

TITLE OF REPORT: Homelessness Review

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with a detailed update following completion of Phase 1 of the Homelessness Review.
2. To seek feedback from the Board on the review findings to date including:
 - a **data report** and a **homelessness review report** from the appointed consultants, Campbell Tickell, confirming the findings from an extensive analysis of relevant data, insight from service users and providers, and a review of current commissioned and directly provided services;
 - a draft **homelessness and rough sleeping strategy** for further consultation, based on the findings and recommendations from the review report;
 - a draft **homelessness charter**, designed to provide a commitment from to range of partners to collaborate and work together in tackling homelessness in Gateshead and achieve our proposed strategic vision:

'to prevent and end homelessness, in all forms, in Gateshead'

Background

3. Earlier this year a report was produced for this Board outlining an intention to undertake a review of homelessness in Gateshead which included the development of a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and a new Homelessness Charter. In May 2021 the Council procured Campbell Tickell to provide external capacity and expertise to support this review.
4. Three phases were outlined within the scope of the commission, although the Council has only committed to completing phase 1 with Campbell Tickell:

Phase 1:

- Data and Insights Analysis. Providing a full analysis of needs and demands from information collated in homelessness assessments (which are completed with all individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness) as well as information collected from support and accommodation services across the borough, both internally and externally.
- A draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Setting out a clear vision, alongside our values, principles and aims, with a detailed action plan for each aim.

- A draft Homelessness Charter. Providing a commitment from a range of partners to collaborate and work together in tackling homelessness in Gateshead and achieve our proposed strategic vision.
- A Homelessness Review which meets our statutory requirements but also includes a broader review of accommodation and support, currently available for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness within Gateshead. Including best practice options, an assessment of our financial position and recommendations for change.

Phase 2 (potentially September 2021-September 2022, to be confirmed):

- Implementation of agreed transformation of homelessness advice, support and accommodation provision for both internal and commissioned provision
- Implementation of a new central 'Gateway' for those seeking accommodation and/or support. That co-ordinates referrals and monitors needs/demand and outcomes.

Phase 3 (potentially from September 2022, to be confirmed)

- Development and implementation of new operating model where support and interventions are delivered, connected to a locality, place based operating model.
- Within this phase we would be seeking multi-disciplinary working with connected services, ensuring that frontline teams work as an integrated delivery team, to assess people's situations in a holistic way, providing advice and bringing them into contact with the right support services. This would include the development of personalised multi-agency support plans, pulling on services as required.

5. It is noted that it was agreed, Phases 2 and 3 of the review may be subject to change, as a result of completion of phase 1 and the outcomes from subsequent consultation with Members and a range of stakeholders, on its findings and recommendations.

6. Phase 1 of our Homelessness Review has now been completed, as follows:

Completed Data Report (Appendix 1):

7. This includes findings from an analysis of 19/20 data of Supported Housing Referrals (1127 in total), Floating Support Referrals (1127 in total) and a snapshot survey of those currently residing in Supported Housing or receiving Floating Support (537 in total).

8. Key findings include:

- Only 23% of referrals to supported housing actually move in, the main reason for this is lost contact.

- 24% of people in supported housing have recently experienced domestic abuse but are residing in generic supported housing, rather than accommodation tailored to meet the needs of domestic abuse victims. Of the new floating support cases opened, 44% are for victims of domestic abuse.
- Around 10% of support service users could be categorised as having complex needs. 7% were in supported housing.
- 69% of service users have some form of disability or long-term health condition. Up to 64% of service users have a mental health need, but just under half of them are currently engaging well with services and receiving the treatment that they need.
- High numbers of people resident in supported housing present a significant risk to others, 102 individuals – representing 46% of the total supported housing population.
- 53% of people receiving a supported housing service during the year moved into settled housing.
- Outcomes from floating support services are good and confirm their contribution to preventing homelessness and repeat homelessness.
- In terms of support needs, achieving housing goals and assistance with finance management are the primary areas where assistance is required, regardless of which service type people are in.
- The level of input required in supported housing is much higher than in floating support, as should be the case.
- 9% of Floating Support Users are 'high need' and 17% of Supported Housing users are 'low need'.
- Vulnerable young people who the local authority have a duty to assist are the subgroup requiring the highest level of input.
- A third of Supported Housing service users had resided for over 2 years, whilst 61% of Floating Support cases received the service for under 6 months.
- Due mostly to 'high levels of risk' a significant number of people in Supported Housing need to be housed in a dispersed supported housing model (including Housing First), with approximately a third of current users needing dispersed housing.

Completed Homelessness Review Report (Appendix 2):

9. The Homelessness Review Report which has been produced, ensures we are meeting our statutory duty requirement, to undertake a broad assessment of homelessness in our area. This includes assessing levels of homelessness, outcomes delivered and the services, support and resources available. It provides the evidence base for the development of our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
10. The review includes an analysis of all applicants who have an initial homelessness assessment in Gateshead by our Housing Options Team. Key findings from this include:

- The overall volume of people owed a homelessness duty increased by 37% in 19/20 from 18/19, with an additional 566 households.
- 49% of those owed a homelessness duty were registered as unemployed. This is substantially more than the national average of 30.5%.
- Domestic abuse is the most common reason for loss of settled home, at 475 households in 19/20. With a quarterly average of 25% this is substantially higher than the north east average of 14%.
- The second most common reason for loss of settled home is family/friends no longer willing to accommodate, at 345 households 19/20 and the third is the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy (private tenancy) at 272 households.
- The volume of people homeless due to violence/harassment is also significantly higher than the national average of 2-3% peaking at 10% in Gateshead in July-Sept 2020.
- 63% of those owed a relief duty (where we are unable to prevent homelessness) are single males, this accounts for 295 single males in total. 61% of those owed a relief duty are living in no fixed abode or with family/friends.
- Of those owed a homelessness duty in 19/20, 1,283 had one or more support need, which accounts for 68% and is 9% higher than the North East average. 366 had 3 or more support needs.
- 32% identified as having a history of mental health problems (higher than national & north east average), 22% identified as being at risk of/experiencing domestic abuse (substantially higher than national & north east average), 14% identified as having physically ill health and disability and 12% identified as having an offending history.
- On average 68% of statutory temporary accommodation placements are within our own stock, this is substantially higher than the regional average which is 32%.
- The proportion of households placed in Bed and Breakfasts/Hotels in 19/20 was lower than the national and north east average.
- For those whose homelessness was prevented, Gateshead secured/maintained settled accommodation (6mths+) for 58% of these households. This is in line with the National and North East average.
- For those where we could not prevent homelessness (those who were owed a relief duty) Gateshead secured settled accommodation for 45%, which is above the national average.

11. In addition to the detailed analysis completed, the Homelessness Review Report makes the following key conclusions/recommendations:

- **Homelessness is not just about housing** and the majority of households that are owed a prevention or relief duty have support needs, with a significant number having three or more, multiple and complex needs.
- **Gateshead recognises that services for homeless people need to be more connected** and aims to develop a Connected Services model. Currently there is a prototype model established that involves a full time nurse practitioner working alongside homelessness officers in a drop in hub for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness

- **There is a significant cohort of homeless people with multiple complex needs.** Most of these individuals are sofa surfing and moving from one insecure homeless situation to another. These individuals have complex needs often related to homelessness, substance misuse, mental health problems, offending and domestic abuse.
- Gateshead should **redesign and recommission the homelessness pathway** so that it more effectively meets the needs of homeless people with multiple complex needs.
- The accommodation and support **options for domestic abuse should be reviewed** as domestic abuse is the most common reason for loss, or threat of loss, of last settled home in Gateshead.
- The homelessness pathway should **present individuals with a number of options** including moving directly into independent accommodation with wrap around support and for those subject to domestic abuse remaining in their own homes with additional security.
- **A commissioning strategy should be developed** which uses the data gathered by the homelessness review on the needs of service users and which maps out the types of provision required.
- **Supported housing and floating support services should be re-specified/re-commissioned** so that they can more effectively meet the needs that have been identified. Particular consideration should be given to victims of domestic abuse and those with multiple and complex needs.
- **The concept of ‘tenancy ready’ should be incorporated** into a new service specification so that individuals move from supported housing when they are ready to move to independence. This will provide a more person centered approach and make best use of provision.
- **A new Gateway should be developed** that can provide an effective method for matching homeless households to vacancies in commissioned supported and floating support services, with referrals rights for Gateshead. The new Gateway could be extended from the outset to in-house services and non-commissioned services where appropriate.
- **Linkages should be established to any changes that result to Gateshead’s allocations and lettings process** as a consequence of a recent review.
- **Appropriate protocols should be developed in relation to transitions** that may result in homelessness, for example in relation to the Duty to Refer for the release of offenders, discharge from hospital, as well as transitions from children to adult services.

Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (Appendix 3):

12. A new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has also now been drafted which includes the vision ‘to prevent and end homelessness, in all forms, in Gateshead’. This includes the following 4 Strategic Aims, which each have a delivery action plan:

- **Aim 1:** Make homelessness a rare occurrence
- **Aim 2:** Homelessness to be as brief as possible and result in positive outcomes
- **Aim 3:** No-one sleeping rough or in unsuitable accommodation
- **Aim 4:** Homelessness is a one-off occurrence

Draft Homelessness Charter (Appendix 4):

13. A new Homelessness Charter has also now been drafted which can be used as a 'call to action', being more accessible and interactive than a strategy. It can also provide a focal point for offers of help, and/or for people to find out more about local efforts to tackle homelessness. The launch of a Homelessness Charter in an area can often bring welcome attention to the issue, whilst also creating new partnerships and interest. The drafted Homelessness Charter for Gateshead sets out the following pledges:

- Everyone has the right to a **secure, affordable home** where they feel safe
- Everyone has the right to good **quality advice and support**
- We need to work together to tackle the **causes of homelessness not just the symptoms**
- Everyone will be treated with **dignity and respect** and be supported to live **free from abuse**
- Preventing homelessness means making it easy for people to **get the help they need, when they need it**
- Ending homelessness needs services to focus on **people's strengths not just their needs**
- The **views of homeless people will be at the heart** of everything we do
- Working together to end homelessness means being willing to **listen to each other's point of view**
- People should be offered the support they need to **Thrive not just survive**
- People should be involved in **deciding their own needs and solutions**
- Ending homelessness needs a focus on **more than just housing**
- Tackling **inequality and understanding difference** is very important in ending homelessness

Further Information

14. Internal and External Homelessness Working Groups were established this year and have met regularly to inform the review, with representation from a broad range of directly and indirectly related services. Members of both groups have also been contacted directly by Campbell Tickell as part of their consultation exercises and data collection review.

15. To support phase 1 of the Homelessness Review and work underway by Campbell Tickell, our officers also:

- Collated detailed information on all advice, floating support and accommodation provision across Gateshead for those 16+ who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This includes information on capacity, the type of support on offer and eligibility criteria. This should assist us with any subsequent phases of the homelessness review.
- Reviewed related budgets and funding streams in partnership with colleagues in commissioning and information collated so far has been shared. This will determine the financial 'envelope' for any future commissioning and service re-design.
- Worked with our Community Safety Team to try and align this review with work underway to deliver the new statutory requirements from the Domestic Abuse Bill, particularly in relation to understanding needs and demand.

16. The Homelessness Data Report, Homelessness Review Report, Draft Homelessness Strategy and Draft Homelessness Charter were all presented to

the Strategic Housing Board at its July 2021 meeting to provide the opportunity for the Board to consider and comment. Feedback was positive, particularly around the strategy and charter, with a key ask to ensure delivery of recommended changes.

Related Recent Homelessness Funding/Programme Developments:

17. A success regional funding bid (£5,089,000 awarded) was placed to the The Changing Futures Regional Programme, which is a jointly funded initiative between MHCLG and the National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF) aimed at supporting individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage. There are 4 projects to be funded across the region including:

- Northumberland (Substance Misuse)
- Sunderland & South Tyneside (Community and Hospital based Alcohol Care Team)
- Gateshead (Homelessness) - building on the established partnership work underway and operating out of Basis@Gateshead and hosted by Oasis Community Housing for adults experiencing multiple disadvantage
- North Tyneside/Newcastle/Northumberland (Domestic Abuse)

18. Gateshead has also recently been successful in a funding bid for £66,707 from MHCLG's Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Programme, which aims to provide sustainable private sector housing solutions for ex-offenders. This initiative will be delivered jointly across the Councils Private Sector Housing Team and our Housing Options 'HOST' Service. It will provide accommodation and support for 15 service users, with incentives and support on offer for Private Landlords.

Proposal

19. Phase 2 of the Homelessness review is to be further scoped out, but is likely to include:

- A new commissioning strategy.
- Re-specifying and remodeling commissioned and internal homelessness related provision, to more effectively meet need and demand.
- Developing a new Homelessness Pathway within a 'connected services model' that includes a central gateway to accommodation and support, that can match households with vacancies within services.

20. There are several related projects and activities that have and will continue to inform the homelessness review during phase 2:

- Tenancy and Allocations Review
- Homelessness Prototype Casework and Development
- Mental Health Locality Based Community Model
- Gateshead's Multiple and Complex Needs Transformation Initiative
- New Domestic Abuse Bill Requirements
- Review of Multi Storey Blocks

21. Consideration is also currently being given to an alignment of the Homelessness Review with the Allocations and Tenancy Review for phase 2. Such an alignment has the potential to achieve greater value for money, an improved customer

journey and a more joined up approach. This particularly applies when considering the proposed 'Market Place' outlined within the Allocations and Tenancy Review and the proposed 'Gateway' within this Homelessness Review.

22. The planned launch of a new Homelessness Forum in September 2021 will also provide a collaborative partnership, with external stakeholders to deliver the aims set out in the final approved Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and further phases of the Homelessness Review.

Recommendations

23. That the Board consider and comment on the Homelessness Review, its findings and recommendations to date.

24. That the Board consider and comment on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, its Action Plan and the proposed draft Homelessness Charter.

25. That the Board notes and supports the 'next steps' in seeking approval for a final draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and launch of the Homelessness Charter in Gateshead, which include:

- Further consultation on the Strategy and Charter with The Community Safety Board, our Housing Providers Partnership and MHCLG.
- A final draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan to be presented to Cabinet for approval in October 2021.
- The detail of phase 2 of the Homelessness Review will be finalised on completion of the consultation and also presented to Cabinet for approval in October 2021.
- A launch of the strategy and the Homelessness Charter in November 2021.

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