



REPORT OF: HOUSING, HEALTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES MANAGER

TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

DATES: 18th DECEMBER, 2018

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HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING IN PENDLE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Policy and Resources Committee on homelessness and rough sleeping in Pendle.

RECOMMENDATION

That Policy and Resources Committee note the report on homelessness which was requested at the previous meeting on 27th November 2018

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

To respond to a Policy and Resources Committee request made on 27th November 2018

ISSUE

Background

At Policy and Resources Committee on 27th November 2018, a request was made that a report on homelessness be made to the next meeting of this Committee.

Further to the Executive Report on 15th March 2018, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has now commenced and required significant changes to the way homelessness is dealt with by local authorities. Whilst there are new duties in relation to providing advisory services and help to secure accommodation, the Council undertook much of this work prior to the new Act in aiming to prevent homelessness, and as such the impact from these changes appear minimal. However, the new Act appears to be having an impact on statistical out-turns, particularly homeless enquiries and prevention / relief cases as seen in Table 1 below:-

Table 1 - Homelessness PI Out-turns 01.04.15 to 30.09.18

Year	Housing Enquiries	Homelessness Enquiries	HN 1(ii) – Number of cases where homelessness has been prevented or relieved	HN 3 – Number of nights provided in Bed & Breakfast to homeless applicants.
2015-16	985	124	117	405
2016-17	968	101	192	248
2017-18	841	130	205	282
1 st Apr 18 to 30 th Sept 18	401	272	149	137

Homelessness Enquiries have increased

- The Act extends the period for which people are considered threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days. Whilst this helps Councils to intervene earlier to avoid a crisis, it also triggers significantly more homelessness enquiries. Previously, many of these cases may have been dealt with as a 'housing enquiry' prior to the person becoming homeless within 28 days.

Prevention / Relief of Homelessness has increased

- A significant number of prevention / relief cases prior to the new Act, may not have been reported as the person was not threatened with homelessness within 28 days at the time. Extending 'threatened with homelessness' from 28 to 56 days makes more cases eligible for this measure.
- In response to the new Act, the allocations policy of the B-with-us Choice-based Lettings scheme has been altered to award higher priority to people threatened with or actually homeless. Housing Needs are as such, assisting many more people via this scheme to resolve their homelessness.

Whilst homelessness enquiries and preventative / relief work have increased, the overall number of cases received ie 'housing enquiries' are broadly in line with previous years. Hence, whilst definitions have changed and as a result, statistical out-turns, the issue of homelessness broadly remains similar to previous years.

Rough Sleeping in Pendle

Whilst people do sleep rough from time to time, historically, it has tended to be for a very short period of time eg a few days, and then the person has been helped into alternative accommodation or resolved their housing issues themselves. It appears however that over the last couple of years that this, most visual expression of homelessness, has been more prevalent, whether rough sleeping itself, or more commonly, street begging. It should be noted that not all of those begging are found to actually be homeless.

The Council's Housing Needs and Community Safety services seek to offer help to anyone rough sleeping / begging whether via:-

- help to secure accommodation
- multi-agency support panels such as Transforming Lives and / or
- referring to community-based agencies who are able to offer assistance.

However, unfortunately not all rough sleepers / beggars choose to engage with Council services and accept help. Sadly, on occasion, there have also been issues with some people begging aggressively or causing a nuisance and where such inappropriate behaviour occurs, the Council will, if need be, take steps to address this issue such as through Community Protection Notices.

In evaluating the extent of rough sleeping, the Council is required to submit to Government, a figure for numbers of people sleeping rough on a 'typical night'. Following guidance issued, the Council contacts all members of the Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Homelessness Forum for

confirmed evidence of any person sleeping rough on the designated night each year. In 2018, feedback received could not evidence that any person slept rough on the specific night chosen.

Table 2 - Rough Sleeper Out-turns submitted to DCLG / MHCLG by year

Year	Rough Sleeper Out-turn – (number of people where there is evidence the person was sleeping rough on the specific night chosen)
2010	2
2011	1
2012	2
2013	1
2014	1
2015	2
2016	1
2017	0
2018	0

The Table suggests that rough sleeping is broadly not a major issue in Pendle although the evaluation is limited in that:-

- it is a 'snapshot' of one night only, rough sleeping numbers may vary on a daily basis.
- people sleeping rough may seek places to sleep which are hidden from view of agencies working in the area

It should be noted that even if an actual 'street' count occurred, officers would not be able to check all areas of the borough due to the potential dangers of checking particular desolate areas during the middle of the night or being able to check buildings / allotments as there is risk of trespassing. Hence, any evaluation of levels of rough sleeping undertaken would always have limitations although it is anecdotally believed that there is probably between one and three people sleeping rough on any one night in Pendle.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy

There are no known policy issues arising from this report.

Financial

There are no known policy issues arising from this report.

Legal

There are no known legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

There are no known risk management issues arising from this report.

Health and Safety:

There are no known health & safety implications arising from this report

Sustainability:

There are no known sustainability issues arising from this report.

Community Safety:

There are no known community safety issues arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity:

There are no known equality and diversity issues arising from this report.

APPENDICES

none