

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to:	The Executive
Date:	18.6.2018
Subject:	Regional Homeless Strategy
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Alun Mummery
Head of Service:	Ned Michael
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Local Members:	n/a

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s
<p>Recommend that the Executive:</p> <p>R1 approve the approach taken in developing the draft Homelessness Strategy and that an outcomes approach is taken in developing the action plan at a regional and local level, part 2 and 3 of this report</p> <p>R2 approve the communication methods for developing the action plan with partners leading up to the consultation period and final approval</p> <p>1.0 Background</p> <p>1.1 National context</p> <p>Part II of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 provides a new legal framework for homelessness services in Wales. The 2014 Act states that all Local Authorities must adopt a Homeless Strategy in 2018 in order to achieve the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of homelessness • Suitable accommodation is provided for people who are or may become homeless; • Satisfactory support is available for people who are or may become homeless. <p>Prior to producing the strategy Local Authorities are required to undertake a local review in line with section 51 of the Welsh Government's Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness as set out below.</p> <p>Identify:-</p> <p>(a) <i>The levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness in the local housing authority's area;</i></p> <p>(b) <i>The activities which are carried out in the local housing authority's area for the achievement of the objectives as set out above.</i></p>

- (c) *The resources available to the authority (including the resources available in exercise of functions other than its functions as local housing authority), other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons for such activities.*

1.2 Regional approach

It was agreed by the North Wales Heads of Service to produce a Regional Homeless Strategy.

Establishing a collective understanding and regional approach towards preventing homelessness will have the following benefits:

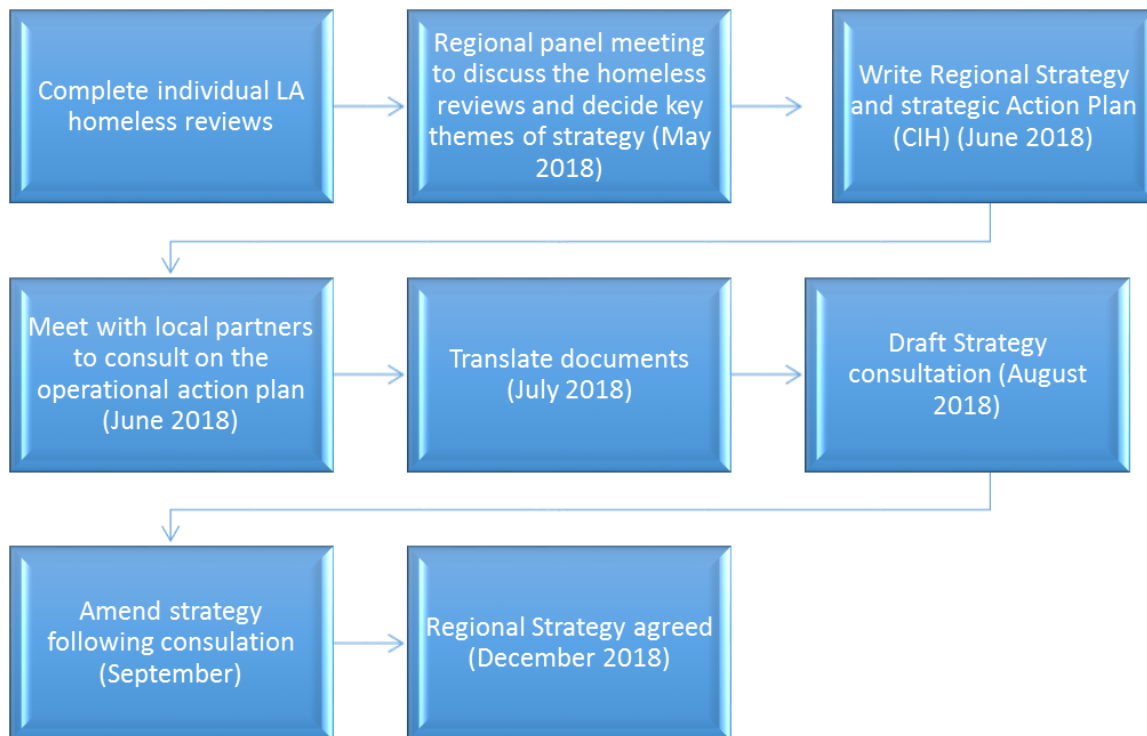
1. Increase the opportunity for the development of more effective working with key partner organisations, such as the Health Service, who operate on a regional basis to tackle some of the underlying causes of homeless.
2. There will be a consistent approach among local authorities with their interpretation and implementation of the homelessness legislation and in the delivery of homelessness services across the North Wales locality. This will help to reduce the potential for variation in the availability and delivery of services across the region.
3. There will be more opportunities for authorities to share their resources, expertise and specialist services.

The Regional Strategy will include an overarching regional document and a 12 month Regional and Local Action Plan.

The six Local Authorities include: Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Wrexham, Denbigh and Flint.

The programme to develop a regional strategy is described below and is being facilitated by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) from the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH).

The timetable for achieving this is detailed below:



Based on the above flowchart the narrative below shows progress to date.

Stage 1: Local Review has been completed

Project Development Workshop Ltd (PDW) consultancy was commissioned to carry out a local review for Anglesey.

The review took place between March and May 2018 and followed the Code of Guidance and Equal Ground Standard. In addition PDW looked at the following:

- Are services fit for purpose?
- How are contracts and relationships managed?
- How well is the homelessness service delivered with partners?
- Is the capacity within teams appropriate and are team functions achieving their goals and expected outcomes?

Approach

As an independent review of homelessness services the assessment was undertaken inclusively, working with staff and key stakeholders to help identify areas for improvement and to acknowledge the strengths of the services.

The following areas of service delivery were assessed:

- Homeless prevention and homelessness
- Use of emergency and temporary accommodation including bed and breakfast
- How the service works alongside and with the Private Rented Sector

- How prevention funds are used including how rent deposits and bonds are managed

Method used:

- A desktop review of key documents
- A mystery shop of services.
- Interviews with managers, staff and partner organisations who support the Council to prevent and discharge their homelessness duties.
- Focus groups with staff groups, partners and customers
- Observing meetings and wider field work to assess the impact of homelessness services on Anglesey.

2.0 Outcomes

Strengths and areas for improvement as identified in the review, are set out in the table below under the key themes of the regional strategy:

	<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Areas for improvement</u>
1. People		
<i>Youth Homelessness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular engagement with young people who are/ have been/ or at risk of homeless – needs are understood and young people support continuous service improvements. • Specific services are available for young people through the Supporting People programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of benefits in 16 – 25 year olds • Innovative solution to overcome barrier of Local Housing Allowance lower than PRS. • Review 16-17 year old joint protocol between Social Services and Housing Options • Unmet need for shared accommodation
<i>Rough Sleepers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rough sleeper packs are available in Holyhead and Llangefni (main towns). • SPoA is capturing possible hidden homelessness in the form of sofa surfing. • Digartref provide a night stop service offering emergency accommodation for young people. • Cold weather policy in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review cold weather protocol to assess what worked well and make any improvements. • Use details from SPoA to map need and identify likely rough sleeping demand.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> place. Housing related support for homeless people over 25 including rough sleepers and people who experience repeat homelessness is a commissioning priority for Supporting People. 	
Complex needs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No data captured on complex cases, needs to be gathered in the future and used to plan services and develop interventions.
Prison leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prisoner Pathway Officer in post <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well established communication links with the relevant partners. Close effective partnership working arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to fund the prisoner pathway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early intervention, assessment and intervention to maximise housing solutions.
2. Homes		
Housing First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Wallich run a successful Housing First project in Llangefni. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Improved access to accommodation	<p>Social Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under 35s accommodation scheme being developed (self-contained units) in partnership with young people. <p>Private sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Landlord Liaison Officer in post <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point of contact for the private landlords. Landlord Forum meets regularly: 	<p>Social Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unmet need for under 35 shared accommodation and larger properties (4 bedroom+) Need to reduce the housing market gap with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intermediate accommodation Shared equity schemes Need to develop and agree a section 95 'duty to cooperate' protocol with RSLs to support rehousing of homeless applicants across the social rented stock on a

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Opportunity to share relevant information with private landlords. ○ Offers a support network. • Rent Smart Wales. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proactively encouraging landlords to register & taking enforcement action. • Syrian Resettlement project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3 families have been supported for resettlement. • Housing Options team have a strong record in sourcing accommodation. • Empty Homes Strategy has helped to bring empty properties back into use in the private and social housing sector. 	<p>more equitable basis.</p> <p>Private sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord incentive scheme such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deposit schemes ○ Financial Assistance for minor improvements ○ Guaranteed rent for empty properties while suitable tenants are found. • Private landlord support services such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finding tenants ○ Management Service ○ Dedicated Housing Benefit Office to provide advice/ assistance for benefit enquiries • Tenant support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Negotiation/ advocacy to remain in the PRS. • Syrian resettlement project needs more accommodation in the PRS.
Temporary Accommodation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve risk assessment process (B&B). • Support for customers in B&B needs to ensure they move on to settled accommodation asap. • Innovative solution to increase the availability of temporary accommodation. • Monitoring of B&B use including trends.

3. Services		
<i>Prevention</i>	<p>Access to services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kiosks within the community provide digital access. • Home visits offered by the O Toole staff who provide early intervention services and support. • The Housing Options Team will be piloting a 'triage' system from May 2018. • Partners offer occasional financial assistance to help people in rural areas access services. • Successful use of mediation. 	<p>Access to services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self-assessment online ○ Map out other providers who offer homelessness prevention services and provide this information. • Waiting time for first contact appointment. • Communication and contact during service. • Monitoring demands on the service • Kiosks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Limited in their use (access to word, USB point) • Promote services available to support people who may be threatened with homelessness. • Rural barriers such as cost of transport impacting on people's ability to access services.
<i>Mitigation of the impact of Welfare Reform</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved relationship between Housing Services and Housing Benefit. • Performance on new Housing Benefit claims. • Universal Credit hub set up by DWP to manage the introduction of Universal Credit in the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare Reform project manager • Digital access. • Support to maximise income • Manage the impact of WR • Early intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Debt and financial advice ○ Resolving housing and welfare benefit problems ○ Identify vulnerable tenants before they are in arrears.

<i>Continued collaboration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless Prevention Forum monitor the impact of Wylfa (influx of workers). • There are elements of mainstreaming the homeless service and activities throughout the Housing Services' team. • Work has been carried out to assess the need for a mental health pathway. • Partners organisations are strong in preventing homelessness • SPoA in place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Directs referrals to the appropriate provider. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal grounds standard • Service Level Agreement between Housing and Housing Benefits • Develop shared first point of contact form and personal housing plans with partners to demonstrate reasonable steps • Continuation of the Reviewing Officer role. • Hospital pathway • Develop the Mental Health pathway <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Help to access services and sustain tenancy. • Pre-eviction protocol with social housing providers.
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3.0 Regional Planning

Based on the individual reviews from each LA key themes have been identified which form the basis of the regional strategy and will be developed into a local action plan for further consultation with local partners and key stakeholders.

Key themes of the Regional Strategy are:

(1) People

- Youth Homelessness
- Rough Sleepers
- Complex needs
- Prison leavers

(2) Homes

- Housing First
- Improved access to accommodation
- Temporary accommodation

(3) Services

- Prevention
- Mitigation of WR
- Health
- Continued collaboration
- Communication/ raising profile

Based on the Outcomes identified in section 2.0 above the Local Action Plan will look at the following areas:

- Services to help people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
- Helping to prevent and relieve homelessness
- Supply of accommodation and support services
- Resources
- Performance management and managing plans
- Private rented sector
- Welfare reform and Universal Credit
- Impact of Wylfa Newydd Power Station on the housing market
- Homeless Forum

Stage 4: Consult local partners and key stakeholders

Each Local Authority is required to consult their local partners and key stakeholders on the outcome of the Regional and Local issues identified.

4.0 Communication Plan

The aim of the consultation is to seek feedback on homelessness strategy and identify how this can be achieved with partners with the objective of:

- Preventing homelessness
- Ensuring suitable accommodation is provided for people who are or may become homeless
- Ensuring satisfactory support is available for people who are or may become homeless

Target Audience:

- a) The Homeless Prevention Forum which, made up of the following partners who deliver homeless prevention services:
 - Housing Benefit
 - Shelter Cymru
 - RSLs; North Wales Housing, Pennaf and Grwp Cynefin
 - Supporting People providers; the Wallich, Digartref Ynys Môn, CAIS
 - Citizen Advice Bureau
 - Betsi Cadwaladar Health Board
 - Community Mental Health
 - North Wales Police
- b) The Service User Homeless Prevention Forum which, is made up of customers who have been or are affected by homelessness and accessed homeless prevention services.

- c) Customer who are likely to be affected by homelessness
- d) Results from results of questionnaire from customers conducted during Homeless Review
- e) Elected Members
- f) Council Officers including Senior Management

Engagement:

	Description	Method	Date
1.	Report to the Executive Committee.	Agree information provided within this report & communication plan.	June
2.	Hold a workshop with the Homeless Prevention Forum (See below) including Service Users.	One off event. Interactive session to gather the views of partners on the purposed action plan.	June
3.	Final draft public consultation	Available online Paper copies available in 'Contact Mon', JE O'toole Centre, Libraries. 4 drop in sessions within the community. Partners will be asked to encourage customers to take part.	August – September
4.	Final draft for to be scrutinsied by Corporate Scrutiny Committee following consultation.		October
5.	Approval by Executive Committee		December

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B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this option?

Housing Act, 2014 requires LAs to produce review of its homeless service and subsequent strategy

C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?

Approval of Strategy is required within the Housing Act, 2014

D – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?

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DD – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?

yes

E – Who did you consult?		What did they say?
1	Chief Executive / Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) (mandatory)	Approved 29/5
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	Approved 29/5
3	Legal / Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	Approved 29/5
4	Human Resources (HR)	
5	Property	
6	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	
7	Scrutiny	
8	Local Members	
9	Any external bodies / other/s	

F – Risks and any mitigation (if relevant)

1	Economic	
2	Anti-poverty	
3	Crime and Disorder	
4	Environmental	

5	Equalities	
6	Outcome Agreements	
7	Other	

FF - Appendices:

G - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):