

Report to Executive

Agenda
Item:

A.1

Meeting Date: 2nd February 2015
Portfolio: Communities and Housing
Key Decision:
Within Policy and
Budget Framework YES
Public / Private Public

Title: INTER-AGENCY HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY FOR CARLISLE
2015-20
Report of: Director of Economic Development
Report Number: ED 02/15

Recommendations:

For Executive to note and consider any feedback forthcoming from the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel following their consideration of the strategy.

Tracking

Executive:	14th January and 2nd February 2015
Overview and Scrutiny:	15th January 2015
Council:	3rd March 2015

1. FOREWORD

Homelessness is a complex issue with multiple causes requiring flexible solutions. To achieve the best possible results for our citizens and our City, we recognise that it is essential that all partners across different sectors and departments understand their important contribution and the cyclical benefits of joined up collaborative homelessness prevention and intervention to support the most vulnerable and those at risk.

The 2015-20 strategy builds on the strengths of the previous strategy, and contributes towards the strategic objectives within Carlisle City Council's corporate plan; in particular to work effectively with partners and to address Carlisle's current and future housing needs; and achieve the vision 'to promote Carlisle as a prosperous City, one in which we can all be proud'.

The strategy also incorporates and compliments other local and national strategic plans and strategies in order to enhance partnership approaches and deliver joint priorities, preventative activities focused on addressing the root causes of homelessness through a collective commitment for Carlisle.

Carlisle City Council has worked closely with key local stakeholders throughout the development of the shared priorities and key actions included within this strategy to ensure that the vision and goals reflect the needs of all within the district; to ensure that ownership, responsibility and accountability is shared. The working group will continue to meet throughout the life of the strategy to ensure success and that the ongoing strategic actions are reviewed annually to reflect the needs of all within the district in line with national and local drivers and legislation changes.

2. BACKGROUND

Section 1 (1) of the Homelessness Act 2002 gives Housing Authorities the power to carry out homelessness reviews within the district areas; and S.1 (3 and 4) places a statutory responsibility on housing authorities to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the ongoing results of the reviews.

Section 3 (1) of the Homelessness Act 2002 requires the local housing authority to have a strategy which seeks to:

- prevent people from becoming homeless
- ensure that there is sufficient accommodation in the area for people who might become, or are homeless
- ensure that people who might be, or are homeless, have sufficient support to prevent them from becoming homeless again
- consult with other relevant agencies in carrying out the review and in preparing the strategy

The 2015-20 Strategy builds on the strengths and achievements of the previous strategy as outlined below.

2.1 Objectives Achieved to date

All key priorities outlined within Carlisle's homelessness strategy 2008-2013 were achieved and include:

Key priority area:	Objectives achieved:
Reduce temporary accommodation by 50% in 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TA target met by 2010 through the utilisation of the hostels as a preventative placement to households where no duty is owed under the Housing Act 1996 • A four times (308%) increase in homeless prevention cases from 2008 – 2013
Stop placing 16 17 year olds in bed and breakfast by 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Bed and Breakfast placements utilised • Increased partnership working with Children's Services and 16/17 year old Homelessness Co-ordinator • Implemented joint assessments with Children's Services as part of the development of the initial joint protocol
Prevent and reduce further rough sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented the provision of emergency accommodation arrangements for severe weather (SWEP) • Commitment to NSNO County wide • Introduction of Street Link • Conducted an official Rough Sleepers count in 2011 • Assisted 118 households through the homelessness prevention grant from 2012 to date with rent in advance / deposits • Adopted a 'Places of change' approach throughout services

2.2 The Homelessness Review – Key Findings

As part of the review process in line with best practice, Carlisle City Council examined the last six years homelessness demographic data; correlating this with information from local social services as to the current and likely future members of social services client groups who are likely to be homeless or at risk of homelessness; for example young people in need, care leavers and those with community care needs.

Trend patterns, current and future demands were determined, including housing and support resources and availability; ensuring that the future strategic priorities set are based on realistic assumptions as to how they will be delivered in practice, and collectively owned by all stakeholders within the district. The main findings included:

- 1200 people consistently approaching for housing advice for each of the last six years
- The number of Homelessness acceptances (full duty) reduced by 68% from 206 to 65 between 08/09 and 13/14 (which is comparably favourable with the national average)
- Proportionally the figures of priority need homelessness decisions have remained fairly constant over the last six years with the largest group being those with dependent children/pregnant (34%), the next largest groups being those with mental health problems (22%) and those suffering domestic violence (8%)
- The causes of homelessness remained proportionally similar with relationship breakdown (29%) and loss of rented accommodation (22%) being the most common causes
- Over the last six years the focus on homelessness prevention within the district has demonstrated an increase of 323% from 97 households successfully assisted to 410. This focus on prevention within homelessness services has successfully brought the City Council in line with the national statistical average
- An average of 35% of all homelessness presentations are from young people aged between 16 and 25

- The most recent official rough sleepers count was carried out on 14th November 2014 during the hours of 2am – 4am; where 45 areas were identified and searched through local intelligence gathered from a variety of local sources including Cumbria Police, The Salvation Army, Churches Together, Carlisle Key, CASS, and Unity. The count was verified by the North East and Cumbria Manager for Homeless Link who accompanied one of the search teams on the night. No rough sleepers were found in any of the locations; further more there was no evidence observed to indicate any recent rough sleeping activity

2.3 In addition, an audit of repeat presentations, applications and of those residents in emergency temporary accommodation for long periods of time over the past six years was reviewed identifying 29 people annually as experiencing multiple exclusion. 1:1 interviews were then conducted with 10 sample cases over a two month period as part of an in-depth local study in to Multiple Exclusion homelessness (MEH) within the district (the full report will be available on-line with the publication of the strategy). The main findings of the sample highlighted that:

- 80% had experienced institutional care, with prison or young offenders being the most commonly experienced (75%) particularly within the male sample (83%)
- 38% experienced having a period in local authority care, and all reported being removed from home as a result of violence or abuse
- 90% had substance misuse issues; with 78% reporting using hard drugs (heroin, crack and cocaine), with the youngest median age of first experiencing this within the female sample as age 14 – significantly the same median age as first injecting drugs within the female sample (17 in the male sample)
- 70% had participated in street culture activities; and 60% reported experiencing all key indicators associated with MEH
- 80% had children (including those who do not live with them 75% female, 83% male)
- 60% reported having slept rough at some point (the median age of females first experiencing this being aged 16, males aged 19)

- 60% reported survival shoplifting (83% of male sample); with alcohol being the recorded as stolen the most; with drugs reported as being bought the most with the money made from selling stolen items
- 25% of females reported experiencing having sex or performing a sex act in exchange for somewhere to stay; with a median age of first experiencing this of 12 years (significantly the same respondents reported experiencing sexual abuse as a child and an adult)
- 90% reported having mental health issues, with 80% receiving medication for this
- 40% reported having attempted suicide an average of 4 times
- 75% of the female sample reported regular episodes of self harming behaviour (cutting; burning; punching; head banging)
- Official homelessness presentations were reported as occurring at the end of the multiple exclusion journey; most significantly within the female sample at a median age of 22 years
- The estimated average cost to local public services within Carlisle based on the average persons experiential findings and DCLG's cost unit calculator (2014) is £60,036 per person; totalling estimated cost of £1.7 million annually

2.4 National, Regional and Local Context

As part of the review relevant strategic documents have been reviewed and key actions incorporated to ensure the effectiveness and success of resources and appropriate partnerships.

The Governments Housing Strategy, *Laying the foundations: a housing strategy for England* acknowledged the current key challenges posed by tackling homelessness, through issues such as the recession, welfare reform and rough sleeping; thus highlighting the importance of homelessness prevention.

Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness encourages better cross-service working between councils, charities, health

services and the police to focus on earlier support for people likely to become homeless and includes five commitments:

- Tackling troubled childhoods and adolescence
- Improving Health
- Reducing involvement in crime
- Improving access to financial advice, skills and employment services
- Pioneering innovative social funding mechanisms for homelessness

The report also set out 10 'local challenges' for local authorities which if addressed will lead to local homelessness services meeting the best or gold standards; these challenges have been incorporated and addressed in this strategy and action plan:

Local Challenges:	
1	Adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services
2	Actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
3	Offer a 'housing options' prevention service, including written advice to all clients
4	Adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative
5	Have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support
6	Develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups; including advice and support to both clients and landlords
7	Actively engage in preventing mortgage reposessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme
8	Have a Homelessness Strategy which sets out a pro-active approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs
9	Not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in bed and breakfast accommodation
10	Not to place any families in bed and breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks

The Government outlined its *Vision to end Rough Sleeping in the No Second Night Out* rollout nationwide; recognising that in order to successfully deal with rough sleeping a gold standard approach to rough sleeping services that meet the No Second Night Out principles will need to be adopted and owned collectively locally to ensure that:

- New rough sleepers should be identified and helped off the streets immediately so that they do not fall in to a dangerous rough sleeping lifestyle

- Members of the public should be able to play an active role by reporting and referring people sleeping rough
- Rough sleepers should be helped to access a place of safety where their needs can be quickly assessed and they can receive advice on their options
- They should be able to access emergency accommodation and other services, such as healthcare if needed
- If people have come from another area or country and find themselves sleeping rough, the aim should be to reconnect them back to their local community unless there is a good reason why they cannot return. There, they will be able to access housing and recovery services, and have support from family and friends

2.5 Carlisle Housing Strategy

The Homelessness Strategy 2015-20 incorporates and contributes towards the key objectives within Carlisle's current Housing Strategy highlighted below in relation to Supporting Vulnerable People through supporting the delivery of housing and support services to meet the needs of all.

1. Responding to our ageing population, with care of vulnerable older people shifting to their homes.
2. Responding to the changes in Welfare reform and the effects within the current economic climate.
3. Meeting the challenges of an increased demand on our services with reduced resources.
4. Responding to increased expectation, choice and control over how services are provided to communities and individuals through the personalisation agenda.
5. Making sure that partnership working and shared priorities are maintained through a changing, competitive market.
6. Better targeting of support to vulnerable people.

1. Work together to review the City Council's Homelessness Strategy.
2. Make sure there is adequate support and appropriate (including temporary) accommodation to meet the needs of vulnerable groups.
3. Reduce pressure on our services by developing innovative prevention solutions, including those focused on reducing worklessness and poverty.
4. Actively work to reduce social isolation amongst older people.
5. Improve access to our services for vulnerable people from hard-to-reach social groups.
6. Co-ordinate and support the delivery of front line services through the Shaddongate Resource Centre.
7. Help vulnerable groups adjust to impact of Welfare reform.

3. PROPOSALS – Putting the Priorities for Carlisle into Action

Partnership working is at the heart of this Strategy and working together we have developed a strategic vision for Carlisle that will ensure we are all working to develop and address the following priority areas over the five year period:

Priority Area 1: Delivery of Appropriate Flexible Accommodation and Support Pathways					
Aim	Action	Objective	Key Partners	By When	Challenges
Develop, implement and embed effective multi- agency personalised support and housing services which allow flexibility and mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Closer working and joined up processes with the Central Access Point (CAP) ○ Review the MEAM model and consider its potential in Carlisle ○ Review local access barriers and exclusions; promoting a culture of crisis intervention across agencies ○ Crisis intervention approaches to manage and prevent evictions and unplanned exits from services ○ Embed a collective commitment to improve the transparency of decision making and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased access and move on routes in to and out of support and accommodation provision ● Increased supply of settled accommodation ● Reduction in repeat homelessness cases and MEH 	Carlisle City Council / Cumbria County Council / CAP / Probation Services / NHS / CMHS / Drug & Alcohol services / Cumbria Police / Training and Education Providers / Housing Providers – RSL's; PRS; SP funded and supported housing / Carlisle YMCA / YOS		

	<p>challenge through escalation and conflict resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop and promote a collaborative local directory of services ○ Review and carry out a temporary accommodation audit across providers; and housing needs survey 				
<p>Improve access to local community services for gypsy and travellers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review of collaborative initial response to assessing initial needs, safeguarding and welfare of unauthorised roadside encampments ○ Consultation in relation to needs and barriers to inclusion ○ Increase the use of housing related floating support provision for gypsy and travellers assessed as having a support need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased access to community services for gypsy and travellers ● Prevention and alleviation of homelessness, and unauthorised encampments 	<p>Carlisle City Council / Cumbria County Council / CAP / NHS / CMHS / Drug & Alcohol services / Cumbria Police / Training and Education Providers / Community groups</p>		

Promote safeguarding as a priority locally within all agencies working with vulnerable adults and children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Place safeguarding at the centre of all service development and delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased knowledge, confidence and reduction of on-going risks 	All agencies represented within the Homeless Strategy working group		
Priority Area 2: Multiple Exclusion Homelessness and Rough Sleeping					
Aim	Action	Objective	Key Partners	By When	Challenges
Strategic multi-agency approach to homelessness prevention and intervention for those who are or at risk of MEH and rough sleeping in line with the Making Every Adult matter framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clear commitment to a cross sector mandate to work outside of single organisational boundaries ○ A multi-agency preventative pro-active approach to identifying, reporting and referring people at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping for advice and appropriate assistance ○ Effective reconnection policy in place ○ Development and delivery of rapid access routes in to specialist mental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduction in repeat homelessness cases and MEH ● Improvement in communication and joint working ● End of rough sleeping ● Improve the overall wellbeing of local people and encourage a focus on the health promotion of the local homeless population ● Improved recognition and 	<p>All agencies represented within the Homeless Strategy working group</p> <p>Mental Health and therapeutic intervention services</p> <p>NHS services</p>		

	<p>health, primary care and appropriate support and accommodation services for people who are experiencing MEH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rapid access in to a range of appropriate drug and alcohol treatment services for adults identified as being at high risk of homelessness and multiple exclusion ○ Focused sustained support to a small case load of people experiencing MEH, which differs from preventative services offered to other at risk groups ○ Focused work to particularly safeguard young females at risk of invisible forms of homelessness and rough sleeping ○ Access to therapeutic rehabilitation and creative services to 	<p>treatment of physical and mental health difficulties amongst people experiencing homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduced levels of trauma and homelessness ● Enhanced links between health and social care agencies 			
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	<p>improve coping strategies to deal with trauma issues and learn alternative coping mechanisms to reduce mental health issues, self harming and self medicating through substances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ On-going local commitment and local promotion of Nightstop, No Second Night Out, Streetlink and the Severe Weather Emergency Provision○ Develop and conduct a county wide co-ordinated strategic health assessment of all people experiencing homelessness○ Embed a Place of Change commitment across all agencies involved in supporting people experiencing homelessness; creating and developing innovative projects and				
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	<p>opportunities for people to engage fully through volunteering, employment, training and education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work in partnership to reduce ASB and carry out a Street needs audit 				
Priority Area 3: Increase and improve positive outcomes for young people experiencing homelessness					
Aim	Action	Objective	Key Partners	By When	Challenges
<p>Develop, implement and monitor the revised and updated 16-17 year old joint protocol</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a Local Commitment for Carlisle which outlines how we will collectively support and implement the Joint Protocol for Homeless 16/17 year olds ○ Review the effectiveness of the Youth Panel as a referral point for emergency cases as part of the Local Commitment for Carlisle ○ Actively promote Nightstop within Carlisle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of Homelessness • Reduced levels of young people experiencing homelessness • Increase access to independent advocacy for all young people aged 16/17 years who present as homeless as part of the Local Commitment • Increased use of Nightstop as emergency accommodation 	<p>Carlisle City Council / Cumbria County Council – Children’s Services and Supporting People (CAP) / Youth Offending Services / 16/17 year old Homelessness Co-ordinator & Case Officer / Supported Housing providers /</p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase awareness of housing options, advocacy, and support available through increased use of social network sites ○ To develop on-line bespoke youth information pages 	<p>for 16-17 year olds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased volunteers to support and expand the Nightstop scheme within Carlisle 	Carlisle YMCA / All local frontline third sector services working with YP / Inspira / JC+		
<p>Promote a co-ordinated response to meeting the diverse needs and wishes of young people, through the development of local youth accommodation pathways with access routes to a range of appropriate and integrated tailored support and accommodation options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To promote and increase the use of housing references for under 18's including guarantors; access to Choice Based Lettings for care leavers; and references given for those in temporary accommodation ○ To develop a local collective ethos and commitment which puts young people and their families in charge of planning for the future; and provides consistent information and advice about every aspect of the young persons life, not just housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved outcomes for young people at risk ● Increase appropriate housing options pathways for young people ● Prevent and alleviate youth homelessness ● Increased use of Early Help Assessments contributing towards Countywide targets 	Carlisle City Council / Cumbria County Council – Children's Services and Supporting People (CAP) / Youth Offending Services / 16/17 year old Homelessness Co-ordinator & Case Officer / Supported Housing providers / Carlisle YMCA / All local frontline third		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote and develop the active use of NYAS with all young people ○ Increase the use of housing related floating support provision for young people identified at risk ○ Increase the use of Early Help Assessments for 16-17 year olds who are at risk of homelessness 		sector services working with YP / CBL partners / NYAS / Inspira / JC+		
Develop and support a range of collaborative local opportunities and options for young people to participate in education, training and employment to promote economic independence and develop key skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Investigate young peoples needs and aspirations; and consult with those identified as at risk of homelessness ○ Explore opportunities to link to and develop marginalised youth groups & projects ○ Link to local partners delivery plans ○ Support and promote the delivery of co-ordinated targeted front line services through the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evidence of needs and aspirations to support strategic co-ordinated approach to service delivery ● Improved outcomes for young people at risk ● Shaddongate Centre utilised as a central community hub for young people identified at risk 	Carlisle City Council / Cumbria County Council / Youth Offending Services / 16/17 year old Homelessness Co-ordinator / IHA / Carlisle YMCA / All local frontline third sector services working with		

	<p>Shaddongate Resource Centre as a central community hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify best practice partnership approaches to effective homelessness prevention through engagement with schools / other education providers for pre 16 years and pre 18 years ○ Promote and increase the number of local foster carers and placements for 16-17 year olds to enable young people to move forward positively in a planned way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent and alleviate youth homelessness 	YP / Inspira / JC+ / Team Fostering		
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Priority Area 4: Prevention of Homelessness

Aim	Action	Objective	Key Partners	By When	Challenges
Meet the Gold Standard challenge standards and strive for continuous improvement in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offer a housing options prevention service which includes written advice to all clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of Gold Standard services • Prevent and alleviate 	<p>Carlisle City Council</p> <p>All agencies represented</p>		

frontline services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Embed and promote the No Second Night Out standards ○ Have a clear multi-agency agreement to improve housing and support pathways for those at risk of homelessness ○ Develop a suitable, safe and good standard private rented sector offer; with a focus on single people at risk of repeat homelessness (non statutory in line with NSNO); including advice and support to both clients and landlords ○ Actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions through embedding the pre-action protocol and utilising preventative toolkit and actions on a case by case basis ○ Have a homeless strategy which sets out a pro-active approach 	<p>homelessness and rough sleeping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve standards, information, advice and options for both landlords and tenants 	<p>within the Homeless Strategy working group</p> <p>Local Private Landlords</p> <p>Mortgage Lenders</p>		
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	<p>to preventing homelessness which is reviewed annually to ensure responsiveness to emerging needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To continue to not place 16-17 year olds in Bed and Breakfast as temporary accommodation; and encourage this good practice across agencies ○ To continue to not place any families in Bed and Breakfast as temporary accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks; and encourage this good practice across agencies 				
<p>Outreach work with local schools to identify young people / families at risk of homelessness; enabling effective</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase the use of Early Help Assessments for 16-17 year olds who are identified as being at high risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prevent and alleviate homelessness ● Increased use of Early Help Assessments 	<p>Carlisle City Council Homeless Prevention / Education welfare / Local</p>		

support and advice to be targeted at an early stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop, implement and monitor clear systems and targeted joint programmes focused on young people & families ○ Identify opportunities to link to / join up specialist targeted panels focused on young people identified as being at risk of homelessness 	contributing towards Countywide targets	schools and youth programmes / Children and Family services / 16-17 year old Homelessness Co-ordinator & case Officer		
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<p>Review develop, implement and monitor all early warning systems, partnerships and discharge policies from all institutional care facilities including hospitals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review effectiveness of all existing discharge policies and protocols; identify gaps, barriers and hospital discharge protocol including mental health hospital discharges ○ Ensure there is appropriate support and signposting in place to assist individuals and families leaving the Armed Forces ○ To offer home visits and mediation services to all as appropriate as a crisis intervention tool ○ Promote a crisis intervention approach to ensure that refusals and pending evictions are flagged at an early stage from all providers within Choice Based Lettings and supported accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prevent and alleviate homelessness 	<p>Carlisle Welfare Reform Board</p> <p>All agencies represented within the Homeless Strategy working group</p> <p>Cumberland Infirmary / NHS services / CMHS / Prison and Probation services</p> <p>The Royal British legion / SAFFA and other local and national supportive charities</p>		
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure effective information protocols and processes in place to ensure early engagement with drug and alcohol treatment agencies and interaction with the criminal justice system to compliment the discharge policies ○ Develop early warning systems and partnerships to ensure an effective response to unauthorised encampments; and to support the local gypsy and traveller protocol ○ Ensure housing / homelessness representation on all appropriate local problem solving and early warning groups ○ Conduct an audit of move on outcomes for vulnerable older adults following hospital discharges 				
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<p>Ensure a joined up approach to households affected by welfare reform changes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development, implementation and monitoring of co-ordinated joined up money, debt advice and budgeting support services (link to UC) ○ Welfare Reform and Universal Credit information and training for all frontline officers across services and schemes including utilising community asset buildings and support workers across sectors utilising a 'train the trainer' approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prevent and alleviate homelessness 	<p>Carlisle Welfare Reform Board</p> <p>All agencies represented within the Homeless Strategy working group</p> <p>CAST</p>		
<p>Monitor the effectiveness and usage of discretionary housing payments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor on a quarterly basis as part of Carlisle Welfare Reform board ○ Ensure that all agencies and clients are aware of DHP's and support applications where appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prevent and alleviate homelessness 	<p>Carlisle Welfare Reform Board</p> <p>All agencies represented within the Homeless Strategy working group</p>		

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 To date a number of consultation meetings and workshops have been carried out with a wide range of representative key stakeholders from within the statutory and third sector agencies in order to shape, agree and take collective ownership of the agreed key priorities and develop objectives within the action plan:

- **24th June 2014** - to outline the progress made on the previous strategy; the current homeless situation and key priority areas and invite discussion in relation to the key priorities / themes identified
- **23rd July 2014** - interactive workshop to explore key priority areas / themes and develop objectives and future actions
- **End of October 2014** – circulation of the draft strategy to key partners and invite comments / amends
- **13th / 14th November** – Official rough sleepers count verified by Homeless Link (the results have been included within the strategy document and action plan)
- **28th November 2014** – Interactive Key stakeholder meeting to amendments; and agree final strategy and action plan
- **28th January 2015 & February 2015 (date TBC)** – Interactive workshop session to allocate lead organisations to take forward the objectives set; outline appropriate timescales and identify key challenges to the achievement of the objectives so that these can be addressed collectively
- **March 2015 (date TBC)** – launch and summit planning session to correspond with the publication and promotion of the strategy in April 2015

The overall partnership approach and commitment to the development and delivery of the Homelessness Strategy priorities has been very strong from the beginning of the Strategy review to date; there is an on going commitment and ownership agreed by all parties with regular meetings planned to take place throughout the life of the five year strategy which will be reviewed annually in line with best practice.

4.2 The Agreed Strategy document and action plan will go through the following internal meetings for approval prior to publication in April 2015:

- SMT – 9th December 2014
- JMT – 15th December 2014
- Executive – 14th January 2015
- Community – 15th January 2015
- Executive – 2nd February 2015

- Council – 3rd March 2015

5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

5.1 Addressing Carlisle's current and future housing needs

Contact Officer: Tammie Rhodes

Ext: 7217

**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's -

Deputy Chief Executive –

Economic Development –

Governance – In accordance with Article 4 of the Council's Constitution, Homelessness is part of the Policy Framework reserved to Council. Therefore, it is for Council to approve the final Policy following recommendation by the Executive after the due Scrutiny process.

Local Environment –

Resources - Any costs associated with the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy can be accommodated within existing revenue budgets.

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 15 JANUARY 2015

COSP.07/15 INTER-AGENCY HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY FOR CARLISLE 2015-20

A short video was played for the Panel showing the Northern Housing Consortium award winning community project which was delivered from Water Street women and family accommodation through a partnership between Carlisle City Council and Fair Meals Direct. The video showed how partnership working provided a valuable local community meals on wheels service for vulnerable adults within the district. The service prepared and delivered hot meals daily to local people and provided learning and volunteering opportunities for the residents of the scheme.

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager presented report ED.02/15 which outlined the five year Inter-agency Homelessness Strategy for Carlisle. Delivery with key partners prior to publication was developed and agreed and the Strategy would be launched in April 2015.

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager introduced Ms Dixon, Advanced Practitioner – Leaving Care Carlisle and Eden and Mr Sellers, Salvation Army to the Panel.

Ms Dixon informed the Panel that she dealt with young people between the ages of 16 and 25 who were leaving care. She stressed the importance of the partnership working to avoid repeat homelessness and to provide stable accommodation.

Mr Sellers stated that he was representing Carlisle Churches Together and was the head of a small working party which looked at the support the Churches could provide in response to homelessness.

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager explained that the report outlined the background to the Strategy and the objectives achieved to date and gave details of the Homelessness Review all of which had previously been considered by the Panel. It was agreed that the meeting would focus on the four Priority Areas and the Action Plan which had been developed with partners and had been attached to the report.

Priority Area 1: Delivery of Appropriate Flexible Accommodation and Support Pathways

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager explained that the main goal of the first priority area was to effectively prevent homelessness. She added that the emphasis was to deliver a flexible approach to support each person in the most appropriate way to help them sustain accommodation. She highlighted a number of the actions including improvements to the Central Access Point and a review of the local access barriers and exclusions. She added that it was vital that a collective commitment to improve transparency of decision making was embedded with all key partners.

In considering the first priority Members raised the following comments and questions:

- *Had it been difficult to place young people in John Street Hostel given the variety of clients in the Hostel?*

Ms Dixon responded that young people leaving care over the age of 18 who perhaps required a higher level of support which was available at the Hostel would be referred. Each case was considered individually and the most appropriate accommodation was sought.

- *Riverside Carlisle had been part of an unsuccessful pilot to bring young people who were leaving care into a controlled tenancy, would the project be readdressed?*

Ms Dixon explained that her team had been involved in the pilot called the Launch Pad Scheme. There had been six tenancies issued, two of which resulted in full time tenancies. Organisational changes within Riverside Carlisle meant that they had not wanted to continue with the Scheme. There was a requirement for more support and accommodation for young people leaving care and Children Services were in discussions with Riverside regarding properties for care leavers possibly on a shared basis where stable support could be provided. More work needed to be undertaken to engage with young people and help them understand their own responsibility and the effect their actions had on their accommodation.

- *Was there a collaborative local directory of services?*

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager responded that there was not a collaborative directory of services and this was a barrier for people. The advantage of the Strategy was that representatives of all agencies took part and had the strength to carry out the actions successfully.

Ms Dixon added that it was hoped that the directory would be established by October. Children' Services had started to develop a directory and it was envisaged that the agencies would feed into that one and pull everything together.

- *How effective was the Council at supplying housing?*

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager explained that the Council could influence nominations and administered Choice Based Letting for clients.

- *Was there a Gypsy and Travellers Council which could assist the Council in improving access to local community services?*

The Director of Economic Development confirmed that there was a Council but they did not necessarily engage with the authority.

- *In what way were gypsy and travellers classed as vulnerable?*

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager explained that under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Code of Guidance gypsy and travellers would be vulnerable if they had mobility issues, were 16/17 years old or if there were children in the

family. The action had been to provide better support and offer the necessary prevention measures. The safeguarding of children locally was a priority for the Council.

Priority Area 2: Multiple Exclusion Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager reported that the Multiple Exclusion Homelessness (MEH) was a specific separate category of homelessness. MEH was a client who had experienced homelessness, was engaged in street culture activity, substance misuse and often had mental health issues. The MEH group were the minority in the homelessness groups but often had the most complex and challenging needs. One reason that this group was a priority was due to the cost and resources needed to deal with the issues. The age group was usually older and issues became more visible when all other options had been explored or exhausted. The priority area looked at how the agencies could deal with the group better and prevent younger clients ending up in the group later in life.

In considering the second priority Members raised the following comments and questions:

- *How were the MEH dealt with currently?*

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager explained that in the past clients had been passed around various agencies and became caught in a homelessness cycle. A personalised and flexible approach was required to improve the service.

The Director of Economic Development agreed that more communication was needed between partners to ensure the right agencies were working together to provide the right support.

- *What prospects were there for young people, were the young people coming out of care NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training)?*

Ms Dixon explained that Children's Services worked with Inspira and the DWP to ensure that young people were aware of all of the options available to them. Unfortunately some of the care leavers were not in an emotional position to attend school or work and they required additional support.

Mr Sellers commented that the Churches usually dealt with people in the MEH category over the age of 30 and, unfortunately, some of the people had been in the cycle for over ten years. People in that group were often difficult to deal with and although the Churches wanted to help them they often had conflicting groups to deal with.

- *The report stated that there were no rough sleepers found during the official rough sleepers count yet the report also proposed the No Second Night Out (NSNO) rollout.*

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager stated that the zero count was excellent news for the City. She explained that a large number of single young people stayed on friends' sofas etc until they had no other options. Homelessness was not necessarily rough sleeping and the Strategy aimed to ensure that those who did stay with friends did not end up rough sleeping. The NSNO addressed more than just rough sleeping

and put preventative measures in place to ensure the Council not only fulfilled its statutory duty but also supported those that were not within the duty.

Mr Sellers felt that there was a perception of homelessness by the Churches that was perhaps different to the actual statistics and this could be due to the help that Churches provided and the lack of interaction with other agencies. He also thought there may be more rough sleepers in the warmer months, he agreed that the NSNO rollout was an excellent idea for the City.

A Member commented that there had been a dramatic decline in the number of homeless both locally and nationally.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio agreed that there had been a reduction in the number of statutory homelessness acceptances but drew the Panel's attention to the report which stated that 1200 people consistently approached the Council for housing advice each year. She also highlighted that there had been a significant increase in the number of people who had received preventative support. She felt that the authority should be proud of the Strategy and of the way it approached homelessness.

Priority Area 3: Increase and improve positive outcomes for young people experiencing homelessness

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager reported that the focus of priority area 3 was 16/17 year olds and the aim was to embed local commitment for Carlisle through the implementation of a Local Joint Protocol for Homeless 16/17 year olds. It was important that there was a flexible approach to working along with a much more responsive approach to young people.

A Member asked if there was an update on the situation with regard to Shaddongate Resource Centre and its role as a central community hub for young people identified at risk.

The Director of Economic Development responded that discussions were taking place with the YMCA to deliver certain support.

Priority Area 4: Prevention of Homelessness

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager reiterated that prevention was the main theme throughout the Strategy. The Council felt that it was important to be involved in the Gold Standard Challenge. Only one authority had reached the Gold Standard to date nationally. To start the process there would be a peer review which would take place in Carlisle in April 2015. The peer review was an in-depth look at the effectiveness of the homelessness service compared to national benchmarking set by the DCLG. The Priority covered all of the actions that would be required to reach a Gold Standard service including the review of all protocols, procedures and policies, in particular the discharge policies, to ensure they were up to date and most importantly to ensure they worked. It was anticipated that the Gold Standard award would take at least 18 months to achieve.

The Strategy also included the monitoring of changes introduced through the Welfare Reform and the effect they had on the community and potential effects on homelessness. She added that the Team also ensured that all agencies and clients were aware of Discretionary Housing Payments which proved vital to those moving into properties without furniture.

In considering the fourth priority Members raised the following comments and questions:

- *Was the issue regarding bare accommodation as a result of the authority not using private landlords to carry out their homeless duty?*

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager explained that private landlords were used by the authority as often this was the only option available. Social Housing was the preferred route as it was deemed more secure by the clients.

- *A Member asked if the homelessness team felt that the Council's financial situation had affected their work.*

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager responded that the financial situation focused all of the agencies priorities to achieve more with less. The Council met its statutory responsibilities and did this well, it also continued to assist those who the Council did not have statutory responsibility for.

The Deputy Chief Executive informed the Panel that there had not been a significant reduction in the homelessness budget although there had been some changes in staffing.

Mr Sellers added that resources was an issue for charitable organisations and there was a greater need for co-ordinated working to maximise the available resources.

- *Would the joint strategy be presented to all agencies that had been involved?*

Ms Dixon stated that she had regular contact with the homelessness team and hoped that next year there would be more opportunity for the panel to see a more robust document with examples of what was actually being achieved through the partnership approach in line with the strategy.

In closing the item the Chairman thanked all those who attended and contributed to a worthwhile meeting and added that it was clear that there needed to be more co-operation between all agencies and inter agency working should be embedded in the culture.

RESOLVED: 1. That Ms Dixon and Mr Sellers be thanked for their attendance and input in the meeting;

2. That Report ED.02/15 be noted;

3. That the observations of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel, as outlined above, be conveyed to the Executive;

4. That an update on the Action Plan be submitted to the Panel in twelve months time.