

Greater Norwich Hostel Strategy 2007-2009

Executive summary

Background to the Strategy

In late 2004 Norwich City Council and the Supporting People Team identified some areas for improvement about hostel provision in the city. It was decided that a joint review should be carried out with the sub-regional housing partners of Broadland District and South Norfolk Councils.

The lengthy review resulted in a consultation document being published in August 2006 and considerable dialogue with the hostel providers.

The review made 10 key recommendations. The Greater Norwich Hostel Strategy addresses points made in response to the consultation report and translates the recommendations into strategic aims and objectives.

The spread of supported accommodation resources (which meet the needs of a range of client groups) resources is not even across the sub region - they are relatively concentrated in Norwich – there are currently 24 bedspaces within the Broadland area, 288 within Norwich, and 86 within South Norfolk. Although the review was started by Norwich City Council and supporting people it became a sub regional in recognition of the increasing expectation for housing issues to be planned and managed at a sub regional level.

Strategic Context

The Greater Norwich Hostel Strategy links with the following other strategies:

- The Greater Norwich Sub-regional Housing Strategy 2007-10
- The Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy 2008 -10
- The Norfolk Housing and Support Strategy for Offenders 2006-9
- The Norfolk Supporting People Strategy 2005-10

Strategic vision

The vision of the hostel strategy is to sustain, develop and improve the hostel accommodation within Greater Norwich so that access to high quality accommodation is available to all those with appropriate need, throughout the period of need. This vision has five key strategic aims:

- To take a strategic and integrated approach towards hostel accommodation provision
- To provide clear access routes into hostel accommodation
- To provide an adequate supply of appropriate supported accommodation within Greater Norwich
- To provide effective resettlement into more independent accommodation
- To maximise funding to support the recommendations identified in the Hostel Review.

Objectives

The objectives are based on the recommendations from the review and are grouped under the 5 strategic aims above. The objectives are as follows:

1. Produce a strategy for hostel provision which provides a framework for implementing the agreed change within the hostel sector in Greater Norwich
2. Produce an action plan that identifies options, timescales and resources to implement the change identified in the strategy
3. Review the action plan after one year
4. Report widely and regularly on the performance against the action plan
5. Create a coherent approach in Greater Norwich to drug and alcohol policies
6. Agree and implement a common approach to drug and alcohol policies where necessary
7. Provide greater access to information about the availability of accommodation and services through either a 24-hour telephone line or internet access depending on available resources
8. Produce a common core application and risk assessment form to ease the application process for individuals
9. Review the eligibility criteria used by hostels to ensure that all those with support needs are appropriately accommodated, and those who do not have relevant support needs are accommodated in other ways
10. Investigate the feasibility of establishing a Central Gateway Hostel Access Service
11. Review the rules and exclusion policies of hostel providers to ensure that there is a coherent sub-regional approach for the benefit of both staff and residents

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13. Investigate the extent to which remodelling and new development is required, particularly to ensure that there is:
 - Emergency supported accommodation services for young people aged 16-21
 - Adequate access within existing services for people who drink or continue to use illicit substances
 - Higher support services for people with entrenched patterns of drug and alcohol use.
 - Adequate service provision for people with challenging behaviour and/or a history of serious offending (i.e. a history of exclusion from hostel services or convictions for serious crimes)
14. Investigate different hostel services around the country and locally that can work effectively with individuals and allow them to stabilise their problems
15. Embed mechanisms and strategies to involve service users in everyday practice.

Monitoring

The action plan which accompanies the strategy will be monitored and reported on through existing GNHP and Supporting people structures.

The full strategy and action plan can be found at:
www.south-norfolk.gov.uk/democracy/2889.asp