

To: Housing Panel

Date: 24 March 2015

Report of: Head of Housing and Property Services

Title of Report: Non-statutory Single Homelessness

Summary

Purpose of report: To provide an overview of non-statutory homelessness in Oxford city and a summary of services commissioned by Oxford City council.

Key decision *No*

Executive lead member: Scott Seamons

Report author: Shaibur Rahman

Policy Framework: Meeting Housing Needs

Recommendation: That the panel note and comment on the report

Appendices to report

Appendix 1 – No Second Night Out (NSNO) data brochure January – March 2014

Appendix 2 – No Second Night Out (NSNO) data brochure April – June 2014

Appendix 3 – No Second Night Out (NSNO) data brochure July – September 2014

Appendix 4 – No Second Night Out (NSNO) data brochure October – December 2014

Appendix 5 – Case study of a client

Background

1. The Scrutiny Committee has requested a report to provide an update on non-statutory homelessness, overview of commissioned services and future challenges for this group of individuals in Oxford.

Definition of ‘non-statutory homelessness’

2. In England, local authorities have duties under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002 towards homeless people full filling certain criteria and who are deemed statutory homelessness. Legislation provides a strict criteria, which ultimately guides our decision making.

"Non-statutory homelessness" covers people who are not considered by the local authority to be eligible for housing assistance, not deemed to be in priority need or who are intentionally homeless according to the above legislation.

3. The term 'non-statutory homeless' collectively refers to the following groups of individuals:

- Rough sleepers
- Individuals accommodation in hostel population
- Sofa surfers
- Individuals with No Fixed Abode (NFA)
- The hidden homeless (those who reside in squats, boats and caravans that are in an inhabitable condition)

Context

4. Oxford has had a historic problem associated with non-statutory single homelessness which, manifests itself in a relatively high number of rough sleepers on the streets of Oxford. The majority of the single homeless population are from Oxford and Oxfordshire, but people are also drawn to Oxford due to its proximity to London and due to its perceived wealth. Only individuals with a local connection to Oxfordshire are able to access the homeless hostels in the city. Those who have come to Oxford from other areas, are assisted to return to their home area where they can access accommodation and support. There are also pockets of deprivation in Oxford, young people falling out of family homes and welfare reform, which contribute to the number of single homeless individuals.

5. The number of individuals who are seen rough sleeping in the city is monitored on a daily basis and the Council's Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness are in close contact with all services that work with rough sleeping and single homeless population in order to understand developments and deal with trends effectively.

Street counts, (national methodology) – delivered according to guidelines stipulated by Homeless Link – are held regularly and this is an important tool to monitor the number of rough sleepers in the city. The last two official counts where data was reported back to DCLG were 19 in November 2013 and 26 in November 2014. The increase in rough sleepers seen in Oxford is in line with national trends. The increase is a currently in-line with national trends in particularly London, the South East and other parts of the country where rough sleeping is prevalent.

This year we have been asked to provide an estimate as well as a Street count figure. This is how the other four districts in Oxfordshire monitor their rough sleeping numbers. For the purposes of reporting to the Health Improvement Board and to have a joint approach we have provided this,

which was 43. The difference between the two methodologies is that street count provides a snapshot on one particular night and the estimate combines intelligence from local stakeholders and provides a best guess.

Please see Appendix 1, 2, 3 and 4 for performance data for the last four quarters.

6. Oxford has 3 large hostels located in the city centre. The dispersed supported housing project provides an additional 83 units of accommodation. These projects are mainly funded by Oxfordshire County Council’s Housing Related Support Grant, and can be accessed by individuals who have a local connection to one of the local authorities in the County. Hostels in the city therefore serve the needs for the whole County.

In total there are about 220 – 230 beds for Single homeless with priority given to rough sleepers or those we believe will be rough sleeping imminently in Oxfordshire. Oxford City Council commissions projects and services that provide additional support to the hostel provision procured by the County Council. Services commissioned by Oxford City Council are vital in order to ensure individuals can successfully address the reasons behind their homelessness and move on from hostel and supported accommodation and into more independent accommodation. These ‘wrap-around’ services are aim to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping by up-skilling individuals. *(Please see Appendix 5 for a case study example).*

7. Due to the high demand on hostel services, Oxford City Council funds a service to provide advice, guidance and referrals to alternative services for those who are sofa surfing or reports. As part of the prioritisation matrix they are deemed to be less vulnerable than those who are rough sleeping on the streets. The advice and guidance is currently provided by Connections Floating Support and is delivered via drop-in surgeries in St Aldates Chambers. This will be changing over the next couple of months as this function will be rolled into the wider Street Outreach and Assessment contract but the expectation to deliver similar advice will remain.

An overview of the types of services we provide

8.

Organisation and Purpose of Grant	Allocation for 15/16
Assertive Outreach, Reconnection, Move-on	
<p>Single Homeless Outreach and Assessment service – a team of 9 FTE with a combination of a Project manager, Outreach workers, Assessment workers and trainees.</p> <p>This service will incorporate the functions previously carried out by Oxford City Outreach, the NSNO Pathway Leader, NSNO Assessment Worker and the advice services for single homeless people who may be in precarious housing.</p>	£350,893
Specialist Homelessness Liaison service (Thames	£40,000

<p>Valley Police) We have taken a different approach to last year where we are commissioning a service to be delivered by the City Centre Unit as opposed to a specific post holder. This may be delivered by the same individual but the focus will be for the unit to deliver specific outputs such as, number of outreach shifts, key meetings attended, tackling begging and anti-social behaviour, attending rough sleeping hot-spots and so on. This means that going forward the problems that need tackling are measured against their organisation as opposed to one individual. This allocation is on a yearly basis and the council have the right to terminate funding if the grant is stopped or reduced beyond March 2015.</p>	
<p>O'Hanlon House (Oxford Homeless Pathways) This grant jointly commissions the service with Oxfordshire County Council. The money specifically commissions the day service that works with vulnerable adults who present with needs such as substance misuse, mental health and alcohol needs. The day service aims to provide a bridge between the service users and other meaningful services such as GP practices, Social services, DAAT teams and mental health teams. There is a reduction of £8k to reflect the reduction that County council have made. However the saving from this will be used to develop alternative initiatives with other day centres.</p>	£124,756.92
<p>Sit-Up service The Sit-up service was commissioned to mitigate for the lack of move on from the Adults homeless pathway. This function will be taken into account when the new pathway/service is commissioned. The cost attached is only for a year and will end on in March 2016.</p>	£54,903
<p>Severe Weather Provision This funding is to cover the cost of running additional services for rough sleepers during periods of severe weather.</p>	£15,000
<p>Housing First Project Housing First will be commissioned for the next year; the project has shown that it can work with some of the most complex/entrenched clients and deliver positive outcomes.</p>	£47,800
Improving Mental Health/Complex Trauma	
<p>Mental Health Practitioner (Luther Street Medical Centre) This post has continued to be a success and it is recommended that funding in partnership with Oxford Health and Oxford Homeless Medical fund is continued for this post. This allocation is on a yearly basis and the</p>	£25,000

council have the right to terminate funding if the grant is stopped or reduced beyond March 2015.	
<p>Complex Needs Service</p> <p>This funding has been allocated to fund a joint project next year. The service will be funded in conjunction with CCG and Public Health department to cater for a cohort whose needs are not met by both the Adults homeless pathway and the supported independent living pathway.</p>	£40,000
<p>Elmore In-reach (1 month)</p> <p>This service is being decommissioned but will be given a one month extension to ensure they have a 3 month period for a closedown period.</p>	£3,394.40
Tackling Worklessness and Improving Positive Activities	
<p>Aspire Oxfordshire</p> <p>Aspire provide social enterprises, work placements, employment opportunities and benefits' advice to Oxford's homeless network in order to develop progression pathways into sustainable independent living.</p> <p>We also fund <i>Two FTE Education, Training and Employment Workers</i> to further develop Aspire's social enterprises, work placements, employment opportunities to Oxford's homeless network in order to develop progression pathways into sustainable independent living.</p> <p>This allocation is on a yearly basis and the council have the right to terminate funding if the grant is stopped or reduced beyond March 2015.</p>	£88,691.50
<p>Emmaus Oxford Furniture Store</p> <p>This money supports Emmaus to provide accommodation for homeless people but also gives them an opportunity to work in their social enterprise; a second-hand furniture store. They have plans to taper the grant they receive from us; however this can only happen once they are operating their store from the new site on Barns Road.</p>	£25,000
<p>The Gatehouse Café</p> <p>This provides some core funding to the Gatehouse daycentre. They open six evenings a week and engage with the hard to reach clients that traditionally do not use mainstream services.</p>	£5,580
<p>Steppin Stone Day Centre</p> <p>This provides core funding to the Steppin Stones daycentre to work with vulnerable adults who are aiming to get back into training, education and employment. Steppin Stones also provide individuals with an opportunity to train in their social enterprises; their allotment, the daycentre kitchen or Porch Pickle</p>	£55,000

enterprises. The daycentre is based away from the city centre, which allows for individuals to move away from the street activities such as begging, drinking and other anti-social behaviour.	
One FTE Service Broker (Big Issue Foundation) This post tackles the lack of engagement of Big Issue sellers with accommodation offers and to improve the partnership working with this organisation. This contract will continue to be within a payment by results framework this year, where 25% of the total grant is paid out only upon evidencing certain set outcomes. This allocation is on a yearly basis and the council have the right to terminate funding if the grant is stopped or reduced beyond March 2015.	£25,000
Priority Services for Young People	
Young Persons Pathway This grant is part of Oxford City Council's contribution to joint commissioning of the Young Persons pathway (for vulnerable & homeless 16 – 22 year olds) with the County Council.	£42,992
Prevention of Eviction Young People Beds To cover the shortfall in DWP benefits received by someone under the age of 25 and those over the age of 25 in order to ensure under 25s can afford to paid their rent/service charge and thus prevent eviction. This allocation is on a yearly basis and the council have the right to terminate funding if the grant is stopped or reduced beyond March 2015.	£5,000
Emergency Bed (within Oxford City) This funding provides one emergency bed for use by Oxford City.	£6,134.28
Homelessness Prevention	
Welfare Reform Outreach Team This funding contributes towards the work of the team focussing on the impact of welfare reform on the City Council and its tenants.	£75,188.15
Discretionary Housing Payments This money has been allocated to ensure that we can mitigate the impact of welfare reform.	£150,000
Target Hardening/Sanctuary Scheme Provided to ASBIT, this is a service for victims of domestic abuse to enable them to stay in their own homes.	£30,000
Elmore Community Services This funds one post within the Elmore team; the post is called a Tenancy Sustainment officer. The officer works with residents of OCC who are finding it difficult to manage their tenancies. This allocation is on a yearly basis and the council have the right to terminate funding if the grant is stopped or reduced beyond March 2015.	£35,630

Business Rates at the Old Fire Station As required by previous CEB report to provide financial relief to Crisis and the Arts at the Old Fire Station in the first years of service.	£3,152
Pre-tenancy course As mentioned before; this will be subject to a review of the service. Should the outcome be positive this will be renewed for the year 2015/2016.	£16,000
MEAM pilot project This amount will be set aside to provide flexibility in extending the pilot project.	£20,000
CHAIN The web-based database management system that currently collates all data and provides monitoring reports on rough sleepers. This service is being extended for a year with the expectation that this will be paid for by the County council as it will be used for the Adults pathway in its entirety.	£8,093
Single Homelessness The funding is to be used to contribute towards the Council's operational activity supporting the work assisting Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness activities.	£100,000
Total	£1,393,208.25

(Please note that there is further detail on the allocation of our grant in the form of a CEB report, which went to City Executive Board on the 12th of March for approval)

9. As well as the above services; Housing Options Service also provides a Personal Housing Plan for every customer who presents to the Duty service; this captures the household's circumstances as well as suitable housing options available to them. We take this opportunity to highlight appropriate support schemes such as the Lord Mayors Rent Deposit Scheme.

Current challenges

10. Some of the main challenges for the authority arise from the County Council's decision to reduce funding for Housing related support previously given through the Supporting People grant. Oxfordshire County Council has decided to reduce the Housing Related Support funding by 38% and this will have an impact on the housing related support services in Oxfordshire, particularly Oxford. Oxfordshire County Council is in the process of finalising the specifications for a new Adult Homeless pathway, which is likely to see a reduction in the quality of support hostels are able to provide to clients. Oxford City Council is planning to use its Homelessness Grant Allocation to commission 'wrap-around' services to boost the quality of support delivered to homeless people to ensure clients have the best opportunity to move into independent living in the community.

11. The client group being serviced by the Adult Homeless pathway has changed significantly over the past few years, providing further challenges. More clients have complex and multiple needs; thus taking a longer time to address the needs, which has an impact on them being move-on ready. The Young Persons pathway is prioritising 16 – 17 year olds and therefore the adults pathway is being forced to take in younger adults of 18 plus.

12. Oxford City Council is fortunate to have good quality services within the city, however this can also bring many problems. The influx of non-statutory homeless individuals into the city has been consistently high with services being located in the city. Once individuals build up their social networks in the city it can prove difficult and challenging to move them back to their home districts.

13. One of the biggest challenges we are currently dealing with is the housing market in Oxford. The private rented sector has become unaffordable for those who rely on Housing Benefits as the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate is well below what the market commands. This is one of the main reasons why individuals in hostel accommodation cannot find suitable accommodation to move on to, and thus stay in hostels longer. The knock on effect of this is that fewer hostel beds become available for those who are in need of this service.

14. Oxford City Council in setting its medium term financial plan for 15/16-18/19 has confirmed this area of service provision remains a high priority and has maintained budget levels despite significant budget pressures overall.

Future developments

15. Oxford City Council aim to commission new services to address gaps for single homeless people and ensure the best possible outcomes can be gained for the clients accessing single homeless services. One of the areas of focus is looking at services for clients with complex needs and dual diagnosis.

Mayday Trust

16. The aim of this pilot project is to test out a new model of working with non-statutory single homeless individuals. It is a model imported from the US and evidence shows that it works well with young people. Mayday Trust approached both Oxford City Council and the Oxfordshire County Council to look at the opportunity to test this on an adult cohort. The pilot project is for a period of 2 years; funded by Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County council, Mayday Trust and Lankelly Chase Trust. This pilot project will not require further funding for the duration.

Making Every Adult Matter

17. Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) is a coalition of four national charities – Clinks, DrugScope, Homeless Link and Mind – formed to influence policy

and services for adults facing multiple needs and exclusions. Adults with multiple and complex needs often :-

- **experience several problems** at the same time, such as mental ill health, homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse and offending.
- **have ineffective contact with services.** People facing multiple needs usually find that one service is unable to deal with all their needs, which means other needs are missed or not addressed.
- **live chaotic lives.** Facing multiple problems that exacerbate each other, and lacking effective support from services, which ends up with people living chaotic lives where escape seems difficult.

18. Oxford City Council submitted an expression of interest to the MEAM coalition in early 2013 to become a pilot area for the South East and was successful.

19. During the year we have been working with local partners and the MEAM coalition service to develop and implement a MEAM pilot, which would meet our unique needs. As such our pilot aims to place a focus on a client's primary support worker. They are afforded the freedom to work additional time and have access to personalisation funds to aid engagement and motivation. It is hoped that learning from this pilot will support fundamental changes within services that operate in this sector and quite possibly the County.

Name and contact details of author:-

Name: Shaibur Rahman
Job title: Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness Manager
Service Area / Department Housing Services
Tel: 01865252825 e-mail: srahman@oxford.gov.uk

List of background papers:

Version number: 0.5

This page is intentionally left blank