

# Public Document Pack

## **JOHN WARD**

Head of Finance and Governance Services

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A meeting of **Cabinet** will be held in Committee Room 1 - East Pallant House on **Tuesday 7 July 2015 at 9.30 am**

MEMBERS: Mr A Dignum (Chairman), Mrs E Lintill (Vice-Chairman), Mr R Barrow, Mr B Finch, Mrs P Hardwick, Mrs G Keegan and Mrs S Taylor

## **SUPPLEMENT TO AGENDA BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7 **Recommendation from the Development Plan and Infrastructure Panel - Revised Local Development Scheme 2015-2018 (Pages 1 - 2)**
- 10 **HR Policies Report Statement (Pages 3 - 11)**
- 11 **Boundary Review of West Sussex County Council (Pages 12 - 13)**
- 12 **Developing a New Strategy for the Visitor Economy (Pages 14 - 23)**
- 19 **Draft Homelessness Strategy 2015-2020 (Pages 24 - 108)**
- 20 **Development of Amenity Sites owned by Hyde (Pages 109 - 127)**

# **Chichester District Council**

## **Development Plan and Infrastructure Panel**

**Thursday 18 June 2015**

### **Revised Local Development Scheme 2015-2018**

#### **1. Contact**

Tracey Flitcroft - Principal Planning Officer  
Telephone: 01243 534683  
E-mail: [tflitcroft@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:tflitcroft@chichester.gov.uk)

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1. To recommend to the Cabinet that it recommends to the Council that it approves the revised Local Development Scheme for publication on Chichester District Council's website.**

#### **3. Background**

- 3.1. Chichester District Council's (CDC) Local Development Scheme (LDS) was last updated and approved by CDC and published in May 2014.
- 3.2. The LDS is kept under review and updates are published on CDC's website, so that the local community and developers are kept informed of the current timetable for producing planning policy documents. The updated version of the LDS covering the period 2015 – 2018 is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.3. The inspector recommended that to make the Plan sound CDC should review the Plan within five years. The LDS will be revised again to take account of the Local Plan review timetable once the process has been agreed by the Cabinet.
- 3.4. Each Development Plan Document must be prepared in accordance with the LDS. It is intended to help manage workloads, resource requirements and enable the public and other interested parties to know when they are able to take part in the planning policy process.
- 3.5. The LDS will be used to monitor CDC's progress in producing planning policy documents as part of the annual Authority's Monitoring Report.

#### **4. Contents**

- 4.1. The LDS contains:

- Information about the current Development Plan for the Chichester Local Plan area.

- A profile for each of the Development Plan Documents (DPD) to be prepared within the three year timeframe.
- A timetable for each main stage of document production, including public consultation stages;
- Information on other documents, including Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.

## **5. Summary of changes to the revised Local Development Scheme**

5.1. The revised LDS covers the period 2015-2018. The main changes are:

- Work will start on the Chichester Harbour Development Management SPD and the Water Resources and Water Management SPD;
- The timetables for the Site Allocations DPD and the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Allocation DPD have been revised to take account of work on the Local Plan, emerging Neighbourhood Plans and resources.

5.2 Section four of the LDS refers to the development plan, reference is made to neighbourhood plans making up the development plan. Specifically, paragraphs 4.1 and 4.5 refer to the Loxwood Neighbourhood Plan being made in July 2015. If for any reason the neighbourhood plan is not made, it is proposed that reference to the Loxwood Neighbourhood Plan will be removed from the LDS.

## **6. Appendices**

6.1. Appendix 1 – Local Development Scheme 2015-2018

## **Equality Impact Assessments - Guidance for services**

We have a legal duty to undertake equality impact assessments for race, disability and gender at the start of any new projects or policies, major changes in service delivery or any potential removal of services. Assessing the equality impact is something that most of us do without thinking about it, for example consideration of how people access any service that we provide or ensuring that certain groups do not face any barriers to what we are providing is often part of our everyday consideration. This thought process must however be documented as we may need to show it as evidence.

There are three possible impacts to consider as part of the assessment:

### A positive impact

Where a policy, service or project improves equality of opportunity. For example providing an interpretation service for people where English is not their first language will enable them to understand and use our services

### A negative or adverse impact

Where the policy, service or project disadvantages one or more of the equality groups. For example an event held with no induction loop facility would have a negative impact on some attendees with hearing impairments.

### A neutral impact

Where a policy, service or project has similar impact upon equality groups whether they belong to an equality group or not.

## How to Carry out an Equality Impact Assessment

For each policy or project that you are assessing you should think about all of the strands of equality and consider the areas of:

- **Accessibility**
  - Physical Facility Audit
  - Transport issues
  - Cost
  - Activity (involvement)
  - Equipment
  
- **Staff Training**
  - Disability Awareness
  - Equalities / Diversity
  - Service Specific
  
- **Monitoring**
  - Data Collection
  - Evaluation
  - Feedback and resulting adjustments in service delivery
  
- **Consultation**
  - In accordance with consultation strategy and guidance
  - Various appropriate methods of consultation
  
- **Communication**
  - Link and knowledge exchange with internal equalities team
  - Various methods of communicating where appropriate
  - Plain English
  - Information Distribution
  - In accordance with new Communication Strategy

### Initial questions

Are monitoring stats available? How could monitoring be collected in future?

Any good practice examples available on diversity in this subject area?

What are the main activities of the policy and areas of work that it will involve?

Who are the main beneficiaries of the policy?

List any changes that you may be expecting to make to the policy over the next year

## Documentation of Equality Impact Assessment

Name of Policy, service, project, decision; **Disciplinary & Contract Termination Procedure**

- a) **Does the policy affect men and women in different ways? e.g. flexible working arrangements might have a positive impact on women with caring responsibilities.**

You should consider any impact both men or women.

	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral	Reason
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

- b) **Does the policy affect people from different racial groups, e.g. will women from certain minority communities use the Council's swimming pool more often if same sex swimming arrangements are in place?**

You should consider the impact on all racial groups, this includes gypsies and travellers.

	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral	Reason
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

- c) **How will the policy impact on people with disabilities, e.g. if information about Council Tax benefits are not made available in large print or alternative formats, access to such benefits might be denied to people with a visual impairment or learning disability.**

You should consider those with impairments such as mobility, sight, hearing, learning disabilities and mental health issues.

	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral	Reason
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

d)

	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral	Reason
Any other equality impact (all other Protected Characteristics)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Overall impact    Low        Medium        High   

Actions to be taken as a result of this impact assessment

Any other comments
The main purpose of this policy update is to further strengthen how staff criminal record disclosures are managed which will further enhance the protection of adults at risk, many of whom may have a disability.

## **Equality Impact Assessments - Guidance for services**

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List any changes that you may be expecting to make to the policy over the next year

## Documentation of Equality Impact Assessment

Name of Policy, service, project, decision; **Flexible Working Policy**

- a) **Does the policy affect men and women in different ways? e.g. flexible working arrangements might have a positive impact on women with caring responsibilities.**

You should consider any impact both men or women.

	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral	Reason
Gender	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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You should consider those with impairments such as mobility, sight, hearing, learning disabilities and mental health issues.

	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral	Reason
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Any other comments

### **Gender**

This policy applies to all staff whether male or female. Traditionally more women than men have had caring responsibilities for children and dependant relatives and therefore this policy may have a positive impact for women.

### **Staff with disabilities**

This policy may have a positive impact on staff with a disability as it enables staff to apply to have a working pattern that suits them better or to work less hours.

### **Age**

This policy may enable older staff to work fewer hours in their later years of employment. Instead of only having the option to retire or to continue working their existing hours, the policy enables staff to apply to work part-time.

### **Religion**

Staff may apply under this policy to work flexibly to allow them to attend religious observance or other religious events.

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**Subject:** Boundary Review of West Sussex County Council  
**Date:** 23 June 2015 11:54:28

Dear Chief Executive,

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has decided that its 'minded to' Council size will be 70 members. This is based on taking one seat out of Adur and all other district areas retaining the same number of County Councillors. It is now inviting interested parties to submit proposals for the pattern of electoral divisions.

As you will be aware, the County Council's Electoral Review Panel is undertaking detailed work on a pattern of electoral divisions. You have all been invited to send a representative to the meeting that discusses your district area. These meetings are taking place over the next four Fridays. For a Council size of 70 members, this indicates the spread across the seven district and borough council areas

#### 70 Members (2015) - minus 1 from Adur

District/Borough	Cllrs	Electorate	No. per Cllr	Variance	Numerical
				From Avg	Variance
Adur	5	47894	9579	7.7%	681
Arun	13	116956	8997	1.1%	99
Chichester	10	90132	9013	1.3%	116
Crawley	9	77707	8634	-3.0%	-263
Horsham	12	102381	8532	-4.1%	-366
Mid Sussex	12	106988	8916	0.2%	18
Worthing	9	80757	8973	0.9%	76

Total	Total	Average
70	622815	8897

#### 70 Members (2021) - minus 1 from Adur

District/Borough	Cllrs	Electorate	No. per Cllr	Variance	Numerical
				From Avg	Variance
Adur	5	49154	9831	3.7%	350
Arun	13	123203	9477	0.0%	-4
Chichester	10	96130	9613	1.4%	132
Crawley	9	85673	9519	0.4%	38
Horsham	12	110866	9239	-2.6%	-242
Mid Sussex	12	114228	9519	0.4%	38
Worthing	9	84424	9380	-1.1%	-101

Total	Total	Average
70	663678	9481

The Boundary Commission's website and map portal are available via these links.

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/south-east/west-sussex/west-sussex-county-council>

<https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/5384>

The Panel meetings will take place as follows:

26 June – Adur and Worthing to be discussed from 10.30am at Worthing Library  
 3 July – Arun and Chichester to be discussed from 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester  
 10 July – Crawley and Mid Sussex to be discussed from 10.30am at Crawley Library  
 17 July – Horsham to be discussed from 10.30am at Parkside, Horsham

Your organisation can get involved in three ways:

1. Write to [james.ironside@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:james.ironside@westsussex.gov.uk) in advance of the Panel meetings to propose a scheme or give views on how effective you feel divisions are currently. Any scheme you wish to propose should be in as much detail as possible. It should have 2015 & 2021 figures by polling district and with division totals. It should cover all the divisions in a district, not just a portion of the district. It should be in electronic form if possible, preferably as an Excel spreadsheet.
2. Your organisation may send one representative to the relevant Panel meeting to speak about your organisation's preferred scheme. Please write to [james.ironside@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:james.ironside@westsussex.gov.uk) if you intend to send a representative.
3. We will send out proposed schemes by district as soon as possible after the Panel meetings, you are welcome to comment on the proposed schemes. Comments must be submitted to [james.ironside@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:james.ironside@westsussex.gov.uk) by 12 August to be included in the Governance Committee's considerations on 24 August, when it will agree the formal West Sussex County Council proposed divisions scheme.

You are welcome to contact the Boundary Commission direct with any proposals.

The Boundary Commission will publish its preferred scheme in November 2015 and there will be a further opportunity for comment at this stage.

Yours sincerely,  
Charles Gauntlett

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Chichester District Council

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 July 2014

Tourism Task and Finish Group Progress Report

1. **Contacts**

Gordon McAra – Chairman of the Task and Finish Group  
Tel: 01730 815569 Email: [gmcara@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:gmcara@chichester.gov.uk)

Stephen Oates, Economic Development Manager  
Tel: 01243 534600 Email: [soates@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:soates@chichester.gov.uk)

2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1 The committee is requested to review progress of the Task and Finish Group and to consider the options set out in section 8 as to the way forward and to make any recommendations to the Task and Finish Group**

3. **Background**

- 3.1 In 2009 the Council entered into a Destination Management Partnership with the tourism industry's pre-existing organisation Visit Chichester (VC). Initially, this included provision of a modest annual grant each year from April 2009 to March 2012, after which point the Council ceased further funding.
- 3.2 During this time it was anticipated that VC would develop a new approach to serving and developing the tourism sector, and would secure alternative and new methods of funding to achieve this. However, VC has struggled to make significant strides forward and its funding is now generally well below the levels obtained 5 years ago.
- 3.3 In 2012, the Council also reviewed its provision of Tourist Information Services. The TICs in Midhurst and Petworth closed with some aspects of the services relocating to alternative outlets. In Chichester the TIC was relocated to the Novium museum.
- 3.4 In September 2013 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation from representatives of Visit Chichester at which the issues facing the organisation and delivery of its business plan were set out to members. Following this a Task and Finish Group was convened in January 2014 to:
- assess the opportunities to develop inbound tourism to the District and to expand the visitor economy
  - establish how the Council could assist VC to become more effective and, in so doing, to assess the VC model against other Destination Management Organisation (DMO) models and test its effectiveness
  - understand the purpose of tourism information services and how this is delivered

- 3.5 The group consists of Mr G McAra (Chair), Mrs C Apel, Mr N Thomas, Mrs B Tinson and Mrs N Graves.

#### 4. The Economic Impact of Tourism

- 4.1 It is reasonable to ask why Tourism should be a 'special case' and why, in the past, it received the seemingly high levels of support and backing from the public sector. The value of tourism is both direct and indirect. There is much that a community or district such as Chichester has in terms of infrastructure, amenities, community assets and environmental assets that the indigenous population enjoy and benefit from, that simply wouldn't exist (or would at least be in a poorer form) if 'Tourism' didn't exist.
- 4.2 In a wider context, tourism is essential to England's economy. This 'visitor economy' which covers leisure tourism, business trips and visiting friends and relatives, generates £106 billion each year, employs 2.6 million people and supports thousands of businesses, both directly and indirectly. It also has a strong and vital interdependent relationship with farming, transport, retailing, cultural assets, coastal and maritime activities, sport, museums and the arts, hospitality and other sectors.
- 4.3 For the first time, Government has a tourism strategy that reaches across Whitehall, looking at policies from a tourism perspective. Funding through the Regional Growth Fund has been allocated to Visit England who is tasked to work with the tourism industry to deliver a 10-year strategic framework for tourism. This sets out ways the industry can work together to deliver a 5% growth in value, year-on-year, over the next decade. This would result in an additional £50 billion in expenditure and the creation of 225,000 jobs.
- 4.4 There are substantial opportunities to increase the value of tourism to the district. In particular, the growth in short-breaks in England provides a growing market, and there is a tremendous opportunity to exploit the potential for exponential increases in spend by turning day visitors into staying visitors

##### **Tourism in Chichester District**

- 4.5 The South East attracts the highest tourism spend for any region outside London. In Chichester District, tourism and leisure generates significant direct expenditure and is the largest private sector employer. According to Visit England data, tourism produces the following in Chichester District:
- 5.2 million day trips each year generating a spend of £144 million
  - 405,000 'staying' trips each year, equating to 1.3 million 'bed nights', and generating a spend of £75 million
  - c. 7,500 jobs in tourism and leisure, plus numerous 'support' jobs

(Please note: Data produced by Visit Chichester shows higher figures than these, but we have been unable to reconcile them to the Visit England figures)

## 5. Outcomes to be achieved

- 5.1 To support tourism and the development of the visitor economy. This is a key priority in the Council's Economic Development Strategy, which was adopted by Chichester District Council in February 2013.
- 5.2 The Task and Finish Group want to understand our existing and potential tourist market by identifying the area's different assets and why people visit.
- 5.3 To establish whether the current DMO is fit for purpose and to consider any in-kind support which the Council can provide to VC or to consider what options are available to us going forward to assist in facilitating a strong DMO. In order to:
  - raise the profile of the District as a visitor destination
  - manage the visitor economy
  - exploit the economic potential to create jobs
  - develop a successful year-round tourism offer
  - exploit the potential for inward investment to the District
- 5.4 To consider what 'destinations' Chichester is made up of and to consider whether 'Chichester District' is a recognisable destination, or whether it should be part of a wider destination; and whether there is an opportunity to work with other authorities for a wider tourism offer
- 5.5 To consider how people access tourism information and the delivery of TIC services.

## 6. Progress so far

- 6.1 The T&F Group has received a number of presentations and considered various pieces of evidence. These have included:
  - A discussion paper on the present position and the opportunities available to develop the district's tourism offering
  - A presentation on the tourism marketplace, the wider visitor economy and the potential for tourism to grow the local economy
  - A presentation from Visit England on the role of destination management organisations and the various models that can be applied
  - A presentation from SDNPA
  - Visit England insights on future trends in tourism
  - A presentation from Visit Chichester
  - A discussion with the Council's Front of House Officer who services the Tourist Information functions at the Novium museum.

### Consultation

- 6.2 Individual members and officers from the Group have also:
  - Met with representatives from businesses and organisations in the District's tourism sector including Bunn Leisure, Chichester City Centre Partnership, Chichester Festival Theatre, Fishbourne Roman Palace, Goodwood and the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum
  - Met with Visit England's Head of Destination Management

- Undertaken a walk-about tour of Chichester to consider the city from a visitor's viewpoint
- Attended the LGA Conference on Culture, Sport and Tourism to obtain insights on successful local authority-led tourism
- Met with officers from Arun District Council and Horsham District Council

## 7. Key Findings

### Visit Chichester

- 7.1 Visit Chichester was set-up as a public-private membership organisation headed by a non-executive Board of directors with the aim that directors should be from local accommodation providers, visitor attractions, Chichester Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCCI) and CDC. The board is currently weighted in favour of the public sector. There is one director representing the visitor attraction/events sector and one representing accommodation providers. All directors are volunteers. There is one part time member of staff working on social media and some paid consultancy. Resources are extremely limited with a budget of c. £70,000 per annum
- 7.2 While welcoming any work undertaken to promote tourism, tourism businesses consulted do not regard the DMO, in its current form, to be vital to their business and several have drifted away from close involvement with the DMO.
- 7.3 The organisation has limited visibility and profile, and some accommodation providers in the District are not clear about the roles it performs.
- 7.4 VC places a lot of importance in developing its website and social media feeds. Despite this, the website does not provide a sufficiently good or responsive service for today's customers. However they have advised that this is being reviewed and updated.
- 7.5 Following the presentation from VC, members concluded that:
- VC appears to be an operational organisation with no defined strategic vision or direction. (However, the Group is aware that a destination management plan dating from 2010 exists)
  - It has a fragmented approach and is a fragile structure - It needs robustness
  - It has insufficient money to effectively market, manage and build the destination
  - It carries out limited consultation with users or providers
  - The presentation gave no indication of any move or aspiration to restructure or consider alternative ways to serve and develop the visitor economy

The members also felt that the name 'Visit Chichester' is a barrier to engendering a united approach to driving the visitor economy across the district.

### The Destination

- 7.6 When considering a destination to visit, visitors do not concern themselves with administrative boundaries when making their choices. However, VC's focus is purely on Chichester District. There is no evidence that VC has considered whether this is the optimum 'destination' to serve, or whether there is naturally a narrower or wider destination that would best attract and serve visitors

- 7.7 Visit England define a destination as follows: *A destination is an area of visitor appeal which includes attractions, accommodation and support services. It may be defined by physical, thematic or administrative boundaries and it embraces a set of distinctive images and qualities that give it a brand identity recognisable by potential visitors. Destinations should be places with which tourism stakeholders have a natural affinity and within which it is practicable for them to work together.*
- 7.8 A key consideration of whether an area can and should be managed as a destination in its own right is whether it has a clear and distinctive identity by which it can be promoted and described to visitors and recognised by them. However, as implied by the above definition, destinations can only work effectively if they are meaningful to the tourism businesses, visitors and other players, including the local authorities and communities, who need to work together to manage them.
- 7.9 Initial discussions with the tourism officer at Arun District Council and with the economic development service at Horsham District Council have indicated a willingness to consider whether some or all of our three districts might comprise an attractive visitor proposition to market and manage.

### **Creating a Viable and Successful Destination**

- 7.10 It is important to consider what activities are required in an area to maximise the impact on the local economy from visitors. These can be broken down into six inter-related sub groups:
- 7.10.1 **Destination Management or A ‘Joined-Up’ Approach** – This is the process of leading, influencing and coordinating the management of all the aspects of a destination that contribute to a visitor’s experience, taking account of the needs of visitors, local residents, businesses and the environment.
- 7.10.2 **Attracting Visitors** - Is primarily about marketing the destination in a variety of forms, including online, social media, PR, and advertising campaigns, as well as generating activities, events and reasons for visitors to choose the destination, and linking in to national initiatives, many of which provide match funding
- 7.10.3 **Inward Investment and Improving the Infrastructure** – Engendering a culture across all stakeholders to consider the visitor economy at every level – Ensuring the planning process is sympathetic and responsive to the visitor economy; developing and providing sufficient accommodation stock of the right kind; sufficient access to parking, public conveniences, public transport and other facilities; cleanliness of the environment; and seeking ways to support new attractions, events and activities to broaden the destination’s appeal.
- 7.10.4 **Welcome and Ease of Movement** – Ensuring that, whichever way visitors enter the destination, they feel welcome and comfortable in the local environment, and they are able to move around in the most efficient way. This makes a big difference to a visitor’s experience. This

includes full customer orientation within the destination, placing the needs of visitors as a key consideration in all decision making

- 7.10.5 **Extending Stay** – Making good links and joint packages between attractions, accommodation providers, shops and restaurants to encourage longer visits; and generating activities and events to encourage longer stays. We know that the longer visitors stay the more they spend into the local economy
- 7.10.6 **Return Visits** - Getting the previous five right has a big impact on this, but can be enhanced through loyalty schemes, offers and specialist events

### **Destination Management Organisation Models**

- 7.11 There is a difference between destination management organisations (which coordinate, manage and market a destination) and simply a destination organisation (which is principally involved in marketing). Crucially, destination management includes the **planning, development and marketing** of a destination as well as how it is managed physically, financially, operationally and in other ways.
- 7.12 The size, form, functions and governance of destination management organisations vary across the country. They may be a single organisation, such as a local authority, or can be an informal partnership or a legal entity, such as a community interest company, that includes representation from both the private and public sectors:
- 7.13 A successful DMO will demonstrate strong private sector involvement, and many DMOs, but by no means all, are private-sector lead. To be successful a DMO needs drive and appropriate experience within its personnel and, above all, strong leadership.
- 7.14 Visit England cite This is Durham, Visit Manchester, Shakespeare's England, Visit Kent, Visit Isle of Wight, Visit York and Visit Winchester as examples of DMOs working well.

### **Tourist information Services**

- 7.15 With the move to mobile technology, traditional TIC services are now no longer required but we still need a Tourist Information Centre for signposting and leaflets. The Group considers that the future of tourist information services should be integral to the wider discussions on destination management.

## **8. Next Steps**

- 8.1 The Task and Finish Group are concerned that, in its current form, VC does not substantially raise the profile of the district as a visitor destination, or strategically manage the visitor economy to fully exploit the economic potential to create jobs. The Group is aware that some additional research is necessary and that it would be helpful for members to hear further evidence on successful destination management.

8.2 The Group would therefore welcome the committee's feedback on the work undertaken so far and seeks the committee's support to:

- consider whether the Council could be the catalyst for bringing together the businesses and organisations in the tourism sector and wider visitor economy to create a stronger partnership. In so doing, to examine the feasibility of establishing a well-resourced new model as well as the challenges involved in refreshing the current model and making it work
- consider what sources of Council or other public funding might be available, which could be used to leverage significant additional sums from the private sector

8.3 The Group would also like to advise the committee that a separate meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held on 22 July 2014, to which all CDC members are invited, to hear from Ms Melanie Sensicle, Chief Executive of This is Durham.

8.4 A further report on the findings of the research by the Task and Finish group will be brought back to the September meeting of this committee.

## 9. Resource and legal implications

9.1 The Task and Finish Group is currently resourced with officer input from the Economic Development Service and by the Principal Scrutiny Officer. At this stage there are no further resource or legal implications.

## 10. Consultation

10.1 Organisations consulted to date are as detailed in section 6 above.

## 11. Community impact and corporate risks

11.1 The aim of the review is to have a positive impact on the visitor economy and, in turn, the wider economy in our district.

11.2 The main risk to this Council is a loss of economic and community benefits if Visit Chichester fails and no action is taken to replace or improve it.

## 12. Other Implications

	Yes	No
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder:</b>		✓
<b>Climate Change:</b>		✓
<b>Human Rights and Equality Impact:</b>		✓
<b>Safeguarding:</b>		✓
<b>Other (Please specify):</b> eg Biodiversity		✓

## 13. Appendices

None

## 14. Background Papers

None

**Chichester District Council**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**18 November 2014**

**Tourism Task and Finish Group Progress Report**

**1. Contacts**

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**2. Recommendation**

**2.1 The committee is requested to note:**

- **progress of the Task and Finish Group**
- **the two new areas of work detailed in sections 4 and 5**

**and to agree that the final report be delayed to a future meeting.**

**3. Background**

3.1 Following the report of the Task and Finish Group to the July meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and the subsequent presentation by Mrs Melanie Sensicle, Chief Executive of Visit Durham, it was anticipated that the Task and Finish Group would complete its research and submit a final report and recommendations to this meeting.

3.2 However, two new and potentially complementary projects to develop the visitor economy report have emerged. One is a study of the visitor economy across the Coastal West Sussex Partnership area, and the other is a new targeted marketing initiative through West Sussex County Council. The Task and Finish Group consider it is appropriate to contribute to, and learn the outcomes of, these projects before submitting a final report.

3.3 Additionally, the Group has had the opportunity to investigate and begin considering a potential new funding model which may assist with the development of any new destination management initiatives. There has also been an opportunity for members of the Group to meet with the Board of Visit Chichester.

**4. Study being Conducted Through the Coastal West Sussex Partnership**

4.1 During the summer the Chief Executives of Arun District Council, Adur District Council, Worthing Borough Council and Chichester District Council considered a proposal from Adur and Worthing to investigate the opportunities for 'Growing Employment in the Visitor Economy' across the Coastal West Sussex Partnership area. A team of four consultants from Brighton Based 'Venues

Advisors' have been engaged to undertake the study, with the cost being met by the District and Borough Councils, West Sussex County Council and the Coastal West Sussex Partnership. Mr Oates is a member of the project Steering Group.

- 4.2 The consultants will review the current visitor economy across the Partnership area, consider the way it is organised and managed, speak with key figures, businesses and organisations to assess the aspirations of each authority and relevant private sector businesses, assess the potential to develop and grow the visitor economy, undertake new research, identify how one or more manageable and marketable destinations might be formed, and propose how the visitor economy across the wider Partnership area might move forward. The consultants will report back to the Coastal West Sussex Partnership Board, on which Cllr Cullen sits, and then report to District/Boroughs for further discussion and appropriate action.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the study and report will be completed by the end of this year.

## **5. West Sussex County Council Initiative**

- 5.1 It has been identified that, since the recession, the county has been gaining more low-paid jobs while at the same time losing high-value jobs to other counties and countries. Additionally, while there is variation within the county, West Sussex generally has an older population than national trends with 40% of the population aged 50 or over and a lower proportion of 25-45 year olds – the demographic group that includes young wealth creators who could potentially galvanise new economic activity and are sought after by national and global employers. To address this, West Sussex County Council is pursuing 'Five Bold Ideas'. These are headed 'Develop a Leading Bioengineering Centre of Excellence', 'Do More with Gatwick Airport', 'Bring High-end Finance to Chichester', 'Make Bognor Regis Better' and 'Beautiful Outdoors'.
- 5.2 These five ideas are intended to accomplish two things. First, to build on West Sussex's existing economic assets to draw more high value jobs into the area. Second, to leverage West Sussex's proximity to London to pull the capital's current and future young wealth creators into the county.
- 5.3 One of the five ideas relates to the theme 'Beautiful Outdoors', with the aim to make West Sussex a preferred destination for young professionals. This is based on the premise that the more people experience West Sussex directly, the more likely they are to move to the area.
- 5.4 At the time of preparing this report we are just commencing discussions with West Sussex County Council on this and the other ideas. When further information and detail is to hand it will help inform our final report and recommendations.

## **6 Other Activity**

- 6.1 For completeness, and to assist in the preparation of the final report and recommendations, members and officers on the T&F Group have also undertaken work in other areas including:

- Research into two alternative funding models for destination management and marketing
- A meeting with the board of Visit Chichester
- Further discussion with representatives of the tourism industry
- A discussion with the Chief Executive of Coast to Capital

## 7. Next Steps

- 7.1 Subject to the outcomes and recommendations of the Coastal West Sussex Partnership study, it is anticipated that the final report and recommendations of the Task and Finish group will be brought back to a meeting of this committee early in 2015.

## 8. Resource and legal implications

- 8.1 The Task and Finish Group is currently resourced with officer input from the Economic Development Service and by the Principal Scrutiny Officer. At this stage there are no further resource or legal implications.

## 9. Consultation

- 9.1 Organisations consulted to date are as detailed in section 6 of the Tourism Task and Finish Group Progress Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014.

## 10. Community impact and corporate risks

- 10.1 The aim of the review is to have a positive impact on the visitor economy and, in turn, the wider economy in our district.
- 10.2 The main risk to this Council is a loss of economic and community benefits if Visit Chichester fails and no action is taken to replace or improve it.

## 11. Other Implications

	Yes	No
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder:</b>		✓
<b>Climate Change:</b>		✓
<b>Human Rights and Equality Impact:</b>		✓
<b>Safeguarding:</b>		✓
<b>Other (Please specify):</b> eg Biodiversity		✓

## 12. Appendices

None

## 13. Background Papers

Tourism Task and Finish Group Progress Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 3 July 2014

**CHICHESTER DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION**

**STRATEGY**

**2009-2014**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chichester District Council's Homelessness Strategy 2009-2014 updates the previous strategy which was developed in 2003. It reports on progress made in delivering the previous strategy, reviews the profile of homelessness in the District and sets out key aims and objectives for the next five years.

The 2003 strategy focused on delivering a service based on homelessness prevention, i.e. seeing homelessness as a process and managing applicants' transition into permanent accommodation. This move towards a prevention and options approach has been successful and is now considered to be the principal means by which to deal with homelessness.

Key achievements since 2003 have been:

- Development of the Housing Options Service as part of a preventative approach to homelessness.
- Reducing the number of homelessness applications and acceptances and starting to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation.
- Reducing the number of families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation in line with the Government target.
- Developing the Private Sector Housing Access Scheme (PSHAS) to help people threatened with homelessness to find alternative private rented accommodation through provision of a Rent Deposit Guarantee and rent in advance.
- Implementation of an Independent Living Scheme (ILS) to support vulnerable customers into permanent affordable housing.

These achievements do not mean that homelessness is no longer an issue. As statistics illustrate, there is still an extremely high level of housing need in the District and the number of people seeking assistance with housing-related issues continues to rise. Affordability and the threat of homelessness is as big an issue as it was five years ago. The downturn in the housing market makes it easier for some households to find a home. For others, for whom home ownership was already marginal, the threat of repossession has grown.

It is essential therefore that we continue to work to prevent homelessness and assist households to resolve their housing issues. Given the high demand for affordable housing we cannot meet everyone's expectations. However we can work to ensure that those who are threatened with homelessness have a wide range of options and are supported to make best use of them.

At the same time we are also receiving increased requests from vulnerable members of the community, to help find secure accommodation or retain their existing home. A new floating support service 'Signpost', introduced in 2007 across Chichester and Arun is making good progress in supporting such people. However it is clear that we need to ensure that support is available for particular groups such as young people, people fleeing domestic violence and people with substance misuse and alcohol problems.

The overall aim of this Homelessness Prevention Strategy is:

**To deliver choice in housing through providing a responsive, pro-active, prevention based service which gives good quality advice, assistance and support to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.**

Within this aim there are five objectives:

**1. Develop the tools to increase choice for customers and to prevent homelessness by:**

- Developing a wider range of prevention options that are applicable to different customers
- Maximising the potential of the private rented sector.
- Maximising the effective use of existing stock and work with our RSL partners to increase the provision of new affordable homes.

**2. Assist households to resolve their housing issues by:**

- Delivering a more personalised service:
- Establishing customer pathways for preventing homelessness

**3. Implement a policy framework that prioritises homelessness prevention by:**

- Updating our Allocations Policy to reduce the risk of homelessness.
- Implementing a more effective means of processing homelessness applications.

**4. Review the provision of Temporary Accommodation, in particular:**

- Ensure that Government targets are met.
- Review financial management and budgeting processes, including a review of the rent structure.
- Review use of the council-owned temporary accommodation after 18 months to ensure it provides a range of options that are appropriate in terms of quality, location and affordability.

**5. Ensure that appropriate support is available for vulnerable groups by:**

- Continuing to work with partner agencies.
- Working with Supporting People team.
- Researching rough sleeping within the District, identifying any gaps in service provision and investigating the feasibility of developing services for people with alcohol related problems.

Actions identified to deliver these objectives are set out in an Action Plan at the end of the strategy.

Most of the proposals are intended to be contained within existing resources but maximum use will be made of partner agencies. The Council receives £30,000 per annum from the Government which is used to fund homelessness prevention initiatives.

## BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGY

Chichester District Council produced a Homelessness Strategy in 2003 and five years on it is timely to review and update the strategy. In 2007 a new over-arching Housing Strategy was produced which set the overall strategic direction for housing in the District supported by individual sub-strategies setting out more detailed actions, one of which is the Homelessness Prevention Strategy. Extensive consultation was undertaken with the community and other statutory and voluntary organisations in developing the over-arching strategy and this has informed the development of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

The aim of the District's Housing Strategy is taken directly from Chichester in Partnership's Community Strategy, namely:

**“That everyone within the District has the opportunity of living in a decent & affordable home”**

Within the Housing Strategy there are three key themes:

- Maximising the effective use of the private housing market;
- Delivering new affordable homes;
- Delivering choice in housing.

In developing the Homelessness Prevention Strategy we undertook a fundamental review of our Housing Options and Homelessness service, including our use of temporary accommodation<sup>1</sup>. This review included undertaking an independent audit of the quality of our service, conducted by Shelter, asking customers what they thought of our service as well as a financial audit of the viability of the services we offer. We have also reviewed homelessness trends and information to identify the main reasons for homelessness and how we need to address them. The findings are set out in Appendix One and summarised in the next section.

The review highlighted that although we had been very successful in delivering housing options and homelessness services to meet our own and government performance targets, we were not delivering services that fully met our customers expectations. The review also highlighted that although we could meet the Government's requirement to reduce our use of temporary accommodation this would result in leaving units of temporary accommodation empty resulting in financial loss through reduced income. We have used the recommendations from this review to inform this strategy.

The strategy therefore is firmly focused upon preventing homelessness, taking a holistic view of customer needs, maximising the choices available to customers and being pro-active in the support we offer. It is inevitable however that for some households we will not be able to prevent them becoming homeless and where necessary we will assist households to make homeless applications whilst we continue to work with them to find alternative solutions. We hope that by adopting this approach we will start to manage customer expectations positively and move away from the public perception of homelessness as a fast-track means of accessing permanent social housing.

The overall aim of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy is:

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<sup>1</sup> “Temporary Accommodation for the Homeless, Housing Options Services and development of a Homelessness Prevention Strategy” Report by John Palmer, North Harbour Consulting, October 2008

**“To deliver choice in housing through providing a responsive, pro-active, prevention based service which gives good quality advice, assistance and support to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness”**

The work of other agencies and organisations, especially with the Third Sector is important in ensuring that a range of services are available to vulnerable customers throughout the District. We will continue to support and work with these agencies to ensure that services that are crucial to local people continue to be available.

**How does the strategy fit with other national, regional and local priorities?**

- **National Priorities:** The Government has issued guidance and targets for the provision of homelessness services. In March 2005, it published a strategy for tackling homelessness entitled “**Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives.**” This set a target to halve the number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation by 2010. This followed the Government’s earlier target of ending the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families. This target has now been embedded within the National Indicator framework (NI156). There is a further requirement for local authorities to eliminate the use of B&B for 16/17 year olds by 2010.
- **Regional Priorities:** The South East Regional Housing Board has produced a new regional Housing Strategy to cover the period 2008 – 2011. This sets out an overall objective of enabling everyone in the South East to live in a decent home. This recognises the importance of homelessness prevention and its aims include increasing access to the private rented sector, making best use of the existing housing stock and addressing under-occupation.
- **Local Priorities:** Key strategic aims for the District are set out in its new Sustainable Communities Strategy. Consultation with the community has clearly highlighted the importance placed upon access to good quality, affordable housing. This has however been placed within the context of ensuring that the environment and quality of life available in Chichester is not compromised.

The Homelessness Prevention Strategy will contribute to the West Sussex Supporting People Strategy which sets out the county priorities for supported housing funding. Housing related support services are a key resource in preventing homelessness. These services are the subject of a countywide strategic review commencing in 2009 which will seek to ensure that there is access to good quality, cost-effective services across the County. Elements of this strategy will also be important in delivering key targets contained within the West Sussex Local Area Agreement (LAA), especially those concerning care leavers, provision of new affordable homes and the number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living.

**How the Homelessness Prevention Strategy has been developed**

Extensive consultation was conducted in 2007 as part of the process of developing the new over-arching Housing Strategy. This involved a wide range of organisations as well as focus sessions in the Community using the newly formed Citizens Panel. This consultation also included issues around homelessness and accessing housing services within the District. Further consultation was conducted in 2008 in relation to the Choice Based Lettings System and in developing the District’s Sustainable Communities Strategy.

## HOMELESSNESS IN CONTEXT IN CHICHESTER

The Chichester District is a large predominantly rural area, with high house prices and significant development pressures. The area is highly attractive. Its economy is based on agriculture, horticulture, tourism, and service industries. Providing housing and homelessness services in such a District presents considerable challenges. These include ensuring access to services, providing sustainable and appropriate temporary accommodation and providing sufficient new homes where affordability is a major requirement.

The District's Sustainable Communities Strategy sets out the principal issues that are affecting the District including those that directly bear upon homelessness. These can be summarised as<sup>2</sup>:

- Higher than average house prices combined with relatively low average wages (compared to county and regional levels), leading to housing demand outstripping supply, and homes becoming increasingly unaffordable for the majority of residents;
- The difficulty of delivering services in a predominantly rural area combined with rural communities becoming unsustainable due to the loss of younger people and increases in retired residents and second homes;
- An increasingly ageing population and associated increase in demands on health and social care services; and
- Out-migration of younger economically active residents.

Various actions and projects have been implemented through the 2003 Homelessness Strategy and these have proved largely successful particularly in reducing the number of homeless acceptances, use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation and helped to make good progress in meeting the reduction in the temporary accommodation target. The underlying problem of the lack of affordable housing and of those seeking assistance and help with housing related problems continues. Indeed it is increasing given the downturn in the housing market and the economy.

### Levels of homelessness in the Chichester District

Overall the number of homelessness applications has reduced from 127 in 2005 to 84 in 2007/8 (see Appendix One, table 6). However this largely reflects the shift in emphasis in the service from one based upon processing applications to one preventing homelessness. Previously many such applications were from people who were either not homeless, or threatened with homelessness, or who were not in priority need. A homelessness application is now submitted as a last resort when all other avenues have been exhausted. This trend reflects what is happening nationally, with a 32% drop in the number of homelessness applications from 2005 to 2007 and a 29% reduction in acceptances over the same period. People accepted as homeless within the District has also reduced from 83 in 2005 to 53 by 2008.

A reduction in the level of homelessness applications doesn't mean that homelessness has gone away or that housing need in the District has reduced. The

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on the LSP and the Community Strategy visit our website: [www.chichester.gov.uk](http://www.chichester.gov.uk)

increase in the number of households seeking housing advice illustrates that accessing suitable housing is still an issue for many people.

### **Profile of those accepted as homeless**

In developing the strategy we have analysed the reasons why people become homeless and this has determined the types of support we need to put in place (see Appendix One, table 7). The reasons are very similar to those that were prevalent when we developed our previous strategy. This does not mean that existing methods of preventing homeless are unsuccessful but that many people are simply priced out of the housing market. Affordable housing is scarce and demand far outstrips supply.

The three main reasons for people becoming homeless centre on parents or relatives being unable to continue to provide accommodation, the ending of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) and relationship breakdown. Over the years homelessness due to mortgage repossession has not been a major issue. However during the last quarter of 2008/9 we have seen an increase in people seeking advice in this area as the economic downturn deepens. An important element in the strategy is increasing the amount of support available to homeowners.

An analysis of homelessness acceptances shows that the main households we assist continue to be families with dependant children (see Appendix One, table 9). Given the unaffordability of the overall housing market this means that family sized accommodation is in even greater demand and the time a family may wait for a three bedroom property can be lengthy. Such accommodation is also in short supply in the private rented sector, at an affordable level, which increases the demand for social rented properties even further.

The analysis also highlights that a significant proportion of single people approaching the council for assistance have personal needs that make them more vulnerable and require additional support to live independently. Whilst we believe that our enhanced housing options approach will mean that these customers should be able to access the same types of housing as others, we need to ensure that a range of support is available to help them to maintain their tenancies and their independence. In particular the analysis highlights the following groups that may require some additional support:

- Young people;
- People with mental health issues;
- People with physical disabilities
- Women fleeing domestic violence.

There are already a wide range of agencies that provide support for these groups and further actions proposed for these as well as other potentially vulnerable groups are explored further in Objective 5 below.

### **Meeting the needs of Rough Sleepers.**

One particular group of people who are not represented within the statistics are rough sleepers. A head count was carried out in the District in March 2002. This found six people sleeping rough across the District. At the end of April 2005 a survey of the Housing Register also showed a total of six people who have registered that they are sleeping rough. As at the end of 2008 there were 37 people registered as being of no fixed abode. This does not necessarily mean that they are sleeping

rough but means that they have no settled accommodation and they frequently move around between friends and relations. Currently the only short-term solution for this group is the provision of a direct access hostel, day-centre and an outreach service run by Chichester Stonepillow.

The issue of rough sleepers is kept under regular review and discussed with service providers. We feel that this is an area that requires further investigation and we will work with our partner agencies to research need and develop appropriate assistance.

It is believed that 80% of rough sleepers have addiction problems and 55% have a dual diagnosis. For many, the absence of a home is a symptom of these underlying problems that need to be addressed before long-term permanent rehousing can become a realistic option. It is therefore an area that needs extensive partnership working in order to provide more effective solutions.

**Use of temporary accommodation**

Where homelessness cannot be prevented and the Council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation it has two main sources, its own self-contained flats or private Bed & Breakfast accommodation. The Council has met the Government’s target of not using B&B for families or young people and using this type of accommodation only in an emergency or where the risk posed by the applicant is such that they cannot be housed in family accommodation.

The Council owned temporary accommodation is of a high standard and comprises self-contained flats. Whilst the current economic climate is making it extremely challenging to meet the Government target of halving the use of temporary accommodation we are optimistic that this will be achieved by 2010. The use of temporary accommodation over the past three years is detailed in table 11 in Appendix One which shows a sharp rise in the numbers accommodated in 2008/9. Whilst we accept the principle of reducing the use of temporary accommodation, successfully meeting this target has financial implications for the council in leaving units of accommodation empty and this is explored further in Objective 4 below which details the findings of a recent options appraisal into its use. It is also dependent on increasing the supply of new lettings.

The District is fortunate in having both a women’s refuge, a teenage pregnancy unit and a foyer for young people, and excellent referral arrangements are in place which means that these facilities can be used as emergency accommodation whilst more sustainable accommodation can be sought by the relevant organisations.

**Housing Register facts and figures**

The implementation of Homemove in July 2007 was a major change to the way in which households can now access affordable homes within the District. Rather than the traditional method of allocating homes, applicants now ‘bid’ for properties. What Homemove doesn’t do however is to increase the amount of affordable homes available to those in housing need. Demand continues to far outstrip supply and the table below shows the number of households registered in housing need.

**Table 1: Breakdown of the Housing Register according to priority as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008**

Breakdown of the Housing Register - under CBL system <sup>3</sup>	Percentage	No. of households
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<sup>3</sup> Detailed definition of the Banding System is available in the Council’s Allocations Policy –

Band A – Urgent Housing Need	1.5%	81
Band B – High Housing Need	6.1%	339
Band C – Medium Housing Need	26.0%	1440
Band D – Low Housing Need	66.4%	3683
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5543</b>

When Homemove was implemented in July 2007 there were 2,700 households registered. This now stands at over 5,600, doubling in 18 months. There are various reasons for this. The new system is much more visible and allocation of homes more transparent which has encouraged more people to join. The methods used for advertising are also more visible and attractive to a wider range of people. There are also likely to be more families who simply are priced out of the housing market due to the lack of affordability of local homes. For many the principle of choice is also much more attractive than the old system of being allocated a home by the Council.

Appendix One sets out details of properties that become available each year (table 16 & 17). This shows that with an average of only 300 properties becoming vacant each year there is a considerable mis-match between the demand and supply. Of these 300 approximately half are newly developed homes which are dependent on market developments. Only a small proportion are suitable for families. With lengthy average waiting times for an affordable home it can be seen that we need to ensure that other, viable options are available to customers to assist them whilst they wait for rehousing through Homemove. When we consider that those in most urgent need are housed much more quickly than others we need to ensure that we have a policy framework in place that acknowledges those who are active in resolving their own housing issues whilst also according priority to those in housing need. This is explored further in Objective 3 below.

### **Maximising housing options to prevent homelessness**

Given the challenges that are presented by the difficulty the majority of the community has in accessing the housing market and the huge demand for affordable housing it is essential that we have a range of measures that can assist households in housing need. As a result of the last homelessness strategy a number of options have been developed. This has included practical products as well as assistance available from other organisations and include:

- Provision of capital funds to encourage landlords to bring back into use empty homes
- Provision of capital funding to enable extensions to social housing where appropriate to reduce rehousing pressures
- Rent Deposit & Guarantee scheme
- Homelessness prevention fund
- Use of Discretionary Housing Payments
- Debt advice and court desk service from Citizens Advice Bureau
- Domestic Violence Outreach service
- Teenage Pregnancy Outreach Service
- Signpost Floating Support Service

- Chichester Stonepillow – providing services for rough sleepers.

Whilst these services are extremely important in preventing homeless within the District we need to ensure that we are offering the assistance that is needed. Particular gaps that we have identified include options for homeowners, maximising the use of the private rented sector as well as making more effective use of the existing housing stock particularly through tackling under and over occupation. These are further explored in Objective 1 below.

### **What does this mean for local people trying to find housing?**

Although our analysis shows that according to official reporting, homelessness has continued to reduce over the last five years, the demand for affordable housing and the number of people approaching the Council with problems related to housing continues to rise.

There is a mis-match between the supply of available housing and the needs, expectations and resources of a large proportion of residents within the District. This mis-match exists in the type, tenure, and size of available accommodation. For example flats and maisonettes are the main access property for the first time buyer due to their lower costs. Unfortunately this type of accommodation is scarce in the District and as a result sells at a premium. This prevents access to the housing ladder for many households on average earnings. 25% of households in the District are in receipt of financial support of which 43% are in receipt of Housing Benefit. For many households the only option is to move out of the District to find less expensive housing.

Changing demographics and social factors combined with high house prices mean that economically active households are finding it increasingly difficult to continue to live in the District in which they have grown up. This means that they are either having to commute large distances to their employment or find work elsewhere. This increases pressure on our existing infrastructure, has an impact on family life with increased working hours and affects the local economy with a shortage of local labour.

### **The Private Rented Sector**

Although statistically the Chichester District has a larger than average private rented sector, this is skewed by the impact of the number of properties owned by the landed estates whose properties are not generally available. Households therefore have little choice within the rented sector and what is available tends to be expensive and/or less attractive and poorly maintained. As a consequence there is a large demand for the cheaper properties and many households are forced to relocate to neighbouring Districts. Growth in student numbers has also created additional demand and some traditional family homes are being used as student accommodation. This creates real problems in attempting to prevent homelessness and reducing the demand for affordable housing, as many landlords have no need to rent to people who may not be able to meet all of the financial criteria. This strategy therefore aims to increase the number of options for people to access the private rented sector, for example through developing better relationships with landlords as well as developing initiatives to help people to afford the costs of private renting. Whilst currently we are experiencing a higher than average availability of rented properties this is a result of current housing market conditions with the lack of

movement in house sales. Once this situation changes we would expect there to be fewer rented properties available.

The recent slow down in the housing market and the 'credit crunch' have obvious implications for the actions outlined in this strategy as well as its potential success in continuing to achieve targets in relation to reducing homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation. Already we are seeing the difficulties that first time buyers face in accessing mortgages and the rise in the number of people getting into mortgage arrears and facing repossession. Rising household costs make this even worse as families struggle to meet financial commitments. This strategy also focuses upon improving the help and assistance we can give to homeowners to assist them to remain in their homes, particularly through providing timely advice but also through developing schemes such as mortgage rescue.

## Delivering our Strategic Objectives

### Key Objective 1: Develop the tools to increase choice for customers and to prevent homelessness

#### Achievements since the 2003 strategy

- Implementation of the Sussex wide Homemove Choice Based Lettings system which aims to give choice to those seeking affordable housing.
- 264 rent deposits approved since 2003 through the Private Sector Housing Access Scheme (PSHAS).
- Introduction in May 2007 of the 'Signpost' service run by Stonham Housing Association which offers floating support aimed at preventing homelessness.
- Establishment of a Homelessness Prevention Fund.
- Implementing the Housing Options Service aimed at preventing homelessness.

Preventing homelessness involves exploring with customers the choices they have available to resolve their own housing issues. Prevention can mean enabling someone to remain in their own home through for example negotiating with a landlord, assisting them to resolve rent arrears issues or by informing them of their housing rights. It also means providing them with the assistance they need to access alternative accommodation if we are unable to prevent them losing their existing home. This could be through 'products' such as a deposit guarantee or a mortgage rescue solution or through practical support such as mediation or advocacy.

One particular scheme that has proved particularly useful in helping more vulnerable customers to access suitable permanent housing has been the Independent Living Scheme (ILS). This scheme is operated in partnership with our local housing providers and Southdown Housing Association (SHA). SHA lease a property on behalf of the customer who then has, in effect, a trial tenancy with support provided by SHA. This means that the customer is given the chance to develop independent living skills until such a time as the tenancy is transferred into their own name once they no longer need support. This scheme has been particularly useful in assisting people with mental health issues and helps around 10 people per year.

Much has been achieved since 2003 however we need to develop further our approach to homelessness prevention. To support implementation of this strategy we will develop a homelessness prevention delivery plan which will set out for each practical measure a service specification considering options for delivery. We believe that in this way we will develop options that are better tailored to meeting customer needs as well as being cost effective, maximising funding available from other sources. To achieve this objective we will focus attention in 3 key areas.

#### **Develop a wider range of prevention options that are applicable to different customers**

##### **Improving the information available to customers by:**

- Reviewing the housing options information that is available on the Council's website and the range of leaflets available to customers seeking housing advice.

- Making better use of the information produced by the Homemove system. Information on bidding patterns, demand and availability of properties is essential for customers in making choices about their housing options.
- Maximising the use of the Homemove scheme for advertising private rented properties and home ownership opportunities.
- Where young people cannot remain in the parental home and the foyer is not a feasible option we need to develop services such as supported lodgings or Independent Living Schemes (ILS) to assist them with making the transition to managing their own accommodation.

**Maximising the opportunities on offer through the Government's worklessness agenda by:**

- Working with our Housing Association partners on the initiatives they implement to assist their tenants in maximising employment opportunities.
- Reviewing the outcomes from the pilot Housing Advice & Employment projects and considering any lessons that can be implemented within the District.

**Helping people to stay in their existing homes by:**

- Providing greater support for those that already own their own homes through developing mortgage rescue products that supplement the national scheme. The Government has introduced a scheme based upon 2 products: an equity release scheme; and a mortgage to rent scheme. Should we feel that these products will not meet local needs we will consider adopting and funding alternative schemes to prevent homelessness.
- Development of schemes aimed at assisting young people to remain in the parental home through developing effective family mediation schemes with appropriately trained partner organisations.
- Ensuring the effectiveness of floating support services to provide support to the community particularly in areas such as budgeting and tenancy support.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the Homelessness Prevention Fund. Often small amounts targeted at prevention can save the Council money by helping people to remain in their own homes. For example by paying off small amounts of arrears or the up-front costs associated with accessing the private rented sector.
- Developing effective working arrangements with partner Housing Associations to ensure that evictions are avoided where possible.
- Maximising the use that can be made of Housing Benefit to sustain a household's existing home. The Council makes use of Discretionary Housing Payments and it is now proposed to maximise the budget aimed specifically at preventing homelessness and also using its flexibility to further fund an enhanced rent deposit scheme.

## CASE STUDY

Charlie is 68 and lives in a private rented flat. He enjoys going to the pub each night to socialise with his friends. Each night when he gets home he puts the TV on and falls asleep in front of it. As he is going deaf the TV is rather loud and disturbs his neighbours into the early hours. His landlord has received numerous complaints from other tenants and although he doesn't want to, has started action to evict Charlie. Charlie therefore approaches the Council for help. After contacting his landlord to find out what the problem is, the Housing Interventions Officer buys him a timer switch for his TV so that it switches off at 10.30pm each night and no longer annoys the neighbours. The landlord lets him stay. £10 spent from the Homeless Prevention Budget therefore saved a lot of distress for Charlie and considerable expense for the Council in having to rehouse him.

## Maximise the potential of the private rented sector

### Developing links with private landlords

- Developing much more personalised links with landlords with whom we have worked successfully on PSHAS. By consulting them about the type of service they would want to receive from us when assisting us to house our customers we hope that they will want to work more closely with us. Recent research<sup>4</sup> that has been undertaken showed that landlords would consider housing people nominated by the council if some of the financial risks were mitigated or additional support was made available. This could also be linked to the existing landlord accreditation scheme.
- Maximising the use that can be made of the Homemove scheme for use by private landlords.
- Look to maximise the effective use of private sector renewal grant assistance to landlords to facilitate the use of properties to prevent homelessness, securing nomination rights where appropriate.

### Improving the effectiveness of the rent deposit scheme by:

- Reviewing the effectiveness of the overall scheme and in particular the use of rent in advance and guarantee arrangements with landlords to ensure maximum take-up of the scheme, implementing more flexible arrangements if required.
- Maximising the resources available through the use of Discretionary Housing Payments to establish a rent deposit scheme for those customers to whom the Council would have a duty to rehouse under homelessness legislation. It is proposed that these deposits will no longer need to be paid back by customers.
- Implementing a rent deposit scheme aimed at non-priority households which would be subject to repayment to enable recycling of the available funds.

## Maximise the effective use of existing stock and work with our developing RSL partners to increase the provision of new affordable homes

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<sup>4</sup> Private Sector Accommodation Report 2006 available on [www.chichester.gov.uk](http://www.chichester.gov.uk)

- Encourage our Housing Association partners to be more pro-active in the market and intermediate rental sector, maximising private finance where appropriate.
- Continuing to support bids for public grants as well as make resources available for Housing Associations to develop affordable housing within the District. The Council has set an ambitious target of enabling 200 affordable homes each year.
- Attempting to ease overcrowding issues through learning from the Government funded pathfinder schemes. We already give priority in the allocations scheme for overcrowded families however we will look to identify opportunities to assist RSLs to fund extensions. We will also look to increase the number of family sized properties in the affordable development programme.
- We will also look to tackle under-occupation, thereby making better use of the existing stock. Work is already underway with HydeMartlet to develop an incentive scheme aimed at assisting those who need help in moving to more suitable accommodation.
- Work with the Estate Landlords within the District to identify joint working practices and means of accessing both property and land opportunities.

#### **CASE STUDY**

We are developing an incentive scheme to assist under-occupying tenants to move to smaller accommodation thereby freeing up a social rented home for a family who are living in unsuitable accommodation. HydeMartlet have already undertaken an extensive survey of their stock to identify under-occupied homes and their research has shown that people who are interested in moving require different things as an incentive. Some want the expenses of such a move covered whilst others have particular properties in mind, or others simply want some practical help in moving. Current proposals for a new scheme involves adopting a flexible approach to providing incentives with a menu of options. It is proposed to employ a specialist worker to assist households to identify alternative housing and to assist them with the practical aspects of moving if required. An under-occupying household can therefore opt for a financial incentive or practical assistance with a move or a mixture of the two.

#### **Priorities for future action:**

- **Review the effectiveness of the PSHAS**
- **Work with HydeMartlet on developing initiatives to tackle both overcrowding and under-occupation within their stock.**

- **Continue to develop 200 new affordable homes each year, wherever appropriate increasing the number of 3 and 4 bedroom homes on developments.**
- **Review working relationships with the Housing Benefit department to ensure assistance is targeted at those most in need.**
- **Implement the Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme and seek to develop a more responsive supplementary scheme to deal with local needs.**
- **In partnership with an appropriate organisation implement a Mediation scheme for young people aimed at assisting them to remain in their family homes where appropriate.**
- **Look into opportunities arising from the Government's objectives aimed at increasing employment opportunities for those in social housing.**
- **Consider the potential for expanding the Homemove scheme to provide more information on alternative housing options.**
- **Work with the Estate Landlords to identify joint working opportunities.**

## **Key Objective 2: Adopt a homelessness prevention approach to assisting households to resolve their housing issues**

### **Achievements since the 2003 strategy**

- Developed the Housing Options service as the first stage in adopting a preventative approach to homelessness.
- Reduced the number of homelessness acceptances.
- Visiting all applicants at home who are threatened with homelessness through friends or relatives who are no longer able to house them.
- Housing Option Plans are given to customers following interview which summarises the advice that has been given and action points agreed
- Homelessness computer database installed in 2005 to improve case management.

We have already achieved a lot through adopting a housing options approach as part of the previous homelessness strategy but we recognise that we can do a lot more to prevent homelessness. In particular we want to adopt a problem-solving approach to tackling customer's housing issues. Where in the past we have focussed upon resolving housing issues directly, we recognise that in reality there may be other issues effecting households which are causing the housing problem. We aim to adopt a more personalised service and make better use of other agencies or Council services to assist customers. Examples include linking in with parenting schemes, Homestart or sports diversion programmes to tackle anti-social behaviour issues, or credit unions to tackle financial exclusion issues. To achieve this objective we will focus attention in 2 key areas.

### **Delivering a more personalised service**

The Council has made significant investment in recent years in the way it communicates with the public, including a new Customer Service Centre (CSC). As the previous section noted, the emphasis within the service is on the prevention of homelessness. The first port of call for customers is the CSC who, having established the initial details of the problem, then make a referral to, and an appointment with, a Housing Options Officer. This Officer will then take on management of the case and work with the customer to attempt to prevent their homelessness. If homelessness cannot be prevented then a homelessness application will be taken and an assessment of any duty the Council may have under the relevant legislation undertaken.

Although the Council has been relatively successful in reducing the number of homelessness applications and acceptances taken, this does not mean that housing problems are reducing. They are in fact increasing with a rise in the number of households seeking assistance with their housing problems. Likewise preventing homelessness can be very time-consuming with housing options officers spending large amounts of time negotiating with landlords or assisting customers to access benefits or resolve financial problems. Increases in the numbers of households seeking assistance and subsequent increases in workloads have been reflected in a recent Council decision to invest additional resources in the Council's Housing Services to meet this higher demand for services. These additional resources have

resulted in additional staff being employed within the service and a restructured team which should be better enabled to meet customer needs.

We also want to ensure that we are collecting good quality data which helps us to inform the services we are providing and fully assess the outcomes we are achieving in homelessness prevention. We will review the IT systems we use to ensure that they not only meet the needs of our customers as well as our staff but also help us to record the successes we are achieving. This will involve mapping processes across the service as well as reviewing the interactions of the existing IT systems.

The first point of contact with people who are homeless or potentially homeless is crucial and sets the tone for any future contact. It is essential, therefore, that whilst the applicant is treated with sympathy and sensitivity, the right information is obtained at this stage so that good quality advice can be given and options, which may prevent homelessness can be explored. As part of the current restructure and additional resources the team will now be even more focused upon homelessness prevention and adopt an active approach to assisting customers. Particular actions which will be undertaken include:

- Review the quality of advice, assistance, support and information available to customers.
- Adopt a holistic problem-solving approach to customer needs including homelessness prevention focusing upon assisting households to resolve their housing issues including any underlying non-housing related issues which may be affecting their ability to secure the housing they need.
- Restructure the work of the Housing Options Service to provide specialist staff that work either on homelessness prevention or homelessness application processing.
- Review interaction with the CSC to ensure that customers get the most appropriate advice in a timely fashion.
- Review the IT systems that support the service to ensure that these are efficient and meet customer needs.
- Ensure that performance measures are tailored to delivering a customer focused service.

In adopting our new holistic approach to homelessness prevention, effective partnership working with other statutory and independent sector agencies will be essential to ensure that good quality advice is available throughout the District. We also need to ensure that referral arrangements that are already in place are effective and timely and that organisations can make early contact with our own service.

It is evident from the amount of correspondence we receive to support customers housing register applications that a wide variety of organisations are approached by those seeking affordable housing. We want to raise awareness amongst these organisations about homelessness prevention and housing options in particular with Health and Social Care agencies, Job Centre staff, and voluntary agencies such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau as well as GPs.

<b>CASE STUDY</b>
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Elaine and her 3 children approach the Council for help after receiving an eviction notice from her Housing Association landlord. She has received numerous warnings from them regarding the anti-social behaviour of her children and the youngest son in particular who is regularly excluded from school. Our previous Housing Option approach would have been to process a homelessness application or secure an alternative private rented home for the family. The role of our new interventions staff will be to identify and work with relevant agencies to get the support the family need to tackle the root cause of the problem. By working with social services, voluntary agencies and educational welfare officers, tackling the children's behaviour and providing parenting skills support could result in the Housing Association agreeing to withdraw the notice and giving the family another opportunity to stay in their home.

### **Establish customer pathways for preventing homelessness**

To deliver a more personalised service aimed primarily at preventing homelessness we believe we need to adopt a more co-ordinated approach. Building upon the tools we will develop to combat homelessness as set out in Objective 1, we plan to set out customer pathways that can be used to address customers' housing problems as set out in the table below. This will be a useful mechanism for staff when working with customers as well as an easy to understand framework which we can share early with them to set out the options available. This framework will take time to develop as we expand the tools and options available to us in preventing homelessness. It will be the role of the Housing Interventions team to work through these pathways with customers to try to prevent homelessness. If at the end of the process this has proved unsuccessful only then will a homelessness application be processed with the customer, although one may have been taken as a cautionary measure earlier but not acted upon.

#### **Priorities for future action.**

- **Continue to develop preventative work in the Housing Interventions Team.**
- **Adopt a holistic problem-solving approach to homelessness prevention focusing upon assisting households to resolve their housing issues including any underlying non-housing related issues which may be affecting their ability to secure the housing they need.**
- **Implement a programme to raise awareness amongst local agencies about housing options and homelessness issues.**
- **Review the IT systems that support the service to ensure that these are efficient and meet customer needs.**
- **Review our partnership working to ensure that we make the most of specialist help available when advising customers.**
- **Ensure that effective referral mechanisms are in place into other available services as well as into our own service.**
- **Implement customer pathways for homelessness prevention.**

**Table 2: Customer Pathways to prevent homelessness**

Type of household Option	Young single person > 25	Single person 25+	Lone Parent	Couple no dependents	Couple with dependents	Customer with support needs	Teenage Parent	Domestic violence
Rent deposit scheme (priority need)			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Rent deposit scheme (non-priority)	✓	✓		✓				
Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Information about agents and landlords	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Referral to accredited landlord			✓		✓		✓	✓
Homeless prevention fund	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Mortgage rescue scheme			✓	✓	✓			✓
Homeshare	✓	✓						
Specialist housing support / agency through referral	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
Foyer referral	✓					✓		
Intermediate rental			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Housing Register	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Independent Living Scheme	✓					✓		
Family Mediation	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Home Ownership options		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Mediation landlord / lender	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Legal interventions								✓

### **Key Objective 3: Implement a policy framework that prioritises homelessness prevention.**

The statutory context within which the Council operates is Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as updated by the Homelessness Act 2002. This places a duty on local authorities to provide housing to those people who are homeless through no fault of their own and who are in priority need. The Council's main duty is to take reasonable steps to prevent the loss of existing accommodation and to secure new accommodation if this is not possible. This reinforces the homelessness prevention approach whereby all alternatives should be exhausted prior to a homeless application being pursued by the customer. If the customer is not in priority need or is homeless intentionally, the duty is restricted to the provision of advice and assistance.

It must however be recognised that customers have the right to make a homeless application at any stage when approaching the Council for assistance and often this right will conflict with the Council's primary objective of assisting customers to pursue alternative options prior to investigating homelessness under statutory provisions. We have already achieved much through adopting a housing options approach as part of the previous homelessness strategy and the previous objectives have set out how we will take this approach further. The new tools and approaches we plan to implement will only be successful where our customers work with us to meet their own housing needs.

We believe that preventing homelessness maximises households' choice and minimises the disruption and distress caused by homelessness. There exists the common perception amongst customers that making a successful homelessness application and spending a period of time in temporary accommodation is a quicker route into permanent affordable housing than waiting for rehousing through Homemove. They perceive the cheaper rents available in social housing as well as the added security of tenure to be much more attractive and worth the disruption of becoming homeless. Current policies mean that households can decide to 'go through' homelessness without pursuing other alternatives, whilst those customers who do work with us to resolve their own housing issues receive little priority for doing so.

We want to implement a policy framework which whilst meeting our statutory responsibilities and providing a safety-net for those in need, fully supports our preferred homelessness prevention approach. To achieve this objective we will focus attention on 2 key areas.

### **Updating our Allocations Policy to minimise the risk of homelessness.**

The Council implemented the Sussex-wide Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme, Sussex Homemove, in July 2007. This resulted in a thorough review of the banding system for allocations, making it simpler and easier to understand. It is proposed to update the Allocations Policy to give an appropriate level of priority to homeless applicants but to ensure that those who resolve their own housing issues are not disadvantaged.

After 18 months of operation of the Homemove scheme households are spending longer in temporary accommodation as they await rehousing. Whilst we are keen that all households get the opportunity to express choice in the housing they wish to

occupy this does have an adverse impact upon our ability to meet Government targets in relation to reducing the numbers of households accommodated in temporary accommodation. We therefore plan to review the operation of Choice Based Lettings, investigating the feasibility of ensuring that choice is maximised for those applicants who resolve their housing issues with us and await rehousing through the Housing Register. Specific measures we will seek to introduce include:

- Allowing those that have a priority through being homeless choice on the Homemove Register for the first 16 weeks after which their right to bid will be removed, with bidding undertaken by the Homelessness Officer. Bids made by officers will be considered suitable as previously discussed with the applicant.
- Those applicants accepting a qualifying offer of accommodation will be placed in band B. A qualifying offer occurs when a household accepts a tenancy in the private rented sector and agrees that the Council has discharged its homelessness duties towards them. Those households that continue to occupy temporary accommodation will continue to be in Band C.
- Homeless households or those threatened with homeless who have no alternative housing options other than affordable housing are placed immediately within band A to reduce the length of time they have to wait for permanent rehousing. These households will include those with a very high support need who require some form of supported or adapted housing.

**CASE STUDY**

Tony and Karen have been living with their parents with their 6-month-old son for the last year. Their parents found the baby too much to cope with in their small house and asked them to leave. Unfortunately they couldn't find anywhere else to live before they had to move out and ended up in Council Temporary Accommodation in Chichester. Although they have been bidding regularly, being in Band C they haven't had any permanent offer of accommodation and they really want to move nearer his work in Selsey. They continue to work with their Housing Interventions Officer and find a 2 bedroom flat for private rent in Selsey at a rent they can afford with some help from Housing Benefit and a rent deposit guarantee from the Council. The landlord has the property as an investment and agrees that as long as they are good tenants they can have a long lease. They agree with the Council that this can be a qualifying offer and they are rebanded to Band B. They now have more priority on the Housing Register and can make the bids they want, waiting for the 2-bed house they want in the Selsey area.

**Implement a more effective means of processing homelessness applications**

Currently our preferred way of working is to exhaust all prevention avenues prior to taking a homelessness application. This can cause some tension whereby customers have the right to make an application but we may resist this as we work to prevent homelessness. Likewise there is a tension with the same officer both attempting to prevent homelessness as well as investigating any subsequent homeless application. Having restructured the Housing Options Service and split responsibilities within the team this gives us the opportunity to review processes. Different officers will now act to prevent homelessness and should this be unsuccessful the applicant's case will then be passed over to a specialist homelessness officer.

We propose being much more upfront with customers with regard to the right to make a homeless application but to also provide more information about the consequence of this route. Where customers are placed into temporary accommodation we will have much more discussion with them regarding the implications of this for their Housing Register Application and the choices they are able to express through the Homemove scheme. We will discuss with them the types of properties that we are likely to consider to constitute a suitable offer of accommodation.

We will hold monthly interviews with all households in temporary accommodation to encourage them to explore alternative housing options particularly in the private rented sector. We will also look to make use of the potential for qualifying offers in order to discharge homeless duties. The new measures we propose to adopt are summarised below:

- All applicants will be visited at home prior to the determination of their homeless application.
- Using intermediate rental properties as a good alternative for families who are threatened with homelessness.
- Increasing the rents payable by households in temporary accommodation to recover the costs of the accommodation and better reflect the cost of private rented sector accommodation.
- Applicants will not be moved between temporary accommodation units unless there are exceptional circumstances due to the additional costs involved in managing the void process.
- Ensure that all prevention routes are pursued either prior to a homelessness application being made or alongside of an application.
- Make use of Qualifying Offers of accommodation where appropriate.
- On entering the temporary accommodation the Homelessness Officer will advise the applicant of what will be considered to be a reasonable offer of accommodation, detailing the areas which will be considered and the types of properties. This will then determine the bids that will be made on behalf of the applicant. On any subsequent offer of accommodation this information can be reconsidered.

### **CASE STUDY**

Ian & Emma have been living in privately rented accommodation for the last 8 years but the insecurity and frequent moves are starting to become disruptive now that their oldest child has started school. They haven't always been able to find a new home in the same area. When their latest landlord gives them notice that they want them to leave they approach the Council for help. We nominate them to a local Housing Association who have a number of Intermediate Rental properties in the area they want to live. This not only means that they don't become homeless but the greater

security this gives them means that the children can settle into school, Emma can get a part-time job in the community and with the money saved on rent they can start to save for a deposit on a home in the future.

#### **Priorities for future action**

- **Review the Council's Allocations Policy to ensure that the policy framework reduces homelessness.**
- **Implement more effective homelessness applications procedures.**
- **Implement housing options reviews with accepted homeless households**
- **Review the potential for the use of qualifying offers.**
- **Implement a system of discussing 'suitable offers' with customers on acceptance of homelessness applications.**
- **Develop a portfolio of Intermediate Rental properties that can be used as a homelessness prevention tool.**

## **Strategic Objective 4: Review the provision of Temporary Accommodation**

Chichester has its own temporary accommodation available to people who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness. This consists of two schemes of self-contained flats. One scheme is located in Midhurst, the other in central Chichester. The standard of accommodation is high in terms of quality as well as size. The Council also uses private bed and breakfast establishments and these are used even when there are vacancies within the council-owned accommodation in the case of households who are deemed to be intentionally homeless or where the occupants poses a potential risk.

The Government has set a number of targets related to the use of temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast. The Council has met the target related to the use of B&B for families and young people. Whilst previous performance meant that we were on track to meet the target related to reducing the overall number of households in temporary accommodation, this is coming under increasing pressure as the current economic conditions are resulting in an increase in homelessness. The target requires us to have a maximum of 28 households in temporary accommodation by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.

### **Achievements since the 2003 strategy**

- **Met the Government target in relation to eliminating the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for families accepted as homeless.**
- **Substantially reduced the number of families in temporary accommodation who have been accepted as homeless.**
- **Developed the PSHAS to enable potentially homeless people to access suitable property in the private sector by means of Rent Deposit guarantees and rent in advance.**
- **On target to meet Government target not to use B&B for homeless young people.**

A recent options appraisal of the use of temporary accommodation has been undertaken considering the future use of the properties particularly in the light of the need to meet the Government's temporary accommodation targets as well as the financial viability of the schemes. The subsequent report made a number of recommendations which are in the process of being implemented and the following actions relate to the delivery of this objective.

### **Ensure that Government targets are met in terms of the use of temporary accommodation.**

The Government targets to eliminate the use of bed and breakfast accommodation and to reduce the use of temporary accommodation overall continue to be extremely challenging. The rationale of reducing the number of homeless families and preventing homelessness cannot be argued against, especially given the cost and disruption associated with homelessness. The reality of preventing homelessness especially in the current economic climate makes this difficult to achieve.

Our actions aimed at meeting these targets therefore focus on a number of areas: reducing homelessness through prevention; diversion from temporary

accommodation into more sustainable housing solutions; and maximising the provision of new affordable homes.

Through these actions we are confident that we will not use bed & breakfast for families or young persons unless it is in an emergency or there are particular risks that mean that alternative temporary accommodation is not suitable. Our close working relationships with the Chichester Foyer also means that if a young person is accommodated in B&B this is only for a short period whilst a referral is made. The new ILS scheme for young people will also provide a sustainable route into permanent housing for people aged between 18 and 25, again minimising the time in B&B.

Without doubt the most challenging target is reducing the total number of households accommodated in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010 to 28. Whilst we were on target to meet this 18 months earlier than the target date, progress has stalled as the effects of the recession and the impact of CBL has led to higher number of people in temporary accommodation and the length of stay increasing. Actions to help us meet the target are detailed throughout this strategy but particular ones to highlight include:

- Revising the Allocations Policy to reinforce our homelessness prevention approach;
- Work with landlords to develop a portfolio of properties which we can use to prevent homelessness;
- Consider options such as private leasing to assist in the provision of temporary accommodation on a more geographically spread basis;
- Develop a portfolio of intermediate rental properties which we can use to provide sustainable alternatives for families at risk of homelessness; and
- Develop a more pro-active approach to housing options focusing upon problem solving.

### **Review the financial management of the temporary accommodation and budgeting processes, including a review of the rent structure.**

The current budgeting provisions in place to manage the council's temporary accommodation make it extremely difficult to assess its financial viability. During the recent options appraisal work a new budgeting model has been developed.

The need to reduce the use of the accommodation by 50% has considerable financial cost to the Council as it is unable to utilise empty units for any other purposes as tenancy provisions determine that they can only be used in conjunction with a homelessness duty. This has had to be taken into account within the new budget model and this will mean taking increasing numbers of units out of management and adjusting the costings appropriately. We will aim to do this by sectioning off separate wings of the accommodation thus reducing the costs associated with keeping accommodation empty. Thus a decreasing number of units will need to cover the overall costs of providing the temporary accommodation. The new financial model has made it easier to set rents that can be adjusted to ensure that we cover the costs of the service. These new rents are to be payable from 1st April 2009 and will be at a level related to the Local Housing Allowance.

As well as the need to recover costs higher rents will also better reflect the price of renting accommodation in the private sector. Currently the low rents payable in the

council-owned temporary accommodation provide a disincentive to applicants when we are working with them to find alternative. There is no incentive for many people to access a private rented home when they can move into temporary accommodation at substantially reduced rents. Likewise once in temporary accommodation there is no incentive to consider alternative housing options other than permanent Housing Association rehousing. The table below shows the Local Housing Allowance Rents as at January 2009 to which the new temporary accommodation rents will be linked.

**Table 3: Local Housing Allowance Rates as at January 2009**

	<b>Weekly Rate (£)</b>	<b>Monthly Rate (£)</b>
1 bed share*	75.00	325.00
1 bed self contained	138.46	600.00
2 bedroom	173.08	750.00
3 bedroom	207.12	897.52
4 bedroom	311.54	1,350.00
5 bedroom	415.39	1,800.02

\*Note: single persons under the age of 25 will usually only be entitled to the 1 bedroom share rate.

Once this new budgeting model and rents are in place we will regularly review the financial management information to ensure that the service continues to be financially viable and that there is not an adverse financial impact upon the occupants.

**Review use of the council-owned temporary accommodation in 18 months time ensuring that a range of options are provided which are appropriate in terms of quality, location and affordability.**

As noted above the Government’s requirement to reduce the use of temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010 will have financial implications for the Council as it will necessitate leaving accommodation empty and therefore there will be associated rental loss from these units. We are very concerned that at times of great housing need we will be leaving accommodation empty. However there is little alternative due to the restraints imposed by the fact that the Council owns the accommodation. Alternative means of provision have been considered and there are options for disposal of the accommodation however given the current economic climate it is felt inappropriate to consider these at this time.

We therefore plan to review the use of our temporary accommodation in 18 months time when we will be able to better evaluate the effect of the economic downturn on the housing service. Options that could be pursued are:

- Disposal of the council-owned accommodation to a Housing Association either through outright sale or lease arrangement. This will mean that there would be greater flexibilities in being able to use the accommodation and it would not have to be solely used in terms of meeting our homeless responsibilities. This would mean more effective use of the housing stock as well as making it more cost effective.
- Disposal of the accommodation and the commissioning of a dispersed stock of temporary accommodation. This would mean that we would no longer have

concentrations of temporary accommodation and could have a wider range of accommodation throughout the District. Currently temporary accommodation is only available in central Chichester and Midhurst whilst many people have family, education and support networks in different parts of the District.

- We could also consider providing temporary accommodation through a different means, for example a private leasing. This would mean that temporary accommodation would be provided on a longer-term basis with families occupying such homes for a considerably longer period of time. The accommodation would however be more suited to their needs and could, again, be dispersed throughout the District.

**Priorities for future action.**

- **Maintain the reduction in the number of homeless families in temporary accommodation to achieve the Government target of 50% by 2010.**
- **Develop relationships with private landlords to enable private rented properties to prevent homelessness and consider options for a private leasing scheme.**
- **Implement a new budgeting and finance model for the management of the temporary accommodation**
- **Restructure the rents for the temporary accommodation to ensure that the costs are met and better reflect private rented sector rents.**
- **Consider options for the future provision of temporary accommodation.**

## **Strategic Objective 5: Ensure that appropriate support is available for vulnerable groups**

A significant proportion of people approaching the council for assistance with housing problems have personal needs that make them more vulnerable. Whereas the majority of households who are accepted as homeless are households with children there are a significant number of single people who require additional support to live independently. This support can be provided through specialist services linked to accommodation or can be delivered on a more flexible basis through 'floating' support. Ensuring that such support is available to vulnerable people is an essential element in preventing homelessness.

### **Achievements since the 2003 strategy.**

- **Implementation of the Signpost Floating support service.**
- **Extension of floating support to support teenage parents and people suffering domestic violence.**
- **Implementation of the ILS scheme to support vulnerable single persons.**

Actions proposed to deliver this objective are:

### **Continue to work with partner agencies to ensure that services are available to those who need additional support.**

Support services are available to a wide range of vulnerable people. These have been developed over a number of years and are funded from a variety of sources. Although not directly provided by the District Council, we make effective use of referral arrangements to ensure that our customers can access the support they need. Although many of these services have not been developed specifically to combat homelessness, many play a crucial part in homelessness prevention. We also want to review the range and quality of advice services provided by other agencies within the District to ensure that we are maximising the use of these services. An overview of services provided in the District is set out below.

#### **The needs of young people**

The extension of the priority needs categories to cover all 16 and 17 year olds as a result of the 2002 Homelessness Act has led to a noticeable increase in the numbers of young people approaching the authority for housing advice. The District has an excellent foyer which can accommodate and provide support and advice to 16-25 year olds and this has meant that the impact of this legislation has not been as great as anticipated. Homelessness amongst young people is becoming an increasing concern, however referral to the foyer means that they can receive the assistance they need to move towards independent living. We recognise however that this is not suitable for all young people and we are currently looking at developing a pilot project to develop an Independent Living Scheme (ILS) for young people as well as researching the feasibility of developing a supported lodgings scheme.

#### **People with mental health problems**

A significant proportion of single people to whom the Council accepts a homelessness duty are people experiencing mental health problems. The provision

of permanent housing and housing related support is considered to be an integral part of a local multi-agency approach to meeting their needs. Wherever possible a solution is sought through the use of the Independent Living Scheme (ILS).

### **Women fleeing domestic violence**

Homelessness acceptances due to domestic violence continues to be one of the main causes of homelessness within the District. There are excellent facilities available to support women within the County with advice available to assist them to obtain support through Women's Aid Helpline or to access refuge vacancies or floating support if they do not wish to move. Good working arrangements are also in place with the local refuge. Work is planned amongst the other Council's within the County to further develop cross-boundary referral and reciprocal arrangements.

### **People with drug or alcohol problems**

There is often a connection between drug and alcohol abuse and homelessness. There are a number of local organisations who provide general support to those who are experiencing such problems but there is a lack of specialist support for this customer group. Many people have to access support or accommodation in neighbouring Districts. It has been recognised that a particular problem within the District is centred on street drinking. Work is underway to quantify this problem and to research the feasibility of providing appropriate services for this customer group in partnership with local organisation Stonepillow.

### **Offenders and those at risk of offending**

The relationship between homelessness and offending behaviour is well documented and the provision of accommodation with support is acknowledged to significantly reduce the risk of re-offending. 66% of discharged prisoners have accommodation difficulties and greater partnership working is needed to achieve a reduction in homelessness amongst this group. The District Councils within West Sussex have been working together to develop common protocols for this customer group and to provide a county-wide rent deposit scheme to assist ex-offenders to access accommodation within the private rented sector.

### **Teenage pregnancy**

The number of pregnant teenagers and single teenage mothers is low within the District and their housing needs are met through referral to the specialist accommodation and outreach service that is operated by Downland Affinity Housing Association. The housing options service operates in conjunction with Downland Affinity through working to keep teenage parents at home as long as possible whilst awaiting a vacancy within the specialist accommodation. Linked with provision of floating support this means that they are fully supported.

### **Older People**

The 2001 Census Data shows that the population of the District is currently 106,450 with a projected increase of 9.6% to 2021. The most significant changes in age range relate to the over 65-age range (+28%) with the 80+ age range in particular increasing by 28%. The implications of this ageing population are considered within the District's Older Persons Accommodation Strategy<sup>5</sup> which focuses attention upon

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<sup>5</sup> The Older Persons Accommodation Strategy can be found on the Council's website [www.chichester.gov.uk](http://www.chichester.gov.uk) The strategy takes into account the national policy agenda and local partners. strategies for older people

promoting independence and where feasible enabling people to remain in their own homes. Increased use of preventative technology is a key element of this approach and this is an area in which the Chichester District is extremely well served through Chichester Careline.

The strategy also recognises that some of the accommodation based services provided for older persons within the District may not be meeting the expectations and requirements of today's older people. Our Housing Association partners are already addressing such issues implementing reconfiguration plans to ensure that their accommodation meets future needs. The strategy also explores the potential need for an Extra-Care scheme in the north of the District but with a wider remit acting as a base for rural delivery of community based services. The feasibility of developing retirement village style accommodation is also highlighted.

The need to tackle under-occupation has consistently been raised as a priority area through the consultation on the Housing Strategy. The older persons strategy considers possible options in this area but centre on providing incentives across all tenures in particular through setting up a 'Move-Buddy' scheme. This proposed pilot project will provide practical support to older people wanting to move with finding a suitable property as well as assisting them in the moving process.

### **Gypsies & Travellers**

Problems exist for Gypsies and Travellers in accessing information and advice, owing to their distrust of outsiders and widespread literacy problems. The ability to choose their style of accommodation and to decide for themselves whether, or how, they continue to live a traditional travelling lifestyle they consider fundamental and crucial to their sense of independence and autonomy.

A Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs assessment was undertaken by the Council in September 2006<sup>6</sup>. The planning issues highlighted within the assessment will be addressed through the LDF Core Strategy. The assessment also highlighted that basic support is available from the Council but recognised that this support could be improved and better co-ordination could be achieved by implementing the following:

- Provide easy to understand Information on accommodation issues distributed using a variety of methods and review housing services to Gypsies and Travellers and where appropriate assist them in making housing applications.
- Undertake a regular review of needs through the monitoring framework that will be put in place to ensure that the Housing Market Assessment information is updated.
- Establish closer inter-departmental links including across neighbouring local authorities to facilitate the sharing of information to enable effective planning and delivery of services, which meet the needs of the travelling community.

### **Work with Supporting People team to ensure that services meet local needs.**

In 2008 Supporting People implemented a programme of reviewing all Supporting People funded supported housing services within the County to ensure that they are strategically relevant and are effective. This process also involves considering demand and supply of the services to ensure that the limited resources are targeted

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<sup>6</sup> Available on the Council's website [www.chichester.gov.uk](http://www.chichester.gov.uk)

most effectively. This is likely to involve decommissioning of some accommodation based services, which tend to be disproportionately expensive, to enable the commissioning of a larger number of more specialist floating support services. This will also mean that services are more widely available to people living in different types of housing.

This Strategic Review process will take place from 2008 to 2010 and services are being reviewed in 3 tranches – Disability, Homelessness and Older Persons services. For each review service specifications will be produced, existing services decommissioned and new services commissioned. We will input into these service reviews to ensure that services are commissioned in each tranche that will assist in preventing homelessness. The services provided through the Supporting People programme are crucial in ensuring the independence of many vulnerable people within the District. Without such services many objectives within this strategy cannot be realised and there is the possibility that levels of homelessness could increase. Work is also underway to develop a new means of ensuring that access to supported housing services in the County are equitable and consistent. This will involve reviewing the operation of local housing support panels and ensuring that there is a consistent means of making referrals to supported housing places across the County.

### **Research the extent of rough sleeping within the District and any gaps in service provision and investigate the feasibility of developing services for people with alcohol related problems.**

A head count of rough sleepers was carried out in the District in March 2002. This count found 6 people sleeping rough across the District. At the end of April 2005 a survey of the Housing Register also showed a total of 6 people who have registered that they are sleeping rough. As at the end of 2008 there were 37 people registered as of No Fixed Abode. Not all of these will be rough sleeping as the majority will be 'sofa surfing' and moving between friends and relatives. We feel that undertaking further research into the extent of rough sleeping in the District is an essential part of this strategy.

The Government has previously set a target of aiming for rough sleeping levels as close to zero as possible. This has now been replaced with an ambition to end rough sleeping once and for all by 2012 and making sure that in future no one has to sleep rough. The Government accepts that action is needed across the whole country and not just in those areas where previous counts have indicated a number of ten or more people sleeping rough each night. They are seeking to ensure that there is an effective safety net in every area as well as actions to prevent rough sleeping.

Direct access hostel facilities, day-centre and an outreach service are operated within the District by Chichester Christian Care Stonepillow and this provides vital services to this very vulnerable group. It is believed that 80% of rough sleepers have addiction problems and 55% have a dual diagnosis. It is therefore an area that needs extensive partnership working in order to provide more effective solutions.

In reviewing the homelessness strategy the lack of services available for those with alcohol problems has been highlighted. The inability of people to access desperately needed services has a knock-on effect by increasing street homelessness, anti-social behaviour, crime etc. It is considered that this is an area where services need to be developed however given decreasing revenue budgets for such support services, a

robust evidence base is required in order to promote the switching of funding into this area.

#### **CASE STUDY**

John has approached the Council for help with his housing. He has always lived at home but has suffered from mental health problems for many years which means that he currently is unable to work. He desperately wants to live independently and get a job but does not feel that he could keep a home of his own without a lot of support. His support worker puts him forward to be considered for the Independent Living Scheme and he is accepted onto the waiting list. Once a place becomes available on the scheme he is allocated a support worker by Southdown Housing Association and they bid for properties through the Homechoice Scheme. Once he is successful his support worker helps him arrange everything he needs to do in order to move in. Southdown are in effect the tenant of the property and they sub-let the property to him. There are regular multi-agency meetings to ensure that John is coping and that he has the support he needs. After 12 months he is receiving only minimal support and has secured himself a part-time job. He then takes over the tenancy from Southdown and no longer needs their on-going support.

#### **Priorities for future action**

- **Implement a pilot ILS project for young people.**
- **Research the feasibility of establishing a supported lodgings scheme for young people.**
- **Develop cross-Council referral and reciprocal arrangements for people suffering domestic violence.**
- **Research the extent of rough sleeping within the District and any associated gaps in appropriate services.**
- **Research the feasibility of developing an accommodation based service to assist 'street drinkers'.**
- **Implement the recommendations of the District's Older Persons Accommodation Strategy particularly in relation to tackling under-occupation and reconfiguring sheltered accommodation.**
- **Review the housing services provided to ensure that they take into account gypsy and traveller issues.**
- **Input into the Supporting People Strategic Service Reviews to ensure that a wide range of services are available to vulnerable people in order to prevent homelessness.**
- **Review the range and quality of advice services provided by other agencies within the District to ensure that we are maximising the use of these services**

## HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2009-2014 ACTION PLAN

TASK	TIMESCALE	LEVEL OF PRIORITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	RESOURCES REQUIRED	RISKS/ ASSUMPTIONS	LEAD OFFICER
1. Continue to develop preventative work to achieve a further reduction in the number of homelessness applications and acceptances focusing upon establishing customer pathways.	April 2012	High	Number of households in TA at the end of each quarter.	Within existing resources Additional prevention tools may require capital or revenue funding.	Risk of sudden unexpected increase in homelessness. Continued downturn in the economy.	Housing Interventions Manager
2. Develop proposals for a young persons mediation service	December 2009	Medium	Greater number of cases prevented following family conflict resolution with a target of 25% of referrals to mediation resulting in homelessness being prevented.	Revenue resources may be required	Provider available to deliver services	Housing Initiatives Officer
3. Review domestic violence procedures with other agencies	April 2010	Medium	Produce new advice and information leaflets by Summer 2010	Within existing resources	None	Senior Interventions Officer
4. Develop a programme to raise awareness about homelessness amongst young people	April 2011	Low	50% reduction in homeless applications from those aged 16-17	Within existing resources	None	Senior Interventions Officer
5. Reduce the number of families in Temporary Accommodation by 2010	April 2010	High	Maintain reduction in number of homeless families in temporary accommodation to meet 2010 target	Within existing resources	Relies on sufficient level of permanent accommodation in all sectors being available	Housing Interventions Manager

<b>TASK</b>	<b>TIMESCALE</b>	<b>LEVEL OF PRIORITY</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</b>	<b>RESOURCES REQUIRED</b>	<b>RISKS/ ASSUMPTIONS</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>
6. Further develop relationships with landlords to expand the PSHAS	December 2009	High	Develop a list of landlords who take referrals direct from CDC	May require additional resources	Relies on sufficient accommodation in private sector	Housing Initiatives Officer
7. Undertake further research into the levels of rough sleeping within the District.	Summer 2010	Medium	Accurate assessment of need established	Within existing resources	None	Housing Interventions Manager
8. Review services available for rough sleepers and identify any gaps in provision	December 2010	Medium	Action plan for meeting service gaps	Within existing resources	None	Housing Interventions Manager
9. Enable the development of a 'wet house' facility for single homeless people	April 2011	Medium	Scheme complete by April 2011	Capital funding from Housing Corporation and revenue funding from SP programme	Assumes site, capital and revenue resources all remain available	Housing Enabling Manager in partnership with CCA
10. Investigate the feasibility of developing a Supported Lodging scheme to provide temporary accommodation for young people in crisis	Summer 2011	Low	Feasibility report.	Revenue funding may be required	Risk of revenue funding not being available	Housing Initiatives Officer
11. Develop a pilot ILS for young people in partnership with WSCC	Summer 2009	High	Scheme to be in place by Summer 2009	Revenue funding from WSCC; accommodation by CDC	Risk of revenue funding not continuing.	Housing Interventions Manager
12. Continue to work with all agencies to increase the level of affordable housing accommodation by 200 new homes per	Ongoing 2008-2013	Very High	200 affordable homes completed each year	Continued capital funding from Housing Corporation and CDC	Risk of reduction in Housing Corporation funding from 2010/11 onwards	Housing Enabling Manager in partnership with partner Housing Associations

<b>TASK</b>	<b>TIMESCALE</b>	<b>LEVEL OF PRIORITY</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</b>	<b>RESOURCES REQUIRED</b>	<b>RISKS/ ASSUMPTIONS</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>
year						
13. Review the provision of Temporary Accommodation	Autumn 2010	Medium	Options Appraisal completed	Within existing resources	None	Assistant Director Strategic Housing Services
14. Review the Allocations Policy to maximise opportunities for homeless prevention.	Summer 2009	High	New Allocations Policy in place.	Within existing resources	None	Assistant Director Strategic Housing Services
15. Review Homelessness Application procedures including maximising the use of Qualifying Offers.	September 2009	High	New procedures in place.	Within existing resources	None	Housing Interventions Officer
16. Develop a portfolio of Intermediate rental properties to assist with homelessness prevention.	December 2010	High	Portfolio of new properties in place.	Will require additional capital resources	Properties available and economic climate allows acquisition of sufficient properties.	Housing Enabling Manager
17. Review Homelessness & Housing Options IT systems.	December 2009	Medium	Action plan for developing IT systems in place.	Within existing resources	None	Business Systems Analyst
18. Implement Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme and identify any gaps in the scheme.	April 2009	High	Scheme in place.	May require additional capital resources depending upon gaps within the Government scheme.	Funding available.	Housing Enabling Manager

<b>TASK</b>	<b>TIMESCALE</b>	<b>LEVEL OF PRIORITY</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</b>	<b>RESOURCES REQUIRED</b>	<b>RISKS/ ASSUMPTIONS</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>
19. Consider recommendations from pilot worklessness schemes.	December 2010	Low	Action plan for further measures	Within existing resources	None	Housing Interventions Manager
20. Review effectiveness of the PSHAS and implement new procedures to maximise effectiveness of the available DHP funding.	July 2009	High	New scheme and procedures in place.	Within existing resources.	Funding continues to be available.	Housing Interventions Manager
21. Investigate the feasibility of implementing a private sector leasing scheme.	December 2009	Medium	Feasibility report.	Feasibility within existing resources. Any new provision will require additional resources.	None	Housing Enabling Manager
22. Implement a scheme aimed at tackling under-occupation.	September 2009	High	Scheme in place	Will require additional resources to implement incentive scheme.	None	Housing Enabling Manager
23. Implement a new financial modelling system for the council-owned accommodation including a review of rents.	April 2009	High	New budgeting and rental structure in place.	Within existing resources.	None	Assistant Director Strategic Housing Services.
24. Review housing options advice provision for Gypsy & Traveller families	April 2011	Medium	Revised policies & procedures in place.	Within existing resources	None	Housing Interventions Manager
25. Review housing options advice provision for migrant workers	December 2011	Medium	Revised policies & procedures in place.	Within existing resources	None	Housing Interventions Manager

<b>TASK</b>	<b>TIMESCALE</b>	<b>LEVEL OF PRIORITY</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</b>	<b>RESOURCES REQUIRED</b>	<b>RISKS/ ASSUMPTIONS</b>	<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>
26. Develop effective working relationships with the Estate landlords	July 2010	Medium	Working relationships and action plan established.	Within existing resources	None	Housing Enabling Manager
27. Review the range and quality of advice services provided by other agencies within the District to ensure that we are maximising the use of these services	April 2011	Medium	Map of service provision & action plan for meeting any identified gaps in service provision	Within existing resources	Positive engagement of other agencies.	Housing Interventions Manager

# APPENDIX ONE – HOMELESSNESS REVIEW

## HOMELESSNESS IN CONTEXT IN CHICHESTER

### Levels of homelessness in the Chichester District

A reduction in the level of homelessness applications and acceptances does not mean that homelessness has gone away nor that housing need in the District has reduced. The table below illustrates the split between housing advice and the number of homelessness acceptances that result. This shows that accessing suitable housing is still an issue for many households within the District.

**Table 6: Number of housing advice & homelessness cases 2003 – 2008**

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09 (to Q3)	Total
Housing advice enquiries	634	606	794	575	2609
Homelessness applications	127	135	84	99	445
Homelessness acceptances	83	81	53	65	282

These figures reflect national trends which have seen a drop in the number of homelessness applications of 32% between 2005 and 2007 and a 29% reduction in acceptances over the same period. The introduction of the Council's Housing Options Service placed much greater emphasis on homelessness prevention. Previously those threatened with homelessness made a homelessness application before any advice on alternative options was considered. Many such applications were from people who were either not homeless, or threatened with homelessness, or who were not in priority need. A homelessness application is now submitted as a last resort when all other avenues have been exhausted.

This new approach has had an impact both on the total number of applications and on the ratio between applications and acceptances. Although this has been a successful start we know that we need to go further and be even more pro-active to reduce the incidence of homelessness.

The number of people found to be intentionally homeless however remains high with 13 in 2005/6, 17 in 2006/7, 18 in 2007/8 and 9 in 2008/9. We hope that by adopting a more preventative approach to homelessness we can ensure that we encourage people to seek advice much earlier and either stop them becoming homeless or assist them in securing alternative accommodation.

### Reasons for homelessness

The table below shows the principal causes of homelessness since 2005/06. This illustrated that the main reasons for homelessness continues to be parents or relatives no longer willing to accommodate other households, relationship breakdown and ending of private sector tenancies. This shows that the actions we have highlighted around ensuring that we assist those threatened with homelessness as early as possible should help us to assist families to secure alternative accommodation in the private sector. Other than for those fleeing domestic violence,

we can often work with families or landlords to give us more time before people become homeless.

**Table 7: Reasons for homelessness where a full housing duty is accepted**

	2005/6	%	2006/07	%	2007/08	%	2008/09 (to Q3)	%	Total
Parents not willing to accommodate	31	37%	25	31%	7	13%	12	19%	75
Other relative not willing to accommodate	12	15%	5	6%	8	15%	11	17%	36
Non-violent relationship breakdown	2	2%	2	3%	1	2%	3	5%	8
Violent breakdown of relationship (partner)	7	8%	3	4%	2	4%	8	12%	20
Violent breakdown of relationship (non-partner)	0	0%	1	1%	1	2%	1	2%	3
Racially motivated violence	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Other forms of violence	2	2%	2	3%	0	0%	1	2%	5
Racially motivated harassment	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Other forms of harassment	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1
Mortgage arrears	3	4%	3	4%	2	4%	1	2%	9
LA / public sector rent arrears	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1
RSL / HA arrears	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Private sector arrears	3	4%	4	5%	3	6%	2	3%	12
Termination of AST	11	13%	13	16%	21	40%	14	21%	59
Loss of rented (other)	2	2%	4	5%	1	2%	0	0%	7
Left prison / remand	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Left hospital	1	1%	7	9%	1	2%	5	7%	14
Left other institution / LA care	0	0%	1	1%	1	0%	0	0%	2
Left HM forces	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	1	2%	2
Other reason	7	8%	11	14%	4	8%	6	9%	28
	<b>83</b>		<b>81</b>		<b>53</b>		<b>65</b>		<b>282</b>

\*Note: due to rounding percentages may not equate to 100%

Approximately 12% of all homelessness acceptances nationally are due to domestic violence and although not as high as this in Chichester, this continues to be one of the main causes of homelessness within the District. There are excellent facilities available to support women within the County and we will continue to assist women to access these. The incidence of domestic violence is under-represented in these figures as through making use of the services available we also assist these households to secure private rented sector homes through our rent deposit scheme in order to avoid the disruption of temporary accommodation.

### Composition of households accepted as homeless

The table below shows the composition of households accepted as homeless. This shows that the majority are accepted due to having dependent children or being pregnant. Other main causes include being vulnerable as a result of old age, physical disability or mental illness. For these vulnerable groups the support services we have highlighted as being so crucial in preventing homelessness are equally important in order for them to move on from temporary accommodation and to sustain a permanent tenancy.

**Table 8: Composition of households accepted as homeless 2005-2009**

	2005/6	%	2006/07	%	2007/08	%	2008/09 (to Q3)	%	Total
Due to Emergency (fire/flood)	2	2%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%	3
Household with dependent children	50	60%	40	49%	32	60%	43	66%	165
Household with pregnant member	16	19%	13	16%	6	11%	5	8%	40
16/17 year old	4	5%	1	1%	1	2%	0	0%	6
Care leaver	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Vulnerable due to old age	0	0%	3	4%	2	4%	2	3%	7
Vulnerable due to physical disability	2	2%	4	5%	5	9%	3	5%	14
Vulnerable due to mental illness / disability	6	7%	16	20%	5	9%	10	15%	37
Vulnerable due to drug dependency	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1
Vulnerable due to alcohol dependency	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Former asylum seeker	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Other	3	4%	2	3%	1	2%	0	0%	6
Formerly in care	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1
Vulnerable due to being ex-HM forces	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Vulnerable due to ex-custody / remand	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0
Vulnerable due to suffering violence	0	0%	1	1%	1	2%	0	0%	2
	<b>83</b>		<b>81</b>		<b>53</b>		<b>65</b>		<b>282</b>

\*Note: due to rounding percentages may not equate to 100%

The extension of the priority needs categories to cover all 16 and 17 year olds as a result of the 2002 Act has led to a noticeable increase in the numbers of young people approaching the authority for housing advice. The fact that the District has an excellent foyer which can accommodate and provide support and advice to 16-25 year olds has meant that the impact of this legislation has not been as great as anticipated with only 6 young persons being accepted as homeless over the period.

The table below shows the types of household that were accepted as homeless over the past 3 years. This highlights that two thirds of households accepted as homeless within the District contain children. Given the disruption that temporary accommodation has on family life this shows that our efforts to prevent homelessness and reduce our use of temporary accommodation are important targets.

**Table 9: Family composition of homeless households 2006-2009**

	2006/07	%	2007/08	%	2008/09 (to Q3)	%	Total
Couple with dependent children	13	16%	14	26%	11	17%	38
Male lone parent household	2	3%	1	2%	1	1%	4
Female lone parent household	38	47%	19	36%	35	54%	92
Male single person	10	12%	12	23%	8	12%	30
Female single person	12	15%	2	4%	7	11%	21
Other	6	7%	5	9%	3	5%	14
	<b>81</b>		<b>53</b>		<b>65</b>		<b>199</b>

\*Note: due to rounding percentages may not equate to 100%

Perhaps not surprising the majority of households accepted as homeless are under the age of 45 with the highest being between 25 and 44. This reflects the fact that families make up the highest percentage of applicants becoming homeless.

**Table 10: Age of main applicant of homeless households 2005-2009**

	2005/6	%	2006/07	%	2007/08	%	2008/09 (to Q3)	%	Total
16-24	34	41%	34	42%	15	28%	20	31%	103
25-44	38	46%	37	46%	24	45%	35	54%	134
45-59	10	12%	6	7%	12	23%	7	11%	35
60-64	0	0%	3	4%	1	2%	2	3%	6
65-74	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1
75+	1	1%	1	1%	1	2%	0	0%	3
	<b>83</b>		<b>81</b>		<b>53</b>		<b>65</b>		<b>282</b>

\*Note: due to rounding percentages may not equate to 100%

### Use of temporary accommodation

As highlighted throughout this strategy we believe that being in temporary accommodation is a disruptive experience for families and one that can have an adverse impact upon family life, children's education as well as on employment opportunities. Whilst the temporary accommodation we have available is of an excellent standard, we are working hard to reduce our use of temporary accommodation through adopting pro-active homelessness prevention measures.

This is however a tough challenge all the time the legislative framework does not support a preventative approach and especially with a down-turn in the economy meaning that more and more households are approaching the Council for assistance

with both financial and housing related problems. The table below sets out the use of temporary accommodation since 2005. The council has a target to have a maximum of 28 households in temporary accommodation by 2010. Whilst good progress was being made to reach this target ahead of the 2010 target, the impact of the economic downturn can be clearly seen in the steady rise in the figures since the beginning of 2008/9.

**Table 11: Households accommodated in temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter.**

	2005/6				2006/07				2007/08				2008/09			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4												
B&B	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	3
Hostels	47	47	44	42	49	30	46	47	34	31	31	35	52	51	47	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>43</b>
Homeless at Home	22	13	13	18	25	1	13	20	25	31	34	38	46	18	18	7
Of Which Families in B&B	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Of which Families in Hostels	43	42	38	36	42	23	31	29	20	20	21	25	34	38	37	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>33</b>

Note: these figures include all households accommodated at the end of each quarter

In terms of length of time in temporary accommodation the length of stay in the Council's temporary accommodation continues to rise. This is largely as a result of the impact of the introduction of the Choice Based Lettings System. As explained in the strategy meeting the Government's target for the reduction in the use of temporary accommodation will be a challenge.

**Table 12: Length of stay in temporary accommodation**

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09 to Q3
B&B	2.54 weeks	6.95 weeks	0 weeks	0 weeks
Hostel	31.25 weeks	24.59 weeks	32.12 weeks	45.67 weeks

Note: figures include all households accepted as homeless but not those for whom no statutory duty is accepted.

## Analysis of the District's Housing Register

The implementation of Sussex Homemove in July 2007 is a fundamental change to the way in which households can now access affordable homes within the District. Rather than the traditional method of allocating homes, applicants can now bid, or express a preference, for properties. This will result in a much more transparent system and it is hoped will result in more sustainable communities and greater satisfaction amongst applicants. The information that the new system provides on customer expectations and demand for properties is also extremely valuable in planning future developments. It is hoped that this system can be expanded over the coming years to include different tenures as well as being used by landlords in the private rented sector. The sub-regional nature of the scheme means that it also provides greater mobility opportunities for applicants to seek housing across East and West Sussex.

**Table 13: Breakdown of the Housing Register according to priority as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008**

<b>Breakdown of the Housing Register - under CBL system<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>No. of households</b>
Band A – Urgent Housing Need	1.5%	81
Band B – High Housing Need	6.1%	339
Band C – Medium Housing Need	26.0%	1440
Band D – Low Housing Need	66.4%	3683
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5543</b>

What Homemove doesn't do however is to increase the amount of affordable homes available to those in housing need. Demand continues to far outstrip supply and the table above shows the number of households registered in housing need. When compared to the number of properties that become available each year and the average waiting times, it can be clearly seen that we need to ensure that other, viable options are available to customers to assist them whilst they wait for rehousing through Homemove, hence the importance of the measures proposed throughout this strategy.

The demand for affordable housing continues to rise and has increased greatly since the introduction of Choice Based Lettings in July 2007 when the Housing Register stood at 2,700 households. In less than 18 months therefore, the Register has doubled. There are a number of reasons for this increase. Not only has the Affordability Gap continued to increase, the new system has made the allocation of affordable housing much more visible, the process has been advertised more widely and is more attractive to a wider number of people. Feedback has shown that younger people in particular find the new medium more attractive. Previous analysis of the Housing Register has shown that around 8.5% of applicants do not have a local connection to the District. Thus the growth in demand cannot be attributed to the greater freedoms that applicants have in applying to different Council's. We do not however have data on the numbers of applicant who are registered in multiple areas.

The table below lists applicants' first choice for a particular parish where they have a strong local connection to that parish. This shows a lower number of applicants who have a local connection but this reflects the higher criteria level for a local connection to a parish where this is a requirement for an allocation in that parish. Points to note from this analysis is the high demand in the Bournes area and especially in Selsey, Hunston and the Witterings. Demand is also high in the north of the District particularly in the market towns of Midhurst and Petworth.

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<sup>7</sup> Detailed definition of the Banding System is available in the Council's Allocations Policy – [www.chichester.gov.uk](http://www.chichester.gov.uk)

**Table 14: Local Connection & first choice preference by parish as at February 2009**

Parish	With Local Connection	Parish	With Local Connection
Appldram	0	Lodsworth	9
Barlavington	0	Loxwood	18
Bepton	0	Lurgashall	4
Bignor	3	Marden	0
Birdham	24	Midhurst	252
Bosham	68	Milland	8
Boxgrove	24	North Mundham	28
Bury	13	Northchapel	24
Chichester	1517	Oving	15
Chidham	16	Petworth	135
Cocking	8	Plaistow	6
Compton	2	Rogate	19
Donnington	26	Selsey	420
Earnley	6	Sidlesham	13
Eartham	0	Singleton	19
Easebourne	52	Southbourne	142
East Dean	4	Stedham	5
East Wittering	133	Stopham	0
Ebernoe	0	Stoughton	1
Elsted	1	Sutton	3
Fernhurst	49	Tangmere	57
Fishbourne	60	Tillington	8
Fittleworth	26	Trotton	2
Funtington	17	West Dean	20
Graffham	11	West Lavington	1
Harting	23	West Thorney	5
Heyshott	11	West Wittering	61
Hunston	41	Westbourne	57
Kirdford	26	Westhampnett	4
Lavant	19	Wisborough Green	14
Linchmere	19	Woolbeding	0
		<b>Summary</b>	
		<b>3549</b>	

The table below sets out a breakdown of the Housing Register by ethnicity. This shows that the overwhelming majority of applicants are white British. There are however a small minority of applicants of different ethnicity and we ensure that Housing Register material is available on request for these applicants. Likewise given the migrant population within the District employed in agriculture we have a significant proportion of applicants from Eastern European countries and when assisting these applicants with housing related queries we can make use of translation facilities that are available across Chichester and Arun. The Council also

has a number of foreign language speakers within its staff and good use of these skills are made when required as well as ongoing use of the Language Line facility.

**Table 15: Housing Register applicants by ethnicity as at September 2008**

		<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	White British	4799	90.59
B	White Irish	8	00.15
C	White other	32	00.60
D	Mixed white/black Caribbean	11	00.20
E	Mixed white/black African	15	00.28
F	Mixed white Asian	17	00.32
G	Mixed white other	35	00.66
H	Asian/Asian British/Indian	4	00.07
J	Asian/Asian British/Pakistani	0	00.00
K	Asian/Asian British/Bangladeshi	4	00.07
L	Asian/Asian British Other	16	00.30
M	Black/Black British / Caribbean	3	00.05
N	Black/Black British African	8	00.15
P	Black/Black British Other	1	00.01
R	Chinese	3	00.05
S	Other	172	03.24
Z	Not stated	169	03.27
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5297</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The table below sets out the number of homes that have become available annually by property size. This highlights the lower numbers of larger family sized homes that become available each year. We have increased the number of 3 bedroom+ houses we are developing however the demand for this size of properties continues to grow. Initiatives such as tackling under-occupation are particularly important in contributing to increasing the numbers that become available.

**Table 16: Properties let by property size 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008**

	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Bedsit</b>	22	7%	13	4%	11	4%	46	5%
<b>1 Bed</b>	102	33%	103	34%	116	40%	321	36%
<b>2 Bed</b>	140	45%	155	51%	137	46%	432	47%
<b>3 Bed</b>	39	13%	35	11%	26	9%	100	11%
<b>4 Bed</b>	7	2%	0	0%	3	1%	10	1%
<b>5 Bed</b>	1	0%	1	0%	0	0%	2	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>		<b>307</b>		<b>293</b>		<b>911</b>	

The table below sets out the number of homes that have become available annually split by priority of applicant. The information in this table is split as the housing register system changed in 2007/08 to take account of choice based lettings. This shows that lower need households, i.e. those in Band D or the Economic / Community band have been successful in securing rehousing if at lower numbers than the priority bands.

**Table 17: Properties let by band 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008**

	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Needs Band Transfer</b>	37	10	6	53	8%
<b>Needs Band Homeless</b>	84	65	10	159	24%
<b>Needs band Other</b>	122	142	24	288	43%
<b>Economic / Community</b>	68	90	8	166	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>666</b>	
<b>Band A</b>	N/A	N/A	47	47	19%
<b>Band B</b>	N/A	N/A	104	104	42%
<b>Band C</b>	N/A	N/A	66	66	27%
<b>Band D</b>	N/A	N/A	28	28	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>245</b>	

Using the Homemove scheme we can get information about waiting times. The information obtained needs to be viewed with a great deal of caution as these are only indicative times. How long a household will wait for rehousing will depend upon their flexibility in the type of home and area they will consider, the urgency of their needs and how their needs change over time. In particular one particularly lengthy wait can adversely skew waiting times for that period. The average wait times however can be used as an indication.

**Table 18: Waiting time on the housing register by band - all Bands 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008.**

<b>Type / Size</b>	<b>No. of Lets</b>	<b>Shortest Wait</b>	<b>Longest Wait</b>	<b>Average Wait</b>
Sheltered	9	5 weeks	13 years	27 months
Studio general needs	18	4 weeks	10 years	12 months
1-bed general needs	146	4 weeks	8 years	11 months
2-bed flat or maisonette	89	20 days	24 years	11 months
2-bed house	79	3 weeks	10 years	8 months
3-bed flat or maisonette	1	5 weeks	5 weeks	5 weeks
3-bed house	50	4 weeks	8 years	12 months
4 bed house	4	11 months	6 years	29 months
5 bed house	0	0	0	0

**Table 19: Waiting time on the housing register by band – Band A 1st January 2008 to 31st December 2008.**

Type / Size	No. of Lets	Shortest Wait	Longest Wait	Average Wait
Sheltered	1	7 months	7 months	7 months
Studio general needs	5	5 weeks	21 months	9 months
1-bed general needs	53	4 weeks	3 years	9 months
2-bed flat or maisonette	17	4 weeks	24 years	22 months
2-bed house	33	3 weeks	18 months	4 months
3-bed flat or maisonette	1	5 weeks	5 weeks	5 weeks
3-bed house	29	4 weeks	31 months	5 months
4 bed house	1	21 months	21 months	21 months
5 bed house	0	0	0	0

**Table 20: Waiting time on the housing register by band – Band B 1st January 2008 to 31st December 2008.**

Type / Size	No. of Lets	Shortest Wait	Longest Wait	Average Wait
Sheltered	5	5 weeks	13 years	32 months
Studio general needs	5	4 weeks	8 months	3 months
1-bed general needs	47	4 weeks	7 years	8 months
2-bed flat or maisonette	49	20 days	18 months	5 months
2-bed house	34	7 weeks	33 months	8 months
3-bed flat or maisonette	0	0	0	0
3-bed house	18	4 weeks	4 years	14 months
4 bed house	3	11 months	6 years	32 months
5 bed house	0	0	0	0

**Table 21: Waiting time on the housing register by band – Band C 1st January 2008 to 31st December 2008.**

Type / Size	No. of Lets	Shortest Wait	Longest Wait	Average Wait
Sheltered	2	5 weeks	27 months	14 months
Studio general needs	7	7 weeks	16 months	6 months
1-bed general needs	28	7 weeks	8 years	13 months
2-bed flat or maisonette	17	7 weeks	35 months	10 months
2-bed house	10	7 months	10 years	22 months
3-bed flat or maisonette	0	0	0	0
3-bed house	3	27 months	8 years	5 years
4 bed house	0	0	0	0
5 bed house	0	0	0	0

**Table 22: Waiting time on the housing register by band – Band D 1st January 2008 to 31st December 2008.**

Type / Size	No. of Lets	Shortest Wait	Longest Wait	Average Wait
Sheltered	1	4 years	4 years	4 years
Studio general needs	1	10 years	10 years	10 years
1-bed general needs	18	5 weeks	5 weeks	22 months
2-bed flat or maisonette	6	11 weeks	6 years	29 months
2-bed house	2	6 months	14 months	10 months
3-bed flat or maisonette	0	0	0	0
3-bed house	0	0	0	0
4 bed house	0	0	0	0
5 bed house	0	0	0	0

When we consider that those in most urgent need are housed much quicker than others we need to ensure that we have a policy framework in place that acknowledges those who are pro-active in resolving their own housing issues whilst also according priority to those in housing need. This is an important element within this strategy.

We have also highlighted within this strategy the need to investigate more fully the needs of rough sleepers. Previous counts have shown very low numbers of rough sleepers however anecdotally other agencies report fluctuating numbers throughout the years. Having analysed the data on the Housing Register this has shown that there are 37 households registered as of no fixed abode. It must be acknowledged however that this does not necessarily equate to people sleeping rough as it can mean that households are staying temporarily with a series of friends or relatives in what has commonly become known as 'sofa surfing'. We anticipate that the further research planned will increase our knowledge of the needs of this client group.

## **Glossary of Terms**

The following is a brief description of some of the terms commonly used throughout this document:

### **Accommodation based services:**

This is housing where support as well as accommodation is provided to vulnerable persons. A condition of the tenancy will be that support is provided and the two elements cannot be separated. If support is no longer needed then the customer will need to leave the accommodation.

### **Affordable Housing:**

Housing which is subsidised to some degree to provide homes for rent, shared ownership or low cost sale to meet the needs of local people who would not otherwise be able to gain access to housing at full market cost.

### **Allocations Policy:**

This is the policy which is used to determine how affordable housing is allocated to Housing Register applicants. The policy is used to prioritise applicants in accordance with Government legislation and guidance.

### **Assured Shorthold tenancy (AST):**

This is a tenancy introduced in the 1996 Housing Act. It is the default tenancy for all tenancies granted after this date. The tenant receives a six-month tenancy and is secure provided that he keeps to the terms of the tenancy agreement. After this initial term the landlord can regain his property by giving the tenant two months notice to leave the property.

### **Choice Based Lettings (CBL) (see also Homemove):**

This is the means by which affordable homes are allocated in accordance with the Council's approved Allocations Policy. Rather than vacant properties being allocated to the highest placed applicant on the Housing Register, available properties are advertised through various means and applicants bid for, or express an interest in, up to three properties. Bids are then prioritised according to the Council's Allocations Policy and the highest placed bidder is offered the property. All Councils are required to implement CBL schemes by 2010.

### **Department of Communities & Local Government (CLG):**

The Government office which looks after and determines national housing policy.

### **Discretionary Housing Payments:**

These are additional payments that can be made through Housing Benefit where there are shortfalls in rent payments which means that a customer may be threatened with homelessness. Examples of where this can be used are for funding rent deposits, paying rental top-ups in exceptional circumstances.

### **Enabling Role:**

The assessment of housing need, the development of policies, and the marshalling of resources by the Council in a way which facilitates the meeting of those needs by a variety of other agencies in the private and independent sectors.

**Floating Support (Outreach):**

Support given to vulnerable people to help them to maintain their own homes as an alternative to developing specialist housing projects. This support can be provided regardless of the type of housing or their tenure and is not linked or tied to the accommodation they occupy.

**Foyer:**

Supported accommodation for young people between the ages of 18 and 25. The support is specifically tailored to developing life skills and encouraging the young person to engage in further education or employment before moving onto independent living.

**Fuel Poverty:**

Fuel poverty is where a household must spend more than 10% of their income on fuel in order to maintain a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

**Homebuy:**

A term adopted by the Government to cover intermediate housing such as shared ownership. This covers New Build Homebuy where applicants can purchase a minimum of 25% share in a new build scheme specifically designated for the purpose and Open Market Homebuy where applicants can purchase a property on the open market at 75% of its value with the remainder covered by an equity loan.

**Homeless Applicant:**

A person or household that approaches the Council for assistance as a result of being homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days. A formal application is made by the household and this is assessed in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 to assess whether the Council will have a duty to provide permanent rehousing.

**Homelessness Prevention Fund:**

A small amount of resources which are available for use by the Housing Interventions Officers to prevent homelessness. These are used on a case-by-case basis and can be used for example to pay off rent arrears.

**Homemove:**

The District's Choice Based Lettings scheme.

**Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs):**

This term describes a building in which a number of separate households are resident, usually sharing some communal facilities such as bathroom or a kitchen, but with separate tenancies or licences.

**Housing Benefit:**

Money which people on low incomes or benefits can get to help them pay their rent. It is a Government scheme administered by the local authority.

**Independent Living Scheme (ILS):**

A scheme by which Southdown Housing Association lease an affordable housing unit from a local housing provider and sub-let it to a vulnerable person in need of accommodation. Southdown then provide ongoing support to the tenant until they are ready to live independently. The tenancy is then transferred to the occupant and support ceases.

**Intermediate Rent:**

Properties let on the basis of the rents being higher than social rents but at a maximum of 80% of market levels. Assured Shorthold Tenancies are granted to the occupants and provided that they adhere to their tenancy agreement, there is greater security than renting in the private market.

**Landed Estates:**

The large estate landlords such as Goodwood or Cowdray who have large land and property holdings which are used primarily for their own workers but are also rented to others.

**Large Scale Voluntary Transfer:**

The process by which both the management and the ownership of council housing is transferred to another body, usually a Registered Social Landlord. It requires the consent of a simple majority of tenants in a ballot.

**Local Area Agreement(LAA):**

The agreement between the local authorities in the County, West Sussex County Council and the Government which sets certain targets for service provision that will be jointly prioritised.

**Local Strategic Partnership (LSP):**

A multi agency partnership charged with developing the Community Strategy and ensuring effective joint working between agencies at a local level.

**Mortgage Rescue Scheme:**

Schemes which are aimed at home owners who are at risk of becoming homeless through being unable to afford their mortgage repayments. Assistance can be through Housing Associations converting the property from purchase to rent or by the purchase of equity shares. The home owner often remains in the property as a tenant of the Housing Association.

**Move-on Accommodation:**

Permanent or longer temporary accommodation provided for people who need to move out of short stay supported housing projects such as hostels or night shelters.

**Outreach Support:**

See Floating Support.

**Private Rented Sector:**

Rented housing controlled by private landlords rather than Councils, RSLs or the voluntary sector.

**Private Sector Housing Access Scheme (PSHAS):**

A scheme devised to assist households to access private rented accommodation. The Council pays the landlord a month's rent in advance and guarantees a deposit through a bond scheme. The rent in advance is paid back by the tenant to the Council through weekly payments.

**Private Leasing Scheme:**

A Housing Association enters into an agreement with a private landlord or investor to lease a property for a number of years. The rent is guaranteed for the landlord as well as return of the property in the same state, save for fair wear and tear. The Housing Association then lets the accommodation to Council nominees who are threatened with homelessness or are homeless.

**Qualifying offer:**

An agreement between the Council and a homeless applicant that the customer will accept a tenancy in the private rented sector as a consequence of which the Council will no longer have a statutory duty to accommodate the homeless person.

**Regional Housing Board (RHB):**

The new body set up by the Government to agree a strategic and funding priorities for housing in the South East Region. Whilst the Housing Corporation will still administer the funding process for RSLs it will be on the basis of priorities set by the RHB.

**Registered Social Landlord (RSL):**

A housing organisation, registered with the Housing Corporation which provides housing for rent, shared ownership or sale on a not for profit basis. It is also known as a housing association.

**Right to Buy:**

The legal right by which council and those tenants of RSLs which are not registered charities are able to purchase the home of which they are a tenant at a discount.

**Shared Ownership:**

A scheme aimed at providing first time buyers, who cannot afford to buy outright, a home suited to their needs. The buyer purchases a part of the equity, paying rent on the remainder which is usually retained by a RSL. The initial share can be between 25% and 75% of the equity.

**Signpost Housing Support service:**

A generalist floating support service providing support to vulnerable persons at risk of homelessness. Support can be provided in finding accommodation, accessing benefits and forwarding onto other specialist services.

**Social Homebuy:**

A new scheme to be introduced by the Government whereby existing Council tenants who qualify for the Right to Buy their home outright instead purchase a share in it. The minimum share is 25%.





# Homelessness Review 2015

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## **1.0 Introduction**

In accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002, all local authorities are required to publish a homelessness strategy and then publish new strategies at periods of not longer than five years. The legislation is clear on how a homeless strategy should be developed. Firstly a comprehensive review of the nature and extent of the homelessness within the local authority should be undertaken to prepare the local authority for developing a new strategy.

The conclusions from the review will form the basis of the strategy identifying where resources should be prioritised. A comprehensive assessment of the nature and extent of homelessness in the district will enable the Authority to develop and deliver housing advice and homelessness services in an effort to prevent and manage homelessness in the district.

Delivery of these services constantly changes to meet the variable needs of the client group. The Council recognises that one service to tackle a single cause of homelessness will not effectively meet the needs of all homeless households, as each household and situation is unique. It is therefore, imperative that we understand where there are gaps in service. We can then develop solutions either locally or countywide to ensure that we have adequate options to manage the demand and reduce the need for individuals to conclude that their only option is to sleep rough. The review looks to identify the gaps in service that exist and offers recommendations to improve services over the next 5 years.

## 1.1 The District Demographic

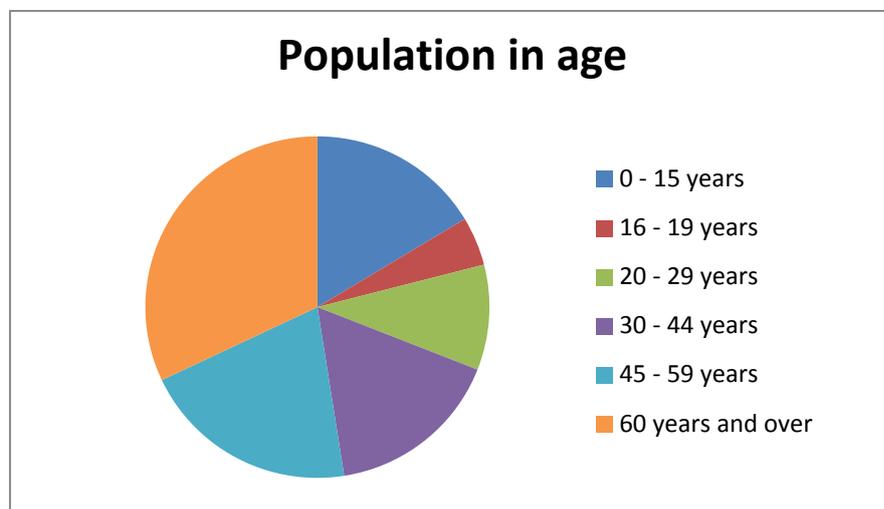
The population of Chichester District has grown from 106,450 in 2001 to 113,794 in 2011 which is an increase of 7,344 or 6.9%. This makes the district of Chichester the fourth largest local authority in West Sussex (out of 7 local authorities) for population size and growth.

WARD: Chichester District comprises of 29 wards, and as at 2011 the ward with the highest population was Chichester East with 8,480 people and the lowest population was in the ward of Harting with 2,026 people. Between 2001 and 2011, the population of Chichester East ward increased the most with an increase of 1,473; whilst the population of Stedham ward has decreased the most with a decrease of 189.

PARISH: There are 67 parishes in Chichester District. As at 2011 the parish with the highest population was Chichester City with 26,795 people and the lowest population was in Eartham and Upwaltham parish with 111 people.

GENDER: The 2011 population in terms of gender is split between 54,401 males and 59,393 females, which equates to 47.8% males and 52.2% females. (The national split is 49.2% males and 50.8% females).

AGE: In 2011 the largest age group in the district were people aged 45-59. The percentage of people aged 45-90 is higher than the national average. Most notably, almost 1 in 4 people in the district are aged 65+ (24.4%) this is considerably higher than the national average (16.4%). The chart below combines a number of the Census output age groups and indicates that almost a third (31.9%) of the population are 60 years of age or over.

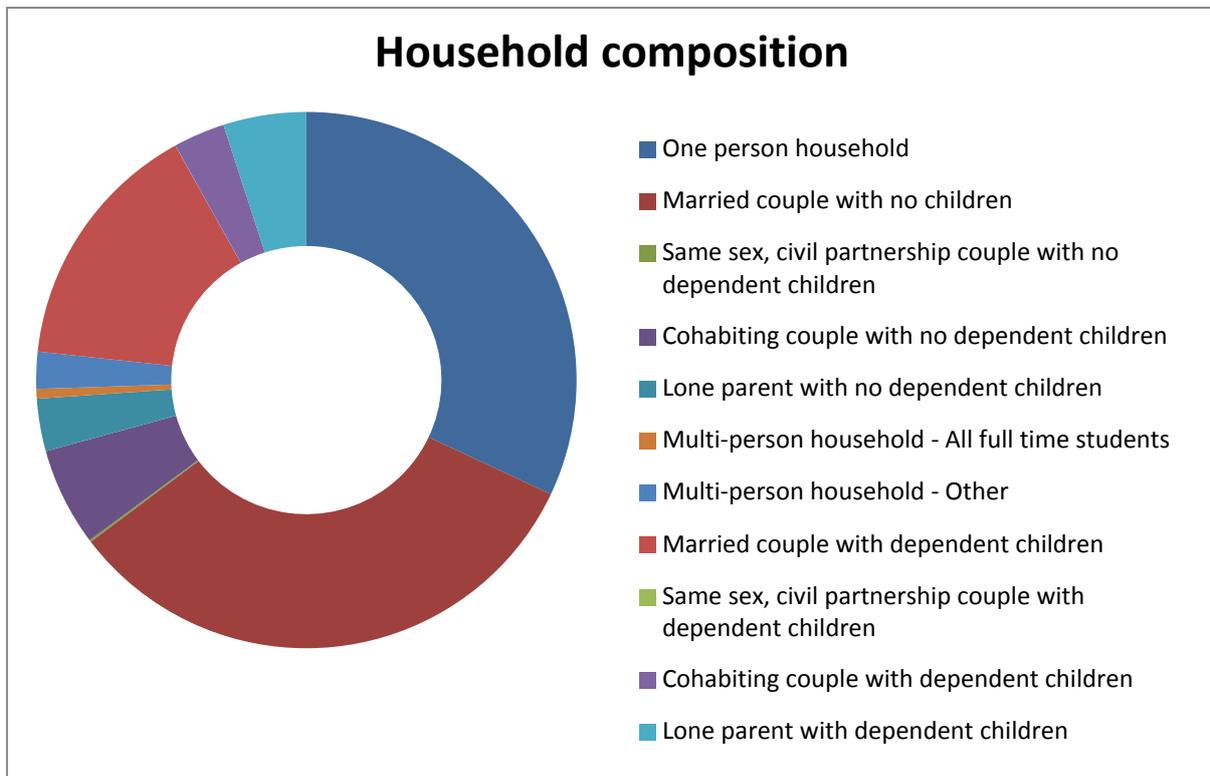


The table below shows the age structure for Chichester District in 2001 and 2011 by percentage, compared to national averages. Areas highlighted are higher than the national average.

Age	2001		2011	
	Chichester	England	Chichester	England
0 – 4	5.0	6.0	5.0	6.3
5 – 7	3.3	3.7	3.0	3.4
8 – 9	2.4	2.6	2.0	2.2

10 – 14	6.0	6.6	5.4	5.8
15	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.2
16 – 17	2.3	2.5	2.1	2.5
18 – 19	2.2	2.4	2.5	2.6
20 – 24	4.8	6.0	5.4	6.8
25 – 29	4.5	6.7	4.5	6.9
30 – 44	18.9	22.7	16.5	20.6
45 – 59	20.6	18.9	20.5	19.4
60 – 64	5.9	4.9	7.5	6.0
65 – 74	11.4	8.4	12.1	8.6
75 – 84	8.3	5.6	8.6	5.5
85 – 89	2.2	1.3	2.4	1.5
90 and over	1.2	0.6	1.3	0.8

**HOUSEHOLDS:** The number of households in Chichester District has increased from 45,796 in 2001 to 49,848 in 2011; this is an increase of 4,052 (8.8%). Chichester District had the third largest increase by number and percentage in West Sussex.



77% of households do not contain dependent children. Almost one in three households in the district is classified as single person occupancy. This is generally in line with county, regional and national averages. Chichester District ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in West Sussex and 72<sup>nd</sup> out of all 326 local authorities in England for single person occupancy.

**ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE:** The number of district residents who had never worked has increased from 56 to 198 people (an increase of 253.6%) between 2001 and 2011. This is below the county average but higher than the national average. Chichester District is roughly in line with the county average for percentage increases for people aged 16-24 who are unemployed. However, this is higher than the regional and national averages. Chichester

District has the lowest percentage increase in unemployment for people aged 50-74. This is much lower than county and regional averages but in line with national averages.

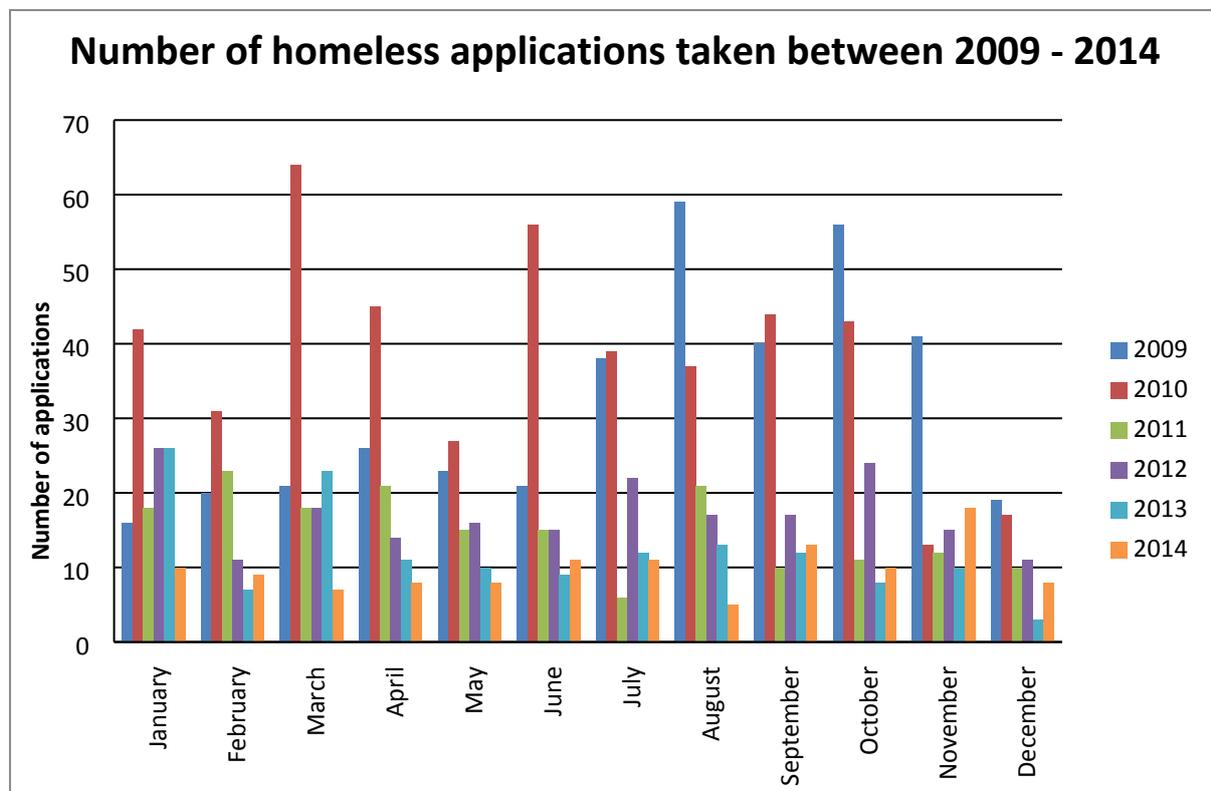
As at 2011, the district had the highest number of full time students in West Sussex (6,266). This is reflective of the University and College being located within Chichester City and the increase in student numbers seen at both institutions over the last decade.

<b>Economically active</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Percentage change</b>
<b>All people</b>	75,216	70.60%	81,037	71.20%	7.74%
<b>Employee: Part-time</b>	9,303	12.37%	11,384	14.00%	22.37%
<b>Employee: Full-time</b>	27,002	35.90%	27,847	34.40%	3.13%
<b>Self-employed</b>	9,751	12.96%	11,774	14.50%	20.75%
<b>Unemployed</b>	1,403	1.87%	2,267	2.80%	61.58%
<b>Full time student</b>	2,117	2.81%	2,830	3.50%	33.68%

## 2.0 Extent of homelessness

The full extent of homeless in the district is difficult to determine. Not all households threatened with homelessness or households who are homeless approach the Council for advice or to make homeless application. Additionally, not all households who approach the Council who are threatened with homelessness or who are actually homeless proceed to make an application, particularly in cases where to make an application would result in an adverse decision.

The bar graph below illustrates the number of homeless applications taken during the period of the last strategy (2009-2014); whilst the numbers of applications are declining the number of households experiencing homelessness is not as demonstrated by the rise in the number of clients requesting housing advice (Section 4.5) between 2009 and 2014.

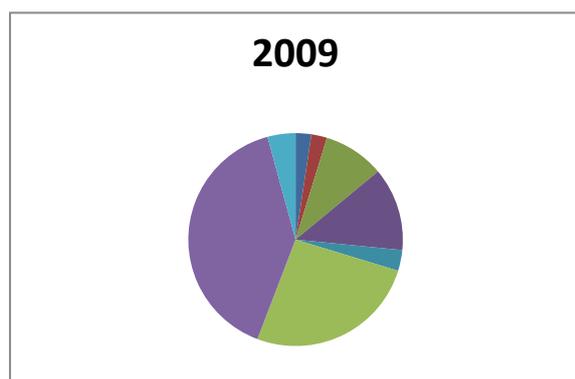
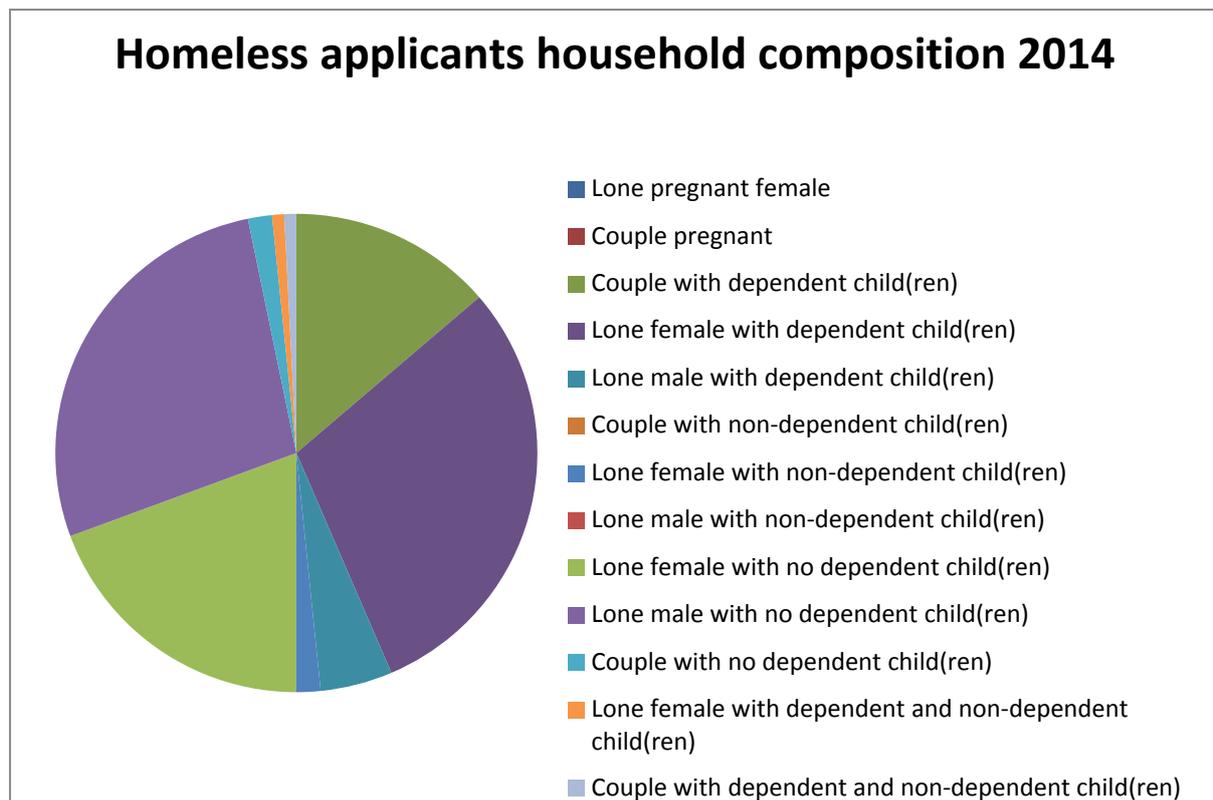


There are many ways of measuring homelessness or the threat of homelessness in the district including regard to the number of:

- repossession notifications from mortgage lenders
- repossession notifications from registered providers of social housing
- applicants in housing need on the Housing Register because they are under notice or living in unsuitable accommodation
- homeless applications
- households discussed at MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) and at risk of violence in their home
- claimants affected by the changes to the Local Housing Allowance
- claimants affected by the removal of the Spare Room Subsidy

- claimants in receipt of Discretionary Housing Payments because their accommodation is unaffordable
- claimants affected by the Benefit Cap

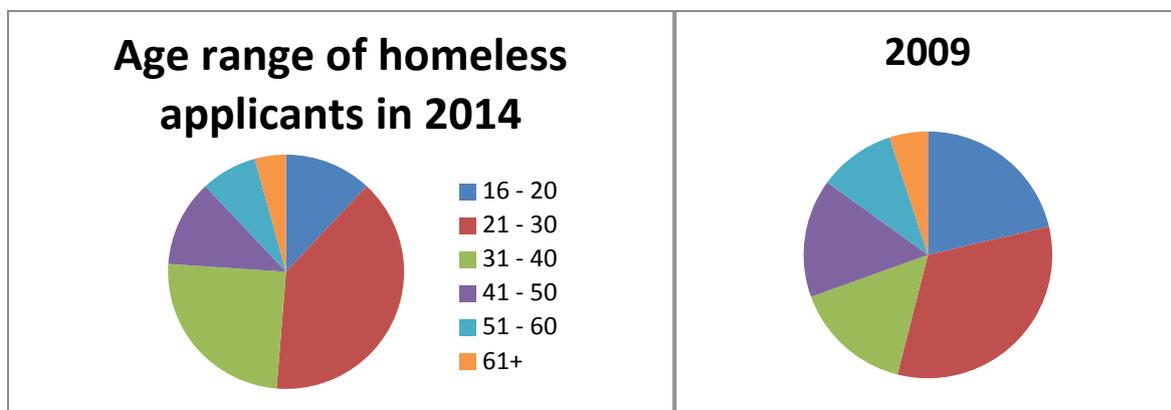
All these measures report a significant number of households who are or at risk of becoming homeless. The ability to manage the demand for housing advice and homelessness services requires an understanding not only of what are the causes of homelessness are but who is most at risk of homelessness.



The Council's core client group consistently over the last five years has been from households without dependent children who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The recorded number of homeless applications from households with dependent children has significantly declined since 2009. The actual number of households with dependent children making a homeless application in 2014 had reduced by almost 50% compared with the number of households who applied in 2009. A variety of reasons can account for this:

- Changes in the way we deliver the service. In 2009 a literal application of the law was delivered by the team and by 2014 more customers are given the option of making a homeless application once they understand whether it is beneficial for them to do so. Many households without a priority need decline to make an application which avoids having to investigate an application where the outcome is likely to be adverse and instead resources are deployed preventing homelessness or securing a suitable solution for the households needs.
- In 2014 no applications were taken from single pregnant women or pregnant couples, this maybe an effect of the amendment to the Council's Allocation Scheme whereby pregnant households are only eligible for two bedroom properties after reaching the end of the second trimester in their pregnancy.
- There was a reduction in the number births in Chichester District in 2012 (1,136) compared with 2009 (1,576).
- The mean age of the mother at childbirth has been steadily increasing since 1970 and in 2012 the national age was 29.8 years. Although the percentage of births outside of marriage continually increases nationally and in 2012 was 47.5%.
- In 2014 there was a 33% increase in the number of households whose homelessness was prevented either through securing private rented accommodation or social housing through the Council's Housing Register.

Despite the varying data on homeless households between 2009 and 2014 the one repetitive variable and reliable conclusion is that the Council's core customer continues to be households without dependent children.



In 2014 the age ranges of applicants presenting as homeless show a reduction in the number of 16-20 year olds. This change is attributable to the inception of the Prevention of Youth Homelessness Team which began in May 2011. The service works with 16 and 17 years olds who present as homeless that are not already supported by Children's Services. The project was born out of the counties Clients Bouncing Back group. The countywide initiative predominantly looks at repeat homelessness or service users and determines how services could be delivered more effectively to meet the needs of these customers in an effort to prevent homelessness and deliver financially efficient services that are sustainable. Since the project began the service has supported 95, 16 and 17 year olds from the District and only 6 were owed a s.20 duty under the Children Act and none made a homeless application.

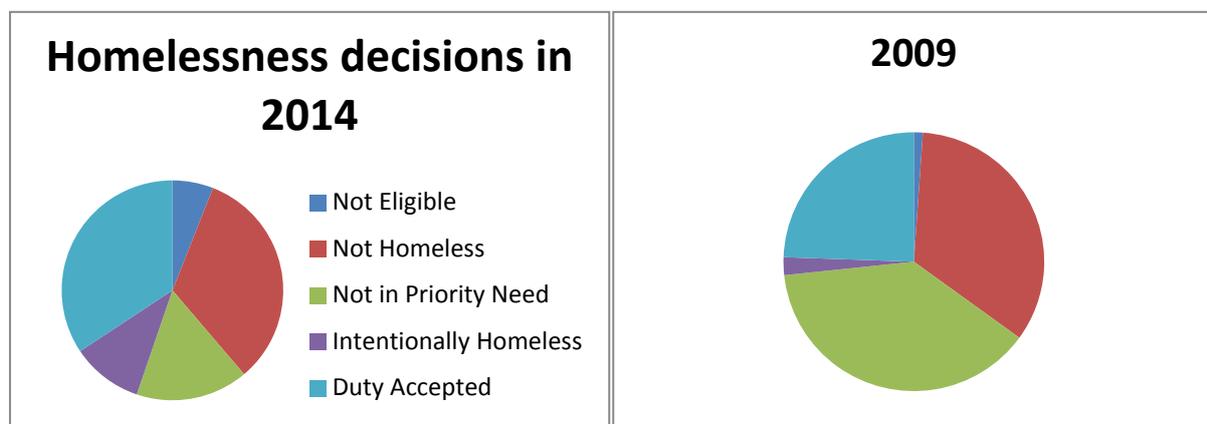
On 1 May 2004 the largest single expansion of the EU in terms of territory, number of states and population occurred. Known as the 'A8' nationals, the Worker Registration Scheme allowed nationals from Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia countries to work and live in the UK conditionally until 1 April 2011 when the scheme ended and the A8 countries acceded and were permitted the same rights as other EU nationals.

When Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU on 1 January 2007, access to employment was more restrictive than the Worker Registration Scheme for the A8 countries. The visa scheme for Bulgarian and Romanian nationals and its transitional controls regulating access to the UK labour market came to an end on 31 December 2013, thus awarding the EU nationals from those two countries the same rights as other EU nationals.

Eligibility for homelessness assistance is dependent on the applicant's right to reside in the UK whether they are an EEA National or non-EEA National. For non-EEA Nationals, eligibility is determined on receipt of the relevant visa or permission to remain in the UK. For EEA Nationals, eligibility is dependent on their 'worker' status, if they do not qualify for the permanent right to reside.

Since the accession of all ten European countries the Government have introduced restrictions on entitlements to benefits to limit access to UK means-tested benefits. In March 2014 the Government introduced a 'Minimum Earnings Threshold' for EEA migrant claimants. Local Authorities have regard to the past and current income of the claimant when determining whether their employment is genuine and effective as opposed to marginal or ancillary and whether they are therefore, a 'worker' and eligible.

The change in diversity particularly with EEA Nationals has seen the number of 'not eligible' decisions for housing assistance increase between 2009 and 2014. Whilst households may not be eligible for assistance, it does not eradicate the housing need. Where the Local Authority does not have a legal duty to provide services, applicants are referred to Social Care Services for assistance under the National Assistance Act 1948. There is a significant gap, county wide, for applicants ineligible for housing services. This deficiency has been raised at the West Sussex Clients Bouncing Back group where Social Care is a member.

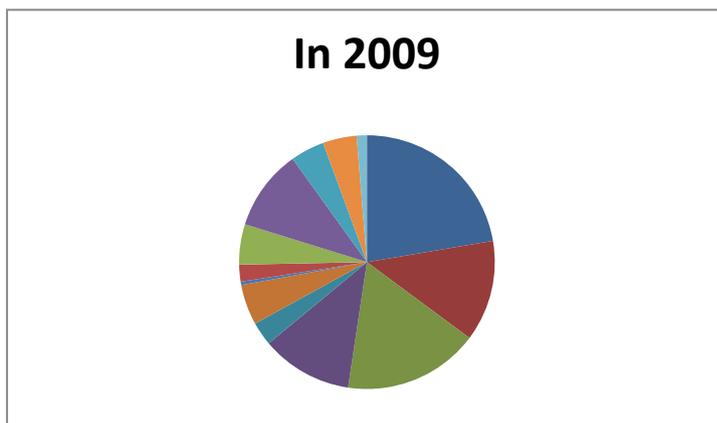
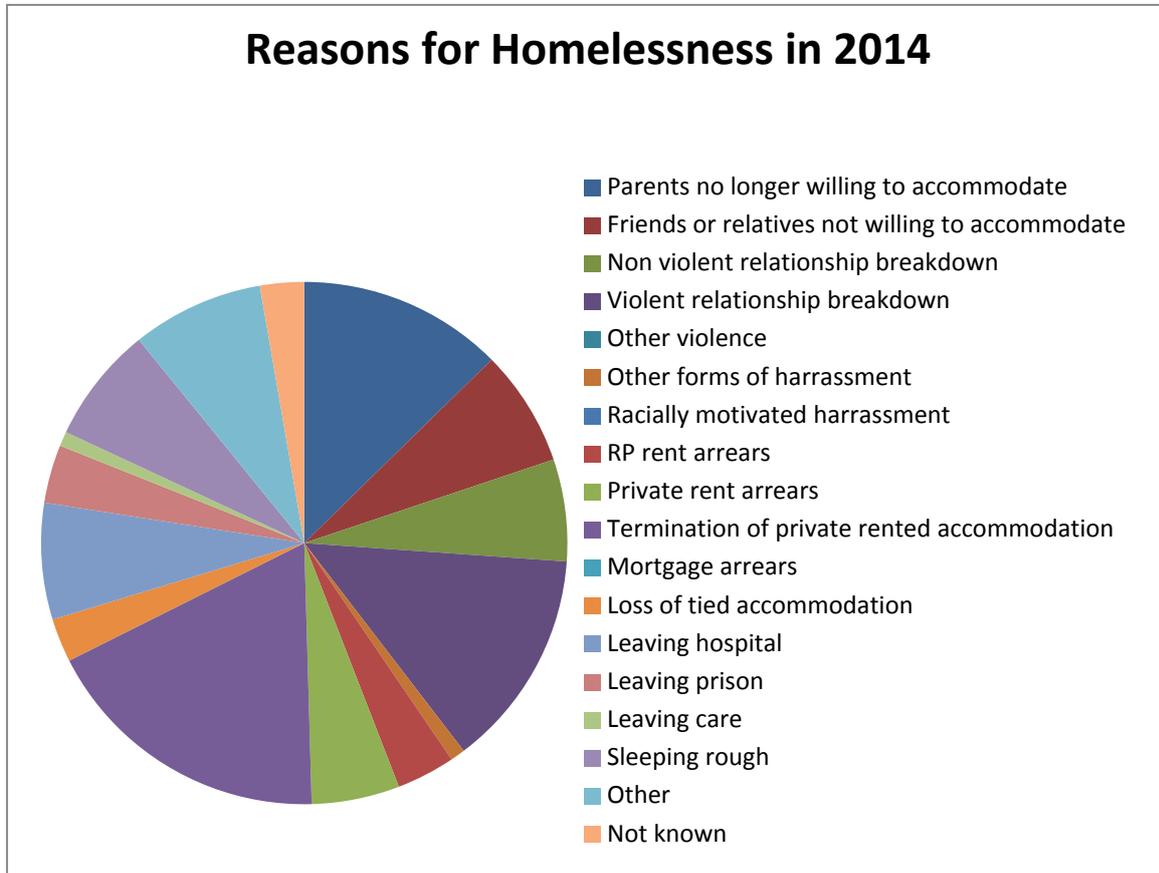


The District Council has seen a 111% increase in the number of A10 nationals seeking housing advice in 2014 compared with 2009. The district has a significant number of individuals rough sleeping in the district. The majority have no interest in securing housing

or affording housing costs i.e. rent, utility bills. Since 2012 when the Rough Sleepers Panel formed, in any given month, up to half of the districts rough sleepers were EEA Nationals who are not classed as 'workers' and therefore had no right to reside. In 2012 the Panel and UK Border Agency (UKBA) targetted EEA national not exercising their treaty rights and managed to reduce the number of EEA national rough sleepers to a small number who had been in the UK for more than 5 years. The remaining EEA Nationals actively rough sleeping are not transient but entrenched rough sleepers who are not engaging with the limited outreach services to end their homelessness. This deficiency highlights a gap in service provision.

Diversity in our customer base has changed noticeably. The use of translation services are more frequent and expensive, interviewing requires skill and experience as the structure is different and more complex than that of an english speaking interview. Investigating and enquiries take longer to undertake and establishing facts from abroad is very difficult with a language barrier, clarifying detail and facts is often lost or confused in translation. This is particularly difficult with countries where their infrastructure is unknown or very different to the services and agencies we have in the UK. Homelessness decisions are based on factual evidence, and not hearsay, without facts the investigating officer cannot substantiate an adverse decision and thus are obligated to rely on the information from the applicant whose interests are in receiving assistance.

### 3.0 Causes of homelessness



#### 3.1 Parents or friends unwilling to accommodate

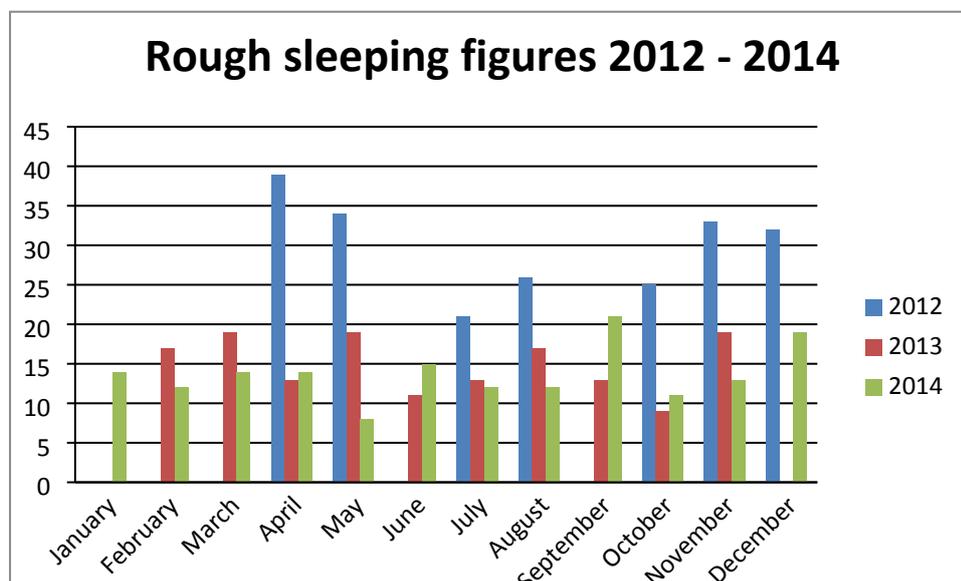
Since 2009 there has been a significant decrease (74%) in the number of homeless applications where parents/friend or relative are no longer willing to accommodate. It is possible that this decrease is attributable to the impact of the Welfare Reform Act 2012. The Act introduced restrictions on working age Housing Benefit claimants where they were under occupying social housing by removing the spare room subsidy (bedroom tax). This measure was implemented on 1 April 2013.

### 3.2 Domestic abuse

The number of applications from households from non-violent relationship breakdowns and those fleeing violence has also seen a significant decline from 2009 to 2014 the reasons for this can't be explained or presumed. However, there have been legislative changes with the Crime and Security Act 2010 which introduced Domestic Violence Notices and Orders designed to protect the victims-survivors of domestic abuse immediately following an incident of domestic violence. Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Orders have been available since March 2014.

### 3.3 Rough sleeping

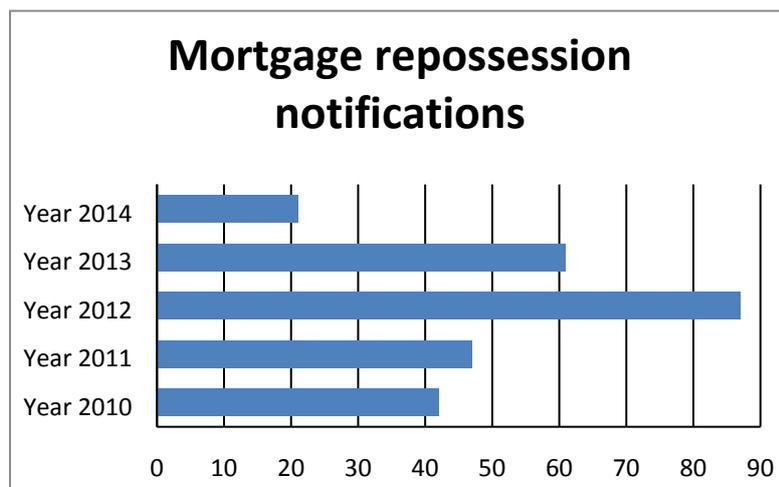
The numbers of applications from rough sleepers has increased; the creation of the multi-agency Rough Sleepers Panel may have instigated this rise in service use. Since the launch of the Panel in April 2012 the intelligence we have on street activity is more reliable and accurate. The countywide strategic group Sussex Homelessness Outreach Reconnection and Engagement (SHORE) financially invested in assertive outreach resources to actively engage and assess the needs of rough sleepers across Sussex (excluding Brighton and Hove). The provision of services has increased the visibility of this client group. The Rough Sleeper Panel is a vital group that identify the needs and establish housing solutions for known rough sleepers. Working in partnership with internal and external professionals has proven to be the most effective means of meeting the needs of rough sleepers. Since the Panel was formed the number of rough sleepers has reduced and the provision of services for rough sleepers has increased.



### 3.4 Mortgage repossessions

The other significant difference between homeless applications in 2009 compared with 2014 was the number of applicants homeless as a result of mortgage arrears. On 5 March 2009 the Bank of England announced that the interest base rate was being lowered to 0.5%, the lowest since the central bank was founded in 1694. House prices, nationally, at the time were falling.

On 1 October 2009 the Civil Procedure Rules were extended to impose a duty on any mortgagee seeking possession of land which consists of, or includes residential property. Within five days of receiving notification of the date of the hearing by the court, the claimant is required to notify the housing department of the local authority within which the property is located. In 2014 Chichester District Council received 22 notifications (compared with 55 in 2013, 87 in 2012 and 47 in 2011) from lenders seeking possession. The requirement on mortgage lenders provides the Local Authority with reliable intelligence relating to the numbers of home owners at risk of homelessness. In March 2011, 13,726 owner occupier households held mortgages and the Local Authority received 47 notifications that year which is 0.3% of all home owners with mortgages. Despite efforts the District Council advises very few home owners who are at risk of homelessness.



### 3.5 Local Housing Allowance

The award of Housing Benefit changed in April 2008 with the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA). LHA uses a nationally set system for setting the maximum eligible rent on which benefit awards are calculated. Rates are now based on the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile (previously the 50<sup>th</sup>) of advertised rents in the Broad Rental Market Area that a claimant lives in. Separate rates are set for each property size and claimants are allocated a LHA rate based on their household size, at a maximum of four (previously five) bedrooms. It is both an in-work and out-of work, means tested benefit, which means many workers on low incomes (31% of current claimants) rely on it to stay in their homes. The benefit is claimed by a household, rather than by individual, so a family or couple receiving LHA counts as one claim.

The number of LHA claimants rose alongside difficult economic conditions with a particular rise in the numbers of working claimants. The number of LHA claimants nationally increased from just over 900,000 claimants in January 2010 to 1,285,000 in January 2012. At the same time restrictions on mortgage finance increased a demand for private rented housing across all income bands. As a result rents increased. The national expenditure on Housing Benefit increased significantly from £11 billion in 2000/01 (£15bn in 2010/11 prices) to £21bn billion in 2010/11.

The Emergency Budget on 22 June 2010 announced dramatic changes to the Local Housing Allowance to address the fairness and sustainability of the scheme by taking steps

to ensure that people on benefit were not living in accommodation that would be out of the reach of most people in work. The intention being to create a fairer system for low-income working families and for the tax payer. The ultimate aim of the changes was to control and constrain the Housing Benefit spend. The changes included:

- Removal of the five bedroom LHA rate so that the maximum level was a four bedroom property.
- Introduction of absolute caps so that LHA rates could not exceed:
  - £250 for a one bedroom property
  - £290 for a two bedroom property
  - £340 for a three bedroom property
  - £400 for a four bedroom property
- Removal of the £15 weekly excess that some customers received under the LHA arrangements.
- Increase in deductions to reverse the freeze in rates since 2001-2002.
- An additional bedroom within the size criteria used to assess Housing Benefit where a disabled person or someone with a long term health condition has a proven need for overnight care and this is provided by a non-resident carer(s).
- LHA rates set at the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile of rents rather than the median.
- Shared room rate extended to all single claimants below the age of 35.

In October 2010 an impact assessment of these changes to existing Housing Benefit claimants was undertaken. The number of households expected to be affected by the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile following the anniversary and nine months of their claim after April 2011, in the District of Chichester was approximately 810 claimants.

### 3.6 The Benefit Cap

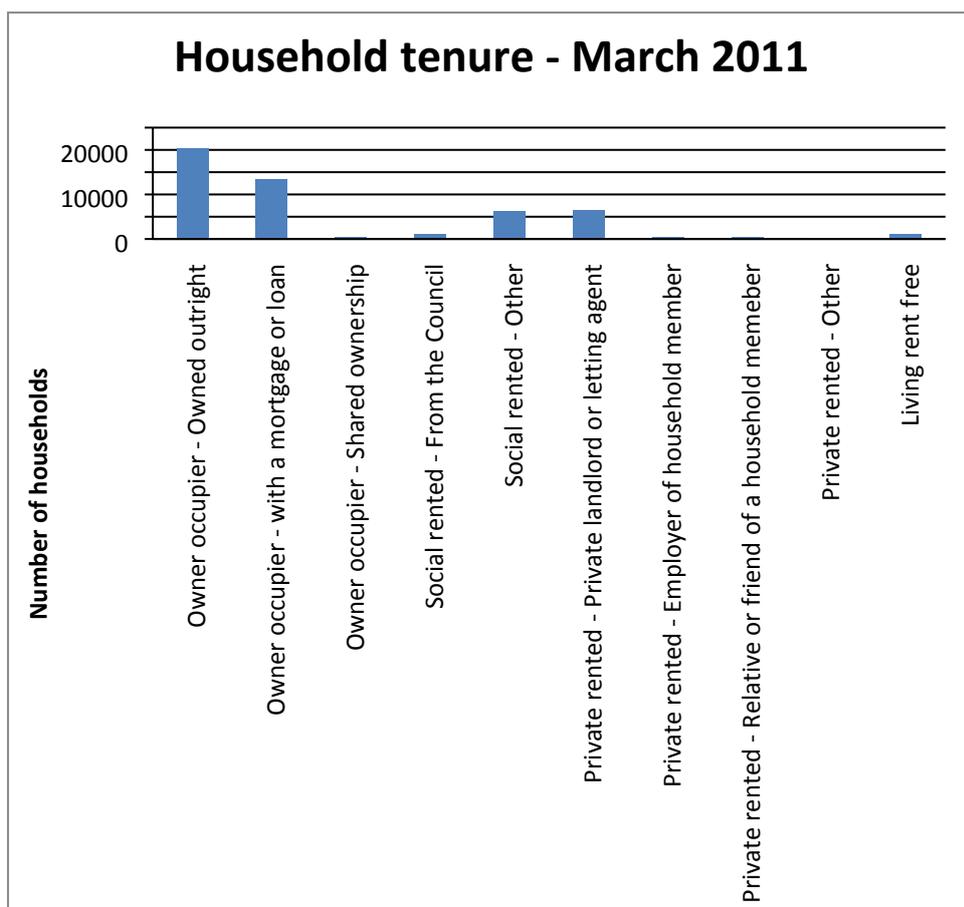
The Welfare Reform Act received Royal Assent on 8 March 2012. The provisions within the Act radically changed the welfare system. The introduction of the Benefit Cap restricted benefit entitlements to working age claimants in an effort to:

- reduce the national spend on welfare benefits,
- improve working incentives for those on benefits; and
- deliver fairness to the taxpayer in work.

The 46 claimants in the district affected in December 2012 collectively had their weekly benefit reduced by £2,653.98, saving the public purse £138,006.96 per annum. The total number of claimants affected by the Benefit Cap when it was introduced was of a manageable level, so that staff from Housing Benefit and Housing Options were able to conduct home visits to every claimant affected by the changes and discuss the impact and options available to them to prevent homelessness.

### 3.7 Supply of private rented accommodation

Approximately 15% of accommodation in the district is privately rented, 15% socially rented and 70% owner occupied.

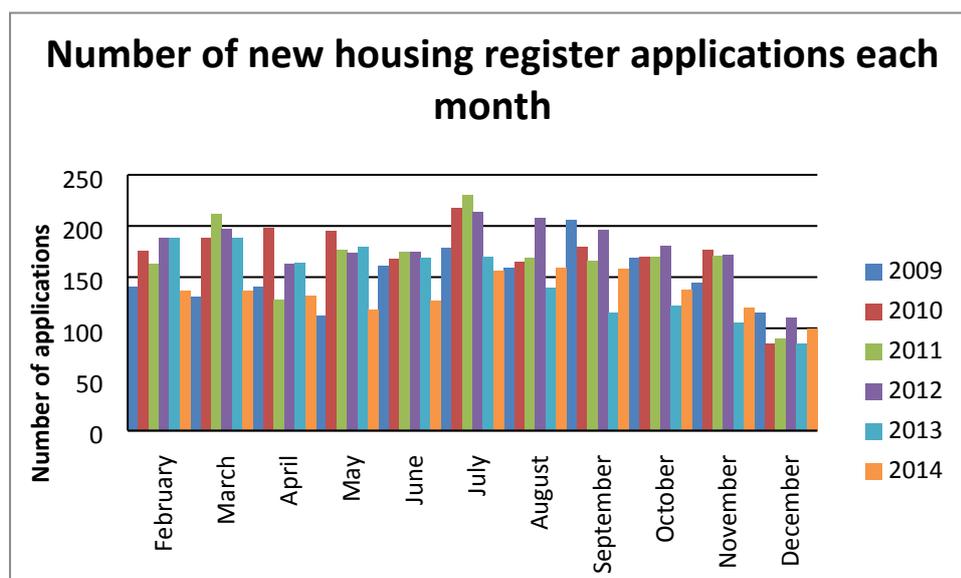


Since the economic down turn in 2008 the demand for private rented accommodation affected the availability of affordable accommodation at the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile for households on benefit or low incomes. The Council's rent in advance and deposit bond scheme was not competitive in a market where demand outstripped supply. In an attempt to increase the Council's access to the private rented sector the Council developed an internal social letting agency. Homefinder was launched in April 2012.

The Valuation Office Agency annually publish Private Rental Market Statistics using a sample of lets in each Local Authority area, the statistics exclude properties let to Housing Benefit claimants. The table below compares the average monthly rent with the Local Housing Allowance rate. On average there is a 16% discrepancy between the market rent levels and the Local Housing Allowance rate.

1 Oct 2013 – 30 Sept 2014	Sample	Average monthly rent	Local Housing Allowance per month	Shortfall
Room	97	£366	£315.68	£50.32 (14%)
Studio	18	£475	£575	+£100.00
1 Bedroom	206	£623	£575	£48.00 (8%)
2 Bedroom	437	£813	£700	£113.00 (14%)
3 Bedroom	324	£1,013	£850	£163.00 (16%)
4 or more Bedroom	154	£1,631	£1150	£481.00 (29%)

### 3.8 Localism Act 2011



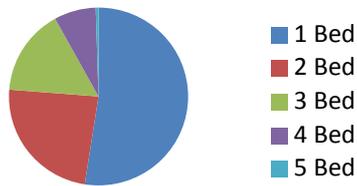
The Localism Act received Royal Assent in November 2011. The provisions within the Act devolved greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and gave local communities more control over housing decisions. Local Authorities were granted new freedoms and flexibility to adjust their Allocation Schemes and determine who can qualify to register with the scheme. Exclusions to home owners, applicants owing significant housing related debts or those without a local connection to the district reduced the number of applicants on the housing register from 6756 in December 2009 to 2731 in the same month in 2014 which is a 60% reduction.

The Act also changed security of tenure in social housing. The Act enables social landlords to grant tenancies for a fixed length of time so that the size of the accommodation reflects the requirements of the household. The minimum fixed period is for 2 years in exceptional circumstances with 5 years being the norm. Flexible tenancies will allow social landlords to manage their stock more effectively and fairly

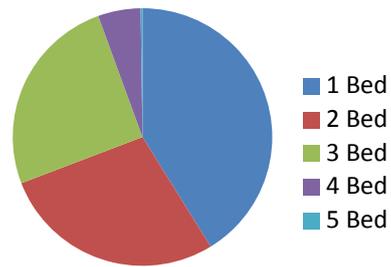
### 3.9 Social housing

The average house price in the South East increased in the year to June 2014 by 9.7%. House prices at this time were 9.2% higher than at their pre-financial crisis peak in 2008. With approximately 15% of all housing stock in the district being privately rented and only 30% of that being affordable and the ambition of becoming a homeowner financially unachievable, the desire and need to secure social housing is increasingly the preferred housing solution. Despite the changes made by the provisions of the Localism Act, social housing is still regarded by the majority in housing need as the option that offers the most security and choice.

### Homemove applicants in housing need in 2014



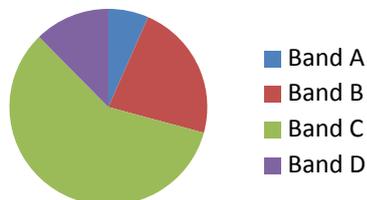
### 2009



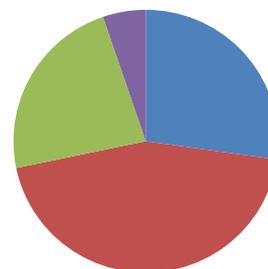
The majority of applicants in housing need on the Council’s housing register continue to require one bedroom accommodation; this is consistent with the majority of homeless households being without children, dependent or otherwise, and the demographic of the district. The reduction in the number of households in housing need with a two or three bedroom need could be a result of an increase in the number of family size new builds allocated in 2014 compared with the previous year. Additionally, changes to the Allocation Scheme following the withdrawal of the Spare Room Subsidy (Bedroom Tax), has also changed the size criteria.

Previously socially rented tenants with two children of the opposite sex were eligible for the allocation of a three bedroom property to accommodate their future needs as a household and to avoid households having to move as the children grew. An allocation like this, to a Housing Benefit claimant, would now impose a 14% reduction in benefit because the household would be under occupying the accommodation. Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy came into effect on 1 April 2013. The Council’s Allocation Scheme was changed to reflect the benefit changes to avoid households accruing arrears, the implication of this change meant that with immediate effect applicants were either adequately housed and not eligible to register or were no longer two bedrooms short and in band B but one bedroom short and their priority reduced to band C.

### Banding status when housed in 2014



### 2009



### 3.10 Temporary accommodation

Since 1993 the Local Authority had owned two units of self-contained temporary accommodation, Tatchells in Midhurst and Westward House in Chichester. The two blocks of temporary accommodation had a total of 63 self-contained flats. In April 2010 the smaller

of the two blocks, Tatchells, was decommissioned and later sold, leaving a remainder of 40 flats at Westward House. The use of temporary accommodation peaked in 2009, the years following have consistently seen just over 100 households accommodated in temporary accommodation every year.

The Council uses B&B accommodation located in and outside of the district only when accommodation in our own temporary accommodation is either not available or an allocation would place the household and/or the other residents at Westward House at risk. The Local Authority justifies the use of B&B for example when accommodating; Registered Sex Offenders and arsonists or in situations where the household are fleeing violence. The use of B&B is strictly limited until other suitable accommodation is arranged.

In 2013 Westward House underwent a full refurbishment. During this time the Managers office was relocated and a further 6 units including 2 fully adapted units for wheelchair users were built, increasing the total number of units to 46. The demand for temporary accommodation has been at a consistent and manageable level over the last five years. The Council however, have difficulty in arranging suitable accommodation for households with four or more children or when applicants have multiple needs and general needs accommodation is not sufficient. In 2014 the Council began to offer temporary accommodation to homeless households not in priority need under s.192 of the Housing Act to utilise temporary accommodation voids at Westward House and to increase the temporary accommodation options for non-priority, single homeless people. The scheme currently provides temporary accommodation for up to 7 people and it is expected to expand to offer emergency accommodation with intensive support to rough sleepers through the SOS outreach service in 2015.

#### **4.0 Activities and resources which contribute to tackling homelessness**

##### **4.1 Single homelessness**

In April 2011 DCLG awarded Sussex authorities a sum of £120,000 to examine current good practice and deliver a raft of services to combat single homelessness and rough sleeping across Sussex. Eastbourne Borough Council was identified as the lead authority for this work and during the first quarter of 2011 the authority accumulated information on the extent of single homeless and rough sleeping across the area, as well as examining examples of good practice, via the Sussex Single Homeless Rough Sleeping Initiative (SSHRSI), the county-wide consultative group.

Following on from this grant, the government awarded the lead authority £567,000 to develop Sussex-wide services in relation to single homeless and rough sleepers. The thirteen Local Authorities meet six weekly, chaired by Eastbourne Borough Council an action plan was drawn up defining each of the local authority's priorities and requirements to tackle single homelessness and rough sleeping. The first initiative funded by the grant employed three outreach workers to deliver street outreach covering Sussex (excluding Brighton and Hove). From these appointments SSHRSI became SHORE (Sussex Homeless Outreach Reconnection and Engagement). The pilot was unsuccessful in the Chichester and Arun area for a number of reasons and the provider (CRI) terminated the contract early, returning

part of the contract funding. The group have since appointed a Project Co-ordinator to progress the action plan and manage the project.

In October 2013 the SHORE group agreed to commission an outreach service to replace the CRI outreach project. The contract grant was for £216,000 to deliver outreach services in one, two or all three of the hub areas which were grouped in accordance of locality and prevalence of rough sleeping:

- Hub 1: Crawley, Horsham, Mid Sussex - £54k
- Hub 2: Arun, Chichester, Worthing & Adur - £81k
- Hub 3: Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, Rother & Wealden - £81k

In November a panel consisting of three Housing Needs Managers from each of the hub areas (Chichester, Crawley and Hastings) interviewed three voluntary agencies who applied for the grants with St Mungos Broadway eventually being awarded the grant for all three hub areas.

In December 2014 SHORE submitted a bid on behalf of Sussex (excluding Brighton and Hove who submitted their own) for the 'Help for Single Homeless' fund. DCLG welcomed bids to break the route into rough sleeping by improving coordination for single homeless clients across local authority boundaries, agencies and the voluntary sector and spread good practice to improve the quality and consistency of the service for single homeless people. The Sussex bid was successful and the group was awarded £248,000.

The Department of Work and Pensions awarded SHORE a further £97,000 following an application to the 'Flexible Support Fund'. This grant funding will support and assist entrenched rough sleepers in Sussex (excluding Brighton and Hove) to engage with Jobcentre Plus whilst securing and offering learning, training, volunteering and employment opportunities. The lead partner for the project is St Mungos Broadway, who employs a full time co-ordinator, the post continues until March 2016.

Stonepillow owns and runs St Joseph's in Chichester, which was a traditional night shelter offering emergency accommodation on a nightly basis. In 2011 the dormitory style accommodation was modernised to single rooms accommodating 10 single homeless people. The transition made the offer of accommodation more attractive to clients and encouraged rough sleepers to consider their future rather than their daily plight. In May 2013 the nightly, direct access accommodation changed to 28 day stay accommodation. Since the change in duration which offers homeless people the security of accommodation for a minimum of 28 days, active engagement with the charities programme has increased and the charity has assisted more homeless people into sustainable move on accommodation.

In 2013/14 Stonepillow managed a hospital discharge pilot for patients with no fixed abode. The demands on the service exceeded expectation and as a result secured funding for a 5 bed self-contained unit offering accommodation following discharge. The project was officially opened in March 2015.

Identified gaps: Chichester has a group of heavily entrenched rough sleepers who do not engage with existing homelessness services. The resources to end rough sleeping in the district are inadequate. The provision of assertive outreach is the only way of engaging with clients that are not seeking assistance. Intensive accommodation support for rough sleepers once they are in accommodation is not currently available but will be considered later in 2015 following the award of 'Help for Single Homeless' funding.

Assertive outreach for mentally ill rough sleepers is unavailable. Mental health services are accessed through GP referral only and although GP services for rough sleepers exist, clients who do not recognise or accept that they are mentally unwell do not approach the GP services asking to be referred to the mental health team.

#### 4.2 Tenancy Support

Southdown Housing deliver low level tenancy support through the scheme 'MyKey'. The support is available to anyone across West Sussex regardless of their tenure. In addition the Richmond Fellowship offers short and long term outreach support for people suffering with a mental illness and living independently.

The Council's Homefinder service provides tenancy support to clients who are threatened with eviction. The Tenancy Sustainment Officer works intensively with tenants and landlord in order to sustain tenancies. Since 1 April 2012 40 tenancies have been successfully sustained by the work of the Tenancy Sustainment Officer, thus preventing homelessness.

Register Providers of Social Housing employ a range of officers to support their tenants, for example; debt management officers, income recovery officers, under occupation officers and ASB officers. RP's manage their stock for the benefit of the business and communities, whilst preventing homelessness by sustaining tenants in their homes. Homelessness prevention performance goes unrecorded as it is not a core function but a by-product of successful housing management. During the Review consultation period with partners, all of the Registered Provider's who responded, under-represented their performance and achievements in preventing homelessness as they don't record their homelessness prevention performance.

The Think Family Project was launched in 2011 and works with families that have problems and cause problems to the community around them, putting high costs on the public sector. The Governments initiative aims to assist 120,000 troubled families in England by 2015 and:

- get children back into school
- reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour
- put adults on a path back to work
- reduce the high costs these families place on the public sector each year

The Government has given West Sussex County Council (WSCC) a target number of families who meet the main criteria across the County of 1165, of which 152 will need to be identified in the Chichester District.

The target group of families were those that met three of the Government's mandated criteria which are as follows;

- Are involved in youth crime and or adult / youth anti-social behaviour
- Have children not in fulltime education
- Have an adult on out of work benefits.

Families are still eligible for the programme if they meet two of the mandated criteria plus at least one of the following local criteria;

- Substance misuse and addiction issues
- Mental Health issues
- Carer in family
- Long term health conditions
- Chronic and substantial debt
- Risk of homelessness
- Domestic Violence in the family

And /or

- Live in a Think Family Neighbourhood
- Have a child under 5
- Have a pregnant woman in the household
- Multiple services are involved with the family (3 or more)
- High use of urgent healthcare services including A&E , Out of hours GP, emergency dentist
- Poor uptake of offered routine health checks and or regular appointments offered to support long term conditions.

Identified gaps: The level and type of support available through the existing schemes are limited. Service delivery is also dependent on client participation. Clients who decline support are often those who would benefit most and if the support is not in place the client is at greater risk of homelessness.

The Phase 1 target of helping 1165 households across the County has been met and there is an extension of the programme and the project has a target of assisting 4060 between now and 2020. The criteria have been widened so that it will be possible to have an early intervention approach. The expanded criteria seek to address the six headline problems that are:

1. Parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour;
2. Children who have not been attending school regularly;
3. Children who need help;
4. Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness;
5. Families affected by domestic violence and abuse;
6. Parents and children with a range of health problems.

It is expected that at least 10 household, living in Chichester District Council's area, will be assisted each year until 2020.

### 4.3 Supported accommodation

The Independent Living Scheme was founded in 2008 providing flexible tenancy support to tenants in social housing. The scheme supports adults with low level mental health and/or learning difficulties and offers a maximum of 2 hours support per client, per week. The scheme is managed by Southdown Housing.

MyPlace is a similar scheme for young people aged 16-25 offering up to 4 hours of support per client, per week. The support from Southdown is expected to be short term so that the scheme can support new referrals to the service.

The Foyer is managed by the housing association Home Group which offers supported accommodation in a direct access 40 bed hostel in central Chichester. The project has its own move-on flats located in the complex which provides residents the opportunity to demonstrate independent living skills before they obtain social housing.

The Alabaré supported housing programme for ex-service personnel offers short term (6-8 months) accommodation in four shared houses in Gosport and Fareham. The accommodation is for single homeless veterans who may have a range of low to medium support needs.

Identified gaps: The existing supported accommodation caters only for those with low level need. The district does not have supported accommodation for people who require a higher level of support. There is a gap where people have identified support needs but their needs do not meet the Social Care threshold but not qualify for accommodation under current supported provisions. There are shortages in supported accommodation for those with high level mental health needs, learning difficulties, Asperger, Autism, Down's syndrome and personal care needs.

### 4.4 Homefinder

On 1 April 2012 the Council introduced an internal lettings agency called Homefinder with the intention of increasing the supply of private rented sector properties in order to prevent homelessness and to allow the Council discharge its housing duty to homeless households into a home in the private rented sector.

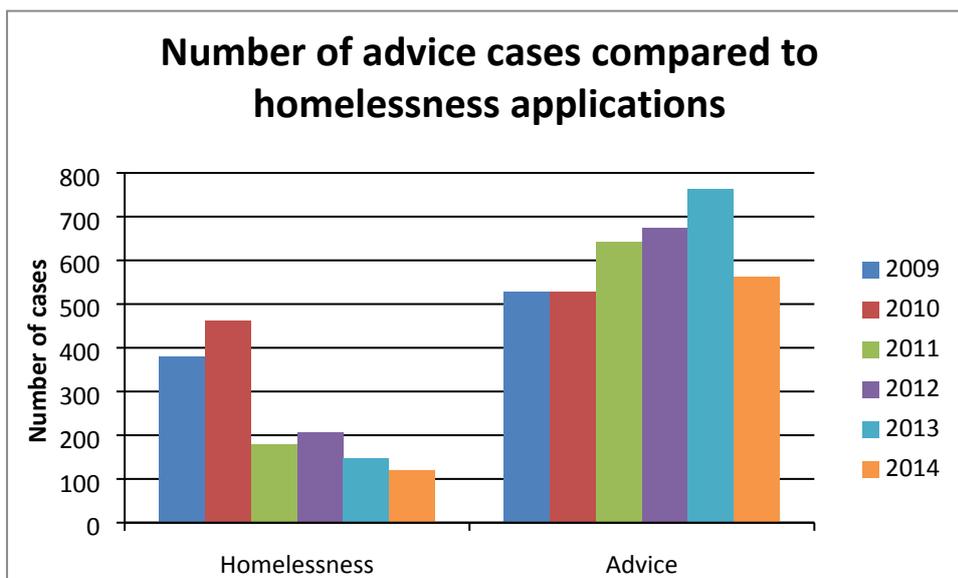
The scheme offers a full housing management service to landlords if they are prepared to let their dwellings at the Local Housing Allowance rate, thus making them affordable to households in receipt of benefits. Homefinder also works with local lettings agents so that low income households can access the sector with the aid of rent in advance and a deposit bond.

The table below shows the number of households that the Council has assisted into the private rented sector since 2009 and it demonstrates that Homefinder has significantly increased the number of households helped to find suitable private rented accommodation.

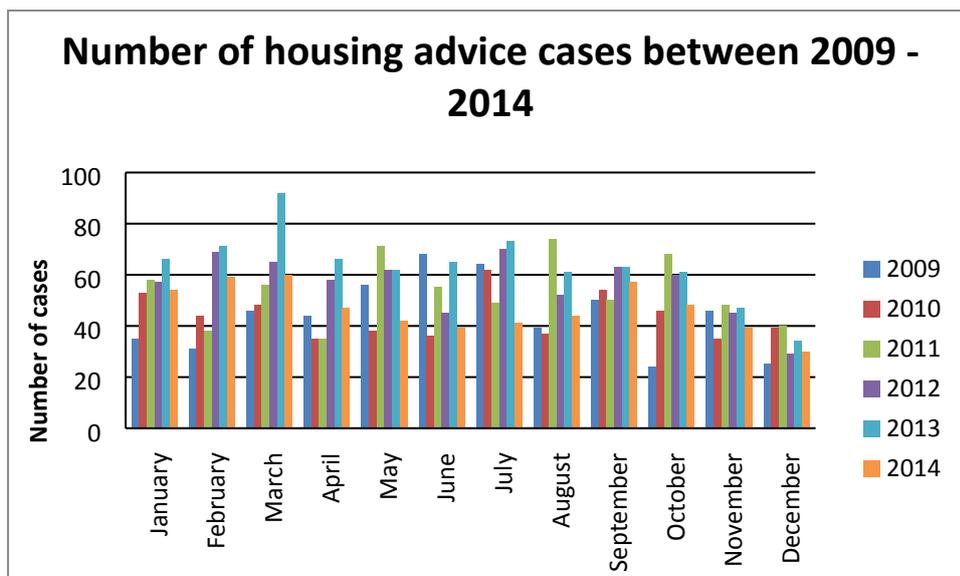


#### 4.5 Advice services

Access to good quality housing advice and information is highly valued and improves the housing outcomes of the majority of those receiving it, often avoiding costly episodes of homelessness.



The Council deliver free housing advice to anyone regardless of their age, income or tenure. The main area of housing advice is in relation to security of tenure. However, there are often secondary and even tertiary issues (most commonly relationship breakdown and debt) that need to be considered and advised upon, in order to sustain or prevent homelessness. Over the last three years the numbers of people seeking advice has stabilized but the complexity and multiple lines of enquiry have made prevention more difficult.



The Council provides advice to landlords, but on occasions, where a conflict of interest arises we signpost landlords to the National Landlords Association. The NLA offer unlimited and free telephone advice to members so landlords can obtain independent advice on their rights and responsibilities as landlords which is mutually beneficial to tenant and landlord. The NLA regularly attend the Council’s Landlord Forums to address landlords and to advertise their services and benefits to prospective new members.

In addition to the in-house advice services employed by Registered Providers, there are a range of other advice services in the district. Some services are means tested whilst other are free to anyone and include:

**Christians Against Poverty** - operate a free and impartial debt counselling advice service to parts of the district. The service is free and delivered in the recipient’s home. Money Management or miss-management is a significant issue for many households that approach the Council. Arrears often accrue because priority is given to other debts and debt advice and 1-2-1 money management is rarely a service people ask for. Households minimise or deny the issues they have had in the past and currently have and show little motivation to address the issues.

**Citizens Advice Bureau** - offer free independent advice from their advice centre in central Chichester and operate a satellite service in Midhurst one morning per week. The CAB offers generalist advice on a range of topics including; housing, debt, welfare benefit, community care.

**Shelter** - offer a means tested specialist housing law and community care advice service under the Legal Aid contract in the Chichester area. The County Court desk service for possession hearings is also delivered by Shelter on the day of listing which is usually a Wednesday.

**Swain and Co** – The high street solicitors firm based in Havant also offer a means tested specialist housing law advice service under the Legal Aid contract for people living in the

district of Chichester. Swain & Co also operate one morning a week from the City's Citizens Advice Bureau office offering legal advice and assistance in relation to Family Law.

**WORTH Services** - are a voluntary agency delivering domestic abuse advisory services. Referrals for outreach support and refuge placements are delivered county-wide.

**National Centre for Domestic Violence** - For victims-survivors who want to remain in their home. Officers are trained to offer advice on how a victim can pursue civil action to safeguard their family in their own home by excluding the perpetrator with assistance from the National Centre for Domestic Violence.

**FindItOut** - is an advice and guidance service for young people aged 13-15 offering advice on a range of topics including education, housing, sexual health, money, health, justice and equality and family relationships.

**Soldiers, Sailors, & Airmen Families Association (SSAFA)** - the national military charity offer a lifelong practical advice and support service to veterans (both regulars and reserves) and their families.

Identified gaps: A reduction in resources has dramatically reduced access to out-of-hours emergency accommodation for men and women fleeing violence. Previously refuge accommodation was available 24/7. Currently there is no out-of-hours provision over weekend or bank holiday period. On these occasions households are offered temporary accommodation from the Council which is often a B&B placement without support and outside of the district as our own temporary accommodation is unfurnished. B&B accommodation is often declined.

Chichester is one of many local authorities who have recently seen the closure of its women's refuge. The reduction in refuge accommodation will affect the availability of emergency, supported accommodation nationally and so fewer women will be able to be accommodated in a place of safety. Before the mass closures attempts to secure accommodation was often difficult, now it will be even harder and local authorities will be required to offer alternative temporary accommodation with no support which will increase the likelihood of the victim returning or remaining with the perpetrator for a longer period.

West Sussex districts and boroughs formed the 'Clients Bouncing Back' group to identify and deliver services to clients who may qualify for assistance under both social care and housing. Partnership working has seen the successful introduction of the Youth Prevention Team. Links between adult social care and children and family services have improved over the past five years but constraints on budgets and the increasing demand complicates the working relationship.

The Council works in partnership with the National Probation Service. Committed to the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) partnership, the group meets on a monthly basis to manage and support the supervision of high-risk offenders in the community. The Council also forms part of the cross agency response to the identification and management of persistent and problematic offenders, through the Integrated Offender Management group.

## 5.0 Future trends

### 5.1 Introduction of Universal Credit

The Coalition Government's introduced legislation to reform the welfare system by creating a new Universal Credit. The intention is that Universal Credit will radically simplify the system to make work pay and combat worklessness and poverty. Universal Credit is an integrated working-age credit that will provide a basic allowance with additional elements for children, disability, housing and caring. It will support people both in and out of work, replacing Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and income-related Employment and Support Allowance.

The three main objectives of Universal Credit are to:

- Reduce poverty
- Make work pay
- Simplify the administration of delivering financial assistance

Aspects of Universal Credit will prevent homeless. Universal Credit will merge out-of-work benefits and in-work support. This means that people will no longer have to take a risk in moving from one system to another. Introducing a single payment method will prevent benefit claims from being stopped due to a change in circumstances or as claimants move from one benefit from another. However, the delivery of Universal Credit will affect the Council's ability to prevent homelessness.

Overall administration of the new benefit will be managed by one department – the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) – as opposed to today's delivery of current benefits through the DWP, HM Revenue & Customs and Local Authorities. Whilst claimants will have one system to contact rather than having to repeat information to three separate bodies, the service will not be managed locally or face-to-face. Currently internal departments refer cases where there is a risk of homelessness or where claimants would benefit from housing advice, this referral system would cease to exist. Early intelligence to prevent homelessness increases intervention performance. Benefits being distributed centrally will reduce local knowledge and awareness and cause interventions to be prolonged and complicated where previously they could be resolved by internally and at speed.

In an effort to prepare people for the "working world" claimants who previously had their Housing Benefit paid direct to their landlord will receive the rent element of their benefit paid to them directly to then forward it to their landlord. This is likely to reduce the number of landlords that accept Housing Benefit claimants into the private rented sector as there is a greater risk to the landlord that rent will not be paid. The guaranteed direct payment from Housing Benefit departments has previously compensated landlords for the reduction in rent levels compared with the increasing market rent levels. The introduction of Universal Credit could affect the attractive benefits of Housing Benefit claimant tenants. Furthermore, the Council's Homefinder gold scheme that guarantee's landlords rental payments will expose the Council to a greater financial risk and will create additional management costs of the scheme.

Housing Benefit claimants who lack money management skills will be at greater risk of homelessness with the abolition of direct payments. Households that have become intentionally homeless through non-payment of rent regularly prioritise other purchases or debts above their rental liability. The availability of additional income, as rent elements are paid direct to the claimant, increases the claimant's risk of homelessness. Claimants with compulsive disorders and addictions may also find budgeting difficult and be at greater risk of homelessness. Direct payments to landlords are widely used as a homeless prevention tool to protect vulnerable claimants who are most at risk of homelessness. Whilst some direct payments will still exist, the majority, in the interests of administration simplicity will not.

## 5.2 Increase in interest rates

A rise in the Base Rate will affect the cost of borrowing and so interest payments on credit cards and loans will become more expensive. An increase will have a significant effect on mortgagees with a variable loan or those whose fixed rate is expiring. A 0.5% increase in interest rates can increase the cost of a £100,000 mortgage by £60 per month. The average house price in March 2014 in Chichester was £274,000 and so the cost of an increase in the base rate could have significant implications for approximately 28% of homeowners with a mortgage in the district.

## 5.3 Reduction in housing stock with the extension of the right to buy scheme

The Housing Bill, which contains a number of key Conservative election pledges, will include an extension of the right-to-buy scheme, allowing England's 1.3 million housing association tenants to purchase their homes with the same discounts offered to council tenants.

Nationally, about 800,000 housing association tenants already have a right to acquire their homes with smaller discounts, but the government's plans would see discounts start at 35% on a house and 50% on a flat. The maximum is 70%, but that is currently capped at £77,900 outside London, and £103,900 in the capital. For example, someone who has been a public sector tenant for ten years could buy a £100,000 flat for just £40,000 - using a 60% discount.

The government claims that by selling off housing association homes, but by requiring a replacement to be built, the scheme will, in effect, double the number of homes available. It will also raise the proportion of home-owners in England, which has fallen over the last few years. However, since 2012, only 46% of homes sold through the right to buy have been replaced by new ones, despite a requirement for local authorities to do so. One problem is that councils - particularly those in urban areas - cannot find enough land to build on.

Around 2.5m council tenants across the UK have bought their homes since right to buy started in October 1980. The numbers buying peaked at 167,000 in England in 1982/83, but fell to 3,179 in 2009/10. After the discounts were increased, sales went back up to more than 15,000 in 2013/14.

Demand for social housing in the district outweighs the supply and, ultimately, any reduction in the number of properties available under the scheme will affect the waiting time for applicants on the housing register and will reduce choice.

#### 5.4 Proposed reduction in the Benefit Cap

The Government's intention to reduce the Benefit Cap further from £26,000 to £23,000 (the equivalent to a pre-tax salary of approx. £29,300) would have a significant affect on additional Housing Benefit claimants. Implementation is expected to save the tax payer £1.35 million per year and is designed to lead to a renewed "stampede to the job centre." The implementation of the Benefit Cap has for some households made living in the district unaffordable to them unless they secure employment. The initial reduction in entitlement did prompt some households to seek employment successfully. Other households found securing part time employment to fit around children care difficult and those with three or more children found the cost of child care too expensive and securing affordable placements in the school holidays were particularly difficult. Therefore, some claimants felt that there was no obvious financial incentive to securing employment and so had to reduce their outgoings to manage the reduction in income.

Lowering the Benefit Cap reduces the rehousing resources the Council has to offer homeless applicants. In order to discharge a housing duty or to conclude that a household are not homeless, they have to be satisfied that the accommodation on offer is affordable. Previously this has been established by using entitlements to JSA, ESA or Income Support. Claimants affected by the Benefit Cap are required to use a proportion of the money they receive for day-to-day living expenses to pay a proportion of their rent because the cost of accommodation in the private and social sector are too expensive for their means. Households using large proportions of their personal allowance risk living below the poverty line with accommodation costs regarded as unaffordable and/or unsuitable.

## 6.0 Recommendations

The conclusions of this review recommend that the following areas be considered in the Council's Homelessness Strategy for the period 2015 – 2020:

- 6.1 Develop the tools to increase choice for customers and prevent homelessness.
- Work with our partners to minimise the impact of welfare reforms and to ensure that customers have sufficient advice and information in order to make informed choices.
  - Continue to develop Homefinder to increase access to the private rented sector and to sustain tenancies in order to prevent homelessness.
  - Work with our Registered Provider partners to ensure that best use is made of their existing stock and that any new housing they deliver meets the needs of local people.
  - Ensure that the housing needs of vulnerable young people are met by developing protocols to prevent care leavers becoming homeless.
- 6.2 Assist households to resolve their housing issues.
- Work with partners to reduce rough sleeping to as close to zero as possible.
  - Ensure that we make best use of the services of our partners in order to sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness.
  - Review the Council's Allocation Scheme to ensure that best use is made of the social housing stock in order to house those in greatest needs and to sustain rural communities.
- 6.3 Implement a policy framework that prioritises homelessness prevention.
- Officers to review the homelessness and housing advice service annually to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of customers.
  - Ensure that future housing developments have the correct mix of dwellings to meet the current and future needs of local people.
- 6.4 Review the provision of temporary accommodation.
- Minimise the number of void units at Westward House by using such units to provide short term supported accommodation for rough sleepers and applicants who are not in priority need.
  - Offer unoccupied units to other local housing authorities or to West Sussex County Council to assist it in its duty to provide accommodation for intentionally homeless households with children.
  - Review rent charges in respect of Westward House to ensure that the units are affordable, especially for low income working households.
- 6.5 Ensure that appropriate support is available for vulnerable groups.
- Work with a wide range of partners to ensure that we can continue to provide and develop effective services to meet the changing needs of vulnerable people.



SCHEDULE TO THE 4TH SCHEDULE (CLAUSE 17)

COMPANY'S OBLIGATIONS OF LARGE SCALE VOLUNTARY TRANSFER AGREEMENT 13TH MARCH 2001

THE SCHEDULE

1. **USE OF INCOME AND RECEIPTS**

Subject to any statutory requirement affecting the Company and the Company's obligations under any debenture or charge or under the Loan Agreement and/or Refinancing Agreement (as those phrases are defined in Clause 1.1.1 of the form of Warranty Deed set out in Part I of the Fifth Schedule to the Principal Agreement) to use all rental income and all receipts from the sale of any part of the Property in the management, maintenance, repair, modernisation and improvement of the Property and community infrastructure and to pay all other proper and reasonable expenses relating to the Property including the payment of interest and the repayment of capital borrowed to acquire and/or improve the Property and otherwise for the provision of Social Housing primarily in the Chichester Area.

2. **RENT INCREASES**

2.1 Subject to the provisions of paragraph 2.2 below not to increase the rent payable by Qualifying Tenants before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2001. For each of the five years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2001 and terminating on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 not to increase the rent payable by Tenants by more than the calculated percentage increase in the RPI during the period of twelve months ending with the date of publication of the figure for RPI published for the last September before the date for such increase in rent PLUS one percent (RPI + 1%).

2.2 Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 2.1 the Company shall be entitled at any time to increase the rent payable by a Qualifying Tenant of a Dwelling where such increase is authorised by the provisions of the Tenancy Agreement.

3. **HOUSING CORPORATION REGISTRATION**

Not knowingly to do or omit to do any act or thing which might result in the cancellation or withdrawal of the Company's registration by The Housing Corporation and to comply with all reasonable requirements of The Housing Corporation.

4. **LIAISON**

4.1 For an initial period of ten years from the Completion Date to attend annual liaison meetings with the Council and provide sufficient and necessary information in order that the Council may satisfy itself that the Company is fulfilling its obligations under the Principal Agreement PROVIDED THAT the Company shall not be required to disclose any such information where despite using reasonable endeavours to obtain any applicable authorisations it is under a legal duty not to disclose such information

4.2 For an initial period of ten years from the Completion Date to attend annual meetings with the Council and the Tenants Forum.

5. **H.O.M.E.S**

To participate in the Housing Organisations Mobility and Exchange Scheme (H.O.M.E.S) and the HOMESWAP Scheme and to maintain a Tenants Transfer List.

6. **ASSURED TENANT'S CHARTER**

To comply with the covenants and conditions contained or implied by statute in the Tenancies of the Property and to comply with the Performance Standards and the Assured Tenant's Charter published from time to time by The Housing Corporation.

7. **CONSULTATION PROMISES**

To comply with all promises and commitments made to former secure tenants of the Council occupying the Property as set out in the Consultation Document.

8. **ALLOCATIONS**

In the selection of tenants for vacant dwellings (other than dwellings required to be offered to nominees of the Council in accordance with the Nomination Rights Deed), to act in accordance with the published allocation policy of the Company as the same may be amended from time to time having consulted with the Council in respect of any proposed amendment and having taken into account any representations the Council may have made in relation to the amendments proposed.

9. **CATCH UP REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMES**

To carry out and complete the catch up repairs programme and improvements programmes referred to in Section 3 of the Consultation Document prior to the fifth anniversary of the Completion Date.

10. **SECURITY OF TENURE**

10.1 The Company shall not seek to gain possession of any of the Dwellings occupied by Tenants on any grounds other than those set out in the Tenancy Agreement notwithstanding that it may have a legal right to use other grounds for possession under the Housing Act 1988 (as amended by the Housing Act 1996), nor will it seek to gain possession in relation to the succession by any person who has a right of succession under Clause 5.7 of the Tenancy Agreement or who would have had such right if the Tenancy Agreement had not been varied save to the extent that possession proceedings are necessary to ensure the succession of such persons.

10.2 In the event that the Council receives notification from a Tenant that the Company is or is proposing to take proceedings for possession of the Tenant's Dwelling in breach of the Company's obligations the Council having made all necessary enquiries and on being satisfied that this is the case shall immediately serve written notice upon the

Company which notice shall ask the Company to confirm that it will withdraw any notices that have already been served or proceedings which have already commenced and that it will abide by its obligation contained in this Clause. The notice shall give the Company 21 days in which to respond or where proceedings are imminent such shorter period as appears reasonable to the Council. If the Tenant's allegation that the Company is in breach is justified and the Company does not give the undertakings required by the Council's notice within the period set out in that notice the Company shall (without prejudice to any other remedies available to the Council):-

10.2.1 pay to the Council a sum equal to any reasonable losses suffered by the Tenant as a result of the breach of its obligation;

10.2.2 pay to the Council a sum equal to the costs and expenses reasonably and properly incurred by the Council in enforcing the obligations of the Company; and

10.2.3 in the event that the Tenant has already been evicted from the Tenant's Dwelling immediately make accommodation available to the Tenant which accommodation shall in so far as its size amenities and locality and the terms and conditions on which it is held be so far as possible the same as the Dwelling from which the Tenant was evicted.

10.3 The Council shall hold any monies recovered under Paragraph 10.2.1 above upon trust for the Tenant absolutely.

## 11. CONSULTATION

The Company undertakes for the benefit of each Tenant that it will consult with each Tenant on any changes in matters of housing management as if Section 105 Housing Act 1985 applied to the Tenancy Agreement.

## 12. RIGHT TO BUY FOR SUCCESSORS

The Company shall permit a tenant who has succeeded to the tenancy of a Tenant's Dwelling whether by statute or under the terms of the Tenancy Agreement to exercise a right to buy the Dwelling on such terms and in such manner as would apply if such Tenant had the preserved right to buy of a successor as defined by Section 171B(4)(a) of the Housing Act 1985 whether or not the tenant is in fact such a successor.

## 13. CONSTITUTION

Not to change the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company so far as they relate to the Company's objects and powers and to local authority or tenant representation without the Council's prior consent in writing, such consent not to be withheld or delayed in relation to all reasonable advice issued by the Housing Corporation concerning the governance of all classes of registered social landlords.

14. **DEVELOPMENT**

The Company shall not in respect of any of the land forming part of the Property which is at the date hereof used as amenity land or as garages or hardstanding carry out or permit to be carried out any development (as defined in the Town & Country Planning Act 1990) without the prior consent in writing of the Council which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed in the case of any development the purpose of which is the provision of further Social Housing in the Chichester Area. In the event that social housing grant monies (or any successor grant scheme thereto) are being applied to the proposed development scheme IT IS HEREBY AGREED that a condition of the Council's consent (if granted) shall be that the Council be granted 100% nomination rights in respect of any initial lettings to dwellings within any new development and any voids thereafter on terms satisfactory to the Council (acting reasonably). Where any other development scheme is proposed and which is dependent on grant monies (other than aforesaid) and which themselves are dependent on some prior condition imposed on the Company, the Council's consent (if granted) shall not include any conditions relating to nominations that are not compatible with the prior conditions aforementioned

15. **AMENITY AREAS**

To maintain all the amenity and play areas transferred pursuant to the terms of the Principal Agreement to the standard appropriate for its current use.

16. **WARDENS**

To offer suitable alternative accommodation within the Company's housing stock to all Transferring Employees who are both designated in Part I of the Third Schedule as being Sheltered Scheme Managers and who occupy a Dwelling as at the date of this Agreement in the event that their employment with the Company shall cease for reasons of retirement or redundancy and in addition to offer such persons (subject to all necessary statutory and other consents) a contractual right to buy of such alternative accommodation.

17. **RECOVERY OF RTB DISCOUNTS**

In the event that, in its capacity as the reversioner under any leases of flats forming part of the Property which were sold by the Council pursuant to the RTB before the Completion Date (details of which freehold reversions to be transferred to the Company are set out in Paragraph B of Part II of the First Schedule to the Principal Agreement) the Company shall, pursuant to the covenants in such leases, become entitled to any repayment of any discount allowed by the Council to the tenant on the occasion of the RTB sale, the Company will (subject to the Council meeting its reasonable costs in doing so) use its best endeavours to recover such sums from such

former tenant or tenants and shall within 28 days of receipt of such sums account to the Council therefor.

**18. ASBESTOS RELATED WORKS**

18.1 Within one month of such works being commissioned, the Company shall provide to the Council full details of any works involving the removal of (or any remedial works required in relation to) asbestos present in the Dwellings and shall distinguish between those works that result from the repairs and improvement programme anticipated in the Stock Condition Survey and those works that are regarded as further works and which are to be counted (in accordance with paragraph 18.3 below) against the £3.3 million provided for in the Price paid by the Company for the Property

18.2 The Company shall allow the Council access (on reasonable notice) to any Dwelling where works envisaged in Paragraph 18.1 are to be or have been carried out for the purposes of allowing the Council to inspect the works carried out or proposed to be carried out

18.3 The Company acknowledges and covenants as follows:-

18.3.1 that the provision of £3.3 million referred to in paragraph 18.1 above has been provided to reflect the cost of any further works required (if any) involving the removal of (or any remedial works required in relation to) asbestos present in the Dwellings (over and above any works required as a consequence of the Company's said repair and improvements programme);

18.3.2 that any works costed against the said £3.3 million shall be works that are necessarily required of the Company to meet the duty of care it owes to any persons in its capacity as landlord. Any dispute between the parties as to whether any further such works are required shall be determined in accordance with the provisions of Clause 22 of the Principal Agreement SAVE THAT the arbitrator shall be appointed by the President of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors from time to time

18.3.3 that no works carried out to rectify defective or otherwise sub-standard works previously undertaken and costed against the £3.3 million shall be double counted against the £3.3 million



THE COMMON SEAL of CHICHESTER)  
DISTRICT COMMUNITY HOUSING )  
LIMITED was hereunto affixed in the )  
presence of:- )

Authorised Signatory

Authorised Signatory



# Chichester District Council

## Executive Board

11th November 2003

### Review of Martlet Homes Garage Sites

#### 1. Contact(s)

Melva Bateman, Housing Portfolio Holder, Tel: (01243 606604)  
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Linda Grange, Housing Enabling Manager, Tel: (01243 534582)  
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Stuart Miles, Senior Planning Officer, Tel: (01243 534683)  
E-mail: [sjmiles@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:sjmiles@chichester.gov.uk)

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Board approve the proposed protocol as a guide to reviewing the suitability of Martlet Homes garage sites for redevelopment.**
- 2.2 **That the Board delegate to the Head of Community Services, following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder, authority to give the Council's consent pursuant to the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer agreement, to redevelopment of such of the garage sites as she considers satisfies the criteria in the Protocol.**

#### 3. Main Report

- 3.1 The Council has pledged to facilitate the provision by Registered Social Landlords of new affordable housing for rent to meet housing need in the district. Areas of highest need are typically those areas where it is most difficult to find suitable sites.
- 3.2 Following on from stock transfer Martlet Homes have undertaken a strategic review of their assets. The recent Stock Condition Survey identified that there is considerable potential for development of additional social houses on their garage sites. Furthermore it was noted that a large proportion of garages are not rented by Martlet Homes tenants and many are used as storage space rather than garaging of private cars.
- 3.3 Martlet Homes have commissioned consultants to carry out a Constraints Analysis on 70 of their garage sites within the district and a working group has been set up to establish a protocol for considering the development potential of these garage sites for social housing and considering feasibility studies of individual sites. The working

group comprises officers from Martlet Homes, Chichester District Council (Planning and Housing) and Action in Rural Sussex.

- 3.4 When the stock was disposed of to Martlet Homes the Council imposed a condition that “The Company shall not in respect of any of the land forming part of the property which is at the date hereof used as amenity land or as garages or hard standing carry out or permit to be carried out any development without the consent in writing of the Council which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed in the case of any development the purpose of which is the provision of further Social Housing in the Chichester Area. In the event that social housing grant monies are being applied to the proposed development scheme, it is hereby agreed that a condition of the Council’s consent shall be that the Council be granted 100% nomination rights in respect of any initial lettings to the dwellings within any new development and any voids thereafter on terms satisfactory to the Council”.
- 3.5 A disposal where the land is to be used solely for the provision of further Social Housing by the Company whether for rent or sale on shared ownership terms is permitted under the terms of the transfer of the stock completed in March 2001.
- 3.6 The Garage Review Protocol sets out the conditions that must be met before a site will be considered for redevelopment as social housing, in terms of housing need, parking requirements, site suitability and resident consultation. In advance of individual planning submissions and in line with the stock transfer agreement Martlet Homes have requested that the Executive Board gives in principle support to developing those sites which meet the criteria set out in the Garage Review Protocol.
- 3.7 Regardless of the in principle support sought, the site will need to be assessed in the normal way before planning permission can be granted. It will be necessary to ensure that an identified need for social housing exists, that housing is the most appropriate reuse for the site, and that the site’s development is appropriate in planning terms. This will need to include a parking assessment to ensure that the development does not lead to under-provision of parking spaces. It may also be necessary to assess whether there is adequate provision of open space and play areas within the vicinity, and to consider the consequences of redeveloping the garages for storage of residents’ possessions.

#### **4. Background Papers**

Martlet Homes Garage Review Protocol, October 2003

#### **5. Appendices**

Working Group Protocol

## Review of Martlet Homes Garage Sites

November 2003

### Working Group Protocol

#### 1. Working Group Membership

Linda Grange, Housing Enabling Manager, Chichester District Council  
Tel: (01243 534582)  
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#### 2. Background

Government guidance contained in PPG3: Housing (March 2000) places emphasis on making better use of under- used sites. Martlet Homes' recent Stock Condition Survey identified considerable potential for development of additional social housing on their garage sites. It was estimated that these areas could accommodate up to 200 much needed social housing units across the district, helping to replace some of those units lost under the Right to Buy.

When the stock was disposed of to Martlet Homes the Council imposed a condition that Martlet could not permit any development of garage or hard standing land without first obtaining the Council's written consent. Martlet Homes have requested that the Executive Board gives in principle consent to developing such sites, which meet the objectives and criteria set out in this protocol.

Martlet Homes recognise that there is much concern about the highway implications of parked cars displaced by such redevelopment and the relationship between new and existing properties. This protocol sets out the circumstances under which garage court redevelopment may be appropriate and the criteria to be used in evaluating individual proposals.

Redevelopment of under-used garage and parking courts can create a safer and more pleasant environment, whilst meeting local needs. A careful approach is required to respond to the unique characteristics and constraints of each site. It should be noted that in many cases redevelopment is neither appropriate nor desirable.

A working group has been set up, comprising officers from Martlet Homes, Chichester District Council (Planning and Housing) and Action in Rural Sussex to establish the major objectives involved and to ensure that the feasibility studies meet those objectives.

### **3. Existing Use**

Garage courts are often secluded behind housing with nothing preventing access to them. There is often a security risk to properties whose gardens back onto these areas and the physical separation of dwellings and garage areas means there is no natural surveillance of these areas. It is clear that many garage courts are inconvenient, due to limited access points and frequently under used as residents prefer to park outside their homes on verges, open space or the highway because these are more convenient and overlooked.

### **4. Redevelopment objectives to be considered by the working group**

#### **(i) Making better use of under-used sites**

#### **(ii) Meeting local needs**

The most obvious local need is the provision of new affordable accommodation, but the associated environmental improvements can also benefit existing residents, if the public areas are made safer and more attractive. Redevelopment can be an opportunity to re-examine both the local parking situation and the requirement for any additional open space or other land uses.

#### **(iii) Creating a safer environment**

Garage courts can attract anti-social behaviour. They can be a target for car crime, garage break-ins and vandalism. The gardens abutting secluded garage courts are often insecure and provide opportunities for burglars. Poor lighting also adds to the fear of crime. New developments should result in a safe, attractive and self-policing environment.

### **5. Garage redevelopment requirements/protocol**

**5.1** The potential redevelopment of these areas will be considered by the working group on an individual site-by-site basis and should ensure that the following criteria are met:

#### **5.2 Housing Need**

The working group must be satisfied that there is proven demonstrable local housing need for the proposed scheme.

### **5.3 Site Size and Shape**

The working group must be satisfied that the size and shape of the site permits dwellings, gardens access, parking and turning to be accommodated in a manner that allows a logical layout, adequate privacy and integration with the surrounding and meets the housing need in terms of size, mix, number of units and tenure.

### **5.4 Constraints**

Martlet Homes have already commissioned Professional Consultants to carry out a Constraints Analysis of 70 of their garage sites, throughout the Chichester District. This involves taking photos and drawing up site plans to map the constraints of each individual site, including rights of way, easements, way leaves, existing services, rights of neighbouring properties (e.g. access, right of light), boundaries and highway constraints. This will be used to establish the development potential of each site. The tenure of adjacent properties will also be noted.

A traffic light approach will be utilised to indicate whether the Constraints Analysis concludes that a site has the development potential:

- Green Light Schemes - sites which are considered to be more easily developable
- Amber Light Schemes – sites which are developable but have a number of constraints requiring further investigation
- Red Light Schemes – sites, which are considered less suitable for development, as they have significant constraints to be overcome.

### **5.5 Parking Requirements**

A parking survey is to be undertaken by Martlet Homes to examine the parking in the local area, including parking courts, distributor roads, grass verges and open space. It is to be examined regularly between early morning and late evening on weekdays and at weekends over a period of two weeks to establish how many parking spaces and garages are in use. In this manner, underused sites suitable for redevelopment can be identified, and opportunities to redistribute parking provision can be examined. It can also be used to identify management issues such as abandoned cars and parking on open space and grass verges.

Resident parking provision must be retained within the local area. It may be possible to relocate parking provision for existing dwellings to their plots or it may be consolidated in more convenient and overlooked locations. The working group must be satisfied that any displaced parking can be integrated in the proposed redevelopment or adequate provision will be provided in the immediate surrounding area.

### **5.6 Open Space requirement**

The working group will consult with Cultural Services to ensure that there is adequate provision of open space and play areas within the vicinity.

## **5.7 Secure by Design**

All new developments would be expected to acquire Secure by Design certification. They should provide natural surveillance of public areas, generate a sense of ownership and secure private areas.

## **5.8 Consultation with Parish Council, Local District Councillors and Local Residents**

Martlet Homes will invite comments from both Parish Councils and Local District Councillors and keep them fully updated in respect of redevelopment proposals, which affect their area.

Local Residents are to be consulted by Martlet Homes with support from Chichester District Council and Action in Rural Sussex and a reaction survey undertaken. This is to involve those who live next to the site and those who park there. The working group must be satisfied that there are no objections that might significantly affect the outcome of a planning application.

## **5.9 Planning**

The above conditions must be met before a garage site will be considered for redevelopment as social housing. Regardless of the in principle support sought from the Council's Executive Board, the site will still need to be assessed in the normal way and the working party's views will not fetter the discretion of the Council as planning authority.

## **6. Progression of Schemes**

All schemes will be assessed against the above criteria, those schemes which meet all requirements and are approved by the working group will be grouped into batches of sites, in priority order for submission to the Head of Community Services. They will then be progressed to planning stage by Martlet Homes in the normal way and bids will be submitted to the Regional Housing Board and/or Housing Corporation so that grant funding can be secured as early as possible.

## Chichester District Council

### Executive Board

9 January 2007

#### Provision of Car Parking on Martlet Amenity Land

#### 1. Contact(s)

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#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Board approve the proposed protocol at Appendix 1 as a guide to reviewing the use of amenity land on Martlet Estates for the purpose of car parking.
- 2.2 That the Board delegate to the Head of Community Services, following consultation with the Housing Portfolio Holder, authority to give the Council's consent pursuant to the land transfer and Large Scale Voluntary Transfer agreement, not to enforce the provisions of the transfer in respect of no development on amenity land and consent to the use of that land for the purpose of car parking that is considered to satisfy the criteria in the Amenity Land Protocol at Appendix 1.

#### 3. Main Report

- 3.1 The transfer document transferring title of the housing stock and associated land to Martlet Homes Limited identified certain land which had not been the subject of development and imposed covenants against further development where the land had some amenity value. Requests for the realisation of this covenant have thus far been the subject of reports to the Executive Board. Martlet Homes have identified further parcels of this land to be used to improve the car parking facilities in some estates and these requests have been considered individually by officers in Community Services. The laying out of the land for car parking and the use of the land for that purpose would

be contrary to the covenant, however Members may be aware that facilities for car parking on Martlet Estates has become an increasing concern.

- 3.2 It is proposed that rather than lift or remove the covenant entirely the Council indicate it gives consent to the approved scheme by confirming that no action would be taken in respect of the covenant if the scheme submitted is implemented. In that way control over any future or alternative development is maintained.
- 3.3 A number of other sites are being identified by Martlet and are coming forward for consideration by the Council. It would appear sensible to adopt a general policy approach towards such sites, together with a scheme of delegation, to facilitate an early response to such requests.
- 3.4 The Amenity Land Review Protocol at Appendix 1 sets out the conditions that must be met before a site will be considered for use as parking. This will need to include a parking assessment to ensure that the such parking spaces are required. It may also be necessary to assess whether there is adequate provision of open space and play areas within the vicinity, and to consider the visual consequences of using the amenity land for parkings.

#### 4. Background Papers

- 4.1 Transfer document – 13th March 2001 Chichester District Council (1)  
Chichester District Community Housing (2).

#### 5. Appendices

Amenity Land Review Protocol

# Review of Martlet Homes Amenity Land for use as Parking

December 2006

## Amenity Land Review Protocol

### 1. Background

Government guidance contained in PPG3: Housing (March 2000) places emphasis on making better use of under- used sites. Martlet Homes' recent Stock Condition Survey identified considerable potential for development of additional social housing on their garage sites. It was estimated that these areas could accommodate up to 200 much needed social housing units across the district, helping to replace some of those units lost under the Right to Buy.

Martlet Homes recognise that there is much concern about the highway implications of parked cars displaced by such redevelopment and the relationship between new and existing properties. This protocol sets out the circumstances under which amenity land may be more appropriately used for parking and the criteria to be used in evaluating individual proposals.

### 3. Existing Use

Amenity land provides open space and play areas for local residents, however due to a shortage of car parking it is often eroded, particularly on the verges by casual car parking resulting in the grassed areas becoming rutted and unattractive. It is clear that many garage courts are inconvenient, due to limited access points, and are frequently under used as residents prefer to park outside their homes on verges, open space or the highway as these are more convenient and visible.

### 4. Objectives to be considered in giving consent to use Amenity land for parking

(i) Easing parking congestion

(ii) Meeting local needs

The most obvious local need is the provision of new affordable accommodation, but the associated environmental improvements can also benefit existing residents, if the public areas are made safer and

more attractive. Redevelopment can be an opportunity to re-examine the local parking situation.

(iii) Creating a safer environment

Garage courts can attract anti-social behaviour. They can be a target for car crime, garage break-ins and vandalism. The gardens abutting secluded garage courts are often insecure and provide opportunities for burglars. Poor lighting also adds to the fear of crime. Any new parking should result in a safe, attractive and self-policing environment.

## 5. Protocol Guidelines

### 5.5 Parking Requirements

A parking survey is to be undertaken by Martlet Homes to examine the parking in the local area, including parking courts, distributor roads, grass verges and open space. It is to be examined regularly between early morning and late evening on weekdays and at weekends over a period of two weeks to establish how many parking spaces and garages are in use. In this manner, underused sites suitable for redevelopment can be identified, and opportunities to redistribute parking provision can be examined. It can also be used to identify management issues such as abandoned cars and parking on open space and grass verges.

The parking survey must have highlighted whether there is a need for additional parking and considered all available options for relocation. It would then need to demonstrate that use of a small amount of amenity land is the best option.

### 5.6 Open Space requirement

Cultural Services are to be consulted to ensure that there is adequate provision of open space and play areas within the vicinity.

### 5.7 Consultation with Parish Council, Local District Councillors and Local Residents

Martlet Homes should invite comments from both Parish Councils and Local District Councillors and keep them fully updated in respect of proposals which affect their area.

Local Residents are to be consulted by Martlet Homes in order to involve those who live next to the site and those who park there. A consultation statement must be provided to the Head of Community Services, who must be satisfied that there are no significant objections.

### 5.9 WSCC- Highways

Martlet must obtain the approval of the highway authority where appropriate.

## 6. Progression of Schemes

All requests will be assessed against the above criteria, those schemes which meet all requirements will be submitted for approval by the Head of Community Services.

Head of Community Services

Dated

December 2006