

Report to	Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	5 November 2020
Lead Member/Officer	Bobby Feeley/Phil Gilroy
Report author	Ann Lloyd/Abbe Harvey
Title	Homelessness – Effects of COVID 19 and Recovery Plans, Homelessness Strategy and Rough Sleeper Census

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. The effects of COVID 19 on homelessness, including Welsh Government guidance and our recovery plans; the revisions within the Homelessness Strategy; and the methodology of the rough sleeper census.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. To provide Members with an update on the progress of the updated Strategic Homelessness Action Plan and the implementation of the Welsh Government three phase homelessness plan and to inform Members of the methodology for conducting the annual rough sleeper census.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That Scrutiny assure themselves that Denbighshire Homelessness Prevention Team is working to the Welsh Government three phase plan, 'Planning Guidance for Homelessness and Housing Related Support Services'.

4. Report details

- 4.1. The Welsh Government planning guidance published on 3 June 2020, set out the priority areas and key principles that local authorities should consider and adopt as part of their strategic and operational planning for tackling homelessness, moving people on from emergency accommodation and developing effective housing related

floating support and supported accommodations. All Local Authorities were required to submit a 3 phase plan from July 2020 through to April 2022.

4.2. Welsh Government allocated the following sums to support the plans nationally:

Phase	Title	Timescales	WG Sum Allocated	Amount DCC Allocated
Phase 1	Crisis Management	March 20 – Aug 20	£10 million + £30 million	
Phase 2	Phase 2 Response	Jul 20 – March 21	£ 40 million	£2,287,637
Phase 3	Move to 'new normal'	Jan 21 – March 22	Not known	

4.3. **Phase 1** - Welsh Government issued new guidelines for the provision of accommodation for rough sleepers and other vulnerable people during and beyond the current Covid-19 Pandemic as part of the Crisis Management Phase.

4.4. This resulted in an additional 96 households being provided with Emergency Accommodation (March 20 - Aug 20) for whom the Local Authority would not previously have had a duty to accommodate. We have been able to claim any additional costs in supporting homeless households as a direct result of COVID 19 from Welsh Government from the Phase 1 allocations.

4.5. **Phase 2** - The latest guidance advises that Local Authorities will have an ongoing duty to these households to secure permanent accommodation. Our Phase 2 Response is in Appendix 1.

4.6. We are currently accommodating 167 households in emergency accommodation (B&B, Caravan Parks); 87 in leased accommodation (longer term temporary accommodation); and 125 households in supported accommodation (receiving additional support for complex needs such as mental health and domestic violence).

4.7. Following the suspension of Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH), working with Denbighshire Community Housing and the RSLs we have been able to accommodate 49 households from emergency accommodation into social housing and this work continues.

4.8. Working in partnership with Conwy County Borough Council (CBC) we are sourcing up to 33 units of accommodation in the private rented sector in Denbighshire as part of the Welsh Government Private Rented Leasing Scheme. The pilot programme provides funding to bring accommodation up to the required standard, provide ongoing support to households to maintain their tenancy and guarantees the landlord

that the property will be returned in the same condition at the end of the 5 year period.

- 4.9. **Phase 3** - Our vision for moving to the 'new normal' is in Appendix 2. There has been no indication of additional funding to support this.
- 4.10. The Supporting People Grant has been replaced by the Housing Support Grant and work is currently being carried out to review all contracts to ensure they fully support the Welsh Government's vision to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- 4.11. The Homelessness Strategy aims to end homelessness in Denbighshire is still current and has been amalgamated with the Housing Strategy which is due for publication in early 2021 and will also link the new Phase 2 Plan and the Homelessness Recovery and Renewal Plan which is in development into an overarching Strategic Homelessness Action Plan that reflects Welsh Government guidance.
- 4.12. There is now a fully integrated corporate approach to homelessness. Community Support Services deliver support to those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, while other services such as Customers and Communities, Planning and Public Protection and Finance are working with Community Support Services, supported by the Corporate Director for Economy & Public Realm, in relation to the buildings.
- 4.13. In November 2019 the annual Rough Sleeping Census was held across Wales and the full report is attached in Appendix 3. In Denbighshire we found a couple from Flintshire rough sleeping on the night of the count, they had been accessing Ty Golau and did not remain in the County.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

- 5.1. The Homelessness Recovery and Renewal Action Plan will contribute to supporting Denbighshire's Corporate Plan 2017-22 in the following areas:
- Everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs
 - The Council supports people and communities to build independence and resilience
 - Younger people want to live and work here and have the skills to do so

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1. Denbighshire have received an indicative allocation of £618,000 to purchase and develop 8 units of family emergency temporary accommodation as part of the Phase 2 Planning, and discussions are ongoing about funding to provide more permanent accommodation.
- 6.2. Revenue funding of £157,091 was received to recruit additional 2 x Housing First Support Officers and 2 x Homelessness Support Practitioners for 6 months.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

- 7.1. Wellbeing Impact Assessments have already been completed and shared with Scrutiny and Cabinet in 2017 during the Strategy and Plan's development.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1. The Phase 2 Plan went to Cabinet Briefing in June 2020, the Homelessness Action Plan went to Partnership Scrutiny in July 2019 and the Strategic Housing and Homelessness Action Plan in March 2020

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1. The new Homelessness Prevention Action Plan is welcome as it will help to improve the lives of those people impacted and at risk of homelessness. The funding from Welsh Government detailed in this report is particularly welcome. It is hoped the plan will also help stabilise the rising costs within this area.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

- 10.1. There is a very limited supply of affordable housing solutions for the majority of the 167 homeless households, both in social housing and the private rented sector. The PRS Leasing scheme will provide up to 33 tenancies and if we can secure the additional Phase 2 Funding from Welsh Government we will be able to provide between 15 – 20 tenancies for single people.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Section 7.4.2(b) of the Council's Constitution outlines Scrutiny's powers in respect of scrutinising and reviewing the Council's performance in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas