

Interim Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy Action Plan January 2017 – March 2018

This one year *Interim* Homelessness Strategy Action Plan (2017-18) has been developed in recognition of the fact that the current Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy (2012-17) is out of date. It also takes into account that the Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan has not yet received formal sign off and as such the high level homelessness actions coming out of that document are yet to be fully defined. It is also likely that the Homelessness Reduction Bill will become law in 2017, and as such it would be unwise to develop homeless strategy beyond the next 12 months as there will be implications from this legislation.

This document has been written based on the conclusions and recommendations within the Worcestershire Homelessness Review 2016, which has recently been finalised, and will direct Worcestershire Local Housing Authority homelessness policy objectives for the next 12 months. Views of customers and partner organisations were collected and analysed as part of the review and have fed into the development of this action plan. This will continue so that all stakeholders have the opportunity to inform future strategy action plans and high level homelessness actions within the Housing Partnership Plan.

Priority 1: Adopt an early prevention and intervention approach with a focus on single people and childless couples

Action	Task/milestones	Lead responsibility	Timescale	Resource implication/VFM	Target/outcome
Prepare for the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Bill	Develop an action plan to deliver on the new duties	Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group (WSHOG) Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership (WSHP)	Early 2017	New burdens funding?	All Worcestershire LA's and key partners are ready for implementation from Autumn 2017
Protect and increase good quality, cost effective, support services	Extend the current No Second Night Out provision to become No First Night Out (NFNO) Deliver on proposals outlined in Homelessness Prevention Programme bid e.g. NFNO workers, support for private landlords	Single Homeless Pathways Officer, W'shire Housing Partnership Officer	April 2017	Homeless Prevention Programme – Rough Sleepers Funding	A reduction in the number of new rough sleepers. NFNO implemented.
Achieve the Gold Standard for Local Authority homelessness services	Carry out benchmarking exercise to measure the cost effectiveness of homeless services	WSHOG	2017/18	Existing funding/resource, NPSS	Services achieve the Gold Standard and that services are VFM. The cost effectiveness of homelessness

					prevention is demonstrated vs. statutory homelessness
Improve data collection and analysis to understand need, commission services based on “what works”, demonstrate cost effectiveness and to improve communications	Commission Homeless Journey Mapping Consider carrying out Young Persons Snapshot survey	WSHOG, WSHP	2017/8	Existing funding/resource	Need is understood and evidenced. Appropriate services are commissioned; existing services are maintained or reconfigured where appropriate.
Upscale communications to improve the likelihood of preventing homelessness.	Review current communication and consider new ways to communicate, making use of social media and online tools.	Housing Advice Managers	2017/18	No new resource	Reduction in the amount of people approaching LA’s as “homeless on the day” People know to ask for advice at the earliest opportunity.

Priority 2: Address the housing and support needs of homeless people with complex needs

Action	Task/milestones	Lead responsibility	Timescale	Resource implication/value for money	Target/outcome
Develop a different and more integrated approach (pathways) to meet the needs of families and single people with complex needs.	Further detail to come out of the Housing Partnership Plan once agreed and also the Homelessness Reduction Bill action plan	WSHP, WSHOG	2017/18		
Address the current gap in provision for continuing and entrenched rough sleepers	Extend SWEP so that it operates if 0 or below for one night. Investigate ways to fund and commission outreach support for rough sleepers. Bid for funding from the Controlling Migration Fund	Single Homeless Pathways Officer As above Working group to be set up	January 2017 2017/18 April 2017	Existing LA cold weather provision funding Lottery funding – outcome of bid not yet known	SWEP extended and in operation. Outreach support in operation. Support to reconnect rough sleepers strengthened. Action against rogue landlords – overcrowding, dangerous conditions

Work with County Council to address identified gaps in provision for Care Leavers (Ofsted, Corporate Parenting Board, Care Leavers Strategy)	Set up working group to (i) explore opportunities to increase housing provision for care leavers with complex needs (ii) improve processes to avoid care leavers being placed into B&B accommodation (iii) ensure care leavers are tenancy ready and in work where possible (iv) carry out joint working/training across teams so that housing expectations are realistic	Working group (WCC and districts, RP's)	2017/18		<p>Relevant recommendations from the Corporate Parenting Board, Care Leavers Strategy jointly achieved.</p> <p>Reduction/elimination of care leavers placed into B&B accommodation.</p> <p>Reduction/elimination of care leavers approaching LA's as homeless.</p> <p>Increase in housing provision for care leavers with complex needs.</p>
Prepare for the Government's future funding model for supported housing once announced (currently out for consultation)	Further detail to come out of the Housing Partnership Plan once agreed. Some schemes may become unviable, new development may be hindered.	WSHP, WSHOG, WCC Registered Providers	2017/18		

Priority 3: Improve access to affordable, settled housing with a focus on those in temporary or “move on” accommodation

Action	Task/milestones	Lead responsibility	Timescale	Resource implication/value for money	Target/outcome
Improve Local Authority emergency and interim accommodation arrangements	<p>Undertake a review of emergency and interim accommodation arrangements.</p> <p>Investigate ways to expand provision.</p>	WSHOG, LA Temporary Accommodation Officers	2017		<p>The number of households in unsuitable emergency accommodation is decreased.</p> <p>Customers are moved more quickly into settled, affordable accommodation</p>
Tackle barriers to moving on from temporary and “move on” accommodation	Further detail to come out of the Housing Partnership Plan once agreed.	WSHP	2017/8		

Improve access to accommodation for Under 35's and large families who are acutely affected by welfare reform	<p>Deliver new models of accommodation, particular for under 35's, in partnership with registered providers and private landlords.</p> <p>Deliver new models of accommodation for large families or those whose housing options are limited due to affordability or poor tenancy history.</p>	NFNO Officers, Single Homeless Pathways Officer, WSHP	2017/18	Homelessness Prevention Programme funding	LA's can meet requirements of Homelessness Reduction Bill Increase in homelessness prevention amongst Under 35's.
Improve access to private rented accommodation	Increase the use of tenancy ready schemes and tenancy support to improve access to the PRS, sustain accommodation and to prevent homelessness.	LA's	2017/18		Reduction in homelessness occurring from private rented accommodation Increase in number of properties offered through LA bond schemes

Priority 4: Improve customers' resilience to prevent homelessness occurring throughout their lifetime

Action	Task/milestones	Lead responsibility	Timescale	Resource implication/value for money	Target/outcome
Prepare for the impact of future Legislation and National Policy;	<p>Ensure customers are prepared for/coping with the impact of welfare reform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - targeted provision of information -they know how to get housing advice and the earliest possible opportunity 	Housing Advice Teams, Revenues and Benefits Teams	On-going	No new resource	There is no increase in homelessness due to unaffordability/rent arrears/intentionality

Improve economic resilience	Work with partners/current resources with an aim to getting people into work Ensure customers are aware of debt advice services/have financial management skills/are maximising their benefit entitlement		On-going		As above.
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