

Report to:	TOURISM, RESOURCES AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Andrew Foot, Head of Housing
Date of Meeting:	15th October 2015

TRANSIENCE PROGRAMME

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the update on the progress of the Transience programme and future direction of planned work.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the update report to determine the next steps in terms of the involvement of the Scrutiny Committee.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To keep the committee updated ensuring 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 Priorities are

- Improve health and well-being especially for the most disadvantaged
- Improve housing standards and the environment we live in by using housing investment to create stable communities
- Create safer communities and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- Deliver quality services through a professional, well-rewarded and motivated workforce

5.0 Background Information

Background and Objectives of the Transience Programme

Blackpool has a significant transient population, with approximately 8,000 people moving into and out of the area annually, and high levels of movement between properties within the town, especially in the private rented sector.

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. 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.

The Transience Programme provides a person-centered programme that supports and refers vulnerable tenants into services that promote healthy, sustainable lifestyles. A dedicated team within the Families in Need division of Children's Services makes contact with vulnerable tenants through Selective Licensing inspections of private rented properties. It helps develop more resilient neighbourhoods that foster personal responsibility and reduce dependence on public sector services by working on an area basis and also by investing in the expansion of community groups within target areas. The programme introduces a pro-active preventative approach to public service delivery. It is linked to wider initiatives to improve housing, support and the attractiveness of deprived areas.

The Programme started in the South Beach area of inner Blackpool from 2012/13 and was originally funded by Public Health. It was then extended into the Claremont area from summer 2014. A successful bid was made to Government for a Transformation Challenge Award of £1.54 million over three years that has become available from the current financial year.

The scope of the work is now being expanded, enabled by the new resources, and reflecting commitments made in the funding bid. This has led to a recent expansion in staff numbers to enable continuing work in South Beach and strengthen work in Claremont. Investment has recently been made in two new posts within the Housing team to build community activity and ensure effective implementation and evaluation of the programme. It is intended that further investment will be made in the programme so that it can move into new areas of central Blackpool from 2016.

The revised aims of the transience programme are to deliver:

- More stability in target areas and a reduction in moves linked to failed tenancies and chaotic lifestyles
- Decrease in incidents of anti-social behaviour and crime
- Fewer crisis presentations to local authority services
- Significant improvements in health and well-being of the population including a reduction in substance misuse and Accident and Emergency presentations
- Decrease in the number of household fires
- Improved school attendance
- Improved learning and skills with residents moving closer to the employment market

Outcomes to date

5.1 **South Beach**

The area for the original pilot scheme was the same as the South Beach selective licensing area, running west of Seaside's Way from Chapel Street in the north to the Pleasure Beach in the south. Initial inspections of all properties have been completed, with 1,690 people contacted and 950 provided with some support. The initiative has received a positive response from the community and feedback from individuals who have been supported suggests that the proactive approach to offer help and support before crisis point has made a difference. The police statistics show a downward trend in anti-social behaviour call outs linked to the private rented sector.

Work to engage the local community in shaping their own neighbourhood is still on going, currently focused on a weekly drop in event that is regularly attended by upwards of 40 individuals who can get advice, socialize, and volunteer. The recent new funding resource will enable an increased presence of the Transience team in the area to contact and support more residents, develop further ways of supporting the local community, and also evaluate in more detail what has been achieved to date.

5.2 **Claremont**

Work covering the whole of the Claremont ward started in August 2014. Most of the first sweep of inspections has been completed to date. The transience team has had contact with 1264 people and provided support to 602 of them.

Work to support the local community will now be further developed, building on an existing local drop in, and helping to co-ordinate community activities. Great Places Housing Association who own over 200 properties in the area are also committed to working with the Council in addressing issues within the community.

5.3 **Areas for further development**

The priorities for the next six months are:

- To further develop the strategic partnership
- To agree and implement a comprehensive evaluation plan, and update the cost-benefit analysis
- To develop a wider community group in Claremont, in partnership with Great Places Housing Group, working with interested parties and existing community groups
- To continue to support and develop the community groups in South Beach
- To revisit and review earlier contacts in South Beach
- To establish a “drop in” base within South Beach
- To plan for further work in the Central area and start to develop links with the existing community groups in those neighbourhoods
- To carry out a partnership consultation workshop to discuss progress, issues and future plans

Does the information submitted include any exempt information? Yes/No

List of Appendices:

None

6.0 **Legal considerations:**

6.1 None

7.0 **Human Resources considerations:**

7.1 Five new staff have recently been recruited following the successful funding bid, with further staff resources to be recruited in 2016 to enable work across a wider area.

8.0 **Equalities considerations:**

8.1 None

9.0 **Financial considerations:**

9.1 The budget is now entirely funded from the Transformation Challenge Award funding that has been secured for three years.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 Risk to staff - Staff work within the training and procedures of Families in Need team

Risk of funding coming to an end – Funding has been received for the full three year programme. Comprehensive evaluation and cost benefit analysis should demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach.

Risk of duplication / lack of coordination with other services – The programme works closely with very many other services within the Council, together with Police and health services. It provides initial support but also relies on referrals to mainstream services.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 All actions are in line with and support the Council's core values, morals and beliefs.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 The programme is continuing to work with the Public Service Transformation Network and the Centre for Excellence in Information Sharing (CEIS). They are currently assisting us with the development of the evaluation frame work.

The evaluation will seek to understand from individuals and the wider community what benefits have been achieved and how the programme could be further improved.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None