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Subject: Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance

Report to: ELT 20 January 2021

Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee 4 February 2021

Report by: Nicola Turner, Housing Director

SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper introduces the work undertaken by the Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance, a multi- agency group established to support reductions in homelessness across the borough. It seeks member endorsement of the Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance Commitment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:

1. Endorses the Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance Commitment.
2. Requests an annual update on the work of the Homeless Alliance.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This paper introduces the Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance which was set up to work collaboratively to address and reduce homelessness and the impacts of homelessness. The alliance recognises that by working together more can be achieved than if organisations work separately. The alliance has developed a formal commitment which reflects the ambitions of the alliance and members are asked to endorse the Commitment.

2. The Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance

- 2.1 The Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance grew out of conversations between local voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE) in the borough who had come together at the start of the first Covid pandemic Lockdown in Spring 2020 to provide mutual support. The Covid pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated homelessness

and the group decided to explore the idea of a local alliance, holding a meeting on 14 August 2020 to gauge interest. This meeting was attended by a representative of the Pathways homelessness service in Norwich. Following the meeting it was agreed to explore the development of a homeless alliance for the borough.

- 2.2 DIAL are part of the network of organisations and successfully applied to the Lloyds Bank Foundation (LBF) to support the development of the homeless alliance. LBF's development team are supporting the development of the alliance and have provided funding to DIAL for six months from October 2020 to fund a part time post to facilitate and guide the development and work of the alliance ensuring momentum and enthusiasm is maintained.
- 2.3 There are currently 17 organisations including the Council involved in the alliance and it is expected this number will continue to grow:

Dial	Feathers Futures	Herring House Trust
The Living Room	Foodbank Plus	Imagine Norfolk Together
GYROS	DWP	Change Grow Live (CGL)
Norfolk Constabulary	Norfolk County Council	Public Health
Norfolk Community Foundation	NHS Primary Care	Future Projects
National Lottery Community Fund	Great Yarmouth Borough Council	

- 2.4 The alliance has developed the Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance Commitment which sets out the role and aspirations of the alliance (see section 3 below). To deliver the commitment a number of sub-groups have been established:

Terms of Reference Group.

This group will develop and agree the governance for both a strategic group and an operational group building upon the strong local operational arrangements which already exist. It will review how existing groups are working and ensure the links between the operational and strategic groups reflect local needs and allow innovation and new working arrangements to be developed collaboratively.

Co-production Group.

This group will ensure that the lived experience of homelessness is embedded into the work of the alliance. It will help to build a better understanding of the causes of homelessness and how we can develop effective preventive services and ensure existing services meet the needs of service users.

Operational Mapping Group.

This group will map existing services to build a wider understanding of what exists, how easy services are to access, how they link to together and where the overlaps are. It will allow a whole system approach to be developed and support pathway approaches which support people in the most effective way. The group will also consider what a good system of service will look like – informing the strategic group and supporting service delivery and innovation.

Live Response Group.

This group will reflect on the impact of the current Covid pandemic and what has already been learnt about the causes of homelessness and what we can continue to learn. The group will consider how we can use the continuing learning to inform the development of a strategy and the wider system approach to preventing and relieving the impacts of homelessness.

Commitment Group.

This group developed the commitment and retains oversight of whether the commitment continues to reflect the position of the alliance. It will also promote the commitment to other organisations and seek endorsement of the pledges within the commitment to ensure it can be delivered.

The wider homeless alliance is the overarching strategic group to which the sub-groups will report, ensuring wider engagement within the work of the sub-groups.

- 2.5 In July 2020, Policy and Resources Committee adopted the Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan 2020 which was produced to reflect the increases in rough sleeping and homelessness amongst single people and childless couples as a result of the Covid pandemic. The strategy identified the need to work collaboratively with partners across the statutory and voluntary sectors and to build a strong preventative approach to service delivery. The Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance will be key to this approach and will also deliver a wider approach to addressing and relieving the homelessness of families which supports the Council's Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2023.
- 2.6 The Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance will complement the work of the county wide Norfolk Strategic Housing Partnership which is also working to reduce homelessness. Links between the two groups have already been made.

3. The Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance Commitment

- 3.1 A copy of the Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance Commitment is attached at Appendix 1, in summary the aim of the alliance is:
 - To end homelessness in Great Yarmouth and working together to develop a shared vision and ambition about how services will work together to prevent homelessness.

This is translated into five commitments:

- To work collaboratively together involving people who are homeless now or have previously been homeless.
- To work towards the shared vision of ending homelessness and understand the causes of homelessness and championing change.
- Ensuring equity of participation – everyone’s voice will be heard and members will be willing to listen to new ideas and share views.
- Treating everyone with dignity and respect and being a champion for the homeless.
- Being open and transparent and providing honest feedback on how services operate to support system and service change.

4. Financial Implications

None

5. Risk Implications

None

6. Conclusions

Building upon the increased awareness of homelessness which is a result of the impact of the current Covid-19 pandemic, a group of VCSE organisations and statutory organisations have come together to form the Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance to work collaboratively together to prevent homelessness across the borough. The alliance has developed the Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance Commitment to set out its aims and the specific commitments it asks all partners to endorse. This paper seeks member endorsement of this commitment reflecting the benefits this joint working will bring.

7. Background Papers

Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance Commitment (attached as Appendix 1)

Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2023

Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan 2020

Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?

Area for consideration	Comment
Monitoring Officer Consultation:	Via ELT
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	Via ELT

Existing Council Policies:	Not applicable
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	None
Legal Implications (including human rights):	The Council has legal duties to prevent and relieve homelessness as a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which enhances the Council's duties as set out in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. The operation of the Great Yarmouth Homeless Alliance will not offset the Council's duties. Endorsing the alliance and being part of the work it delivers to prevent homelessness and relieve the impacts of homelessness will complement the Council's discharge of its legal duties.
Risk Implications:	None
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	The alliance has a clear mandate of providing equality of service.
Crime & Disorder:	None
Every Child Matters:	The needs of families who are homeless will be included in the work of the alliance.



The Great Yarmouth Commitment

The Great Yarmouth Homelessness Alliance is made up of organisations, groups, individuals, and businesses actively working together to tackle and prevent homelessness in Great Yarmouth.

Our aim is to end homelessness in Great Yarmouth and ensure that every person is empowered and equipped to live their lives with the freedom to make their own choices and with easy access to all relevant services. We believe that every person, no matter what their background, has the right to stable, safe, and secure housing.

We believe more can be achieved by working together and have established a shared ambition and vision about the way we will work to prevent homelessness. Involving people who have lived experience will be essential to ensure the Great Yarmouth Alliance delivers positive action to tackle homelessness.

Background

What do we mean by homelessness?

People can be homeless if they have nowhere to stay and are sleeping on the streets. They can also be considered homeless (also known as the hidden homeless) even if they have a roof over their head. This means that homelessness can also include examples such as people who are:

- Sofa surfing (temporarily staying with friends or family)
- Staying in a hostel, night shelter or bed & breakfast accommodation
- Squatting
- Homeless because of violence or abuse in their home
- Living apart from their family because they do not have a place to live together.

What is the scale of the issue in Great Yarmouth?

Much like the national picture, Great Yarmouth has seen increasing numbers of people who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness. During the Covid-19 lockdown, Great Yarmouth Borough Council housed 51 rough sleepers and 102 people thought to be at risk of homelessness - with 85 people sheltered by the authority at the peak of the pandemic between 23 March and 30 June.

Homelessness can affect anyone, and people can become homeless for lots of different reasons. There are social causes of homelessness, such as a lack of affordable housing, poverty, non-eligibility to benefits, unemployment and certain life events that cause individuals to become homeless.

People can also become homeless when they leave prison, care, the armed forces, or accommodation for asylum seekers, and have no home to go to. Some people are homeless as they have escaped violent relationships and some people become homeless simply because they can no longer afford the rent.

Life events like a relationship breaking down, losing a job, mental or physical health problems, or substance misuse can be the trigger to someone becoming homeless. Being homeless can in turn make many of these problems even harder to resolve.

The Alliance's partnership working will involve people who are homeless and people who have experienced homelessness as an integral part of what we do. It is vitally important that these views are reflected, and services reflect these needs and aspirations.

Our Commitment

We are stronger together

- To work collectively to achieve the best outcomes for people who are faced with homelessness or who are homeless.
- We will involve people who are homeless and people who have experienced homelessness as an integral part of what we do.

We have a shared Vision

- To work towards our shared vision to end homelessness in Great Yarmouth.
- To actively identify the root causes and gaps in provision and champion for change.

Equitable Participation

- We will promote diversity ensuring everyone has the right to have their voice heard.
- There will be a willingness to listen to new ideas and share views.

Dignity and Respect

- We believe that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect including those who are homeless.
- We will champion for the person who is homeless to be at the centre of the services that support them.

Honesty

- All members of the Alliance will be open to receiving and providing honest and constructive feedback on services including their own and contribute to supporting system change.
- To be open and transparent, wherever possible with information sharing to support the coordination of Alliance's response to homelessness.

Our Aims

- Provide multi-sector leadership and shared vision and coordinating a collective response
- Communicate a clear vision to the wider public
- Help to harness and enable greater partnership working
- Gain a greater understanding of the purposes, expertise and capabilities of those involved
- Improve communication between local organisations
- Develop an inclusive approach including involving people who are or who have been homeless that puts them at the centre of the services that support them.
- Provide a framework for learning, improvement and sharing experience between Alliance members and to enable and monitor change at a system level.
- Enable Alliance members to support and advise one another

- Raise awareness of services providing support and work to prevent homelessness locally
- Identify areas for action and work together to tackle these challenges
- To continuously seek to shape and develop support services to meet the needs of those who need support
- To reduce the number of people rough sleeping, year upon year until we end homelessness in Great Yarmouth

How can you get involved?

For more information about the Alliance and to see how you can get involved please contact:

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Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales is working with and supporting the Homelessness Alliance through its [People and Communities](#) work, as Great Yarmouth is one of six communities across England and Wales the Foundation is partnering with. An aspect of this support is resourcing the capacity needed to take the work forward, as well as providing direct support through the Development Team at the Foundation and drawing on additional insights and expertise to provide tools to help develop the work. Finally, the Foundation is interested in learning, as part of the Alliance, about what it takes to create long term and systemic change.