



To: All Members of the Protecting the Most Vulnerable Policy Committee

Professor Steven Broomhead
Chief Executive
Town Hall
Sankey Street
Warrington
WA1 1UH

Councillors:
Chair – M Smith
Deputy Chair – M Creaghan

K Buckley, H Cooksey, R Knowles, S Krizanac, K Morris,
R Purnell, G Welborn

Protecting the Most Vulnerable Policy Committee

Date: Tuesday, 06 December 2016
Time: 18:30
Venue: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Sankey Street, Warrington, WA1 1UH

Agenda prepared by Julian Joinson, Principal Democratic Services Officer, Tel: 01925 442112, Fax: (01925 656278 Email: jjoinson@warrington.gov.uk)

AGENDA

Part 1

Items during the consideration of which the meeting is expected to be open to members of the public (including the press) subject to any statutory right of exclusion.

1 Apologies

To record any apologies received.

2 Code of Conduct - Declarations of Interest

Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulation 2012

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when the item is reached.

3 Minutes

3 - 8

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2016 as a correct record.

**PROTECTING THE MOST VULNERABLE
POLICY COMMITTEE
15 September 2016**

Present: Councillor M Smith
Councillors: M Creaghan, K Buckley, H Cooksey, R Knowles,
R Purnell and G Welborn

PTMV4 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence received were received on behalf of Councillors S Krizanac and K Morris.

PTMV5 Minutes

Decision,

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

PTMV6 Workforce Strategy for Children's Social Care

The Committee considered a presentation from Fiona Waddington, Assistant Director Children and Young People's Targeted Services, on recruitment and retention within Children's Social Care. Members were informed that the recruitment and retention of children's social workers and managers had been an enduring challenge for over a decade. The presentation included information on the following matters:-

- The national pressures;
- 5 Year Social Work Reform Programme;
- Recruitment and retention in Warrington – position at July 2016;
- Warrington workforce profile, salaries and workloads;
- Other pressures in Warrington;
- Recruitment and Retention Strategy research – key issues to address;
- Recruitment and Retention Strategy – proposed approach; and
- The next steps.

Members made a number of comments and asked questions on the following and officers responded as indicated:-

- The cost of the Strategy would be in the region of £1.4M, which was proposed to be funded from within the existing Service. How would that cost be funded? – It was envisaged that strengthening the Early Help Division would reduce the need for referrals, thereby easing the pressure on 'front door' services. The development of the Edge of Care Service would provide wrap-around care for the family, which again should reduce demand elsewhere in the care system. Currently there were not enough children's home places or foster carers which meant that more expensive placements needed to be purchased, which currently cost in the region of £8.2M. Children leaving the

care system and a reduction of children coming into care would gradually free up that resource. Additional funding would also need to be found to fund the Edge of Care Team as this was an 'invest to save' scheme which was only funded for a limited period;

- Had any specific themes been identified as a result of exit interviews? – Exit interviews and staff surveys were routinely carried out, which provided an insight into why staff stayed or decided to leave and what the Council could do better to attract people in. Key issues were caseloads, salaries and newly qualified staff taking advantage of Warrington as a smaller authority and good training-ground before seeking broader experience and better pay elsewhere, or transferring to agency work.
- Was the drive to continually raise standards a barrier to recruitment or off-putting to newly qualified social workers? – There were many routes into social work, but universities might have to raise their entry requirements to filter out unsuitable candidates. The Council had offered to help universities to provide practical experience of social work in the workplace. The Government's announcement of mandatory assessment and accreditation for various Child and Family Practitioner social worker roles was a worry for staff, particularly for mature staff. A number of authorities including Greater Manchester were piloting that scheme. Staff had to be endorsed by their employer, but only local authorities could provide endorsement, which meant that councils would have greater control over which staff should be trained. The net effect might be that agency staff would seek to return to council employment.
- The Ofsted judgement in 2015 was that the service 'required improvement'. When would the next inspection take place? – It was envisaged that the next inspection would take place in 2018, although the inspection framework was due to change in 2017 from the 'single inspection' format. A themed inspection or joint inspection, for example with the police, might take place.

Decision,

- (1) To note the presentation on recruitment and retention within Children's Social Care; and
- (2) To request an update report on the impact of the on Recruitment and Retention Strategy in April 2017.

PTMV7 Adult Social Care Market

The Committee considered report of Stephen Reddy, Executive Director, Families and Wellbeing, on the Adult Social Care Market. Steve Peddie, Operational Director Adult Services, was in attendance to outline key issues within the report and to deliver a presentation to the Committee. The report highlighted some of the major challenges for social care, including the risks of market failure.

The Council continually strived to shape and reform public services with the ambition to improve life opportunities and independence across the life course, supporting residents to start well, live well and age well, particularly those most dependent on public services. To help the Council to achieve that vision it was essential to build a

relationship with residents, partners, communities and businesses based on fairness and sustainability, build on the assets and strengths of individuals, families and communities and integrate services to improve outcomes.

The Care Act 2014 supported the above – a ‘strengths-based’ view of the individual within their family and community, with a stronger role for the local authority in terms of its statutory responsibility to support people to self-care and access advice and information, as well as to provide adequate, affordable, sustainable provision and to stimulate and manage the care and support market. Achievement of those responsibilities was challenged by 5 major forces in the Warrington economy:

- Funding challenges – funding for adult social care was not increasing;
- Demographics – rising need and high demand;
- The social care economy – a chronically low-wage and low-skill economy;
- High employment – and, therefore, low supply of lower-paid labour; and
- The rise in the minimum wage – the ‘National Living Wage’.

The report provided an in depth commentary on the above challenges and offered an overall assessment of the local situation and some suggestions for moving to a sustainable and ethical future.

The presentation provided further information on the following:-

- Care Act 2014;
- Social care in a wider landscape;
- The multiplicity of social care services;
- Budget 2016/17;
- National market landscape – workforce issues;
- Adult social contracts in Warrington;
- Competition;
- Demographics (and the implications of complexity on cost);
- The social care economy – care homes financial positions;
- The impact of the National Minimum Wage;
- Summary of the challenges in Warrington; and

The challenges for all care providers were significant giving rise to a need for the Council to maintain a dialogue with its various partners.

Members made comments and asked questions on the following and officers responded as indicated:-

- Was there a case for increasing the local authority’s stake in the social care provider market – Re-entry into that market was considered to be too difficult;
- Why was the number of personal assistants (PAs) not known to the authority and was there a need for those persons to be registered? – These were people paid directly by the individual persons in receipt of Direct Payments (in lieu of social care services) or Personal Health Budgets. There was no statutory need for such persons to be registered. The local authority audited any expenditure made, which had to be for items to meet the care needs of

individuals as identified in the relevant Care Plan. However, care could not be provided by a person who lived with you. Apart from those rules, the system was largely unregulated and up to the individual;

- Was the local authority responsible for prisoners' care needs? – Warrington was a pioneer in that area and had made the national news as an exemplar authority. The issue of prisoners' needs could be quite controversial. Previously prisoners' care needs were met by other prisoners, who were largely untrained. Currently, Warrington was working closely with prisons in the area to provide care services, although those were at relatively low cost;
- Research showed that care homes made around £17k profit before tax, the Council had approved an uplift of payments of up to 3% from April 2016, but National Minimum Wage demands in its first year of operation had caused an estimated 4.5% rise in costs. With profit margins so small potentially businesses could collapse, but the Council appeared not to be helping sufficiently. – The Council was doing what it could, but there was an assumption that the private sector would share some of the burden of austerity by making efficiency savings just like the public sector.

Members discussed how the Committee might support the work of the Council in ensuring the sustainability of the care market. The Chairman referred, in particular, to Paragraphs 10.7, 10.11 and 10.12 of the report, which identified areas where a high level of cooperation between the Council and its partners was desirable. It was hoped that elected Members could be included in the dialogue with providers. Members considered that a Working Group might be an appropriate format for engagement with care providers.

Decision,

- (1) To note the report and presentation on the Adult Social Care Market; and
- (2) To request the Chairman to write to the Executive Board to indicate that the Committee would be keen to work with it to engage further with registered services to learn more about the levels of risk and the real levels of profit margins in the sector from the owners of those services, as well as the staff who are providing the care.

PTMV8 Work Programme 2016/17

The Committee considered a report seeking approval to the final Work Programme for 2016/17 and monitoring the actions and recommendations arising from the Committee and any Working Groups.

Members were reminded that the Committee, at its meeting on 21 June 2016, had approved a number of themes for its draft Work Programme 2016/17, including some topics being rolled forward from the Work Programme 2015/16. Subsequently, further work had been undertaken to develop the detailed content of the draft Work Programme and a final programme was provided for the Committee's consideration.

The Work Programme was a living document and might be updated periodically in response to changing priorities and other factors. Two amendments were proposed to the draft topics selected in June 2016, as follows.

- The addition of an update report on the Workforce Strategy for Children's Social Care (4 April 2017); and
- The reinstatement of an update report on the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (date to be determined)

The report also contained an update on the monitoring of actions, recommendations and referrals for the Committee. In relation to minute PTMV31(4) Welfare Reform and Work At 2016, it was reported that the Leader of the Council had agreed to write to MPs to outline the challenges which might be faced by the most vulnerable in society under the Welfare Reforms. A letter was currently being drafted.

Councillor Buckley reminded Members of the good work being carried out under the programme of emissary visits to children's care homes, which provided a high degree of assurance around the standards of care for that group of vulnerable young people.

Decision,

- (1) To note the final Work Programme 2016/17, as presented, subject to the inclusion of the following topics:-
 - update report on the Workforce Strategy for Children's Social Care; and
 - update report on the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards;
- (2) To note the Schedule of future meetings;
- (3) To note the Schedule of Progress on Actions and Recommendations, Referrals from Other Bodies and Final Recommendations from Working Groups.

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PROTECTING THE MOST VULNERABLE POLICY COMMITTEE – 6TH DECEMBER 2016

Report of the: Stephen Reddy, Executive Director, Families and Wellbeing

Report Authors: David Cowley, Head of Service, Housing Standards & Options

Cathy Fitzgerald, Head of Service - Substance Misuse and Commissioning Development, Public Health

Contact Details: **Email Address:** **Telephone:** 01925 246890
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Ward Members: All

TITLE OF REPORT: HOMELESSNESS AND CHAOTIC LIFESTYLES

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise members on the current homelessness trends in Warrington, what work is being taken to address chaotic lifestyles and associated homelessness; as well as report progress from the Warrington Homelessness Commission and Homelessness Strategy.

2. CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT

2.1 The report is not confidential or exempt.

3. BACKGROUND: STATUTORY HOMELESSNESS CRITERIA

3.1 The term “homelessness” is a broad one and has a number of interpretations. For the purposes of this report a household is homeless if they do not have accommodation which they have a legal right to occupy, which is accessible and physically available to their household and which it would be reasonable for them to continue to live in.

3.2 The Council has legal duties to homeless people guided by the Housing Act 1996, the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011. There are four set criteria which must be met to be accepted as homeless, in addition to consideration about whether the applicant has a local connection to Warrington.

3.3 The award of a full housing duty under relevant homelessness and housing legislation in effect means an award of Band A (the highest priority banding) under the Council’s Housing Allocations Policy, delivered by the Chooseahome

Scheme, managed by Golden Gates Housing Trust. If none of the Housing Associations provide accommodation, the duty still lies with the Council.

- 3.4 The criteria homeless applicants must meet to qualify for a full housing duty is:
- i. **To be eligible for assistance** – usually a UK National or EU or other foreign national who qualify for benefits (social housing is considered a benefit).
 - ii. **To be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days** of the application
 - iii. **To not be homeless intentionally** – the applicant should not have caused their own homelessness by something they deliberately did or did not do.
 - iv. **To have a ‘priority need’**. There are automatic priority need categories which are dependent children, pregnancy, 16/17 year olds, care leavers under 21 years and people homeless because of fire, flood or other disaster.

Homeless people who do not have an automatic priority need (as set out above) need to be considered ‘vulnerable’ before they qualify.

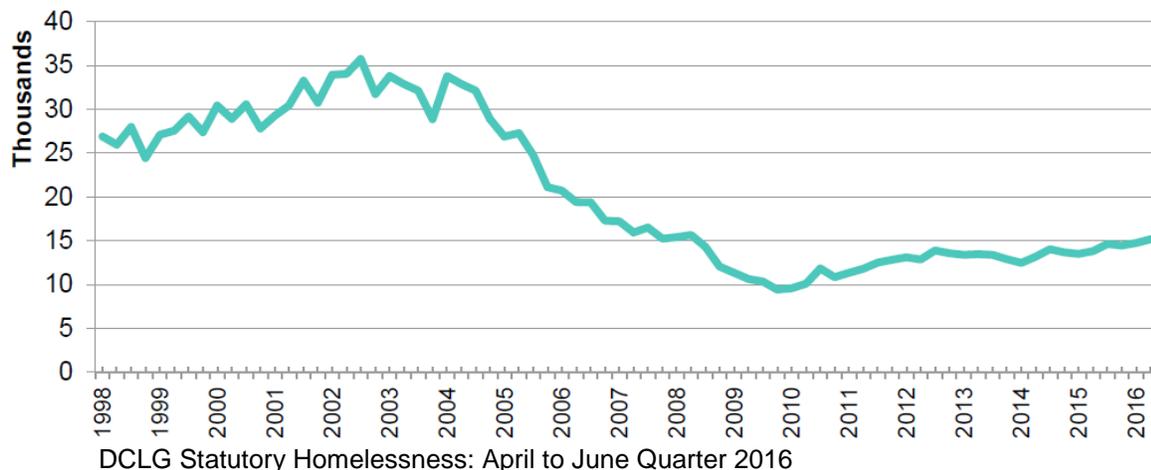
3.5 The Council also has a duty to provide free advice and assistance to all households threatened with homelessness. In practice, Warrington goes beyond this with the aim to attempt to prevent or relieve homelessness which is discretionary.

3.6 Warrington has 144 units of supported accommodation. In comparison, St Helens Council has 249 units of temporary accommodation and Cheshire West and Chester have 309 units of specialist accommodation for households who have housing and support needs in the borough.

4. NATIONAL CONTEXT

4.1 The number of homelessness acceptances during a calendar year peaked late 2003 at 135,580 before falling to a low of 41,780 in 2009. Since 2009 homelessness has gradually been increasing. Chart 1 below sets out the number of homelessness acceptances each quarter.

Chart 1: Households accepted by local authorities as owed a main duty each quarter Q1 1998 to Q2 2016 England



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- 4.2 Local authorities accepted 15,170 households as statutory homeless between 1st April and 30th June 2016 which is 3% up on the previous quarter and 10% on the same quarter last year.
- 4.3 A snapshot of all households living in temporary accommodation identified that on 30th June 2016 there were 73,120 households nationally. This is 9% higher than the same data in 2015 and up 52% on the low of 48,010 on 31st December 2010.

Chart 2: Homelessness Acceptances and Households in Temporary Accommodation on 30th June 2016

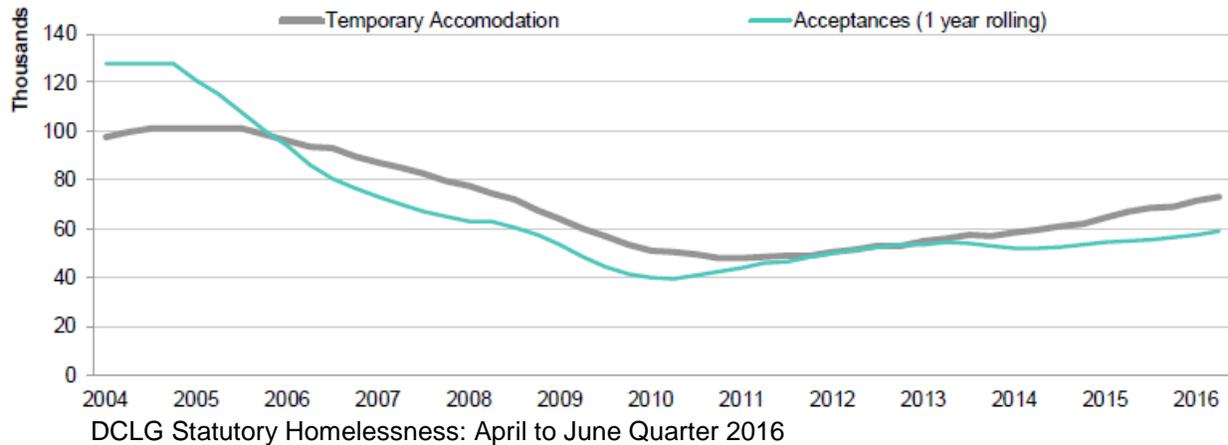
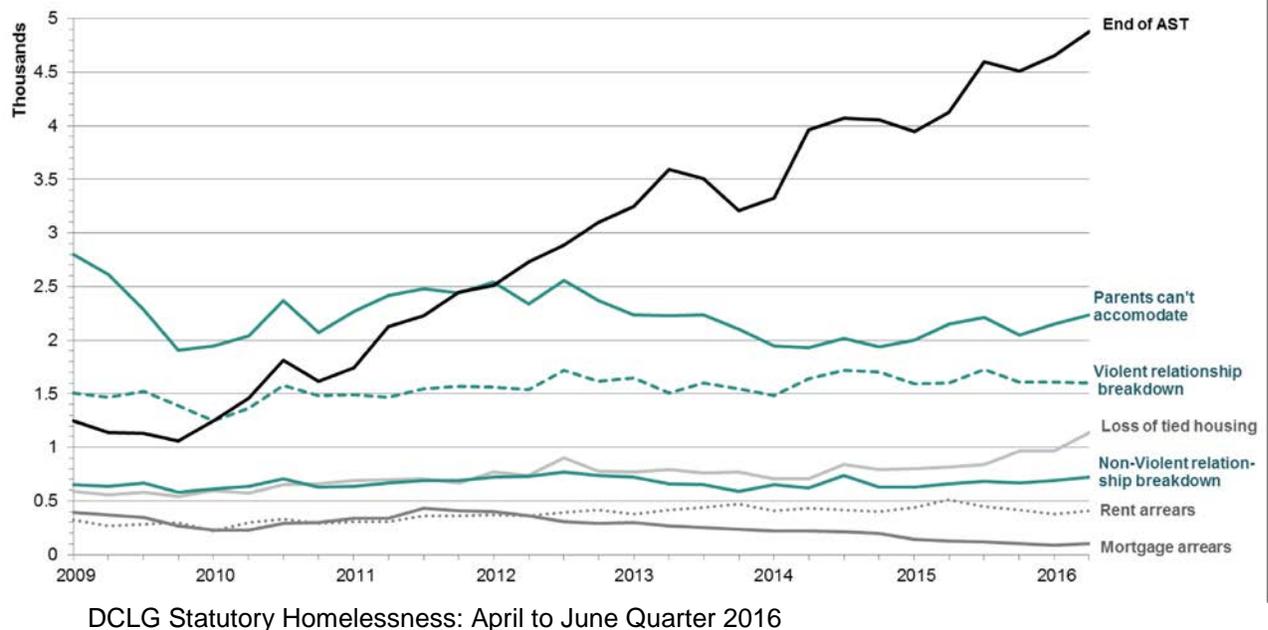


Chart 3: Main duty reasons for loss of last settled home Q2 2016 England



- 4.4 The ending of an assured shorthold tenancy with a private landlord was the most common reason for loss of the last settled home in Q2 2016. This represents 32% of all acceptances in England and 41% of acceptances in London (this compares with 23% in Warrington). Over the last 6 years the end of an assured

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shorthold tenancy has increased from a low of 1,060 households in Q4 2009 (11% of all cases) to 4,880 in Q2 2016 (32% of cases). By comparison the rise in acceptances for all other reasons between Q4 2009 and Q2 2016 was 1,920. This indicates that affordability is an increasingly significant issue as more households facing the end of a private tenancy are unable to find an alternative without assistance. The increase in the end of tenancies is also related to the expansion of the private rented sector which has doubled in size since 2002 and now houses 4.3 million households 2015/16. In Warrington, there has been a 105.1% increase in the private rented sector from 5,263 properties in 2001 to 10,270 in 2011.

- 4.5 To give an idea of the levels of homelessness in relation to population density, the rate of acceptances per 1,000 households can be calculated. Between April and June 2016 the number of homelessness households was 0.65 per 1,000 households in England. In London the rate was 1.36 with the rest of England at 0.52 whilst for Warrington it was 0.25 per 1,000 households.
- 4.6 In February 2016 the government released its latest national figures on rough sleeping in England. In the autumn 2015 the total rough sleeping counts and estimates equated to 3,569 rough sleepers. This is up 825 (30%) from the autumn 2014 total of 2,744. An analysis of the figures shows that the number of rough sleepers has increased by 27% in London and 31% for the rest of England.

5. WARRINGTON CONTEXT

Performance Indicators

- 5.1 From 2013/14, there had been a reduction in the number of statutory homeless applications made compared to the previous two years as set out in the table below.

Table 1: Homelessness Applications and Acceptances

Year	Applications	Acceptances	Acceptance rate
2011/12	161	144	89%
2012/13	127	83	65%
2013/14	260	113	43%
2014/15	168	86	51%
2015/16	160	84	53%

Source: Warrington Borough Council Homelessness Statistics

- 5.2 In the first 6 months of this year 2016/17, there has been a sharp increase in the number of homelessness decision and acceptances. Between April and September 2016 the number of homelessness acceptances was 81 compared to 29 in the same period in 2015. This is almost the level for the entire last year.

Table 2: Homelessness Applications and Acceptances Period Comparisons

Quarter	2015		2016	
	Decisions	Accepted	Decisions	Accepted
April/June	29	11	43	22
July/September	27	18	85	59
Total	56	29	128	81

Source: Warrington Borough Council Homelessness Statistics

- 5.3 Housing Plus, CAB and Revenues and Benefits work to prevent homelessness has also been increasing. The comparison figures just for Housing Plus are as follows:

Table 3: Prevention and Relief of Homelessness from Housing Plus

Quarter	2015	2016
April/June	192	208
July/September	146	166

Source: Warrington Borough Council Homelessness Statistics

- 5.4 Nationally in 2015 there was an overall increase of 30% in rough sleepers, whilst in Warrington we were able to achieve the same as in 2014 which was 5 rough sleepers. The rough sleepers count in October 2016 also found 5 rough sleepers. Through the work of the Rough Sleepers Action Group this has reduced to 1 rough sleeper at the time of preparing this report in November 2016.
- 5.5 Nationally the number of homeless families with children housed in B&B accommodation has reached its highest point for a decade. Living in B&B has a negative impact on children’s health and wellbeing. It also presents challenges financially and on day to day living. For example, how can families provide healthy meals without cooking facilities and purchasing cooked food is often more expensive than making a nutritious and healthy meal. Government guidance states that B&B accommodation is unsuitable for families and can only be used in an emergency and then for less than 6 weeks.
- 5.6 At present all emergency temporary accommodation are at full capacity. A snapshot at the end of July 2016 found 11 households in B&B (4 families, 1 pregnant couple and 6 single people). The B&B budget for 2016/17 is £30,154 and as at the end of July £41,472 has been spent with a projected overspend of £90,000 unless alternative measures of increasing the provision of temporary accommodation are implemented.
- 5.7 At a meeting of the Executive Board on 14th November 2016 approval was given to provide £1.5 million to acquire in the region of 13 dispersed properties for use as emergency temporary accommodation and one property to prevent homelessness.

6. SUPREME COURT RULING ON PRIORITY NEED

6.1 In May 2015 the Supreme Court considered 3 cases in which the Court of Appeal had made rulings concerning the assessment of an applicant's vulnerability to determine whether they had a priority need. These cases were as follows:

- Hotak v London Borough of Southwark
- Kanu v London Borough of Southwark
- Johnson v Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

6.2 Appendix 1 provides a summary of these cases and comments on how they would have been dealt with in Warrington.

6.3 The Supreme Court ruling sets out the way Councils should now undertake "vulnerability" assessments. This ruling is whether an applicant would be significantly more vulnerable if homeless than an ordinary person. This is a substantial modification to the principles Councils have been applying since 2002 which lowers the threshold and potentially increases the number of applicants who may fall under the statutory homelessness duties than has historically been the case. Appendix 2 sets out the approach prior to the Supreme Court ruling and the new vulnerability assessment.

7. GOVERNMENT POLICY CHANGES

7.1 The government has made a number of substantial policy changes which are likely to impact on homelessness which are as follows:

- Government housing policy is to focus on the provision of low cost home ownership rather than rented. However, a recent announcement in the Autumn Statement on 23rd November 2016 has provided additional funding of £1.4 billion for new housing and this will include affordable rent
- April 2017 scrapping entitlement to housing benefit for 18 to 21 year olds
- £12 billion welfare cuts such as benefit cap of £26,000 to be reduced to £20,000 from April 2017
- Reduction in rents by 1% each year from April 2016 for the next 4 years. The government has implemented a temporary exemption until April 2017 from the rent cut for supported housing only (such as Penketh Court) whilst it carries out a review on costs and the impact of the policy.
- Cap to the amount of rent from 1st April 2018 that housing benefit will cover in the social rented sector to the relevant Local Housing Allowance (LHA) for new tenancies from 1st April 2016

7.2 A Private Members Homelessness Reduction Bill had its second reading debate in October 2016 and proposes to amend the Housing Act 1996 to make provision for measures to reduce homelessness through prevention. Appendix 3 provides additional background information.

8. ROUGH SLEEPERS

8.1 In 1998 the government's first snapshot street count of rough sleepers in England counted 1,850 people sleeping rough on one night. By 2002 this number was 585 which represented a substantial reduction of around two thirds. In Autumn 2010 the snapshot street count was 1,768 and this has increased to an estimated 3,569 in Autumn 2015.

8.2 The table below sets out the snapshot one night rough sleeper count held every year in Warrington:

Year	Count
2013	11
2014	5
2015	5
2016	5

Source: Warrington Borough Council Homelessness Statistics

8.3 The Council established the Rough Sleepers Action Group (RSAG) which meets every fortnight and is chaired by the Council's Homelessness & Housing Services Manager. Membership of the group includes the following:

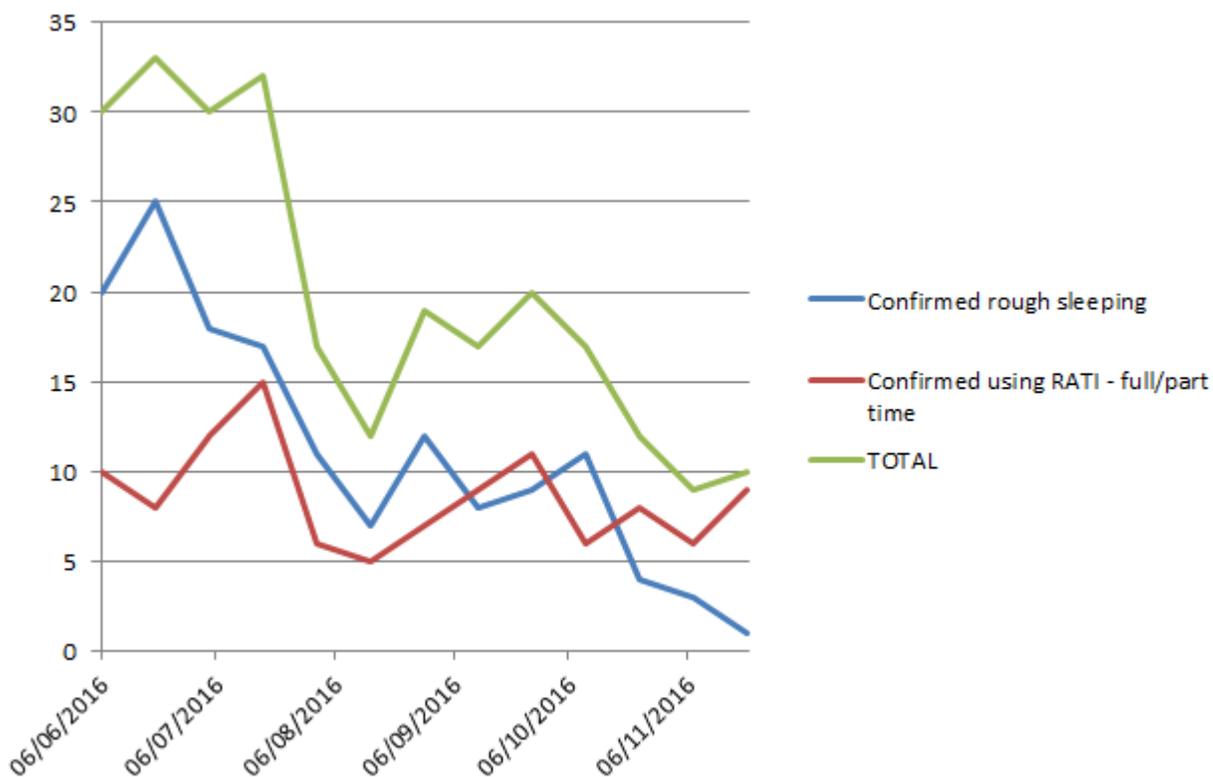
- WBC Housing Plus, Adult Social Care, Public Health and Neighbourhoods/Well Being Team
- Salvation Army: James Lee House (supported housing for single homeless adults)
- Your Housing Group: Verve Place (supported housing for young homeless people 16-21)
- YMCA: Room at the Inn Night Shelter/Day Centre
- Bridgewater NHS: Safeguarding Officer
- Cheshire Police: Town Centre Police
- Community Safety Partnership
- Culture Warrington: Town Centre Services
- Change Grow Live: Drug and Alcohol Treatment Providers
- The Gateway Centre: community centre

8.4 The aim of the RSAG is to share intelligence, to monitor and take action to end rough sleeping in Warrington. Set out below are the trends in relation to rough sleeping and those using Room at the Inn (RATI).

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RSAG meeting date	Confirmed rough sleeping	Confirmed using RATI	TOTAL
06/06/2016	20	10	30
20/06/2016	25	8	33
04/07/2016	18	12	30
18/07/2016	17	15	32
01/08/2016	11	6	17
15/08/2016	7	5	12
29/08/2016	12	7	19
12/09/2016	8	9	17
26/09/2016	9	11	20
10/10/2016	11	6	17
24/10/2016	4	8	12
07/11/2016	3	6	9
21/11/2016	1	9	10

Source: Warrington Borough Council Homelessness Statistics



Source: Warrington Borough Council Homelessness Statistics

- 8.5 There are several ways in which to report rough sleepers to the Council at any time. Such reports are investigated and rough sleepers are offered advice and support from Housing Plus:

Email: roughsleepers@warrington.gov.uk

Web Form: www.warrington.gov.uk/roughsleepers

Warrington Borough Council is also registered with the National Rough Sleeper Reporting Service, Street Link. Street Link are an alternative route to report rough sleeping.



Streetlink Website : www.streetlink.org.uk/tell-us-about-a-rough-sleeper

Streetlink Phoneline: 0300 500 0914

- 8.6 Every year the Council operates the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) which aims to prevent deaths of people sleeping rough and to ensure that every effort is made to engage individuals with support services during the winter months. The Council monitors the weather to identify if this could increase the risk of serious harm to people sleeping rough and puts measures in place to minimise this. For example, James Lee House provides 4 additional emergency beds for overnight use within the scheme and an additional emergency bed is provided at Grange Avenue. Additional information on SWEP is provided at Appendix 4.
- 8.7 As part of an action within the Homelessness Strategy, James Lee House will provide 8 additional direct access beds within their existing contract, which is higher than the original 4 planned. The improvement costs are funded by Your Housing Group. Due to the higher number of units, approvals required, and an increase in works and costs, the revised schedule for these direct access units are to be delivered in spring 2017.

9. CHAOTIC LIFESTYLES

- 9.1 From the above data, it can be seen that rough sleeping is just one symptom of chaotic lifestyles; and that focusing on one aspect can lead to improvements such as the work of the RSAG and SWEP. Despite attempts to bring rough sleepers into the housing options system; anecdotally, some individuals preferred to sleep rough in summer rather than maintain a tenancy in James Lee House. For example, the choice of RATI rather than other accommodation offered by housing options; and others continuing to sleep rough while RATI and emergency accommodation were available.

9.2 Public health and neighbourhood teams have been working with housing teams to deal with other factors that are contributing to chaotic lifestyles other than accommodation. The town has seen the impact of new psychoactive substances leading to more chaotic and volatile behaviour as part of substance misuse, and there is now a new joint offer for health and housing for vulnerable clients.

10. NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

10.1 The use of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), often known as “legal highs”, in Warrington first came to our attention in 2012/13 when these became the drug of choice within the prison establishments across the country. As the Council has the responsibility of commissioning the substance misuse services for both Risley and Thorn Cross prisons this issue became a relevant working concern.

10.2 NPS contains chemicals which produce similar psychoactive effects to “traditional” illegal drugs like cocaine, cannabis and ecstasy. They started to become more popular on the UK drugs scene around 2008 to 2009, with synthetic stimulants such as benzylpiperazine (BZP) and mephedrone, and synthetic cannabinoids (such as “spice”), among the first to gain popularity. It is difficult to test the compounds of NPS as each batch is made differently which is why it is seen as a “chaotic drug” because people do not know exactly what they have taken. From a treatment perspective users do not see that they have an issue so there have been minimal presentations of treatment.

10.3 Up until May 2016, NPS usage and supply was legal. Prior to May 2016, there were several shops across the town which sold NPS and they were visited by both Cheshire Police and the Council’s Public Protection team regarding their supply. For at least 2 years previously, the Public Health team (substance misuse) collected regular data around NPS usage from a range of commissioned and partner services, to assist in understanding the prevalence and also to see what actions could be introduced. What became clear for Warrington was that NPS usage was not with “young people” but with older, mainly historic drug users, who had a higher threshold for NPS than their counterparts. These are known to services and are aged from mid-twenties upwards. The main activity areas remain in the town centre, although a higher prevalence occurs where vulnerable people congregate.

10.4 The Psychoactive Substance Act 2016 came into effect on 26th May 2016 which made it illegal to sell so called “legal highs”. The main sanctions within the act are as follows:

- Up to 7 years in prison for the supply, production, possession with intent to supply, importation or exploitation of a psychoactive substance for human consumption
- Up to 2 years in prison for possessing a psychoactive substance in a custodial institution

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- Prohibition and premises orders which will allow the police to shut down head shops and online dealers in the UK with up to 2 years in prison for those who fail to comply
 - Police powers to seize and destroy psychoactive substances, search people, premises and vehicles, and to search premises by warrant if necessary
- 10.5 Prior to the legislation being introduced, staff from Public Health, Public Protection and Community Safety Partnership met at least fortnightly (along with staff from YMCA and CGL (Pathways to Recovery Drug and Alcohol Service) to consider plans in working with local retailers. There was concern that once the legislation was introduced then retailers would not have been able to sell, thus potentially disposing of the NPS in inappropriate ways. This could have caused great harm to users and non-users alike. Public Protection and Cheshire Police worked together in visiting those retailers and ensured that there was an NPS “amnesty” and methods of confiscation were in place for safe disposal of any drugs.
- 10.6 Since the introduction of the legislation in May this year, Cheshire Police have reported that for the period 1st April, 2016 to 31st October, 2016, across the force footprint there have been 15 arrests for possession, of which 6 were in Warrington. Cheshire Police advise that they are unable to find any arrests prior to the introduction of the legislation, so it must be read that the arrests occurred since May 2016. Between the same period for supply 5 offences have been recorded for Warrington for possession with intent to supply and for supply with charges and investigations are ongoing. It is noted that the Government have not yet updated the list of what is or is not actually a psychoactive substance and this lack of clarity may hinder further work by Cheshire Police.
- 10.7 Warrington’s Public Health team has a designated officer who is responsible for training and educating around NPS. Her work is the only one of its kind across the 9 Cheshire and Mersey Public Health frameworks. From April to September 2016, 3 training sessions have been delivered with 56 people attending. Several more sessions have been delivered up to beginning of November, and in total 6 more dates have been scheduled for up to 150 people until March 2017. Between April 2015 and December 2015, 417 people attended NPS training. The Public Health team are prioritising NPS as part of its refresh of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, given its local and national priority.
- 10.8 CGL (Change Grow Live – drug and alcohol treatment providers) have been offering some “taster sessions” for service users of YMCA as several of those members are chaotic NPS users. There have been 4 weekly sessions covering NPS with attendance at the sessions ranging up to 10 people. CGL are continuing those sessions for vulnerable people from 29th November for an initial period of 6 weeks.
- 10.9 The Council are starting consultation from 28th November 2016 until 23rd January 2017 regarding a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO). Warrington’s PSPO

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would focus on the problem of new psychoactive substances, or 'legal highs'. It follows research by the council and police which identified this as a key form of anti-social behaviour which is having a negative impact on the town centre. Even though the sale of such products is now illegal they are still prevalent.

- 10.10 While this is not an issue which is exclusive to Warrington, the introduction of a PSPO targeting legal highs would see authorities here taking a pro-active approach to dealing with what is a growing national problem. PSPOs can be enforced by a police officer, a police community support officer, designated council officers and employees of other delegated organisations. Anyone found to be under the influence of, or in possession of NPS within the town centre would be in breach of the PSPO and could be dealt with through the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £100. However, work within the PSPO area would focus equally on support. Anyone who is found by officers to be under the influence of NPS would be signposted to a range of services that can help them and offer help and advice wherever possible.

11. HEALTH AND WELLBEING PATHWAY

- 11.1 Following a review of the delivery of health and wellbeing services directed towards homeless people, several services were linked together to form a new health pathway based at the Council's Housing Plus Service from 1st April 2016.
- 11.2 The assessment process within Housing Plus was re-designed to enable health improvement needs to be identified and supported at an early stage, making use of wellbeing mentors, wellbeing associates and facilitating rapid access to CGL Pathways via their outreach service and Floating Support.
- 11.3 **Housing Plus** is the common gateway in Warrington for access to support for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It provides housing advice and assistance to the general public in Warrington who are seeking accommodation, including access to social and private rented housing, with specific services dedicated to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Housing Plus also manages a stock of emergency housing and provides a gateway to supported and specialist housing for people in housing need. The service is accessed widely and caters for all client groups including young people, families, older people and rough sleepers. The service is experienced in working with partner services to ensure that vulnerable clients are able to access support services.
- 11.4 **The Wellbeing Service** targets the most disadvantaged communities and provides tailored support to individuals to help them make healthier lifestyle choices and access appropriate services. They work with individuals to develop a wellbeing action plan and support them to move towards achieving their goals identified in it. Wellbeing mentors and associates, along with CGL Pathways and the primary care (GP) service, with Eric Moore Health Centre for the homeless, are able to ensure that this population is registered with a GP and dentist; have access to basic health care and lifestyle interventions such as the Integrated

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Wellness Service including smoking cessation, appropriate drug and alcohol treatment; as well as pathways into specialist services via mainstream provision.

- 11.5 **CGL Pathways** provide the psycho social and emotional support and clinical treatment for individuals with drug and alcohol issues including an assertive outreach who offer different ways of engaging the substance misuse treatment service.
- 11.6 **Floating Support services for vulnerable tenants provided by Your Housing Group** provides support for the most vulnerable tenants to maintain their tenancies and access support for other services.
- 11.7 While the health and wellbeing pathway was first put in place for YMCA clients, it is offered to all new clients who access Housing Plus in the Gateway. YMCA service users are able to access the wellbeing offer at any time; even if they are not accessing housing options for a variety of reasons, and a special weekly drop-in session is also in place for wellbeing mentors.
- 11.8 Regular meetings have occurred with YMCA staff and service users to engage them in the health pathway. Attendance has also included representation from elected members. The Council regularly supply YMCA with information on the health pathways (both with personal visits and leaflets) and issues raised by YMCA have been resolved. CGL also have a drop in session for drug and alcohol users on a weekly basis.
- 11.9 In recent months, the YMCA have amended their opening hours to 10am-2pm and 6pm-9pm. In the gap between 2-6pm, it was suggested people could attend the Health and Wellbeing Pathway service or CGL, if appropriate. YMCA service users who have attended the last 2 meetings with Council representatives now have some form of accommodation with only 2 who consider themselves as homeless. At the last meeting on 24th November, service users did say that many of them were unable to access housing due to having arrears with GGHT/Torus. The complexity of updating "Chooseahome" was also noted. YMCA staff brought up issues around the pathway and lack of access by some YMCA individuals for the health offer. This is mainly due to them being banned from the Gateway or that they are not able to access "Chooseahome" so, therefore, don't get referred to the pathway. Council staff at the meeting on 24th November advised that if YMCA service users come into Housing Plus with a leaflet then they will be dealt with through the pathway.
- 11.10 The new Health and Wellbeing Pathway has had on average a 30% take up from people approaching Housing Plus for assistance with housing. Clients referred to the Wellbeing service have been supported on a range of issues highlighted in Appendix 5.

12. HOMELESSNESS COMMISSION

12.1 The Homelessness Commission shifted the emphasis from reactive to preventative services in accordance with the commission's findings. Set out below are the 10 key recommendations and progress on achieving these:

1. Develop a clear vision and strategic partnership approach

Complete: The Homelessness Commission set out the vision in the March 2014 report and this was adopted within the Homelessness Strategy 2014 to 2018.

2. Partnership borough wide strategy

Complete: The Executive Board and Warrington Partnership Board approved the Homelessness Strategy 2014 to 2018.

3. Multi-agency governance group

Complete: Homelessness Priority Action Group established leading on the delivery of the vision, future homelessness work and actions within the Homelessness Strategy. This group meets quarterly and sets out the priority actions to achieve the Homelessness Strategy reporting progress to the Warrington Partnership Board.

4. Strategic review of commissioning, management and delivery of homelessness services

Complete: review completed by consultants Perry Richards which informed the Homelessness Strategy 2014 to 2018.

5. Single gateway approach

Complete: The Council's Housing Plus service provides the single gateway into housing and support for the homeless. This brief was extended to include health needs for homeless and vulnerable people from April 2016 when the health contract with the YMCA ended.

Housing Plus has 100% nominations to James Lee House and Verve Place as well as priority referrals to the Vulnerable Tenants Support Service (VTSS).

6. Ensuring the needs of homeless young people are met

Progress: no 16/17 year olds accommodated in B&B since April 2014 except for 1 person for 4 nights in September 2016 (this was a late presentation on a Friday with no alternative options available and daily visits from a social worker)

7. Monitoring the impact of welfare reform

Progress: ongoing

8. Review of homelessness and housing statistics

Complete: a new homelessness database system (Locata) has been purchased and is operational providing customised reports and statistics.

9. Peer review

Progress: not prioritised for 2016 to focus on other key actions

10. Preventative approach

Progress: Housing Options target for 2014/15 was 688 preventions and achieved 809 with an additional 1,169 preventions achieved working with the Council's Benefits & Exchequer Services on Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP).

Warrington has adopted the Pan Cheshire Re-connections policy established with our neighbouring Cheshire local authorities.

- 12.2 Arising from the Homelessness Commission, the Homelessness Priority Action Group has been established chaired by an independent. This group has prioritised actions and monitored delivery of the Homelessness Strategy reporting to the Warrington Partnership.

13. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

- 13.1 The Homelessness Strategy was produced following a strategic review of commissioning, management and delivery of homelessness services. The Homelessness Priority Action Group recently undertook a stocktake to refresh the priority actions and inform the delivery of the homelessness strategy in 2017/18.

- 13.2 A major focus of the Homelessness Strategy is prevention and the Council has launched two panels as part of this prevention approach which are as follows:

Hard to House Multi Agency Panel

The aim of this panel is to obtain suitable accommodation and support for people who have acute housing needs and at risk of homelessness. At the heart of the Panel is the working assumption that no single agency or individual can see the complete picture of the life of a person at risk of homelessness, but all may have insights that are crucial to prevent them from becoming homeless.

Pre-Eviction Rent Arrears Panel

The aim of this panel is to reduce the level of evictions by social landlords across the borough by working with all social landlords and CAB.

- 13.3 Another area of focus for the homelessness strategy is to ensure high quality services are commissioned to deal with and prevent homelessness. A summary of the homelessness strategy and commentary on progress is set out in Appendix 6.

14. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

14.1 At present all emergency temporary accommodation are at full capacity. The B&B budget for 2016/17 is £30,154 has already been spent and has a projected overspend of £90,000 unless alternative measures of increasing the provision of temporary accommodation are implemented. The Executive Board in November 2016 agreed to spend £1.5 million to acquire properties for sale using £1 million capital receipts reserves funding and £0.5 million from Section 106 affordable housing commuted sums.

14.2 The table below sets out the different costs for providing temporary accommodation and compares these with Local Housing Allowance rates:

Family Accommodation Comparison		
	Weekly	Monthly
B&B	£490	£2,123
LHA rates	£109	£ 475
Difference	£381	£1,648
Single Accommodation Comparison		
	Weekly	Monthly
B&B	£252	£1,092
LHA rates	£ 49	£ 212
Difference	£203	£ 880

14.3 The majority of homeless cases are in receipt of benefits and able to claim housing benefit for their temporary accommodation costs. Using the snapshot figures at the end of July 2016 there were 11 households in B&B (4 families, 1 pregnant couple and 6 single people) these equate to £3,724 a week or £16,136 a month paid for by the Council. No invest to save case can be produced as the proposals aim to seek to reduce the potential scale of overspends on B&B this year and in future years which are estimated at between £90,000 to £120,000. However, unless there is a change in policy direction in relation to welfare reform cuts and other housing policy changes it is forecast that homelessness is likely to increase in the future.

14.4 Substance misuse services (CGL) are commissioned by Public Health. The current contractual obligations include services offered to NPS users alongside other substance misuse.

15. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY / EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 15.1 There has been an increase in homelessness presentations and acceptances which has resulted in the Council using B&B. The additional temporary accommodation will be provided to a high standard and will be more suitable than the emergency B&B currently provided.
- 15.2 There is a distinction between homelessness and chaotic lifestyles. For example, it has been seen that many individuals with chaotic lifestyles are not homeless. Despite vulnerability, a minority of individuals are choosing not to engage with the services offered. Multi-agency initiatives are in place and continue to outreach to these individuals whether rough sleeping or affected by substance misuse.
- 15.3 For Warrington, it is understood that the main cohort using NPS are not young people, but people (both men and women) who are historic drug users. Those who are known to services are aged from mid-twenties upwards. The main activity area remains the town centre; although a higher prevalence occurs where vulnerable people congregate.

16. RECOMMENDATION

- 16.1 This paper is to advise members on the current homelessness trends in Warrington, what work is being taken to address chaotic lifestyles and associated homelessness; as well as report progress from the Warrington Homelessness Commission and Homelessness Strategy.
- 16.2 That the Committee notes the contents of the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

17.

17.1

Contacts for Background Papers:

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Appendix 1: Summary of Cases Considered at the Supreme Court

Kanu (appellant) v London Borough of Southwark (respondent)

MR KANU: Single man – HIV positive which had developed into AIDS. Mr Kanu stated that as a street homeless person he was not able to access his medication. The Council found the man had no priority need under statutory homelessness. The court of appeal held the Council's decision and refused leave to bring a further appeal through the courts.

Comment: It is likely that a positive decision would have been made in Warrington by Housing Plus on this case, provided that it was satisfied that the applicant's health would have seriously declined because his homelessness was preventing him accessing necessary medication for a serious illness. Likely outcome in Warrington: Band A on Choosehome with an award of social housing.

Hotak (appellant) v London Borough of Southwark (respondent)

MR HOTAK: single man with learning difficulties which affected his ability to cope with daily living, had self harmed and suffered symptoms of depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He relied on his brother, who was also street homeless, for support with daily hygiene, organising health appointments, meals and finances. The Council found that Mr Hotak was not vulnerable under the terms of the Pereira Test because he had his brother to support him and there was no reason to suggest that his brother would not continue to support him. The court of appeal held that the Council could take support received into account and upheld the council's decision to find Mr Hotak not vulnerable and, therefore, had no priority need under statutory homelessness.

Comment: It is likely that a positive decision would have been made in Warrington by Housing Plus on this case. We would not have considered Mr Hotak's brother satisfactory support because he was street homeless himself. Although none of Mr Hotak's presenting issues would have met priority need taken together we would have likely considered him vulnerable. Likely outcome in Warrington: Band A on Choosehome with an award of social housing.

Johnson (appellant) v Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (respondent)

MR JOHNSON: single man 37 years old who had spent much of his life in custody from being 13 years old. He was a heroin addict and suffered from depression and arthritis. He had been sofa surfing and rough sleeping for several years. The Council decided that he was not vulnerable and, therefore, did not have a priority need under the statutory homelessness legislation. The case went to the Court of Appeal who upheld the council's decision that Mr Johnson was not vulnerable.

Comment: Many applicants presenting to the Council's Homelessness Service, Housing Plus, present with similar issues to Mr Johnson and have addiction, low level mental health, common physical health conditions (like arthritis) and often with an offending history. It is very likely we would have made a negative decision in this case i.e. not priority homeless. Likely outcome in Warrington: Offer of hostel accommodation at James Lee House and offer of Bond Guarantee Scheme (if private sector landlord would accept client subject to references and credit checks).

Appendix 2: Supreme Court Ruling

1. Assessment Test Prior to Supreme Court Ruling May 2015

The test that has been applied by Councils to establish whether an applicant may be in “priority need” as a result of being “vulnerable” (due to old age, mental illness, handicap, physical disability, other special reason, as a result of having been in care [for those over 21 and other than certain students], having served in the armed forces or having been in custody, and as a result of leaving accommodation on account of violence or threats of violence) has reflected an interpretation of the judgement in the Court of Appeal in R v Camden London Borough Council, Ex p Pereira (1998) 31 HLR 317.

The test (known as the “*Pereira Test*”) was incorporated into the Homeless Code of Guidance in 2002 and has involved Officers assessing whether the applicant, when homeless, would be less able to fend for himself than an “**ordinary homeless person**” so that injury or detriment to him would have resulted when a less vulnerable person would be able to cope without harmful effect.

The threshold for accessing a statutory homelessness duty, particularly for single people or couples with no children, is very high and in recent years the courts have supported this high threshold, illustrated in the cases considered by the Supreme Court (see Appendix A).

The “**ordinary homeless person**” has been considered historically by Councils on the understanding that rough sleepers have a lower life expectancy than the general population, are more likely to suffer from addiction issues and to have mental and physical health problems etc.

2. New Vulnerability Assessment

In order to decide whether an applicant falls within the priority need definition, Officers should compare them with “**an ordinary person if made homeless**”. This should be in the context of ordinary people generally and not seek to compare with ordinary people from the locality of the district. The comparison is with ordinary people who happen to be homeless. It should not be made with ‘**ordinary homeless people**’, and not with ‘**ordinary street homeless people**’. The relevant test is whether the applicant would be *significantly* more vulnerable if homeless than an ordinary person.

The Council retains discretion in assessing who is vulnerable under this test, although negative decisions may result in more legal challenges.

Appendix 3: Homelessness Reduction Bill

The Bill is similar to the legislation introduced in Wales in 2014 and draws on the conclusion of an independent review of the legal duties owed to homeless people.

<http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/The%20homelessness%20legislation,%20an%20independent%20review%20of%20the%20legal%20duties%20owed%20to%20homeless%20people.pdf>

- Definition of homelessness amended to include termination of assured shorthand tenancy, definition threatened homelessness is increased up to 56 days from 28 days.
- Duty of local housing authorities to provide advice amended to have greater focus on prevention of homelessness by covering more topics, for broader cohort of people, especially high risk groups. Joint working between neighbouring local housing authorities is encouraged, as is integration with adult social care information and advice services
- Mandatory code of practice for local housing authorities to be introduced.
- Homelessness reduction duties introduced (repealing current duties owed to those threatened with homelessness) including:
 - ❖ Duty to assess the housing needs of an applicant and provide a personal housing plan
 - ❖ Duty to help to prevent an applicant from becoming homeless
 - ❖ Duty to help to secure accommodation for homeless applicant for 56 days
- The definition of becoming homeless intentionally amended to include circumstance where an applicant has failed to accept a reasonable offer, or has failed to cooperate with help being provide to relive their homelessness.
- Duty to persons with nowhere safe to stay introduced to obtain accommodation for a minimum of 56 days
- Definition of local connection amended to a minimum of 6 months, family associations apply solely to children below the age of 18 and anyone with a long term disability.
- Accommodation suitability amended to explicitly cover accommodation in the private rented sector

Appendix 4: Severe Weather Emergency Protocol

The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) and it sets out the arrangements that Warrington Borough Council and partners will put into place to ensure that rough sleepers are not at risk of dying and/or at risk of serious ill health and have a place of safety and security during extreme weather circumstances. It will operate between November and March each year.

When is it triggered and how will I know?

The weather conditions are monitored on a daily basis by Housing Plus and the following triggers are used:

- When the night time temperature is predicted to be zero degrees Celsius or below (taken as an average) for three consecutive nights or
- When there are severe weather warnings in place (as defined by the Met Office accompanied by advice from the Warrington Borough Council Emergency Planning Team) or
- Where the weather and/or conditions of the Town Centre are deemed unsafe such as thick snow on the ground, localised flooding etc

Housing Plus will make the decision to activate SWEP. They will make a decision by 12 noon. They also decide when to de-activate the protocol.

Your service will be informed of activation/de-activation by email. It is then the responsibility of the recipients to disseminate this information to colleagues and clients.

How can people access this service?

When the protocol is activated people are asked to present to Housing Plus at the Gateway between 2pm and 4pm where Warrington Borough Council Housing Plus Team will conduct a needs and risk assessment.

People will not be able to access this emergency provision without presenting to Housing Plus and this is not a guarantee that they will be accepted.

The protocol is for people aged 18 and over only. Please contact WBC Access to Social Care or WBC Emergency Out of Hours Service should you suspect anyone under the age of 18 to be rough sleeping.

What service is provided?

Emergency provision is allocated on a priority basis led by a needs assessment conducted by WBC Housing Plus. Accommodation is basic and may consist of a camp bed and blanket. Accommodation is only provided during the night time.

What is my role in this protocol?

Should you meet anyone who is at risk of rough sleeping and the protocol is active please signpost them to access an assessment at Housing Plus at the Gateway.

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Can people access any further support?

You can signpost people to the WBC Housing Plus service who will conduct a triage assessment to identify housing needs and options.

Also during the night for people who are rough sleeping Warrington Police will endeavour to conduct a safe and well check.

If you have any concerns about a person who you believe is rough sleeping please note their details and sleeping site and contact one of the numbers below:

WBC Housing Options	(9am to 5pm)	01925 246868
Access to Social Care	(9am to 5pm)	01925 444329
WBC Emergency Homeless Out of Hours		01925 444400
Warrington Police		01925 652222
(to conduct a safe and well check)		

Appendix 5: Health and Wellbeing Pathway Statistics (2016)

	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	TOTAL
HOUSING							
Assistance finding somewhere to live	128	59	97	91	133	112	620
Help using Chooseahome	57	36	68	78	99	85	423
Reporting problems with landlord	20	16	17	9	27	11	100
Overcrowding	15	6	19	6	12	8	66
Disrepair	9	0	15	4	10	6	44
MONEY							
Assistance claiming benefits	62	22	37	32	32	25	210
Money/budgeting advice	26	15	27	18	22	19	127
Help with debts/arrears	30	12	24	23	30	30	149
HEALTH							
Help getting a doctor or dentist	16	13	13	5	16	15	78
Help getting medical assistance	11	6	9	4	12	5	47
Advice about smoking/alcohol use	3	4	3	2	2	6	20
Help with drugs/legal highs	5	1	0	2	1	3	12
Advice about healthy eating	7	4	1	3	1	1	17
HOMELESSNESS							
Help with managing a home	11	2	8	5	3	1	30
Advice about home adaptations	4	0	3	5	6	0	18
Help getting supported housing	10	22	23	18	27	26	126
Help getting older people's housing	23	1	1	2	1	0	28
Help coming off living on the streets	27	5	10	5	10	16	73
SAFETY							
Fleeing violence/domestic violence	16	11	10	17	16	13	83
Help making the home safer	2	0	0	1	2	1	6
Help dealing with difficult neighbours	4	0	4	4	8	2	22
LIVING							
Access to Food/clothing bank voucher	26	12	18	23	34	17	130
Access to Furniture	41	20	33	39	38	7	178
Help finding a job	15	13	19	16	10	17	90
Information about community centres/services	8	9	10	4	8	2	41
Information about day time activities	11	9	10	5	8	2	45

Appendix 6: Homelessness Strategy Summary

Action	Update
Review allocations policy	Revised policy out to consultation
Establish Hard to House Panel	Complete
Commission a pathway of services for homeless young people with WBC Children and Young People's Services	On target
Discontinue grant funding to Room at the Inn	8 additional direct access beds to be provided by James Lee House spring 2017. De-commissioning plan to be developed with RATI when appropriate
Research Housing First model	Complete
Review how housing associations co-operate with the Council to assist in its statutory homelessness duties and prevention of homelessness	Draft nominations and exclusions policy
Review private rented sector offer	Work underway
Direct access to immediate appropriate accommodation at James Lee House to prevent rough sleeping with rapid access to move on, reconnection and appropriate housing	Delays have occurred because of the increase from 4 to 8 beds. Completed due spring 2017
Mapping exercise to identify what day time services are available for homeless and vulnerable people	Work underway
Establish Pre-Eviction Rent Arrears Panel	Complete

WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PROTECTING THE MOST VULNERABLE POLICY COMMITTEE – 6 December 2016

Report of the: Councillor Matt Smith, Chair of the Protecting the Most Vulnerable Policy Committee
Report Author: Julian Joinson, Principal Democratic Services Officer
Contact Details: **Email Address:** jjoinson@warrington.gov.uk **Telephone:** (01925) 442112
Ward Members: All Wards

TITLE OF REPORT: WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17 AND MONITORING OF ACTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROTECTING THE MOST VULNERABLE POLICY COMMITTEE

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of the report is for the Committee to consider an update on the delivery of its Work Programme for 2016/17 and to monitor the actions and recommendations arising from the Committee and any Working Groups.

2. CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT

2.1 Not applicable

3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

3.1 The Committee, at its meeting on 21 June 2016, approved a number of themes for its draft Work Programme 2016/17, including some topics being rolled forward from the Work Programme 2015/16. Subsequently, further work was undertaken to refine the detailed content of the draft Work Programme and a final programme was agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 15 September 2016.

3.2 The Work Programme is a living document and may be updated periodically in response to changing priorities and other factors. The following amendments have been proposed to the published Work Programme 2016/17 since the last meeting:-

- Workforce Strategy for Children's Social Care – Inclusion of the update report requested following the discussions on 15 September 2016 (to be reported in April 2017);
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards – Inclusion of the update report requested following the discussions on 15 December 2015 (reporting date in 2017 to be determined);

- Annual Report for the Adoption Service – New report identified to include the report on performance against the Adoption Scorecard (reporting date in 2017 to be determined);
- Fostering Service Annual Report – New report identified (reporting date in 2017 to be determined).

3.3 The revised Work Programme is attached at **Appendix 1**.

3.4 The report also contains an update on the monitoring of actions, recommendations and referrals for this Committee, at **Appendix 2**.

4. WORKING GROUPS

4.1 The Committee has not established any Working Groups for 2016/17. The scope of any Working Groups, including their terms of reference, support requirements, resources and timescales will need to be approved by the Committee prior to their formal establishment.

4.2 Upon the Committee's recommendation from its meeting held on 15 September 2016, the Executive Board has established a Task Group to consider the Social Care Market for Older People. The Task Group comprises Councillors M Smith (Chair), P Wright, H Cooksey, M Creaghan, R Knowles, S Krizanac and K Buckley. The first meeting of the Task Group is due to be held on Wednesday 14 December at 5:00pm at the Town Hall.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 When carrying out activity Members are reminded of the general financial climate and the Council's commitment for delivering its Vision within the Council Strategy 2015 -2018 of "*using our resources wisely*"

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 The following potential risks have been identified: recommendations not accepted by Executive Board, or not acted upon; partners unwilling to engage; insufficient capacity within Directorates to support activity following service redesign; selection of inappropriate topics, which have minimal impact or are undeliverable; capacity within the work programme to deal with matters arising.

6.2 Risks are regularly monitored and managed by the Policy Committee Chairs, with the advice and support of relevant officers. Links with Partnerships and Performance are well established to ensure that the work programme takes account of national and local policy developments and to enable key risks to be identified. Delivery of the Work Programme is routinely monitored.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Democratic and Member Services has an up to date Equality Impact Assessment for its policies and services, including supporting the Council's meetings and decision making arrangements.
- 7.2 Equalities issues relating to policies, services and other topics under scrutiny are the responsibility of the individual Directorates concerned. However, the Committee will monitor the compliance by Directorates on equality and diversity issues when carrying out its functions.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation with Protecting The Most Vulnerable Policy Committee members and officers from relevant Directorates about the Work Programme content is undertaken on a regular basis.

9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 To approve the updated Work Programme 2016/17 (**Appendix 1**); and
- 9.2 To note and comment on the Monitoring of Actions, Recommendations and Referrals (**Appendix 2**).

Protecting the Most Vulnerable Policy Committee Draft Work Programme – June 2016 to March 2017

Work Programme Topic	Purpose of the item	Link to National Policy & Local Context	Lead Officer	Date of Meeting
<i>Theme Adults</i>				
Homelessness and chaotic lifestyles	<p>Look at what work is been undertaken to address chaotic lifestyles and associated homelessness</p> <p>The committee could also look at the outcomes from the Warrington Homeless Commission, current levels of homelessness in Warrington and the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy</p>	Nationally one of the impacts of welfare reform is increasing levels of homelessness. In Warrington a Homelessness Commission was held in 2013 which took an in-depth look at homelessness and made a number of recommendations	Muna Abdel Aziz	6 Dec 2016 ✓
Adult Social Care Market	Look at the adequacy, sustainability and meeting the cost of care	Demand for adult social care is increasing which is partly attributed to an aging population. In addition costs are rising whilst budgets are being reduced.	Steve Peddie	15 Sept 2016 ✓
Integrated Health and Social Care by 2020	Explore how Warrington is meeting the previous Government's requirement to fully integrate health and social care by 2020		Steve Peddie	7 Feb 2017
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards	Update report requested following the discussions on 15 December 2015	The Council had adopted a risk based approach to processing applications, because of the large number of applications. The Committee was particularly interested in receiving an update on those persons considered to be priority 'Red'. Those were situations where there was a dispute around what was in the person's best interest or where	Steve Peddie	TBA

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		a person was requesting to leave or were resisting care.		
Theme – Children and Young People				
Workforce Strategy for Children’s Social Care	Assist in the development of a workforce strategy to recruit and retain children’s social work practitioners and managers	Nationally and locally there are difficulties recruiting and retaining social work practitioners and managers.	Fiona Waddington	15 Sep 2016 ✓
Improving educational outcomes for vulnerable children	Look at a programme of projects which will be undertaken in 2016/17 to improve educational outcomes for vulnerable children.	National research shows that the attainment gap is widening between mainstream and vulnerable children. Warrington is no different in respect therefore a number of projects are underway to try to reverse this trend	Fiona Waddington	7 Feb 2017
Edge of Care	Look at the new edge of care service which is due to commence in September 2017	In Warrington the number of children subject to child protection plans and coming into care has increased. A new service has been introduced with the aim of reducing demand.	Fiona Waddington	4 April 2017
Workforce Strategy for Children’s Social Care	Update report requested following the discussions on 15 September 2016	The recruitment and retention of children’s social workers and managers had been a challenge both nationally and in Warrington for over a decade. The Committee wished to receive an update as to progress following the implementation of a new Recruitment and Retention Strategy for Warrington	Fiona Waddington	4 April 2017
Annual Report for the Adoption Service	Look at a key report on a service which delivers outcomes for vulnerable young people, including the report on performance against the Adoption Scorecard	To ensure compliance with the National Minimum Standards	Fiona Waddington	TBA
Fostering Service Annual Report	Look at a key report on a service which delivers outcomes for vulnerable young people	To ensure compliance with the National Minimum Standards	Fiona Waddington	TBA

Date Revised: 28 November 2016

Schedule of Future Meeting Dates

Meeting Dates		Where possible, draft documentation to be provided no later than	Final documentation to be provided no later than
2016	6 December	18 November	25 November
2017	7 February	20 January	27 January
	4 April	24 March	31 March

Committee Recommendations & Actions

2015/16 - 2016/17

Minute No & Date	Recommendation/Action	Referred to & Date	Response/Comments	Progress
PTMV31(4) 05/04/16	<p><u>Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016</u></p> <p>To request the Head of Democratic and Member Services to write to the Executive Board to encourage the Council to write the Government and the two Warrington MPs, to outline the challenges which might be faced by the most vulnerable people in society under the Welfare Reforms and to seek their support in ensuring that adequate provision is available for this group; and</p>	B Magan/ Councillor T O'Neill 07/09/16	A suggested letter has now been drafted for formal approval.	In progress
PTMV6(2) 15/09/16	<p><u>Workforce Strategy for Children's Social Care</u></p> <p>To request an update report on the impact of the on Recruitment and Retention Strategy in April 2017.</p>	F Waddington	The topic has been added to the Committee's Work Programme 2016/17	✓
PTMV7(2) 15/09/16	<p><u>Adult Social Care Market</u></p> <p>To request the Chairman to write to the Executive Board to indicate that the Committee would be keen to work with it to engage further with registered services to learn more about the levels of risk and the real levels of profit margins in the sector from the owners of those services, as well as the staff who are providing the care.</p>	F Waddington	The Executive Board has agreed to establish a Social Care Market for Older People Task Group	✓

Referrals to the Committee

2016/17

Referred from & Date	Minute Details	Response/Comments	Progress
N/A	There are no outstanding referrals received by the Committee	N/A	N/A

Working Group Final Report Recommendations

2016/17

The Committee has established the following Working Groups:-

Recommendation	Referred to & Date	Response/Comments	Progress	Review Date
Nil	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A