

Homelessness Strategy

2015 - 2019

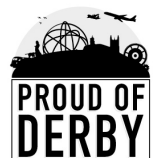
Consultation Draft



Autumn 2014



Derby City Council



Foreword

Since the publication of our last Homelessness Strategy in 2010, we have seen dramatic changes to the environment in which homelessness services are delivered. Changes resulting from the economic downturn, and in particular welfare reform, are impacting detrimentally on many low income groups and those susceptible to homelessness. Well documented funding cuts to Councils are coupled with falls in support and funding streams to other statutory agencies, and those in the voluntary and community sector.

As a result, this new strategy is being developed in a context of shrinking resources and increasing demand for services. There is also considerable uncertainty over the future. Although the economy has emerged from recession, the benefits of this are yet to be felt by many low income households. Meanwhile, some 18 months into the welfare reform programme, new schemes are still evolving and the implementation of Universal Credit is behind schedule. Amidst this uncertainty there will be a general election in 2015, with the policy direction of any new government difficult to anticipate.

These factors weigh heavily on the determination of what can realistically be achieved in the years ahead. Nevertheless, the challenge - and our aspiration - remains to prevent homelessness wherever possible. Where it does occur, the objective is to provide suitable accommodation for affected households as soon as possible.

The response to this challenge will be based on the same core principle as that which underpinned our earlier achievements - effective partnership working in tackling and relieving homelessness.

In order to ensure our actions continue to be up to date and successful, they should be based on a clear and comprehensive strategy. This document provides a robust and broad framework to maximise the effectiveness of service provision across agencies, and minimise the impacts of austerity measures on those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

To succeed, the strategy needs the backing of all partners; I hope you will give it your support.

Councillor Sarah Russell – Cabinet Member for Housing, Finance and Welfare

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Table of terms and abbreviations

BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
DCC	Derby City Council
DCLG	Department for Communities & Local Government
DHA	Direct Help & Advice
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payments
DIAP	Derby Integrated Advice Partnership
DV	Domestic Violence
DWP	Department for Work & Pensions
ECHG	English Churches Housing Group
EEA	European Economic Area
HOC	Housing Options Centre
HRS	Housing Related Support
JSA	Job Seekers Allowance
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
LAS	Local Assistance Scheme
MRS	Mortgage Rescue Scheme
NSNO	No Second Night Out
PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PHL	Planning, Housing and Leisure Board (Overview and Scrutiny)
RBL	Royal British Legion
RP	Registered Providers
UC	Universal Credit

Introduction

- i) Derby City Council published its last Homelessness Strategy in 2010 and has now produced this Homelessness Strategy 2015 -19 following a further review, detailed analysis and consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.
- ii) The Derby City Homelessness Review was completed in August 2014 and provides a comprehensive understanding of homelessness in Derby. It identifies not only what has worked successfully in the past, but also the key issues and gaps in service provision that are currently in evidence¹.
- iii) Building on the findings of the review, the purpose of this strategy is to assess the scale of the challenge facing us, the level of resources available to meet the challenge, and to provide a clear framework for future action.
- iv) The strategy therefore sets out our vision, key priorities and detailed actions - for improving services and tackling homelessness in Derby over the next five years. It covers the period 2015 to 2019. However, if substantial changes to national social and economic policy result from the 2015 general election, a decision may be taken to bring forward the next strategy from 2019.
- v) In formulating this strategy, the Council recognises that the problems and causes of homelessness are frequently much more far-reaching than simply 'bricks and mortar' issues. Relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol misuse, mental health, violence and financial problems can all contribute to making households homeless. Similarly, many people that are susceptible to homelessness have multiple needs that extend beyond the basic need for a home, and it is not possible for the Council to meet all of those needs in isolation.
- vi) Consequently, homelessness services are delivered by a range of providers and partnership working is crucial to achieving the objectives set out in this document.
- vii) This strategy should therefore be seen as a multi-agency document between the Council and all of the partner agencies that are involved in tackling homelessness in the city.
- viii) Monitoring will be carried out through the Council's performance management systems. Further reports and updates will be tabled at the Homeless Liaison Forum, thus allowing additional scrutiny amongst partners.

NB: A table of terms and abbreviations can be found on Page 5

¹ The findings of the Homelessness Review underpin many of the propositions in this strategy. It is therefore referred to frequently in the text and should be seen as a supporting or complementary document. It is available online [here](#).

SECTION 1 – THE LEGAL AND CORPORATE CONTEXT

1.1 The Nature of Homelessness and the Need for Action

1.1.1 Homelessness is the most extreme form of housing need and has also been described as ‘one of the most distressing and visible of social problems’.²

1.1.2 But clearly, homelessness is not just about housing. There are huge inequalities between the health of homeless people compared to the health of the general population. Frequently, homeless people display mental and physical health problems alongside substance mis-use.

1.1.3 Locally, a recent review of homelessness in Derby by the Planning, Housing and Leisure (PHL) Board highlighted:

...some of the most desolate and complex issues and situations that the city's homeless (and those providing services in this area) face on a daily basis³

1.1.4 Homelessness also damages people's capability - through loss of skills, through a loss of focus on employment and through damage to their resilience and self-confidence.

1.1.5 In preventing and reducing homelessness therefore, we are helping individuals not only to sustain stable accommodation but to restore their health and self-belief and be in a position to make a genuine contribution to society.

1.1.6 Tackling homelessness not only benefits the well-being of the homeless person themselves but also benefits their families, friends and the community as a whole.

1.1.7 The crucial need to tackle homelessness, both socially and politically, is further reinforced by legislation, which requires all local authorities to develop up-to-date homelessness strategies.

1.2 Legal framework

1.2.1 A local authority's duty to homeless people is contained within part seven of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

² Chartered Institute of Housing: <http://www.cih.org/publications/pub129.htm>

³ Topic Review of the Planning, Housing and Leisure Board, September 2013, Derby City Council

- 1.2.2 This act requires local authorities to develop homelessness strategies which include actions that:
- a) Prevent homelessness
 - b) Ensure there is sufficient accommodation available for people who are or may become homeless
 - c) Ensure there is satisfactory support for people who are, or may become homeless, or need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again.
- 1.2.3 Government has added to this legislation with evolving guidance and a number of further policy initiatives. These are discussed in outline on pages 9-10, and in more detail in the Homelessness Review, pages 5-8.

1.3 Strategic Links

- 1.3.1 This new strategy links in with a number of other Council and partner plans and policies. These include:
- a) Derby City's Council Plan 2014-15
 - b) Housing Strategy 2009-14
 - c) Housing Renewal Policy 2015-2020
 - d) Empty Homes Strategy 2015-20
 - e) Economic Strategy 2011-16
 - f) Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2011 and on-going updates
- 1.3.2 The Council Plan 2014-2015 contains a number of objectives relating to the health, well-being and quality of life of Derby's residents. To achieve these objectives, the Council works in partnership with a large range of other bodies through *Derby City and Neighbourhood Partnerships*. Within it, people work together voluntarily towards a safe, healthy and sustainable future for the people of Derby through shared vision and leadership. Tackling homelessness is directly linked to the plan's objectives relating to 'better outcomes for our communities' and 'improving inner city areas'.
- 1.3.3 The other strategies and policies listed above also have bearing on tackling homelessness, due to their links with issues surrounding housing quality and supply, social and financial inclusion and health.

SECTION 2: HOMELESSNESS IN DERBY – THE CURRENT SITUATION

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 In order to assess the best way to tackle homelessness in the future it is essential to take stock of the current situation and consider what can be learnt from our previous experience.
- 2.1.2 This exercise has been completed in the [Homelessness Review](#) 2014 and it is not intended to repeat the analysis of the review here. Rather, the strategy is a response to the findings of the review and the two documents should be read in conjunction with one another.
- 2.1.3 This section does however provide a summary of the main findings of the review and outlines:
- a) major changes since 2010 to the broader context in which homelessness services are delivered
 - b) the response from service providers
 - c) further key learning points from the review
 - d) current levels of homelessness in Derby

2.2 MAJOR CHANGES SINCE THE LAST STRATEGY

- 2.2.1 The key changes since our last strategy in 2010 are summarised below and include factors such as the political/legal framework, demographics, and resources, as well as evolving government guidance. (For a more detailed discussion of these changes please see the Homelessness Review pages 5-8)
- ❖ Government Guidance and the Political/Legal Framework
- 2.2.2 The statutory basis for action on homelessness is provided in 1.2.1 above. The Localism Act (2011) made a significant change which now allows a local authority to discharge its homeless duty by the offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector⁴. It also required that in formulating a Homelessness Strategy, a local authority should include consideration of its Tenancy Strategy.
- 2.2.3 The Government has supplemented primary legislation with continuing guidance to local authorities and a number of further policy initiatives. These are discussed in more detail in pages 5-8 of the Homelessness Review. One the most recent of these initiatives is: *Making Every Contact*

⁴ The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 describes how the suitability of private accommodation should be assessed and ensured.

Count: A Joint Approach To Preventing Homelessness (Department of Communities & Local Government (DCLG), 2012)⁵. This champions joint working as a way of reducing and tackling homelessness. The report highlights five key areas of focus:

- a) tackling troubled childhoods and adolescence
- b) improving health
- c) reducing involvement in crime
- d) improving skills, employment and financial advice
- e) pioneering social funding for homelessness

2.2.4 Part of the remit of this initiative is the nationwide introduction of *No Second Night Out* (NSNO), (2012). In Derby the project is managed by Riverside English Churches Housing Group (ECHG) in partnership with the Council. A website and 24 hour helpline is available for members of the public to report and refer rough sleepers. The six commitments of NSNO are:

- a) helping people off the streets
- b) helping people to access healthcare
- c) helping people into work
- d) reducing bureaucratic burdens
- e) increasing local control over investment in services
- f) devolving responsibility for tackling homelessness

2.2.5 In 2012 Government commissioned a new service to look at what additional activities could and should be carried out by local authorities to tackle and prevent homelessness. A series of ten 'local challenges' was set, which local authorities had to meet in order to achieve the *Gold Standard*. More details on this initiative can be found in Appendix B.

❖ Demographic Changes

2.2.6 Variations in demography can affect the demand on homelessness services in a number of different ways:

Volume and composition of household units.

2.2.7 Due to a number of cultural and economic factors that are evident both nationally and in Derby, the total number of households is increasing, while the average size of these households is decreasing.

2.2.8 This trend impacts directly on the numbers of households presenting themselves as homeless and on the demand for affordable

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-every-contact-count-a-joint-approach-to-preventing-homelessness>

accommodation, particularly single person accommodation and two bed houses.

Migration

- 2.2.9 Derby has been subject to a net increase in its population size since 2011, rising from 248,700 to an estimated 254,000 in 2014⁶. This has resulted in more demand on housing stock and more pressure on homelessness advice services.
- 2.2.10 Anecdotal evidence suggests that a proportion of this population increase can be accounted for by inward migration. Many migrants are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, arriving via the asylum dispersal system, or as working migrants, predominantly from Eastern Europe. A sizeable minority have also simply moved to Derby from other parts of the UK.
- 2.2.11 These changes can impact on community cohesion generally but also on the demand for and delivery of homelessness services.

❖ Economic and Financial Context

- 2.2.12 There are a broad number of factors in this category which have impacted directly or indirectly on the incidence of homelessness and the resources available to address it. The main ones are as follows:

Welfare Reform

- 2.2.13 The Welfare Reform Act (2012) has had broad-ranging and significant impacts on some Derby residents. The most notable changes it has made are described below⁷.

a) Removal of the spare room subsidy

This concerns under-occupation of social housing for housing benefits claimants. Those who are in receipt of housing benefit who are under-occupying now face significant reductions in their housing benefits. This change is colloquially known as the 'bedroom tax'. The changes have affected 2053 Derby residents, of which 1352 live in Derby Homes properties.

b) Housing Benefit Cap

The cap applies to the combined income from the main out-of-work benefits plus child benefits plus child tax credits. The limits are £500 per week for couples or lone parents and £350 per week for single people. In

⁶ Source: Subnational Population Projections at www.ons.gov.uk

⁷ All figures are as of February 2014

Derby 101 households have been affected.

c) *Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)*

This is a one-off payment that housing benefits claimants can apply for to help pay their rent. Extra funds have been released by Government which Derby City Council has successfully bid for to help more customers. 1244 awards have so far been made, 195 of which were to private sector residents.

d) *Local Assistance Scheme (LAS)*

This has replaced the discretionary elements of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) Social Fund and provides non-monetary support to vulnerable residents in emergency. In Derby 478 awards have been made – 320 food vouchers, 40 home packs, 118 utility top-ups.

e) *Universal Credit (UC)*

Once UC has been fully implemented it is intended that this benefit will be a single payment for all day-to-day living costs and will be paid directly to claimants. However due to the phased national roll-out of this scheme, it is unlikely to happen in Derby before 2016.

The Housing Market

2.2.14 Although there were some house price falls in the immediate aftermath of the credit crunch, the general direction for house prices is now upwards and we are currently seeing significant increases again. This reduces accessibility to the owner-occupied sector, with a knock-on effect for properties in the private rented sector and on the demand for social housing. The comparatively higher rents within the private sector also increase demand for social housing.

2.2.15 Problems of housing supply that were exacerbated by the recession are persisting even though we are now in a period of economic growth. Annual housing completions in England totalled 112,630 in the 12 months to March 2014⁸. Although this is an increase of four per cent compared with the previous 12 months, it is still well short of the rate required to meet the estimated increase in household numbers of 232,000 per year.⁹

Public Funding Cuts

2.2.16 Since 2010 central government grant support to local authorities has been subject to significant cuts as part of national austerity measures intended to help address the budget deficit¹⁰.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/house-building-in-england-january-to-march-2014>

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-projections-2008-to-2033-in-england>

¹⁰ For more detail see : <http://www.publicfinance.co.uk/news/2014/08/council-spending-cut-by-nearly-one-third-since-2010/>

- 2.2.17 The main impact on the provision of homelessness services in Derby is through cuts to the housing related support (HRS) budget. The expenditure on housing related support has reduced from approximately £10million in 2011/12 to £3.765 million in 2013/14, and then to £1.765 million in 2014/15. This has resulted in a reduction in commissioned support from 49 services supporting around 5,000 vulnerable people to seven services supporting 165 vulnerable people – all of which are aimed at vulnerable homeless groups.

2.3 THE DERBY RESPONSE: WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED

Overview

- 2.3.1 The above mentioned changes have represented increasing challenges for service delivery in Derby. But the partnership of organisations delivering homelessness services in the city has responded with resilience and innovation, despite declining resources. An account of these actions highlights 'what works' and therefore helps to inform our planning for the future.
- 2.3.2 *Sourcing a number of different funding streams to bolster resources.* The most recent example of this was the bid in 2012 to the Homelessness Transition Fund. Riverside ECHG was successful in the bid for a street outreach team to cover Derby and the eight district council areas across Derbyshire. This supports work with rough sleepers and homeless people, preventing new occurrences through improved identification of rough sleepers and ensuring local accountability. It has an 18-month duration. Accessing additional DHP to tackle the impacts of welfare reform (see paragraph 2.2.13) provides another example.
- 2.3.3 *Updating the allocations policy.* Changes were made in 2013 to speed up the flow through temporary accommodation by reducing from three months to one month the bid period for homeless households to select a property from Homefinder. This has two benefits: it results in, at any one time, more temporary accommodation likely to be available and also that households are moved into settled accommodation more quickly.
- 2.3.4 *Effective use of the Mortgage Rescue Scheme (MRS)* to enable households to avoid possession proceedings. Since 2009 this has seen:
- a) 322 cases referred, of which 209 have proceeded, 58 to completion so far
 - b) £1.96m secured debt has been written off or restructured, usually through the use of a debt management plan
 - c) £2.7m unsecured debt has been written off or restructured

- d) increased benefit take up by 'at risk' households totalling £10,700 per week

Funding for the MRS ended in March 2014.

- 2.3.5 *Maintaining a review process* to ensure key targets are met wherever possible. This is linked to a performance monitoring framework which is made up of national and local performance indicators.
- 2.3.6 *Working towards achieving the 'Gold Standard'*. In 2012 Central Government commissioned a new service to look at what additional activities could and should be carried out by local authorities to tackle and prevent homelessness. A series of ten 'local challenges' was set, which local authorities had to meet in order to achieve the Gold Standard. Derby City Council has made a pledge to achieving the Gold Standard, and is currently working towards achieving silver¹¹. More details on the Gold Standard can be found in Appendix B.

Partnership working

- 2.3.7 Homelessness services are typically delivered by the Council in partnership with a number of other stakeholders. These include social housing providers, the advice sector, hostel providers, charities, churches and other faith groups. The voluntary sector undertakes crucial work, particularly in alleviating some of the worst effects of homelessness.
- 2.3.8 Other statutory agencies such as the probation service, Citizens' Advice, Connexions, health and social care providers also play a critical role.
- 2.3.9 Improved partnership working - coordination between the key agencies and the mobilisation of complimentary resources and expertise - has been critical to achieving success. Continued partnership working is at the heart of this new strategy. Examples from the last four years are as follows:
- 2.3.10 *Welfare Advice*: In April 2013 the Government stopped funding legal advice in a most areas of Social Welfare Law through civil legal aid. Although the majority of Derby's legal and welfare advice was funded this way, the main partners – Derby Advice, the Citizens Advice/Law Centre and Direct Help & Advice (DHA) - all agreed to continue working closely. Together they were awarded some Advice Services Transition Fund money from government to help make the transition by forming the Derby Integrated Advice Partnership (DIAP). This is two year funding which is now at the end of its first year. Work is currently underway on a sustainability plan.

¹¹ As at August 2014

- 2.3.11 *Shared accommodation*: Derby has expanded the range and volume of shared accommodation available for homeless households in partnership with a number of providers. Derventio Housing Trust is the largest provider in this context and has made 565 placements in the last two years.
- 2.3.12 *Increased work with the churches* to support severe weather provision. This took on the form of the Winter Night Shelter Project, with seven city centre churches taking it in turn to provide an additional 35 places for rough sleepers during the coldest winter months.
- 2.3.13 *Agreeing a hospital discharge process* to ensure that no-one is discharged from hospital unless they have an address to go to. This operates under the 'Healthy Futures' scheme. It is managed by Derventio Housing Trust and funded by the Southern Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).
- 2.3.14 *The NSNO* initiative to tackle rough sleeping. In Derby this project is managed by Riverside ECHG in partnership with the Council (for more detail, see 2.3.2).
- 2.3.15 *Provision to tackle Domestic Violence (DV)*. There has been an overall reduction in the DV service provision following the closure of Rebecca Court in March 2013 and the Hadhari Nari Women's refuge in October 2013. However the latter provision re-opened in November 2013 under the sole DV service provider, Refuge.

The Voluntary Sector

- 2.3.16 The Padley Day Centre and its ten-bed hostel accommodation are funded by voluntary donations and some housing benefit. It has volunteers that support the homeless and offers services such as meals, shower facilities, clothing as well as support and advice. The Padley also runs a charity shop which is manned by volunteers.
- 2.3.17 DHA (formerly Derbyshire Housing Aid) has a strong volunteer base active in advice and other support services.
- 2.3.18 The churches¹² do a great deal for homeless people such as providing free hot meals, snacks, clothing exchange and advice. These services are almost entirely run by volunteers.
- 2.3.19 The Royal British Legion (RBL) offers support and practical assistance to ex-Service men or women and their dependants, particularly if homeless or living in temporary accommodation. RBL voluntary case workers assist

¹² Including the Salvation Army, Jake's New Life Christian Centre, Storehouse, St Alkmund's Church, St Augustine's Church, Osmaston Road Baptist Church (soup kitchen) and Derby City Mission

with delivering this support.

2.3.20 ***Accessing the Private Sector***

Approximately 80% of the housing stock in Derby is privately owned, while the private rented sector has grown from approximately 9,000 dwellings in 2008 to approximately 15,000 dwellings in 2013. Making greater use of this valuable resource to meet housing need has been a key priority. The main mechanisms for achieving this are through our bond scheme and empty home strategy. These are detailed below:

Bond Assurance and Rent in Advance

- 2.3.21 This provides the equivalent of a deposit and/or rent in advance. At any one time the Council can be under-writing up to £75,000 worth of bonds to landlords in the private rented sector to provide customers with a tenancy. Between April 2010 and March 2014, 676 households accessed a private sector tenancy with the support of the bond scheme.

Empty Homes

- 2.3.22 Since 2010 more than 500 properties have been returned to use with the help of the Empty Homes Service. This service worked with a number of Registered Providers (RPs) including Derbyshire YMCA, Action Housing & Support and Nottingham Community Housing Association, to support funding bids to government and bring properties back into use in Derby. It also works with the Council's Housing Development Team on projects such as the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). This is a multi-million pound scheme to deliver 170 new homes, of which 66 will be former empty properties returned to use.

2.4 FURTHER KEY LEARNING POINTS FROM THE REVIEW

- 2.4.1 Derby's Homelessness Review 2014 provides a very detailed and comprehensive analysis of homelessness in Derby. In addition to the successes outlined above, this analysis has provided a number of additional key learning points to further inform the strategy. These can be summarised as follows...

❖ Causes of Homelessness

- 2.4.2
- a) The main cause of homelessness has become 'termination of assured short hold tenancy' (35% of all cases). This has replaced 'family, relatives and friends no longer willing/able to accommodate', which is now the second largest cause (31%).
 - b) Relationship breakdown, particularly violent relationship breakdown, is becoming an increasingly significant factor once again and now

comprises 19% of cases.

c) Perhaps contrary to expectations, repossession due to mortgage arrears remains a small and falling factor, accounting for less than 4% of cases. This is due to the following factors...

- Record low interest rates and Government guidance to financial institutions which slows down or stops the repossession process- the so called 'pre-action protocol'.
- MRS - this has now ceased but dealt with 209 cases between 2009 and 2014.
- DHA court desk – which intervenes at repossession hearings on behalf of the homeowner.
- The post of Financial Inclusion Officer based at Housing Options Centre (HOC).
- There are also a large number of other organisations providing debt advice through the DIAP. This comprises Derby Citizens Advice & Law Centre, DHA and Derby Advice.

❖ Levels of Statutory Homelessness

2.4.3 The number of homeless applications and acceptances has increased significantly in the last 12 months, as illustrated below:

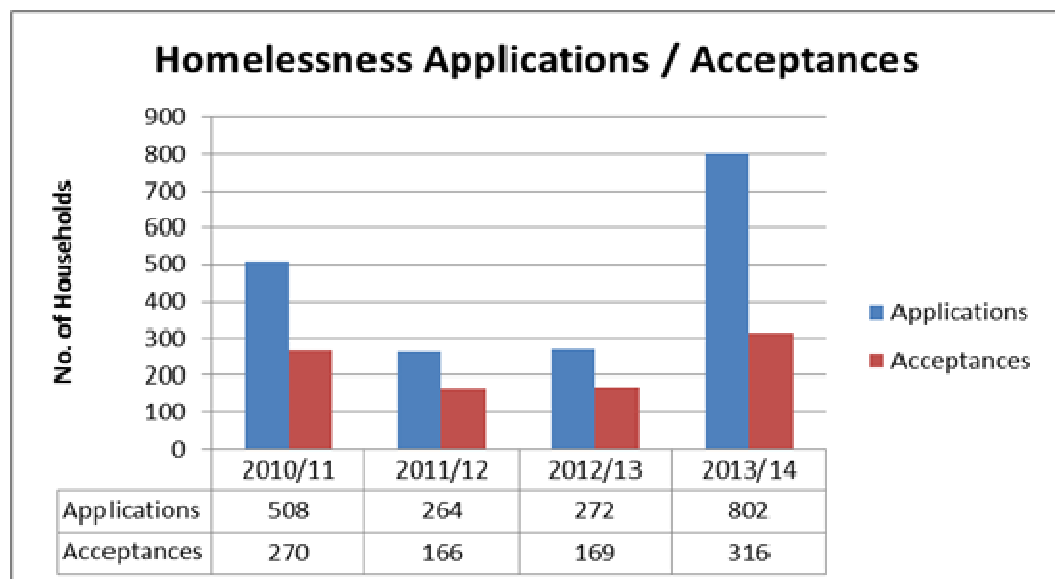


Figure 1: Homelessness Applications/Acceptances

Of particular note is the rise in the number of applications between 2013 and 2014. The rise from 272 to 802 cases constitutes an increase of 295%.

❖ Preventions

2.4.5 The number of preventions has been gradually falling as illustrated below:

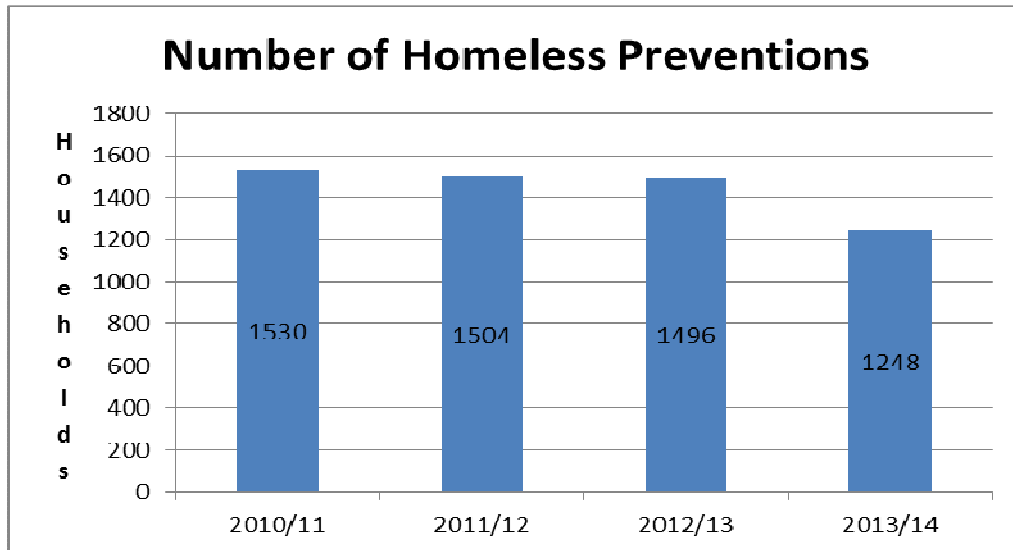


Figure 2: Number of Homeless Preventions

2.4.6 These falling levels are likely to be due to:

- a) A general increase in the volume of enquiries putting a strain on all aspects of the service
- b) A loss of supported accommodation due to HRS cuts
- c) A reduction in front line staffing capacity which impacts on the ability to prevent homelessness as this is a labour intensive activity
- d) The wider economic downturn which has reduced the capacity of partners and other agencies to assist in collaborative working to prevent homelessness¹³.

❖ The Profile of Homelessness

2.4.7 *Age Range*

- a) Younger age groups remain the most susceptible to homelessness. The age ranges 16-24 and 25-44 have comprised over 75% of all cases in the last four consecutive years.
- b) Within this range there is an increasing proportion in the upper tier, reflecting greater levels of family breakdown and reducing average household size.

2.4.8 *Household Type*

- a) Single parents remain the most susceptible group to becoming statutorily homeless, comprising in excess of half of the total throughout the previous four years.
- b) Couples with dependent children are the second largest group

¹³ Much of this analysis is based on a report to the PHL Performance Surgery, 28 November 2013

consistently accounting for over one quarter of the total.

2.4.9 Rough Sleeping

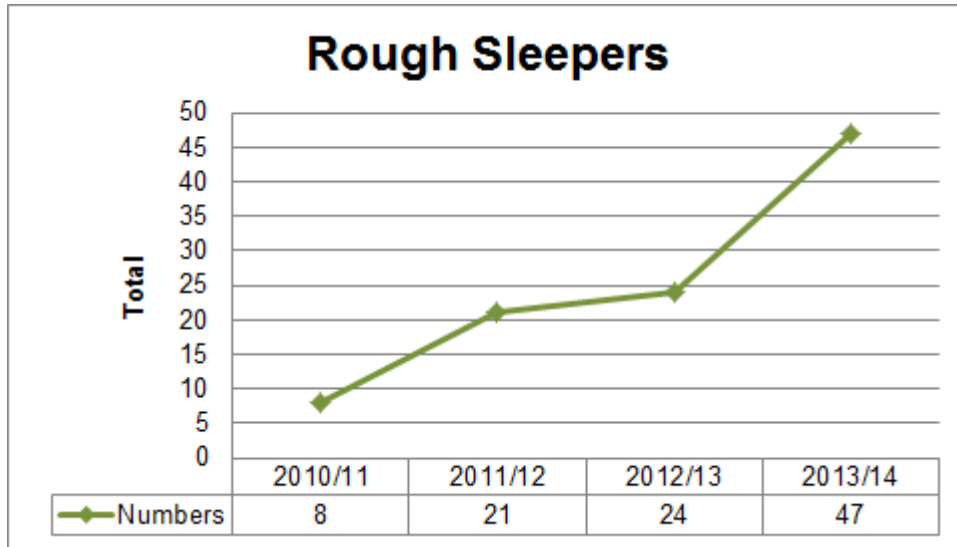


Figure 3: Numbers of Rough Sleepers

As with over all levels of homelessness, the rough sleeper count is high and rising. The main reasons for this rise are likely to be:

- a) a reduction in the quantity of supported accommodation
- b) reduction in on going support including tenancy support
- c) a general squeeze in the resources of voluntary and community organisations that have supported rough sleepers.

2.4.10 Resources

Resources have fallen for many of the departments and agencies that tackle homelessness. Examples include:

- a) year-on-year cuts in central government support to local government
- b) subsequent cuts in HRS budget and staffing resource
- c) financial pressures on the Community and Voluntary Sector and other statutory agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Youth Offending Service etc.

There have also been falls in the personal resources of many households due to the economic downturn and changes resulting from welfare reform.

2.5 CURRENT LEVELS OF HOMELESSNESS IN DERBY

- 2.5.1 Key indicators around the rate of homelessness show it is getting worse. Homelessness applications are rising, the numbers assessed as actually being homeless are rising, and the numbers we are able to prevent

becoming homeless are falling.

2.5.2 The precise figures are as follows: comparing 2012-13 with 2013-14, the number of formal applications has risen from 272 to 802 households; the number accepted as statutorily homeless has risen from 169 to 316 households, while the number of preventions has fallen from 1496 to 1248. The number of rough sleepers (as officially counted) has risen from 24 to 47 over the same 12 month period. Trends over the last four years are detailed and graphed in the Homelessness Review.

2.5.3 However, these figures do not 'paint the whole picture' as to the homeless situation in Derby as they do not always take fully into account the following factors...

- a) The 'hidden homeless' – which includes groups such as those living in overcrowded or unsuitable occupation, 'sofa-surfers', concealed second households, and other 'non-priority need' groups that may not have been formally registered as homeless with the authorities.
- b) Those accepted as homeless in previous years who then 'make their own arrangements' or simply disappear, with it never being made clear whether and when their situation was resolved.

2.5.4 Consequently, it is impossible to establish the precise number of homeless households present in Derby at any one particular time.

2.5.5 What we can measure is the indicative 'flow' of homelessness. This includes:

- a) the number of households making a formal homelessness approach
- b) the number accepted as being statutorily homeless
- c) the numbers threatened with homelessness that early preventative action has managed to avert.

Taking these factors together gives a good over all indication of the extent of demand for service provision.

2.5.6

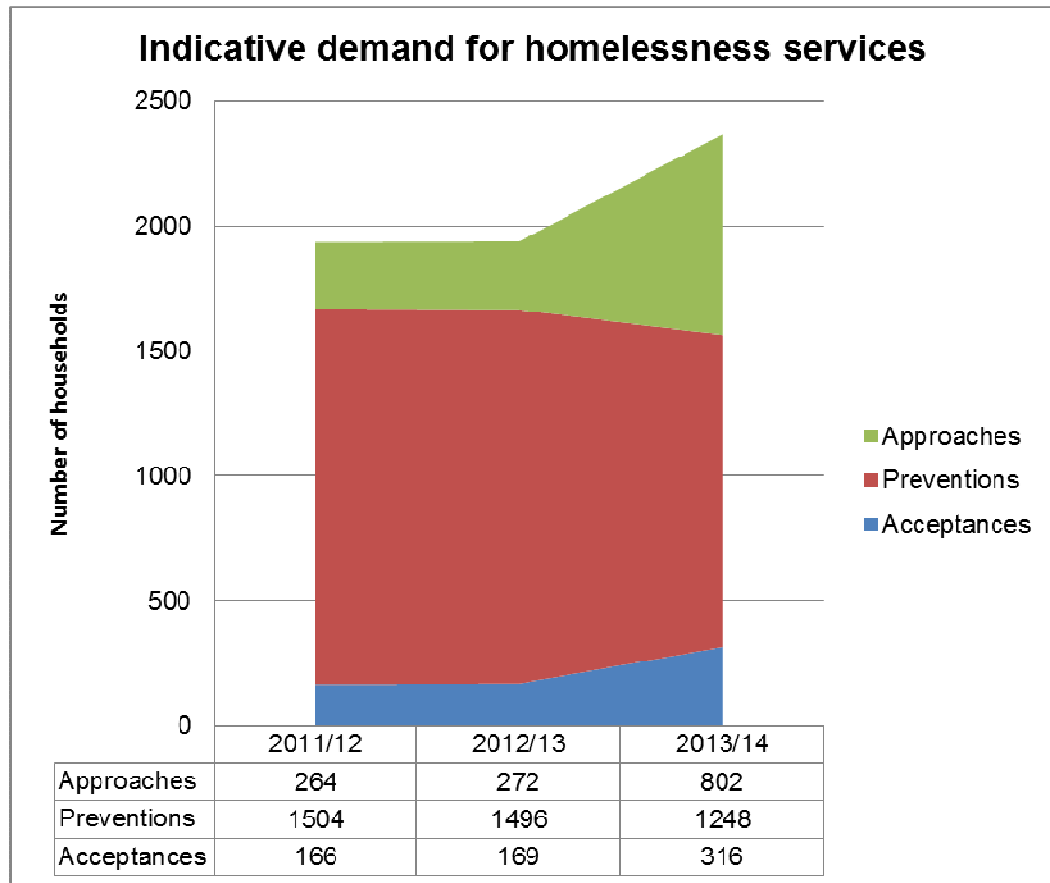


Figure 4: Indicative demand for homeless services

The graph illustrates a high and rising level of the flow of homelessness demand throughout the last three years. Of course these figures do not include many of the hidden homeless nor those that never approach the council for assistance. They also do not include long term homeless people that have been homeless for more than three years such as some rough sleepers. Finally, they also do not include certain non-European Economic Area (EEA) foreign nationals that have no right to reside in Britain and are consequently not eligible for housing services.

Predicting Future Levels of Homelessness

- 2.5.7 The difficulties of measuring precise current levels of need are magnified when it comes to predicting future needs. But the current socio-economic and demographic context suggests that there will be further difficulties for many households trying to access good quality affordable housing, especially as the impacts of welfare reform and funding cuts continue to filter through.
- 2.5.8 Furthermore, loss of local authority housing stock through 'right to buy' coupled with an insufficient rate of new builds across sectors is only likely to exacerbate the mis-match between the supply and demand for housing.
- 2.5.9 Having consulted stakeholders as well as undertaking some detailed

analysis of homelessness data, there are a number of additional areas that are significant in terms of future trends in homelessness and housing needs. Of most significance, we are concerned about...

- a) The potential increase in the numbers of young people who will approach the service, because they cannot afford to access their own housing unassisted. This factor will be worsened by the cuts to Housing Benefit / Local Housing Allowance, which exacerbates an existing shortage in single person, two-bed houses and shared accommodation.
- b) The increasing numbers who may approach due to mortgage repossession. Derby's MRS has already ceased due to an end to funding despite significant success (see 2.3.4), and historic low interest rates cannot, presumably, be maintained indefinitely.
- c) Specific vulnerable clients who need a package of support when leaving institutions and to then sustain their tenancies.
- d) The impact of new benefit sanctions on EEA workers. This is a complex area but the main effect will be a reduction in eligibility to various benefits including housing benefit. The key points are as follows...
 - From 1 April 2014 new EEA job seekers have generally not had access to Housing Benefit.
 - From 9 April 2014, routine use of interpreters ended as claimants were expected to improve language skills.
 - From 1 July 2014 new jobseekers have had to have lived in country for three months before claiming Child Tax Credit and Child Benefit.
 - EEA and non-EEA JSA claimants generally face a system of sanctions which reduces or pays a nil rate of JSA if they fail to take sufficient steps to look for work or take up an offer of work or training. Benefit may be sanctioned for periods of four weeks up to three years for repeated offences.

More detailed information on this important area can be found in Appendix C.

- e) The continuing lack of provision, both now and in the foreseeable future, for any funding or changes in legislation for housing migrant workers / failed asylum seekers and others with no recourse to public funds.

Resources – Current and Future levels

- 2.5.10 There are currently just over 20,000 units of social housing in Derby, comprising approximately 13,300 units of Council stock and 7,300 units of RP stock.
- 2.5.11 Specialist accommodation such as hostels, refuges and supported accommodation are provided to meet the needs of specific vulnerable groups and are invariably funded by HRS.
- 2.5.12 In addition to physical resources there are a number of agencies and organisations across the statutory and non-statutory sectors which provide advice, assistance and other support to homeless households or those at risk of homelessness.
- 2.5.13 For more detail on the full scope of physical resources and other support services see the review pages 32-36.
- 2.5.14 However, the extent to which the future level of resources can be maintained or expanded is in some doubt in the current climate. This point is discussed in more detail in paragraph 2.4.1 and in the 'Key Challenges' commentary on 4.2.1.
- 2.5.15 But despite these and other uncertainties, Derby will continue to operate as effectively as possible in the prevention and alleviation of homelessness. Sections 4 and 5 set out in detail how this will be achieved.

SECTION 3: FORMULATION OF THE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

- 3.1 The new strategy has been drafted over the period July to October 2014, in a context of shrinking resources and increasing demand for services. There are two main elements to its formulation; the homelessness review and the consultation process. These are discussed below.

Homelessness Review

- 3.2 The Derby City Homelessness Review consists of a detailed analysis of recent and current levels of homelessness, and the response of service providers. It provides most of the evidence base for this strategy. It is discussed on page 5 while page 18 onwards summarises some of its key findings. The review can be accessed in full [here](#).

Consultation

- 3.3 In 2013, Derby City Council's Planning, Housing and Leisure Board, which is an overview and scrutiny board, carried out a 'topic review' of homelessness. This involved a thorough review of service provision and was followed by a detailed report on the findings. The report contains 14 recommendations regarding service delivery.
- 3.4 The findings of this report have made an important contribution to the development of this strategy. A number of its recommendations have already been put into place, while others have links with Gold Standard requirements and are reflected in the delivery plan in Appendix A. A detailed response to the recommendations can be found in this [cabinet report](#).
- 3.5 This strategy has been written in consultation with a wide range individuals and organisations. These include:
- a) Members of the public
 - b) Elected Members
 - c) People that are currently homeless as well as those that had previously been homeless
 - d) Housing associations
 - e) Charities and support providers
 - f) Health and Social Care providers
 - g) Derby Homes
 - h) Council departments including Adult Social Care, Housing, CYP (Youth Offending, Leaving Care)

Everyone with an interest in this subject was invited to participate in the process.

- 3.6 The consultation process ran from 1 July 2014 until 4 November 2014. A detailed summary of the consultation findings can be found in Appendix D. We held a consultation event with service providers, face to face discussions with single homeless people at Milestone House, and ran a postal questionnaire to families who had previously been at risk of homeless or actually homeless. We also widely publicised the development of the new strategy and invited comments and feedback through the Council's web pages, a press release, and internally through *iderby* and *in touch*.
- 3.7 Feedback has reinforced concern over many of the areas previously discussed. It also highlighted the following issues...
- *The reduction or loss of services* such as floating support and the end of funding for the mortgage rescue scheme.
 - *Reduction in availability of suitable accommodation.* Between 2011 and 2013 the number of supported accommodation bed spaces was reduced from 527 to 150¹⁴. Much of this reduction has fallen on hostel accommodation. For example in the last 2 years Hartington House has closed with the loss of 40 units, Wilkins Drive with the loss of 12 units, and NACRO accommodation (for offenders and ex-offenders) has ceased with the loss of approximately 30 units.
 - *More rough sleeping*, antisocial behaviour and street drinking including the availability of high strength alcohol.
 - *Dispersals of asylum seekers* by the UK Border Agency (UKBA).
 - *Private landlords being more 'choosey'* in terms of selection of tenants
 - *A lack of leaflets/ written advice*
 - *New benefit sanctions*, which can result in the suspension of housing benefit in certain cases.
- 3.8 Some of these matters are outside of our control, such as dispersals of asylum seekers by the UKBA. Other matters need greater resources than are available to resolve. Nevertheless this strategy has been drawn up with consideration of the points raised, and wherever possible they are addressed in the delivery plan.

Equalities

- 3.9 Briefing papers were submitted and discussed at each of the Equalities Forums. An equalities impact assessment (EIA) was held in October, with officers and members of the equalities fora participating.

¹⁴ Source: Homelessness Briefing Paper to Cabinet Member for Housing and Advice, November 2013

- 3.10 The main actions which arose from the EIA concern the wider promotion of information and services in a variety of formats, and the participation of forum members in the newly created Homeless Liaison Forum. This latter action gives scope for equalities issues to be taken into account as other actions in the delivery plan are implemented. Both of these actions are included in the delivery plan.

SECTION 4: VISION AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

4.1 OUR VISION

- 4.1.1 As discussed in section one, the Council and its partners have a duty to address the key causes of homelessness and respond appropriately and effectively. In order to provide focus for this work we have developed the following long term vision:
- 4.1.2 *Our vision is for a Derby where the Council and its partners work together effectively to ensure that homelessness is prevented wherever possible, and to enable those who do become homeless to have access to housing that is sustainable and suitable for their needs.*
- 4.1.3 There are then, two main elements to our vision: that through partnership working we provide an advice and support service which minimises the incidence of homelessness, but where it does occur, reduces its duration and impact on those experiencing it. The vision is aspirational and describes a situation we would like to achieve. However, resource limitations are likely to prevent it being fully achieved for the foreseeable future
- 4.1.4 The vision leads on to a number of strategic priorities, supporting goals and specific actions. But in setting these out it is crucial to be mindful of the potential barriers there are to overcome. These are discussed in more detail below.

4.2 KEY CHALLENGES LOOKING FORWARD

- 4.2.1 In addition to the issues raised on page 2.5.9 and 3.7, there are a number of other areas which may impact on both the demand for and supply of homelessness services and on our capacity to fulfil our vision.

These include:

❖ Funding and Financial Issues

- 4.2.2 HRS provides the bulk of funding for accommodation and support services for those susceptible to homelessness and other vulnerable groups. This funding has been subject to severe cuts over the last three years, falling from approximately £10million in 2011/12 to £3.765 million in 2013/14, and then to £1.765 million in 2014/15. This has resulted in a

reduction in commissioned support from 49 services supporting around 5,000 people to seven services supporting 165 people – all of which are aimed at vulnerable homeless groups.

- 4.2.3 Funding from the Council's own resources will also continue to be stretched as of course will those of key partner organisations in all sectors. The council has to find savings of approximately £60 million over the next three years.

❖ Physical Resources

- 4.2.4 Despite national initiatives in areas such as rough sleeping, and the broader provisions of the Homelessness Act 2002, there are still many homeless households for whom temporary accommodation cannot be found on the day that they lose their previous accommodation. This situation has been made worse by the cuts to HRS funded accommodation previously described and is likely to further deteriorate by forthcoming cuts.

- 4.2.5 There are also likely to be continuing resource issues in relation to drugs, alcohol and mental ill health treatment.

❖ Political Changes

- 4.2.6 There will be a general election next year and so the policy stance of any new government is difficult to anticipate. At a local level it is essential to gain member support for effective delivery.

❖ Migration

- 4.2.7 This poses another unknown and has been referred to on page 22. The new benefit sanctions described are likely to have a continuing and serious impact on the ability of certain migrants to sustain stable accommodation and so increasing their risk of homelessness. It is also unclear to what extent there will be further UKBA dispersals in Derby.

❖ Welfare Reform

- 4.2.8 This issue has been discussed previously (2.2.13). However, many of the impacts of welfare reform are still 'working through' while other changes, such as UC, are yet to be implemented.

- 4.2.9 When it finally arrives, UC will result in most cases in rent (or the rent element) being paid to the tenant and not the landlord. This may make

letting to tenants receiving housing benefit less attractive, and increase the reluctance of landlords to do so. This impact is likely to affect our objective of increasing access to the private rented sector.

- 4.2.10 But certainly, review of the benefits system at national level is an on going process, driven in part by the national debt. It is likely therefore that we will see further changes introduced over the forthcoming years.

4.3 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 4.3.1 The vision naturally leads on to a set of over-arching strategic priorities, which have been formulated bearing in mind not only our local concerns but also the national agenda and government guidance.

- 4.3.2 The three strategic priorities are discussed below. Specific actions that support these priorities are in the Delivery Plan, Appendix A.

Strategic Priority A: Create And Maintain a City Wide Framework to Promote Effective Partnership Working by all Agencies.

- 4.3.3 Homelessness is of course not about bricks and mortar alone, and the causes of homelessness can be complex. Consequently, in preventing or alleviating homelessness, the key to achieving a long term sustainable solution frequently lies in resolving a far wider range of issues than just the provision of accommodation.

- 4.3.4 These issues may relate to health, relationships, finance, employment or education and training. While the individual may also have emotional, psychological and/or spiritual support needs. Addressing these concerns holistically is therefore crucial to achieving a sustainable outcome.

- 4.4.5 It is not possible for the Council to meet all of those needs in isolation; consequently, partnership working is fundamental to achieving success.

- 4.4.6 In order to build on previous success it is essential that partner agencies continue to work closely together. This will increase the effectiveness of service delivery and help monitor progress. Specific measures we will undertake to achieve this are detailed in the Delivery Plan, Appendix A.

Strategic Priority B: Maintain and Improve Measures to Prevent Homelessness

- 4.4.7 The prevention agenda is at the heart of this strategy. Early intervention before the 'crisis point' is reached is considerably preferable to dealing

reactively to a situation in which the person has already lost their home.

- 4.4.8 The key to successful prevention is an in depth understanding of the key causes of homelessness, with appropriate action for each individual.
- 4.4.9 The impact of the economic downturn and of certain measures relating to welfare reform means that many households' incomes have been reduced. Financial pressures can result in homelessness, particularly where these lead to rent or mortgage payment arrears. Vulnerable groups and people with mental or physical health needs may also need resources to access the support they need to maintain a tenancy. Promoting financial inclusion and managing the impacts of welfare reform is therefore a key priority in preventing homelessness.
- 4.4.10 As previously mentioned, over the last eighteen months, the number of preventions achieved has fallen due to funding pressures and increased demand putting a strain on all aspects of the service. The challenge now is to ensure that as pressures continue, prevention services are not squeezed further.

Strategic Priority C: Help Homeless People Back into Suitable Housing and Provide Support to make this Sustainable

- 4.4.11 Prevention is not possible in all cases, but providing suitable, settled accommodation, with on-going support, is essential to turn around the lives of homeless people and prevent them becoming homeless again.
- 4.4.12 The recent cuts in the availability of suitable accommodation, coupled with the reduction in levels of floating support, make achieving this objective especially challenging. Nevertheless the Homelessness Liaison Forum will examine ways such services can be maintained, and will monitor opportunities to achieve additional funding to support these measures.

4.5 SUMMARY: THE BENEFITS OF A SUCCESSFUL HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY AND THE CASE FOR PREVENTION

Community and Corporate Benefits

- 4.5.1 As discussed in section 1.3, a successful homelessness strategy makes a direct contribution to our corporate goals, particularly those relating to health, inclusion, and active citizenship.

Value for Money

- 4.5.2 In principle there are two ways of approaching homelessness – tackling the situation after it has arisen, or focusing on prevention (or a combination of both).
- 4.5.3 The University of Heriot-Watt published research in 2007 that demonstrated that preventing homelessness can save money when compared to the cost of helping someone who is already homeless. For example...
- a) The cost per person of successful mediation (estimated at £600) is around nine times less expensive than providing alternate settled accommodation.
 - b) The costs of home visits are estimated to be 3.5 times less expensive than providing alternate settled accommodation. This based on the running costs of around £15,000 per annum, assuming 50% of a case officers' time.
 - c) Advice on housing options (e.g. resolving housing benefit problems, rent or service charge arrears, negotiation or legal advocacy) is estimated at around nine times less expensive than providing alternate settled accommodation.
 - d) The costs of a rent deposit scheme are estimated to be 8.5 times less than the costs of providing accommodation under the main homelessness duty. This based on the assumption of an average of £800 per case with re-payment of 25% of deposits awarded. (In Derby the average deposit is half of this figure, around £400 per property).
 - e) The cost of operating a rent bond scheme is 37 times less than the average cost of providing accommodation under the main homelessness duty. This based on the assumption that the average claim rate of bonds at 10% per annum.
 - f) The sanctuary scheme represents a saving of 5.5 times the costs of providing accommodation under the main homelessness duty.
- 4.5.4 These savings are summarised in the table below:

Value for Money Ranking	Prevention Measure	Savings compared to cost of meeting main homelessness duty
1	Rent bond scheme	37 x
2	Advice on housing options	9 x
3	Mediation	9 x
4	Rent deposit scheme	8.5 x
5	Sanctuary scheme	5.5 x
7	Home visits	3.5 x

Figure 5: Service savings

4.6 The Risks of Cutting Funding for the Prevention of Homelessness

- a) *Performance* – clearly, a reduction in funding will affect the ability to achieve homelessness targets and this could result in an increase in homelessness levels.
- b) *Corporate image* - cutting funding for preventing homelessness can generate negative publicity.
- c) *Economic* – preventing homelessness saves money when compared to the cost of providing temporary accommodation and re-housing into alternative accommodation, as demonstrated above. Therefore, cutting the funding for preventing homelessness may provide short-term savings but could prove considerably more costly in the medium/long-term. This will be seen not only in the provision of accommodation for those that become homeless, but also through greater demands for service provision from other areas such as social services, the police, the NHS etc.
- d) *Environmental* – there is likely to be an increase in the number of people sleeping on the streets. Other street activities such as begging, drinking, and prostitution are also likely to increase. All of which is undesirable in city centres and potentially off-putting to people thinking of visiting and businesses intending to invest in the area.
- e) *Legal* - local authorities have a duty under part seven of the Housing Act 1996 to prevent homelessness. Reduction in funding could have a detrimental impact on the local authority's ability to fulfil this duty satisfactorily. A reduction in funding for tools to prevent homeless will result in an increased number of people being owed the full housing duty.

- 4.4.7 In summary, reducing the budget for the homelessness might appear to be a saving, but it could actually incur more costs than it saves. Continuing to adequately resource homelessness prevention initiatives should result in cost savings for the Council in the long term.

SECTION 5: DELIVERY PLAN

- 5.1 The following Delivery Plan brings together all the key actions identified in the preceding section, while also identifying which organisation, officer or department is responsible. It also indicates by when the action will be achieved, and how it will be resourced.
- 5.2 It represents 'the bottom line' – how in practice specific actions will be undertaken in order to achieve our strategic objectives and tackle homelessness in the city.

Monitoring and Review

- 5.3 The delivery plan will be subject to review in light of the changing circumstances in which services are delivered. It is worth repeating that the likely continuing funding cuts from central to local government may impact significantly on the resources available to implement these actions.
- 5.4 However, irrespective of resource issues, effective monitoring of the strategy's delivery plan is essential to ensure achievements are made and that the targets continue to be relevant.
- 5.5 Consequently, in addition to the monitoring arrangements described on pages 6 and 14, the newly established Homeless Liaison group will periodically review progress and recommend changes to the plan as circumstances change. The group will comprise staff from the council and from other agencies with an interest in homelessness who will contribute expertise from their own specialised fields.

Equalities

- 5.6 A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) of this strategy was undertaken in October 2014. Its purpose was to assess the impact of the strategy on the different equality groups with the intention of implementing corrective action where this impact is negative. It is also intended to ensure that access to services are maximised for everyone.
- 5.7 Monitoring these activities will inform future changes to the strategy and enable our service response to remain appropriate and relevant to changing circumstances.

Homelessness Strategy Delivery Plan 2014

Key to officers: GH: Glynis Hawkes; KM: Kim Morgan; JM: Jeremy Mason; TT: Trisha Thomas; MP: Matt Palmer; LD: Laura Dennis; RM: Rachel Morris (YMCA); CM: Clare Mehrbani

STRATEGIC PRIORITY A: CREATE AND MAINTAIN A CITY WIDE FRAMEWORK TO PROMOTE EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP WORKING BY ALL AGENCIES

Action	Lead Officer/Org	Comments	Resources	Timescales
A1: Establish a new Homeless Liaison Forum, comprising members from across agencies.	TT	Purpose is to oversee implementation of the strategy and where appropriate amend as circumstances change. Invite members from each Diversity Forum to nominate their own champion to attend this group.	Existing	April 2015 – then 6 monthly
A2: Meet all departmental targets for... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approaches - Acceptances - Preventions - TA (snap-shot) - B&B (snap-shot) - Rough sleepers (annually) 	TT	The 2015-16 targets will be available in February 2015. Progress against targets to be reported to the HLF.	Existing / various	On going
A3: Improve clarity of and access to pertinent information and sign-posting – particularly for those emergency cases where persons become homeless ‘out of hours’ and have no previous experience of the system. Ensure that all important phone numbers are available in a multi-lingual format.	TT/MP	Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Display screens at CH b) National phone line for reporting rough sleepers c) Leaflets 	Existing	April 2015

Derby City Homelessness Strategy 2015-19

A4: Further develop online access to information, advice and a holistic range of support services.	JM/LD		Existing	April 2015
A5: Work towards achieving the Gold Standard.	MP	Achieve 'Silver' by April 2015. HLF to review feasibility and timescale for achieving gold at next meeting.	Existing	April 2015 and on going
A6: HLF to encourage collaborative action amongst organisation to secure additional funding as and when opportunities arise.	All agencies	Organisations will make individual applications for funding and these may be commercially sensitive. However, funding is sometimes made available for partnerships only.	Existing	On going
A7: Develop an online directory of all homelessness services in Derby.	LD		Existing	April 2015

STRATEGIC PRIORITY B: MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE MEASURES TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

Action	Lead Officer/Org	Comments	Resources	Timescales
B1: Increase financial support and advice to prevent homelessness caused by debt and financial issues. This will include: a) Increased referrals and signposting to the Derby DIAP b) Direct support through the homeless prevention fund and repossession fund. c) Continued use of the Credit Unions, maximising take-up of their services	TT/MP	The Financial Inclusion Team deals with bond assurances/ applications and rent in advance. Also work closely with customers who are being repossessed. Financial Inclusion team is promoting pre-paid rent accounts with Credit Unions.	Existing	On going

Derby City Homelessness Strategy 2015-19

B2: Continue to promote the bond scheme, tying it in with other measures to promote financial inclusion: a) Maintain £75,000 upper-limit for live active bonds. b) Carry out a financial assessment with all tenants that approach needing a bond	MP		Existing	On going
B3: Mitigate the impact of benefit sanctions/limits by ensuring process in place to prevent HB being suspended incorrectly.	MP	DWP have confirmed that they are planning to make improvements to their automated processes so that where sanctions have been applied that do not affect HB entitlement, the claim will not be automatically suspended.	Existing	Autumn 2015 (approx.)
B4: Ensure staff are familiar / trained in verifying the new HB forms.	KM/TT/MP	Resources dept. is developing new procedures which will simplify and speed up processing: a) On line HB claim forms from February 2015 b) Risk Based Verification Assessment from February 2015.	Existing	From Feb 2015
B5: Finalise the Information and Advice Strategy in order to co-ordinate advice and reduce duplication.	DCC Service Transition Team		Existing	April 2015
B6: Improve clarity of the referral process for those at risk of homelessness.	All agencies	Specific actions to be agreed at HLF, April 2015.	Existing	April 2015
B7: Complete the review of the allocations policy and implement necessary changes.	KM	Proposed changes affecting homelessness are: a) Create a new need for applicants who have completed a pre-tenancy course b) Award additional priority to applicants at risk of becoming statutorily homeless within 3 months	Existing	April 2015
B8: Arrange training for housing providers in the new allocations policy.	KM		Existing	June 2015

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<p>B9: Review Derby City's Joint Housing Protocol for 16/17 year olds.</p> <p>Ensure adherence to the policy incorporating cross department training.</p>	<p>Suanne Lim (YOS)</p> <p>Various agencies</p>	<p>A review is needed following the reduction in Housing Related Support funded projects and the introduction of the Housing Framework for 16/17 year olds.</p>	<p>Existing</p>	<p>December 2014</p> <p>Jan 2015 and on going</p>
<p>B10: Promote EET for people living in supported housing.</p>		<p>To be assessed by HLF</p>	<p>HLF</p>	<p>April 2015</p>
<p>B11: Investigate reinstating floating support or alternatives to it.</p>		<p>To be assessed by HLF</p>	<p>HLF</p>	<p>From April 2015</p>

STRATEGIC PRIORITY C: HELP HOMELESS PEOPLE BACK INTO SUITABLE HOUSING AND PROVIDE SUPPORT TO MAKE THIS SUSTAINABLE

Action	Lead Officer/Org	Comments	Resources	Timescales
<p>C1: Carry out rough sleeper Street Audits on a six weekly basis and the annual rough sleeper count.</p>	<p>NSNO</p>	<p>NSNO to check streets daily. Will respond to referrals from other agencies and national phone line.</p> <p>NSNO will audit and report to DCC the levels of rough sleepers.</p>	<p>HTF</p>	<p>On going</p>
<p>C2: Ensure services provided by NSNO are documented, agreed and auditable.</p>	<p>GH</p>	<p>Complete Service Level Agreement with NSNO.</p>	<p>Existing</p>	<p>April 2015</p>

Derby City Homelessness Strategy 2015-19

C3: Achieve sustainable funding for NSNO	CM/MP	Funding is currently in place until August 2015. Future possible options to explore and consider include; HRS funding, DCLG funding, Health funding, Police and Crime Commissioner funding.	HLF	August 2015
C4: Continue to provide individual plans for each rough sleeper which identifies exactly what each agency needs to do and what the individual themselves need to do to address the issues.	NSNO	Carried out by NSNO team.	HTF	On going
C5: Develop and maintain written procedures including 'steps from homelessness to settled accommodation'. To include an assessment of the full range of support needs of the household, along with a specification of which agency will deliver on them and at what stage in the process.	TT/KM/MP	Procedures are being reviewed and written as part of the Gold Standard – these are in relation to all aspects of service.	Existing	To review and update annually from April 2015
C6: Work more closely with Public Health and Commissioning in provision of effective services for homeless persons with drug and alcohol mis-use issues.	MP/TT	Formerly the 'complex case panel' which assesses people with multiple and complex needs.	Existing	On going
C7: Ensuring that all vulnerable people have access to additional support via the Local Support Services Framework.	All agencies	More detail from Kate Green	Existing	On going
C8: Continue to develop the PRS - Investigate the use of private sector leasing	JM	PSL is a process where the Council or its partner takes a long term lease on a privately owned property and the sublets to those in housing need.	Existing	On going
C9: Continue with Case Managers Reference Group	RM	Formerly the 'complex case panel' which assesses people with multiple and complex needs. RM to report on the future of this group.	Existing	On going
C10: Develop a 'reconnections' policy for those presenting as homeless with no local connection	MP	Development of the policy is on going.	Existing	July 2015

Derby City Homelessness Strategy 2015-19

C11: Assess how severe weather provision is maintained via partnership working	HLF	To be assessed at HLF meeting.	Existing	October 2015
C12: Review outreach worker times	HLF	HLF to assess and expand provision where possible	Existing	From April 2015

THE GOLD STANDARD

In 2012 Central Government commissioned a new service called the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) to look at what additional activities could and should be carried out by local authority housing departments to tackle and prevent homelessness. The NPSS service compiled a series of ten 'local challenges'¹⁵ which are to:

1. adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness involving all local authority services
2. actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
3. offer a Housing Options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients
4. adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative
5. have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support
6. develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both clients and landlords
7. actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme
8. have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs
9. not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation
10. not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks

The Gold Standard Challenge operates by a peer review scheme designed to help local authorities deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services.

By achieving the ten challenges, local authorities demonstrate that they have comprehensive prevention services in place for all customers, both the statutorily and non-statutorily homeless.

¹⁵ These are set out in the report: *Making Every Contact Count: A Joint Approach to the Prevention of Homelessness*.

APPENDIX C

BENEFITS SANCTIONS

The DWP introduced new rules in December 2013 which tightened benefit implementation and eligibility rules for EEA migrants. There is now a more robust habitual residence test for those people claiming means tested benefits. Since January 2014 people coming to the UK must have lived here for three months before they can claim income based - Job Seekers Allowance (JSA).

After six months of claiming JSA claimants must show that they have a 'genuine prospect of finding work' (Genuine Prospect of Work Assessment (GPoW)) in order to continue to receive JSA and other benefits such as housing benefit, child benefit and child tax credit. Potential claimants must actively seek work throughout the six month period, have a genuine chance of finding work and provide compelling evidence to demonstrate this. GPoW will be tested at the outset of the claim and at further periodic intervals. A person with an initial right to reside will lose that status after six months unless they can provide the requisite 'compelling evidence'.

Additional changes:

- 1 March 2014 - a minimum earnings threshold was introduced to determine whether an EEA national is in genuine or effective work. For 2014/15 the threshold is £153 per week – equivalent to 24 hours work at minimum wage.
- 1 April 2014 - new EEA job seekers now generally do not have access to Housing Benefit.
- 9 April 2014 - routine use of interpreters has ended as claimants are expected to improve their language skills.
- 1 July 2014 – new jobseekers will have to have lived in the country for three months before claiming Child Tax Credit and Child Benefit

Certain EEA citizens remain eligible for benefits if they are able to establish a 'right to reside'. Categories of people with a right to reside include:

- Workers
- Self-employed
- Family members of qualified persons
- Parent and primary carer of the child in general education of an EEA worker

EEA and non-EEA JSA claimants generally face a system of sanctions which reduces or pays a nil rate of JSA if they fail to take sufficient steps to look for work or take up an offer of work or training. Benefits may be sanctioned for periods of four weeks up to three years for repeated offences.

APPENDIX D

CONSULTATION EVALUATION

A broad-based consultation of key stakeholders closed on 4 November 2014. It focussed on the key issues which surround and concern the tackling of homelessness. The main objectives of the consultation were to:

- a) Disseminate information about changes in the extent of homelessness and resourcing of homelessness services since the last strategy
- b) Consult on the development of our strategic priorities for the period 2015-2019 and how these can be achieved

The following were invited to join in the consultation process:

- i) Elected Members
- j) Overview & Scrutiny Board
- k) Housing associations
- l) Charities and support providers (including Derby City Mission)
- m) Third sector organisations
- n) Voluntary sector
- o) Health and Social Care providers
- p) Derby Homes
- q) Council departments including Adult Social Care, Housing, CYP (Youth Offending, Leaving Care)
- r) Advocacy groups
- s) Members of the public

We held a consultation event with service providers, face-to-face discussions with single homeless people at Milestone House, distributed postal questionnaires to families who have previously been at risk of homelessness or actually homeless. We also widely publicised the development of the new strategy and invited comments and feedback through the Council's web pages, a press release and internally through *iderby* and *In Touch*.

We have received 13 postal responses, 12 Milestone House interviews and 10 people were spoken to at Centenary House. The respondents were asked a variety of questions concerning their experiences of being homeless in Derby.

Their feedback has reinforced concerns over many areas. It has also highlighted the following issues...

- The reduction or loss of services such as floating support and the end of funding for the mortgage rescue scheme.
- Reduction in availability of suitable accommodation. Between 2011 and 2013 the number of supported accommodation bed spaces was reduced from 527 to 150. Much of this reduction has fallen on hostel accommodation.
- More rough sleeping, anti-social behaviour and street drinking including the availability of high strength alcohol.
- Dispersals of asylum seekers by the UK Border Agency.
- Private landlords being more 'choosy' in terms of selection of tenants.
- A lack of leaflets/written advice.
- New benefit sanctions, which can result in the suspension of housing benefit in certain cases.

The questionnaires and interviews found that the majority of people who access homelessness services were referred there by professionals such as doctors, social workers, the police etc. 19% of respondents already knew how to access homeless services, including all of those people who were interviewed at Milestone House.

In the main, people were not using the electronic services offered to them; people stated that they would prefer to either speak to someone in person or use leaflets to access the information they needed. Respondents did however feel that it would be useful to have information available on social media sites such as Facebook. A noted barrier was that the Council's website is not translatable which makes it difficult to access for some people. Since the consultation this has now been rectified and a translation widget has been installed which gives people whose first language is not English confidence in the information they are reading.

A separate event took place with a variety of different stakeholders, including housing providers, charities, council departments, religious organisations and elected members. The aim of this event was to establish the provision of services that currently exists in Derby and to find out what people felt were the inherent challenges that they were facing as service providers.

Some of the consistent issues that were raised by stakeholders were:

- Moving from a preventative service to a reactive one
- From helping all to only helping statutorily homeless
- Chaotic client group
- Insufficient one-bed accommodation to move people on to
- welfare reform, housing benefits and the general economic climate

Some of the suggested solutions are:

- More move-on/shared accommodation with intensive housing management if support is not an option
- Co-ordination of services
- Sharing information
- Multi-agency meetings (e.g. homeless forum)
- Maximise discretionary housing payments

Following the various consultation meetings and events an action plan was created which will help with the delivery and monitoring of the Homelessness Strategy. The draft plan was then considered, amended and approved at a further stakeholder event. The delivery plan can be found in Appendix A.