



Appendix 1

HOMELESSNESS REVIEW

March 18 (updated March 19)

**(To inform the
Homelessness Strategy 2018-2023)**

South Cambridgeshire District Council Homelessness Review 2018

CONTENTS

Executive summary

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Outcomes of 2013-18 Homeless Strategy

Chapter 2 – Profile of Homelessness in South Cambridgeshire

2.1 The South Cambridgeshire area

2.2 Links with other strategies

2.3 Current levels of homelessness

2.4 Levels of rough sleeping

2.5 Breakdown of homeless applicants by age group and household type

2.6 Reasons for priority need

2.7 Reasons for homelessness

2.8 Ethnicity

2.9 Foreign Nationals

2.10 Asylum Seekers

2.11 Gypsy and Travellers

2.12 Future levels of homelessness

2.13 Welfare reforms

2.14 Social housing policy reforms

2.15 Funding of supported housing

2.16 Devolution

2.17 The Homeless Reduction Act

Chapter 3 – Existing Housing and Support

3.1 Temporary accommodation

3.2 Other accommodation/ specialist support

3.3 Permanent accommodation

Chapter 4 – Homeless Prevention Activities

4.1 The Housing Advice and Options Team

4.2 Floating support

4.3 Private sector leasing

4.4 Deposit guarantee scheme

4.5 Single Homeless Service

4.6 Discretionary housing payments

4.7 Safe at home

4.8 Spend to save

4.9 CAB – Money advice service

Chapter 5 – Partnership working and consultation

5.1 Key forums

5.2 Trailblazer

5.3 Protocols

5.4 Consultation

5.5 Partner Agencies

Chapter 6 – Performance Monitoring

6.1 Homeless strategy action plan

6.2 KPI's

Chapter 7 – Resources

7.1 Expenditure and income

7.2 Government grants

7.3 Grants to external organisations

Chapter 8 - Conclusions

Executive Summary

The following points below summarise the main findings and challenges identified in the Homelessness Review:

Profile of Homelessness
Levels of homelessness are increasing with a 62% increase in homeless approaches between 2012/13 and 2017/18 and a 55% increase in acceptances between 2012/13 and 2017/18.
The highest priority group for homeless acceptances is households that include dependent children, followed by first pregnancy and those who vulnerable due to mental health.
The highest age category of homeless acceptances are those aged between 25-44 who make up around 50% of all homeless applications.
The main cause of homelessness is now termination of assured shorthold tenancy which accounts for a third of all homeless acceptances.
South Cambridgeshire does not have a specific problem with rough sleeping and levels remain low. It is unlikely that this will become a problem in the future since rough sleepers tend to migrate to Cambridge City where there are support services/facilities. Advice and assistance is provided to rough sleepers in South Cambridgeshire, but due to the low numbers this does not form a key issue for the strategy.
7.8% of homeless applicants accepted were from black and minority ethnic (BME) households in 2016/17, compared to 6.7% of the population as a whole.
14% of homeless acceptances have been from foreign nationals on average over the past five years with the highest nationality represented being Polish.
Future homelessness – based on current trends, homeless acceptances are expected to rise significantly with potential worse case scenario of a 7-fold increase in case load.
The Homeless Reduction Act commenced on 3 rd April 2018 and increases the duties owed by the Council.
Existing Housing & Support
The number of households in temporary accommodation has increased by 9% over the last 6 years.
Use of bed & breakfast however has reduced considerably with only £22,606 spent on this type of temporary accommodation in 2017/18 compared with £99,767 in 2012/13.
Redevelopment of existing hostel site in Waterbeach – providing better quality of living standards and an increase in units from 16 to 30 overall.
Private rented accommodation in the district is expensive and unaffordable to many households when comparing the local housing allowance (LHA) with the median rents.
Home ownership is also unaffordable for many households with lower quartile figure comparisons showing house prices to be 10.8 times higher than income (Sept 18).
Prevention Activities
Homeless prevention has reduced since 2014/15 largely due to the difficulties accessing affordable private rent, although figures have increased in 2017/18.
Most homeless prevention is achieved through securing alternative accommodation rather than maintaining current homes, reflecting the unaffordability of current accommodation.
However, private rent assistance remains the highest successful intervention to prevent homelessness.

Following a review of the private sector leasing (PSL) scheme, an in-house scheme via a new council owned company has been set up.

The County-wide Trailblazer project is working to increase homeless prevention further through building stronger links between agencies and making homelessness the unacceptable outcome.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires councils to compile a Homelessness Strategy and to renew this at least every five years. South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) published its first Homelessness Strategy in July 2003 and subsequent strategies have been implemented with the last one covering 2013-18. The actions within the Strategy have been monitored closely to ensure that the key objectives have been achieved.

1.1 Outcomes of the 2013-18 Homelessness Strategy

The 2013-18 Strategy focussed on two main areas:-

- The prevention of homelessness and
- Temporary accommodation

Homeless prevention outcomes

Floating support

The generic floating support service that amalgamated a number of general and specialised floating support services has been difficult to access, with lengthy waiting times jeopardising the chances of being able to prevent homelessness. Access has improved in recent years following closer working practices with the service.

The service continues to refer to this scheme when necessary, along with other local support services where there are mental health issues including the Riverside Floating Support service and the Chronically Excluded Adults team.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

The DHP policy was revised to take account of the impact of the changes to the LHA. Close collaboration between the Council's housing advice and housing benefit services have enabled these funds to be targeted at homeless prevention.

Under Occupation

As at July 2017 253 tenants were identified as under-occupying Council accommodation and in receipt of housing benefit. Of these the majority, 175, did not wish to move. 75 households have already been assisted to move to smaller accommodation.

Mental Health

The council continue to see an increase in complex cases from clients requiring mental health support. Access to support services or specialised accommodation can be challenging, placing additional strain on the housing service.

The service is represented on the accommodation forum for specialist mental health accommodation and we are part of our local problem solving group. We also work closely with the Riverside Floating Support service and the Chronically Excluded Adults service to find suitable support for those who need it.

As part of the Trailblazer work so far, the homeless prevention liaison officers have been linking in with the Cambridge and Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT), including locality teams and staff from the Prism service. The Prism service provides a Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) who is linked to a GP's surgery and the Trailblazer team are starting to receive referrals from people at risk of homelessness that they are working with.

Money advice

We continue to work closely with the Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) to provide a money advice service and this is a key tool used by housing advisors to prevent homelessness. Further improvements have been made including drop-in sessions and introductory telephone calls to increase take-up from those at risk of homelessness.

Single Homelessness

SCDC work in partnership with the City Council and Huntingdonshire District Council to access the single homeless service provided by the City Council and access to single person accommodation through the City led Town Hall Lettings.

Referrals to the single homeless service have increased each year, up to 2016/17, with 89 referrals made during this year. This reduced slightly to 79 in 2017/18. During the past two years the annual target of 24 placements was surpassed by 37 actual placements in 2016/17 and 27 in 2017/18.

Reconnection policy

Policy adopted in 2013 to prevent rough sleeping and enables assistance to be directed to those with a connection to the sub-region.

King Street Homefinder scheme

Scheme disbanded due to lack of future funding and alternative resource via the single homeless service and Town Hall lettings.

Information

Leaflets and information to residents and applicants are regularly updated. However this continues to be a key area of work in view of new legislation, changing responsibilities, new Council website and Trailblazer initiatives.

Temporary accommodation

Redevelopment of Robson Court

Maple Court – the new provision replacing Robson Court – opened in 2015 providing 30 self contained units of temporary accommodation managed by Sanctuary Housing Group.

Occupancy rates have been high since the scheme was opened with over 90% occupancy each year.

Options for the Bungalow

To date the Bungalow has continued to be used to provide 4 units of temporary accommodation, due to the Council's increased demand for this accommodation.

Empty Homes

Since the implementation of our Empty Homes Strategy in 2012, the Council has invested around £2million on purchasing 15 empty homes to utilise them as temporary accommodation around the district to house households facing homelessness; which has also helped to reduce the amount we had to spend on bed and breakfast accommodation.

Foyer

A Foyer scheme, providing accommodation and training opportunities for young people was investigated, however, as yet no potential site has been identified and revenue funding has not been available. The Council have, however, worked with the Break charity to provide a property which they will use to support around three care leavers in preparation for independent living.

Impact of welfare reforms on PSL

Following a review of the financial needs of continuing the PSL scheme with King Street it was agreed to run down this scheme and set up a new scheme managed by the Council through a separate company.

Discharge of Duty policy

Policy has been adopted in 2013. This enables the council to discharge our statutory homeless duties through the private rented sector, however, in reality there have been very few cases where this has occurred due to the checks required around the standard of accommodation and the high use of private sector accommodation to prevent homelessness. However, the new PSL scheme, managed by Council staff, will ensure the properties meet these standards, making the process of discharging our homeless duties into the private sector easier.

Chapter 2

Profile of Homelessness in South Cambridgeshire

2.1 The South Cambridgeshire Area

South Cambridgeshire is located centrally in the East of England region at the crossroads of the M11 / A14 roads and with direct rail access to London and to Stansted Airport. It is a largely rural district, which surrounds the city of Cambridge and comprises 105 villages, none currently larger than 8,000 persons. It is surrounded by a ring of market towns just beyond its borders, which are generally 10–15 miles from Cambridge. Together, Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire and the market towns form the Cambridge Sub-Region. South Cambridgeshire has long been a fast growing district and in 2011 had a population of 148,800 persons (bigger than Cambridge itself) and was identified with having the largest numerical increase in population of 18,800 across England since the 2001 census. South Cambs has become home to many of the clusters of high technology research and development in the Cambridge Sub-Region.

Affordability remains a growing problem for South Cambridgeshire with the cost of buying or renting on the open market consistently high; with South Cambridgeshire being the second most expensive district for house prices in the county after Cambridge City. The average house price in Sept 2018 was £441,539, an increase of £33,471 in just two years. The lower quartile house price to income ratio is 10.8 for South Cambridgeshire (Sept 2018) – generally house prices of 3 to 3.5 times income are considered affordable.

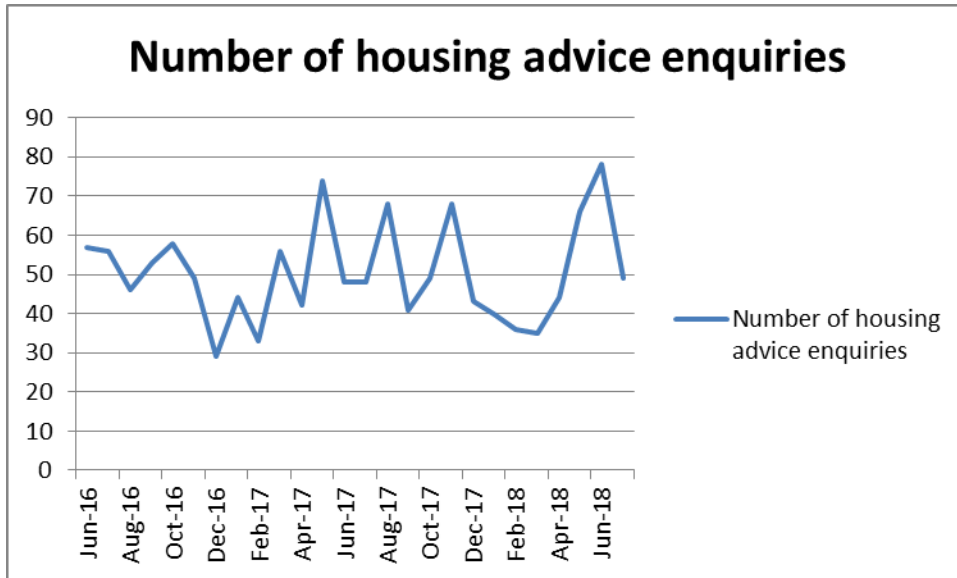
There is an active private rental market with high demand. Rents in the district are expensive, making most private rentals unaffordable for those on benefits or a low income. Private rentals at the lower end of the market are few and far between and for those relying on housing benefit to pay their rent, the difference between the LHA rate and the rent payable represents an average shortfall of £290 per month (Sept 2018).

2.2 Links with other strategies

Homelessness is the Council's highest risk and therefore actions to mitigate against this remains a priority. Homelessness is a key theme in the joint City and South Cambridgeshire Housing strategy, and has strong links to governments policies around welfare reform and, of course, the major change to homeless legislation through the Homeless Reduction Act.

2.3 Current levels of homelessness

Demand for the service continues to be high. Since June 2016 we have recorded the number of advice enquiries undertaken – see graph below. The figure has remained relatively steady with an increasing trend during the start of 2018/19 which coincided with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act (59 cases per month on average compared to an average of 48/49 per month during the previous two years).

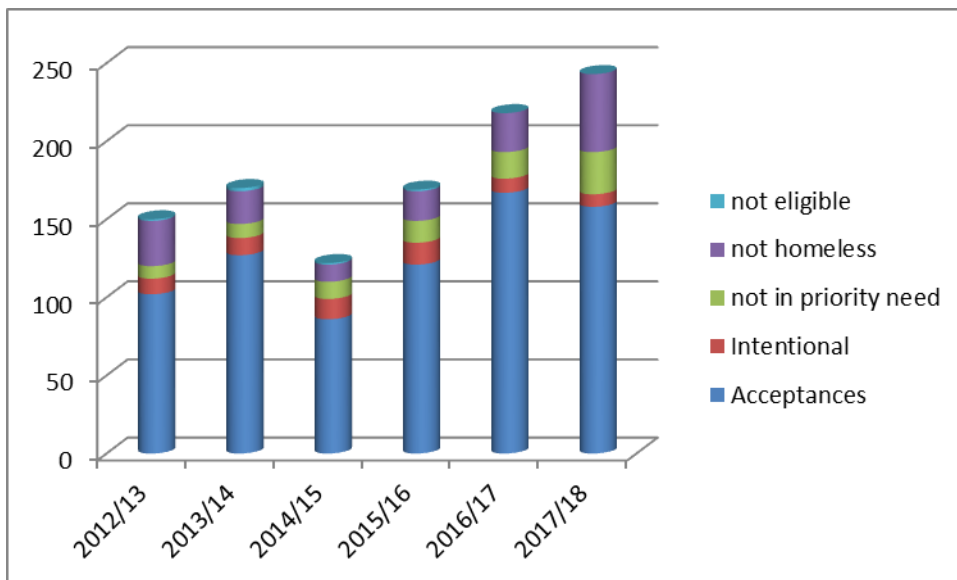


Homeless applications and acceptances however have risen significantly over the course of the past six years albeit with a dip during 2014/15. P1E data (quarterly statistics on homelessness) shows the following:

62% increase in homeless applications between 2012/13 and 2017/18.

55% increase in homeless acceptances between 2012/13 and 2017/18.

Homelessness in South Cambs is increasing at a significantly higher rate than nationally with England as a whole increasing their homeless acceptances by just 2% in comparison to our figures (Ref: Housing Statistical release June 2017).



(P1E data)

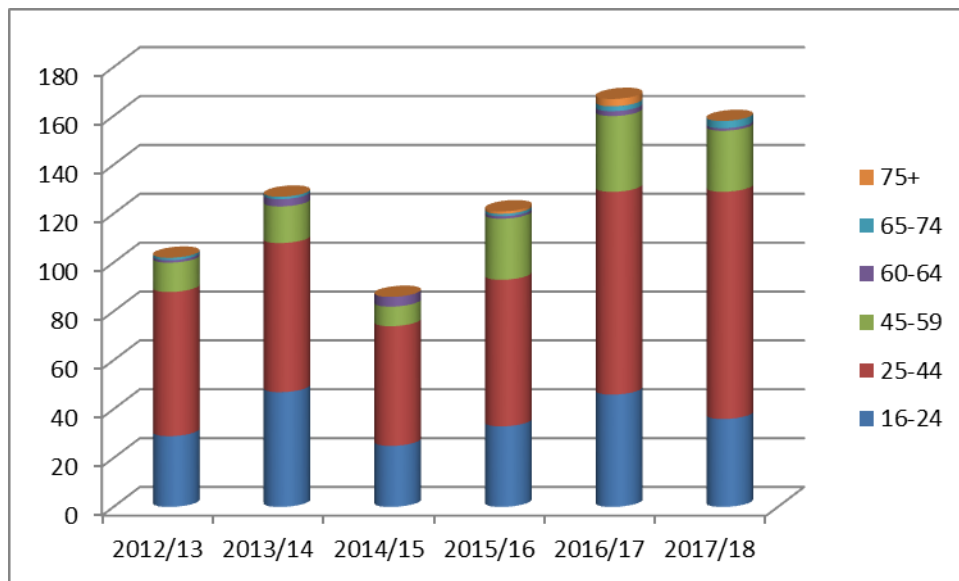
2.4 Levels of Rough Sleeping

The Council are required to complete a rough sleeping count or provide an estimate each year by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Because of the rural nature of the District and the relatively few numbers of rough sleepers it is not feasible to undertake rough sleeping counts across the District on a particular night. Therefore SCDC provide an estimate each year. Parish Councils are written to asking whether there are any known rough sleepers in their parish. In addition staff, local agencies - such as the police and homeless services - are contacted and asked to respond with any rough sleepers they were aware of.

Historically our figures have been very low. Four were estimated in November 2017, however, our figures are generally in the region of 0-2 and our estimate returned to 0 in November 2018. South Cambridgeshire does not therefore have a specific problem with rough sleeping, in proportion to its population, and it is unlikely that this will become a problem in the future since rough sleepers tend to migrate to Cambridge City where there are support services/ facilities. It is, however, acknowledged that there are a number of single people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness that could be at risk of rough sleeping and therefore solutions are required for this group. The Council adopted a reconnections policy for rough sleepers in 2013 and work with and provide funding to Cambridge City Council on their single homeless service. Other advice and assistance offered to single homeless people include requests for welfare checks, advice on private rent, referral to the rent deposit guarantee scheme and referrals to suitable properties within our private sector leasing scheme.

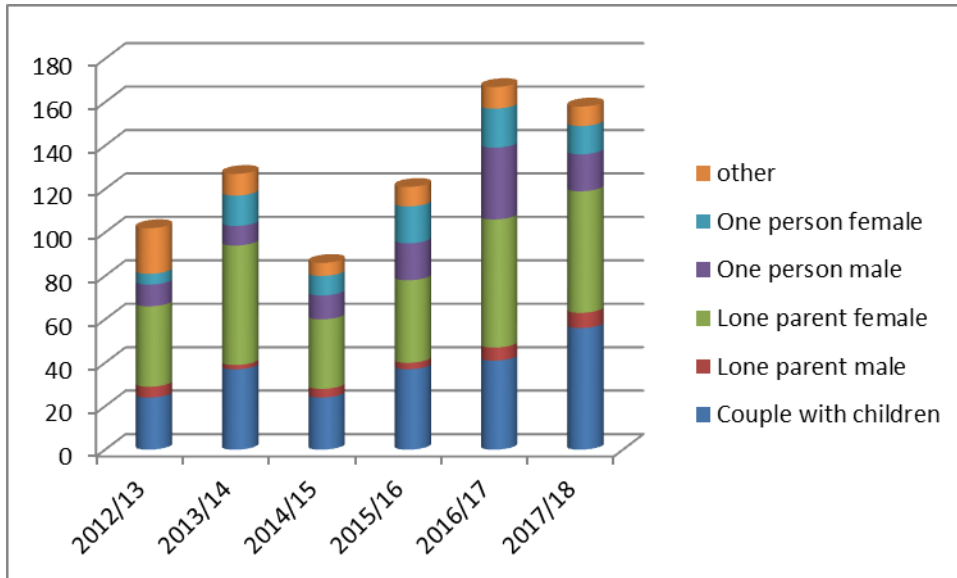
2.5 Break down of Homeless Applications by Age group and household type

The following graph shows the age groups of those making a homeless application during the past five years. In each year the highest represented age group amongst homeless applicants is 25-44 accounting for around 50% of all applications. This is followed by the 16-24 year age group and continues the trends seen in previous years with the two categories accounting for over 80% of all applicants.



The following graph shows the breakdown of household type across the six years for those accepted as homeless. Female lone parents is consistently the highest household type (36% of acceptance over the six years), followed by 'couple with

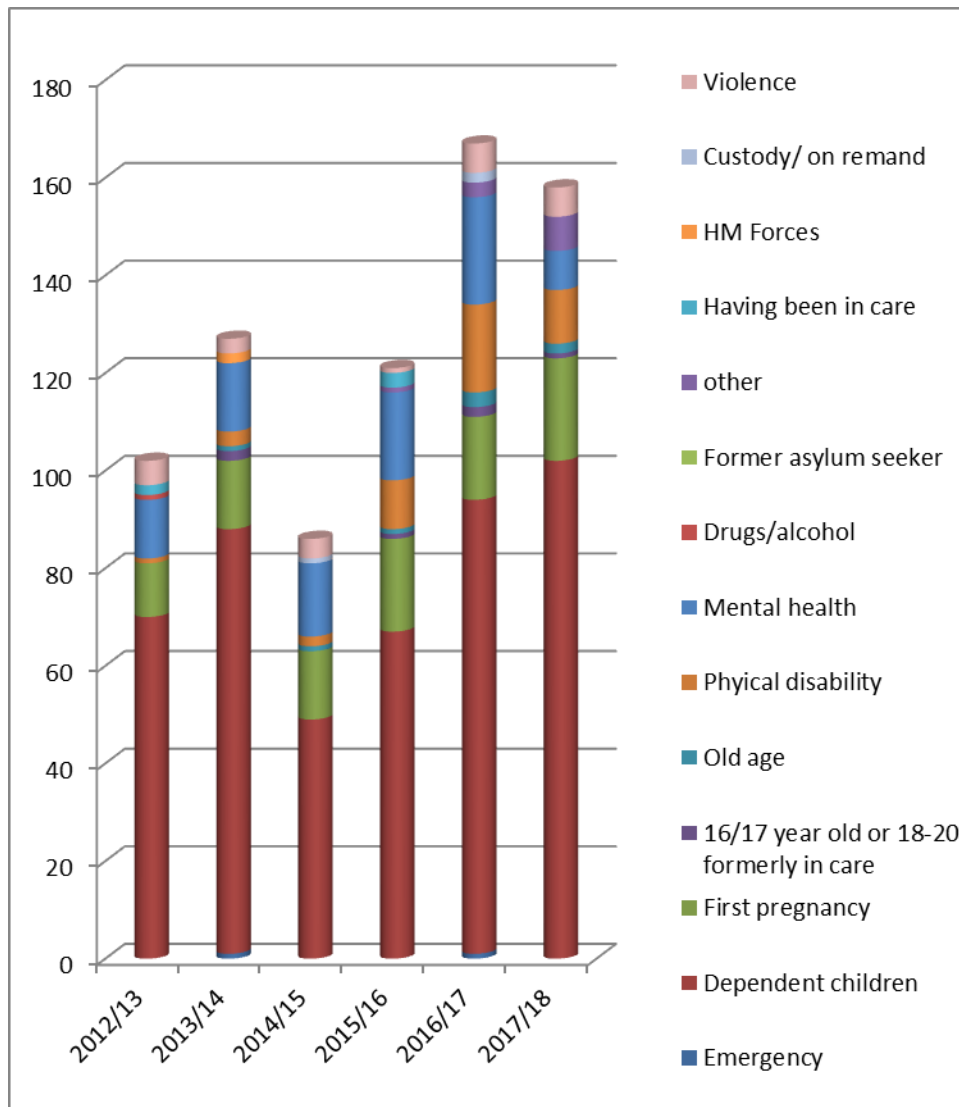
children' (29% of accepted applicants over six years). One person households have increased during the five year period, accounting for 23% over the six years. This potentially reflects the complex needs and vulnerability of many single applicants and the difficulties finding suitable single person accommodation.



2.6 Reasons for Priority need

The homeless legislation defines the priority need categories that determine who we have a duty to accommodate. During 2017/18, 65% of all homeless applications were accepted meaning they were found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless (i.e. they did not bring on their homelessness themselves) and in priority need. This is generally consistent with the previous five years.

As in previous years though, during the last six years, those with dependent children are the largest group of priority need applicants, counting for around 60% throughout this period. The second highest priority need category is first pregnancy, followed by mental health, again reflecting the higher levels of vulnerability amongst our applicants.

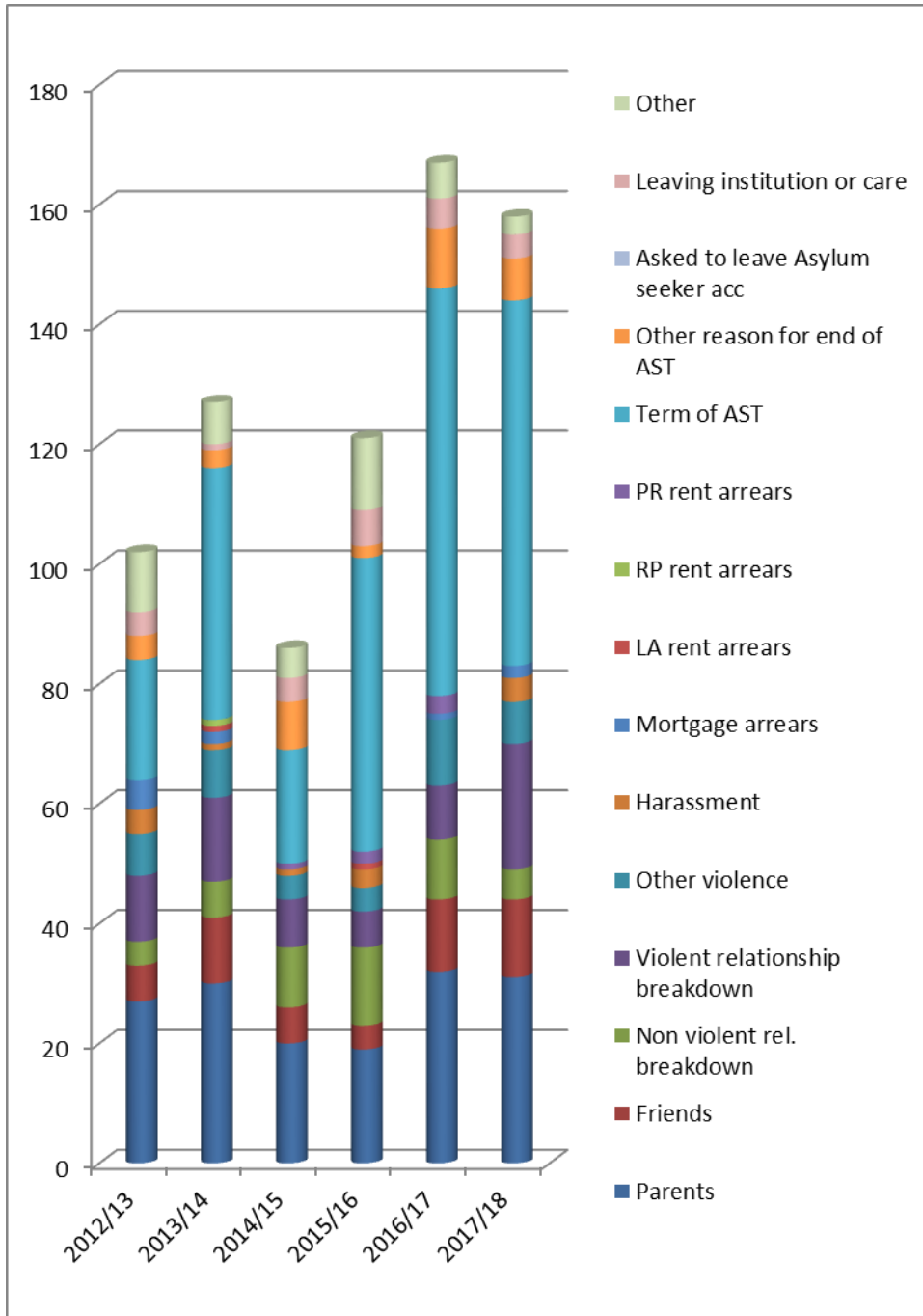


2.7 Reasons for homelessness

During the previous review period trends changed in terms of the main cause of homelessness when 'being asked to leave by parents' was overtaken by 'termination of assured shorthold'.

Overall this trend has continued with 'termination of assured shorthold' accounting for one-third of all homeless applications over the past six years. Whilst in 2012/13 and 2014/15 'parents asking their children to leave home' was very slightly the highest cause for these years, 'termination of assured shorthold' is the highest cause (and has accounted for more than double the reason of 'parents asking their children to leave') over the most recent three years.

The third highest cause of homelessness has varied each year between 'being asked to leave by friends', 'non violent relationship breakdown' and 'violent relationship breakdown', but overall across the five year period 'violent relationship breakdown' is the third highest cause of homelessness.



These figures match the national trends for reason for loss of last settled home, with 'Termination of Assured Shorthold' accounting for 29% of all cases in the last quarter of 2016/17 and 'parents no longer being able to accommodate' being the second biggest cause.

Ethnicity

2.8 BME households

The BME population is small and dispersed throughout the district, with no particular pockets of high concentrations of BME communities.

Comparing the general population data to the figures from the P1E homeless statistics for the last year 2017/18 and the proportion of non white applicants are slightly higher than the population's proportion of 6.7%. BME acceptances in 2017/18 accounted for 11.4% of all acceptances; however, the numbers are very small and represent 18 cases.

	2017/18 % appn accepted	Population data (Census)
White	84.8	93.3
Black	1.9	0.9
Asian	5.7	2.9
Mixed	2.5	1.8
Other	1.3	1.1
Not stated	3.8	
Total non-white	11.4	6.7

2.9 Foreign nationals

The proportion of accepted applicants who are Foreign Nationals has remained fairly consistent over the past 5 years (13.7% across the previous 5 years and 14.5% during 2017/18). Of the European Economic Area (EEA) Nationals, Polish is the highest nationality.

	2017/18	Across all 5 years
Czech Republic	0	1
Estonia	0	1
Hungary	0	2
Latvia	0	4
Lithuania	2	6
Poland	9	24
Slovakia	0	1
Slovenia	0	0
Bulgaria	0	1
Romania	1	1
Croatia	0	0
Other EEA	8	27
Non EEA	3	15
UK National	135	520

2.10 Asylum Seekers

Information from the P1E's show that during the past 5 years no one was accepted as homeless due to being a former Asylum Seeker.

2.11 Gypsies and Travellers

The 2011 census identified 0.3% of the population as a white Gypsy/Irish Traveller in South Cambridgeshire, equating to an overall figure of just under 500 Gypsy & Travellers recorded as residing in the District.

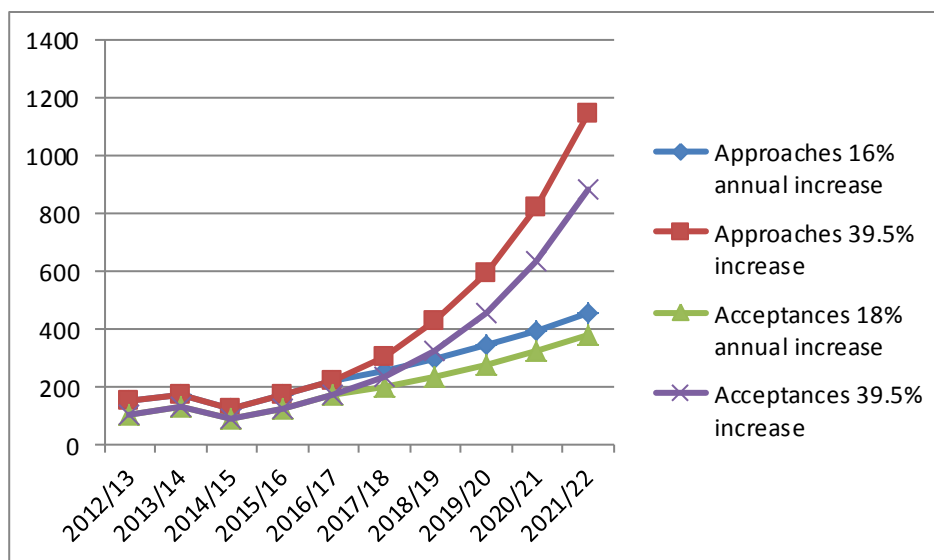
In 2016 a sub-regional Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment was undertaken. The study was carried out on the basis of the changes to the planning definition of a Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showperson which meant that persons who ceased to travel permanently would no longer be considered under the definition

of a Gypsy & Traveller. The findings of the survey identified that there was no requirement to provide additional Gypsy & Traveller pitches in the District. For Travelling Show people, 12 additional pitches were identified to be provided over the Local Plan period up to 2036. The survey also identified that 61 Gypsy & Traveller households no longer meet the definition but have a housing need. This need, in planning terms, will be addressed as any other part of the settled community through current housing planning policies.

2.12 Future Levels of Homelessness

Homelessness both nationally and within South Cambs has increased over recent years, with especially high increases in homeless acceptances seen in South Cambs in the last couple of years. There are a number of external factors that this can be attributed to, including welfare reforms and increasing costs in the private housing market.

Based on recent levels we can expect homeless acceptances to increase, however, predictions are difficult due to changes to the homeless legislation, continued welfare reforms and difficulty accessing affordable accommodation in the private sector.



The graph above shows future predictions based on the levels of acceptances and approaches over the past five years. The more conservative predictions take the average increase and decrease over the last five years (average 18% increase each year in homeless acceptances and 16% increase in homeless approaches) and the more recent increases are therefore tempered by the decrease between 2013/14 and 2014/15.

The predictions at a more drastic level follow the trends experienced over the last couple of years and are arguably more realistic due to the impact of the welfare reforms and the difficulties accessing and maintaining privately rented accommodation. These figures see homelessness rising exponentially with homeless acceptances and approaches becoming five times higher than current levels.

It should be noted that whilst the Homeless Reduction Act aims to reduce homeless acceptances, Local Authorities will have increased responsibilities to provide housing plans and prevention options to all those who approach, resulting in most

approaches involving active case work. If we compare existing levels of homeless acceptances to future levels of approaches, we are seeing a potential seven-fold increase in case load.

2.13 Welfare reforms

The implementation of a major national programme of welfare reforms is well under way. Key aims are to cut the overall welfare bill and encourage people into work.

A key driver of the welfare changes is to make it financially worthwhile for people to take on paid employment rather than claim benefits. This, combined with advice and support around seeking employment, education and/or training should lead to improved opportunities for some people who would previously have been caught in the benefit trap.

However, with severe cuts to the national welfare budget happening at the same time, many claimants are finding their benefits reduced, and struggling to make ends meet, including those who are already in work. In South Cambridgeshire there are approximately 65 households subject to the benefit cap with an average weekly restriction of £49.86 (the highest being £155 per week).

Universal Credit was introduced across the district in October 2018. This replaced six other benefits, including housing benefit, and is provided in a single monthly payment. Nationally the risk of Universal Credit claimants falling into rent arrears has been found to be high, increasing the risk of homelessness as well as the Councils role as a landlord.

2.14 Social Housing Policy reforms

Other than 1% annual rent cut for social housing tenants, and a review of social housing rent policy, it is now unclear the extent to which the range of social housing policy reforms announced during 2015-16 will be implemented. These include: the annual high value asset levy payable by stock holding local authorities; the phasing out of lifetime tenancies for council tenants; and extension of the Right to Buy to Housing Association tenants. In the meantime, more positive proposals for a green paper on a national review of social housing have been announced, although timescales are unclear.

Rent cuts have had a significant impact on the councils' Housing Revenue Accounts; and the higher value asset levy – if implemented - would have significant financial implications for the council, reducing the amount available for providing services to tenants and for investing in new homes.

2.15 Funding of supported housing

The government had been proposing changes to the way that the housing related costs of supported housing are funded, to make up the funding shortfall to providers which is likely to arise from the introduction of Universal Credit and other welfare reforms.

Following consultation, these proposals have been withdrawn and supported housing will remain with Housing Benefit. This will be particularly important for temporary accommodation in terms of being able to respond to the changing needs and to minimise costs and use of unsuitable temporary accommodation such as B&B.

The County Council are currently reviewing Housing Related Support services, which is of particular significance to homeless services and homeless prevention, and we will continue to participate in this review.

2.16 Devolution

Powers and funding devolved to the new Cambridge & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) are to be used to facilitate delivery of new homes, economic growth, local infrastructure, and jobs across the area. As part of this, £100m is available for new affordable housing.

The CPCA have been granted the powers to receive the £100m fund from the Government to be spent on funding the start on site of at least 2000 additional affordable homes by 31 March 2022. This provides a unique opportunity to speed up housing delivery generally, and boost the delivery of affordable housing.

2.17 Homeless Reduction Act

The main national policy change relating to homelessness has been around the passing of the Homelessness Reduction Act. The Homeless Reduction Act brings major changes to the homeless legislation and with it, significant resource implications for the Council. The Act, which emanated from a Private Members Bill and received Royal Assent in April 2017 came into affect from April 2018.

The Homeless Reduction Act places new responsibilities on local authorities to provide advice and assistance to prevent and relieve homelessness, regardless of priority need. It is expected that the impact of the act will be to increase the number of customers approaching the Council for assistance. In addition, the Act will place significant additional administrative burdens on local authorities, particularly in relation to the level of detail required in producing and monitoring Personal Housing Plans. Furthermore, there are potentially 10-15 stages in the new process where the local authority is required to issue a written decision and where these decisions are all subject to review.

Based on the expected increase in customers and the additional time needed to manage each case, additional staffing resources are essential.

Additional resources are also required to properly prepare for and implement the legislation. This includes changes and modifications to IT systems and equipment, specialist training and a review of policies and procedures.

The main changes that the act will bring are:

- Applicants will be treated as being threatened with homelessness within 56 days (previously 28).
- Duty to prevent homelessness.
- Duty to relieve homelessness.
- Duty to complete a needs assessment and personal housing plan and keep these under review.
- Increase in decisions that can be reviewed, including decisions to end the prevention and relief duties and actions specified in the personal housing plan.
- A requirement on the applicant to co-operate with the actions to prevent and relieve homelessness.

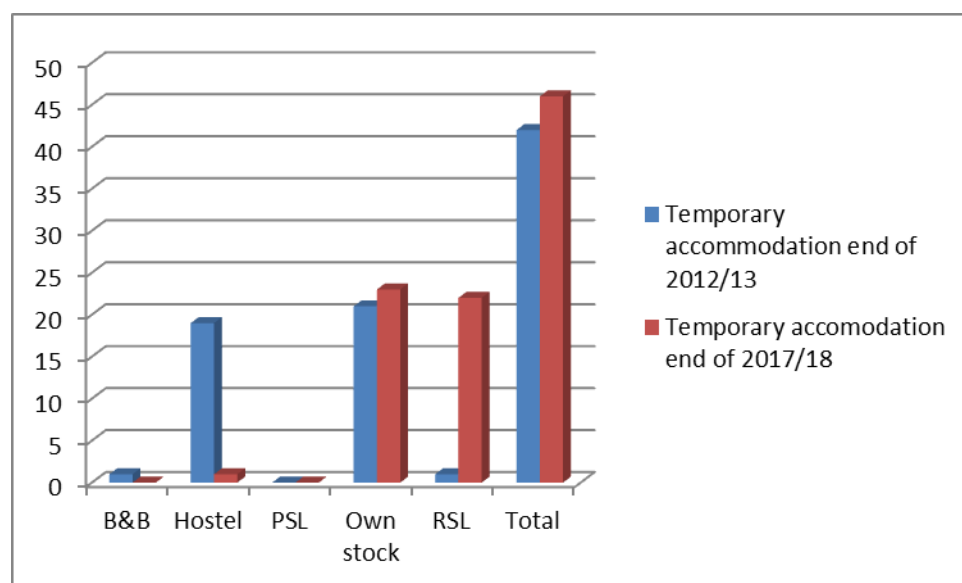
- A duty on other public sector bodies to refer cases of potential homelessness to housing (from Oct 2018).
- Advice and information will need to be available to support specific groups, which include:
 - People released from prison or youth detention accommodation
 - Care leavers
 - Former members of the regular armed forces
 - Victims of domestic abuse
 - People leaving hospital
 - People suffering from a mental illness or impairment and
 - Any other group that we identify as being at particular risk of homelessness in the district.

Chapter 3

Existing Housing and Support

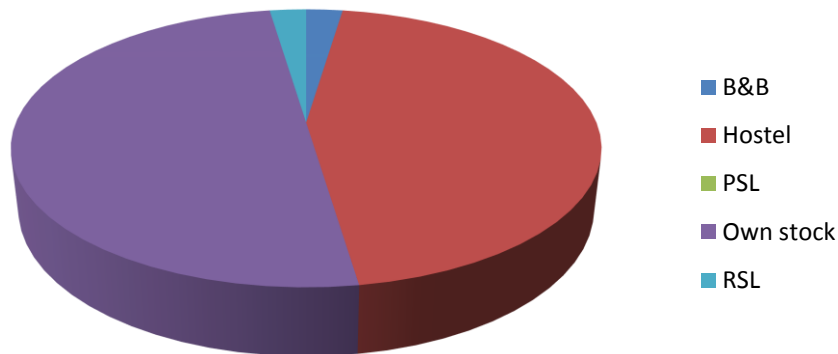
3.1 Temporary accommodation

The demand for temporary accommodation has also increased over the last 5 years. Figures from the end of 2012/13 and 2017/18 show a 9% increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation, although numbers have been higher within this period with figure at the end of 2016/17 showing a 43% increase on the 2012/13 levels.

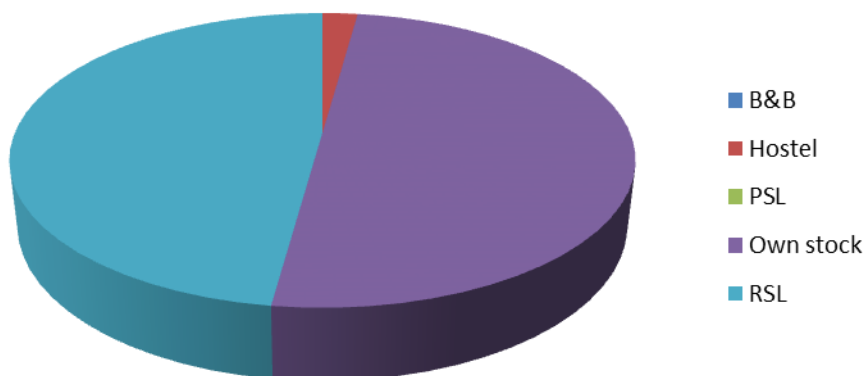


Previously the Council had two hostels that provided shared accommodation for statutory homeless households. During 2013/14 one of these sites was redeveloped, replacing a 16 room hostel with 30 units of self contained temporary accommodation. Not only has capacity increased but the standard of accommodation is much more suitable for families and vulnerable single people. Research into living in shared temporary accommodation shows that this can impact physically and mentally on homeless households, and the lack of privacy and space to play can have a detrimental effect on families and children. The new provision no longer comes under the definition of hostel accommodation, hence the reduction in hostel accommodation and increase in registered social landlord (RSL) accommodation within the temporary accommodation stats.

Temporary accommodation end of 2012/13



Temporary accommodation end of 2017/18



The Council still use properties within its own stock for temporary accommodation. Whilst this helps us to provide more suitable temporary accommodation than, for example, B&B placements, ideally we would like to reduce this amount to maximise the number of properties that can be let on a permanent basis.

The PSL scheme has almost solely been used for prevention with no cases in 2017/18 being recorded as temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter.

The team's success in managing homeless applicants and their temporary accommodation is reflected in the low usage of B&B despite an overall increase in temporary accommodation.

Year	Annual B&B spend
2012/13	£99,767
2013/14	£24,894
2014/15	£11,028
2015/16	£19,965
2016/17	£10,616
2017/18	£22,606

3.2 Other accommodation/ specialist support

Supported specialist accommodation is largely located within the City of Cambridge (and therefore not within the boundaries of South Cambridgeshire District), as it is close to facilities, services, transport links etc. Although SCDC does not have specific nomination rights to most of the specialist schemes referrals can be made to many of the young peoples schemes via the in-form facility shared by members of the Youth Accommodation Forum. The Council has nomination rights to 10 bed spaces at the YMCA for young people aged 16-25 as well as a shared emergency bed space with Cambridge City Council.

Supported accommodation for the mental health client group is administered by the monthly accommodation forum at Cambridge and Peterborough Foundation Trust (CPFT). Officers can support applicants within the forum if they have been referred by a Community Psychiatric Nurse, but there are no direct referral mechanisms.

Residents ready to move on, can be assessed under the Home-Link Sub-Regional choice based lettings scheme and, where appropriate, will be awarded Band A.

3.3 Permanent accommodation

Council housing

SCDC is a stock holding authority with 5225 social rented homes. Of these, 1056 are sheltered homes for the elderly. (As at 1/04/2018 *Ref: Medium Term Financial Strategy – App 2, Housing Revenue account budget setting report 2019/20*)

At the time of the last Homeless Review the Council's landlord functions had become self-financing. The Council took a debt of £205m, but was able to keep its full rental income, which enabled the Council to develop a business plan to re-invest into existing stock and begin to build new affordable social rented homes. The New Build Strategy identified up to 200 new homes that could be built in the next 10 years.

Unfortunately these plans were thwarted by the 1% rent reduction, which effectively wiped out the Council funds to pursue this plan. The Council have so far built 67 new affordable rented homes (and a further 13 shared ownership homes) with a further 69 rented (and 25 shared ownership) in progress. (*Ref: Medium Term Financial Strategy – App 2, Housing Revenue account budget setting report 2019/20*)

Over the last 3 years (up to March 18) on average 291 allocations have been made each year from the housing register into Council stock, 29% of which are generally for sheltered accommodation and would not normally be suitable for homeless households.

Housing Associations/ Registered Social Landlords

The number of lettings made to RSL's on average each year is 200. In addition, a new build programme has resulted in 1067 new affordable homes across the district over the past six years up to March 2018 (average of 178 properties per year).

Choice Based Lettings (CBL)

The Cambridgeshire sub region introduced their CBL scheme in 2008, called Home-Link. The lettings policy was reviewed in 2013 to take account of some of the welfare reforms.

With the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act, the policy is being reviewed to ensure it remains compatible with the new legislation. The policy and impact of the new legislation will remain under review to ensure it continues to address the highest housing needs.

As at April 2018, there were a total of 2411 applicants on the housing register for South Cambridgeshire, split into the following housing needs bands:

Band	Number of applicants
A	148
B	465
C	714
D	1084

Private rent

Private rent in the district is expensive. Housing Benefit entitlement is restricted to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) for the area. The following table shows the LHA for Cambridgeshire for each size of property along with the weekly median rent. The difference each week makes access to the private rent sector very difficult for many households in receipt of benefit or on a low income.

Table showing median rent and LHA

Property size	Median rent Sep 2018	LHA	Difference per week
1 bed	172	130	42
2 bed	206	149	57
3 bed	252	174	78
4 bed	322	231	91

Private Sector Leasing

The Council has worked with King Street Housing for many years to provide a Private Sector Leasing (PSL) scheme. However, with increased costs in this area and a very competitive housing market the difficult decision was made to end this arrangement and set up a new scheme in-house. Whilst the Council will need to subsidise the scheme, it was established that this is a more cost effective solution to the existing arrangements.

The purpose of having a PSL scheme is to provide access to affordable, good quality private rented accommodation to help prevent homelessness. The scheme can also be used to provide temporary accommodation for those owed a homelessness duty and as an offer of suitable accommodation to end our homelessness duties.

The Council have set up a separate company to operate the scheme that is solely owned by the Council – Shire Homes Lettings.

The scheme is now up and running and there is an on-going project to increase the availability of properties under the scheme.

Home Ownership

The average house price for South Cambridgeshire in Sept 2018 was approximately £416,387, with the lower quartile averaging £295,000. Figures from the Cambridgeshire Sub regional housing market bulletin show average median house prices are 8.3 times the average income, whilst comparisons between the lower quartile figures show house prices to be 10.8 times higher than income (Sept 2018). As a general rule, house prices of 3 – 3.5 times income are considered affordable.

For many households therefore living in the district home ownership continues to be unaffordable.

Chapter 4

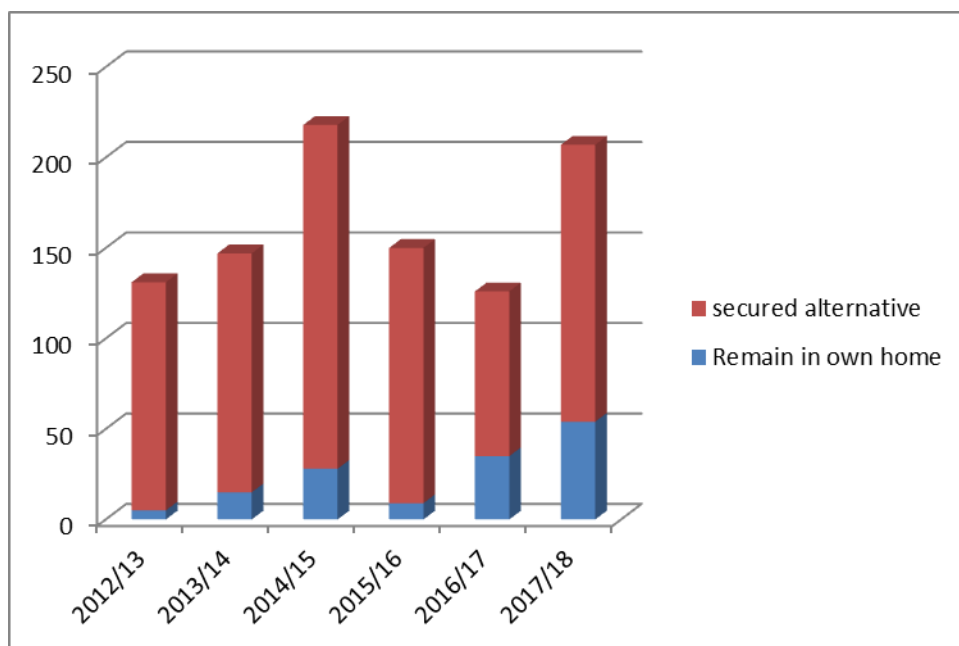
Homeless Prevention Activities

4.1 The Housing Advice and Options Team

The housing advice and options service is part of the Affordable Homes department of the Council. The service is responsible for providing free and confidential advice to the residents of South Cambridgeshire District, including homeless prevention. The service is also responsible for the Council's statutory duties under the homeless legislation contained within the 1996 Housing Act and introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act, along with responsibility for letting social rented properties under Home-Link, the sub-regional choice based lettings service. The service also provides services specifically for elderly residents in the district including a Visiting Support service that supports residents and helps them to maintain their homes and the Community Alarm service.

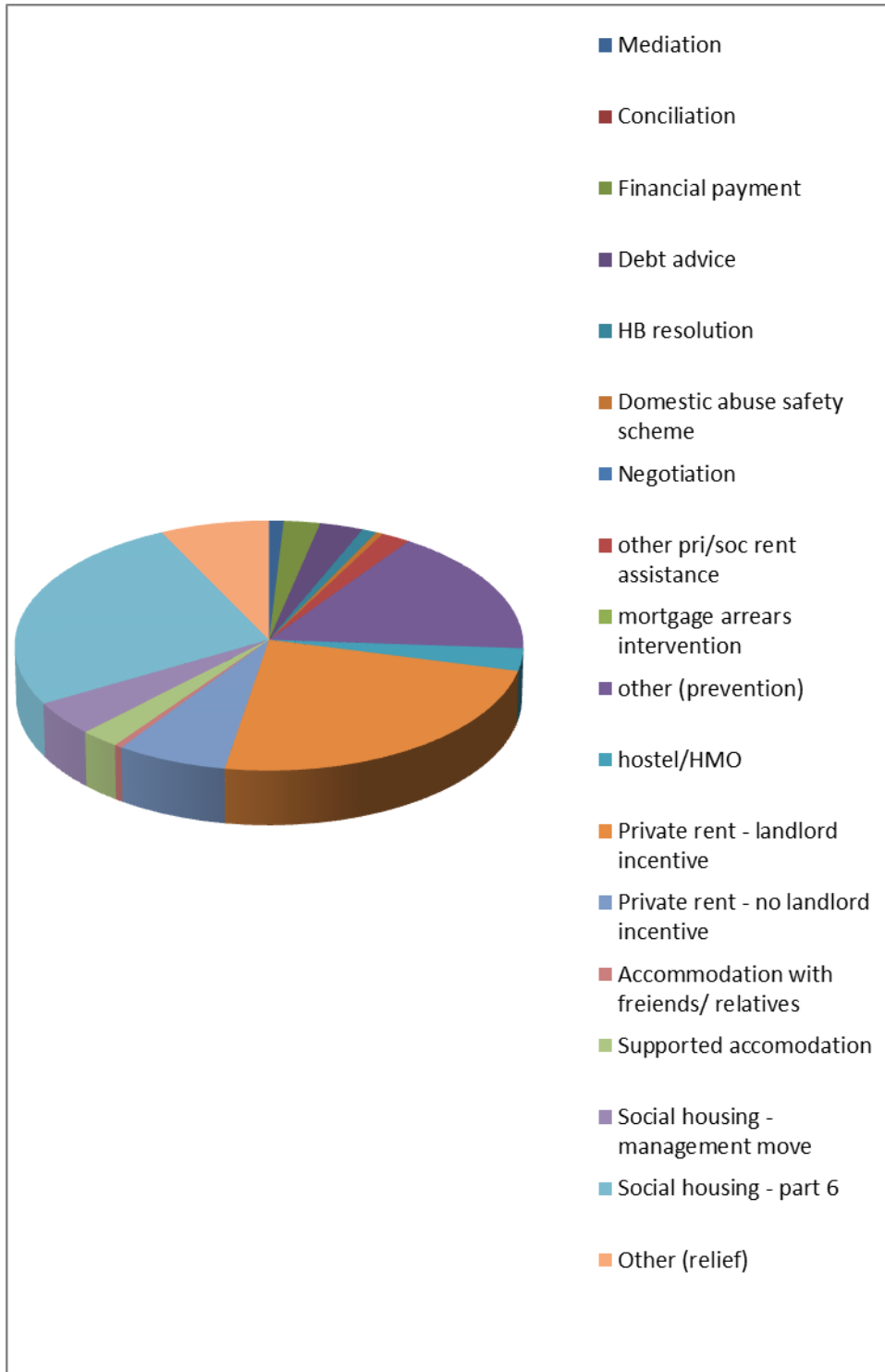
The housing advice and homelessness section within the team have continued to focus on prevention since the last strategy, however, during this time options such as private renting have become more difficult to access. This has had a knock on affect with the number of homeless approaches and acceptances which have increased during the period.

The following table shows the number of potentially homeless cases prevented through officer intervention. The chart also illustrates the difficulties in trying to help households remain in their current homes. Far more prevention is achieved by assistance to secure alternative accommodation. This is a reflection of the changes to welfare reform, where many household find their current accommodation unaffordable.



The table below shows the activities undertaken to help prevent homelessness during 2017/18. The main areas where homelessness can be successfully

prevented is through assistance to access privately rented accommodation with a landlord incentive and accommodation allocated via Home-Link.



Additional staffing resources have been required to meet the demands of the Homelessness Reduction Act. This includes an additional Housing Advice and Homelessness Assistant to help with the triage stage, when applicants initially contact the service, an additional Housing Advice and Homelessness Officer to help manage the increase in the administrative and decision making processes for each

case and a Complex Case officer to assist with the most vulnerable applicants and liaise with additional services and agencies to ensure appropriate support.

4.2 Floating support

A county wide floating support service is in place to support a range of clients aged 16 – 64 who may need housing related support to help them to maintain their accommodation.

In addition, the Housing Advice and Options service refers clients in need of support with mental health issues to the Riverside floating support service and the Chronically Excluded Adults service.

4.3 Private sector Leasing

The settled homes scheme was previously provided through the private sector leasing scheme with King Street Housing. As our own private sector leasing scheme develops the priority will continue to be homeless prevention, through an offer of a settled home through this scheme.

4.4 Deposit guarantee scheme

The rent deposit guarantee scheme has been in operation for a number of years. The scheme provides either the deposit or a guarantee of the deposit to private landlords. King Street Housing manage this scheme on behalf of the Council and their role relates to facilitation of the letting rather than ongoing management.

The scheme is offered to both priority need and non priority need applicants at risk of homelessness and enables them to find and choose their own accommodation.

During the last financial year since April 2017, 24 households had been assisted to secure private rented accommodation with the deposit scheme. This has reduced significantly when compared to previous years (43 in 2016/17 and 45 in 2015/16), but this is in line with current trends around the affordability of private rented accommodation and the difficulties therefore of finding suitable tenancies.

4.5 Single Homeless Service

The single homeless service led by Cambridge City Council stems from government funding issued in 2012 for single homeless prevention. The service provides shared accommodation in the private sector for single people. Both South Cambridgeshire District Council and Huntingdonshire District Council continue to work in partnership with the City Council to provide this service.

Referrals to the single homeless service have increased each year, up to 2016/17, with 89 referrals made during this year. This reduced slightly to 79 in 2017/18. During the past two years the annual target of 24 placements was surpassed by 37 actual placements in 2016/17 and 27 in 2017/18. At the end of 2017/18, 85 single households had been successfully placed in accommodation through the service.

4.6 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)

DHP's are extra payments to assist with housing payments for those in receipt of housing benefit. The policy prioritises homeless prevention and additional payment towards housing costs such as rent can be made to help prevent homelessness.

Funds for DHP's are allocated from Central Government.

£75,000 of the allocation for 2018/19 will be specifically used by the housing advice team to prevent homelessness.

4.7 Safe at Home

Additional security measures are offered to victims of domestic abuse, where they wish to remain in their own homes and these measures will provide a safer environment. The team work closely with the Bobby scheme to provide this support.

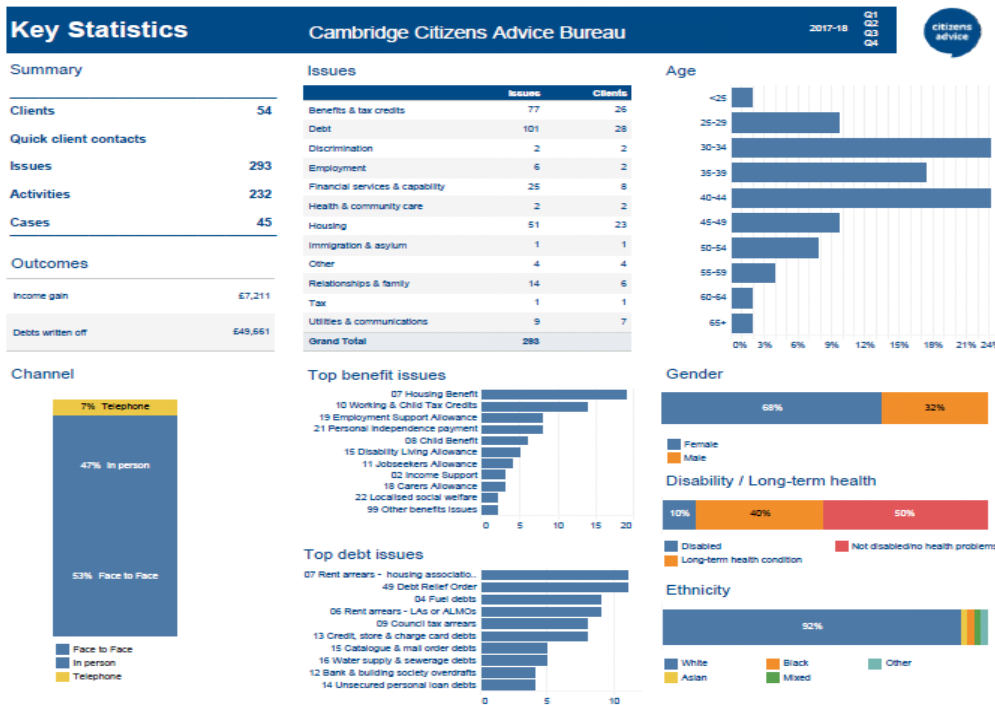
4.8 Spend to Save

As well as the prevention schemes mentioned above, there is also provision within the homeless budget for officers to determine other prevention measures. A recent review of expenditure on homelessness within South Cambs estimated that accepting a homeless application cost the Council approximately £2,100 and it is anticipated that this will increase as homelessness increases due to having to resort to more expensive temporary accommodation. Therefore, as a guide officers have discretion to provide one off solutions up to a maximum of £2,000 per applicant to prevent homelessness. This will not only be a cheaper option for the Council but will reduce the disruption and distress to the families caused by homelessness.

These payments are made as a loan which the applicant agrees to repay at an affordable weekly/ monthly repayment.

4.9 CAB – Money Advice service

The Council works in partnership with Cambridge CAB to provide a money advice outreach service from the Council's offices. Many applicants approach the Council with debt issues, which the CAB can assess and assist with.



4.10 Homeless prevention via Home-Link

As part of the Home-Link lettings policy, Band B can be awarded to applicants, likely to be in priority need, who are working with us to prevent their homelessness. As demand and housing need for housing increases there can be no guarantee of rehousing prior to homelessness, however, where households are willing to be as flexible as possible there is some chance of rehousing.

As at March 2018, 35 households were registered on Home-Link with a housing need of homeless prevention and 20 had been housed during the previous year.

Chapter 5

Partnership Working and Consultation

5.1 Key Forums

The team work in partnership with a number of other agencies to support those who are homeless, address their associated needs and improve joint working. Key forums attended by the service include:

- Chronically excluded adults service
- County protocol meetings
- Home-Link Management Board
- Home-Link Operations group
- Hostel managers meeting
- Youth Accommodation forum
- Mental Health accommodation forum
- MAPP
- MARAC
- Sub regional homelessness group
- Trailblazer steering group
- Residents at risks

This is not an exhaustive list and one-off or ad-hoc meetings are also attended with other agencies as the need arises.

5.2 Trailblazer

In 2016, a range of partners across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough came together to bid for “homeless trailblazer” funding. Happily we secured nearly £750,000 as a result. Our vision is that “by empowering all public facing staff to identify the risk of homelessness and work together to prevent it, we make homelessness the ‘unacceptable outcome’”.

The project is well underway, with the funding expected to last up to mid 2019. Partners to the project will therefore be undertaking an evaluation of the project and establishing which activities have proved successful and how these may be able to continue either collectively or within each local authority area.

The project includes:

Homeless prevention

The homelessness prevention team are working with a wide range of local teams to work better together, to reduce homelessness. They have been helping staff identify the early warning signs of homelessness and ways to prevent it. The team have built up good working relationships to deliver a better service by linking agencies up.

The team provide support and direct help to achieve the following:

- Educating agencies to recognise the early warning signs of homelessness and ways to prevent it.

- Helping people as early as possible when threatened with homelessness, regardless of “priority need”.
- Promoting a new housing health-check and new budgeting tools.
- Supporting agencies to make action plans for those at risk of homelessness.
- Ensuring customers are engaging with help given, to ensure a positive outcome.
- Working closely with housing options teams to see what has been successful and what has not, using the feedback to further develop the project.
- Helping to develop all aspects of the homelessness prevention hub and the rent solution service.

The landlord rent solution service

Loss of rented or tied accommodation is our biggest reason for homelessness acceptances, and this is mirrored across the County. As part of the Trailblazer project:

- We will create a new ‘rent solution’ service to help landlords maintain tenancies, resolve tenancy problems and reduce evictions which are leading to homeless acceptances.
- We will aim to attract landlords to use our trailblazer delivery vehicle through these interactions.

The rent solution service offers free specialist help and advice to agents, landlords and tenants to help maintain tenancies and try to help resolve tenancy problems that may otherwise lead to evictions.

New business development

It is evident that social housing cannot meet the levels of housing need across the County. Access to private rent accommodation is vital and enabling people on low incomes to secure private rented accommodation is now the most significant housing route to prevent homelessness.

Two new business development officers will develop schemes that facilitate access into good quality, affordable and suitable private rented homes. The aim is to increase supply of affordable housing options for households in need, co-operating with existing offers and exploring new opportunities.

This will be achieved by:

- Working with existing private rental schemes.
- Setting up new private rent schemes, for example; guaranteed rent schemes for private landlords.
- Facilitating new supplies of accessible rental accommodation.

Expanded Web Resources

Debt advice and resolving arrears are key to homelessness prevention. We will support the Making Money Count (MMC) web resource and we will expand our web resource to help residents and partner agencies with more information around homelessness and build better inter-agency knowledge.

5.3 Protocols

The housing advice and homelessness service have a number of protocols in place with other agencies. This is likely to increase with the requirements of the duty to refer under the Homeless Reduction Act. Most protocols are, and will need to be, County wide to ensure a consistent approach for County-wide agencies.

Some key existing protocols include:

Homeless 16/17 year olds:

A vital area of work between Housing and Children's Services to ensure vulnerable 16/17 year olds receive the help and support they need to either resolve the issues at home that have led to the threat of homelessness or those who are living away from their families for the first time, whilst still legally being a minor.

The protocol has recently been under review and further government guidance is due in light of the Homeless Reduction Act requirements.

Intentionally homeless families

Another protocol between Housing and Children's Services relates to assistance offered to intentionally homeless families. This protocol is due for review, particularly in light of the Homeless Reduction Act, where even greater emphasis is put on prevention.

MAPPA

This is a protocol between housing and key agencies who are part of Multi Agency Public Protection.

This protocol was recently updated in April 2017 promoting a housing options approach. The protocol mainly applies to level 2 and 3 offenders and covers comprehensive planning six months in advance of release.

5.4 Consultation

As part of this review of homelessness we contacted a number of partner agencies to get their view on our emerging priorities bearing in mind the main causes of homelessness in the District, the priorities identified by the Trailblazer project and our response to new legislation and government policies.

Summary of responses

Priority 1: Working closer with partner agencies to prevent homelessness:

Why?

- Priority aim of the Trailblazer project.
- Increase in homeless applicants with complex needs.
- Mental illness is one of the top reasons for priority need amongst homeless acceptances.
- Earlier intervention will increase homeless prevention.
- Introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act and requirements on all agencies to refer where there is a risk of homelessness.

What will this include?

- Responsibility on all agencies to help prevent homelessness.
- Increase prevention upstream
- Increased casework with all homeless applicants (including non priority homeless applicants), identifying key actions through housing plans.
- Help staff within partner agencies to identify early warning signs of homelessness and find new ways to prevent it.
- Establish housing pathways for specific needs.

Agencies responding – 11

Agencies who agreed with this priority – 11

Key areas of support offered:

- Outreach domestic abuse services.
- Working with the Trailblazer project
- Cross boundary working
- Identify early warning signs of those at risk of losing their tenancy.
- Can offer preventative support in relation to care and support needs
- Support complex clients including help with work and life skills.
- Support with package of furniture and equipment for new home.
- Increased provision of accommodation in partnership with South Cambridgeshire.
- Physical or emotional health care that could help prevent homelessness.

Priority 2 - New private rent initiatives:

Why?

- Ending of an assured shorthold tenancy is the main cause of homelessness.
- Severe lack of affordable accommodation in the private sector.
- Increased responsibilities, but no increase in provision of accommodation and existing lack of social renting to meet demand.
- Need to increase prevention options to reduce use of inappropriate temporary accommodation such as B&B.

What will this include?

- Implement and grow private sector leasing scheme.
- New landlord and rent solution service (Trailblazer project).
- New business development officers to increase access to private rented sector (Trailblazer project).
- Exploring opportunities for Build to Rent Schemes on the larger strategic sites in South Cambridgeshire as part of the Council's affordable housing enabling role.

Agencies responding – 11

Agencies who agreed with this priority – 11

Key areas of support offered:

- Continue Town Hall Lettings (THL) for single people.
- Share good practice
- Work collaboratively with SCDC around complex cases.

- Signposting service users.
- Can support those in private rent through outreach.
- Work with private landlords to support tenant.

Priority 3 - Access to information

Why?

- Trailblazer priority
- Easier and earlier access to information in response to increased demand.

What will this include?

- Advice on rights and responsibilities to help residents prevent homelessness from their current accommodation.
- Advice on other housing options available
- Better advice and information for partner agencies.

Agencies responding – 11

Agencies who agreed with this priority – 10

Key areas of support offered:

- Joined up advice.
- Access to advice and information.
- Early identification.
- Advice on how to access services.
- Provide advice to clients.

Priority 4 - Access to accommodation and support

Why?

- With affordability being such a severe problem in South Cambridgeshire – access to affordable and decent accommodation is crucial.
- Homelessness is increasing and this is likely to increase demand for temporary accommodation and subsequent rehousing.
- Increased level of cases with complex needs.

What will this include?

- Increase supply of affordable accommodation (including private rent and social rent).
- Review levels of temporary accommodation and the need for additional units.
- Enable existing and potential tenants to access appropriate support to enable them to maintain their accommodation.
- Implementation of the PSL scheme.

Agencies responding – 11

Agencies who agreed with this priority – 11

Key areas of support offered:

- Support for those affected by domestic abuse.
- Working in partnership.
- Ensure correct support in place for complex cases.
- Work on housing options for complex cases, including training flats.
- Preparation for independent living.
- Ongoing support.

- Supporting people in a tenancy.

5.5 Partner agencies

Our Partner Agencies include, but is not restricted to the following agencies and services:

Cambridge City Council
East Cambridgeshire District Council
Fenland District Council
Huntingdonshire District Council
Peterborough City Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Cross Keys Homes
Flagship
Guinness Partnership
Cotman Housing
Hastoe Housing
BPHA
Hundred Houses
Papworth Trust
Orbit
Metropolitan
Luminous
Accent Nene
Clarion Housing
Suffolk Housing
Cambridge Housing Society
Sanctuary Housing
Cambridge Citizens Advice Bureaux
John Huntingdon's Charity
NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
Office of Police and Crime Commissioner
King Street Housing
Cambridge Women's Aid
Cambridge Re-use
Cambridge Cyrenians
Emmaus
Jimmy's Cambridge
Wintercomfort for the Homeless
Riverside

Chapter 6

Performance monitoring

6.1 Homeless strategy action plan

The action plan will illustrate key actions needed to address the priorities identified in the homeless strategy. This will be regularly monitored by the Council to ensure actions remain on track.

6.2 KPI's

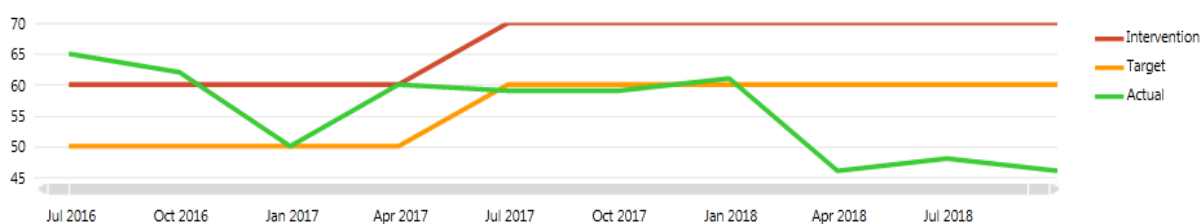
The Council monitors three KPI's for the homeless service:

- No's in temporary accommodation
- Numbers of homeless prevention.
- Expenditure on B&B

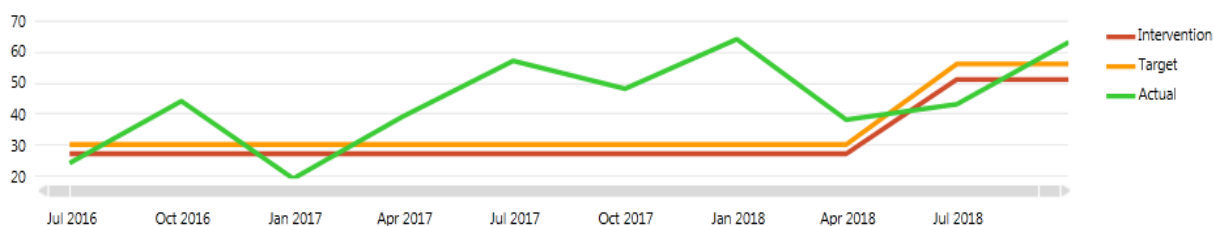
These three PI's give an overall picture of the impact on homelessness and how well we are able to respond to it. Whilst our focus remains on prevention we can see the impact that external factors may have on our ability to prevent homelessness. There has been some correlation between an increase in homeless prevention and a reduction in temporary accommodation, although overall demand for the service is increasing.

Expenditure on B&B has the ability to escalate quickly and is therefore closely monitored. Increased costs here will show that additional resources and options are required for alternative temporary accommodation.

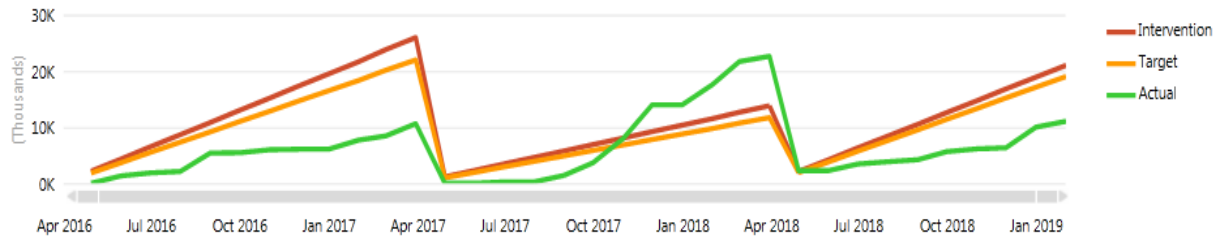
Number of Households in temporary accommodation (beginning of 2016/17 to end Sep 2018)



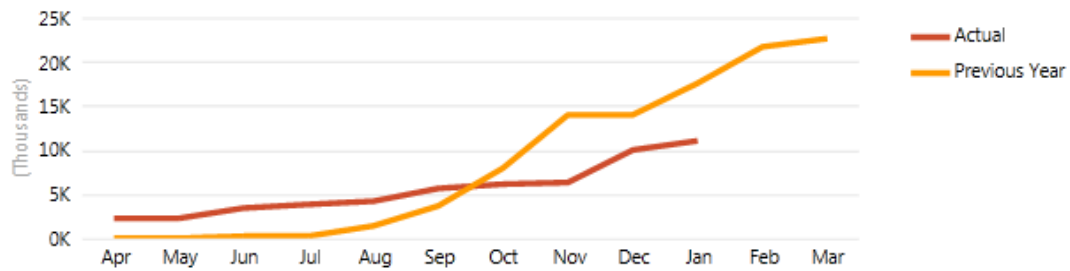
AH208 - Number of households helped to prevent homelessness (beginning of 2016/17 - end Sep 2018)



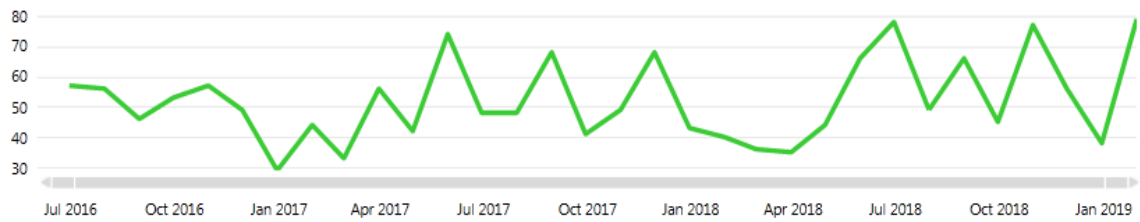
AH212 - £s spent on B&B accommodation (year to date) (beginning of 2016/17 – end Jan 2019)



AH212 - £s spent on B&B accommodation (year to date) – 2018/19 to date (red) versus 2017/18 (amber)



Housing Advice Caseload (Jun 2016 – end Jan 2019)



Chapter 7

Resources

7.1 Expenditure and income

Housing advice and homelessness service

	2006/07	2012/13	2017/18
Payments for Accommodation	£47,479	£152,324	£117,420
Associated costs for homeless households (storage of Household Goods, etc.)	£5,361	£10,861	£17,558
Provision for Irrecoverables	£0	£3,800	£0
Rent Deposit Partnership Scheme	£36,642	£51,825	£3,116
Charitable Payment Scheme	£29	£331	
Homeless prevention Grants			£11,413
Prevention Measures	£8,808	£18,157	£22,211
Staff & Central Support Costs	£126,606	£265,739	£401,403
Total Expenditure	£224,925	£503,036	£573,121
Income – Contributions	£2,690	£71,586	£51,782
Income – Government Grant	£40,700	£55,166	£109,047
Total Income	£43,390	£126,752	£160,829
Net Expenditure	£181,535	£376,284	£412,292

Payments for accommodation show a significant reduction in the most recent year. This is largely due to a reduction in the use of B&B accommodation. Spending on homeless prevention has increased as this area of work has been prioritised. This includes a money advice service to aid homeless prevention.

Private sector leasing

An additional budget was approved for the new private sector leasing scheme. Working within the current housing market, it is clear that this scheme cannot be operated at nil cost, and therefore it will need to be subsidised by the Council to ensure it provides truly affordable accommodation for those in housing need. However, with the increasing number of homeless applicants there is the real risk of expensive B&B costs escalating quickly and therefore it was felt that interventions such as this would help to minimise this risk of an extreme increase in expenditure as well as being a better housing solution for homeless and potentially homeless families.

Estimates for the PSL scheme were estimated based on recent private rent expenditure and costs incurred by our own in-house services and contractors. Based on 70 properties it is anticipated that the cost of the scheme will be in the region of £175,190, however, this compares to potential costs of over £2 million if B&B is relied on to provide additional temporary accommodation.

7.2 Government Grants

The Government provide an annual grant for homelessness prevention, which is usually reviewed every three years. The amount of grant awarded for 2016/17 to 2018/19 is expected to be as follows:

2016/17	£49,362
2017/18	£49,430
2018/19	£49,525

In October 2017 the Government announced that it would be allocating £72.7 million 'New Burdens' funding to all housing authorities in England in acknowledgement of the transitional support required by local authorities implementing new processes and systems to prepare for commencement of the new act. The funding covers the remainder of 17/18 and the following two financial years through to March 2020. It is not expected to be extended beyond this date, although a thorough review of the funding and underlying financial assumptions have been promised after the second year.

The allocations to South Cambridgeshire District Council are as follows:

2017/18 - £28,530
2018/19- £26,134
2019/20 - £30,035

In addition, the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG) was introduced this year. This grant is not directly designed to cover the costs of implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act but can be used in this manner if a council chooses to do so.

FHSG is a direct replacement for the 'Temporary Accommodation Management Fee' (TAMF) which was distributed to local authorities by the Department of Work and Pensions until the end of March 2017. This funding stream is primarily to cover the costs of temporary accommodation, although the regulations allow it to be spent on wider homeless prevention activities if a council chooses.

7.3 Grants to external organisations

The Council provides grant aid to organisations that offer housing advice and other support to homeless and potentially homeless households.

In December 2018 the lead member for Finance, following recommendations from the grants committee, approved grants for the following organisations for next three years. The annual grant is also shown.

Organisation	Grant allocation 2019/20
Cambridge Cyrenians	£1,780
Cambridge Re-Use	£1,800
Cambridge Women's Aid	£8,500

Cambridge Cyrenians – the grant from South Cambridgeshire is contributing to the maintenance and upgrade of computers and IT support provided to service users. Cambridge Cyrenians provides a PC and internet access for residents in each of

their houses to enable them to bid on-line for housing, apply for benefits and search for work.

Cambridge Re-Use provides low cost household goods to low income families in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. The service is well used as the Housing Advice team regularly work with households on low incomes who cannot afford to furnish their accommodation without the aid of the Re-Use scheme.

Cambridge Women's Aid offers a high standard of modern refuge accommodation to women and children, providing support and activities to build confidence and support independence. The outreach services offered by Cambridge Women's Aid provides a free and confidential service based in the community to support those affected by domestic abuse, either directly or by supporting those who know them or work with them.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

There is no doubt that homelessness remains an increasing challenge for SCDC, like most local authorities across the Country. A number of external factors have contributed to this including welfare reforms and an unaffordable housing market. Homelessness have risen significantly over recent years and demands on local authorities will increase further due to the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act.

Additional resources have been agreed by the Council to help to address this including an increase of staffing resources to meet these challenges and a Private Sector Leasing scheme to provide much needed affordable accommodation for those in housing need. Central Government has also provided additional funding to help local authorities with their new duties and responsibilities although the new burdens funding falls far short of the actual costs. In addition SCDC are part of a County-wide partnership who were successful in obtaining Trailblazer funding to increase homeless prevention opportunities as early as possible. It is therefore essential that these resources as well as existing resources are put to the best use possible and focus will need to remain on the new initiatives being supported including the Trailblazer project and the private sector leasing scheme.

The Councils statutory responsibilities in relation to homelessness are subject to the largest change since the homeless legislation was introduced and time and resources are required to meet these challenges.

Like many local authorities the main cause of homelessness is termination of assured shorthold tenancies and we can see that affordability of housing is a key concern within the district. Specific prevention options including debt advice and affordable housing options therefore need to remain a priority. Early intervention is essential and given the expected increase in homelessness it is important that we make information available that the public can access directly and where possible address their own housing needs. Early work undertaken by all agencies signed up to the ethos adopted by the Trailblazer project of 'homelessness being the unacceptable outcome' will also aid early resolution of housing difficulties.

Key themes that are therefore emerging as priorities for the next 5 years include:

- Working closer with partner agencies to prevent homelessness
 - Trailblazer project
 - Establishing pathways
- New private rent initiatives
 - Increase supply of accommodation through Shire Homes Lettings
 - Utilising opportunities to prevent homelessness in the private rented sector through, for example, DHP, rent deposit scheme, support to landlords.
- Access to information
 - Written and website information
 - Targeted advice for specific groups

- Access to accommodation and support
 - Increase supply of housing
 - Monitor impact of Homeless Reduction Act
 - Monitor need for temporary accommodation
 - Maximising homeless prevention
 - Review of lettings policy