

Draft
Leicester's Homelessness Strategy
& Delivery Proposals

2013 – 2018



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Executive Summary

1. The Homelessness Review was undertaken from March 2012 to October 2012 and included meeting with many providers of homelessness services, evidence collection, staff consultation and mystery shopping of a small number of Leicester City Council and Voluntary Sector providers and also the Housing Options Service. The Strategy is based on the findings of that Review

National and Local Context

2. Nationally, the Government has introduced a raft of policy reforms. While these will open some flexibility in decision making, the overall impact is a reduction in the funding available to help individuals with their housing costs.
3. The council's Homelessness Services Budget for 2012/13 is £6.61m. This will reduce by £1.16m from 2013/14. Further saving will also be required during the next few years as Government grants continue to reduce.

Homelessness Review Conclusions

4. 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 two years. We now need to plan for the likelihood of further increases due to the recession, welfare reforms and reductions in public expenditure.
5. 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, or the 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') and repeat homelessness where the last accommodation was a hostel.
6. 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 also a need to improve support to enable them to sustain independent living.

New Strategic Priorities

7. The Homelessness Review process led to the development of six new strategic objectives which were consulted on and agreed at 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.

Governance and monitoring of the Homelessness Strategy

8. The Homelessness Strategy will be monitored by the Housing Advice and Programme Board (HASP) led by Leicester City Council. This Board consists of representatives from a number of Homeless Service Providers and other agencies. A robust Performance Management Framework will be developed to

ensure we are able to monitor the actual outcomes achieved for homeless people.

Partnership Working

9. The Homelessness Review has re-invigorated partnership working amongst homeless service providers across the city, and together, we have identified the main issues relating to homelessness and future priorities. With the current financial constraints it is essential that we work closely together, to make the best use of available resources.

Implementation

10. Following consultation and final decisions by the Council, the key tasks arising from the Homelessness Review and Homelessness Strategy, will be incorporated into an Implementation Plan which will be monitored by the HASP Board.

Introduction to the Homelessness Strategy

11. Leicester has a proud history of providing high quality services to homeless people through a diverse partnership made up of public, private, voluntary, community and faith organisations. Many of these organisations have been involved in developing this strategy and will continue to play a key role in its implementation. The strategy sets out our vision for the future of homeless services in Leicester and the key challenges and priorities that need to be addressed. To achieve this, we are committed to working together to achieve better outcomes for homeless people, in the future.

Our Vision

12. Our vision is for a city where individuals, couples and families, affected by homelessness, will 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.

Development of the Homelessness Strategy

13. 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. A review of homelessness in Leicester was undertaken from March to October 2012. This included an analysis of services that are currently provided across the city, utilisation rates, gaps in services, perceived need and the resources available to meet this need. A summary of the main conclusions of this review is included in this Strategy and the full review document will be published on the Council's website.
14. During the review, meetings were held with over 60 partner organisations, including homeless service providers. Discussions were held with both senior managers and also front-line staff, to gain an understanding of the issues they face on a daily basis. A staff survey was undertaken to ensure everyone had an opportunity to contribute to the new strategy. Most importantly, we spoke to many people who have accessed these services to gain an insight into their homelessness journeys. Two consultation events, including a Homelessness Summit, were held with our partners to discuss the current homelessness situation in Leicester. These resulted in the development of our six strategic principles, which underpin this strategy.

Principles of Leicester's Homelessness Strategy 2013

15. We aim to improve the lives of people facing, or experiencing homelessness, by embedding these principles into all our homeless services, across the city.
 1. Anyone at risk of homelessness is given advice and support to prevent this, whenever possible.
 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.
 3. We will implement 'No Second Night Out' to ensure that new rough sleepers will not sleep out for more than one night.
 4. Anyone who is homeless will be able to 'move-on' into appropriate accommodation.
 5. Anyone who is homeless will be able to access appropriate care services to meet their health and well-being needs.
 6. There are opportunities to access training, education, employment and enterprise initiatives.

National and Local Strategic Context

National Context

16. The Government has embarked on a number of reforms to social housing and welfare policy, including the development 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, including the development of 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.
17. The Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness has recently published their National Homelessness Strategy, *Making every contact count - A joint approach to preventing homelessness* (Aug 2012) which includes a number of challenges for local authorities.
18. The Localism Act introduces a raft 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.

19. The Welfare Reform Act introduced Universal Credit, changes to Housing Benefit, Local Housing Allowance, Council Tax Benefit and child support and reforms to the Disability Living Allowance.
20. The Government is reducing public spending, including the ending of Supporting People funding.
21. While some of these measures open up some areas of local flexibility in decision-making, the overall impact is a reduction in funding to help individuals with their housing costs and a reduction in the availability of social rented housing. The scale of these changes, taken in conjunction with a reduction in local authority funding, makes the preparation of this new Homelessness Strategy the most challenging to date.

Leicester Context. 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 2249 and numbers have continued to rise, though less steeply. This is a 13.5% rise over the two years. We predict by the end of 2012/13 we will have seen over 2,350 households who face homelessness.

22. Our ability to prevent these people from actually becoming homeless is rising, from 86% of cases in 2010/11 to a predicted 91% 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.
23. In addition, 732 families and single people went into the council funded voluntary sector homeless hostels and other temporary accommodation. Because these hostels have direct access we do not know how many of these people also came to Housing Options. However, we suspect that most are additional cases to the numbers given above.
24. We find it much more difficult to prevent homelessness for single people and it is more difficult to track the eventual outcome, whereas families stay in touch until they are in settled accommodation. Where we do not know the outcome, 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 but who we could not help, went on to rough sleep, as a result. 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.
25. The Council faces the challenge of ensuring that people, who are either facing or experiencing homelessness, are able to access good quality services, which meet their needs, in a climate of reduced financial resources.
26. One proposal is to make better use of the private rented sector as more permanent housing for homeless families. In December 2011 we began to offer temporary private rented homes to homeless families, through our LeicesterLet scheme. This is a much more suitable temporary place for a family than living in a hostel and gave many homeless families the chance to be housed in areas they prefer. In line with statute at that time, our current policy is that the family

stays on the Housing Register in Band 2 and can bid for a council tenancy. The LeicesterLet tenancy is for at least one year, but many families can stay beyond that if they like the property and location and the landlord agrees. We now propose to use the new discretionary power and offer a private tenancy to end the homelessness duty. The families will be suitably housed and if they are required to leave the accommodation (through no fault of their own) within 2 years, the homeless duty still exists and the family will be helped by the Housing Options Service to secure suitable alternative accommodation again.

27. As a result of reductions in Government funding, the Council Budget, approved in February 2012, includes savings of £43m by 2014/15, of which £33m is a direct reduction in the net budget.
28. The Council's Homelessness Services Budget for 2012/13 is £6.61m. The Council's 2012/13 budget reduced this by £1.16m from 2013/14. In addition further savings are now proposed of £0.36m during 2013/14, and a further £0.68m in 2014/15. The position in future years is not known at this stage and further reductions may be required.

2012/13 Estimates	In-House	Independent Sector (#)	Total
	£000	£000	£000
Temporary Accommodation			
Homeless Families	375	688	1,063
Single People Hostels	947	1,794	2,741
Move On Accommodation	-8	300	292
Other Support:			
Floating Support	467	358	825
Rough Sleepers Outreach Team	91	-	91
Housing Options (*)	1,087	-	1,087
Day Centres & Other Services	79	433	512
	3,038	3,573	6,611

(*) Housing Options undertake the following tasks - advice, housing registrations, preventing homelessness and dealing with homeless declarations.

(#) The Voluntary Sector also contributes their own resources to these services.

29. Changes to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and Housing Benefit also pose further challenges for local people. With the introduction of welfare reform, over 400 families in Leicester will be affected by the £25,000 benefit cap. Also over 2,000 households will be affected by the bedroom tax. 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.

30. The Government has launched the Homelessness Transition Fund to help address rough sleeping and to prevent single homelessness. The Leicester Voluntary and Community Sector, in partnership with the Council, have submitted a bid to access this funding.
31. 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.
32. As the Council must meet its statutory and corporate responsibilities first, the biggest impact of the service reductions will be on single homeless people. There are, however, good reasons why certain other single homeless people should be offered temporary accommodation and more intensive support. The Strategy proposes new criteria for access to temporary accommodation (Appendix A)

Outcomes from the Homelessness Strategy 2008 – 2013

33. The Homelessness Review highlighted many positive actions undertaken in the last five years to improve the lives of those either facing or experiencing homelessness. These include:

Leicester City Council Housing Division

- 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.
- Amendments to the Allocations Policy have been proposed, to reflect changes to Housing Benefit rules. The aim is to avoid the possibility of rent arrears for future tenants. Consultation on these changes has recently been completed.
- Introduction of Leicester Homechoice to provide applicants with choice, flexibility and transparency when obtaining a property.
- The Leicester Let and the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme 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.
- The internal Move-On Board has been established to address barriers to move-on from temporary accommodation.
- Introduction of 'Next-Step' planning in LCC hostels.
- Development of the Revolving Door Service to work with entrenched homeless people to reduce repeat homelessness and repeat stays in temporary accommodation.

- The Councils' STAR service provided floating support to 1,500 households and gave advice to a further 1,200 households, through the neighbourhood offices.
- 1,602 households were prevented from becoming homeless.
- Job Club established at the Dawn Centre resulting in placements for some people.
- The LCC 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.

Voluntary and Community Sector

- The Faith Groups have provided food, clothes furniture and support to many of the most vulnerable people in Leicester.
- The Day Centres provided support to vulnerable people, many facing social isolation.
- 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 and is produced by homeless people.
- Leicestershire Cares, STRIDE and Action Trust aim to break the cycle of homelessness through their employment and volunteering projects.
- The YMCA invested £4m capital refurbishment in their East Street accommodation and were recognised as a regional centre of excellence for their work with young people. They have also developed the YPOD service to work with young offenders and care leavers to improve access to housing and other services.
- Evesham House provides meaningful activities for their residents, who have alcohol issues, through the LOROS Volunteering Project.
- The Bethany Project and Kirton Lodge work with families to achieve removals from the Child Protection Register.

Other Agencies

- The Inclusion Healthcare Social Enterprise was established and continues to provide a range of health services for homeless people across Leicester City. 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.

Successes resulting from the Review Process

- The establishment of the Homelessness Strategy Reference Group to contribute to the development of the Homelessness Review and Homelessness Strategy.

- 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 LCC staff, has reduced current levels of rough sleeping. Learning has informed this strategy.

Homeless Review Conclusions

34. The Homeless Review was undertaken from March 2012 to October 2012 which included meeting with our key partners and stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and future priorities. This strategy should be read in conjunction with the full Leicester City Council Homelessness Review. The following key conclusions have been established.

Homelessness in Leicester

Rough Sleepers

35. There were 198 individual rough sleepers found in Leicester during the last year, with many being of Eastern European origin. In November 2011, there were 53 rough sleepers in Leicester, the highest figure outside of London. Although emergency beds were introduced during the inclement weather, rough sleeping numbers returned to the higher level once these closed. It is clear that a more planned and sustainable approach is required, in the form of the 'No Second Night Out' principles, implemented in other areas across the country.

Hostel provision and access

36. There are many providers of hostel accommodation, in Leicester, including the Council, with a total of 609 bed spaces. There is a range of accommodation across the city comprising of individual rooms in cluster flats to rooms in larger projects. There appears to be an over-provision of generic singles accommodation, however it is difficult to establish exact need levels as there are many direct access hostels across the city.

37. 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 use bed spaces as efficiently as possible.

Move-on from temporary accommodation

38. It appears that many single people have stayed in hostels longer than they may have 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.

39. 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.

40. 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. For example, moving from a catered to a non-catered hostel to reduce costs for the client.

41. 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

42. 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 move-on and has worked on a one to one basis with the most entrenched homeless people. However, resources only enable the service to work with 50 cases at one time, and the lessons learnt from this project need to be embedded across all homelessness services to reduce repeat homelessness in the future.
43. In contrast to this, the Council sees no repeat family homelessness.

Housing Related Support

44. 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.
45. Floating support can be the least expensive and most effective intervention for helping people to achieve independent living.

Staffing issues

46. Issues have been raised about the need for specialist staff training and development across both council and voluntary sector provision.

Culture of single homelessness services

47. 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.
48. 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.
49. We 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.

The Housing Options Service

50. The current footfall into the Housing Options Service averages at 1,500 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.

Governance and Performance Management

51. One of the roles of the Housing Support and Advice Programme Board (HASP) is to oversee the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy and Delivery Plan. There is evidence that this does not work as effectively as it could. It is better than it was but needs to be more co-ordinated and robust. Our partners, and key stakeholders, also need to play a more active role in monitoring the Homelessness Strategy.

Partnership Working

52. Partnership working between the Council and the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sectors has been improving. The Council has held events with homeless service providers and other agencies with the aim of identifying homelessness issues and priorities for the future. The Homelessness Strategy Reference Group has been involved in the development of the Homelessness Review and Strategy and from this group the Rough Sleepers Task Panel was formed. They have reduced current rough sleeping in Leicester and the lessons learnt from this process will be mainstreamed into our service planning. This new way of working, where all providers are valued, must be built upon.

53. We will develop a shared understanding of the routes into and out of homelessness with reference to the services which the council funds. We have set this out in Appendices B and C

New strategic priorities : How do we deliver?

Six new strategic priorities have been developed in partnership with our key stakeholders and are the main drivers for transforming homelessness services in Leicester, these are as follows:

- 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.
- 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 and in many cases 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 moving into the Dawn Centre.
- 2.5 We will publish the criteria for households to be offered a temporary bedspace. (Appendix 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 ensure all support staff receive the necessary training which gives them the necessary skills and knowledge to work with clients to obtain positive outcomes.
 - 2.9 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.
 - 2.10 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.
 - 2.11 We will use the Council's new I.T. information HUB to improve joined up working for our clients.
 - 2.12 We will develop a common assessment framework, in partnership with other service providers, for use in the SAR and in all contracted hostels
 - 2.13 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.
 - 2.14 Hostels are not solving the long-term problem of those clients experiencing repeat homelessness. 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 also develop accommodation and support options for those entrenched clients who may never live independently.
 - 2.15 There will be a minimum accommodation standard for temporary accommodation and for private sector rented accommodation where we provide the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme.
 - 2.16 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.
 - 2.17 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.
 - 2.17 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.
- 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. It will involve 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. 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 the Rough Sleepers Task Panel.

The bid, submitted to the Homeless Transition Fund by the Homeless Leicester Partnership, will build on existing resources to reduce rough sleeping in Leicester. At present, the outcome of the bid is unknown and the result will direct the future development of our No Second Night Out Project.

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 the Rough Sleepers Task Panel and Homeless Link to ensure we are able to implement the lessons from the 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.
- 3.4 The Council's Rough Sleepers Outreach Team will be able to refer rough sleepers directly to 6 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 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. This will be 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 partners to identify potential funding sources to secure language and interpretation services for the Outreach Team.
- 3.10 We will work with the NEIBO project, which provides support to Eastern Europeans.
- 3.11 With our partners, we will develop innovative ways to support entrenched 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.
- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 We will also continue to support rough sleepers to access healthcare and other basic services.

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.
- 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.

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.

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'.

Source: www.StMungos.org.uk

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 key 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 Clear routes into education, training and employment will be advertised in the Homelessness Service Directory and on the Council website.
- 6.3 We will implement closer working between support staff and employment projects to enable homeless people to access more work placements and training.
- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 Hostel support workers will provide basic life skills training to clients in a fun and non-threatening or institutionalised manner.
- 6.6 Clients in hostels will be encouraged, as part of their support plans, to engage in training and meaningful activities, once their circumstances have stabilised.
- 6.7 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.

7. Other actions required to support the strategic priorities

- 7.1 All Housing Division staff will ensure they are providing the best possible service to clients, including developing specialisms where appropriate.

- 7.2 We will review the Housing Allocation Policy with a view to removing Band 5, as these applicants are very unlikely to receive a social housing property, with a view to making efficiency savings.
- 7.3 A Homelessness Communication Plan will be developed 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.

Partnership Working

54. The Homelessness Review has re-invigorated partnership working amongst homeless service providers, across the city. Together, we have identified the main issues we need to address to improve the lives of homeless people, across the city. Many organisations, both large and small, have been involved in the review process and have been able to contribute to the homelessness debate.
55. Homelessness is a citywide problem, which requires a citywide solution. This can only be achieved by working together to make the best use of the resources we have, particularly when we are faced with such challenging budget restrictions.
56. We will develop partnership working with County and District Councils where appropriate to achieving our aims, for example to address rough sleeping.
57. We want to ensure that homeless services continue to consult clients, both past and present, to identify how their homeless journeys could have been made easier.
58. We will build on the partnership working exhibited by the Homelessness Strategy Reference Group. We will embed lessons learnt from the Rough Sleepers Task Panel which led to real improvements to the lives of many rough sleepers. We know that the reductions in public spending is going to test this partnership working but we are confident that we can continue to work together to address homelessness in Leicester.

Governance and implementation of the Homelessness Strategy

59. The Homelessness Strategy will be monitored by the Housing Support and Advice Programme Board (HASP) within Leicester City Council. Currently HASP meets as a main Board and as a series of smaller, themed sub-groups. However, we feel this process has not been as effective as it could have been. The role and working practices of HASP will be reviewed and updated to reflect our new approach to addressing homelessness.
60. A robust performance management framework will be developed which will include outcome based contract management. This framework will ensure we only collect and monitor information that will identify homelessness trends and

issues and will inform future service planning and improvement. Quarterly reports will be compiled and shared with partners and will contribute to an Annual Statement of Homelessness in Leicester.

61. The final version of the Homelessness Strategy will include an Implementation Plan. This will be monitored and reviewed by Leicester City Council and our partners through the HASP Board. A Communication Plan will also be developed, to overcome previous issues with information sharing and communication and all HASP reports will be published on the Homelessness pages of the Council's website.
62. The Council will continue to provide Homelessness Services, both in-house and by contractors. The draft Delivery Proposals will set out our proposed approach and is included in our consultation.
63. During the review process it became clear that providers wanted a named Strategic Lead for Homelessness at the Council, and also suggested the Assistant Mayor for Adults and Housing should take on the role of Homelessness Champion for the City. The strategic lead for homelessness at the Council will be identified by the Director of Housing. The request for a Homelessness Champion is under consideration.
64. We would like to thank the people who talked to us during our many visits to homeless projects. They kindly and candidly shared their homelessness stories with us and these stories have contributed to this new Homelessness Strategy.

For more information

For more information on the Homelessness Review and Draft Homelessness Strategy please contact us on 0116 252 6266 or at siu@leicester.gov.uk

APPENDIX A:

Proposed eligibility criteria for offer of emergency or temporary accommodation

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

2nd criteria: fall into one of the following categories.

No changes to previous criteria.

Category	Duty arises from
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)

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. There no changes to current criteria in these notes
2. 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.

3. 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.)
4. 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.
5. 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.