

# **Cllr Simon Allen, Cabinet Member for WellBeing Key Issues Briefing Note**

## **Wellbeing Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel – March 2012**

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### **1. PUBLIC ISSUES**

#### **Severe Weather Assistance for Homeless People**

The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) was developed and agreed by the Homelessness Partnership in December 2011. The protocol states that extra measures will be put in place when temperatures fall below 0 degrees on three consecutive nights. During the cold weather in January, over a period of 14 nights, Julian House and the Reach Floating Support Service, in partnership with Genesis Open House Day Centre, implemented the protocol and extended their services to rough sleepers, ensuring that accommodation, food and support were available 24 hours a day. The extra staffing hours needed were covered by staff working overtime and/or flexible hours, but agreement was given for overtime or agency staffing, if necessary. Budgets for the coming year include a sum to cover emergency staffing costs arising from implementation of the SWEP in the coming year, to ensure that this vital element of outreach to rough sleepers can be put into place as soon as temperatures fall to critical levels.

### **2. PERFORMANCE**

#### **Temporary Accommodation**

- December 2011 saw a continued reduction in households in temporary accommodation, (twenty one), the lowest figure since May 2010. However, there was an increase in households in temporary accommodation during January and February 2012 rising from twenty four and then twenty nine households. There was also an increase in the use of bed and breakfast, as temporary accommodation. The increased use of temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast accommodation follows increased homeless applications, including a larger number of applicants being discharged from hospital. This, to some extent, reflects pressures being seen in the hospital, with increased levels of activity over the winter period, including referrals to the Social Work team based at the hospital.

#### **Energy Efficiency**

- The number of properties receiving energy efficiency measures has gone up from 114 at the end of September (red) to 522 at the end of December (green). This already exceeds the year-end target of 300.

## **Empty Properties**

- A property in South Down that has been empty for 10 years & featured in Empty Property week has now been sold due to the efforts of Housing Services, including garden clearance, in persuading the owner to dispose of the property. The owner thanked Housing Services for their support and stated that without this support he is likely to have continued to do nothing.

### **3. SERVICE DEVELOPMENT UPDATES**

#### **Support for Rough Sleepers**

- Housing Services have been working with the Bath Homelessness Partnership to reduce the number of people sleeping rough. The rough sleeper count carried out in November 2011 found 4 rough sleepers which is an improvement on previous estimates. The service that is provided to rough sleepers is going to be enhanced through a successful bid to the Homeless Transition Fund. 190 bids were submitted and the Julian House / DHI partnership bid, supported by the Homelessness Partnership were one of only 41 successful bids. The maximum funding of £250,000 was granted for the three year project, which will develop an assertive outreach team to provide support to rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping to initiate and sustain their use of crisis accommodation, whilst enabling them to make positive lifestyle changes in addressing health, addictions, offending and worklessness. The new service will target this with a focus on prevention, on-going support and the creation of sustainable pathways into independence.

#### **Alcohol Treatment**

Recurrent savings of £100,000 have been released from the substance misuse budget through the strategic shift from three to two adult treatment providers. This has enabled additional investment in alcohol treatment capacity, which is identified as a priority in the Refreshed Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for B&NES 2010-12 (agreed by Partnership Board for Health & Wellbeing, June 2011) and confirmed by the Joint Commissioning Board for Substance Misuse in December 2011. It is anticipated that this additional investment will increase capacity by 90 clients (from 450 to 540) a year.