



**Service Delivery  
Committee**

**Tuesday, 23 January  
2018**

**Matter for  
Information**

**Title:** **Homelessness within the Borough**

**Author(s):** **Steve Nash (Housing Services Manager)**

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**1. Introduction**

This Committee has requested a report to brief Members on homelessness in the Borough.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

That Members note the contents of the report.

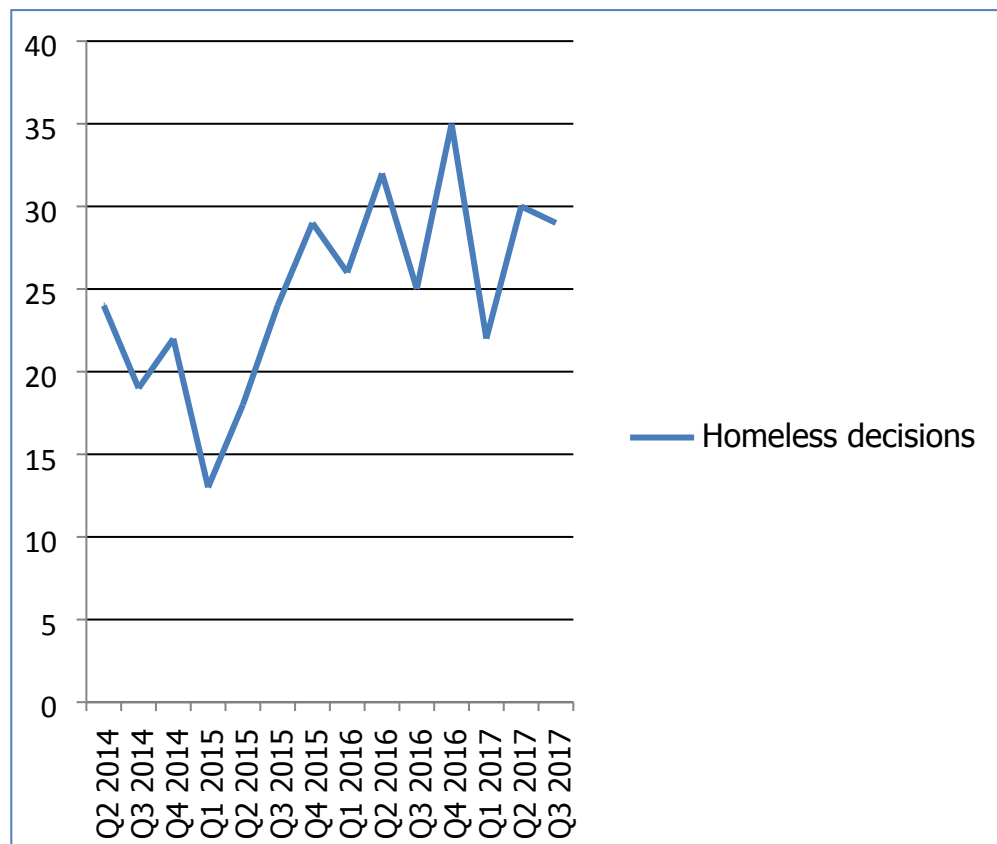
**3. Information**

3.1. The Council has to provide a homelessness service.

3.2. Homelessness is rarely about people sleeping rough on the streets.

3.3. Homelessness is generally increasing.

3.4.



The chart above shows the number of homeless applications made each quarter for 2014-2017.

- 3.5. Homeless applications have increased from 78 in 2014/15 to 114 in 2016/17 and are projected to be the same or a little higher for 2017/18.
- 3.6. The majority of homeless applications are from people who are privately renting where the tenancy is ended and they are either unable or unwilling to find another private rental. This reason accounts for at least 35% of all homeless acceptances.

#### **4. Temporary Accommodation**

- 4.1. In 2017/18 we have had 27 family sized homes become available for letting through Choice Based Lettings this compares poorly with the 114 in 2016/17 and 49 in 2015/16. This means that the numbers of families in temporary accommodation has risen dramatically as there is nowhere for them to move onto.
- 4.2. The lack of affordable housing in the Borough means that eligible homeless households are spending longer in temporary accommodation.
- 4.3. Temporary accommodation is expensive to procure and operate and increased provision will inevitably see an increased cost to the Council.
- 4.4. At present we use a mix of Housing Department properties and property secured in the private sector. The majority of accommodation in the private sector comprises spot purchased nightly accommodation including B&B hotels, hostels and self contained annexes.
- 4.5. The Council are not allowed to place families in B&B accommodation, we do in an emergency and when we do this the period of occupation can be no longer than 6 weeks. Spend on B&B has increased from £7 438 in 2014/15 to £51 555 in 2016/17.
- 4.6. In 2014 when we closed the Graytone House Hostel we estimated the need for 4-5 units of temporary accommodation. Currently there are 14 households in temporary accommodation with another 3-4 expected to need such accommodation over the next few weeks.
- 4.7. We are developing our own new hostel at Belmont House which has been designed to accommodate between 4-5 small households and which is due to become operational by late summer 2018.

#### **5. Homelessness Reduction Act**

- 5.1. The Act received cross party support and it's intention is to make Councils do more to prevent and address homelessness. In particular everyone will have a detailed assessment which will be used to produce a plan to help prevent or deal with their homelessness. Further details will be discussed at the Member event on 30 January 2018.
- 5.2. Officers are concerned that the significantly increased administrative burden risks detracting from the job of helping people. To mitigate against this we have invested in a new IT system to help staff meet the new duties. This system is installed and operational albeit we have to wait until April to turn on the elements designed specifically to deal with the new Act. We have also increased the team from 2 to 3 Officers.
- 5.3. The new Act comes into force in April 2018 and is considered by the sector to be entirely inadequately funded. This Council will receive £8 569 in 2017/18, £7 850 in

2018/19 and £10 122 in 2019/20 as 'new burdens funding'.

- 5.4. It is likely that we will have to accommodate more people in temporary accommodation and for longer than under the current rules.

## **6. Rough Sleepers**

- 6.1. No report on homelessness is complete without a mention of rough sleepers.
- 6.2. Each year we are required to estimate the number of rough sleepers on a date of our choosing. We estimated 3 rough sleepers on the night of 1 October 2017.
- 6.3. We receive referrals through the Streetlink website operated nationally by Homeless Link. We also receive referrals directly from the public, generally via the Customer Service Centre.
- 6.4. We always try to visit and if we have a reliable description and location we also refer to the Homeless Transitions Service which is a short term project funded through a DCLG grant and administered by Charnwood Borough Council with links to No Second Night Out (see below).
- 6.5. We have access to the No Second Night Out scheme which has emergency bedspaces in Loughborough and Leicester. The idea behind this scheme is to take first time rough sleepers off the street, work with them intensively and get them into other accommodation to reduce the risk of them becoming entrenched rough sleepers.
- 6.6. However the majority of the Rough Sleepers in the Borough refuse services and seem content, in their own way, to sit in such a position on a main shopping street that they might appear to be begging. The good people of the Borough amply supply these individuals with food, clothing, money and even food for their dogs.
- 6.7. The reasons for refusing service include current bans from the Dawn Centre in Leicester (the main Leicester City Council homeless hostel), not wanting accommodation unless their dog can stay (the Dawn Centre has space for 2 dogs but dogs are banned from all other hostels), not wanting to live in a hostel with easy access to drugs – to name a few.
- 6.8. Officers are satisfied that all rough sleepers that we can locate are offered services and are concerned that refusal rates are so high.

### **Background Documents:**

Homeless Strategy 2016 available on [https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/housing\\_advice](https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/housing_advice)

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<b>Implications</b>   Homelessness within the Borough	
<b>Finance</b>	The extra funding related to the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act is considered to be inadequate and any shortfall would have to come from the General Fund.
<b>Chris Raymakers</b> (Head of Finance, Revenues & Benefits)	
<b>Legal</b>	The Council has a legal duty to implement the Homeless Reduction Act.  The report is satisfactory.
<b>Dave Gill</b> (Head of Law & Governance / Monitoring Officer)	
<b>Corporate Risk(s) (CR)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Decreasing Financial Resources (CR1)</b>  See financial implications.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Reputation Damage (CR4)</b>  Failure to address the homeless situation could damage the Council's reputation.
<b>Steve Nash</b> (Housing Services Manager)	
<b>Corporate Priorities (CP)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Effective Service Provision (CP2)</b>  The Council has put the necessary arrangements in place to respond to the Homelessness Reduction Act and the Homelessness situation generally.
<b>Steve Nash</b> (Housing Services Manager)	
<b>Vision &amp; Values (V)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Respect (V2)</b>  All customers will be dealt with respect regardless of their situation.  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Customer Focus (V5)</b>  The Homelessness Service will be customer focussed to provide all the necessary advice and support needed in these difficult situations
<b>Steve Nash</b> (Housing Services Manager)	
<b>Equalities &amp; Equality Assessment(s) (EA)</b>	There are no equalities implications arising from this report.
<b>Steve Nash</b> (Housing Services Manager)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Not Applicable (EA)</b>