

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 24 April 2014

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Title: Homelessness Update

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Item for Information

Summary

1. This report is to brief members on the homelessness figures for the first three quarters of 2013/14

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Board notes this report

Financial Implications

3. The council has a Hardship Fund of £100,000 and Homelessness Fund of £101,000 which are available to meet the increasing costs and/or invest in homelessness-reducing measures

Background Papers

4. None

Published papers

5. Housing Performance Indicator Report 2013/14

Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	N/A
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A

Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

	Qrt 1 2012/13	Qrt 2 2012/13	Qrt 3 2012/13	Qrt1 2013/14	Qrt 2 2013/14	Qrt 3 2013/14
Homelessness Presentations	16	11	20	24	29	30
Homelessness Acceptances	11	15	6	15	17	18
Homelessness Preventions	44	30	29	13	23	26
Numbers in Temporary Accommodation	18	18	18	14	19	32
Priority accepted homeless families time spent in Bed and Breakfast	0.9 weeks	0.7 weeks	2.4 weeks	0.8 weeks	4.5 weeks	5.7 weeks
Customers received in-depth housing advice	2012/13 first 9 months = 231			2012/14 first 9 months = 325		

7. The above table gives the homelessness statistics for the first three quarters of 2013/14 compared to the first three quarters of 2012/13.
8. As can be seen the levels of homelessness are still increasing, having significantly increased in 2012/13 over the previous 12 months.
9. The effect of the recession continues to put individuals and families under pressure that in some instances has led to homelessness.
10. There was a significant increase in the number of homeless applicants having to be placed in Temporary Accommodation (TA) during quarter 3. This

resulted in people having to stay in Bed and Breakfast accommodation longer and many applicants had to be placed in shared accommodation provided by SupportWorks in Harlow.

11. As reported to Members last November planning permission was gained to convert another council house into two further furnished temporary units. This work is expected to be completed by the end of May 2014. Work at Mead Court is has now commenced and this site will provide 4 new units of furnished temporary accommodation later this year.
12. However 8 of the empty flats at Mead Court are currently being used as TA, so even with the additional converted property the TA stock will decrease by 2 when the demolition of Mead Court occurs later this year. Officers continue to look for other sites/properties to develop for further temporary accommodation and recently a flat in Manor Road Stansted was identified a suitable for this use. The cost of any necessary furnishings and equipment needed can be met from the Hardship/Homelessness fund.
13. The housing options team have seen a total of 325 clients for in-depth housing advice in the first 9 months of 2013/14 compared to 231 for the same period in the last financial year.
14. The prevention of homelessness is still proving difficult particularly with the difficulty in finding people suitable alternative housing options within the private sector. Many private landlords remain unwilling to consider applicants on benefits and Local Housing Allowance rates remain well below market rents in this area.
15. The Council as of the 1st April 2014 has brought the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme in house but it remains to be seen if this will generate an increase in clients being able to access the private rented sector through the help of the scheme.
16. The provisional figures for quarter 4 show that the situation has remained difficult a further report will be brought before the housing board in July which will report on the first 3 months of 2014/15 as well as the final quarter figures for 2013/14.

Risk Analysis

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Cost of dealing with homelessness increases	2. The PI's show that homelessness remains on an upward trend	2. There may be a need to increase the amount of money available to	Careful monitoring of the homelessness budget allows for early notification of any potential overspend. The Housing Options

		spend on homelessness	team continue to try to prevent homelessness where ever possible and keep the time that clients have to spend in nightly let accommodation to a minimum
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.