

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to:	The Executive
Date:	17.12.2018
Subject:	Regional Homeless Strategy
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Alun Mummery
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Local Members:	n/a

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s
<p>Recommend that the Executive:</p> <p>R1 approves the Regional Homelessness Strategy and Local Action Plan.</p> <p>1.0 Background</p> <p>The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 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. Local Authorities are required to undertake a review of their Homelessness service as a basis for producing the Strategy.</p> <p>The strategy aligns with the objectives of the Council Plan, 2018-22.</p> <p>1.1 Regional approach</p> <p>It was agreed by the North Wales Heads of Service to produce a Regional Homeless Strategy.</p> <p>Establishing a collective understanding and regional approach towards preventing homelessness will have the following benefits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

As the Homelessness Strategy states, Homelessness affects councils across North Wales and this process highlights collaboration at both strategic and operational levels in order to deal with and seek to reduce the effects of homelessness. The Local Action Plan has been prioritised by the Service and is achievable in 2019.

One risk in implementing the Regional Strategy is that ownership is shared and lack of commitment by one or more partners can have an impact on progress. In order to try to respond to this the Chartered Institute of Housing, who has supported us in formulating this strategy, has agreed to be a 'critical friend' as we tackle the Regional Action Plan.

See **appendix 1** for a copy of the Draft Strategy and Local Action Plan.

Local Review

Project Development Workshop Ltd (PDW) were commissioned to undertake a local review for Anglesey.

The review was conducted between March and May 2018 in line with the Code of Guidance. 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?

The data for the period April to mid October shows that 377 people have had contact with the Homelessness Service either by way of a pre-arranged meeting or by visiting the office to inform staff that they are at risk of becoming homeless or are homeless. The reasons given for being homeless, were breakdown of a relationship, friends, family or parent not

able to offer accommodation or leaving prison.

In accordance with the Act, an assessment of their circumstances must be undertaken with advice and support given and a decision to secure emergency, prevent homelessness, help to secure accommodation or duty to secure accommodation. This can mean bed and breakfast, offering solutions to remain in the property or helping to find private accommodation.

Consultation

Following approval by the Executive Committee to consult based on the communication plan, 16.6.18, extensive consultation has been undertaken whilst conducting a review of our Homelessness Service which has fed into this Strategy, see **appendix 2** for further information.

The main messages are:

- Information about performance needs to be better co-ordinated
- Homelessness is acknowledged across teams
- Our staff are enthusiastic and willing to help our customers who are facing a period of emotional strain and uncertainty
- Customers are important to us within our service

This Scrutiny Panel, 13 November, 2018 has scrutinised the Strategy as well as the consultation report.

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?

yes

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)	
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	
3	Legal / Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	
4	Human Resources (HR)	
5	Property	
6	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	
7	Scrutiny	<p>The Partnership Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, 13/11/18 recommend that the Executive Committee approve the Regional Strategy and Local Action Plan.</p> <p>The Chair of the Partnership and Scrutiny Committee will attend on 17/12/18 to provide feedback.</p>
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	Impact assessment completed
6	Outcome Agreements	
7	Other	

FF - Appendices:
Appendix 1 Regional Homeless Strategy and Action Plans Appendix 2 Consultation Report

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

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People, homes and services

A regional approach to tackling homelessness in North Wales

DECEMBER 2018 - DEC 2022



Chartered
Institute of
Housing
Cymru



CYNGOR SIR
YNYS MÔN
ISLE OF ANGLESEY
COUNTY COUNCIL



Foreword

When, as a group, we initially discussed what the title for this strategy should be, there was a tacit recognition that addressing homelessness across the region was more than simply increasing the supply of the right type of housing.

Yes, the shortage of supply is a big contributing factor to people presenting as homeless, whether they are rough sleepers, those on social housing waiting lists, or those sleeping on a friend's sofa without any prospect of any affordable permanent accommodation.

But all the evidence from the individual homelessness reviews, carried out by the six North Wales local authorities to inform this strategy, suggests a more complex explanation as to why so many are sleeping rough or waiting to be housed.

It is about the specific groups of people in need of support, the type of homes we need to provide them with and the services that allow them to live sustainably in those homes – **People, Homes and Services.**

Common themes emerged around the types of demographics presenting as homeless, particularly young people, those with complex needs such as mental health issues, and those leaving prison.

The reviews also identified common themes around the gaps in the type of accommodation, as well as the gaps in data to inform a strategic approach to combatting the issue.

Finally, commonality across the region emerged on other root causes such as welfare reform, lack of early intervention and a lack of collaboration with the health service, and in some cases between council service areas.

Fundamentally, this strategy recognises that homelessness, and the issues that cause it, has no regard for local authority boundaries and that if we are really going to address this issue, then all six councils need to work together to join up data, services and solutions.

This document sets out a strategy based on working together to reach the overarching goal – eradicating homelessness in North Wales. The strategy has been developed within the context of local housing reviews and strategies, and will inform commissioning plans and funding priorities for each local authority area.

Matt Dicks
Director, CIH Cymru

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1. Introduction

1.1 Legislative background:

Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a statutory duty on each local authority in Wales to carry out a homelessness review and formulate a homelessness strategy. A homelessness strategy, under section 50 of the Act, is a strategy for achieving the following objectives in the local housing authority's area:

- The prevention of homelessness;
- That suitable accommodation is and will be available for people who are or may become homeless;
- That satisfactory support is available for people who are or may become homeless.

1.2 Additional legislative and regulatory considerations:

When preparing this strategy partners have referred to and taken into account the following:-

- 10 Year Homeless Plan
- National Housing Pathway for Ex-Service Personnel
- National Pathway for Homelessness Services to Children, Young People and Adults in the Secure Estate
- Preventing Homelessness and Promoting Independence: A Positive Pathway to Adulthood
- The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2015
- Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016
- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and Population Needs Assessment
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Assessment of Wellbeing
- Regional Strategic Plans
- Equalities Act (Wales) 2010
- Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (Wales) Regulations 2014
- Code of Guidance to Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness, 2016
- Welfare Benefit Reforms

1.3 Key objectives:

The aim of this strategy is to address the root causes of homelessness, with the ultimate aim of ending it altogether in North Wales. After carrying out a Homelessness Review in each local authority areas, the six authorities across the region will meet that goal by achieving the following key objectives:

- **Developing a regional approach to tackling homelessness in North Wales**
- **Sharing best practice across the region**
- **Developing shared services and collaboration where possible**
- **Developing a better understanding of the causes of homelessness through better data capture across the region**
- **Reducing homelessness in North Wales**

1.4 the North Wales homelessness picture

This was the picture of homelessness in North Wales in July 2018:

Number on household
Waiting List in North Wales:

7,022



75%

of Welsh people think Welsh
Government should house
rough sleepers



509

in temporary
accommodation

84

sleeping rough



Two-thirds

of Welsh people believe Welsh Government
should provide a good quality home to everyone



2. The regional approach

2.1 Background

The Williams Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery, which reported in 2014, noted that:

“The public sector relationships in Wales are overly complex and this complexity does not serve Wales well. The structures, relationships and responsibilities of public sector bodies in Wales, and the partnerships between them, must be streamlined, accountability clarified and synergies maximised.”

And that:

“There is a need for a step change in the performance and delivery of public services in Wales.”

The Commission also recommend the reduction in the number of councils in order to streamline the delivery of public services in Wales. Whilst the Welsh Government has stopped short of reorganisation, a collaborative approach has continued to dominate its agenda in terms of the delivery of public services since the commission published its report.

In June 2017, the Heads of Housing of the six North Wales local authorities, together with the Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru, undertook a commitment to work together to develop a regional homelessness strategy.

A working group was established and communication opened with the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government agreed to the regional approach outlined in the document in **Appendix A**, provided that each of the six local authorities in the region *“adopts/signs up to the regional strategy”*.



2.2. Key Shared issues

The local reviews have been carried out and common themes and key areas for action have been identified across the region:



2.2.1 People (This is not an exhaustive list but the groups highlighted by the local authority individual reviews)

Key issues	
Youth homelessness	<p>Ensuring correct information is provided to young people via different social media platforms</p> <p>Misunderstanding/lack of knowledge of service provision amongst young people</p> <p>The impact on young people and their housing needs, when family life reaches crisis point</p> <p>Clarifying what we mean by young people and understanding the needs of different groups of young people such as 16-17 year olds in B&B, 20-35 year-olds in one-bed accommodation - a lack of understanding as to why different groups are presenting as homeless</p> <p>Failure to identify at-risk young people at an earlier stage - e.g. vulnerable people/ACES agenda - and a need to provide more joined up services, e.g children services not communicating with housing at an earlier stage</p> <p>Shortage of shared accommodation and one-bed accommodation</p> <p>Shortage of right type of accommodation</p> <p>Many young people aren't tenancy ready - i.e. not financially literate, not experienced living independently</p>
Rough sleepers	<p>Numbers are growing</p> <p>Shortage of the right type of accommodation e.g. emergency accommodation</p> <p>Lack of joined up working between charities and local authorities in delivering outreach services</p> <p>Addressing the "drug and alcohol culture" - a proportion don't use their accommodation because of drug culture. Drug users less likely to use emergency shelter accommodation</p> <p>Lack of support for people with mental health issues</p>

Complex needs	<p>Lack of a clear definition of what Complex Needs mean</p> <p>Lack of co-ordination in service provision</p> <p>Lack of adaptive housing and coordinated use of resource across region</p> <p>Welsh Government commitment to Supporting People Programme</p>
Prison leavers	<p>Prisoner Pathway - not enough resource</p> <p>Lack of collaboration across region</p> <p>No longer within Priority Need</p> <p>Lack of suitable accommodation for those convicted of arson</p>

2.2.2 Homes

Key issues

Housing first	<p>Shortage of funding</p> <p>Lack of Clarity from Welsh Government in terms of its housing first strategy and what it means - is it a health and/or housing spend?</p> <p>Lack of political appetite at a local level in certain Local Authority areas</p>
Improved access to accommodation - supply	<p>Under 35s accommodation</p> <p>Unwillingness of Private Rented Sector (PRS) to take tenants on welfare benefits</p> <p>Lack of consistency in housing support in PRS</p> <p>Upfront letting agency fees</p>

Temporary accommodation

- People unable to move on
- Shortage of right type accommodation
- Too expensive
- Continual risk assessments required

2.2.3 Services

Key issues

Prevention/ intervention

- Intervention takes place at crisis point - homelessness is a symptom not the cause
- Lack of holistic approach to prevention across Local Authority departments - it's every department's responsibility to prevent homelessness

Welfare reform

- Implementation of Welfare Reform agenda

Health

- Lack of collaboration and services in locality and at a regional level
- Lack of understanding of housing within health sector



3. The collaborative framework

3.1 The strategic aim

The core strategic commitment from the six local authorities in North Wales is to create a culture of better collaboration across the region, in terms of addressing the specific issues causing homelessness as outlined above. That agenda will be cemented into the strategic approach of each authority by adoption of the Regional Homelessness strategy as set out in this document. Each authority will develop its own local action plan based on the priorities of the regional strategy and this section outlines where collaboration can take place at a regional level.

3.2 Collaborative work plan

Based on the correlation of key themes, key areas of collaboration across the region have been identified:

3.2.1 People

Youth homelessness:

- Develop a regional approach for young people in terms of information on:
 - Being tenancy ready
 - Financial literacy Welfare/Benefits
 - Promoting a Young People's Positive Pathway to Housing
- Creating better links between accommodation and employment opportunities
- Creating the right support and prevention tools to help maintain tenancies

Rough sleepers:

- Create a regional charity liaison hub to improve consistency and strategic delivery of support
- Promote Streetlink App and Information on reporting homelessness and how public can assist homeless people
- Change perceptions of politicians and public in relation to stereotypes in terms of emergency accommodation, shared accommodation and housing first
- Pulling data sets together at a regional level to create a better understanding of:
 - Why people refuse certain types of accommodation
 - Why tenancies end/Why people present as homeless
 - What PRS want in terms of support and how can we encourage landlords to let to Welfare Benefit claimants
- Develop better engagement with rough sleepers to understand need

Complex needs:

- Develop definitive and shared definition of complex needs across region
- Coordinate use of research across region and individual local authorities in terms of data on complex needs
- Develop/utilise right type of housing
- Develop better collaboration across local authority departments around complex needs

Prison leavers:

- Increase resource for Prisoner Pathway by developing a reciprocal agreement across region - creation of regional Prisoner Pathway network of officers
- Improve monitoring of Prisoner Pathway and develop a data map of impact it's having across region

3.2.2 Homes

Housing First:

- Joined up communications approach to persuade local politicians of the merits of Housing First
- Feed into on-going Welsh Government roll out programme to better understand WG vision
- Share best practice across region

Improved access to accommodation - supply:

- Raise awareness of Homelessness Strategy with other departments
- Embedding homelessness at a strategic level across the region
- Increasing supply that is suitable and accessible
 - o Social new build
 - o Utilising more PRS stock
- Develop a suite of incentives across the region to encourage landlords to work with Homelessness Service
- Working with PRS to reduce negative perception of taking on Welfare Benefit tenants
- Regionalising comms approach with PRS landlords
- Further promote Tai Teg web portal

Temporary accommodation:

- Explore innovative solutions to temporary accommodation
- Learning from Local Authorities that don't use bed and breakfast accommodation to meet temporary accommodation needs - sharing best practice across the region
- Communications campaign to address public perceptions of temporary accommodation and the people that use it
- Where it is necessary, explore regional service level agreements with temporary accommodation providers

3.2.3 Services

Prevention/intervention:

- Create cross-regional data set to better inform why people present as homeless
- Raising awareness amongst statutory services within local authorities to understand that earlier intervention can prevent future homelessness
- Create a regional map of the prevention tools available at both a local and regional level
- Share information services across the region
- Sharing training resource across the region

Welfare reform:

- Develop a regional early intervention hub
- Set up a regional best practice group
- Plug data gaps to better understand the impact of sanctions on homelessness
- Regionalise pre- eviction protocols

Health and social care:

- Better demonstrate cost-benefit of investment in housing and homelessness agenda in terms of savings to health service through sharing of best practice
- Creating a louder voice for housing on Public Service Boards



4. Outcomes

The ultimate aim of this strategy is to reduce homelessness and work towards its eradication across North Wales, measured against an evaluation system (see section 5 below).

5. Monitoring and evaluation

A Regional Homelessness Delivery group has been set-up to implement the regional strategy and action plan. The group is made up of the Housing Strategy leads from the 6 Local Authorities and will meet once a quarter. Where necessary sub-groups will be set-up to deliver some of the actions, membership of the sub-groups will include the relevant partners and frequency of the meetings will be determined by the group.

The progress made against the Regional Action Plan (Appendix B) will be presented quarterly to each Local Authority (LA) Strategic Housing Partnership which oversees the implementation of the LAs Local Housing Strategy and related strategies. The role of the LA Strategic Housing Partnership is to co-ordinate and strengthen housing related activities across all services and partner organisations.

An annual report will be prepared detailing the progress made against the regional action plan and each Local Authority will present the report to their Economy and Plan Scrutiny Committee. The LA will also include progress made against the local Action Plan within the report and will ensure it is publically available online on the LA's website.

Appendix A

Outline - North Wales regional homelessness strategy

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 has introduced the most fundamental changes to homelessness legislation since the introduction of the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977. Alongside the ground breaking statutory duty linked to the prevention of homelessness, the Act also introduced, for the first time, a statutory duty upon a local housing authority to undertake a Homelessness Review and to produce a Homelessness Strategy, with the strategy being published by the end of 2018.

Should the North Wales local authorities produce individual Homelessness Strategies; these would contain similar aims and objectives. Therefore, the North Wales Heads of Housing recommended that the six North Wales local authorities work together to collectively produce and publish a Regional Homelessness Strategy.

CIH Cymru agreed to act as facilitator for the project and met with project leads from the local authorities on 25 October to develop an approach and work plan.

The benefits of such a strategy could include:

- The potential for local authorities to collaboratively procure and deliver homelessness services will be enhanced. There will also be increased opportunity for the development of more effective working with key partner organisations, such as, Health Service, i.e., who operate on a regional basis.
- There will be a more consistent approach among local authorities with their interpretation and implementation of the homelessness legislation, i.e., reasonable steps, 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.
- Local authorities will be able to develop a broader and more detailed understanding of regional issues, better understanding issues neighbouring authorities are encountering.
- There will be more opportunities for authorities to share their resources and expertise and specialist services. It was also recognised that there would be improved collaboration amongst local authorities, for example, with the management of MAPPA cases.
- Establishing a collective understanding and regional approach towards preventing/ tackling homelessness will result in local authorities, together with their partners, having a stronger, more positive influence on the development of future Welsh Government policy, particularly, around housing, homelessness and supporting people issues.

Approach:

- Each council will undertake local reviews and develop local action plan
- The local plans will be analysed, and common themes and areas of cooperation will be identified to develop a draft regional strategy and action plan
- Consult on draft regional strategy and action plan (politically and cross sector)
- Publish final regional strategy and action plan



Appendix B – Regional Action Plan

Theme	Action	Task	Output
<p>People</p> <p>Youth Homelessness</p>	<p>Develop a consistent approach across North Wales to support young people to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Become tenancy ready. (2) Maintain their tenancy 	<p>Map out existing services available to support young people in each County.</p> <p>Gather information from the Single Pathway (and any other methods available) to identify the demand for support services in each County.</p> <p>LAs to share existing referral processes with partners to maximise the use of services available and good practice examples.</p> <p>Identify areas for collaboration.</p> <p>Train front line officers on how to develop effective personal plans for young people.</p>	<p>Each LA will offer robust personal plans for young people that include support to access training and employment opportunities, and resolve any debt and management money issues.</p>
<p>Rough Sleepers</p>	<p>Deliver a consistent service across North Wales that responds to rough sleepers</p>	<p>Develop a regional communication plan to promote Street Link.</p> <p>Develop a regional engagement toolkit to improve communication with rough sleepers to better understand their needs.</p> <p>Each LA to develop local outreach services based on local need and share good practice to ensure consistent approach.</p>	<p>Improve engagement with those who have a street based lifestyle to reduce the need of people sleeping rough</p> <p>Improve consistency and delivery of support to rough sleepers.</p>

Theme	Action	Task	Output
Complex needs	Develop a coordinated approach to responding to customers with complex needs.	<p>Agree what the definition of complex needs is across the region.</p> <p>Share data and good practice.</p> <p>Identify areas for collaboration.</p> <p>Train front line officers on how to respond to customers with complex needs and ensure the right support services are in place.</p>	The complex needs of customers will be met.
Prison leavers	Continue to provide Housing Solutions to prison leavers prior to release maximising opportunities to work in collaboration to ensure effective use of resources.	<p>Develop a reciprocal agreement across the region.</p> <p>Share monitoring data and develop a data map of the impact it is having across the region.</p>	Increase the resources for Prisoner Pathway
Homes	In collaboration use innovation to respond to the accommodation needs of customers.	<p>Share data and good practice.</p> <p>Identify areas for collaboration</p>	Implement a successful approach to Housing First in each local authority area.
Improved access to accommodation	Develop a regional approach to improve the access to the private rented sector	Develop a consistent approach to landlord incentive schemes across the region.	Improve the access to accommodation in the private rented sector.
Temporary accommodation	Explore innovative solutions regionally to reduce the cost of temporary accommodation.	<p>Share data and good practice.</p> <p>Identify areas for collaboration</p>	Reduced costs for LAs.

Theme	Action	Task	Output
Services Prevention	Deliver a consistent service across North Wales that responds to the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.	Map out prevention tools available at both a local and regional level. Train frontline officers on prevention tools available.	Better understanding of why people are presenting as homeless.
Mitigation of Welfare Reform	Develop a collaborative approach to reducing the impact of Welfare Reform on working age claimants affected by Universal Credit	Set-up a regional best practice group and share data to better understand the impact of WR (including the impact of sanctions) and develop effective mitigation measures. Regionalise pre-eviction protocols.	Reduce the impact on customers and public services.
Health and Social Care	Develop closer working arrangements with Health Services	Identify areas for collaboration.	Create the links between health and housing.

Isle of Anglesey County Council Homeless Strategy Action Plan 2018-19 (Dec- Dec)

Theme	Action	Task	Output
People Providing welfare advice/ financial inclusion to homeless clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruit an additional FI officer to be embedded into Homeless team on a part time basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Map out existing financial inclusion offers to support homeless clients - Referral process to be agreed between homeless and income team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maximising income to reduce risk of future homelessness - Long term financial robustness for customers - Reduce customers returning on a frequent basis who are deemed as 'homeless' due to improved financial stability - Improved customer satisfaction
Services Implement equal ground standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To ensure we meet national legislative requirements of implementing the equal ground standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Liaise with Shelter to implement local equal ground standard - Develop quarterly case studies on on how equal ground standard has brought success plus lessons learnt to our delivery - Consider our accessibility – community hubs etc (reduce the impact of entering a formal office by some individuals with complex needs & vulnerabilities) - Customer service training - Mental health awareness - Equal opportunities training - Addressing and acknowledging additional needs such as literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Earlier prevention of homelessness due to improved relations with Housing Options team – two way clarity - Improved relations during the homeless cycle - Swifter compliance of homeless investigations due to increased communication with customer
Services Promote Housing Options service to encourage earlier presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify key stakeholders to actively promote the Housing Options service / SPOA to allow people to prevent as homeless prior to crisis point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a short film - Develop a list of all relevant contacts / email addresses / telephone numbers - Develop a simple marketing plan to ensure all ideal stakeholders are involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Earlier prevention - Manage expectations - Improved relations with key referring agencies such as health and social services - Customers can be provided with information, advice and assistance prior to homelessness

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring Health (BCUHB) on board as this is viewed as an area which requires stakeholder improvement - Increased marketing on Corporate social media / website accounts - Update corporate website and improve the navigation whilst considering vulnerable clients - Stakeholders to openly provide constructive feedback on areas of required improvements by Housing Options 	
<p>Services Ensure services for customers suffering relationship breakdown are mapped and information on provision is shared with customers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Realising this is one the main contributors to homelessness - Map out existing mediation services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop marketing collateral – leaflets, posters, social media - Ensure clarity on all mediation services, if appropriate for individual clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased awareness on couples seeking support (through Relate or Teulu Môn) should personal relations pose a risk to future homelessness
<p>Services Develop a complex needs protocol and case assignment / review progress and monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a coordinated approach to responding to customers with complex needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree what the definition of complex needs is across the region and ensure this is agreed locally with partners - Share data and good practice with social services, SP providers - Identify areas for collaboration with partners i.e. local GPs and Community Nurses - Train front line officers on how to respond to customers with complex needs and ensure the right support services are in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The complex needs of customers will be met. - To provide intelligence for future planning of services
<p>People Develop a process to manage bed and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Process and protocol development in regards to managing B&B's more effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small contribution from customers per night to support the ongoing costs of B&B 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced costs

<p>breakfast accommodation more effectively to ensure customers are in sustainable homes as quickly as possible and spend and numbers are accurately recorded</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Swifter decisions on homelessness - Reduce overall annual B&B costs - Consider innovation for temporary accommodation solutions - Increase support and guidance from Shelter - Focus group with individuals who have been placed in temporary accommodation on how B&B's have affected their lives and how this can be improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homeless customers are reporting they feel better with a more long term focus - Improved customer satisfaction due to swifter decisions resulting in a more permanent tenure (private or local authority) - Having a more suitable alternative for emergency accommodation from those stepping down from statutory services such as mental health
<p>People Mental Health Pathway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement the Mental Health Pathway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appoint a Mental Health Assessor - Arrange training for staff on dealing with Mental Health matters - Work with Health and other key agencies on the Mental Health Pathway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase knowledge and skills on Mental Health issues for staff - Better outcomes for customers presenting with mental health matters
<p>Services Working in partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with the Homeless Prevention Forum to establish sub groups which help address issues within the Regional and Local Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree workstreams and representation from the Forum to develop during the year and to feed into the regional and local action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-ordinated response to issues by all partners

Appendix 2

This is a summary of the consultation that took place during the Service Review and consultation period of the Strategy.

Responses received during consultation period

The North Wales Regional Homeless Strategy 2018-22 consultation was conducted during October and November, 2018. As each Local Authority conducted a review of their Homeless Service with consultation taking place during the reviews via workshops with stakeholders, surveys with customers and social media this was a basis to developing this Regional Homeless Strategy. Both Homeless Reviews and this consultation period for this Regional Homeless Strategy are felt to be sufficient in being able to agree the Strategy and Actions Plans.

Summary of responses

Do you agree with the overall aim of the North Wales Regional Strategy?

72% agreed with the overall aim

Of the responses two customers had given personal experience of trying to access homeless and support services.

Do you agree with the objective of the Strategy?

70% agreed with the objective of the Strategy

'The objectives are balanced against the Legislation'

Each individual review from the Local Authorities have identified shared objectives to reduce Homelessness across North Wales

All responses agreed with this and one comment was made that it is a 'good example of partnership working'

Responses to the Regional Action Plan included

'we strongly support the task of 'training frontline staff on how to develop effective personal plans for young people' and think this would be of great use'.

Organisations which have responded:

Clwyd Alyn Housing Association

Local Authorities – Benefits and Revenue Service, Housing Services, Environmental Health

Llandudno Hospitality and Local Establishments

Shelter Cymru

Ynys Mon Homeless Forum

Llais Ni Ynys Mon

A specific event was held with Digartref Service Users on the Homeless Strategy

7 service users attended

The notes from the session have split the discussion into 3 main topics:

1. Communicating with Anglesey Council
2. In tenancy support (previous/current services)

3. Any further support (suggestions for the future)
1. Communicating with Anglesey Council- the group was asked about any thoughts and feelings (positive or negative) that they had about any communication they had experienced with Anglesey Council.
Key messages were:
 - It can be difficult to access services and support services could be signposted better
 - Facebook and twitter offers limited communication as Housing Services do not access them directly
 - Housing Benefit letters can be difficult to understand
 - Although the Council cannot help more help could be given in directing people to support services
 - More information / posters could be used to give information
2. In tenancy support (previous/current services)
 - Floating support is very important
 - There was an acknowledgment that accessing floating support can be difficult as there is a waiting list
 - Council see B&B as last resort
3. Any further support (suggestions for the future)
 - Empty buildings could be used as temporary housing
 - GISDA café was seen as a good idea
 - Group had enjoyed contributing to Housing Services – video on being homeless / reviewing information leaflets

Feedback from the Homeless Service Review

The following part gives a summary of the consultation that took part during the Service Review of the Homeless Service which has been fed into the Regional Strategy and subsequent Action Plans. This part also highlights the ongoing consultation /participation opportunities.

In partnership with Digatref Cyf, the Housing Service has developed the Service User Homelessness Prevention Forum. This is a group of young people who are or have been service users who help to influence the development and improvement of the service. They have been recognised in the TPAS Cymru Participation Awards by coming second in the improving services category 2017. They are an active, enthusiastic and engaged group.

The overarching aim of the Service User Homelessness Prevention Forum, is to enable young people to work in partnership with Anglesey's Homeless Prevention forum in preventing homelessness on Anglesey.

The aims of the Service User Homelessness Forum are:

- Ensure young people have an opportunity to share knowledge, information, ideas and good practice about homelessness and prevention of homelessness issues.

- To promote effective joint working between service users, service providers, stakeholders, organisations, statutory bodies and interested parties, in order to develop a cohesive and co-ordinated approach to tackling and preventing homelessness.
- To progress the action plan of the Homelessness Strategy.
- To have an active role in the review of Anglesey's Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan.

Some of their achievements are listed here;

1. Helped set-up an innovative housing development project

Action 4 in the interim homeless action plan: Explore options to facilitate sharing, particularly for single people under age 35 as a response to welfare benefit changes which restrict housing costs to shared accommodation rate

- Designed an under 35s housing options questionnaire – designed to help the Council understand young people's housing needs.
- Supported an application for 4 self-contained modular units in Holyhead aimed at young people (under 35 years old) that offer an opportunity to learn independent living skills before moving to larger permanent accommodation. – Welsh Government Innovative Housing Grant
- Interviews architects
- Supported consultation events

2. Support the development of the interim homeless strategy and monitor progress quarterly.

Forum members said they feel they are helping to influence services and said the following;

"It makes me feel like I have done something good when I hear they have listened to what we have said!"

"If we didn't tell them what we thought, they wouldn't know what is needed"

"This has been an excellent experience for me, I have learnt so much. I never thought the Council would listen".

Service User Homeless Prevention Forum

As part of the review a focus group was held with 12 members of the Service User Homelessness Forum. Their feedback is provided below

16 members attended

Views on the following services:

Lighthouse

- Heard about it from a member of staff at the Job Centre
- Excellent Service:
 - Signpost you to other services who can help.
 - Somewhere to go in the day; given food, can use the shower
- Could improve their service by offering day time activities.
- Very supportive.

The Wallich

- Offer good tenancy support services.
- Excellent in helping to find accommodation.

The Council

- Had to fight for support because they did not know how to deal with a customer with mental health.
- Was in B & B for weeks, when I chased up I was not on the system.
- I was given keys to a new house (in Llangefni) and asked to leave the B&B (in Felinheli) within hours, had no transport.
- Do not talk to internal departments (social services, housing benefits)
- Will not help me because I have no local connection – I have to leave the hostel in May because I am 25.
- Offer a good service but not enough accommodation and B&Bs to put you in.
- Can be patronising on the phone and it takes a long time to get through to the right department.
- Need more 1 bedroom accommodation.
- I did not get support from the Council –need to improve their communication.
- Hard to access services when you have no transport to get to Llangefni.
- Housing applications are long and hard to understand.

Private landlords

- Private sector is not affordable.
- Shared accommodation is the only affordable options but there is any landlords offering this.
- Don't want young people on Housing Benefits.

Shelter Cymru

- I was homeless for months and put myself in jail because I knew I would get help with accommodation when I came out. Shelter Cymru found me accommodation.

Digartref

- Offer excellent service; inspire training, help to with a CV.
- No recommendations for improvement.

Service Users Housing Support Perspective

A Service User group for Housing Support was also held, which was well attended by users across a variety of tenures. There was a presentation by DWP on Universal Credit and welfare reform and it was also an opportunity for PDW to explain the homelessness review. The meeting was well organised and attendees asked questions about issues raised during the forum. During this review, it was clearly evidenced that the council has a well-developed service user network which it uses to good effect in involvement and improvement of services, gaining valuable feedback from user experience.

Homelessness Forum

The Council hosts the Homeless Forum which is made up of council officers and partners in the main at the practitioner level. They meet to discuss issues such as:

- Homelessness across Anglesey and particular issues
- The homeless strategy
- New initiatives

With the Homeless Forum we discussed how effective the group was and should there be improvements. The participants recognised that a Homeless Forum is essential for shared working.

Online survey results

During the review the council hosted an online survey for customers to feedback their views on how homelessness or threatened homelessness is dealt with by the Council. The survey ran for a four-week period in April and in all, 38 people responded.

Survey questions and responses:

Q1. Have you accessed the homeless service within the last 12 months?

60.% of customers replied yes to this question

Q2. How easy was it to contact the homeless service?

64% of respondents stated that it was easy or very easy to contact the homeless service

Q3. How did you contact the Homeless service?

1	phone	58.6%	17
2	visit to office	55.2%	16
3	kiosk	3.4%	1
4	email	6.9%	2
5	other	17.2%	5
6	Comments:	0.0%	0

Q.4 How satisfied were you with how regularly you were kept informed of the progress of your case?

58% of customer were satisfied or very satisfied with the regular information they received on the progress of their case.

Q5. How satisfied were you with the support or advice you received from the homeless team?

67% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the support or advice from the homeless team

Q6. Did you get the solution you needed?

70% of customers replied yes

Some customers who replied made the following comments (Q7)

“Was kept waiting for a long period of time at the age of 17, had to sofa surf from house to house when I was pregnant”

“It took three months to be housed in a safe place close to my relatives which, resulted in my mental health deteriorating, but they did what they could”

“I am still homeless six months after first asking for help!!”

Q8. Overall how would you rate your experience?

64% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience

Q9. Please tell us what you think the homeless service could do better?

“They do a good job so far”

“Availability of appointments”

“Be quicker”

“Be more accessible particularly by phone and drop in”

“Not a lot of help at all, very hard to get in touch with people, waiting time is ridiculous”

Overall the scores are largely positive about the service provided by the Housing Options service, however, time waiting to be seen is a recurring theme. The new remodelling approach due to be launched in April 2018 anticipates dealing with this issue.

Telephone survey

PDW carried out a telephone survey, contacting 40 customers and receiving replies from 19 customers. This is a summary of the responses we received;

What was the reason why you were homeless?

Parents/friends/family eviction	3
Relationship breakdown	2
Domestic Abuse	4
Eviction from social housing	
Eviction from private rented sector	5
Leaving Army	
Leaving Prison	2
Other	3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug abuse. • Disabled parent being rehomed and pregnant daughter needed to get out of home before this could happen • Antisocial behaviour from neighbours forced emergency vacation of home

Which other organisations did you approach or were you referred to?

Shelter	5
CAB	4

Solicitor	
MP	1
Other	

How easy was it for you to contact the Housing Options service?

- 83% of customers said it was easy or very easy to contact Housing Options

How did you contact the Housing Options service?

- 6 customers phoned the service
- 17 visited the Llangefni office

Where Housing Options staff knowledgeable about you circumstances?

- 89% of customers confirmed that the Housing options staff were knowledgeable

Where the staff helpful and sympathetic?

- 50% confirmed that they were

How satisfied were you with the quality of service you experienced from the Housing Options service?

- 62% of customers said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the service
- *'although it took a while to find a house it was worth waiting for'*

How satisfied were you with the advice you received from the Housing Options team?

- 54% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with the advice they received
- *'staff were very helpful'*

Prevention of homelessness

Could the service have prevented you from becoming homeless?

- 80 % felt the service could have prevented them from becoming homeless'
- *'I wasn't offered any financial advice or support as a victim of domestic abuse'*
- *'The Council could have offered more help and support in the 2 months leading up to the original eviction notice'*

Did you get the solution you needed?

- 67% of customers stated they got the help they needed'
- *'the officer was particularly helpful in this very difficult case'*

How satisfied were you with how regularly you were kept informed of the progress of your case?

- 50% of customers were satisfied with how regularly they were kept informed

Bed and breakfast accommodation

Were you placed in bed and breakfast accommodation?

- 4 customers responded that they were placed in bed and breakfast accommodation, with 60% of them satisfied or very satisfied with the standard
'The B+B was fine, it was not a suitable location but in itself it was nice'

Temporary accommodation

Were you placed in temporary accommodation?

- 2 were placed in temporary accommodation with 100% satisfied with the standard
'The temporary accommodation turned out to become the new home'

Did you receive any support during your stay in temporary accommodation?

- **36% of customers received support whilst they were in temporary accommodation**
How did you consider the support you received?
- 70% of customers stated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the support they received overall
'Offered and took counselling to cope with stress and pressure of being homeless. Offered and took storage for possessions'

Overall, how would you rate your experience?

- 66% of customers were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience
'Although I was not placed in temporary accommodation I was offered support if I required it through the Council'

Improving services - what could be done to improve the Housing Options services?

'Communication needs to be more often even if nothing in the case has changed just to let people know that they are still in the system'

'Communication follow ups, no one contacted me to let me know how things are going had to call Council follow-up meetings when placed in accommodation'

'There needs to be more homeless accommodation on Anglesey especially for large families, this lady has 6 children'

'Please update people on progress more often or answer emails'

Summary

In summary, the Service Review found the following for access to the service;

- There is a Corporate Customer charter in place for the Housing Service which includes the Housing Options Service

- There is a fact sheet for customers, includes information on the Private Rented Sector, Social Housing and contact details
- There is a single point of access leaflet for customer which explains what housing related support is, how to contact the service, how customers are referred and how to get involved in the service
- The website provides information for customers on homelessness and homeless prevention, homelessness advice, housing debt and money problems, eviction and sleeping rough service, supporting people programme
- The council meets many of the requirements of Shelter Cymru's Equal Ground Standard

There are a number of strengths across the service;

- It is positive that the Housing Service has a customer care charter, however it is not currently monitored for performance
- There are strong elements of mainstreaming the service within the Housing Service with the Customer Care team taking and completing the first contact assessment for customers
- The staff who work in Housing Options and all colleagues within the Housing Service who assist customers who are homeless or threatened with homelessness are enthusiastic and show a strong passion to help customers
- It was clear during observations, focus groups and testing of the service that the customer is important within the service