

Housing & Community Safety 17/18

Overview of the service

The remit of the team is to deliver the Council's housing advice and homelessness service with the emphasis on preventing homelessness.

The service is also responsible for fulfilling the Council's legal obligation to assist homeless persons, investigate the individual reasons for homelessness and advise the client accordingly and provide temporary accommodation where applicable.

In addition to the above the team is responsible for ensuring illegal evictions and harassment within the District are eradicated, providing a Landlord Resolution Service and Landlord Forum, liaising with partner housing providers, referring clients to the homeless hostels. They are also the conduit for the Rent Deposit Scheme, Young Persons Project, Young Parents Project, Crash Bed Provision for 16/17 yr old (or care leavers), Private Sector Leasing Scheme, Choice Based Lettings Scheme, Housing Register and Allocations of social housing.

We are regulated by Government and have to have regard of numerous Housing Acts as well as the Council's Homelessness Strategy 2015 – 2018 and the Council's corporate aims of:

- **maintaining sound finances by investing wisely, maximising income and providing effective and efficient services, and,**
- **when delivering our services our customers are at the heart of everything we do**

The cost to run the service totals £458,261 per annum. This amount includes staffing costs, homelessness prevention initiatives, deposits for private sector accommodation and staff training. It also funds temporary accommodation for homelessness emergencies alongside hostel charges and voids and removal and storage costs.

Since January 2014 we have increased our income stream by passing the full cost for bed and breakfast and removal and storage onto the client, as well as renting out our hostel rooms to other Local Authorities.

For Community Safety

The CSP has this year delivered the launch of its 'eyes and ears' scheme that recruits volunteers to report incidents of vulnerable people. Members include supermarkets, Royal Mail, churches and other community groups. The intelligence gathered recently led to a timely intervention to prevent a gas explosion at an elderly vulnerable lady's home. Her life and those of her neighbours were saved to a visit by a civilian police staff member. We have also secured funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner to tackle alleged abuses of migrant workers in the District. This will fill an intelligence gap and help focus on operations to tackle offenders.

Officers from various agencies are working together to solve anti social driving incidents

at the Council's car parks and business centres.

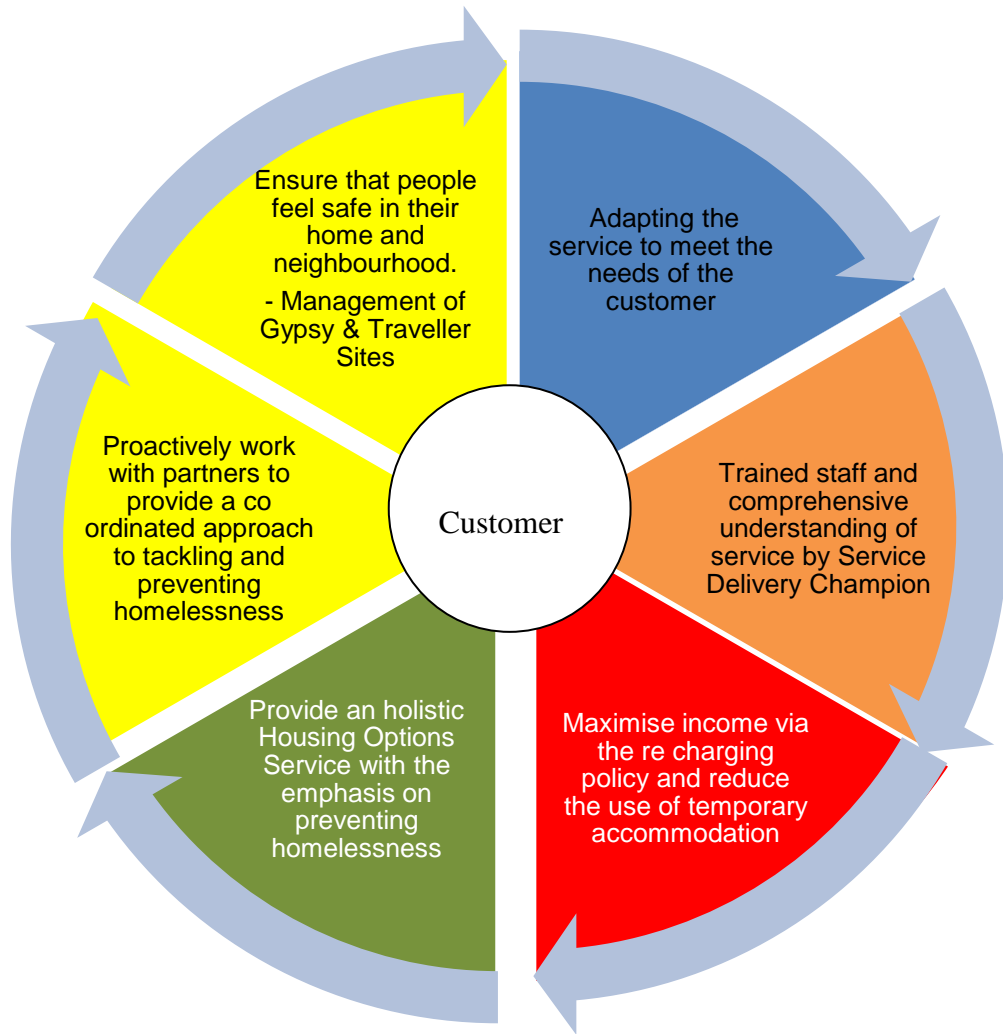
Officers are also working with Littleport parish council to tackle youth ASB through providing better facilities and encouraging young people at risk of offending into positive activities in the town.

Officers have escalated their use of new ASB powers, with five Criminal Prosecution Notice warnings being sent out for anti social behaviour involving dangerous dogs. A new mediation initiative between the Council and the Police has enabled council and police staff to deliver an in house mediation service thus saving both organisations money. Staffs are fully trained as mediators and subjects include anti social behaviour, neighbourhood disputes etc. Following mediation, officers put Good Neighbour Agreements in place where appropriate.

Work on the Governments Prevent agenda continues. So far officers have attended and presented a talk to young people on the dangers of terrorism and being radicalised. A talk was given to 800 students at Witchford College and there is a programme to roll this out to other schools across the district.

Staffing information

Post	Full/Part time	Area of Department
Housing & Community Safety Manager	Full Time	All
Housing Options Officer	Part Time	All
Housing Options Officer	Full Time	All
Housing Options Officer	Full Time	All
Trainee Housing Options Officer	Full Time	All
Income & Recovery Officer	Full Time	All
Neighbourhood Officer	Full Time	All
Tenancy Support Officer	Full Time	All
Housing Admin Officer	Full Time	All
Traveller Liaison Officer	Part Time (currently vacant)	All



Strategy map- 2017/2018

Commitments towards our Vision

Housing & Community Safety

Performance Measure	Link to Corporate Plan Priority	Target and reporting timescale (i.e. 6 monthly or annually)	Baseline from previous year/output from previous year	Owner and co-owners
Maximising income via the re charging policy and reduce the risk of temporary accommodation	A customer driven efficient Council with a “can do” attitude and pro business approach and commercially focused to ensure financial self sufficiency for the tax payer.	To avoid the use of B&B accommodation where possible unless in an absolute emergency and there is no other accommodation available to the client.	100%	All Officers
		To ensure that Homeless decisions made within 33 working days. Internal target of 10 working days.	100%	
		To prioritise emergency homeless presentations and where possible deal with the situation on the day of presentation to the council.	100%	All Officers
		To ensure that every effort is made by the Income Recovery Officer (IRO) to recoup monies loaned to clients for deposits, storage & removals and full recharge for any time spent in B&B with a collection rate of 75%	95%	Income & Recovery Officer
Provide an holistic Housing Options Service with the emphasis on preventing homelessness	Making East Cambridgeshire an even better place to live	To ensure we use 100% of Discretionary Housing Fund	100%	All officers
		To prevent at least 350 households from becoming homeless per year.	240	
		To effectively engage with landlords by undertaking 2 landlord forums per year.	0	All Officers
		To undertake a rough sleeper estimate.	yearly	All Officers

Performance Measure	Link to Corporate Plan Priority	Target and reporting timescale (i.e. 6 monthly or annually)	Baseline from previous year/output from previous year	Owner and co-owners
Adapting the service to meet the needs of the customer	A customer driven efficient Council with a "can do" attitude and pro business approach and commercially focused to ensure financial self sufficiency for the taxpayer	Update websites and ensure plethora of leaflets distributed across the district. Reviewed annually.	Yearly	All officers
		Conduct Customer Satisfaction surveys.	50%	
		Carry out home visits to those who need them.	100%	All officers
		To take a report to committee to approve full hand over of Earith and Burwell Gypsy and Traveller sites to ECDC and to recruit to the vacant Traveller Liaison Officer	June 2017	Housing & Community Safety Manager
To maintain a full and professionally qualified team that is technically up to date with current and emerging legislative changes		Ensure all officers attend all mandatory council training courses in policy and procedures for child safeguarding, quality & diversity, health & safety etc.	100%	All officers
		Appraisals to be completed annually	100%	Housing & Community Safety Manager
		Service awareness briefings for Service Delivery Champion.	100%	All Officers
		All officers to be up to date with changes to benefits/Universal Credit and Benefit Caps being introduced in from November 2016 and Universal Credit roll out to all new applicants from May 2017.	100%	All Officers
Ensuring people feel safe in their home and neighbourhood	Making East Cambridgeshire an even better place to live	To allow certain domestic abuse applicants to remain in their current property and to be safe in the knowledge that their property is secure.	2	All Officers
		To ensure 5% more rents collected than in 2016/17 from the Traveller Sites.	£86,214	Housing & Community Safety Manager
		To attend meetings and conferences for MARAC, MAPPA and ASB, make sure housing team are aware of any impending homelessness relating to domestic violence/abuse, crime and disorder or ASB.	100%	All Officers
		Deliver the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Board meeting twice annually and lead development of annual Action plan and all performance measures	Twice annually	Neighbourhood Officer
		100% of Section 106 grant applications determined with 3 weeks	100%	Neighbourhood Officer
		To sign up at least 20 Parish Council members/clerks as Eyes and Ears volunteers and roll out more multi agency events	Twice annually	Neighbourhood Officer
		Prevent awareness raising sessions at the secondary schools in East Cambridgeshire involving video presentation.	Annually	Neighbourhood Officer