



Neighbourhoods and Housing Housing Services



Main responsibilities:

- Advice on homelessness, including prevention; investigation of applications and provision of temporary accommodation and resettlement.
- Implementation of the council's homelessness strategy.
- The provision of accommodation and support to asylum seekers through a government contract.
- The settlement of refugees into the city.
- Provision of a 48-plot site for travellers at Cottingley, and dealing with unauthorised encampments in other parts of the city.
- Management of a central alarm service to elderly and other vulnerable people.

Budget highlights 2007/08:

The pressure of homelessness is expected to continue in this year due in part to the lack of affordable housing outcomes. Efforts are geared towards reducing the levels of homelessness to achieve the targeted occupancy of 250, £2.1m is budgeted to support this service. The service will ensure that recovery of associated Housing Benefit is maximised to reduce the overall cost of this service and it is anticipated that £1.8m will be received in Housing Benefit income.

From 1st June 2006, fixed price contracts (up to March 2008) have been implemented with 4 main providers of temporary accommodation (Cascade, Select, Care and Safe Haven). Occupancy target of 250 has been set for April 2007.

As part of the 2007 change programme, Housing Advice Centre is to be re-named as Homelessness Advice and Prevention (HAP) to reflect its core focus of improved services to customers. Hollies and Pennington Hostel services are to be tendered.

It will be important to closely monitor the budget relating to the provision of accommodation and support to asylum seekers. The new contract with the National Asylum Support Service to provide Section 95 accommodation to asylum seekers was signed in May 2006. Payment within the new contract will be dependent on the status and number of asylum seekers.