

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO OVERVIEW AND SELECT COMMITTEE ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2019

PART A : REPORT

SUBJECT: Homelessness Reduction Act Update

REPORT AUTHOR: Satnam Kaur, Group Head of Residential Services

DATE: 12 August 2019

EXTN: 37738

PORTFOLIO AREA: Residential Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides an update to Members on the impact of the Homeless Reduction since its introduction in April 2018.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

For Members to note the contents of the report

1. BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act came into effect on 3 April 2018. The Act amends Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, introducing new assessment, prevention and relief duties owed to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, irrespective of priority need or whether they might be deemed to have made themselves intentionally homeless.
- 1.2 The Act increases the length of time that a local authority must consider a person is at risk of homelessness so that the authority should provide assistance if they are threatened with homelessness within 56 days. This was previously 28 days.
- 1.3 Under the new duties, local housing authorities are required to carry out an assessment and develop a personalised housing plan with the applicant. If the applicant is threatened with homelessness, a *prevention* duty will be owed. In these circumstances, the steps in the personalised housing plan will aim to enable the applicant to stay in their current accommodation or find a new place to live.
- 1.4 If a person becomes or is already homeless a *relief* duty will be owed. The steps in their personalised housing plan will aim to help the applicant to secure suitable accommodation for a period of at least 6 months.
- 1.5 Both duties, prevention and relief, lasts up to 56 days. If an applicant is homeless at the end of the relief duty, the main housing duty (where the local housing authority accepts a duty to help secure accommodation for the applicant) may apply if they are in priority need and are not 'intentionally homeless'.

1.6 The new duties now mean that every person or household that is, or threatened with, homelessness and eligible has a right to approach the Council for advice and prevention support.

2. IMPACT OF THE ACT

Having been in force for 16 months, the main implications of the Act to date are:

2.1 An increase in homelessness presentations, mainly as result of the change in which an applicant can present as homeless or threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days.

Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20 (to date)
Number	773	963	1189	461

2.2 An increase in the number of people being housed in temporary and emergency accommodation. Alongside an increase in the length of time people spend in this type of accommodation. The number of households accommodated at the end of July 2019 is set out in the table below

Jul-19	Emergency (nightly paid self-contained)	Emergency (nightly paid non self-contained)	HRA TA self-contained	HRA TA non self-contained	Total
Single	7	11	4	6	28
Couple	1	0	0	0	1
Family	58	0	31	1	90
Other	0	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	66	12	35	7	120

2.3 The Council continues to look for alternatives to nightly paid accommodation, such as the 10 homes that were purchased at Wick in 2018. It should be noted that the service is demand led and can fluctuate significantly, making expenditure very difficult to forecast.

2.4 Furthermore, Residential Services has recently been successful with a bid to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for funding of £120,000 over 12 months to focus on a dedicated approach to accessing private rented sector, which in turn it is anticipated will reduce the use of and time spent in temporary and emergency accommodation.

2.5 There has been an increase in administrative burden due to the new levels of paperwork required by the Act. This redirection of resources is impeding our ability to meet the needs of applicants at risk of homelessness. We have tried to reduce

the impact by standardising paperwork as far as possible.

2.6 Whilst our duties have increased the supply and affordability of accommodation have remained largely unchanged, impacting on our ability to truly prevent and relieve homelessness.

3. CONSULTATION:

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		✓
Relevant District Ward Councillors		✓
Other groups/persons (please specify)		✓
4. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial	✓	
Legal		✓
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		✓
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		✓
Sustainability		✓
Asset Management/Property/Land		✓
Technology		✓
Other (please explain)		✓

6. IMPLICATIONS:

Financial

6.1 As homelessness demand continues to rise, so do placements in emergency and temporary accommodation. This has significantly impacted the cost of homelessness has highlighted in the table below. a further supplementary estimate of up to £500k net is expected for 2019/20 in addition to an increase in the Homelessness budget for 2020/21.

Nightly Paid Accommodation Net Expenditure Summary 2018/19				
	Actual 2017/18 £'000	Budget 2018/19 £'000	Actual 2018/19 £'000	Variance 2018/19 £'000
Gross Expenditure	777	950	1,825	875
Income	(200)	(246)	(554)	(308)
Net Expenditure	577	704	1,271	567
Recovery Rate (including Housing Benefit)	26%	26%	30%	

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

Members to note the impact of the Homeless Reduction Act to date.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

N/A