

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>TOURISM, ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Andrew Foot, Head of Housing
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	21 February 2018

## **TRANSIENCE PROGRAMME AND SELECTIVE LICENSING**

### **1.0 Purpose of the report:**

1.1 To consider an update on the evaluation of the Transience Programme and Selective Licensing.

### **2.0 Recommendation(s):**

2.1 To comment upon the report and highlight any areas for further scrutiny.

### **3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):**

3.1 To keep the Committee updated and ensure that progress has been achieved.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered: None

### **4.0 Council Priority:**

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is:

“Communities: Creating Stronger Communities and Increasing Resilience”.

### **5.0 Background information**

5.1 At the meeting of 21 July 2016, the Committee requested that an evaluation report of the Transience Programme be considered at a future meeting once it had been completed. Members also requested an update on how the programme was being marketed. This report sets out the initial work on evaluation of the Transience Programme and recent work to evaluate the impact of Selective Licensing in the

South Beach area that was reported to Executive on 15 January 2018.

- 5.2 The dominance of poor quality privately rented housing, often converted from former guest houses, has led to intense concentrations of deprivation, and an environment that fosters poor health, crime, welfare dependence and lack of opportunity in inner Blackpool. This in turn leads to local partners having to commit significant resources in responding to acute health, social care, educational and employment needs as well as dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 5.3 The Transience Programme is aligned and coordinated with the implementation of Selective Licensing inspections of private rented properties. It introduces a pro-active preventative doorstep and drop in approach to public service delivery, linked to wider initiatives to improve housing, supporting and expanding community groups and provision and improving the attractiveness of deprived communities.
- 5.4 The Transience Programme has been externally funded since 2015, following a successful bid for Transformation Challenge Award (TCA) funding that enabled work to move from South Beach into Claremont and then the Central area of Blackpool. The Programme was due to end in March 2018 but there has been sufficient funding to enable an extension of the programme to September 2018.
- 5.5 An evaluation has been commissioned so that it can inform the transition to a new model of neighbourhood service delivery in inner Blackpool at the end of the Programme. The evaluation will set out whether the approach has been effective, what can be done better or what is missing, and what elements are most important to retain when the funding comes to an end. This will then enable a succession plan to be developed by summer 2018.
- 5.6 The evaluation will be completed by the end of March 2018. So far, only initial findings based primarily on stakeholder interviews have been provided, with further work on outcomes within the area, including the views of local residents, still to be completed.
- 5.7 The initial report sets out the objectives, a theory of change, and findings from stakeholders. The positive findings include:
  - The Programme has picked up significant numbers of people and properties needing intervention but which would otherwise have gone unnoticed.
  - The work has prevented issues from escalating into acute need.
  - The work has improved connections between services to help get better and quicker outcomes for service users
  - Multi-agency working enables services to understand and address issues that would not otherwise be identified.
  - Skills and knowledge have been shared between services so that more issues are

identified and intelligence shared.

- Staff have been motivated by being able to deliver a better service to residents through multi-agency working. The right allocation of individuals and effective management was important to success and had worked well in some areas but not others.

#### 5.8 Areas for improvement include:

- There has not been a consistently clear view of the aims, objectives, and roles of each partner
- Licensing is still not recognised by landlords as being effective
- Some organisations have not always allocated sufficient resources to the work
- Evaluation of outcomes has been limited during the programme - monitoring has focused on activity, and has in some cases been hampered by the lack of availability of the right information.
- There is still a need for better coordination of voluntary sector activities within the inner neighbourhoods.

#### 5.9 Draft recommendations from the initial report include:

- It remains important to address the primary driver of transience of an over-supply of poor quality, easily accessible, accommodation in inner Blackpool by seeking local control of Local Housing Allowance levels.
- A more systematic link should be established between the work of the housing enforcement team and Blackpool Housing Company so that every opportunity is taken to offer landlords a way out when their properties require significant investment.
- Ensure agreement on a clear theory of change to guide the future work of the Transience Programme so that all partners have the same understanding of how the aims will be delivered.
- Adopt a new outcomes focussed monitoring framework. This will be developed as part of the current evaluation work.
- Implement mobile technology for data collection, for the People's Team as well as for housing enforcement officers.
- All partners need to collect data on the support offered to individuals that can then be aggregated; currently data is not collected and shared consistently at the level of individuals.
- Further develop the low level mental health support that is immediately available to individuals identified through the Transience Programme work.

#### 5.10 With regard to the marketing of the Transience Programme, there has been a reluctance to give a high profile to work which is so embedded within the property inspection programme linked to selective and additional licensing. It is also time

limited with uncertainty currently on how elements of the work will continue beyond the end of the Transformation Challenge Award funding in September 2018. The challenge now is to ensure that there is a clear succession plan as soon as possible after the evaluation has been completed and that all partners and local residents are made aware of the plans for neighbourhood service delivery in each area going forward.

- 5.11 An evaluation has also been completed of the Selective Licensing Scheme that ran in the South Beach area from March 2012 - March 2017, with a report which went to the Executive on 15 January 2018. A copy of the report is attached at Appendix 8 (a). Selective licensing requires that private landlords obtain a licence and comply with licence conditions for each property that they let within the designated area.
- 5.12 The evaluation found that selective licensing powers have enabled local authority enforcement officers to gain access to nearly all of the private rented properties in the area through a comprehensive inspection programme to check compliance with licensing conditions. Without licensing, local authorities can only require landlords to provide access to their properties where there is reason to believe that the property standards are in breach of Housing Health and Safety Rating System requirements, usually following complaints.
- 5.13 The inspection programme has led to thousands of property condition issues being identified and addressed. In South Beach, 85 enforcement notices and 737 schedules of work were issued during the licensing programme period. The large majority of these would not have been picked up and addressed without licensing.
- 5.14 The statutory ground for introducing the scheme in South Beach was high levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) linked to privately rented properties. The dedicated ASB officer has worked with landlords and residents to help resolve complaints of ASB in the licensing area. This officer has encouraged safe reporting of ASB, encouraging tenants and landlords to acknowledge their responsibilities and make a real difference in improving the South Beach community. From the introduction of licensing in South Beach to the end of the programme, ASB levels have fluctuated, but there has been an overall trend of a small rise in ASB reports linked to private rented properties from the start of the programme in 2012-2013 before a reduction by the end of the five year period.
- 5.15 As well as enabling compliance with licence conditions to be checked, support has been offered to vulnerable tenants through the Transience Programme, and the Police and Fire and Rescue Service have also been able to identify and respond to issues that would not otherwise have been identified. Across the area nearly half of all the residents met through the multi-agency inspection programme have received some form of intervention, including access to a GP or a dentist, support for improved mental or physical health, social isolation, or employment or volunteering

opportunities.

- 5.16 Additional funding from the Transience Programme has secured the ASB Officer to remain based in the South Beach area until September 2018, when that funding programme runs out. This resource continues to respond to residents and landlords in resolving incidents of ASB.
- 5.17 The need for a further licensing scheme in South Beach has been kept under review, in anticipation of an extension of the scope of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Mandatory Licensing by Government following consultation in December 2016. The Ministry for Communities and Local Government (formerly known as Department for Communities and Local Government or DCLG) published its response to consultation in late December 2017, confirming a small extension to the scope of the scheme. Work will now be carried out to understand what this means for South Beach, and then ascertain what further action and resource is still required in this area to ensure that progress is maintained and that residents feel safe, secure and supported in their communities.
- 5.18 In conclusion, the Transience Programme and Selective Licensing in South Beach have delivered support for many hundreds of residents and significant improvements in property conditions. Following the completion of the Transience Programme evaluation, a succession plan will be developed to take forward the findings and incorporate the key elements of the Transience Programme into developing neighbourhood service delivery models. The unique focus of the model is an emphasis on pro-actively reaching out to residents who need support, linking up with the development of community activities, and delivering improvement across a whole neighbourhood. Emerging work on family centres and joined up delivery of health and social services at the neighbourhood level present an excellent opportunity to continue to deliver this kind of pro-active support.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

**List of Appendices:**

Appendices 8 (a) - Executive Report (South Beach Selective Licensing Evaluation Report)  
Appendices 8 (b) - South Beach Selective Licensing Evaluation Report

**6.0 Legal considerations:**

6.1 None

**7.0 Human Resources considerations:**

7.1 The human resources implications of the ending of Transformation Challenge Award funding for the Transience Programme will be determined as part of the succession plan.

**8.0 Equalities considerations:**

8.1 None applicable

**9.0 Financial considerations:**

9.1 The full costs of the Transience Programme to the end of September 2018 will be met from the Transformation Challenge Award.

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 The principal risk at this point is that there is no ordered transition from the work of the Transience Programme into future neighbourhood service delivery. The evaluation has been commissioned to determine which elements have been most effective and to plan for support for vulnerable individuals and communities beyond September 2018.

**11.0 Ethical considerations:**

11.1 None

**12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

12.1 None

**13.0 Background papers:**

13.1 None