

# Executive Report

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## **Homelessness Strategy - Phase 1 delivery proposal**

Adult Social Care & Housing Scrutiny Commission

2<sup>nd</sup> May 2013

Decision to be taken: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2013

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**Assistant Mayor: Cllr Andy Connelly**

**Lead director: Ann Branson**

## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: all
- Report authors: Ann Branson and Gurjit Minhas
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### 1. Summary

- 1.1 The Homelessness Review established that homelessness services are in need of transformation. The Homelessness Strategy aims to transform services with a move away from the current culture of crisis and rescue to providing more prevention and support.
- 1.2 The review found that a hostel environment is not always conducive to achieving positive changes for people. If people do become homeless, services need to enable them to access and sustain independent settled accommodation as quickly as possible.
- 1.3 A 12 week public consultation exercise has taken place and the responses have been considered by the Executive in making the proposal outlined in this report. It is recommended that decisions on the delivery proposals are taken in phases. This first report proposes to adopt the Strategy is (Appendix A) and proposes some early delivery decisions, including provision for homeless families. Further reports will be brought on the remaining proposals.
- 1.4 Section three of the report gives supporting detail on the Executive's proposal and provides some feedback from the consultation.
- 1.5 The budget for all Homelessness Services for 2012/13 is £6.611m and the agreed budget, subject to further decisions for 2013/14 is £5.590m. The estimated potential total saving arising from the all the Consultation Proposals was £2.1m including an estimated £1.22m potential savings arising from the issues considered in this report. In response to the consultation and further consideration of data collected this report modifies those proposals and identifies potential for an estimated full year net saving of £938k, arising from phase one proposed decisions only. Appendix F shows the financial impact of the proposed decisions which have reduced the savings below that originally consulted upon. The actual saving for these proposals depends on final contract prices. The decision making and procurement timescale will determine when these savings are achieved. (see section 5)
- 1.6 The full results of the consultation feedback referred to in this report are available at: <http://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/adult-social-care-health-and-housing/homelessness>

## 2. Executive Proposal

The Executive considered the feedback from consultation and further information from officers and makes the following proposal:

### Strategy and Policy

- 2.1 the **Homelessness Strategy** as set out in Appendix A is approved subject to detailed consideration in a further report on the level of hostel provision required for single people, young people, and floating support, a further report on the proposal to end Band 5 in the housing allocation policy and the decisions proposed in this report.
- 2.2 the piloting of the proposed **Eligibility Criteria** set out in Appendix B for access to all council funded temporary accommodation continues .
- 2.3 the power to **cease the homeless duty by offering a private rented sector let** is used where appropriate and impact reviewed after one year.
- 2.4 a **Single Access and Referral point** for access to all council funded temporary accommodation and floating support is created as part of the in-house Housing Options and Support Service.

### Delivery Plan:

- 2.5 homelessness services are provided via in-house provision or through external organisations chosen in accordance with the Council's statutory and internal procurement obligations.

### Delivery Plan: Services for Homeless Families

- 2.6 **Border House** is retained as a temporary hostel for homeless families (as defined in our access criteria) and, **in response to consultation and further analysis, services are sought to provide support to families in 10 units of temporary accommodation for one year with an option to extend after review.**
- 2.7 **in response to consultation, the specialist nature of the Family Support Service is recognised and the service is therefore retained and provided by STAR to families at risk of homelessness instead of only to those in Border House, and it is proposed that the Corner Club continues to provide services to families in Border House and the local community.**
- 2.8 services are commissioned to provide support to **teenage parents** in 10 units of accommodation

### **Delivery Plan: Specialist Provision**

- 2.9 to fund sufficient beds for **homeless ex-offenders** leaving prison on licence and others identified by the Probation Service as needing specialist support, to meet city needs
- 2.10 the current in-house **rough sleepers outreach team** is retained

### **Delivery Plan: Employment Support**

- 2.11 Leicestershire Cares is grant aided to continue to provide an **employment, training and education advisor** for homeless people using council funded temporary accommodation or support services , **but the level of grant aid is discussed with them.**

### **Delivery Plan: Day Centres**

- 2.12 Anchor Centre is grant aided to continue to provide a **Wet Day Centre**, based in current premises
- 2.13 **in response to consultation the Centre Project is grant aided to continue to provide a day centre, based in the current premises.**
- 2.14 **in response to consultation, the YMCA is grant aided to provide a day centre within the Dawn Centre, to provide meaningful activities such as assisting people to access work and training, subject to further discussions with YMCA.**

### **Delivery Plan: Next Steps**

- 2.15 further information will be brought to the Executive before decisions are considered on the provision for young people and single people and floating support .

## **3. Supporting information including options considered:**

**3.1 Homelessness Strategy** see Appendix A. Consultation feedback on the headline strategic priorities is generally positive and these are therefore proposed unchanged. They are:

- Anyone at risk of homelessness is given advice and support to prevent this, whenever possible
- When someone is homeless today, we aspire to assist them into appropriate accommodation, with support, and we will ensure that services are tailored to address their individual needs
- We will implement 'No Second Night Out' to ensure that new rough sleepers will not sleep out for more than one night
- Anyone who is homeless will be able to 'move-on' into appropriate accommodation

- Anyone who is homeless will be able to access appropriate care services to meet their health and well-being needs
- There are opportunities to access training, education, employment and enterprise initiatives

In support of achieving each of these priorities a number of policy and process proposals were made. These were largely supported and remain unchanged in the Strategy as set out in Appendix A.

The emphasis on the prevention of homelessness and the prevention of repeat homelessness will be achieved by retaining and enhancing the following services:

- Housing Options advice ( see also 3.4)
- Leicester Homechoice and the housing allocations policy
- Rent Deposit guarantee scheme and work with the private sector
- Increase in floating support
- Revolving Door Service

Detailed proposals on the last three will be considered in a further report.

### **3.2 Eligibility for access to council funded temporary accommodation**

The Executive agreed to pilot the use of new criteria during the consultation period. The majority of respondents to the consultation support the proposal but there are concerns about what will happen to the people who do not meet these criteria. There were comments on how the criteria should be broader but almost all of the suggestions were for groups already included in the criteria and showed some misunderstanding of the fact that the proposals go beyond the statutory minimum, and lack of awareness of the legal tests we apply to identify vulnerable people. The experience of using the new criteria has shown that family households, vulnerable adults, people with an offending background, rough sleepers and people on drug/alcohol programmes have been the main groups offered temporary accommodation. During the pilot, admissions to the 32 bed Upper Tichbourne Street single person hostel stopped and it has now closed. There has been no increase in rough sleeping during the pilot. Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Division, the Adult Social Care Divisions and the Probation Service are supportive of the criteria. While experience suggests that the criteria are largely fit for purpose, it will be helpful to continue the pilot before final decisions are made. In particular we need information over a longer period to increase the reliability of predictions of the likely impact of the proposed single persons hostel closures and increase in move-on accommodation and support. People who approach Housing Options but who do not meet the criteria are offered housing advice and other assistance (such as Rent Deposit guarantees) where appropriate.

### **3.3 Use of Private rented sector to cease homelessness duty**

The consultation included a postal and online questionnaire, 78% of respondents to the postal questionnaire supported this proposal, while only 36% of online returns did. There are concerns that the private rented sector will not be able to respond to this proposal with high quality and affordable accommodation. There are also concerns about the level of on-going support tenants will receive once they are placed in a private sector property, as many of these people could be at their most vulnerable.

This is a new discretionary power which allows Councils to make an offer of a private sector let to fully discharge their duty to find settled accommodation for homeless families and vulnerable people. The experiences of other councils who have used this power have been useful in deciding whether this power is helpful for Leicester. It is of most relevance for our work with families (see Appendix H). It is recommended that the power is adapted for use in appropriate cases and review impact after one year. The appropriateness will be assessed on a on a case-by-case basis, taking into account individual circumstances and an assessment to confirm that the property offered would be suitable for the family concerned. The use of the power will be carefully monitored to ensure there is no unfair impact on clients from protected groups.

The Council has used the private rented sector for homeless families and singles since December 2011 as temporary accommodation and this has been welcomed by many families as an alternative to a hostel. There are processes in place to ensure the standards of the property. Floating support will continue to be available where required, and this report proposes an increase in floating support and that specialist Family Support can also be offered in particular cases.

The use of this power will depend on the supply of suitable accommodation. Using private sector lets will continue to help reduce the need for families to stay in temporary accommodation. It may also impact on the numbers of approaching the council as potentially homeless as it may encourage some families to find their own private sector let. Where families do approach the council they will continue to be assessed in accordance with our homelessness duties. The power will be considered for use for homeless applications that are both made and accepted on or after the effective date of adoption of the policy.

### **3.4 An in- house Single Access & Referral point (SAR) to all council funded temporary accommodation and support.**

Currently people can go directly to council funded VCS hostels and be admitted. Each provider has their own and different access criteria. A SAR is required to ensure that council resources are directed to those the council considers to be in most need as defined our published eligibility criteria. A SAR will also help ensure that people are offered alternatives to going into a hostel.

The consultation feedback indicates support for a SAR however there are some concerns about this being located in Housing Options. Concerns have been raised about the ability of Options staff to be able to undertake assessments effectively, particularly within the short timescales available for client interviews.

(about an hour).

Issues have also been raised about the operation of the whole service in one location, particularly families having to present and wait in the same area as single people, who may display chaotic characteristics. It has been suggested that the service is split between families and singles.

- A single access point will not mean everyone who needs temporary accommodation has to visit the Housing Options Centre at Phoenix House . The service can also be arranged in the following ways: Direct case management eg officers in Probation, Childrens Services , ASC and other agencies work directly with officers in Housing Options
- A request for temporary accommodation can be submitted by the rough sleeper outreach team on behalf of rough sleepers who are hard to engage
- Options officers visit the Dawn Centre daily to see anyone who has come into the emergency beds there
- Home visits by Options Officers
- Hospital visits by Options Officers
- Prison visits by Options Officers

Housing Options staff focus initially on housing issues and the need for emergency accommodation. Staff ask the person questions to build up a picture of their background. In order to assess whether clients meet the eligibility criteria staff have access to information from other organisations with whom we have data sharing agreements. In addition where the client appears 'less able to fend for themselves than an ordinary homeless person' we have a duty to offer temporary accommodation while we make further enquiries. The work of the single access point will include arranging for entry into council and VCS contracted bed spaces, arranging for council and VCS contracted floating support and case tracking to ensure smooth move on and appropriate services are made available. We must also cover the expected increase in customers coming to Housing Options. It is proposed to reconfigure duties of some existing staff and increase staff by three posts at a cost of £79k.

## **DELIVERY PLAN proposals**

### **3.5 Procurement: Procurement Route**

Some VCS providers in response to the consultation have made the case for the Council to continue to use their services through some form of negotiated agreement, offering to do that for a cheaper price and recognising that some changes in delivery may be needed. Their argument is that competitive tendering could put at risk the valuable partnerships that have been created, which ensure local knowledge is retained and that have brought external resources into the City. While these points are recognised the Council clearly has a duty to ensure value for money and the duty to allow opportunity to other potential suppliers. Most of the current contracts have been in place since 2006 and have been extended several times. This argument was put forward

by parts of VCS in 2011 and partly because of this, further contract extensions were agreed until the Homelessness Review could be carried out. The full legal advice on this issue is set out in section 5.2 and the conclusion is that the council should procure homelessness services using competitive tendering in line with Public Contracts Regulations 2006 and our own internal Contract Procedure Rules. Separate advice was taken on the relationship with the YMCA. The full legal advice is set out in section 5.2. The conclusion is that the council should tender services for young people as there was no specific relationship with the YMCA to justify only contracting with them. See also para 3.17 below. Two petitions specifically asked the council to support all local charities that help homeless people.

### **3.6 Border House and provision for families**

The proposal for services to homeless families is set out in Appendix H. Consultation feedback is in section 9.2 of the consultation feedback report. The Delivery Plan identified that 60 units of supported temporary accommodation are required for families, including 10 specifically for teenage parents. The Delivery Plan proposed that Border House is retained and that 10 units are sought for teenage parents. Currently we have 129 units of temporary family accommodation provided by the voluntary and community sector and the council. The implementation of the strategy will mean that fewer families will be referred to hostel accommodation; more people will be helped by Housing Options and floating support services to retain their current accommodation and prevent homelessness and more families will be offered the private rented sector, to relieve their homelessness. Border House offers significantly better value for money than current external providers and gives Housing Options a flexible and responsive service, particularly in emergencies. (The layout of Border House allows units to be connected for large families).

Response to consultation: There are general concerns about reducing family units, particularly when the impact of welfare reform is not yet known. There is a petition to 'save Kirton Lodge'. Two petitions asked the Council to 'maintain the current number of available bed spaces for homeless people.' There is concern that families will not receive the support they need when they need it most and much support for retaining the specialist Family Support Service. There is concern that the delivery proposals will increase homelessness and lead to more damaged families. Issues have also been raised about safeguarding children if families live in private rented homes, as at present hostel staff are able to monitor families in hostels and take action to address this.

Our analysis of data for 2012/13 shows that the proposed 60 units for homeless families will be sufficient to meet the needs of the estimated 213 homeless families (including teenage parents) who will need temporary accommodation annually. However due to uncertainty about the number of people in voluntary sector hostels to whom we may owe a statutory duty, the possible impact of welfare benefit reform, and the need to increase access to the private rented sector, as a safety net we propose to increase the proposed number of family units by 10 (to 70 units overall).



Floating support will continue to be available where required, (it is proposed to increase floating support, details will be brought in Phase 2 proposals) and this report proposes that specialist the Family Support Service is retained. Appendix H describes the overall family service in more detail.

There is broad support from Children's Services Division for the numbers of temporary family units being proposed on the understanding that all family households including teenage parents (see below) will be protected by the safety net of the council's homelessness duties. As a comparison Nottingham City Council currently provide 53 units of temporary family accommodation to meet their City's needs. Families residing in currently contracted VCS accommodation will be offered timely housing advice, assistance and support to move into settled homes before the end of the contracts.

**Note from Children's Services**

Children's services are fundamentally in support of the housing review proposals for families and teenage parents. Assurance has been given that this vulnerable group who are assessed to have housing and social needs will be provided with advice and guidance at the earliest point ensuring appropriate housing is secured at the earliest opportunity.

The additional support needs of families, young people and teenage parents will be met through the provision of commissioned family support services. This is essential as this vulnerable group have multiple difficulties which frequently impact on their lives. The support offered will form part of any safeguarding plans put in place by children's services to ensure improved outcomes.

It is critical that families and young people currently in hostel accommodation are provided with clear guidance and their needs protected during this period of transition.

It is understood that the referrals made by children's services will remain a priority and the partnership arrangements will be further cemented by the inclusion of the views of the service during the next stage of planning.

The following VCS providers of accommodation based family services have been informed that their current contract will end in October 2013.

**Provider**

ASRA ( formerly LHA)  
Adullam Homes Housing  
Foundation HA  
(7)

**Hostel**

Kirton Lodge for families (19 units)  
Bethany for families (25) on 2 sites  
Foundation Women's hostel single parents

The following providers will end after October 2013 as they are under framework agreements.

East Midlands HA (29)

Elmfield House, Gap Project and Liberty House

**3.7 Family Support Service and Corner Club** – The Family Support Service provides support to families in Border House to prevent re-occurring homelessness. Support plans are tailored for each member of the family; workers are specialists in child development, child protection and work with survivors of domestic abuse. Resettlement work takes place in the community alongside STAR to ensure a smooth transition into settled accommodation. During the last year, the service supported 91 families. The service has a multi skilled team who are all qualified to a high standard in child development and safeguarding. The team have successfully had children de-registered off the Child Protection register due to the intensive support provided. The team also work with sex workers and offer sexual health advice, pregnancy tests and contraception.

Corner Club provides sessional crèches and a homework club for children staying in Border House and also parent and children sessions for both those staying in Border House and the community.

Consultation feedback on both these services is that they are valuable and support families at their most vulnerable and should continue.

It is therefore proposed to retain the Corner Club and provide the specialist Family Support Service within the STAR service and make support available to families identified as being particularly at risk of homelessness who would benefit from whole family support, as well as those in Border House or the private rented sector. This can be funded from the proposed growth of floating support in both the HRA and in this Strategy.

**3.8 Teenage Parents:** There is broad support from Children’s Services for the numbers of temporary family units being proposed on the understanding that all family households including teenage parents will be protected by the safety net of homelessness duties of the council. Joint protocols have been agreed with Children’s Services to organise a planned approach when assistance is required with families who are homeless and there are safeguarding concerns. Children’s Services agree that it is desirable to have some specialist provision for homeless teenage parents and their children. Consultation feedback supports the need for this provision though some questioning if the proposal give sufficient.

**3.9 Ex-offenders on licence and others identified by Probation** – The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Probation Service support the eligibility thresholds and the number of units being proposed for ex-offenders connected to the city so that they can leave prison on licence and for other offenders needing this form of accommodation. The proposed number of 30 units is a reduction from

the current provision of 46 units for this specialist group. The proposed number is to meet the needs of the city, but no longer fund provision for people from the county. Details of further provision for offenders needing less specialist accommodation will be set out in the phase 2 decision report. The two current VCS providers of accommodation based specialist support for ex-offenders have been informed that their current contracts will end in October 2013 (Adullam Homes Housing Association and Home Group (Stonham). There is no current or proposed Council provision.

Consultation feedback on this proposal raises some concerns and support for the need to offer support to this group, but also showed some misunderstanding of the proposals. The eligibility criteria makes it clear that various other categories of ex-offenders will be helped, including those who have served sentences of less than 12 months, high risk, young offenders and all those who are homeless within one year of leaving prison. These categories will be considered in the phase 2 report.

**3.10 Rough Sleepers-** It is recommended that we retain the current in-house team. Consultation feedback on this proposal is that there is over whelming support for maintaining the Rough Sleepers Outreach Team. There will be more consideration of rough sleepers in the phase 2 report.

**3.11 Employment Education and Training** - Access to employment and training is essential to breaking the cycle of homelessness and this proposal was supported in the consultation. The current provider, Leicestershire Cares has provided a good service, 62% of its clients were placed in education, training or employment within 3 months of joining the scheme.

**3.12 Wet Day Centre** – There was some criticism of this service in the consultation feedback and lack of support (only 34%) from the Hansom Hall Client event. This service is for street drinkers who can include homeless people. The service may be best provided with the Council's drug and alcohol services and a transfer to ASC is being discussed. The overall future of the Centre may also depend on the continuing support of other partners. It is recommended that the Council continue to grant aid the centre because of its contribution to dealing with street drinking. During 2011/12 there were 136 service users at the centre, a high proportion of these were men aged between 26 and 55. If approved, the Budget would be transferred to ASC.

**3.13 The Centre Project** – this is a drop- in service for vulnerably housed people and those prone to tenancy breakdown; about 295 unique visitors regularly use this service. The centre provides housing advice, signposting, help with applying for benefits and liaises with landlords to resolve issues. The centre also provides help with getting people into education, employment and training. At the client event people were very against reducing resources to Day Centres and the Reference Group is against this proposal. It is recommended that grant aid for this centre continues.

**3.14 Day centre within the Dawn Centre.** The current day centre, YASC, provides support, food, drinks, showers, laundry facilities and sign posting to other services and is open from 8.00am to 4.00pm. However, currently the service

does not record numbers of unique clients so use and outcomes are difficult to monitor. In the consultation, people stated they were worried about how people will access and be signposted to services such as healthcare if this closes. Inclusion Healthcare and the Mental Health Outreach services are particularly concerned as they use the day centres and hostels to trawl for people who need access to their services. There was support for the notion of reforming the Day Centres to have more positive outcomes. The YMCA has approached officers with a proposal for a reconfigured service with a short morning session (Monday to Friday) open to all and then more focused one to one sessions with those requiring support to get into work, training or other meaningful activities. In response to this feedback and to achieve better outcomes for homeless clients it is recommended that this is explored.

**3.15** Further consideration of consultation feedback and the data we are collecting is required before recommendations are made in the following service areas: temporary accommodation for young people, and for single people, floating support and Corner Club.

### **3.16 Risks**

The risks are that:

- The rise in the number of people who come to us saying that they are facing homelessness is greater than estimated
- We fail to prevent homelessness.
- We have insufficient temporary accommodation and/or access to independent settled accommodation.
- Support packages fail to prevent homelessness and repeat homelessness.

### **3.17 Risk outcome and its mitigation**

**Mitigation:** As part of the overall proposals allowance has been made for funding for bed spaces for a transitional period during which the full impact can be assessed. This report proposes a further 10 units for homeless families with an annual review of need. Proposals for mitigation of risk for single people will be brought in a future report.

If the strategy fails to mitigate these risks the outcomes will be:

- For families, rise in use of bed and breakfast which can become very costly, very quickly, for the council and is undesirable for family life.
- For single people, rough sleeping. We may not have statutory duties to assist most of them and it is difficult to predict the impact on the city. Few people actually resort to rough sleeping (198 individuals last year, already decreasing in first 9 months of this year). Most will 'sofa surf' or live in overcrowded households potentially causing tension and disruption for families and friends.

### **3.18 Impact on voluntary sector**

In developing the proposals set out in the Delivery Plan the relative impact on the voluntary sector and in house services has been assessed. The potential procurement implications for the voluntary sector are set out at Appendix C. The Phase 1 delivery proposals in this report have changed the balance of impact in favour of the VCS compared to the consultation proposals.

### **3.19 Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 – How will the proposals for procurement help improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the relevant area?**

All proposals aim to transform homelessness services in Leicester away from a culture of crisis and rescue to one of prevention and support. Evidence for this need has been identified and is under pinned in our review of homelessness in Leicester. We will be commissioning by procuring external services. Bidding opportunities will be open to both the private and third sector. Procurement for new services will take place following procurement rules and regulations and we will support socially responsible business practices. Service specifications will be outcome based so we can better monitor the impact services have on people. This will replace output specifications that tend to just monitor the number of people services support. Bidders will be required to explain what social value their organisation will bring. This will contribute towards the tender evaluation process and award of contract. Improvements will be secured through the award of contracts, for which the service providers will have a contractual obligation to meet.

## **4. Details of Scrutiny**

### **Public consultation was conducted for 12 weeks ending February 18th**

The consultation included a postal and online questionnaire, over 20 events and meetings were held with stakeholders and a specific client consultation event. A joint report was received from the Voluntary and Community Sector as well as letters and e-mails from individuals, providers and other stakeholders. Petitions were submitted and discussed at Full Council on the 21st March 2013

**Adults and Housing Scrutiny Commission** considered the original proposals at a special meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

## **5. Financial, legal and other implications**

5.1 Financial implications: David Janes and David Roy- Project Accountants and Rod Pearson – Head of Finance

### **Financial Implications**

The council's budget strategy includes the following cumulative reductions to be made in Homelessness expenditure:

2013/14	£0.900m
2014/15	£1.930m
2015/16	£2.000m

The figures shown in this section need to be viewed as illustrative only as there are material uncertainties on the timing, cost and final form of the new Homelessness Strategy. Projected full year savings for phase one are £0.938m. Projected savings in 2013/14 are currently estimated to be approximately £0.213m, based upon:

- the current project plan,
- existing contract prices,
- the assumption that new contracts let based on decisions contained within this report will start on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014 (Phase One Delivery Proposals) with the exception of the day centre within the Dawn Centre which will start 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013, and
- the assumption that contracts subject to future decisions will start on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2014.

The two main issues arising are:

1. The achievability of the currently budgeted savings. Any shortfall here would mean that compensating savings would need to be found elsewhere. The budget assumption for phase 1 was that savings of £1.218m would be found. The proposals contained in this report would save £938k; leaving an ongoing shortfall of £280k.
2. The timing of the savings. In year shortfalls could possibly be offset by the use of one-off reserves. Housing have uncommitted reserves of £351k which could (subject to agreement by the Executive) be used to partly offset the 13/14 overspend position. The remaining overspend might then be met from corporate reserves. The potential position is shown in the table below.

	DRS Savings	Current Projection	Shortfall	Transfer from Hsing Reserves	Remaining Shortfall
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
2013/14	900	213	687	(351)	336
2014/15	1,930	Not yet available			

No projections are currently available for 2014/15. Any delays in implementation would cost about £160k per month; assuming there are no further reductions in budgeted savings.

Appendix E shows the budgeted cost of existing services within the scope of phase 1,

including those where decommissioning is proposed.

Appendix F shows the estimated additional costs of proposals to retain part or all of existing services where the consultation had originally proposed decommissioning, or where it is now proposed to reorganise or enhance existing services.

#### 5.2 Legal implications : Carolyn Howard Solicitor

- 5.2.1 Under the Homelessness Act 2002 the Council is required to have a strategy for preventing homelessness in its area. The strategy must apply to everyone at risk of homelessness and not only those who are identified as being within a priority group under the Housing Act 1996 part 7.
- 5.2.2 the proposed strategy follows a period of consultation and should give due consideration to the matters raised therein in adopting its strategy.
- 5.2.3 in securing external services the Council is required to comply with statutory procurement procedures and to ensure that any existing services that need to be ended are terminated in accordance with present contractual arrangements.
- 5.2.3 tenders for young people are sought in accordance with the Council's statutory and internal procurement obligations, there is no specific relationship with the YMCA.

#### 5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications Duncan Bell, Senior Environmental Consultant, Environment Team. Ext. 29 6775

The main implication arising from these proposals is in the reduced provision of hostel accommodation and the increased use of private rented accommodation.

The closure of hostel accommodation currently provided by the Council should lead to a reduction in the direct carbon footprint of Housing Services. However, this will not affect the corporate carbon footprint figures reported to the Government – as these do not include emissions from residential accommodation provided by the Council.

In terms of the wider carbon footprint of Leicester, Housing Services could have a positive influence on the energy efficiency of private rented accommodation which takes the place of hostel accommodation. A minimum standard of efficiency could be required on the Energy Performance Certificate before a property would be recommended. Landlords of poorly insulated properties could be signposted to advice about how to bring them up to standard. The overall effect would be to benefit tenants by ensuring homes are affordable to keep warm, as well as to reduce carbon emissions.

#### 5.4 Equality Impact Assessment : Irene Kszyk- Corporate Equalities Lead

The Equality Impact Assessments are attached at Appendix D. The Phase 1 delivery proposals in this report are assessed as having the same impact as the proposals that went to public consultation.

It is important to have a sense of the relative 'equality/human rights' priorities that frame our responsibilities in considering what action to be taken as an authority in addressing the needs of people likely to become homeless.

The starting point is ensuring that we meet people's basic human rights (as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998). In regard to homelessness, the most relevant Articles of the Human Rights Act 1998 to consider are:

- Article 2: the right to life
- Article 3: the right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way
- Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence

The above Articles should be embedded within the eligibility criteria used to prioritise the provision of services to those who are likely to become homeless or are already homeless. Considerations around safeguarding and crime and disorder issues and the provision of appropriate support to individuals and families are indicative of how we would be meeting our Human Rights responsibilities.

In addition to Human Rights, consideration also needs to be given to the Equality Act 2010. Key here is the consideration of the impact of discrimination – elimination of discrimination is a feature of our public sector equality duty - crucial to those who already experience discrimination as a result of their protected characteristic (and where this possibly contributes to their being homeless) or who may be likely to experience discrimination as a result of their protected characteristic while being homeless. Again these considerations should be embedded within the eligibility criteria used to prioritise the provision of services based on an individual's or family's circumstances.

A final consideration is to ensure in the delivery of services identified in the strategy, that we meet the diverse range of customer 'service utilisation' needs reflecting the range of protected characteristics of those being served. Unless service practice/delivery is gender, cultural, or faith appropriate for example, the intended outcomes of service provision will not be met due to lack of fit. By ensuring that practice meets the diverse range of potential needs, we are meeting another element of our public sector equality duty – the promotion of equality of opportunity in achieving improved outcomes of not being/no longer being homeless.

The separate Equality Impact Assessment completed templates for the Homeless Strategy and the Homeless Strategy Delivery Proposals capture a range of positive and negative impacts which extend across the full range of protected characteristics.



## 5.5 Human Resource Implications

The proposal to retain the Family Support Service will require an assessment of the relevant job descriptions to determine if any amendments are needed and if they constitute a significant change that would warrant a re-evaluation of grade. Appropriate consultation with staff affected will need to take place.

HR will continue to be consulted to ensure the HR processes are managed appropriately.

### Employment Law

It is likely that some of the proposals outlined within this report will have employment law implications for example redundancies and/ or the transfer of employees under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (“TUPE”). The report does not however contain sufficient information for detailed advice to be given at this point. It is advised therefore that legal services are consulted throughout this process to ensure compliance with the current legislation and minimise any risk to the Council.

## **7. Summary of appendices: (previously circulated)**

Appendix A: Homelessness Strategy

Appendix B: Eligibility Criteria

Appendix C: Impact on Voluntary Sector

Appendix D: Equality Impact Assessments

Appendix E: Current Costs of Services Included in Phase 1 Decisions (confidential paper attached separately)

Appendix F: Reduction in the Cost of Services

Appendix G: Dependencies between Phase 1 and Phase 2 Decisions

Appendix H: Services to Homeless Families and Single Women

## **8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

9. Yes at this stage. Advice in this report includes legal financial information relating to providers. The decisions and supporting information will be made public.

## **10. Is this a “key decision”? Yes**

**11. If a key decision please explain reason**

The decisions as a whole will have significant effect on all wards in the City and will have significant impact on the current budget of £6.6m pa.

## **Appendix A**

**Draft**

# **Leicester's Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 2018**

## Foreword

Welcome to Leicester's Homelessness Strategy for 2013-18.

My vision is a decent home within reach of every citizen. As part of that I want Leicester to be a city where individuals, couples and families who are affected by homelessness have simple and effective access to a range of housing services and other opportunities, to enable them to rebuild their lives and make a success of their futures.

This strategy is the product of a thorough review of homelessness and homeless services in the city, and the product of a comprehensive consultation exercise.

We are now in the midst of very difficult times. Recession, budget cuts to statutory and voluntary services, and extensive welfare benefit reforms pose enormous challenges for us as a city. Many Leicester people live in crisis, and one of the worst crises of all is to be without a home.

The causes of homelessness and its effects are complex and intertwined, and inevitably there are no simple solutions. It's not just about buildings and beds; it's about the things that go wrong in people's lives: health, income, families etc. And these things can go wrong for anyone, especially these days.

So although this strategy focusses on the detail of our policies and services for homelessness for the next five years, it does not do this in isolation. Sir Peter Soulsby, the City Mayor for Leicester has developed a comprehensive *Delivery Plan for Leicester*. Within this, the council and its partners are working hard to deliver a comprehensive new Economic Action Plan, a new Health and Wellbeing Strategy, our Children and Young People's Plan and the recommendations of the Leicester Child Poverty Commission, to name but a few of the strategies that seek to impact on some of the causes and the effects of homelessness.

No one organisation can tackle homelessness effectively alone. It's a citywide issue requiring action from many. In particular, the voluntary, faith and community sector have a huge and vital role to play: harnessing the skills and hard work of so many people, and delivering sensitive and tailored solutions to our diverse communities, often from within those communities themselves.

Much has been achieved and we have much more to do. I am very conscious of and grateful for all the hard work that council staff, our statutory partners and voluntary and faith groups are doing.

I look forward to working together with all our partners to deliver this strategy and tackle homelessness in Leicester together.

**Assistant Mayor Andy Connelly**  
**Lead for Housing**

## Introduction

**This is Leicester's 2013-18 five year strategy for tackling homelessness in our city.**

**Statutory duty** The Council has a statutory duty to give housing advice to all citizens of Leicester, and to provide temporary accommodation as required to homeless families, pregnant women, certain young people and vulnerable single people. We also have a statutory duty to co-operate with probation, police and prisons to help house high risk offenders, and we also have associated duties relating to the prevention of crime and disorder.

**Five year strategy** The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all local authorities to develop a Homelessness Strategy every five years, based on a review of the local homelessness situation. This is our third strategy under that legislation.

**Homelessness Review 2012** To shape our strategy, we are required by Government to carry out a comprehensive review of homelessness every five years. We undertook our latest review between March and October 2012.

The review provided a detailed analysis of:

- services that are currently provided across the city;
- utilisation rates and gaps in services, and perceived need; and
- the resources available to meet this need.

During the review, we held meetings with over 60 partner organisations, including homeless service providers. We talked with senior managers and front-line staff to gain an understanding of the issues they face on a daily basis. We also carried out a staff survey, and most importantly of all, we spoke to many people who have accessed our services so that we could gain a direct insight into their experiences.

In addition, we held two consultation events with our partners, including a Homelessness Summit in June 2012, where we discussed the current homelessness situation in Leicester. As a result, we have developed the six strategic principles which underpin this strategy.

A summary of the main conclusions of the Homelessness Review has been published on the Council's website at [\[link to be inserted\]](#).

**Consultation on the draft strategy** Using the findings of the review, we drafted our new strategy and published it for consultation between 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012 and 18<sup>th</sup> February 2013. The results of the consultation have been published on the Council's website at [\[link to be inserted\]](#).

This strategy has been developed by looking very closely at both the review, the responses we received in the consultation and data that we continued to gather during the consultation, including our pilot of new eligibility criteria for accessing council funded temporary accommodation.

## Progress since the 2008-13 Homelessness Strategy

The Homelessness Review 2012 highlighted many positive actions undertaken in the last five years by the council and our partners to improve the lives of those either at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

**During 2011-12, 1,602 households were prevented from falling into homelessness as a result of housing advice. This was a 16% increase in the previous year.**

- ✓ In 2010 we introduced Leicester Homechoice to provide applicants with choice, flexibility and transparency when looking for a property.
- ✓ The Council established a Single Access and Referral Service pilot for its hostels in 2010 and voluntary sector providers were invited to join the pilot. We now have better, but not complete, data to understand the factors influencing single homelessness.
- ✓ Following consultation, amendments to the allocations policy have been agreed to reflect changes to housing benefit rules. The aim is to avoid the possibility of rent arrears for future tenants and to help those who will be affected by the 'bedroom tax' to move to a smaller home if they wish.
- ✓ The Leicester Let and the Rent Deposit Guarantee Schemes have been further developed to assist people to obtain private sector rented accommodation. Last year 193 households were assisted using this scheme.
- ✓ The severe weather beds policy has been reviewed and amended to enable easier access to beds during inclement weather.
- ✓ A Move-On Board has been established to address barriers to move-on from temporary accommodation.
- ✓ We have introduced 'Next-Step' planning in council hostels.
- ✓ We have developed the 'Revolving Door Service' to work with entrenched homeless people which is successfully reducing repeat homelessness and repeat stays in temporary accommodation. Due to the intervention of the Revolving Door Service there has been 60% decrease in admissions for clients.
- ✓ The Council's STAR service provided floating support to 1,500 households and gave advice to a further 1,200 households through the neighbourhood offices during 2011/12.
- ✓ A Job Club has been established at the Dawn Centre, resulting in placements for some people.
- ✓ The council Outreach Team achieved one of the highest planned EU reconnection rates and was recently given an award to recognise their contribution to the community through their work with rough sleepers.
- ✓ Faith groups have provided food, clothes furniture and support to many of the most vulnerable people in Leicester.
- ✓ The Community of Grace provides accommodation and support for some of the most entrenched and vulnerable homeless people.

- ✓ The Adullum and Stonham Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme assisted 39 ex-offenders into private sector rented accommodation.
- ✓ The new NEIBO service supported 15 Eastern European former rough sleepers into secure accommodation.
- ✓ The Action Homeless 'Down Not Out' magazine was launched, it is produced by homeless people.
- ✓ The YMCA invested £4m in refurbishment of their East Street accommodation, and were recognised as a regional centre of excellence.
- ✓ Inclusion Healthcare Social Enterprise was established and continues to provide a range of health services for homeless people across Leicester. Its work with homeless people is recognised nationally.
- ✓ The Leicestershire Partnership Trust Mental Health Service was recognised as a model of excellence for their work with homeless people.
- ✓ The Anchor Centre provides an alternative to street drinking, assists homeless people with drinking problems into accommodation, and helps to sustain tenancies.
- ✓ Leicester's unique health service for homeless people became a social enterprise 'Inclusion Health Care'.
- ✓ We established a Homelessness Strategy Reference Group which contributed to the development of the Homelessness Review and Homelessness Strategy, and will continue to provide us with feedback and ideas.
- ✓ The Rough Sleepers Task Panel was developed in response to the high level of rough sleepers in Leicester. The panel, which includes representatives from the voluntary, community and faith sectors and council staff, has reduced current levels of rough sleeping.

## National policy

The government has put in place a number of reforms to social housing and welfare policy, including the publication of its first national housing strategy, *Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England* (2011). This strategy outlines the Government's approach to homelessness prevention, meeting the needs of vulnerable people, managing the consequences of those made homeless and addressing rough sleeping. The government has also developed the *Vision to End Rough Sleeping: 'No Second Night Out'* (2011) The government's strategy also enables local authorities to give extra priority to working households, those making a community contribution, and ex-service personnel when it allocates council housing.

The Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness published their national homelessness strategy, *Making every contact count - A joint approach to preventing homelessness* in August 2012 which includes a number of challenges for local authorities.

The *Localism Act 2011* introduces a number of local government reforms across finance, planning, governance and housing, including fixed-term tenancies and greater flexibility in allocating social housing and operating waiting lists. It also enables local

authorities to cease their homelessness duty, by using an offer of private rented accommodation.

The *Welfare Reform Act 2012* introduced Universal Credit, changes to Housing Benefit, Local Housing Allowance, Council Tax Benefit and child support and reforms to the Disability Living Allowance.

Finally, the Government is reducing public spending, including the ending of ring fenced *Supporting People* funding within overall grant to local government. Leicester City Council overall grant funding has reduced by £75m per year between 2010 and 2015.

### **Impact of Welfare Reform**

The impact of welfare reform will be particularly significant for Leicester.

- Income for working age benefit claimants will be restricted to £500 per week for families and lone parents and £350 for singles.
- Any benefit income above £500 will not be paid. Housing Benefit is included in this, but not Council Tax Benefit, although separate council tax benefits are being proposed.
- Exemptions apply to households who are in receipt of Disabled Living Allowance, War Widows Benefit and Employment Support Allowance.

Currently households with people under 25 are exempt from deductions. The new system brings in a flat rate deduction of £65 month for everyone over 21 years of age, regardless of their employment status. Young people on benefit will especially be affected by this.

Changes to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and Housing Benefit also pose further challenges for local people. With the introduction of welfare reform, 411 families in Leicester will be affected by the £25,000 benefit cap and 2,182 households will be affected by the bedroom tax. In addition, the universal credit, which will see all means-tested benefits rolled into one benefit, will be paid directly to the client and people will now be responsible for paying their rent and council tax, many for the first time in their lives. We fear this could lead to non payment of rent.

## **Homelessness in Leicester**

In 2010-11, 1,981 families and single people came to our Housing Options Service saying that they were facing homelessness. During 2011-12, this rose to 2,249, and numbers have continued to rise, though less steeply. This is a 13.5% rise from the previous year. Many of them are 'repeat homelessness' – that is, they have come to us before for homelessness services. We predict by the end of 2012-13 we will have seen over 2,443 households who face homelessness, a further 9% increase from the previous year. Over the 2 year period from 2010/11 to 2012/13 this is a predicted rise of 22.5%.



Our ability to prevent these people from actually becoming homeless is rising, from 86% of cases in 2010-11 to a predicted 95% this year. However, we still expect that during 2012-13, 148 families and 258 single people will have to be referred into one of our hostels, and 60 families may, as a last resort, have to spend a short time in bed and breakfast because they face crisis.

In addition, 732 families and single people went into the council funded voluntary sector homeless hostels and other temporary accommodation in 2011-12. For many of the single people it will be a repeat episode of homelessness. Because these hostels have direct access, we do not know how many of these people also came to Housing Options.

We find it much more difficult to prevent homelessness for single people, and it is more difficult to track the eventual outcome. In comparison, families tend to stay in touch until they are in settled accommodation. Where we do not know the outcome of our support, we record this as a failure, in line with government reporting requirements. In 2011, we tracked whether any of the single people who asked for a hostel space and could not be helped by the council had gone on to sleep rough as a result, but we found no-one had done this. We have a similar issue in our hostels, where 53% leave without letting us know if their housing problem has been solved. We also know that 37% of single people, who came into our hostels, had been in previously within the last two years.

The number of households coming to the council's Housing Options Centre saying that they face homelessness has risen by 13.5% over the past year. We now need to plan for the likelihood of further increases due to the recession, welfare reforms and reductions in public expenditure.

The main reasons that families become homeless in Leicester are:

- that they are required by the Home Office to leave asylum seekers accommodation;
- that family and friends are no longer able to accommodate them; or
- loss of a private sector assured short hold tenancy.

The main reasons that single people become homeless are that:

- family and friends can no longer accommodate them;
- they have no fixed abode (including 'sofa surfers'); or
- they are 'repeat homelessness' where the last accommodation was a hostel.

### **Rough Sleepers**

There were 198 individual rough sleepers found in Leicester during 2012-13 year, with many being of Eastern European origin. In November 2011, there were 53 rough sleepers in Leicester, the highest figure outside London. This snapshot figure is now returned to the previous level of between three and 10 each night. It is clear that a more planned and sustainable approach is required, offering more intensive support to those who are repeat rough sleepers, which is about 60 people, as well as helping new rough sleepers before they become entrenched.

### **Accommodation Provision**

There are many providers of hostel accommodation in Leicester, including the Council, with a total of 609 bed spaces. This consists of a range of accommodation across the city ranging from individual rooms in cluster flats to rooms in larger projects. There

appears to be an over-provision of generic single accommodation, however it is difficult to establish exact need levels as there are many direct access hostels across the city. However, the review has shown that temporary accommodation, while essential in a crisis, is not solving the long-term problem for many single people, many of whom experience numerous episodes of homelessness.

The review found that to some extent we fund a crisis and rescue service instead of an enablement model of homelessness:

- hostels often do not achieve positive changes for clients;
- many clients in hostels are de-motivated and have low expectations;
- people are institutionalised in some single hostels; and
- the role of day centres is unclear.

Solutions for families lie largely in a supply of good quality, affordable housing, However, for vulnerable single people, while this is crucial, there is also a need to improve support to enable them to sustain independent living.

#### **Access to temporary accommodation**

There are various access policies in place amongst providers. It is recognised that providers want to have a say in who is coming into their hostels, particularly in terms of maintaining the house balance. However we need to ensure the most vulnerable and entrenched people are not being excluded from services and that bed spaces are used as efficiently as possible.

#### **Move-on from temporary accommodation**

Many single people have stayed in hostels longer than they needed to due to the way Supporting People funded services. As this funding was for a period up to two years, this may have led to a less robust approach to moving clients on to independent living. From October 2011 to March 2012 the average length of stay for single people in Council hostels was 47 days and the maximum length of stay was 429 days.

There were 306 unplanned moves and 103 evictions from all hostels across the city in 2011-12. The main reasons for evictions are due to rent arrears, behavioural issues and non-engagement with support plans.

34% of planned moves were to other hostels. Clients are transferred to other hostels which can better meet their needs or to avoid an increase in rent arrears and possible eviction. An example of this is a client moving from a catered to a non-catered hostel to in order to reduce costs for them.

There is a lack of appropriate move-on accommodation across the city, although this situation is sometimes eased through the use of private sector rented accommodation. There is also a lack of affordable social housing.

#### **Repeat Homelessness**

37% of single homeless people coming into the Council hostels have experienced at least two previous stays in hostel accommodation with many entrenched clients experiencing multiple stays.

The development of the Revolving Door Project has helped to identify barriers to moving on and has worked on a one to one basis with the most entrenched homeless people. 65% of the original clients referred to Revolving Door have moved on into independent accommodation. The lessons learnt from this project lead us to believe

we can reduce repeat homelessness amongst single people and we need to embed the lessons learnt in homelessness services.

In contrast to this, the Council sees no repeat family homelessness.

### **Housing Related Support**

Many clients are supported to make life changes. However the level and quality of support across the hostels appears to be inconsistent. There is also a need for more specialist support, particularly for people with complex needs.

Floating support can be the least expensive and most effective intervention for helping people to achieve independent living. The intensity and duration of support must reflect individual need if it is to be successful and cost effective.

### **Staff training and development**

We know that the quality of the support we provide to our service users is dependent on the skills and knowledge of staff that provide those services. We are committed to ensuring that our staff receive the training and development they need to the best job that they can in helping people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

### **Culture of single homelessness services**

For single homeless people, there is a culture of crisis and rescue in the city. Most single persons hostels are not places of change for many homeless people and many residents appear de-motivated, have low-esteem and low expectations. We need to develop a model of enablement to ensure homeless people are able to access opportunities to turn their lives around to be able to live as independent members of the community. However, we must also recognise that there will always be a small number of people who will never be able to live completely independently and we will need to develop sustainable options for them.

The views of clients on their experience of homeless services ranged from those who said that services proactively helped them to turn their lives around, to others who said that they felt trapped and had little hope for the future.

We therefore need to focus a higher proportion of resources on prevention and floating support, which provides support to people where they live, to reduce the risk of homelessness and repeat homelessness.

### **The Housing Options Service**

The current footfall into the Housing Options Service averages at 1,800 people per week. More people are accessing the various services within the Housing Options Service and are receiving the support and help they need. However, issues have been raised about the need to further improve customer care, the Phoenix House reception area, and the difficulties in training staff to deal with all the complexities that customers face.

## **A new approach to homelessness**

**Homelessness services are in need of transformation. We need to tackle the problem of homelessness downstream – moving from a culture of crisis and rescue to one of prevention and support.**

**Investing in prevention** Under *Delivering the Strategy* below we set out a range of specific work we will do to invest more resources to enhance and extend the work we will do to seek to **prevent homelessness**.

**Ensuring Fairness** We are making these changes in an environment of reducing resources and rising need. It is therefore essential that we make sure that the temporary accommodation that we do have goes to those that are most in need. We have therefore piloted new eligibility criteria to ensure that this happens, and once the finalised criteria are adopted, we will require all council funded providers to follow the criteria in order to **ensure a fair and just system of provision**. However, we fully recognise that this system is surrounded and supported by an array of hugely valuable provision from the voluntary and faith sector: provision that responds to a diverse range of needs and issues.

**Improving Access** We also know that people have found that access to our services has been over complex and fragmented. We need to improve service users' experience of accessing our services and **make sure that all the component parts of the experience of access, assessment and support work as simply and smoothly as possible**. We are therefore developing a **Single Access and Referral Service** backed up by a common assessment framework in partnership with other service providers.

**Moving on to settled accommodation** Our Homelessness Review demonstrated that a hostel environment is not always conducive to achieving positive changes for people. Our focus must be on **enabling people in temporary accommodation to move on to settled accommodation** as quickly as possible. We are therefore going to provide **more and better support to enable people to do this**.

**Managing Equality** We will also strive to ensure that we manage the **equality** impacts of the decisions we make and the services we provide as effectively as possible. Addressing inequality, and removing the barriers to equality will be at the heart of all of the work that we do.

In particular, we know that in response to our consultation on our proposals there were requests to invest more in specific temporary accommodation provision for black and minority ethnic (BME) clients, given the rising proportion of people with BME backgrounds in the city. However, we believe that BME provision should be mainstream and not segregated. As a diverse city it is essential that we are able to provide culturally diverse services within culturally diverse communities. We will build culturally sensitive services into specifications for the procurement of our services, and indeed ensure that specifications are designed so that services support the needs of all service users from groups with protected characteristics under the equality legislation. Addressing inequality will also therefore form part of any future performance monitoring of service provision.

**Providing effective settled accommodation** Key to our strategic approach is to make better use of the **private rented sector** as more permanent housing for homeless families and focusing floating support for single people where it is most needed. We will ensure that for people who are ready and able to take up a tenancy in the private rented sector, we will develop the sector, and we will invest more resources in working with private landlords to make them ready to take on tenants who are at risk of homelessness. We will work with Leicestershire District Councils who are to receive new Government funding to provide private rented sector accommodation for singles, and we will work with the Homes and Communities Agency to do more to make more **empty homes** available for those that need them. We will also continue or work to ensure that there is an adequate supply of **affordable accommodation** within the city, as set out in our separate *Affordable Accommodation Strategy*.

## Six Principles

The Homelessness Review process led to the development of **six new principles** which were developed through the Homelessness Summit in June 2012. These objectives focus on prevention, providing temporary and move-on accommodation, implementing the 'No Second Night Out' initiative for rough sleepers and ensuring homeless people are able to access the services they need.

These strategic principles aim to break the cycle of homelessness and form the basis of this Homelessness Strategy.

### Leicester Homelessness Strategy 2013-18

#### Six strategic principles

**We aim to improve the lives of people facing, or experiencing homelessness, by embedding these principles into all our homeless services, across the city.**

**Principle 1** Anyone at risk of homelessness is given advice and support to prevent this, whenever possible.

**Principle 2** When someone is homeless today, we aspire to assist them into appropriate accommodation, with support, and we will ensure that services are tailored to address their individual needs.

**Principle 3** We will implement 'No Second Night Out' to ensure that new rough sleepers will not sleep out for more than one night.

**Principle 4** Anyone who is homeless will be able to 'move-on' into appropriate accommodation.

**Principle 5** Anyone who is homeless will be able to access appropriate care services to meet their health and well-being needs.

**Principle 6** There are opportunities to access training, education, employment and enterprise initiatives.

## Driving the strategy

Tackling homelessness can only be achieved through a city wide response. From working on the root causes of homelessness, such as unemployment and low income, health and family problems, to providing effective support services and the right kind of housing to help those who are homeless or at risk of it, the city must work together. Our work to prevent homelessness and support people to move on from homelessness cannot be divorced from our wider work to tackle its causes and effects. The **City**

**Mayor's Delivery Plan 2013** [add links when published] sets out a comprehensive picture of our plans for the city and its people going forward into the future, and within this a number of key strategies are particularly important in setting out how we will work:

### **Leicester's Economic Action Plan 2012 to 2020**

Leicester's Economic Action Plan sets out an ambitious strategy for investment in the city's economy up until 2020. It outlines key actions where the city council will play a central role in driving economic growth for Leicester and builds on the substantial investment already made in the city over the past 15 years. It builds on the strong entrepreneurial spirit of Leicester's business community, its location and connectivity. Alongside a focus on developing well paid and highly skilled jobs for the future, the action plan includes actions and investment that will support the development of skills and a better integration of support services targeted at disadvantaged neighbourhoods. <http://citymayor.leicester.gov.uk/welcome/leicesters-economic-action-plan/>

### **Leicester Children's Trust Children and Young People's Plan 2011 - 2014**

The Children and Young People's Plan is the single, overarching plan for Leicester's Children's Trust and sets out the strategic direction and the six priorities for improvement for children and young people in Leicester for the 2011-14. The plan brings together the top priorities for everyone working with children, young people and families and sets out in detail the actions we will take to improve outcomes. It is about improving the life chances of those most vulnerable to poor outcomes, and the priorities are focused on those areas that we most need to change.

1. Safeguard and promote the welfare of all vulnerable children and young people.
2. Improve children's health and reduce the gap between the most and least deprived.
3. Raise achievement in Leicester to national averages and higher, and narrow the gap between the lowest achievers and other children.
4. Develop an integrated children's workforce that 'thinks family' and intervenes early to narrow the gap between vulnerable and other children.
5. Reduce and mitigate the effects of family poverty on children's life chances in Leicester.
6. Improve outcomes for particularly vulnerable groups of children and young people: looked after children, children and young people with special educational needs/ learning difficulties and/or disabilities, young offenders and children and young people who are carers for others

<http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/social-care-health/young-peoplefamilies/support-services/childrenstrust/childrensplan/>

### **Leicester's Child Poverty Commission**

More than 26,000 Leicester children, over a third of those in the city, are growing up in poverty. To respond to this alarming statistic, and to get to the heart of the issues affecting those children, Leicester's Child Poverty Commission was established in June 2011, and has published 66 recommendations on local service delivery, the policy of local and central government, the work of voluntary organisations and the role of the private sector, business and employers.

The commission's recommendations are set out in five categories, and the commission will report annually on progress against the recommendations and will publish revised recommendations each year

1. early years, schools and education
2. income, personal finance and housing
3. health and wellbeing
4. economy, work and transport
5. policy and governance

<http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council-services/education-lifelong-learning/parental-support/child-poverty/>

### **Leicester's Health and Wellbeing Board**

From April 2013, new arrangements will take effect to deliver public health arrangements, and a new health and wellbeing strategy is being developed. A number strategic priorities are set out within the strategy that will help to reduce many of the health and wellbeing problems that can lead to homelessness and can arise from it as well. These focus on work to reducing the lifestyle factors that can lead to ill health, improving access to and take up of services, providing support and care services for people who are vulnerable to enable them to live independently, and continuing the work to break the cycle of poor health and deprivation by focussing on the wider determinants that influence health over the long term, such as low educational attainment, deprivation, skills and worklessness.

<http://citymayor.leicester.gov.uk/welcome/city-partnership/leicester-city-shadow-health-and-wellbeing-board/>

**Working in partnership** The Housing Support and Advice Programme Board (HASP) involves internal and external statutory and VCS stakeholders. This partnership will continue to oversee the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy and Delivery Plan.

In turn HASP will review their terms of reference and working methods to ensure that they are fit for purpose in carrying out this role, picking up some of the feedback from the consultation on what needs to change to make partnership working more effective. In addition, we will review and improve the performance management and communications processes that we use to support this arrangement.

**Sharing good practice** We know that sharing information and good practice is also essential to the development of our responses to homelessness in the city as well. We will therefore also work with partners to ensure that we are doing this effectively as possible – for example by working with the Multi-Disciplinary Team to develop their role.

**Involving service users** We know that people's experiences of homelessness services, and their own insights and ideas can be hugely valuable in shaping how we work, and creating a client centred approach. We will therefore develop and improve the way in which we involve service users in service planning and development.

**Effective Communication** We will develop a Homelessness Communication Plan to provide clients, and the agencies working with them, access to relevant and timely information in relation to homelessness. This will include an updated, web-based, Homelessness Service Directory and an improved homelessness section on the Council's website.





## Delivering the strategy

**Actions** We have identified a number of actions that we need to take to deliver the six principles that emerged from the review. These are set out below. They will be incorporated into our delivery plan.

We will develop clear measures and milestones for delivery, including transitional arrangements.

We will work closely with partners in developing these delivery plans.

Further, more detailed procurement decisions to deliver the strategy will be made in phases during Spring and Summer 2013 arising from the procurement (delivery) plan which we sought feedback on as part of the consultation exercise on this strategy.

**Principle 1 Anyone, at risk of homelessness, is given advice and support to prevent this, whenever possible.**

### What do we need to do to achieve this priority?

- 1.1 We will build upon the prevention work currently undertaken by the Housing Options Service by further developing the prevention tools, including advice, liaison with those seeking to evict, mediation, mortgage rescue, increased re-settlement work in prisons and more flexible access to private sector rented accommodation.
- 1.2 We will continue to use effective landlord management practices, to prevent evictions from Council properties.
- 1.3 We will raise awareness of the availability of floating support to private sector landlords.
- 1.4 Further work will also be undertaken to incentivise private landlords to get involved in the Leicester Let Scheme (for families) and the Rent Deposit Guarantee Schemes (for single people).
- 1.5 We will work with Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Probation Service and other partners to develop a clear pathway for all homeless offenders leaving prison to ensure that appropriate accommodation is available for them, upon release.
- 1.6 All clients who are interviewed in the Housing Options Service will continue to receive written confirmation of the services they have been provided with, including all advice and assistance.
- 1.7 We will liaise with similar local authorities to learn about effective preventative services.

**Principle 2** When someone is homeless today, we aspire to assist them into appropriate accommodation, with support. We will ensure that services are tailored to address their individual needs.

**What do we need to do to achieve this priority?**

- 2.1 The culture of our homelessness services will move from one of crisis and rescue to one of prevention. We will provide floating support, including specialist support where appropriate to help increase the number of households prevented from becoming homeless and reduce repeat homelessness.
- 2.2 We will see this as a particular opportunity to modernise our single persons homelessness services to ensure they achieve positive outcomes. Hostels will become places for change and will require clients to actively engage in their road to independent living.
- 2.3 We now propose to use the new discretionary power in appropriate cases to offer a suitable private tenancy as the ending of our homelessness duty.
- 2.4 We will reduce hostel provision and re-configure existing services which will include using the Dawn Centre in its original role as an Assessment Centre and short-stay hostel. A catering service will continue to be provided to help stabilise clients in the Dawn Centre.
- 2.5 We will publish the criteria for households to be offered a temporary bedspace. (Our pilot criteria are shown at Annex A)
- 2.6 We will undertake an assessment to establish the most appropriate pathway to meet the accommodation and support needs of the client.
- 2.7 An appropriate next step plan will be developed for all clients in hostels and other temporary accommodation to ensure they move as quickly as possible to independent living and do not become homeless again.
- 2.8 We will continue to analyse the barriers that single people face in getting a sustainable independent home, and use our analyses to shape services.
- 2.9 We will ensure all support staff receive the necessary training which gives them the necessary skills and knowledge to work with clients to obtain positive outcomes. We will work with partners to develop our approach to training and focus the development and training of staff on areas that partners and users have told us need development, including specific skills relating to empathy, health and wellbeing, psychology and the practical support that users need to achieve sustainable independence as soon as possible.

- 2.10 Hostels and bed and breakfast are not an ideal environment for most people and should only ever be a short-term temporary accommodation solution. We will reduce the use of family and single person hostels and continue to use bed and breakfast as a last resort. We will ensure that when they are used the stay is as short as possible. We will increase the provision of short stay move-on accommodation for people searching for settled tenancies.
- 2.11 There will be a Single Access and Referral Service (SAR) for all accommodation and floating support services funded by the Council. This will ensure we deliver a holistic, joined up and accessible service and that scarce resources are directed to the most vulnerable people.
- 2.12 We will use the Council's new IT information hub and information sharing agreements with our providers and other stakeholders to improve joined up working for our clients.
- 2.13 We will develop a common assessment framework, in partnership with other service providers, for use in the SAR and in all contrasted hostels.
- 2.14 We will work with our partners in the No Second Night Out Project to meet the needs of non-statutory homeless single people and childless couples.
- 2.15 We will build on the Revolving Door Service and work in partnership to identify and overcome the barriers which are prohibiting a move to independent living. We will work with a reconfigured multi disciplinary team and the VCS Transitional Funding projects. We will also develop accommodation and support options for those entrenched clients who may never live independently.
- 2.16 There will be a minimum accommodation standard for temporary accommodation and for private sector rented accommodation where we provide the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme.
- 2.17 We will increase the supply of floating support, including specialist support, tailored to meet the needs of vulnerable people who are facing or experiencing homelessness.
- 2.18 In more complex cases, we will provide floating support to clients who are moving into independent accommodation but who will need some help to learn basic tasks like budgeting, cooking and generally looking after themselves.
- 2.19 All service providers need to ensure that their services are culturally sensitive to the needs of individual clients. This will form part of any future performance monitoring.

**Principle 3 We will implement ‘No Second Night Out’ (NSNO) to ensure that new rough sleepers will not sleep out for more than one night.**

Nationally, the Government and Homeless Link are promoting an approach to ending rough sleeping called No Second Night Out (NSNO).

The proposed Leicester NSNO Project aims to ensure new rough sleepers do not spend more than one night on the streets and will prevent them from becoming entrenched in a street lifestyle. The approach involves the early identification and assessment of rough sleepers and the provision of a single service offer, which will provide a credible and realistic alternative to rough sleeping. It requires all partners will give a consistent message that rough sleeping is not acceptable.

As part of our strategy we want to work with partners to identify how Leicester’s No Second Night Out Project, including the single service offer, will operate in practice to achieve a sustained reduction in rough sleeping in Leicester. The Homelessness Review documented the Council’s initial proposals to reduce rough sleeping and this will be built upon during the development of our No Second Night Out approach, in partnership with HASP.

**What do we need to do to achieve this priority?**

- 3.1 We will develop and implement a Leicester NSNO project. This will be done in partnership with Housing Advice and Programme Board to ensure we are able to implement the lessons from the Rough Sleepers Panel and NSNO projects in other cities.
- 3.2 We will develop a clear policy to address the issue of rough sleeping amongst people without recourse to public funds and develop solutions for these people.
- 3.3 We will develop a shared database, to formalise how we track and address the needs of rough sleepers, particularly those who return to the streets.
- 3.4 The Council’s Rough Sleepers Outreach Team will be able to refer rough sleepers directly to dormitory beds at the Dawn Centre.
- 3.5 An assessment of rough sleepers, using these beds, will be undertaken immediately and appropriate services offered.
- 3.6 Rough sleepers may also go into a hostel bed or the dormitory through the SAR Service.
- 3.7 Planned reconnection will be offered as a realistic and appropriate alternative to rough sleeping.
- 3.8 Where appropriate, case conferences will be convened to consider each rough sleeper to ensure they receive the support they require. A more robust and supported case management approach will be introduced based on the

principles used by the Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings and also those of the Rough Sleepers Task Panel.

- 3.9 We will work with the NEIBO project, which provides support to Eastern Europeans.
- 3.10 With our partners, we will develop innovative ways to support entrenched and repeat rough sleepers, who often present with a range of complex needs. This can include challenging behaviour, which can make it difficult to place them into appropriate accommodation that meets their needs, while maintaining a calm environment for the other residents.
- 3.11 We recognise that not all rough sleepers will choose to come in to hostel or dormitory beds and we will continue to offer them support to go directly to other accommodation.
- 3.12 We will also continue to support rough sleepers to access healthcare and other basic services, working closely with Inclusion Healthcare.

#### **Principle 4 Anyone who is homeless, will be able to ‘move-on’ into appropriate accommodation**

The key to ending homelessness is through the provision of appropriate, good quality, settled accommodation, with appropriate support when needed, to enable homeless people to live independently.

For this strategic priority we define settled independent accommodation as:

- having a social rented or private sector tenancy, with or without floating support.
- living, by choice, with family and friends.
- becoming a home owner.

There is a steady supply of one bedroom council lets but few single homeless people are eligible for these, usually because of former debts.

We recognise that between the crisis of homelessness and finding independent accommodation, many people will need somewhere to live temporarily that is not a hostel. This is often referred to as ‘move-on’ accommodation. People may go into ‘move-on’ accommodation from a hostel, the streets or directly after going to Housing Options or a voluntary sector project. They can use this time to develop skills to live independently and to address any barriers to moving on such as former rent arrears.

We define ‘move-on’ as short to medium stay (2 weeks to six months) usually in a shared house, flat or cluster flat where there is medium to high level support provided, at the level each individual needs, usually provided by visiting staff.

### **What do we need to do to achieve this priority?**

- 4.1 We will advise and assist every person, who uses our Homelessness Services, to plan their next step towards independent accommodation. We will work with them to overcome the barriers they face to achieving that and also subsequent steps.
- 4.2 We will co-ordinate access into and moves out of temporary accommodation through the development of the Single Access and Referral Service. This will ensure a coordinated approach is implemented which provides fair and equitable access for all.
- 4.3 Hostel Support Workers will work to ensure the length of time a client spends in a hostel is as short as possible.
- 4.4 We will increase the supply of shared and supported move-on accommodation.
- 4.5 We will continue to assist clients to address the main barriers to move-on, for example the accrual of rent arrears, to ensure we are not trapping people into the homeless cycle.
- 4.6 We will endeavour to ensure continuity of support between move-on and independent accommodation.
- 4.7 We will increase the priority within STAR for those new council tenants coming from hostels or who are referred by the Housing Options Service. We will encourage Housing Associations to do the same.
- 4.8 We will seek to increase the supply of good quality, private rented accommodation, particularly for homeless people. We will continue to require standards for properties where we give a rent deposit guarantee.
- 4.9 We will increase the promotion of our private landlord shared house guarantee scheme.
- 4.10 We will explore the feasibility of a private sector renting registration scheme for the City, beyond the existing Houses in Multiple Occupation scheme
- 4.11 We will continue to work with our partners to identify and develop new affordable housing options, including private sector leasing schemes for single people.
- 4.12 We will seek to increase resources for rent guarantees for homeless people by working closely with schemes funded within the Voluntary Sector from other sources.

- 4.13 We will explore the provision of very specialist long-term accommodation for those with complex needs or entrenched behaviour, who nevertheless do not meet Adult Social Care criteria for support.

**Principle 5 Anyone, who is homeless, will be able to access appropriate care services to meet their health and well-being needs**

Homeless people or those in insecure accommodation, often find it difficult to access mainstream health and other services. This results in their health and other well-being needs being left unaddressed. Rough sleepers, in particular, are more likely to experience increased health and mental health problems but they do not prioritise seeking help for these, when they are trying to live their life on the streets. Although the Housing Division does not directly provide these services, we want to ensure that all homeless people can access the same healthcare opportunities as other people in the community. The work of Inclusion Health Care is fundamental and invaluable to achieving this.

We recognise that many homeless people, or those in temporary accommodation, struggle financially and turn to community and faith day Centres and drop-in services for food, clothing and furniture. They also receive support to help overcome their feelings of social isolation and loneliness from these services. We wish to highlight the valuable work Leicester's community and faith Groups undertake to help improve the lives of our city's most vulnerable people.

**What do we need to do to achieve this priority?**

- 5.1 We will re-configure the Dawn Centre into an Assessment Centre, which will enable more co-ordinated interventions for clients with complex needs.
- 5.2 We welcome the continued presence of Inclusion Healthcare which provides primary health care for homeless people, at the Dawn Centre.
- 5.3 We welcome the continued presence of the Homeless Mental Health Service which provides services to homeless people, at the Dawn Centre.
- 5.4 We will continue to work with partners through the Hospital Discharge Protocol.
- 5.5 Housing Options and the Dawn Centre will continue to work with Inclusion Healthcare to ensure that if a homeless person is being discharged from hospital, and requires extra healthcare, that they are given a 'health bed' at the Dawn Centre. Referrals from other hostels, as a medical transfer, will continue to be supported.
- 5.6 We will work with partners to explore how we can improve quicker access to alcohol and substance use services, including access to detox schemes.

- 5.7 We will provide specialist floating support for homeless people, in temporary accommodation, who are experiencing alcohol or substance problems.
- 5.8 We will continue to support a day centre to provide an alternative to street drinking.
- 5.9 Many clients in hostels appear to be demotivated and have low confidence and self-esteem. They also have low expectations about their futures. Hostel Support Staff will work proactively with clients, through support planning, to help them re-build their confidence and self-esteem.
- 5.10 Hostel Support Staff will continue to work with clients to ensure all clients are registered with a Doctor and can access health and other services they may require.

**Principle 6 There are opportunities to access training, education, employment and enterprise initiatives.**

*Most homeless people do want to make the transition from pavement to pay packet. They want to lead full and meaningful lives, and pay their way like everyone else. But, because of traumas caused by homelessness, they need dedicated help and support to make this possible.*

**St Mungos**

Homeless people require access to work, training placements and meaningful and rewarding activities to help rebuild their confidence and to overcome feelings of isolation and boredom.

There are strong links between unemployment and homelessness, and training and employment are key to achieving independent living.

**What do we need to do to achieve this priority?**

- 6.1 We will continue to support employment and training organisations to ensure homeless people are supported to access education, training and employment opportunities.
- 6.2 We will implement closer working between support staff and employment projects to enable homeless people to access more work placements and training.
- 6.3 All support workers will support clients to access employment opportunities. They will ensure clients are 'work ready', for example, in hostels, getting out of bed in the morning and having their identification and any other necessary documentation, prior to looking for work. Any setbacks of this kind can have a hugely negative impact on their confidence.



- 6.4 Clients in hostels, move on or receiving floating support will be encouraged, as part of their support plans, to engage in training and meaningful activities, once their circumstances have stabilised.
- 6.5 We will continue to work with an employment project on our Leicester to Work initiative which enables hostel clients to access work placements within the Housing Division.

### **Eligibility criteria for offer of emergency or temporary accommodation**

These criteria may be reviewed in response to experience of their impact.

1st criteria: are homeless or threatened with homelessness and eligible for public assistance (unless found rough sleeping).

2<sup>nd</sup> criteria: fall into one of the following categories.

#### **No changes to previous criteria.**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Duty arises from</b>
a. Family, pregnant woman (no change to previous criteria)	Housing Act 1996
b. Vulnerable Adult (no change to previous criteria)	Housing Act 1996
c. Children leaving care (no change to previous criteria)	Children's Act 1989 Referrals from Children's Division and Housing Act 1986.
d. High risk offenders (no change to previous criteria)	Criminal Justice Act 2003 Duty to co-operate with Police, Probation and Prison Services under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
e. Ex-offenders leaving approved premises. (no change to previous criteria)	Criminal Justice Act 2003 Referrals from Probation Service.
f. Vulnerable adults and families (no change to previous criteria)	National Assistance Act 1948 Referrals from Adult Social Care Division.
g. Young offenders and ex-offenders (no change to previous criteria)	Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 referrals from Youth Offending Service.
h. Council tenants in an emergency. (no change to previous criteria)	Identified within Housing Division (payment made by HRA, most council tenants would be rehoused within council house stock).
i. People over 60. (no change to previous criteria)	Who do not fall within above categories, identified by Housing Division.
j. People found rough sleeping or considered to be of immediate and high risk of rough sleeping.	Who do not fall within above categories, identified by Housing Division and in support of No Second Night Out principles. Dormitory accommodation may be offered to people who are in this category, particularly in an emergency or where the person is not connected to Leicester( see note 3) or is

	ineligible for public funds
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**Proposed changes in criteria.**

<p>k. Other ex-offenders: under current eligibility criteria offences from many years ago taken into account. This new threshold will reduce numbers of people offered temporary accommodation and focus on those most likely to be facing problems.</p>	<p>Crime and Disorder Act 1998 General duty to prevent Crime and Disorder. Usually people approaching us within one year of leaving custodial sentence who do not fall within above categories. Identified by Housing Division with Probation Service</p>
<p>l. People on identified drug and alcohol programmes or eligible for them and on waiting list. Under current eligibility criteria a client saying they use drugs or alcohol is taken into account. This new threshold will reduce numbers of people offered temporary accommodation, and focus on those with most problems.</p>	<p>Who do not fall within above categories. Referrals from agencies identified by ASC Drug and Alcohol Services</p>

**Notes**

1. Categories a: and b: are homelessness duties.

Categories c: to g: may be regarded as arising directly from other Council statutory duties.

Categories h: to l: support other high Council priorities.

2. Access to emergency or temporary single homeless accommodation is primarily for those applicants that have had a settled address in the City of Leicester for the last 6 out of 12 months immediately prior to presentation (rough sleeping will not count towards this connection) or if the applicant has always been connected to Leicester but has been in prison/institution away from the City and is now homeless immediately post release/discharge.(exceptions to this policy will apply where there is a statutory homeless duty.)
3. The Council may refuse to provide a bed space when there are no vacancies and there is no statutory duty to do so. Advice will be given. Where there is a duty and

there are no suitable hostel bed spaces, other temporary accommodation will be offered.

4. The Council imposes sanctions on homelessness service users who fail to comply with accommodation and other agreements (e.g. failure to comply with rent payments or arrears agreements, threatening behaviour etc.) These sanctions can include the need to meet specified requirements to gain re-entry to hostels.

## **Appendix C**

### **Impact on Voluntary Sector**

In developing the proposals set out in the Delivery Plan we have been mindful of the relative impact on the voluntary sector and in house services.

The proposals reduce the savings sought from both the voluntary sector and in house services.

The proposals within this report are forecast to increase expenditure on voluntary sector services by £204,000 above the levels previously consulted upon.

Tables 1 and table 2 below relate to services formerly commissioned under the old supporting people and homeless grant regime, and show the impact of the initial consultation proposals and impact if the phase 1 proposals within this report are adopted.

These tables include the proposals placed before the Executive by this report together with other proposals within the Delivery Plan which will be the subject of later reports.

**Table 1 – Impact On Contract Value For Services Funded From Former Supporting People Grant and Homelessness Grant**

<b>Estimated contract value</b>	<b>In House £000</b>	<b>VCS £000</b>	<b>Total £000</b>
<b>Initial Consultation Proposals</b>	1,045	1,860	2,905
<b>Proposed Phase 1 Revisions</b>	76	204	280
<b>Revised Phase 1 Proposals</b>	<b>1,121</b>	<b>2,064</b>	<b>3,185</b>
<b>Current Service Cost – March 2013</b>	1,642	3,430	5,072
<b>% Reduction – Initial Consultation Proposals</b>	36%	46%	43%
<b>% Reduction – Revised Phase 1 Proposals</b>	32%	40%	37%

**Table 2 – Impact On Number Of Units For Services Funded From Former Supporting People Grant and Homelessness Grant**

<b>Estimated contract value</b>	<b>In House Units</b>	<b>VCS Units</b>	<b>Total Units</b>
<b>Initial Consultation Proposals</b>	339	411	750
<b>Proposed Phase 1 Revisions</b>	-	10	10
<b>Revised Phase 1 Proposals</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>760</b>
<b>Current Service Units – March 2013</b>	377	515	892
<b>% Reduction – Initial Consultation Proposals</b>	10%	20%	16%
<b>% Reduction – Revised Phase 1 Proposals</b>	10%	18%	15%

The impact on the voluntary sector is likely to be many hostel closures.

Our contracts pay for support. Accommodation costs are paid for by rents and service charges, the bulk of which are covered by Housing Benefit.

We cannot predict the exact response by the voluntary sector to our proposed reduction in volume and payment for contracted support in hostels. We hope some in the voluntary sector will reconfigure and provide more low cost 'move-on' i.e. flats and shared houses with visiting support rather than projects with staff based on site with overnight cover. We propose that the growth in floating support will also be largely met by voluntary sector provision.

## Appendix D

### Equality Impact Assessment for the Homeless Strategy

<b>Name of strategy, policy, plan or needs assessment framework</b>	
Homelessness Strategy	
<b>Lead officer and Contact details</b>	<p>Helen McGarry – Service Improvement Manager Gurjit Minhas – Business Change Manager</p> <p>E mail: <a href="mailto:Helen.mcgarry@leicester.gov.uk">Helen.mcgarry@leicester.gov.uk</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:gurjit.minhas@leicester.gov.uk">gurjit.minhas@leicester.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>List of other(s) involved</b>	Ann Branson

#### Step 1 Strategy/policy/plan/needs assessment framework context

##### Question: 1

<p><b>1a. What does the strategy/policy/plan/needs assessment framework cover? What are its aims and objectives?</b></p> <p>It is a statutory duty for each local authority to have a Homelessness Strategy and for this to be reviewed at least every 5 years. A review of homelessness services in Leicester took place between March and July 2012. This has resulted in the production of Leicester’s draft 2013 – 2018 Homelessness Strategy.</p> <p>The Council has a statutory duty to give housing advice to all citizens of Leicester and duties to provide temporary accommodation as required to homeless families, pregnant women, certain young people and vulnerable single people. We also have a statutory duty to co-operate with probation, police and prisons to help house high risk offenders and duties relating to the prevention of crime and disorder.</p> <p>The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to ensure that individuals, childless households and families affected by homelessness will have simple and effective access to a range of housing services and other opportunities. This will enable them to re-build their lives and make a success of their futures. The strategy sets out the key challenges and priorities relating to homelessness that need to be addressed in Leicester. The priorities identified are our statutory duty, which includes families, some young people, pregnant women and some vulnerable single people with drug and alcohol issues and ex-offenders.</p> <p>The six strategic principles of the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anyone at risk of homelessness is given advice and support to prevent this, whenever</li> </ul>
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possible

- When someone is homeless today, we aspire to assist them into appropriate accommodation, with support, and we will ensure that services are tailored to address their individual needs
- We will implement 'No Second Night Out' to ensure that new rough sleepers will not sleep out for more than one night
- Anyone who is homeless will be able to 'move-on' into appropriate accommodation
- Anyone who is homeless will be able to access appropriate care services to meet their health and well-being needs
- There are opportunities to access training, education, employment and enterprise initiatives

Alongside the Homelessness Strategy are the future Delivery Proposals, which outline the services we propose to commission, taking into account the new financial envelope. A separate Equality Impact Assessment has been produced on these Delivery Proposals.

#### **1b. Who does the strategy/policy/plan/needs assessment framework affect? How?**

Anyone that is currently experiencing or facing homelessness, also people who may become homeless in the future. Staff employed by existing providers will be affected if the Council changes providers, reduces or de-commissions services as a result of the Strategy implementation. Internal staff working in homelessness services may be affected.

Services will continue to be provided for statutory homeless households, but services may no longer be available for some people whom we owe no statutory duty, in particular this could affect single people.

We know the demographics of people currently on the Housing Register. These are shown below.

#### **Floating support clients – Ethnic Origin 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number of people</b>	<b>% of people</b>
White	1383	59%
Black	383	16%
Asian	377	16%
Other ethnic origin	44	2%
Chinese	43	2%
Mixed/dual heritage	85	4%
Not known	23	1%

#### **Floating support clients – Disability 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Number of people</b>	<b>% of people</b>
Yes	610	26%
No	1657	71%



Not known	71	3%
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#### Floating support clients – Gender 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

Gender	Number of people	% of people
Female	1448	62%
Male	890	38%

#### Floating support clients – Religion 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

Religion	Number of people	% of people
Christian	573	24%
Do not wish to disclose	178	8%
Hindu	99	4%
Jewish	4	0%
Muslim	311	13%
None	648	28%
Not known	458	20%
Sikh	39	2%
Any other Religion	28	1%

If the proposals are implemented or homelessness rises we will see an increase in people accessing Housing Options and the Housing Register. We expect the profile to remain constant; however we will continue to monitor the profile of clients to ensure our services are appropriate to meet their needs.

#### Demographic break down of the Housing Register (October 2012)

##### Age

Age of applicant	Number of applicants	% of applicants
Under 18	6	0.1%
19 to 24	1 516	15.7%
25 to 44	5 036	52.0%
45 to 54	1 475	15.2%
55 to 74	1 353	14.0%
75+	295	3.0%

##### Ethnic Origin

Ethnicity	Number of applicants	% of applicants
White	3 062	31.6%
Black	1 000	10.3%
Asian	2 375	24.5%
Other Ethnic origin	136	1.4%
Ethnic origin not given	2 928	30.3%
Chinese	13	0.1%
Mixed/duel heritage	163	1.7%

##### Disability

Disability	Number of applicants	% of applicants
Yes	482	4.9%
No	3 771	38.6%
Unknown	5 504	56.4%

### Sexuality

Sexuality	Number of applicants	% of applicants
Bisexual	114	1.2%
Gay (female / lesbian)	27	0.3%
Gale (Male)	28	0.3%
Heterosexual / straight	3 435	35.2%
Other	118	1.2%
Prefer not to say	472	4.8%
Unknown	5 563	57.0%

### Religion

Religion	Number of applicants	% of applicants
Atheist	146	1.5%
Bahai	0	0.0%
Buddhist	9	0.1%
Christian	1 219	12.5%
Hindu	339	3.5%
Jain	7	0.1%
Jewish	0	0.0%
Muslim	1 040	10.7%
No religion	1 010	10.4%
Other	164	1.7%
Prefer not to say	260	2.7%
Sikh	71	0.7%
Unknown	5 492	56.3%

Although our aim is to reduce and prevent people becoming homeless external factors such as the economic climate and the welfare benefit changes may impact on the numbers of people making homelessness declarations. We expect the profile to remain constant; however we will continue to monitor the profile of clients to ensure our services are appropriate to meet their needs.

### Demographic profile of homeless people

#### Homeless declarations – Ethnic Origin 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012

Ethnicity	Number of people	% of people
White	602	55.2%
Black	132	12.1%
Asian	118	10.8%
Other ethnic origin	25	2.3%
Chinese	0	0.0%
Mixed/duel heritage	0	0.0%
Not known	214	19.6%

**Homeless declarations – Disability 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012**

Disability	Number of people	% of people
Yes	66	6.0%
No	410	37.6%
Unknown	615	56.4%

**Homeless declarations – Religion 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012**

Religion	Number of people	% of people
Atheist	20	1.8%
Buddhist	2	0.0%
Christian	116	10.6%
Do not wish to disclose	48	4.4%
Hindu	15	1.4%
Jewish	0	0%
Muslim	71	6.5%
None	158	14.5%
Not known	620	56.8%
Sikh	10	0.9%
Any other Religion	31	56.8%

**Homeless declarations – Age 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012**

Age of applicant	Number of applicants	% of applicants
Under 18	15	1.4%
19 – 24	325	29.8%
25 – 44	576	52.8%
45 - 54	137	12.6%
55 - 74	32	2.9%
75+	6	0.5%

**Homeless declarations – Gender 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012**

Gender	Number of people	% of people
Female	449	41.2%
Male	642	58.8%

**Homeless declarations – Sexual orientation 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012**

Sexual orientation	Number of people	% of people
Bisexual	10	0.9%
Gay (Female / Lesbian)	6	0.5%
Gay (May)	1	0.1%
Heterosexual / Straight	397	36.4%
Prefer not to say	43	3.9%
Other	16	1.5%
Unknown	618	56.6%

If the proposals are implemented we expect to see a decrease in hostel admissions. We expect the profile to remain constant; however we will continue to monitor the profile of clients to ensure our services are appropriate to meet their needs.

**Hostel admissions - Ethnic Origin 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number of people</b>	<b>% of people</b>
White	2525	68.9%
Black	152	4.1%
Asian	351	9.6%
Other ethnic origin	1	0.03%
Chinese	41	1.11%
Mixed/duel heritage	222	6.06%
Not known	372	10.2%

**Hostel admissions – Disability 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Number of people</b>	<b>% of people</b>
Yes	689	19%
No	2941	80%
Unknown	34	1%

**Hostel admissions – Religion 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Number of people</b>	<b>% of people</b>
Buddhist	9	0.25%
Christian	747	20.39%
Do not wish to disclose	226	6.17%
Hindu	55	1.50%
Jewish	1	0.03%
Muslim	297	8.11%
None	1780	48.58%
Not known	466	12.72%
Sikh	35	0.96%
Any other Religion	48	1.31%

**1c. How well does the strategy/policy/plan/needs assessment framework take into account the changing demographic profile of the city and the needs of new/emerging communities?**

The review of Homelessness Services identifies Leicester has a total population of 329 900 people (2011 Census) which represents a 16.6% increase on the 2001 Census.

Leicester has a relatively young population and a high percentage of black and minority ethnic residents, currently estimated at 40% (Diversity of Leicester: A Demographic Profile 2008). The population also includes migrants for the European Union, asylum seekers and refugees.

Leicester has a reputation of being a culturally diverse and safe city.

The review of Homelessness Services in Leicester identifies that family and single homelessness is rising. The Strategy predicts that homelessness will continue to rise due to the financial climate and Welfare Reforms.

The number of EEA workers has increased in the city and we have seen an increase in rough sleepers from Eastern Europe.

Black people are over-represented in statutory homeless services, when compared to people from White, and Asian backgrounds. It is thought the rise in the number of black people being accepted as statutory homeless is linked to migration and asylum in Leicester.

The loss of NASS accommodation, effecting refugees remains the main reason for loss of last settled accommodation. However, this is now on a downward trend.

**1d. What equality issues does the strategy/policy/plan/needs assessment framework need to address based on existing research or other service information available for the intended target audience? Outline the issues to consider for each of the protected characteristics below (where relevant for the target audience).**

<b>Age</b>	Young people becoming homeless will need to access housing advice, assistance, temporary accommodation and tenancy support, in particular, young people leaving care or teenage parents. There are a high number of children in our family hostels. The majority of people receiving a positive homeless decision were aged 29 to 49 years old.
<b>Disability</b>	Disabled people may need to access services as a result of harassment or leaving care. People with mental health issues may have specific needs that need to be addressed by services.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	People going through gender re-assignment may need to access services as a result of harassment or discrimination
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Women may need to access accommodation as a result of becoming pregnant
<b>Race</b>	People facing harassment or discrimination may need to access services. We are aware that people from the Asian community are underrepresented in our service user profile and people from Black communities are overrepresented. Any future changes to services could have a disproportionate impact on people from Black communities. We need to ensure our services are culturally sensitive to meet the needs of people from different backgrounds. Some people struggle to understand procedures when accessing homelessness services, particularly where their first language is not English.
<b>Religion or belief</b>	People facing harassment or discrimination may need to access services. We are aware that some hostels do not cater for the religious needs of some groups and are not culturally sensitive, however some BME providers do address these needs. Some people prefer women only services.
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	People may need to access services as a result of domestic violence.  More women than men work within homelessness services and therefore maybe disproportionally affected by any changes resulting from the new strategy.  There is some evidence to suggest sex workers have difficulty accessing services due to opening hours and access arrangements.
<b>Sexual</b>	People facing harassment or discrimination may need to access

<b>orientation</b>	services. We are aware some individuals find hostel environments to be unsafe.
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**Date completed** 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012

## Step 2 Consultation

### Question: 2

#### 2a. What consultation has taken place on the proposed strategy/policy/plan/needs assessment framework? When, where and who with?

##### Consultation 2012

Consultation took place when undertaking the review of homelessness services between March and July 2012. This included a workshop with service providers in March and a Homelessness Summit in June 2012. A Homelessness Strategy Reference Group was formed, made up of volunteers from Council services, the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector, and a representative from Homeless Link. This Group met numerous times during the review process and gave their views on the issues effecting homeless people in Leicester and the services currently provided to support them. Council officers undertook 64 interviews with current service providers, which amounted to over 140 hours of consultation. Surveys were carried out with front line staff and we talked to clients during our visits to services. Initial responses from this consultation, relating to equality issues are listed below.

##### Consultation 2012/13

Formal statutory consultation has taken place on the proposed strategy; this lasted 12 weeks, it commenced in November 2012 and closed on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2013. A range of consultation methods were used, including an online survey, a postal questionnaire, meetings and events with providers, partners and clients. People also sent in letters, e-mails and petitions in response to the consultation. There were 112 responses to the online survey, 110 responses to the postal questionnaire; over 1500 signatories to a number of petitions and over 20 meetings and events were held. Three of the petitions were about homeless provision for black and minority ethnic groups.

#### 2b. What potential impacts did consultation stakeholders identify?

##### Consultation 2012

- Welfare Reforms will mean that more people will be threatened with homelessness.
- Possible reductions in funding will have the biggest impact on single homeless people.
- There will be an increase in the number of people with complex issues to address.

##### Consultation 2012/13

Generally the strategic priorities of the strategy were supported, the focus on prevention and support was supported, however many stakeholders identified impacts in relation to some of the detail of the strategy in particular the proposal to reduce hostel provision.

Feedback on the proposal to reduce hostel provision indicated that most respondents did not support a reduction in provision, some of the equality impacts highlighted were:

- Some current clients felt that if they were not in a specific BME hostel they would experience racism, ignorance and religious hatred from other residents
- Lack of BME provision will lead to isolation for clients
- Need women only spaces in hostels
- Negative impact on those with mental health issues
- Unfair to those who experience domestic violence
- Impact on mental health of service users
- Impact on children, more children could go into care
- Negative impact on young people
- More males will be affected by closures of hostels for single people
- Lesbian, Gay and Transgender people need more support.
- Need for single sex rough sleepers provision

Feedback on the proposed Eligibility Criteria indicated that most respondents generally supported the criteria, some of the equality impacts highlighted were:

- Impact on vulnerable people who do not meet the criteria
- Criteria does not cover asylum seekers or new arrivals
- Impact on people who have substance use issues but who are not in active treatment
- The criteria should consider gender identity (transgender) and sexual orientation discrimination

Feedback relating to discharging the duty into the private rented sector was mixed, some of the equality impacts highlighted were:

- Children will not access specialist support
- Frequent moves in the sector will be disruptive for children, in relation to education and friendships
- Difficulty in offering mental health services in a shared house in the private rented sector

Feedback on the Single Access and Referral Point (SAR) indicated that most respondents generally supported the SAR, some of the equality impacts highlighted were:

- Concern Housing Options does not work for single people
- Children's Services in support of the SAR
- Young people may prefer to speak to other people rather than Housing Options staff
- Mentally ill people may not want to identify that they have an illness to SAR staff
- Perceived lack of customer care

**2c. What positive impacts were identified? For people with which protected characteristics?**

## **Consultation 2012**

- Specialist support will help to address the specific needs of homeless people
- Supporting health and well-being services will help to address the health needs of homeless people
- Introducing “No Second Night out” will help to address rough sleeping in the city, particularly to address the needs of people with no recourse to public funding.
- Floating support and prevention work is seen as positive and helps people from becoming homeless.
- The Council will meet its statutory duties
- The Strategy recognises the importance of education and training in helping people out of homelessness.
- Mediation is seen as an important part of prevention.
- On-going staff training is important to help officers assess the needs of individuals and complete assessments accurately.

## **Consultation 2012/13**

### **Strategy**

The majority of the respondents supported the six strategic principals of the strategy, 78.3% of respondents to the postal questionnaire supported the initiative and 78.6% of respondents to the online questionnaire agreed with the principals.

The majority of the respondents also supported No Second Night Out, 78.3% of respondents to the postal questionnaire agreed with the principals and 79.5% of respondents to the online questionnaire supported the initiative.

100% of clients at the client event at Hansom hall were in favour of retaining the Outreach Team.

The positive impacts mentioned in the feedback relating to the strategy were:

- Benefits of personalised support following the user wherever they were accommodated.
- Agreement of proposed priorities and emphasis on prevention

### **Discharging duty into the private rented sector**

The majority of respondents did support the proposal to discharge the duty into the private rented sector, 77.8% of respondents to the postal questionnaire supported this proposal and 36.6% of respondents to the online questionnaire supported this proposal.

The positive impacts mentioned in the feedback relating to the discharging duty to the private rented sector are:

- New Arrivals Strategy Group supported the use of this sector for new arrivals to the city.



## **Single Access and Referral Point (SAR)**

There was no specific question about the SAR in the consultation, however Children's Services have commented that they are supportive of the SAR for families with young children and young people. They welcomed the potential for a more consistent process with improved monitoring of cases.

## **2d. What negative impacts were identified? For people with which protected characteristics?**

### **Petitions**

- The petitions indicated claimed there will be negative impacts for people from BME backgrounds if specific BME services were not available in the future.
- The Kirton Lodge petition identified negative impacts for women and children if Kirton Lodge were to lose its funding
- Other petitions identified negative impacts for all people if there was a reduction in hostel provision and day centres.

### **Strategy**

The strategy was generally supported however it was highlighted that negative impacts would result from the delivery proposals and in particular the proposal to reduce hostel provision.

### **Reducing Hostel Provision**

Some of the negative impacts identified in the feedback on reducing hostel provision include:

- Negative impacts for people from BME backgrounds if BME specific services were not available in the future.
- Negative impacts on women if there were no women only spaces in hostels
- Negative impact on those with mental health issues
- Negative impact on mental health of service users
- Negative impact on children, more children could go into care
- Negative impact on young people
- Negative impact on males as they will be most affected by closures of hostels for single people

### **Eligibility Criteria**

Some of the negative impacts identified in the feedback on the proposal for the new eligibility criteria include:

- Negative impact on vulnerable people who do not meet the criteria
- Negative impact on people who have substance use issues but who are not in active treatment
- Criteria needs to consider people with sexuality or gender identity issues

### **Discharging duty into the private rented sector**

Some of the negative impacts identified in the feedback on the proposal to discharge the duty into the private rented sector include:

- Children will not access specialist support
- Frequent moves in the sector will be disruptive for children, in relation to education and friendships
- Difficulty in offering mental health services in a shared house in the private rented sector

**Single Access and Referral Point (SAR)**

Some of the negative impacts identified in the feedback on SAR include:

- Young people may prefer to speak to other people rather than staff at Housing Options
- Mentally ill people may not want to identify that they have an illness to SAR staff
- Perceived lack of customer care at Housing Options for all groups

**2e. Did stakeholders indicate how positive impacts could be further promoted? How?**

In the feedback from the Voluntary and Community Sector, it was recommended that the strategy be revised, include a vision statement, have more references to equality issues, links to other strategies and an indication of how clients could be involved in helping to shape future provision.

**2f. Did stakeholders indicate how negative impacts could be reduced or removed? How?**

- Need for a EU speaking worker in the Outreach Team
- More research needs to be carried out to understand the needs of homeless people from a BME background or who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.
- Improved equality data collection and analysis needs to take place across all providers.

**2g. Did potential service users identify any equality outcomes arising from the proposed strategy/policy/plan/needs assessment framework? If yes, what are they?**

No

**Date completed** .....12<sup>th</sup> March 2013.....

**Step 3 Proposed strategy/policy/plan/needs assessment framework**

Prior to considering the amended strategy in light of the consultation feedback, it is important to have a sense of the relative ‘equality/human rights’ priorities that frame our responsibilities

in considering what action to be taken as an authority in addressing the needs of people likely to become homeless.

The starting point is ensuring that we meet people's basic human rights (as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998). In regard to homelessness, the most relevant Articles of the Human Rights Act 1998 to consider are:

- Article 2: the right to life
- Article 3: the right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way
- Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence

The above Articles should be embedded within the eligibility criteria used to prioritise the provision of services to those who are likely to become homeless or are already homeless. Considerations around safeguarding and crime and disorder issues and the provision of support to individuals and families are indicative of how we would be meeting our Human Rights responsibilities.

In addition to Human Rights, consideration also needs to be given to the range of protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010. Key here is the elimination of discrimination – a feature of our public sector equality duty - crucial to those who already experience discrimination as a result of their protected characteristic (and where this possibly contributes to their being homeless) or who may be likely to experience discrimination as a result of their protected characteristic while being homeless. Again these considerations should be embedded within the eligibility criteria used to prioritise the provision of services based on an individual's or family's circumstances.

A final consideration is that we ensure in the delivery of services identified in the strategy, that we meet the diverse range of customer needs in order to ensure that the services are effective in achieving their intended outcomes. Such considerations – for example, gender, cultural or faith appropriate practices – should reflect and meet the needs of the diverse range of needs based on the protected characteristics of those being served.

### **Question 3**

**How will the proposed strategy/policy/plan/needs assessment framework impact on people affected because of their protected characteristics? Tick the potential impact of those likely to be affected by their protected characteristic.**

	No impact <sup>1</sup>	Positive impact <sup>2</sup>	Negative impact <sup>3</sup>	Impact not known <sup>4</sup>
<b>Age</b>		√	√	
<b>Disability</b>		√	√	
<b>Gender reassignment</b>		√	√	
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>		√	√	
<b>Race</b>		√	√	
<b>Religion or belief</b>		√	√	
<b>Sex (gender)</b>		√	√	
<b>Sexual orientation</b>		√	√	

**Question 4**

**For those likely to receive a positive impact, describe the likely positive impact for each group sharing a protected characteristic. How many people are likely to be affected?**

For all groups an increase in prevention services will mean some people will not have to go through the experience of homelessness. This will positively impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals as people will not need to relocate or lose support networks. This could also mean people will retain work and children not having to change schools, therefore not disrupting their education.

For all groups an increase in support services will mean that more people will be able to retain their tenancies and or be supported into independent living. For some people who have been revolving through the hostel system this could mean the break in a cycle of dependency and move on into their own settled accommodation. Again this would positively impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals.

Housing Options will monitor the numbers of people prevented from becoming homeless and those referred to support services.

**Question 5**

**5a. For those likely to receive a negative impact, describe the likely negative impact for each group sharing a protected characteristic. How many people are likely to be affected?**

<sup>1</sup> The proposal has no impact (positive or negative) on the group sharing a protected characteristic.

<sup>2</sup> The proposal addresses an existing inequality experienced by the group sharing a protected characteristic (related to employment, provision of services or facilities).

<sup>3</sup> The proposal disadvantages one or more of the group sharing a protected characteristic.

<sup>4</sup> There is insufficient information available to identify if the group sharing a protected characteristic will be affected by the proposal.

People under threat of becoming homeless as a result of social or economic problems and not aware of what can be done to address their situation, could become increasingly more isolated, vulnerable and distressed as their problems accumulate/accelerate without adequate intervention. It is crucial that they have access to information on what they can do about their situation and the support services available in the city to assist them if they become homeless.

If they do become homeless, there are a range of negative impacts they could experience which are dependent on the reason for their becoming homeless.

**Negative personal impacts arising from becoming homeless** There are personal/social negative impacts of becoming homeless: their no longer having the family and possibly friendship networks that provide social support, resilience and a sense of belonging to a place. If the cause of homelessness was economic, there would be a decrease in their standard of living which could result in poorer health and wellbeing. They could also become isolated from their previous 'world of work' and lose job skills needed for future employment.

**Negative impacts arising from proposed homeless accommodation**

Once homeless, there are negative impacts arising from the limited accommodation available from the council. Temporary accommodation may only be available for families and some single people where we have a statutory duty and those who meet our eligibility criteria. This means that other people from any protected characteristic group, who are not statutory homeless or vulnerable may not be able to access temporary accommodation.

If there are reductions in hostel places, this would reduce the availability and type of accommodation available. Alternative accommodation may be limited and away from existing social networks and communities.

**Negative impacts arising from proposed support when homeless**

If there are reductions in the provision of day centres, homeless people may no longer be able to access these services during the day, resulting in potential further social isolation. This may lead to an increase in use of other drop in centres and voluntary group activities.

On-going monitoring of the specific strategy areas mentioned in this Equality Impact Assessment will continue to ensure any impacts on groups with protected characteristics are identified and addressed.

**5b. How can these negative impacts be reduced or removed?**

We propose to increase the provision of advice and assistance at Housing Options to enable people to make choices about their housing situation, to prevent homelessness and to help people to retain their current accommodation.

We propose to increase support to prevent homelessness occurring in the first place by increasing floating support.

We propose to increase move on accommodation.

We propose to build in the need for culturally sensitive services within specifications for services to be commissioned.

We propose to ensure that needs of all people with protected characteristics are built in within the specifications for services to be commissioned.

We propose to ensure referrals and signposting takes place to relevant agencies to address non housing issues and opportunities for social interaction.

We will continue to pursue all options to increase the supply of affordable housing in the City.

In response to the consultation feedback some amendments have been made to the strategy including adding a vision statement and links to other strategies.

On the basis of consultation received we are looking to re-consider some of the original proposals and change them to:

- Retaining the Family Support Service and the Corner Club to provide support to families in the community at risk of homelessness instead of only to those at Border House. This change will assist more families with children who have safeguarding issues.
- to provide support to additional units of accommodation than originally proposed, this will impact on all people with protected characteristics.
- Retain the Centre Project to continue to provide support vulnerably housed people and those prone to tenancy breakdown. This change will impact on all people with protected characteristics who will continue to use the service.
- To consider retaining the day centre at the Dawn Centre providing a service for 20 hours a week. This change will impact on all people with protected characteristics who will continue to use the service.
- To continue to pilot the eligibility criteria, to monitor impact on people with protected characteristics. The eligibility criteria takes into account the needs of people experiencing homelessness if fleeing DV, households with safeguarding issues and people experiencing harassment or discrimination.
- To only use private sector lets to discharge the homelessness duty in cases where it will be appropriate and suitable. This proposal will ensure families who are more vulnerable are placed in suitable housing to meet their needs. This sector will not be used if it is assessed that the accommodation will not be appropriate for households who have safeguarding issues or who are fleeing DV.

#### **Question 6**

**What data/information/analysis have you used to inform your equality impact findings?**

Information collated and included in the Review of Homelessness Services in Leicester 2012.

Consultation data collected as part of the formal consultation that took place on the Homelessness Strategy in 2012/13.

#### **Question 7**

**7a. Does the proposed strategy/policy/plan/needs assessment framework include any equality outcomes? If yes, what are they?**

Equality outcomes are integrated in the output measures for divisional reporting; these will be tracked over time.

**7b. What indicators will you use to measure the successful delivery/achievement of these equality outcomes?**

Housing divisional output measures which include:

- Reduce the total number of people who repeatedly (stock and returners) rough sleeper
- Reduce the number of repeat single people on the homelessness list
- Increase the number and %age of households prevented from becoming homeless after seeking help at housing options.

**Date completed** .....14<sup>th</sup> March 2013.....

This EIA has been completed by: Gurjit Minhas

Lead officer (signature)	Gurjit Minhas
Date	12.03.2013

The EIA has been signed off by the Equality Officer:

Equality officer (signature)	Irene Kszyk
Date	15.03.2013

This EIA has been signed off by the Division Director:

Divisional Director (signature)	Ann Branson
Date	15.03. 2013

## EIA Action Plan

Please list all the equality objectives, actions and targets that result from the Equality Impact Assessment. These should be included in the relevant service plan for performance management purposes.

Equality Objective	Action required	Target	Officer responsible	By when?
Example: To know equality profile of all service users.	Example: collect monitoring data on disabled users (currently not being provided)	Example: To have data for first performance review	Example: Joe Smith	Example: Start collection of data in June 12
Ensure future provision meets the needs of people with protected characteristics	Develop specifications to address needs of all people with protected characteristics.	Dates will be based on when services are commissioned.	Helen McGarry	Dates will be based on when services are commissioned.
Ensure eligibility criteria addresses needs of people with protected characteristics	Monitor protected characteristics of people eligible and not eligible under new criteria to see if any trends need investigating.	Weekly monitoring, will need to be reviewed on a regular basis to see if there are any trends that need investigating.	Vijay Desor	Monitoring has already started
Ensure discharging the duty into the Private Rented Sector does not impact adversely on people with protected characteristics. E.g. families with child safeguarding issues	Monitor protected characteristics of people going into the private sector. Ensure accommodation is offered in circumstances where it is suitable and appropriate for the household.	Weekly monitoring will need to be reviewed on a regular basis to see if there are any trends that need investigating.	Vijay Desor	Monitoring to start once a decision has been made to implement this change in policy.
Ensure the Single Access	Ensure Housing Options staff are	On -going	Vijay Desor	To commence in June 2013



and Referral point is accessible and is set in a safe environment for vulnerable people. E.g. people with mental health issues	trained to deal with vulnerable clients and have customer care training			
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## What to do next?

If this EIA has identified any issues that need to be addressed (such as plugging a data gap, or carrying out a specific action that reduces or removes any negative impacts identified), complete the attached EIA Action Plan to set out what action is required, who will carry it out, and when it will be carried out/completed.

Once your EIA has been completed, (signed by the equalities officer **and countersigned by your Director**) the equality officer will work with you to monitor this action plan.

### Officers to contact:

Corporate overview: Irene Kszyk 296303  
 Adult Social Care: Gurjit Minhas 298706  
 Children's: Sonya King 297738  
 City Development & Neighbourhoods: Daxa Patel 296674

## Equality Impact Assessment - Homelessness Strategy Delivery Proposals

<b>Name of service</b>	<b>Homelessness Delivery Proposals</b>
<b>Lead officer and Contact details</b>	<b>Helen McGarry – Service Improvement Manager</b> <b>Gurjit Minhas – Business Change Manager</b>  <b>E mail: <a href="mailto:Helen.mcgarry@leicester.gov.uk">Helen.mcgarry@leicester.gov.uk</a></b> <b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:gurjit.minhas@leicester.gov.uk">gurjit.minhas@leicester.gov.uk</a></b>
<b>List of other(s) involved</b>	<b>Ann Branson</b>

**What is this EIA about?**

(Please tick✓)

<b>Budget proposal for existing service or service contract to achieve savings</b>	✓
<b>Budget proposal for new or additional service expenditure</b>	
<b>Commissioning a new service or service contract</b>	
<b>Changing or removing an existing service or service contract</b>	

### **Step 1: The proposal (how you propose to change the service)**

**Question 1:**

<b>What is the proposal/proposed change?</b>
<p>A review of homeless services in Leicester has taken place, resulting in the draft Homelessness Strategy 2013 – 18. Sitting alongside the draft Strategy are the draft Delivery Proposals. These give more specific details on our proposals for commissioning homelessness services in the future. These draft proposals have been based on the findings of the Homelessness Review and the draft Homelessness Strategy, taking into consideration the new financial envelope.</p> <p>The Housing Department has a 2012/13 Homelessness Services Budget of £6.611m, against which savings are now required of £1.52m during 2013/14, rising to £2.2m in 2014/15. These delivery proposals reflect this budget reduction.</p> <p>The review has shown that temporary accommodation, while essential in a crisis, is not solving the long-term problem for many single people, many of whom experience numerous episodes of homelessness. Solutions for families lie largely in a supply of good quality, affordable housing, however, for vulnerable single people, while this is important; there is</p>

also a need to improve support to enable them to sustain independent living.

In response to these findings, we have developed proposals which aim to support people into independent living, this is in line with national best practice we have identified. We want to focus resources to preventing homeless, wherever possible.

Therefore the proposals are to increase and maintain the following services listed below:

### **Supported and shared accommodation**

We propose to increase the number of units from 133 to 155 (including an extra 42 during the transitional period). Provision will continue to be provided in-house and commissioned from the voluntary and community sector.

### **Floating support**

We propose to increase the units of floating support from 316 to 395. Provision will continue to be commissioned from the voluntary and community sector and in-house. We will also provide targeted support to stop people revolving through the hostel system.

### **Rough sleeping**

We propose to retain the current in-house team (3 Officers).

### **Wet Day centre**

We propose to continue support for the provision of a safe environment for entrenched street drinkers.

### **Employment, education and training**

We propose to continue support for employment, education and training opportunities for homeless people.

### **Housing Advice and determination of homelessness decisions**

We propose to fund advice, assistance and prevention activities in-house (Housing Options).

We propose to increase funding to further develop the Private Rented Sector.

We propose to develop a full Single Access and Referral Service in- house (Housing Options)

Temporary accommodation will be provided to families and single people to whom we owe a statutory duty and to those who meet our eligibility criteria. This will mean only those in the highest need will be placed, other clients will be offered advice and assistance (e.g. the rent deposit guarantee scheme. We propose a reduction of the number of hostel spaces across the city as listed below: It is proposed that transitional arrangements are put in place to support people to move out of temporary accommodation and to help them access

alternative provision.

<b>Client group</b>	<b>Current provision</b>	<b>Proposed provision</b>
Young people	139 units provided by the voluntary and community sector	65 units commissioned from the voluntary and community sector
Families	129 units provided by LCC and the voluntary and community sector	50 units retained in house (Border House) 10 units for teenage parents commissioned from the voluntary and community sector
Ex-offenders	46 units in the voluntary and community sector	30 units commissioned from the voluntary and community sector
Single people	129 units provided by LCC and in the voluntary and community sector	44 units retained in house (Dawn Centre)

### **Day Centres**

We propose to stop funding day centres.

### **Who will it affect and how will they likely be affected?**

The increase in prevention and support services will affect anyone that is threatened with homelessness, is homeless or has experienced homelessness. Staff employed by existing providers and internal LCC staff working in Housing Options, Hostels, Supported Housing and STAR will be affected if services are reconfigured or more resources agreed to increase current provision.

Any decommissioning decisions will affect anyone experiencing or facing homelessness, also people who may become homeless in the future, the service they receive may change. Staff employed by existing providers will be affected if the Council changes providers, reduces or de-commissions services. Internal LCC staff working in Housing Options, Hostels, Supported Housing and STAR will be affected if the proposals are implemented following the consultation process.

### **External providers that may be affected are:**

- ASRA Housing Group (formerly Leicester Housing Association Support Services)
- Adullam Homes Housing
- Foundation Housing Association
- East Midlands Housing Association
- Hits Homes Trust
- Leicester Holme Project
- Leicester YMCA

- Home Group Limited (Stoneham)
- Action Homeless (Leicester)
- Park Lodge Project
- Catch 22 Charity
- Leicestershire and Rutland Probation Board
- Shelter Housing Aid and Research Project
- Centre Project
- Leicestershire Cares
- Anchor Club
- Y Advice and Support Centre

Temporary accommodation will continue to be provided for statutory homeless households and to some other clients groups who meet our eligibility criteria. We anticipate the biggest impact will be on single people who will receive a different type of service.

Different services collect different types of data and service user information to capture the service they deliver and the outcome service users receive. The aim of the profile below is to capture what you already collect, not to make your information fit a standard template. List the equality profile of your service users. Where you find you do not address a particular characteristic, ask yourself why. You may need to follow up any information gaps as an action point. If this is the case, add it to the action plan at the end of the template.

### Question 2:

#### What is the equality profile of current service users?

We know the demographics of people currently on the Housing Register. These are shown below.

If the proposals are implemented we will see an increase in people receiving a floating support service. We expect the profile to remain constant; however we will continue to monitor the profile of clients to ensure our services are appropriate to meet their needs.

#### Floating support clients – Ethnic Origin 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

Ethnicity	Number of people	% of people
White	1383	59%
Black	383	16%
Asian	377	16%

Other ethnic origin	44	2%
Chinese	43	2%
Mixed/duel heritage	85	4%
Not known	23	1%

#### Floating support clients – Disability 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

Disability	Number of people	% of people
Yes	610	26%
No	1657	71%
Not known	71	3%

#### Floating support clients – Gender 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

Gender	Number of people	% of people
Female	1448	62%
Male	890	38%

#### Floating support clients – Religion 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

Religion	Number of people	% of people
Christian	573	24%
Do not wish to disclose	178	8%
Hindu	99	4%
Jewish	4	0%
Muslim	311	13%
None	648	28%
Not known	458	20%
Sikh	39	2%
Any other Religion	28	1%

If the proposals are implemented or homelessness rises we will see an increase in people accessing Housing Options and the Housing Register. We expect the profile to remain constant; however we will continue to monitor the profile of clients to ensure our services are appropriate to meet their needs.

#### Demographic break down of the Housing Register (October 2012)

##### Age

Age of applicant	Number of applicants	% of applicants
Under 18	6	0.1%
19 to 24	1 516	15.7%
25 to 44	5 036	52.0%
45 to 54	1 475	15.2%
55 to 74	1 353	14.0%
75+	295	3.0%

##### Ethnic Origin

Ethnicity	Number of applicants	% of applicants
White	3 062	31.6%

Black	1 000	10.3%
Asian	2 375	24.5%
Other Ethnic origin	136	1.4%
Ethnic origin not given	2 928	30.3%
Chinese	13	0.1%
Mixed/duel heritage	163	1.7%

### Disability

Disability	Number of applicants	% of applicants
Yes	482	4.9%
No	3 771	38.6%
Unknown	5 504	56.4%

### Sexuality

Sexuality	Number of applicants	% of applicants
Bisexual	114	1.2%
Gay (female / lesbian)	27	0.3%
Gale (Male)	28	0.3%
Heterosexual / straight	3 435	35.2%
Other	118	1.2%
Prefer not to say	472	4.8%
Unknown	5 563	57.0%

### Religion

Religion	Number of applicants	% of applicants
Atheist	146	1.5%
Bahai	0	0.0%
Buddhist	9	0.1%
Christian	1 219	12.5%
Hindu	339	3.5%
Jain	7	0.1%
Jewish	0	0.0%
Muslim	1 040	10.7%
No religion	1 010	10.4%
Other	164	1.7%
Prefer not to say	260	2.7%
Sikh	71	0.7%
Unknown	5 492	56.3%

Although our aim is to reduce and prevent people becoming homeless external factors such as the economic climate and the welfare benefit changes may impact on the numbers of people making homelessness declarations. We expect the profile to remain constant; however we will continue to monitor the profile of clients to ensure our services are appropriate to meet their needs.

### Demographic profile of homeless people

#### Homeless declarations – Ethnic Origin 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012

Ethnicity	Number of people	% of people
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White	602	55.2%
Black	132	12.1%
Asian	118	10.8%
Other ethnic origin	25	2.3%
Chinese	0	0.0%
Mixed/dual heritage	0	0.0%
Not known	214	19.6%

#### Homeless declarations – Disability 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012

Disability	Number of people	% of people
Yes	66	6.0%
No	410	37.6%
Unknown	615	56.4%

#### Homeless declarations – Religion 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012

Religion	Number of people	% of people
Atheist	20	1.8%
Buddhist	2	0.0%
Christian	116	10.6%
Do not wish to disclose	48	4.4%
Hindu	15	1.4%
Jewish	0	0%
Muslim	71	6.5%
None	158	14.5%
Not known	620	56.8%
Sikh	10	0.9%
Any other Religion	31	56.8%

#### Homeless declarations – Age 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012

Age of applicant	Number of applicants	% of applicants
Under 18	15	1.4%
19 – 24	325	29.8%
25 – 44	576	52.8%
45 - 54	137	12.6%
55 - 74	32	2.9%
75+	6	0.5%

#### Homeless declarations – Gender 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012

Gender	Number of people	% of people
Female	449	41.2%
Male	642	58.8%

#### Homeless declarations – Sexual orientation 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012

Sexual orientation	Number of people	% of people
Bisexual	10	0.9%
Gay (Female / Lesbian)	6	0.5%
Gay (May)	1	0.1%
Heterosexual / Straight	397	36.4%



Prefer not to say	43	3.9%
Other	16	1.5%
Unknown	618	56.6%

If the proposals are implemented we expect to see a decrease in hostel admissions. We expect the profile to remain constant; however we will continue to monitor the profile of clients to ensure our services are appropriate to meet their needs.

#### **Hostel admissions - Ethnic Origin 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number of people</b>	<b>% of people</b>
White	2525	68.9%
Black	152	4.1%
Asian	351	9.6%
Other ethnic origin	1	0.03%
Chinese	41	1.11%
Mixed/duel heritage	222	6.06%
Not known	372	10.2%

#### **Hostel admissions – Disability 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Number of people</b>	<b>% of people</b>
Yes	689	19%
No	2941	80%
Unknown	34	1%

#### **Hostel admissions – Religion 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Number of people</b>	<b>% of people</b>
Buddhist	9	0.25%
Christian	747	20.39%
Do not wish to disclose	226	6.17%
Hindu	55	1.50%
Jewish	1	0.03%
Muslim	297	8.11%
None	1780	48.58%
Not known	466	12.72%
Sikh	35	0.96%
Any other Religion	48	1.31%

#### **Do you anticipate any changes to your service user profile as a result of your proposal/proposed change? If yes, how will it change?**

The number of people accessing hostel accommodation will reduce.

We know people from a black background are disproportionately over represented in current homeless services. We anticipate that the profile of people using homeless services will not change.

More people will be accessing floating support and shared / supported accommodation.

We expect more people to access advice and prevention services.

Think about the diversity of your service users and the specific needs they may have that you need to address, depending on the service context and user group. An example of service need is school aged children having differing school meal requirements due to their ethnic or religious background; a potential issue could be poverty/low income having adverse impacts on children, women (lone parents) and pensioners. This depends on the service context and user groups.

<b>What are the main service needs and/or issues for those receiving the service because of their protected characteristic?</b>	
	<b>Service needs and/or issues by protected characteristic</b>
<b>Age</b>	<p><b>Those at threat of becoming homeless:</b> Young people under threat of becoming homeless need advice and support on how to address the issues they are facing that may cause them to be homeless. This will vary based on their personal and current housing circumstances.</p> <p><b>Those who are homeless:</b> Young people who have become homeless will need to access housing advice, assistance, temporary accommodation and tenancy support, in particular people leaving care or teenage parents. There are high number of children in family hostels. The majority of people receiving a positive homeless decision were aged 29 – 49 years old.</p> <p>We currently provide services targeted at young people and teenage parents and we propose to continue to do so. We propose to develop specifications for future services to meet the needs of young people and support them into independent settled accommodation.</p>
<b>Disability</b>	<p><b>Those at threat of becoming homeless:</b> Disabled people may need to access safeguarding services as a result of harassment by others, or victimisation by family members. Those leaving care may require additional support to become independent. People with mental health issues may have specific needs that need to be addressed by services.</p> <p>We currently provide services that aim to be accessible for disabled people and we propose to ensure that the access needs of disabled people are met by future providers.</p>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<p><b>Those at threat of becoming homeless:</b> People going through gender re-assignment may need to access services as a result of harassment or discrimination.</p>

	<p>We currently aim to ensure services are sensitive and meet the needs of people going through gender reassignment and we propose to ensure future services will continue to do so.</p>
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	<p><b>Those at threat of becoming homeless:</b> Women may need to access advice and support as a result of their becoming pregnant.</p> <p><b>Those who are homeless:</b> Pregnant women who are homeless may need health related advice and support as well as accommodation during and after pregnancy.</p> <p>Services we currently provide aim to meet the needs of pregnant women and we propose to ensure future services will continue to do so.</p>
<b>Race</b>	<p><b>Those at threat of becoming homeless:</b> People under threat of becoming homeless need accessible advice and support (in other languages if necessary) on how to address the issues they are facing that may cause them to be homeless. This will vary based on their personal circumstances. If they are experiencing harassment or discrimination they may need specific support on how to stop and redress what has occurred.</p> <p><b>Those who are homeless:</b> People from different cultural backgrounds need to be able to access information, and advice if necessary, on the assistance available to them if they become homeless (in other languages if necessary). Services should be culturally sensitive to the needs of people from different backgrounds.</p> <p>We currently aim to ensure that we meet the needs of people from all ethnicities including the language needs of people and we propose to continue to do so.</p>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<p><b>Those at threat of becoming homeless:</b> People under threat of becoming homeless need advice and support on how to address the issues they are facing that may cause them to be homeless. This will vary based on their personal circumstances. If they are experiencing harassment or discrimination they may need specific support on how to stop and redress what has occurred.</p> <p><b>Those who are homeless:</b> Service providers should be aware of the religious needs of different groups, including the preference for women only services.</p> <p>We currently aim to ensure that we meet the needs of people from a variety of religious backgrounds and we propose to continue to do so.</p>
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	<p><b>Those at threat of becoming homeless:</b> People may need information and advice on how to access support and possibly services as a result of domestic violence.</p> <p><b>Those who are homeless:</b></p>

	<p>Some women may prefer women only services.</p> <p>We currently aim to ensure that we meet the needs of men and women and we propose to continue to do so.</p>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<p><b>Those at threat of becoming homeless:</b> Some people may face homelessness because of their sexual orientation (within family/kinship relationships) and need advice and support on how to address the issues they face. Or they may need information and advice on how to access support and possibly services as a result of domestic violence.</p> <p><b>Those who are homeless:</b> Some individuals find hostel environments to be unsafe.</p> <p>We currently aim to ensure services are sensitive and meet the needs of people in respect to their sexual orientation, we propose to ensure future services will continue to do so.</p>

**Question 3:**

**Will the proposal have an impact on people because of their protected characteristic? Tick the anticipated impact for those likely to be affected and describe that impact in the questions 4 & 5 below.**

	No impact <sup>5</sup>	Positive impact <sup>6</sup>	Negative impact <sup>7</sup>	Impact not known <sup>8</sup>
<b>Age</b>		√	√	
<b>Disability</b>		√	√	
<b>Gender reassignment</b>		√	√	
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>		√	√	
<b>Race</b>		√	√	
<b>Religion or belief</b>		√	√	
<b>Sex (gender)</b>		√	√	
<b>Sexual orientation</b>		√	√	

**Question 4:**

**Where there is a positive impact, describe the impact for each group sharing a protected characteristic. How many people are likely to be affected?**

For all groups an increase in prevention services will mean some people will not have to go through the experience of homelessness. This will positively impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals as people will not need to relocate or lose support networks. This could also mean people will retain work and children not having to change schools, therefore not disrupting their education.

<sup>5</sup> The proposal has no impact (positive or negative) on the group sharing a protected characteristic.

<sup>6</sup> The proposal addresses an existing inequality experienced by the group sharing a protected characteristic (related to provision of services or facilities).

<sup>7</sup> The proposal disadvantages one or more of the group sharing a protected characteristic.

<sup>8</sup> There is insufficient information available to identify if the group sharing a protected characteristic will be affected by the proposal.

For all groups an increase in support services will mean that more people will be able to retain their tenancies and or be supported into independent living. For some people who have been revolving through the hostel system this could mean the break in a cycle of dependency and move on into their own settled accommodation. Again this would positively impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals.

**Question 5:**

**Where there is a negative impact, describe the adverse impact for each group sharing a protected characteristic. How many people are likely to be affected?**

People under threat of becoming homeless as a result of social or economic problems and not aware of what can be done to address their situation, could become increasingly more isolated, vulnerable and distressed as their problems accumulate/accelerate without adequate intervention.

If they do become homeless, there are a range of negative impacts they could experience which are dependent on the reason for their becoming homeless.

There are personal/social negative impacts of becoming homeless: their no longer having the family and possibly friendship networks that provide social support, resilience and a sense of belonging to a place. If the cause of homelessness was economic, there would be a decrease in their standard of living which could result in poorer health and wellbeing. They could also become isolated from their previous 'world of work' and lose job skills needed for future employment.

Once homeless, there are negative impacts arising from the limited accommodation available from the council. Temporary accommodation may only be available for families and some single people where we have a statutory duty and those who meet our eligibility criteria. This means that other people from any protected characteristic group, who are not statutory homeless or vulnerable may not be able to access temporary accommodation.

If there are reductions in hostel places, this would reduce the availability and type of accommodation available. Alternative accommodation may be limited and away from existing social networks and communities.

If there are reductions in the provision of day centres, homeless people may no longer be able to access these services during the day, resulting in potential further social isolation. This may lead to an increase in use of other drop in centres and voluntary group activities.

**How can the negative impact for each group sharing a protected characteristic be reduced or removed?**

We propose to increase the provision of advice and assistance at Housing Options to enable people to make choices about their housing situation, to prevent homelessness and to help people to retain their current accommodation.

We propose to increase support to prevent homelessness occurring in the first place by increasing the units of floating support. We propose to increase specialist floating support to meet the specific needs of clients and with the aim of reducing people revolving through the hostel system.

We propose to build in the need for culturally sensitive services within the specifications for the procurement of all services.

We propose to ensure referrals and signposting takes place to relevant agencies to address non housing issues and opportunities for social interaction.

We will continue with the implementation of No Second Night Out which will address the needs of rough sleepers.

We are working to increase access to the private rented sector to increase the supply of housing we have in this sector.

The proposed new eligibility criteria is being piloted.

Should the proposals be go ahead, the project plan allows time between the announcements and the implementation of new services to allow time for in-house and voluntary sector services to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for existing services users.

Allowance has been made for 42 additional move-on bed spaces for a one year period during which the full impact can be assessed.

We will continue to pursue all options to increase the supply of affordable housing in the City.

**Question 6:**

**Which relevant stakeholders were involved in proposing the actions recommended for reducing or removing adverse impacts arising from the proposal?**

To be added in the final document when consultation has taken place.

**What data/information/analysis have you used to inform your equality impact findings?**

Information collated and included in the Review of Homelessness Services in Leicester 2012.

**Supplementary information**

**Question 7:**

**Is there other alternative or comparable provision available in the city? Who provides it and where is it provided?**

Alternative provision is available across the city, within the voluntary and community sector. Our proposals include commissioning some services in this sector.

We also propose to increase access to the private rented sector and increase our supply of accommodation in this sector that people can be referred to.

**Can this alternative or comparable provision help reduce or remove the negative impacts identified in Question 5? If not, why not?**

Even with commissioning in the voluntary and community sector the negative impacts would remain with the current financial envelope. Our aim is to meet basic priority needs and our statutory duties. Our proposals to increase preventative services will help to reduce the numbers of people having to access some of the services we are proposing to reduce.

**Would service users negatively affected by the proposal be eligible to use this alternative or comparable provision? Would it meet their identified needs?**

Service users would be able to access some of the preventative services. These would not necessarily meet all their identified needs.

**Question 8:**

**Will any particular area of the city be more affected by the proposal than other parts of the city? What area and why?**

Affects the entire city.

For example, Government policies or proposed changes to current provision by public agencies (such as new benefit arrangements) that have an adverse impact on residents; external economic impacts such as the recession/economic downturn; socio-economic factors such as deprivation/low income.

**Is it likely that there may be other sources of negative impacts affecting service users over the next three years that need to be considered? What might compound the negative effects of this proposal? Describe any additional negative impacts over time that could realistically occur.**

- The economic climate, including the current housing market and unemployment could lead to a rise in homelessness. For example, re-possession could increase which could lead to an increase in people declaring themselves homeless.
- Shortage of social housing and affordable housing in the private rented sector.
- Impact of Welfare Reforms

**Question 10:**

**Will staff providing the service be affected by the proposal/proposed changes? If yes, which posts and in what way?**

Staff will be affected. Senior staff are currently being reviewed in a Senior Management Review and a separate Equality Impact Assessment is being carried out as part of that review. There will be further staff reviews and Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out as part of the review process.

**Date completed** 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012

## Step 2: Consultation on the proposal

Consulting potential service users on the proposal will provide you with an opportunity to collect information from them on the equality impacts they think may occur as a result of the proposed change, positive as well as negative. For negative impacts, this is an opportunity for them to identify how best to mitigate any negative impacts on them that they think may occur.

### Question 1:

**What consultation on the final proposal has taken place?**

**When, where and who with?**

12 week formal statutory consultation has taken place on the proposed strategy; this commenced in November 2012 and closed on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2013. A range of consultation methods were used, including an online survey, a postal questionnaire, meetings and events with providers, partners and clients. People also sent in letters, e-mails and petitions in response to the consultation. There were 112 responses to the online survey, 110 responses to the postal questionnaire; over 1500 signatories to a number of petitions and over 20 meetings and events were held. Three of the petitions were about homeless provision for black and minority ethnic groups.

### Question 2:

**What potential impacts did consultation stakeholders identify?**

Petitions about BME provision claim that if there were no specific BME providers the impact on BME clients would be that their cultural needs would not be met.

The petition to save Kirton Lodge identifies that if Kirton Lodge lost its funding this would impact on vulnerable women and children.

The other petitions were mainly in support of retaining the current level of hostel and day centre provision to prevent homelessness.

Increase and maintain:

**Move on** – The general feedback was that this would have a positive impact and was supported, however some concerns were raised about the suitability of shared accommodation for all clients and requests for further definition and clarification about move on.

**Floating Support** – The general feedback was that this would have a positive impact and was supported by most stakeholders, however the comments made this would depend on the effectiveness of the provision.

**Rough Sleeping** – There was strong support for No Second Night Out and retaining the rough sleepers team however concerns were raised that reduction in hostel provision would increase homelessness.

**Wet Day Centre** – There was overall support for this service, in particular from the Police and Safer Leicester Partnership.



**Employment Education and Training** – There was overall support for this initiative and the feedback indicated that this service would have positive results for all groups.

**Housing Options Service** – Mixed response to this service, concerns about customer care and gate keeping role.

**Reduction in hostel provision for** – overall was not supported. There were 112 respondents to the online survey, 18.8% of them supported this proposal. There were 110 respondents to the postal survey out of them, 34.6% supported this proposal. At the client out of 94 attendees, 0% supported this proposal.

**Young People** – The proposal to reduce hostel accommodation for young people was not supported by most respondents, concerns were raised about young people being vulnerable and impacts on crime and disorder.

**Families** – The proposal to reduce family accommodation was not supported by most respondents, concerns were raised that children could end up in care because of safeguarding issues and there was not enough provision.

**Ex-offenders** – This proposal received a mixed response, probation were supportive of this proposal as it was felt it met the City needs, but other stakeholders like the Police were worried about crime and disorder impacts.

**Single people** - This proposal was not supported by most respondents, concerns raised about crime and disorder impacts and some groups with protected characteristics needing more support.

**Day Centres** – There was overall support for days centres, in that they helped people access health care and reduce rough sleeping.

**What positive equality impacts were identified? For people with which protected characteristics?**

**Increase in Floating Support** – general overall positive impact for groups needing more support such as young people and people who are revolving through the system, some of these have mental health issues or substance and alcohol dependencies.

**Rough Sleeping Proposals (No Second Night Out and retain the Out Reach Team)** – general overall positive impact to assist clients, some who may have mental health issues or substance and alcohol dependencies.

**Retain Wet Day Centre** – Overall positive impact as a safe environment for clients with alcohol dependencies.

**Retain Employment Education and Training Initiative** – Overall positive impact for clients from all protected groups in that outcomes are achieved to help people access employment, education and training.

**Housing Options Service** – Positive impact for clients from all protected group that are

helped to find housing solutions

**What negative equality impacts were identified? For people with which protected characteristics?**

**Move on** – most of the feedback indicated that increasing provision would not have a negative impact, however shared housing for some vulnerable people would not be suitable.

**Floating Support** – most of the feedback indicated that increasing provision would not have a negative impact, however it should not be seen as a replacement for intensive support, some people may need e.g. people with mental health issues.

**Housing Options Centre** – Some of the negative impacts identified were:

- Young people may prefer to speak to other people rather than staff at Housing Options
- Mentally ill people may not want to identify that they have an illness to Housing Options staff
- Perceived lack of customer care at Housing Options for all groups

Reduction in hostel provision for – overall some of the negative impacts were identified as:

- Negative impacts for people from BME backgrounds if BME specific services were not available in the future.
- Negative impacts on women if there were no women only spaces in hostels
- Negative impact on those with mental health issues
- Negative impact on mental health of service users
- Negative impact on children, more children could go into care
- Negative impact on young people
- Negative impact on males as they will be most affected by closures of hostels for single people

Young People – some of the negative impacts identified by respondents included more young people who were vulnerable having to face threatening conditions and more crime and disorder if provision was reduced.

**Families** – some of the negative impacts were that there may be more safeguarding issues for children and initiatives such as the Family Support Services beneficial for the health and wellbeing of children. Negative impact on BME communities if there was no specialist BME provision.

**Ex-offenders** – some of the negative impacts identified related to increase in crime and disorder if this provision was reduced.

**Single people** - some of the impacts identified related to more crime and disorder if this provision was reduced and also identified more males would be affected by this proposal. Negative impact on BME communities if there was no specialist provision.

**Day Centres** - some of the impacts identified related to more crime and disorder if this provision was reduced and less access to health services.

**Question 3:**

**Did stakeholders indicate how positive impacts could be further promoted? How?**

**No**

**Did stakeholders indicate how negative impacts could be reduced or removed? How?**

**Increasing or retain hostel provision, including services such as the Family Support Service and keeping day centres open.**

**Date completed** .....14<sup>th</sup> March 2013.....

### Step 3: The recommendation (the recommended decision on how to change the service)

#### Question 1:

Has your recommended proposal changed from the proposal in Step 1 as a result of consultation and further consideration?

Yes  No  If 'no', go to Question 2.

#### **If yes, describe the revised proposal and how it will affect current service users?**

- Retaining the Family Support Service and Corner Club to provide support to families in the community at risk of homelessness instead of only to those at Border House. This change will assist more families with children who have safeguarding issues, this will help keep more children safe.
- Services are sought to provide support to additional units of accommodation than originally proposed, this will impact on all people with protected characteristics. More provision will mitigate some of the crime and disorder identified through the consultation feedback.
- Retain the Centre Project to continue to provide support vulnerably housed people and those prone to tenancy breakdown. This change will impact on all people with protected characteristics who will continue to use the service. More provision will mitigate some of the crime and disorder identified through the consultation feedback.
- To retain the day centre at the Dawn Centre providing a service for 20 hours a week. This change will impact on all people with protected characteristics who will continue to use the service. More provision will mitigate some of the crime and disorder identified through the consultation feedback.

**What are the equality implications of these changes? Identify the likely positive and negative impacts of the final proposal and the protected characteristic affected.**

Go back to the initial exercise you carried out at the beginning, on understanding your equality profile. Re-visit each characteristic and what has changed as a result of amending your recommendation. Revise potential positive and negative equality impacts accordingly.

The equality impacts will be that more people from all the groups with protected characteristics will receive services that they have identified that they need. Alongside this the overall increase in prevention and support services which was part of the original proposals will mean some people will not have to go through the experience of homelessness. This will positively impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals as people will not need to relocate or lose support networks. This could also mean people will retain work and children not having to change schools, therefore not disrupting their education.

For all groups an increase in support services will mean that more people will be able to retain their tenancies and or be supported into independent living. For some people who have been revolving through the hostel system this could mean the break in a cycle of dependency and move on into their own settled accommodation. Again this would positively impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals.

Specifications for all new services commissioned will be developed to ensure that the needs of all people with protected characteristics are addressed. As highlighted earlier people from a black background are disproportionately over represented in current homeless services. We anticipate that the profile of people using homeless services will not change, therefore the needs of this group as well as other needs to be met by all providers.

**How can any negative impacts be reduced or removed?**

**We will need to monitor outcomes for all groups with protected characteristic to ensure appropriate services are being delivered in the future and investigate and address any trends that show negative impacts on any particular group of people.**

**Question 2:**

**Are there any actions<sup>9</sup> required as a result of this EIA?**

Yes

No

**If yes, complete the action plan on the next page.**

**Date completed** .....14<sup>th</sup> March 2013.....

<sup>9</sup> Actions could include improving equality information collected or identifying the actions required to mitigate adverse impacts identified in the EIA.

## Step 4: Sign-off

<b>This EIA completed by</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Lead officer	Gurjit Minhas	Gurjit Minhas	14.03.13
<b>Countersigned by</b> Equalities Officer	Irene Kszyk	Irene Kszyk	15.03.13
<b>Signed off by</b> Divisional Director	Ann Branson	Ann Branson	15.03.13

**Completion** - Keep a copy for your records, and **send an electronic copy** of the completed and signed form to the [Corporate Equalities Lead](#) for audit purposes

## EIA Action Plan

Please list all the equality objectives, actions and targets that result from the Equality Impact Assessment. These should be included in the relevant service plan for performance management purposes.

Equality Objective	Action required	Target	Officer responsible	By when?
Example: To know equality profile of all service users.	Example: collect monitoring data on disabled users (currently not being provided)	Example: To have data for first performance review	Example: Joe Smith	Example: Start collection of data in April 2013
Ensure future provision meets the needs of people with protected characteristics	Develop specifications to address needs of all people with protected characteristics.	Dates will be based on when services are commissioned.	Helen McGarry	Dates will be based on when services are commissioned.
Ensure all groups with protected characteristics are receiving a fair service to meet their needs	Monitor outcomes for all groups with a protected characteristic to ensure appropriate services are being delivered in the future and investigate and address any trends that show negative impacts on any particular group of people	Once new services are in place	Ann Branson	Once new services are in place

## Appendix F

### Reduction in the Cost of Services

#### Summary of Savings (Full Year Effect)

Projected savings from consulted on proposals	£2,100k
Of which included in Phase 1	£1,218k
Of which included in Phase 2	£882k
Savings from recommendations in phase 1	£938k
<b>Difference from the originally projected savings for phase 1</b>	<b>£280k</b>

#### Analysis of the Reduction in Savings

Additional transitional family support (10 units)	£106k
Continuation of day centres	£98k
Continuation of Corner Club	£70k
Other	£6k
<b>Total</b>	<b>£280k</b>



## Appendix G

### Dependencies between proposed Phase One and Proposed later decisions

1. Phase One decision focus on
  - Overall strategy
  - Creation of single access point
  - Procurement of temporary family accommodation
  - Family Support Service
  - Corner Club
  - Day Centres
2. Further reports will be brought on
  - Change to Allocation Policy (Band 5)
  - Level of provision needed for single people and young single people and their transitional arrangements

### Strategy Decisions

3. The Strategy Principles provide a framework for both phase one and later decisions and can be agreed at this stage.
4. The sections in the Strategy titled “Delivery the Strategy” contain some detailed proposals. Recommendation 2.1 is therefore qualified to allow these issues to be considered later. These detailed proposals will also be amended, as required, depending on the decisions taken in this report.

### Delivery Plan Decisions

5. The decisions relating to Family provision can stand alone from proposed Phase 2 decisions.
6. The decision on specialist support to homeless ex-offenders can stand alone from future decisions on single people in general. This is because this group is seen as the highest priority of provision for single people.
7. Employment initiatives stand alone.
8. Day centres are used only by single people. However, the rationale for this grant aid is not linked to decisions on the amount and type of temporary accommodation for single people which will be considered in Phase 2. Making decisions in phase 1 reduces uncertainty for the Day Centres whose contracts have been extended until the end of June 2013

## Appendix H

### Services to Homeless Families and pregnant women

#### What will the service look like if the proposals are implemented?

1. **All homeless families and pregnant women will continue to be offered help to find and keep a settled home.** This is not only policy it is backed by statutory duties. If a family fear they are facing homelessness for whatever reason and they get in touch with either Housing Options (by phone or visit) or a local Housing Office they will firstly be offered support and advice to *either* keep their existing home (e.g. debt and welfare advice, check Housing Benefits, negotiating with their current landlord) *or* assistance to find a new house (e.g. join the Housing Register, look in private rented sector with the help of LeicesterLet or a rent deposit guarantee). During 2012/13 we predict<sup>10</sup> that over 1200 families will come to Housing Options saying they face homelessness and we will help the majority of families in those ways .This is what we mean by **prevention**.
2. **Between April and December 2012** homelessness was prevented or the length of stay in hostels and bed and breakfast kept as short as possible by helping families into settled accommodation as follows:
  - Move into a Council or Housing Association or HomeCome let via HomeChoice. ( **174 families**)
  - Get a private let for use as their settled home, with the help of LeicesterLet or rent guarantee. (**71 families**)
3. If homelessness **cannot be prevented or it is unreasonable for the household to stay where they are (e.g. fleeing Domestic Violence)** then the Council **will arrange temporary accommodation**.
4. **Between April 2012 and December 2012 151 families** went into the council's own family hostel or into Kirton Lodge (a council funded VCS hostel) after a referral from Housing Options.
5. Nearly all refugee families need to go into a hostel because the Border Agency give very short notice of asylum decisions and notice to quit from NASS accommodation. We manage domestic violence cases arising for council tenants by the effective use of the Housing Allocation Scheme, which means families are transferred directly into alternative council accommodation and hostels are avoided. In other cases, we refer some domestic violence cases to

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the council funded SAFE project in Leicester and women's refugees (locally and nationally) and some go into Border House. The basis of referrals to temporary accommodation is based on risks presenting to the family. If domestic violence is discussed or suspected officers always tell service users about the range of services available in the City.

6. In addition, between **April 2012 and December 2012 29 families** went into a **private rented house as a temporary measure**. The Council believes that with very few exceptions, it is better for a family to be offered a family home rather than a hostel space. Certainly bed and breakfast will only be used as a last resort in an emergency. Between April 2012 and December 2013 **53 families had to use bed and breakfast** for very short periods of time usually less than 4 nights before moving into a hostel or other temporary or settled accommodation.
7. So, **if no settled home is immediately available and the family is in crisis** then a hostel space is seen as preferable to bed and breakfast. But better still would be an independent home. That is why in December 2011 we started to use the private rented sector as temporary accommodation. Families have generally welcomed this; it has given people access to homes in more parts of the City as well as independence. **The proposal now is to make the private let the permanent solution to their homelessness crisis. (ie cease our duty)**
8. At the moment there are 7 VCS council funded temporary family and teenage parent 'hostels' (some are self-contained supported flats ) with 80 units which, with the exception of Kirton Lodge, run their own admissions policies.
9. We are confident that either a hostel admission could have been avoided, or the length of stay reduced for many of the families going into this VCS provision. (average length of stay was 20 weeks, compared to 14 weeks in Border House, and for teenage parents one year).
10. We agree that some teenage parents will need a specialist supportive environment so 10 spaces will be commissioned with Children's Services working with Housing Options to identify who needs this accommodation. The length of stay in this supported accommodation will be assumed to be longer than in normal homelessness hostels. However, there will still be an emphasis on families being helped to get their own settled independent home.
11. To reduce the risk that our calculations are wrong and to give some buffer if homelessness rises we now propose a further 10 units more than originally proposed. We propose these will be commissioned from the VCS for one year with the ability to extend. It is proposed to annually review the overall need for provision in both VCS and Border House.
12. **Housing related support** will be provided within the hostels, as now, by the hostel provider, but Housing Options will track progress in reviewing support needs and finding independent settled accommodation. Where appropriate, on-going floating support will be provided by STAR (if the family move into

Council accommodation) and by STAR or a VCS provider if moving into Housing Associations or a private let. If Children's Services have particular concerns then the Family Support Service (proposed to be part of STAR) will provide the support. The majority of homeless families need little further housing related support once they have their own settled home. We do not get repeat homeless families. (ie very different to the situation with homeless single people.) Currently some refugee families receive housing related support through a specialist provider in VCS. This issue will be considered in Phase 2 decisions.

### **How is this different to the current service?**

The *proposed* differences are

13. **Any family who faces homelessness and wants council funded temporary accommodation will need to contact Housing Options.** This is good practice because they can be told of their housing rights, their correct band on the Housing Register, and be offered alternatives where appropriate.

At the moment, most families who enter VCS hostels are referred by individual social workers, police, VCS advice services, inter-hostel, and self-referral. The VCS hostel may focus on giving support and give less priority to finding an independent settled home.

14. **Some families will be offered a private sector let as their *settled accommodation*, not just as a temporary measure.** This will avoid or reduce the time waiting in a hostel for an offer of a council or housing association let. (This is what is meant by **ceasing duty into the private rented sector**). There will be careful processes to ensure that these offers are suitable and that they are made with due regard to equitable treatment. (this is challengeable in the courts) One reaction from some families may be that they no longer come to us as homeless, because they just look themselves for a private sector let. If they approach us for help we will continue to offer a rent deposit guarantee to help them to do this. This is becoming more common. The availability of private family homes for rent has grown considerably in recent years.

15. **Family Support will be available to vulnerable families, not just in Border House.** Where Children's Services or the local Housing office identifies that a homeless family is facing difficulties that might mean they will lose their home and whole family support is needed then they will refer that family to the Family Support Service (FSS).

At the moment FSS is funded for those families staying in Border House. The proposal is that a family who needs this help can be offered the service to either prevent homelessness, during a temporary hostel stay, or when they have moved into settled accommodation. Children's Services will advise housing on the need and priority.

16. There will be **less need for temporary accommodation** for families because it will only be offered *to families in crisis, where settled accommodation cannot be found immediately.*
17. There will be **more rehousing of families who wait on the Housing Register** e.g. those in insecure accommodation, overcrowded families, families living in one bedroom accommodation, families with medium level health or care needs and families living with friends and relatives. (Band 2)

Footnote:

Predictions are based on pro rata increase of 6 months data