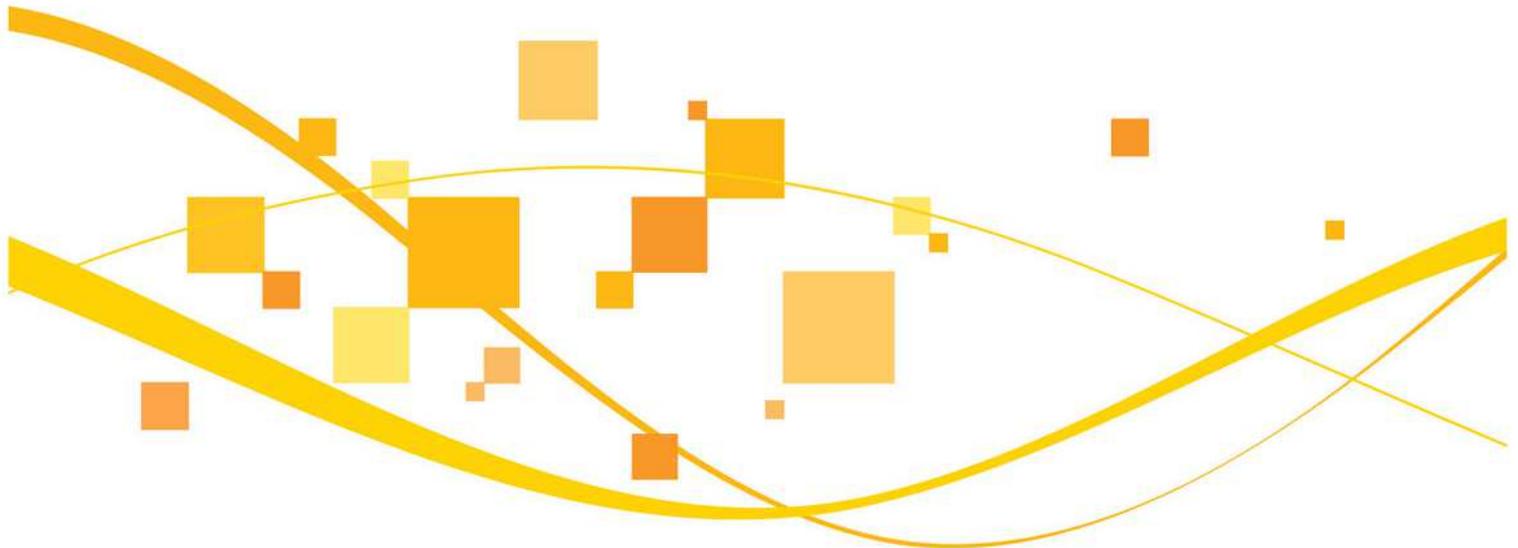


Homelessness Prevention Strategy

January 2014 updated January 2018



Key Information

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Section/Directorate:	Housing Services
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1. Introduction

In Basildon, our overarching goals are to prevent and reduce homelessness and repeat homelessness through early intervention, partnership working and by ensuring a delivery of high quality services from both our own departments and our partners.

Preventing Homelessness in Basildon continues to be a priority. Households experiencing homelessness or who are threatened with homelessness are often trapped in a negative cycle that can impact upon their health, emotional wellbeing and life chances. The effects on children within households experiencing or threatened with homelessness can be lifelong.

Basildon Council's vision is 'creating opportunity' for those within the Borough. Preventing homelessness is a key way to ensure that we create meaningful opportunities for the families and individuals living in Basildon so they are able to flourish.

In 2011 the Coalition Government introduced the Localism Act, which resulted in a number of changes to the context in which local government operates. Basildon Borough Council (referred to herein as "the Council") has adopted a number of Strategies and Policies, including this Homelessness Prevention Strategy (referred to herein as "the strategy") to align itself with the new powers and responsibilities provided by this Act.

This Homelessness Prevention Strategy outlines the steps the Council will take to overcome the challenges presented by these legislative changes and, at the same time, how we will capitalise on the opportunities arising. The Strategy has been developed in context with the Council's new Housing Allocations and Tenancy Policies and compliments the terms of both.

This document will be published on the Council's website (www.basildon.gov.uk) and copies will be provided free of charge to anyone wishing to view a copy.

The strategy has been amended with effect from January 2018 in order to take account of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which gained Royal Assent in June 2017 and is due to be implemented in April 2018.

Please see appendix 4 for a summary of the changes and new duties the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduces.

2. Executive Summary

The Council is acutely aware that housing is the very fabric of people's lives; it means safety and security for most, but can be an issue of great stress and instability for others. People can be made homeless for a variety of reasons. The Council's approach is, and has always been, to offer support for those who reach the 'end of the line', demonstrating utmost consistency, and prioritising support to those who need it most.

However, a struggling economy has resulted in government spending cuts, limiting the services that the Council's homelessness service can realistically provide. Occurring concurrently has been an increase in the number of approaches to the homeless service, driven by the same poor economic climate as well as more 'traditional reasons' such as relationship breakdown. The Council has concluded that measures to prevent homelessness are now seen as the most cost effective use of limited Council funds and it is this rationale which has led to the creation of the Council's Homelessness Prevention Strategy. It is anticipated that the Strategy will help both the Council, key stakeholders and other agencies to appropriately target the limited and reducing resources available to them.

The Strategy and accompanying action plan have been developed in consultation with members of the public, elected Councillors, voluntary & community organisations and our RSL partners with thorough statistical analysis also contributing. As a result of this work, the Council has concluded it is necessary to move away from taking a reactive approach to a homeless crisis. Instead, the focus will be on providing proactive advice and support to individuals and those in need of assistance.

The Strategy will target both groups and individuals struggling to maintain tenancies or facing other homelessness crisis and aims to provide them with the support necessary to prevent them making a homelessness application. The Strategy also includes support for those struggling to access housing in the private rented sector due to financial reasons. Furthermore, as part of the Strategy, Basildon Council will work with external agencies to assist vulnerable individuals, for whom accessing housing services may be problematic, secure a tenancy or a place in a supported accommodation scheme.

It is anticipated that the Strategy will encourage strong partnership working between the Council, its key stakeholders and other partner agencies. Developing these strong partnerships means the Strategy can ensure that any challenges arising from the ongoing political and economic changes can be more easily overcome. This will allow the people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in the Borough to receive the best possible assistance from both the Council and its partners.

Progress towards the outcomes of the Strategy will be continually monitored with a review of both the Strategy and accompanying action plan conducted regularly as service demand requires.

3. Why have a Homelessness Prevention Strategy?

We are, by law required to take action to tackle homelessness. This requirement is governed by Part 7 of *the Housing Act 1996*, which provides the statutory under-pinning for the measures outlined in the Strategy.

Broadly speaking, under the homelessness legislation somebody is statutorily homeless if they do not have accommodation that they have the legal right to occupy, which is available to them (and their household) and which it would be reasonable for them to continue to reside.

The homelessness legislation places a general duty on housing authorities to ensure that advice and information about homelessness, and preventing homelessness, is available to everyone in their district or borough free of charge. The legislation also requires authorities to assist individuals and families who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to apply for help.

Under the *Homelessness Act 2002* all housing authorities must have in place a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their borough or district. The first strategy had to be in place by July 2003 and after that has to be reviewed at least every five years.

The strategy must set out the Local Authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for ensuring that sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

Local authorities need to ensure that organisations, within all sectors, whose work can help prevent homelessness or meet the needs of homeless people in their District or Borough, are involved in the strategy. This needs to include not just housing providers (such as housing associations and private land-lords) but also other statutory bodies such as Social Services, the probation service, the health service and the wide range of organisations in the private and voluntary sector whose work helps to prevent homelessness or meet the need of people who have experienced homelessness.

The Council's Strategy will ensure both new and existing preventative measures are coordinated within the same document so that their standalone and collective effectiveness / cost effectiveness can be accurately reviewed and measured.

4. Policy Statements

Basildon Borough Council is committed to ensuring those facing a homeless crisis are given access to the support and resources they require. The Council has recognised that preventing homelessness is vital for ensuring personal wellbeing, whilst also being more cost effective than seeking to assist households through statutory homelessness provision. Whilst the Council remains committed to helping those to whom a homelessness duty is owed, the focus now is on preventing homelessness by:

- Enhancing access to the Private Sector and encouraging those with accommodation to find their own solutions to their homelessness crisis by providing signposting and advice on financial and technical assistance;
- Reviewing the needs of; and providing support for vulnerable individuals including those threatened with violence and make provision to ensure they are able remain in their current accommodation;
- Working collaboratively with partners and external agencies to provide housing assistance and advice to all households as well as creating dedicated pathways to housing solutions;
- Collaborating internally to mitigate the effects of the Welfare Reform Act;
- Ensuring those found to be rough sleeping are identified and given the support necessary to get off the street;
- Preventing and relieving rough sleeping by adopting the no second night out principles, reconnection protocols and providing access to emergency accommodation;
- Working with supported housing providers to refer vulnerable people to supported housing;
- Providing appropriate interim and temporary accommodation to meet the needs of the clients and preventing repeat approaches to the service.

5. Context – Consultation, engagement, research and analysis.

The section below outlines both the national and local contexts in which this Strategy is embedded and highlights the major drivers which have contributed to its development. This includes the legislative and economic circumstances which have made it necessary to develop a new Strategy as well as supporting evidence explaining why the strategy responds to these circumstances through the measures outlined within it.

Both the National and Local Context sections below have been updated with effect from January 2018 when the Strategy underwent a minor review to take into account the new duties and responsibilities as set out in the homelessness Reduction Act 2017 due for implementation in April 2018.

5.1 National context

The Council's Homelessness Prevention Strategy has been formulated at a time when there are great political and financial pressures on Councils nationally to change how they deliver services to the public.

Since the Council's last Strategy was published in 2014, there has been a period of political redirection across the public sector. Housing services have been, and will continue to be, impacted upon by a number of these changes. Nationally, a change in government during 2010 led to a new political programme for the public sector evidenced through the umbrella directives of the Localism Act 2011 and Welfare Reform Act 2012. Both of these Acts had significant impact upon the housing department resulting in major operational changes, requiring a new strategy to be devised to take account of this

The Localism Act 2011, includes measures that have resulted in significant changes to the Council's homelessness duties, the allocation of social housing and the security of tenure. The principle changes are as follows:

- Social housing allocations reform. Local authorities now have greater freedom to set their own policies about who should, and who should not qualify for the housing waiting lists. The Council reviewed and consulted upon its revised Allocation Policy in response to this part of the Act alongside the review of the Strategy. It was adopted in March 2014 and is due to be implemented in late 2014;
- Reform of homelessness legislation - One key component of the Act allows local authorities to dramatically alter the way in which they deal with people experiencing a homelessness crisis. Whilst the Councils duty to house those who are eligible, in priority need and unintentionally homeless remains, the terms of the Act mean people who become homeless will no longer be able to refuse offers of accommodation in the private rented sector. By supplying quality and affordable private rented homes, it is anticipated that the Council will be able to offer a solution to people experiencing a short-term homelessness crisis, whilst also

ensuring that social housing remains available for those in need on the housing register;

- Social housing tenure reform – in future tenancies will be able to be granted for a fixed term (minimum of two years);
- A national home swap scheme has been introduced for people in social housing.

The government intends that the changes in the Localism Act will provide local authorities and housing partners with greater flexibility to manage housing need in their area with a range of accommodation options available which better meet local circumstances and priorities. It is also intended that local authorities will, as a result, be able to provide realistic housing advice for everyone in need regardless of statutory status.

Local Authorities have the opportunity to use this new flexibility to move to a new approach to housing advice and homelessness prevention which provides a tailored solution for each household and a more joined up approach to identifying and addressing the range of underlying issues that can lead to homelessness.

The Welfare Reform Act which was enacted on 8th March 2012 contains a raft of alterations to the way in which benefits are delivered with the changes coming into force in April 2013.

From this date tenants of working age who received housing benefit have had this reduced if they have one or more spare bedrooms. The reduction is expected to be 14% for one extra bedroom and 25% for two extra bedrooms or more. In addition a Housing Benefit cap was introduced which effectively limited the amount of housing benefit payable for accommodation with the stated intention of reducing rental levels.

The cuts to housing benefit imposed by the Welfare Reform Act 2012 have had a significant impact on the Council being able to procure private rented accommodation into which the homelessness duty can be discharged.

It is expected that nationally, these changes will leave thousands of Council tenants having to overcome a payment deficit each month that did not exist previously. It is anticipated that this extra financial burden will increase the number of approaches to the housing assessment service for advice and assistance. Measures contained in this Strategy aimed at improving partnership working, raising public awareness and improving access to services, will be essential in helping people prepare for, and cope with these welfare changes. As a direct result of taking these measures, it is anticipated that a significant amount of homelessness will be prevented and demand on homelessness services reduced.

The government's new national Homelessness Prevention Strategy *Making Every Contact Count* intends that every contact local agencies make with

vulnerable people and families counts. The plan is based on two guiding principles which have informed the construction of this Strategy, they are:

- Prevention and early intervention to stop people 'falling off the track'. Those who are vulnerable should be spotted earlier and their underlying issues addressed before they reach crisis point;
- A 'second chance society' ensuring that no one is written off and those needing another chance get access to the support they need.

The paper highlights that;

- Prevention is the key to making every contact count with 34% of homelessness case due to eviction by relatives or friends;
- Family breakdown is critical to address, with 18% of all acceptances in 2011/12 being due to relationship breakdown and two thirds of 16/17 year olds taking part, stating that parental separation or divorce was the 'trigger' to their situation.
- Local innovation – the government wants to see better local leadership and new local authority led multi-agency partnerships to prevent homelessness, integration of existing local services, and new funding mechanisms.

The plan also sets out ten local challenges to help authorities implement its approach. The recommendations are not central impositions or targets however the government believes their addition could lead to homelessness services meeting the standards of the best. They are:

- To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services;
- To actively work in partnership with the voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs;
- To offer a housing options prevention service to all clients including written advice;
- To adopt effective local alternatives towards preventing and addressing rough sleeping;
- To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client groups that include appropriate accommodation and support arrangements;
- To develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups including advice and support for both client and landlord;

- To have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs;
- To not place any young person aged 16 or 17 into bed & breakfast accommodation.
- To not place any families into bed & breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than six weeks.

As will be seen in the measures outlined later in the Strategy, the Council is committed to following these recommendations and in some respects aims to exceed them.

When designing the Strategy, the Council has been keen to follow the protocols created by the 'no second night out' project based in London. The aim is to ensure there is a rapid response to new rough sleepers and that they are provided with an offer from either the Council or a partner agency that means they do not have to sleep out for a second night. By promoting collaborative working with partner agencies, the Strategy will ensure that those identified as homeless are given the support needed to get off the streets.

Occurring concurrently with the above national changes has been the deepest recession for a generation which has resulted in several rounds of government spending cuts, the results of which are seen with less funding being available to individual Councils. As a consequence, the Council has undertaken a programme of measures aimed at reducing expenditure whilst also ensuring as many services as possible remain operational. In order to achieve this goal, individual departments, including housing, have been and continue to be, required to operate in the most efficient manner possible.

Given the tighter fiscal constraints placed upon it, the housing department has identified that preventing homelessness is far more cost-effective and efficient than seeking to assist households via statutory homelessness provisions. Figures taken from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) publication "*evidence review of the costs of homelessness*" estimate that the annual costs of homelessness to local authorities range from £24,000 - £30,000 (gross) per person.

Since the Strategy was originally published in 2014 the National context has changed significantly. For example, the previous four years have brought about:

- Rapidly increasing house prices
- Rising numbers of people living in the private rented sector
- ASTs ending are now the single biggest cause of homelessness
- Welfare reforms, including the introduction of Universal Credit
- Dwindling supplies of social housing

In addition, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 due for implementation in April 2018 builds on the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011

firmly placing prevention on a statutory footing and raising expectations that Councils will provide meaningful advice and assistance to everyone threatened with or experiencing homelessness by employing a range of viable and affordable local housing options.

5.2 Local context

Basildon is the largest borough in Essex with a population of 183,000. The population is expected to increase to 210,000 by 2034. Ethnic minorities make up a relatively low 10.5% of the population, compared to other parts of the country, however, the borough includes the largest Gypsy and Traveller population in Essex. Households are becoming smaller with 54% of the borough living as a single adult or as a couple without children. 77% of our adult population are of working age, by 2034 this is forecast to decrease to 72%.

The median gross full-time salary earned by a person working in Basildon is £29,848 a year and the median household income for a household living in the borough is only marginally higher at £32,147.

There are around 76,120 homes in the Basildon Borough. Based on a stock condition modelling exercise carried out in 2017, it is estimated that 63% are owner occupied, 13% are privately rented, and 24% are in the social sector. Due to the proximity to London, and high demand for housing, particularly for families, house prices and private sector rents in the borough are much higher than the average local earnings will allow for.

The average house price in the borough is £303,676, an increase of over 52% in the last ten years. The borough is leading the way in South Essex with a net delivery of 680 new homes in 2014/2015.

The Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) highlights wider trends, such as higher levels of population growth in Basildon that reflects an increasing flow of migrants from London. The SHMA predicts that approximately between 3,272 and 3,744 new dwellings per annum are needed across South Essex to cope with the demand.

The SHMA also indicates that there is a significant level of unmet need for affordable housing across TGSE, with a calculated need for 1,877 affordable homes annually over the next five years to clear the backlog and meet newly arising needs. Once the backlog is cleared then only newly arising needs will need to be met, requiring 1,767 affordable homes annually.

Figure 1: Summary of objectively assessed need range. (TGSE, 2016)

	Lower end of range	Upper end of range
Basildon	763	837
Castle Point	326	410
Rochford	312	392
Southend-on-Sea	953	1,132
Thurrock	919	973
TGSE	3,272	3,744

Source: Turley, 2015; Edge Analytics, 2015

5.3 Consultation

As part of the development of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy Basildon Council undertook an extensive consultation exercise which ran from Monday 25th November 2013 to Monday 13th January 2014.

During the time the consultation was open a total of 7 responses were received from residents of the Borough and members of Council staff.

This consultation process involved the public, partner agencies, Registered Social Landlords, elected Council members and other Council departments. Each of them was able to review the strategy to ensure it is inclusive and meets the needs of the Borough and then provide their feedback through an anonymous online survey available on the Basildon Borough Council Website.

In addition to this online consultation, members of staff of the RSL Partners, community organisations, local agencies and neighbouring local authorities whom the Council works with as part of our homelessness prevention goals were invited to a stakeholder engagement event held at Wat Tyler Park on Monday 25th November. The attendees were given a presentation on the revised Strategy before being given the opportunity to ask questions or raise any concerns that they had. These comments were noted and used to inform the consultation and development of the Strategy. For a list of attendees at this event see appendix 2.

Following the closure of the consultation on the 13th of January the responses were analysed and the results presented to Councillors and officers in order to establish if any changes to the draft Strategy were necessary. As the respondents to the consultation were largely in favour of the homelessness prevention measures proposed in the draft strategy it was decided that no

changes would be required. Appendix 1 contains a full analysis of the results of the consultation.

The Strategy has been updated with effect from January 2018 in order to take account of the changes to homelessness legislation as a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The Strategy is scheduled for a full review in November 2018.

Data Analysis

In addition to the above consultation exercise, the Council has undertaken a raft of statistical analysis and reviewed its current homelessness prevention work in order to identify the challenges the Strategy aims to overcome and to assess the groups to be targeted by the measures contained within the Strategy. The results of this analysis of local needs and current work that has been carried out below.

5.4 Current homelessness prevention work

Local authorities are required to record cases where they have prevented or relieved homelessness. For example, this could be where a Council has found alternative accommodation for an individual prior to them being made homeless.

Basildon Borough Council has a dedicated housing assessment team, housing advice team, and homelessness team whose aim is to relieve and prevent homelessness.

The number of cases assisted through homeless prevention and housing advice exceeds the number of homelessness cases to whom a statutory duty is owed.

In 2017/18 Quarters 1-3 the team has successfully prevented homelessness in 80%¹ of all the cases approaching as threatened with homelessness through a range of activities, including:

- Financial advice and assistance, including debt advice and resolving housing benefit problems
- Help finding alternative accommodation, including private rented accommodation, social or supported housing
- Negotiating and mediating with landlords, friends, and relatives to enable clients to remain in their current accommodation either in the long term or while a planned alternative solution can be secured
- Implementing sanctuary scheme measures to allow victims of domestic abuse to remain in their property

¹ Of 549 cases closed April –Dec 2017 homelessness was prevented in 437

- Provision of other advice, such as legal advocacy, signposting other support services, and advising on the validity of section 21 notices.

This proactive approach ensures that the Council are able to help customers remain in their own homes or move to alternative accommodation prior to them being made homeless. The introduction of this Strategy will seek to build on the work already carried out by Basildon Council and create clear pathways towards preventing homelessness.

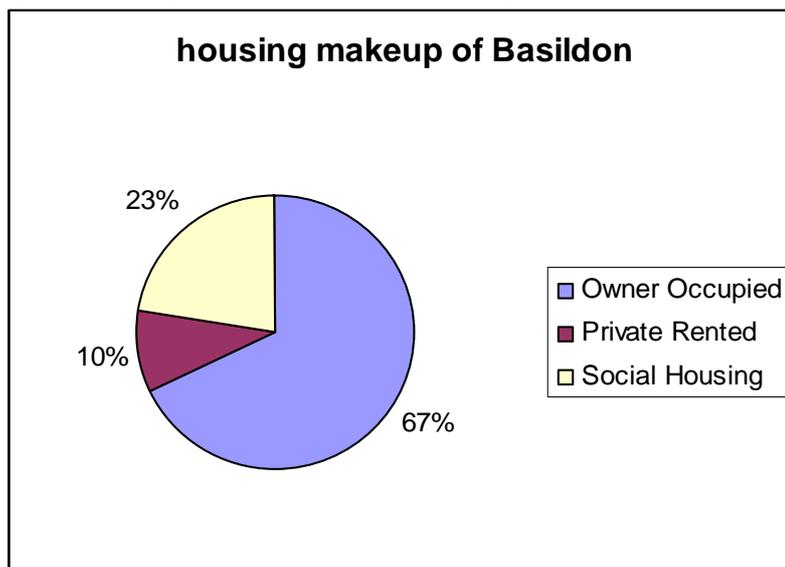
Basildon Council’s Housing Services have a proud heritage of innovation and ambition. The Service has been a Government pilot for the innovative ‘Family Intervention’ scheme, match funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. The programme takes a holistic approach to supporting hard-to-reach families and offers targeted support to families who face the threat of eviction as a consequence of anti-social behaviour. Having delivered successful results in the Borough of Basildon, ‘family intervention’ initiatives have been adopted by Essex County Council and the “Family Solutions” initiative launched.

5.5 Profile of Basildon

The Borough of Basildon is located in South Essex and comprises of a mix of main urban area with surrounding rural areas with greenbelt on the borders between communities.

The 2011 census showed that Basildon has the largest population in Essex with approximately 174,497 people comprised of 72,746 households with a total housing stock of 74680 dwellings. Of these 65.9% are owner occupied, 10.3% privately rented, and 23% in the social sector (figure.2).

Fig.2 – Housing Makeup of Basildon Borough



Additionally, the Borough’s housing stock consists of a large amount of terraced housing (36%) and maisonettes or flats (16%). This means that there is high demand for more housing suited to families.

Due to this lack of family housing and the proximity of the Borough to London, house prices and private sector rents in the Borough of Basildon are prohibitively high in comparison to average local earnings. The average house price stands at £229,548 and average rent for a two bedroom property at £161 per week in the Basildon area, £171 in the Wickford area and £187 in the Billericay area. These prices plus the present economic situation put the prospect of both home ownership and rental beyond the reach of many. The result is that a large number of people are faced with the prospect of homelessness and forced to seek help from the Council.

The Office of National Statistics has been commissioned by the sub-region (comprising of Basildon, Thurrock, Southend, Rochford and Castle Point) to compile a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) in order to understand the housing need in the Borough over the next 4 years. The results of this assessment demonstrate that the population of the Borough is expected to grow by up to 14% by 2031. More dwellings will be needed – possibly as many as 16,000, although the exact number depends on the rate of household formation and migration. Furthermore, the population is aging in line with national trends and there is a need to plan for more elderly and very elderly residents. This Strategy acknowledges that more homes will be needed in both the short term and long term. The aim is to increase the supply of affordable housing thus alleviating demand, reducing costs and making it easier for individuals to access accommodation.

5.6 Housing register & homeless data

The strategy has undergone some amendments to take account of the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 – as such this section has not been updated in detail but for a current picture of homelessness and demand please see Appendix 5

The requirement for this Strategy is further emphasised when the figures regarding the number of people on the housing register and those making homelessness applications are analysed. Basildon Borough Council runs a Choice Based Lettings Housing Register in partnership with registered providers; this incorporates all households waiting for accommodation in the Borough including homeless households. As of January 2014, the Council had approximately 5,000 home seekers on the housing register.

This situation poses a challenge for the Council as demand for housing significantly outstrips the available supply. Specifically, there is high demand for 2 bed properties and these same properties have a low availability. Though the Council implemented a Downsizing Incentive Scheme aimed at encouraging tenants under occupying family sized accommodation to move, this data shows that at present, those facing a homelessness crisis due to unaffordable private sector rents, are likely to face a long wait for affordable accommodation on the housing register.

For some, the wait on the housing register can prove too much and, unable to resolve their homelessness crisis by moving to more affordable accommodation, they are ultimately forced to make an approach to the housing assessment service as homeless. Figure 2 shows that between April 2012 to March 2013 5,598 customers approached the housing assessment service for advice. January 2013 in particular recorded a large increase in the number of approaches to the service based in the Basildon Borough Council foyer.

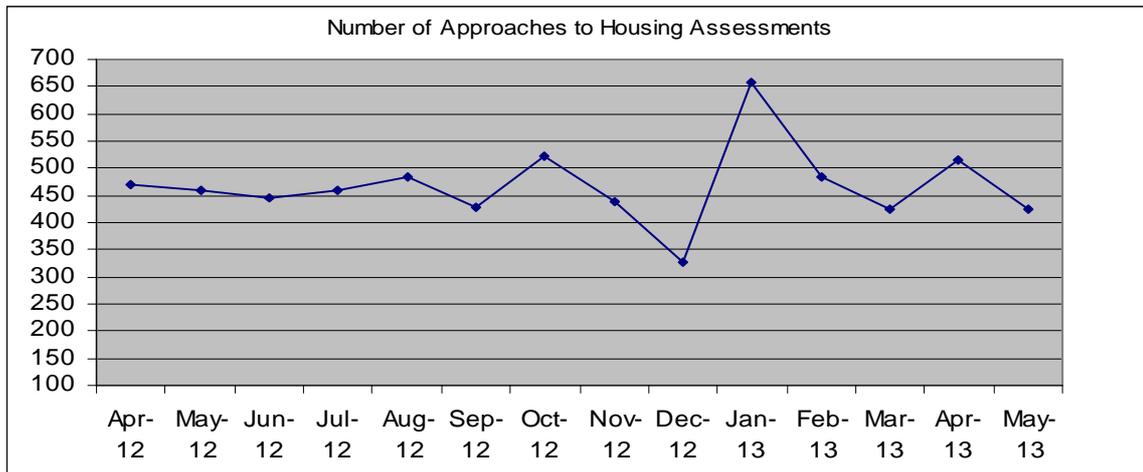


Figure 3: Approaches to housing assessments Apr 12 – May 13.

Of the 5,598 approaches to housing assessments that took place during 2012/13, 418 resulted in a homelessness application.

Figure 3 shows that the number of homelessness applications has increased by 64% since 2009/10 whilst the number of people to whom a full duty is owed has increased by 67% in the same period.

The Council predict the increase in homelessness applications and the number of people accepted as homeless seen during 2013 is likely to continue. This increase is largely due to the aforementioned reasons such as the economic climate, increased costs of both private rented and owner occupied accommodation and the government's welfare reforms.

The continued rise in the number of homelessness applications is regarded by the Council as unsustainable, with no indication that the number of applications is likely to fall without intervention. The Strategy will provide the support mechanisms allowing those facing a preventable homelessness crisis to overcome it without resorting to making a homelessness application.

Homeless application outcomes	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Number of applicants to whom a full duty is owed	221	191	232	255	282
Number of applicants found to be intentionally homeless	37	23	32	44	33
Number of applicants found not to be in priority need.	22	20	34	25	50
Number of applicants found not to be homeless	54	14	13	5	22
Number of applicants found to be ineligible for assistance	34	23	23	10	31
Total number of homelessness applications	368	271	334	339	418
Acceptance Rate	60%	70%	69%	75%	67%

Figure.4 – Homeless Applications 2008/9 – 2012/13

Further to this continued rise, the Council has recently completed a review of its Allocations Policy and this is due to come into effect in July 2014. This new Policy is likely to see a rise in homelessness applications due to the revised eligibility criteria for those applying to the home seekers register.

As a result of these changes it is likely that it will be more difficult to discharge the homelessness duty via the register which will impact negatively upon the time spent in temporary accommodation and it is anticipated that homelessness prevention figures will decline.

Given the Strategy has undergone a light touch review necessitated by the change in legislation more recent demand, trends and performance can be found in Appendix 5.

5.7 Profile of homelessness acceptances

Needs profiling is a system employed by the Council to identify both the needs of the Borough population and pressures on the homeless service. The system is in place to ensure that as a Council we provide services that are suitable and accessible to all and that resources are targeted towards area of most need.

Carrying out needs profiling analysis is useful as it enables us to identify the specific groups/individuals that homelessness prevention work should be aimed at. The data used as part of the needs profiling process is taken from the census and will link to the JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment).

During 2012/13, 23.4% of homelessness applicants registered parents no longer willing to accommodate them as the reason for loss of their last settled address. Parental evictions can be broken down into three categories; relationship breakdown, overcrowding or a combination of the two. Often, overcrowding is due to the birth of the applicant's child with this remaining a constant reason for homelessness in recent years.

As part of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy, Basildon Council will continue undertaking joint assessments with Social Services in an attempt to resolve any difficulties which have arisen between 16 and 17 year olds and their caregiver. The aim of this work is to prevent homelessness by rebuilding relationships and allowing young people to remain in the family home until they can be housed into supported housing through the housing register or are able to find their own alternative accommodation.

The loss of assured short hold tenancies as a reason for loss of last address has increased from 16% in 2011/12 to 24.1% in 2012/13. With the private sector demanding rent in advance, deposits and working references it is difficult for many to get another tenancy without assistance and they are forced to turn to the Council for help. The Council recognises that working with the private sector is important to reducing these incidences. As part of this Strategy, the Council will work with private landlords and the voluntary sector in order to enhance access to the private sector for those struggling to enter another tenancy. By adopting these measures it is anticipated that a large proportion of homelessness applications can be prevented.

Violent relationship breakdowns between partners also represent a significant proportion of households facing a homelessness crisis. Such incidences require specific resources to ensure safety and that adequate, suitable accommodation has been provided. The Strategy includes measures aimed at keeping victims of abusive relationships in their homes, where this course of action is deemed feasible. If this is not possible, the Council will work with partners to find safe accommodation or provide emergency accommodation to prevent the individual from becoming homeless.

In reality there is often more than one reason for homelessness, as it is often caused by a complex chain of events. For example, someone who becomes homeless after losing their tenancy might only apply as homeless after exhausting the good will of the family or friends they had been staying with. There can be many elements that cause a family to be homeless and all of this needs to be considered within the application to ensure that adequate advice and support are given in a time of crisis.

5.8 Age profile of homeless acceptances

By investigating the age profile of applications made to the housing register, it is shown that in 2012 nearly 50% of the applicants were aged 16-30. This data reflects the current economic climate in which younger people are finding it increasingly difficult to find their own accommodation and are therefore applying to the Council in search for more affordable accommodation.

The trend for younger people to be most affected is continued when the homelessness applications data is analysed. Here once again the majority of applicants eligible for accommodation, in priority need and intentionally homeless in 2012/13 were aged 16-44.

Whilst the focus of this Strategy will be on targeting these age groups by alleviating the circumstances that cause their homelessness, the Council is committed to continue providing support services for all homelessness applicants.

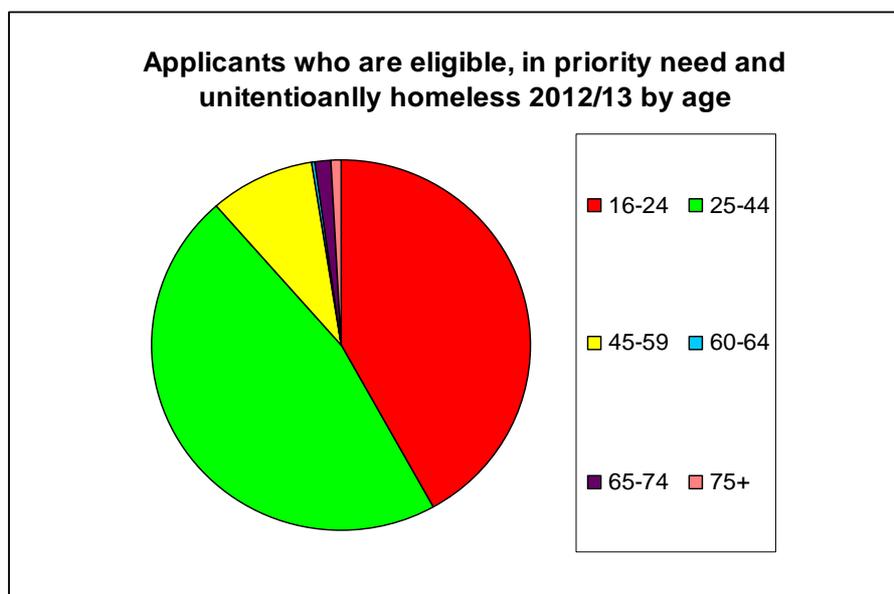


Figure 5 - The majority of homeless applications in 2012/13 was made by two age groups: 16-24's and 25-44's.

5.9 Providing a targeted support service

The council currently does, and will continue to as part of this Homelessness Prevention Strategy, provide advice and assistance to all who make an approach to the homelessness assessment service. However, this does not mean that the Council has a duty to house all who wish to make a homelessness application. Instead, the Council helps those to whom it does not have a full homelessness duty to access alternative services that may be able to assist them with their housing needs. The Council does not have a duty to house the following groups because they are:

- Deemed to be intentionally homeless
- Without recourse to public funds
- Homeless but not in priority need.

It has been recognised that whilst homelessness cannot be prevented for all individuals due to the above eligibility restrictions, more can be done to prevent homelessness amongst some specific client groups. This strategy will target individuals presenting to housing assessments who are about to become homeless but unlikely to meet the homelessness criteria for one or more of the above reasons. The Council will work with these individuals to find appropriate solutions to their homelessness crisis in order to prevent them from becoming homeless and being unable to be assisted further by the Council.

As demonstrated above, renting houses in Basildon through registered private providers remains available only to a select few. For those struggling to find affordable accommodation, this Strategy will enhance access to the private sector by securing affordable housing through the planning system.

The above context has demonstrated that the current situation regarding housing and homelessness is unsustainable particularly given the financial constraints placed upon Local Authorities as a result of Government spending cuts. These developments have affected both the services that the Council can realistically provide and also the public expectations of the Council providing them, which has stretched some services to the limits. This Strategy will address many of the factors mentioned above that cause a homelessness crisis, with the focus concentrated on preventing homelessness rather than reacting to it as is often the case at present.

6. Council Priorities

In 2012 Basildon Council released its latest corporate plan that will run until 2016. The Corporate Plan identifies one overall ambition for the Borough – ‘*creating opportunity*’ for local people and this is underpinned by five clear promises. The table and text below illustrates the levels of impact that the Homelessness Prevention Strategy will have upon the delivery of the Councils five corporate promises.

Corporate Promises	Levels of Impact			
	High	Medium	Low	None
We will get the basics right	X			
We will provide value for money	X			
We will demand good public services from out partner organisations	X			
We will support and develop the local economy			X	
We will positively transform our borough.			X	

6.1 We will get the Basics right: Those facing a homelessness crisis are likely to be incredibly stressed and anxious about their predicament. As a result, the housing department, is committed to ensuring that it gets the basics of customer service and operational delivery right first time to prevent causing any more stress to those in need. The Strategy is committed to dealing with enquiries and requests positively and in a timely manner in order to keep residents and customers informed. Furthermore, the Strategy will ensure that the Council continues to deliver services to an acceptable standard and that as an organisation, operates effectively.

6.2 We will provide value for money: The core aim of the Strategy is to deliver the greatest value for money from the housing department’s homelessness services. The Council, like members of the public, continues to feel the effects of the recession and government spending cuts. As a result we will spend taxpayer’s money as if it were our own. As mentioned above, carrying out work to prevent homelessness is far more cost effective than processing a homelessness application and the Council is committed to assisting more people in this way. By adopting this approach, the Council will be able to help more people faced with a homelessness crisis, whilst not needing to increase staffing levels thus delivering high levels of value for money.

6.3 We will demand good public services from partner organisations: The voluntary sector plays a key role in the delivery of services to the community, often supporting those most in need. The Council recognises this and financially supports the delivery of a number of services. As part of the Strategy, Basildon Council will work with partners in schools, colleges, the NHS, Police and the voluntary sector and will demand the highest standards of service delivery from each partner organisation. Additionally, the Council

will work in partnership with organisations supporting vulnerable individuals and will ensure the highest standards of client care are maintained.

6.4 We will positively transform our Borough: Though not a core aim, the Strategy includes measures for the provision of new affordable housing in the Borough by developing the work we undertake with Private Sector Landlords. Ensure empty homes are kept to a minimum and ensure Private Sector Landlords maintain their properties to a “decent” standard working with colleagues in Environmental Health. Whilst the exact numbers of housing to be built are not known it is predicted that the construction of aspirational housing will positively transform the Borough. It will allow families to settle in Basildon where they may have otherwise not been able to afford to as well as providing existing residents with a more diverse choice of housing.

7. Outcomes and Priorities

The section below outlines the specific outcomes and priorities that will need to be achieved in order to successfully implement the Strategy. Each outcome is broken down into priorities that the Council hopes will be achieved as a result of that outcome and highlights the key actions necessary to achieve these priorities.

For more information about the implementation of the Outcomes and Priorities and key actions that arise from the Homelessness Prevention Strategy see the Strategy action plan in appendix 3.

8. Outcome 1: Development of Basildon Council’s housing options

As evidenced above, private rented housing through registered providers remains available to very few, putting pressure on the Council to house a greater number of people who have nowhere else to go. The constant challenge that the Council has to address is to make the best possible use of the limited housing stock available, given the very high demand for housing in the Borough. Where it is not possible to prevent homelessness, the Council will ensure that appropriate interim and temporary accommodation is provided to those who are eligible. Finally, as part of the Strategy, Basildon Council will offer advice and assistance to residents aimed at helping them to meet their housing requirements.

8.1 Priority 1: Enhance access to the private sector

Preventing homelessness via improved access to the private rented sector is identified as one of the top priorities of the Strategy.

Key action: Basildon Council recognises that the most effective way to enhance access to the private sector is through securing a supply of good quality affordable housing through the planning system to meet the needs identified above. The Council has a successful recent history of developing its own housing stock. In order to meet demand it is estimated that more affordable homes will be required. Management are to set targets for house

construction internally following the publication of the Local Development Framework.

Key action: The housing department actively encourages private sector landlords to engage with the Council on a regular basis. As part of this drive, private sector landlord forums are held bi-annually with improved information supplied through the Web. The Council has also signed up to a sub-regional Landlord Accreditation Scheme. In order to deliver on the priority of enhanced access to the private sector, the Strategy will ensure that the engagement between private sector landlords and the Council continues.

Key Action: Basildon Council continually seeks to secure a good supply of affordable accommodation including HMOs (House of Multiple Occupation.) The aim of this work is to support clients affected by the housing benefit reforms by signposting them towards this accommodation. Under the terms of the Strategy, the Council will continue this work to ensure that the growing number of applicants struggling to afford private accommodation can be assisted in finding a place to stay. Additionally, Housing Options will maintain a list of licensed HMO properties held by the Environmental Health department to ensure recommended properties meet all legislative requirements.

Key Action: In order to ensure the standards of accommodation in the private sector recommended by the Council are maintained, Housing Options will work with the Councils Environmental Health department. By working collaboratively both departments will share information and where necessary, use enforcement powers to take formal action regarding complaints of harassment and illegal eviction.

Key Action: The Council operates a rent deposit guarantee scheme with the target client group being those applicants who meet the full housing duty under the homelessness legislation.

8.2 Priority Two: Provide appropriate interim and temporary accommodation.

Occasionally homelessness cannot be prevented and as a result individuals and families are placed in interim and temporary accommodation. The Council aim to have as few households in temporary accommodation as possible but current demand for social housing means that it is sometimes unavoidable but to place some customers in this type of accommodation. The aim of the Strategy is to ensure that where its use is necessary, the Council will have adequate provision for temporary accommodation.

Key action: As part of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy, Basildon Council is committed to avoiding the use of temporary accommodation for families wherever possible. The Council will specifically avoid using bed and breakfast accommodation to house families due to the fact that type of Bed and Breakfast we require (with cooking facilities) often means families are placed outside of the Borough.

Key action: The Council will ensure that the accommodation provided is appropriate for its customer's needs. Family Mosaic has two hostels with units that can be converted to be inter-connecting or adapted to meet the needs of client with disabilities.

Key Action: Housing Options will support its customers in interim accommodation during the homelessness decision period and then in temporary accommodation and finally during the transition to permanent accommodation. This support aims to prevent repeat approaches to the homelessness service from customers who are likely struggle to support themselves during this period.

8.3 Priority three - Encourage Tenants to find their own solutions

Choice in housing is important for enabling people to feel settled in their home, however, for some people realistic choices are limited and pragmatic decisions need to be made. The Strategy will encourage customers approaching the Council for assistance to seek their own solutions to their housing issues. The Council will support customers in this process by providing advice and support as well as signposting to services which may solve their housing issues & prevent them from becoming homeless.

Key action: The Council will continue to invest in new I.T. and customer facing information systems to include a holistic web-based advice tool which can help people look at their income, needs and aspirations and identify suitable options in terms of tenure and location. For many people, this advice will enable them to find a private sector housing solution (rent, low cost home ownership or outright purchase) and avoid the need for them to make a homelessness application.

Key action: Another key action will be to actively promote mutual exchange schemes so that tenants can find their own housing solutions if they are under-occupying or in overcrowded situations.

Key action: The Customer Service team is essential to ensuring that the goals of the Strategy can be delivered. Customer Service staff will be trained to use the software which is accessible in the foyer of the Basildon Centre so they are able to assist customers searching for a mutual exchange.

Key action: The Council will continue to run a cash incentive scheme aimed at encouraging those currently under occupying property to downsize into property that better suits their needs. The incentive scheme will allow Basildon Council to maximise the utilization of existing housing stock, freeing up much needed family sized accommodation across the Borough for those in overcrowded conditions or waiting on the housing register for more affordable accommodation to become available.

9. Outcome two: Provide support to vulnerable people and those in priority need who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

It is important to ensure that the Councils limited resources are targeted at the households who are in most need of assistance. As part of the homelessness review we have analysed the use of the service over previous years and highlighted seven groups in need of a higher level of support. The strategy will ensure that these groups are specifically targeted with support and assistance to prevent them from becoming homeless or to alleviate their homeless situation.

9.1 Priority one: Prevent and relieve rough sleeping

In July 2011, the Government published its vision to reduce rough sleeping. Entitled '*No Second Night Out*' the document recommends several simple practical measures to immediately prevent and tackle rough sleeping. The Council has adopted the measures contained within '*No Second Night Out*' and incorporated the key actions arising from this into the Strategy as outlined below.

Key action: New rough sleepers should be identified and helped off the streets immediately so that they do not fall into a dangerous rough sleeping lifestyle. We can refer people to night shelters across the region and aim to get them reconnected with support services in order to resolve barriers to settled accommodation.

Key action: Members of the public should be able to play an active role by reporting and referring people sleeping rough. The Council will take action on any rough sleeping intelligence brought the attention of the Council by the public or external agencies. In this vain the Council will continue to participate in and publicise the national Street Link Scheme to help locate rough sleepers.

Key action: The Council will ensure that Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) can be provided to rough sleepers. Once emergency accommodation has been provided the Council will offer support to solve the customer's homeless crisis and work to solve their accommodation situation as well as supporting them through the reconnection protocol.

Key action: Rough sleepers should be helped to access a place of safety where their needs can be quickly assessed and they can receive advice on their options as well as access to other services, such as healthcare, if needed. The Council will develop a 'hub' for rough sleepers which will provide advice and assistance across the region.

Key Action: The Council will continue working with partner organisations and the sub-region to develop strategies to prevent rough sleeping and to ensure no person endures a second night out.

9.2 Priority two: Prevent homelessness among 16 and 17 year olds

As demonstrated above, parents, relatives or caregivers no longer willing to provide accommodation is one of the most common reasons for approaches to the homelessness service. When the person is 16 or 17 years old then the situation is even more critical. The mobile nature of homelessness amongst young people means that the scale is hard to measure with most young homeless people relying on 'sofa surfing' between friends and family before they approach the Council as a final resort. The Strategy will target these individuals to ensure appropriate support is provided and where possible homelessness is prevented.

Key Action: Basildon Council acknowledges that young people need to be targeted early in giving the message about the reality of housing and homelessness. Young people at school have been identified as a key group for both the Council and Social Care Services to focus prevention work on. One of the biggest challenges is to change the mind-set of the population that council housing is easily accessible. Essex County Council is developing a regional project to deliver across schools which aims to dispel myths regarding social housing and plans to deliver this project to all schools within the Borough.

Key Action: Continue working in partnership with Essex County Council and make use of the countywide joint protocol for 16/17 year olds and those leaving care to identify and solve the issue that caused homelessness in the first instance. This partnership has been proven to prevent homelessness amongst these client groups in the past.

9.3 Priority three: Review the needs of the travelling and show people community

The housing need of travellers and show people has been a high profile issue for the Borough. Travellers are often reluctant to approach the authorities for help with their homelessness situations. Their specific housing preferences make it difficult for the authority to provide suitable accommodation and work is needed to find the best way to meet their needs.

Key Action: In order to provide a conclusive analysis of the housing needs of this group the Council will complete an assessment of needs for the travelling and show people community. This should provide a more conclusive analysis of the housing need of this group of the community.

Key Action: Basildon Council is currently seeking planning permission for a new traveller's site providing 16 pitches. Though in its early stages, if it is approved it would increase the number of pitches available in the borough to 40. In order to efficiently manage the site Basildon Borough Council will create a local lettings policy.

Key Action: Establish a project group with the aim of developing and exploring initiatives to resolved homelessness within the travelling community.

9.4 Priority four: Provide active support for offenders and ex-offenders

National research shows that housing is a key element to reducing crime and preventing reoffending. Ex-offenders often face housing issues when they leave prison and as such the homelessness legislation recognises that some people will be found vulnerable as a result of leaving an institutional background.

Key action: The Council will continue to work with multiple agencies including the probation service to ensure that specific cases of homelessness or potential homelessness amongst this target group are referred to the Housing Assessments Service for advice and assistance.

9.5 Priority five: Support Victims of domestic abuse

The breakdown of a relationship involving abuse has been highlighted as a recurring cause of homelessness. It is recognised that victims of domestic abuse live in fear of repeat incidents. This frequently results in them having to move homes on numerous occasions, with the associated issues of moving away from support networks, family and friends. Many victims of domestic abuse would prefer to stay in their own homes if they had the option.

Key action: A member of the housing options team is to continue attending the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), so high risk victims can be identified and also so multi-agency working to prevent homelessness can be encouraged.

Key action: The Sanctuary Scheme project is a victim centred initiative, which aims to make it possible for victims of domestic abuse to remain in their home and feel safe. The scheme enhances a person's property with physical security measures, which helps the family feel safe. Referrals from agencies and self-referrals are accepted by housing options who will continue to assess victims of domestic abuse and the suitability of the scheme for the individuals.

Key action: Basildon Borough Council will relocate victims of domestic violence for whom the Sanctuary scheme is not appropriate or if it is impossible to stay in their current property to safer accommodation.

Key action: As part of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy, Basildon Council will continue to monitor the usage of Changing Pathways (formerly Basildon Women's Aid) and other refuges.

9.6 Priority six: Work with supported housing providers to refer vulnerable people to supported housing.

Occasionally people need extra support in accessing accommodation and are required to be placed in supported housing. There are a number of reasons why an individual may be placed in supported housing including physical/mental health issues. The Strategy will ensure that these individuals are brought to the attention of the Council's housing department and are provided with the support required to prevent homelessness.

Key action: The Council will continue working with registered provider Family Mosaic to provide a referral to the Essex Floating Support for vulnerable people across Essex who may be experiencing problems maintaining their accommodation, or have health or other issues which affect their ability to cope with day-to-day living. In 2012/13 the Council referred over 400 people to the services.

Key action: The Council will continue to support the Nacro and Foyer joint assessment panels and ensure appropriate move on arrangements for young people exists. When residents of Nacro and Foyer are deemed ready to move on to permanent accommodation, they are given a 'social award' through the Council's allocation scheme which proves that they have undergone the relevant courses and allows them to have priority points when making an application to the joint housing register.

Key action: Continue working with all referring and accepting organisations to standardise referrals and acceptances to support programmes (Nacro, Foyer and Floating support.)

Key action: Close working with social services is essential to identifying those over 21 who have been in care and may struggle to access housing services. The Council will work with social services to ensure that these individuals are picked up and placed in specialist accommodation.

9.7 Priority seven: Support people with mental health problems and learning difficulties

Homeless households, who are vulnerable due to mental health problems and/or learning difficulties or a combination of these, continue to show a demand on the homelessness service. The percentage of homelessness acceptances amongst this group has varied from 5% to 14% in the last two years.

Key action: Continue to attend a joint working Mental Health panel to ensure clients are "moved through" a variety of supported housing with varying support often through to independent living.

Key action: Provide additional support to clients finding it difficult to maintain a tenancy without support. This support can include placement in specialist

supported accommodation if general needs accommodation with the Council or a registered provider is not appropriate. Clients placed in the Councils hostels are to be assigned a key worker.

10. Outcome three: Working with partners and agencies to prevent homelessness.

It is a fundamental requirement that everyone should have a decent home to live in. When we do not have a duty to house someone then we need to ensure that there are support schemes and partners to refer clients to. Moreover housing cannot work in silo and as part of the Strategy housing choice will continue to work multiple departments and agencies to prevent homelessness.

10.1 Priority one: Ensure the provision of housing advice and assistance to all households

The core aim of the Strategy is to ensure that those who require information about housing, homelessness and benefits can access it quickly and easily.

Key action: The Council will ensure that advice and information about homelessness, and the prevention of homelessness, is available free of charge to any person in the Borough. The Council will continue providing an initial housing assessment service in the council reception area and a housing advice service on an appointment basis.

Key action: Refer people who the Council does not have statutory duty to house to the Community Resource Centre (CRC). The CRC is part funded by the Council and can provide housing and benefits advice. They run a lettings programme with affiliated landlords in which they help place homeless clients into accommodation and also help with applications for Budgeting and Essential Living Loans, to cover the initial start-up costs.

Key action: In order to assist a greater number of people in financial difficulty the Council will fund a dedicated financial advisor who will be based within Basildon's Citizens Advice Bureau.

Key action: Work with IMPACT to provide a welfare benefits information and advice service to the homeless and those threatened with homelessness. Referrals are made to them through registered providers such as Family Mosaic and our own housing advice service in cases where specialist legal advice may be required.

Key action: The Council will continue working with voluntary and third sector groups including Shelter, church organisations and the Fusion Advice Board which brings together local agencies such as the Job Centre, credit unions, Probation, Sept, Signpost and social care to collaborate and share services available throughout the Borough. This will allow us to ensure that we can offer the most far reaching and diverse services possible to those who need them.

10.2 Priority two: Work with external agencies to create dedicated pathways to housing solutions to prevent homelessness.

The Council are working to co-ordinate with external agencies to ensure that there are clear pathways to housing for those individuals with complex needs or where multiple agencies are working with them. The action points below detail how the Council will work with these agencies to create the pathways necessary to assist these individuals.

Key action: Continue working with the Essex County Council and other services involved in the Family Solutions Programme to bring all services together, eliminate duplication and improve outcomes for the families involved. To date the Council have worked with over sixty four families in the Borough and successfully turned around thirty two cases to help them manage and change their lifestyles for the better. In this time we have not had any of these cases referred to homelessness and all are successfully maintaining their tenancies.

Key action: Continue to develop, strengthen and review pathways from hospitals, mental health, care and other institutions to ensure there is planned discharge with appropriate housing solutions in place. The health and wellbeing board will facilitate the discussion between the Council, the NHS and other partners to review these pathways.

Key action: The housing department will seek to assist under occupying tenants affected by the new benefit system obtain more affordable accommodation. The council will promote the home swapper scheme to allow under occupying and overcrowded households to exchange homes.

10.3 Priority Three: Collaborate to mitigate the effects of welfare reform.

One of the biggest challenges the Council are facing is the introduction of the welfare reform programme which began in April 2013. As has been demonstrated above this has caused a rise in the number of homelessness applications received by the Council. Basildon Council recognises that collaborative working is the only way that the Council will be able to properly meet the increased needs of our customers.

Key action: Housing Choice, Revenues and Benefits and Customer Services will collaborate on training and information provision internally so that all staff are up to date on the measures.

Key action: Revenues and Benefits have been given extra Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) in order to help mitigate the welfare reform changes from April 2013. Housing Advice will collaborate with revenues and benefits to ensure those requiring DHP are identified.

Key action: Housing choice will collaborate internally and externally to ensure that the public are fully aware of the measures to be introduced to alleviate benefit changes, providing publicity via media, websites and leaflets and are aware of the services available should they need them. Additionally, events are to be held throughout the year to raise awareness of the options available to the public who may be struggling to adapt to the new welfare regime.

Key action: The Council will develop a debt policy to ensure that tenants who are adversely affected by the welfare reforms are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner.

11. Performance Management, Monitoring and Governance

11.1 Monitoring and Evaluating the Strategy

The Council's Housing Choice and PMO teams will be the main groups responsible for the monitoring, implementation and achievement of this Strategy, and the accompanying strategy/action plan.

The strategy and action plan will be monitored by the managers responsible for the delivery of each key performance indicator and outcome at regular meetings. These meetings will focus on targets and outcomes for each of the strategic aims identified in the action plan. After one year, the action plan that corresponds with this Strategy will be reviewed in light of the fast changing economic, political and legislative environment in which it operates.

The table below lists the indicators which will be used to monitor the Strategy. It makes reference to the outcomes listed above and highlights the key performance indicators and targets pertaining to each as well as how the Council will ensure these actions are implemented. This includes who will be responsible for monitoring the implementation, how regularly we will report on progress and to whom, the timeframe for implementation and how the outcomes will be monitored to ensure they meet their original purpose.

Performance against key indicators will be monitored and reported as per the table. Internal monitoring is via Departmental Management Team providing an overview on progress towards achieving the strategic aims.

11.2 Delivering the Strategy

For the updated Strategy Action Plan please see Appendix 6. The action plan has been amended to take account of the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and to reflect the 12 month term left between this updated Strategy and a new Strategy being formulated for 2019-2024.

12. Links to other Corporate Policies or Partner documents.

The section below highlights the links between the Council's Homelessness Prevention Strategy and other documents created both internally and externally by partner agencies. By highlighting the links between these

Policies, a joined up approach on similar issues can be created, avoiding duplications and contradictions between departments/partners, creating a consistent delivery of service.

12.1 Allocations Policy 2014 (subject to approval in advance of this Strategy)

The Allocations Policy will seek to maximise the opportunities provided to Councils under the terms of the Localism Act 2011. Under the policy, new eligibility criteria aimed at limiting the number of people applying to the housing register will be introduced. The aim is for applicants to have a realistic chance of being successful at gaining a property thus preventing them remaining on the register with little prospect of ever gaining a tenancy as happens at present. At the same time the Policy will provide an accountable & transparent service so current and potential applicants have more information on their prospects of being re-housed and can be offered alternative support to prevent a homelessness crisis if necessary.

12.2 The Tenancy Policy 2014 (subject to approval in advance of this Policy)

The Tenancy Policy will likewise seek to maximise the opportunities provided by the Localism Act 2011 and will see introductory and flexible tenancies introduced, aimed at delivering the best use of the limited housing stock in the Borough. Five year fixed term tenancies and one year introductory tenancies are to be introduced which will not automatically result in a 'home for life', should tenants' circumstances change during this period, an offer of alternative accommodation can be made, or notice served to recover the property.

The introduction of the Strategy at the same time as the revised Allocations and Tenancy Policies is essential for ensuring a consistent service delivery whilst also mitigating the risk of homelessness to those affected by the changes that are introduced. It is anticipated that by working with both the Allocations and Tenancy Policies, the Councils Homelessness Prevention Strategy will identify those no longer eligible for social housing and provide them relevant support aimed at preventing homelessness.

For more information regarding the new Tenancy and Allocation please refer to the Council's Allocations Scheme and Tenancy Policy and Strategy.

12.3 Rough Sleeper Strategy 2012

In 2012 the Council produced a Rough Sleeper Strategy and this has been used to inform some of the outcomes within the Homelessness Prevention Strategy. The strategy has been particularly useful at providing information regarding Basildon's present homelessness situation, current homelessness projects as well as providing context regarding the housing profile of Basildon.

The Rough Sleeper Strategy aligns with the Homelessness Prevention Strategy by;

- Outlining the homelessness prevention work currently being undertaken by the department allowing areas of development to be highlighted.
- Highlighting the need to work inclusively and collaboratively with partner agencies.

12.4 Thames Gateway South Essex Sub-Regional Housing Strategy 2008-2011

Thames Gateway South Essex Sub-Regional Housing Strategy 2008-2011 is another document that aligns with the content of this Strategy. The primary aim of this document is to set out the priorities and actions which will accelerate the supply of high quality and sustainable housing to help meet the needs of people living, or aspiring to live in the Thames Gateway South Essex sub region.

Like the Homelessness Prevention Strategy, the document looks at the targets, issues, trends and partnership actions arising from:

- Future housing growth to ensure it is sustainable and future proof;
- Needs of vulnerable groups living in the sub region;
- Future of the current housing stock to ensure it is at a decent standard.

Homelessness Prevention Strategy

Appendices



Appendix 1 - Homeless Prevention Strategy Consultation Analysis

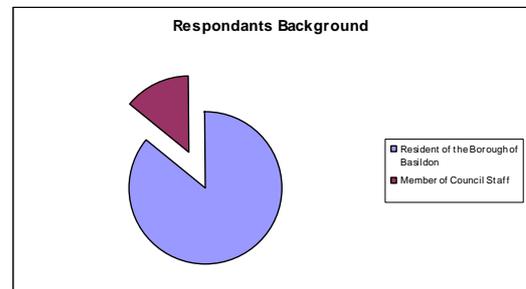
Below is a detailed analysis of the results of the Strategy Consultation that was open for comments between Monday 25th November 2013 and Monday 13th January 2014. During the time the consultation was open a total of 7 responses were received from residents of the Borough and members of Council staff.

Information about respondents

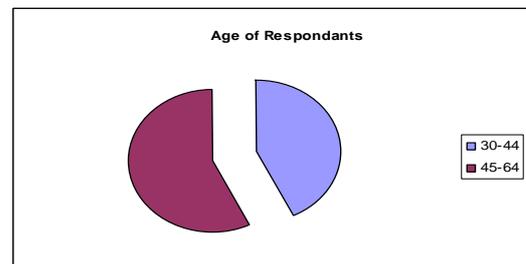
The data below provides information about the people that responded to the survey, this information has been used to inform the analysis of each question undertaken further down the page.

Respondent's background

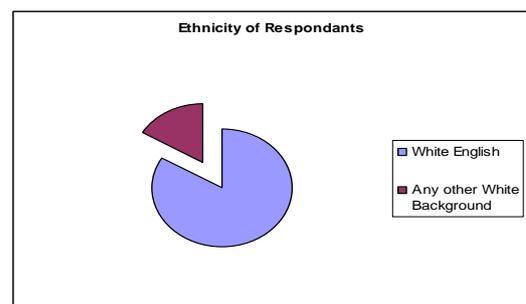
Resident of the Borough of Basildon	6	85.71%
Member of Council Staff	1	14.29%

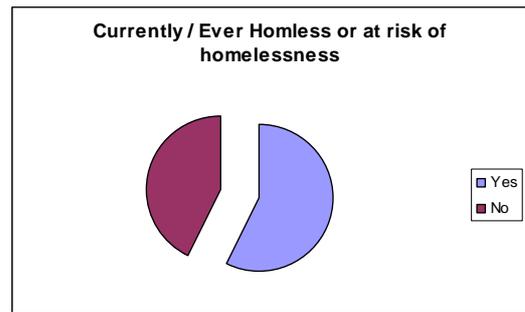


Age of respondents	Number	Percent
30-44	3	42.9%
45-64	4	57.1%



Ethnicity	Number	Percent
White English	5	83.3%
Any other White Background	1	16.7%





Currently/Ever Homeless/risk of homeless?	Number	Percent
Yes	4	57.1%
No	3	42.9%

As part of the consultation, residents were asked to evaluate the level of importance that the strategy places on a number of areas, the results are outlined below.

	No Priority	Low Priority	Moderate Priority	High Priority
Preventing and curing rough sleeping	0	1 (14.3%)	2 (28.6%)	4 (57.1%)
Increasing access to the private sector	0	2 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)	3 (42.9%)
Ensuring adequate Council and temporary accommodation is provided	0	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	3 (42.9%)
Youth and Young Persons' Homelessness	2 (28.6%)	0	2 (28.6%)	3 (42.9%)
Ensuring Homeless people's access to mental health, drug and alcohol services	1 (14.3%)	0	3 (42.9%)	3 (42.9%)
Preventing/ avoiding homelessness through help to maintain tenancies and targeted advice and assistance	0	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	5 (71.4%)
Working in partnership, group monitoring, sharing of information and best practice	0	0	3 (42.9%)	4 (57.1%)
Dual diagnosis' (e.g. mental health issues combined with drug & alcohol problems.)	0	1 (14.3%)	4 (57.1%)	2 (28.6%)

From this analysis it is clear that the majority of respondents placed a moderate to high priority on all areas that the Strategy will focus on. The only exceptions to this were on increasing access to the private sector and youth and young person's homelessness.

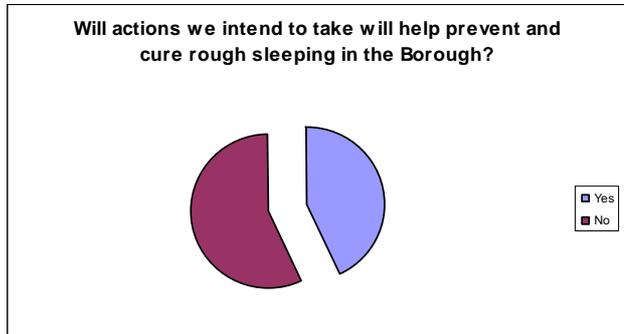
The lower priority favoured by some respondents to increasing access to the private sector may be explained by comments received from some respondents which stated that they did not believe increasing access to the

private sector would solve the homelessness crisis of an individual in the long-term as it may become unaffordable.

Question-specific analysis

Q1: Do you think that the actions we intend to take will prevent and cure rough sleeping in the Borough?

	Number	Percent
Yes	3	42.90%
No	4	57.10%

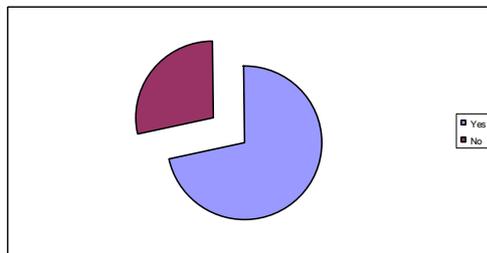


The Majority of people do not believe that the actions outlined in the Strategy will prevent and cure rough sleeping in the Borough. The comments received from those who answered no to this question suggest that more work is needed to construct a night shelter in Basildon or work with homelessness charities to provide this type accommodation.

Two respondents also noted that SWEP or No Second Night Out has limited success as it distributes the problem and does not enable the contact needed to work with people in order to enable a change of circumstances.

Q2: Enhancing access to the private sector accommodation.

	Number	Percent
Yes	5	71.40%
No	2	28.60%

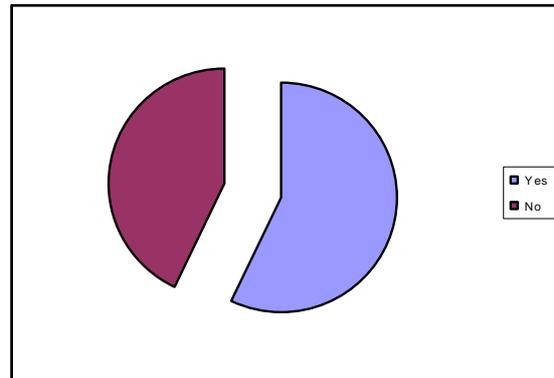


The majority of respondents are in favour of the proposals we make to enhance access to the private sector.

The two responses against the proposals were both from housing professionals, one of whom was a private landlord who stated that the private sector do not want homeless people. The other stated that one of the reasons homelessness is on the increase is due to the high price of private sector rents and that by placing homelessness applicants in the private sector is short-sighted.

Q3: Do you think that the actions we intend to take will help prevent homelessness amongst those already in a tenancy / property?

	Number	Percent
Yes	4	57.10%
No	3	42.90%



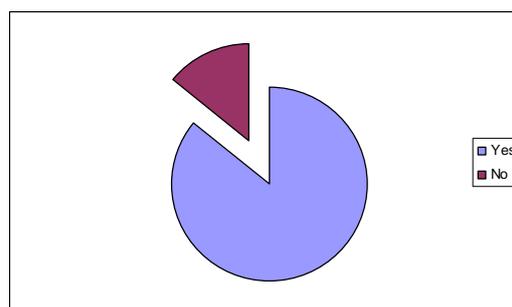
Even though the majority of respondents supported the actions we intend to take to prevent homelessness amongst those already in a tenancy / property there were a significant number of people who were not in support.

Of the three comments received, two related to the cash incentive scheme with suggestions that the money used as part of this scheme could be put to better use for lowering rents or towards the decent homes program. The Council plan to use the downsizing incentive scheme to assist those in rent arrears due to changes introduced by housing benefit reforms to move to more affordable, smaller accommodation and preventing their homelessness in the long run.

The other comment suggested making it easier to speak to someone in the Council for advice/help – the new contact centre should help with this.

Q4: Do you think that the actions we intend to take will help to prevent homelessness amongst vulnerable individuals and victims of domestic abuse?

Yes	6	85.70%
No	1	14.30%

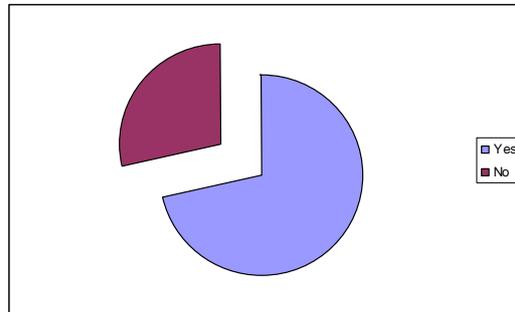


There was overwhelming support for these proposals with only one respondent registering a negative response. This individual was concerned that individuals at risk of domestic abuse may never be free from the threat of an abusive partner all the while they return to their original accommodation, no matter how secure it may be. The Council takes the individual's circumstances into consideration when making decisions on the appropriate solution to an individual's situation to ensure that an individual feels safe and

secure in their property regardless if this means moving them to a new property or making use of the sanctuary scheme.

Q5: Do you think that these actions will help to prevent and relieve homelessness amongst youths and young people?

Yes	5	71.40%
No	2	28.60%



The vast majority of people were in favour of the proposals covered by this question. Of the two that registered negative responses only one placed comment. They were concerned that the strategy will lead to more young people being homeless as no amount of work with the family is going to resolve or get to the bottom of the complex dynamics within some homes, and in the attempt to try, young people will be left to remain in potentially unsuitable situations. A decision is on individual circumstances will be made before a course of action is taken and this may include placing an individual in supported accommodation away from their family. The majority of families can, and have benefitted from mediation provided in partnership with ECC.

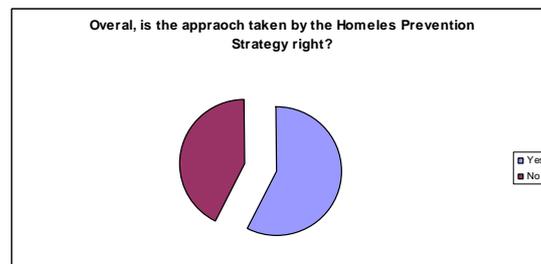
Q6: Do you think that partnership working will prevent homelessness?

Yes	7	100%
No	0	0%

As all respondents were in full support of these proposals there is no need for further analysis to be undertaken.

Q7: Do you think that the approach taken by the Homeless Prevention Strategy is right?

Yes	4	57.10%
No	3	42.90%



Though only a small majority believe that the approach taken by the Homeless Prevention Strategy is right there were just two responses that explained why they came to this decision.

The first indicated that ‘no person should ever be expected to sleep outside on the street and when there is a genuine need for shelter, especially in the winter, more needs to be done to provide immediate appropriate shelter. This should be followed by advice and support to establish cause of homelessness and help available to prevent further homelessness.’ Whilst Basildon Council attempts to prevent homelessness, if the individual is deemed not in Priority need or is not eligible for housing then sometimes homelessness is unavoidable. The methods outlined in the strategy are aimed at alleviating the causes of homelessness so that no individual has to sleep out on the street.

The second comment indicated that Pound Lane residents DO NOT want a homeless hostel built in their road. This hostel is still in the planning stages and no decision has yet been made – the facility, if built, will help the Council to meet its homelessness obligations.

Appendix 2 – List of groups involved in the consultation process.

Group	Service Type	Consultation Method
Anchor Trust	Housing Association	Attendance at consultation event
Circle Anglia	Housing Association	Attendance at consultation event
Estuary	Housing Association	Attendance at consultation event
Guinness Trust	Housing Association	Attendance at consultation event
Hannover	Housing Association	Attendance at consultation event
Housing 21	Housing Association	Attendance at consultation event
London and Quadrant	Housing Association	Attendance at consultation event
Mosaic	Housing Association	Attendance at consultation event
Moat	Housing Association	Attendance at consultation event
Sanctuary	Housing Association	Attendance at consultation event
Southern Housing	Housing Association	Attendance at consultation event
Genesis	Housing Association	Attendance at consultation event
Swan Housing	Housing Association	Attendance at consultation event
Salvation Army	Support Service	Attendance at consultation event
Basildon CAB	Advice Service	Attendance at consultation event
Community Resource Centre	Advice Service	Attendance at consultation event
NACRO		Attendance at consultation event
Basildon Women's Aid	Support Organisation	Attendance at consultation event
Shelter Eastern Counties	Homeless Service	Attendance at consultation event
IMPACT	Advice Service	Attendance at consultation event
TGSE Housing		Attendance at consultation event
HARP Southend	Homeless Service	Attendance at consultation event
ECC Family Solutions	Support Agency	Attendance at consultation event
DIAL Basildon	Advice Service	Attendance at consultation event
Essex Probation	Monitoring agency	Attendance at consultation event

Appendix 3 – Homelessness Prevention Strategy Action Plan

Basildon Council

BASILDON • BILLERICAY • WICKFORD

Homelessness Prevention Strategy Action Plan



Updated January 2018

The Homelessness Prevention Strategy Action Plan outlines the direct, lateral and bilateral program of work focused on how the council will prevent homelessness within the Borough. This section sets out the parameters and context in which the strategy will operate throughout the period 2013-2018. This document sets out how the council plans to prevent homelessness in the Borough and meet the requirements of the homelessness legislation Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002), the Localism Act 2011, the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and more recently the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 due for implementation in April 2018. This plan is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to and takes account of the emerging needs of homelessness in the Borough.

As a consequence of the economic downturn, the numbers of residents approaching the Housing Options service for assistance has increased. Occurring concurrently with this rising service demand has been a significant reduction in public service expenditure across multiple agencies which are certain to continue for the foreseeable future. These developments have affected both the services that the Council can realistically provide and also the public expectations of the council providing them. In light of these circumstances, an evaluation of homelessness in the local area and new legislation produced by central government, Basildon Borough Council has placed a greater emphasis placed on preventing homelessness.

Due to the proximity to London, house prices and private sector rents in the Council controlled area are prohibitively high. As a direct result of these circumstances, increasing numbers of people are struggling to afford accommodation and are turning to the Council for assistance in meeting their housing needs. Furthermore, the ongoing economic uncertainty coupled with recent welfare benefit reforms means that the demand for the Council's homelessness support services is likely to remain high, as has been the trend for the last year. So far in 2017/18 the service has seen a 40% increase in the number approached for assistance with housing advice.

Figures taken from the Department for Communities and Local Government publication "evidence review of the costs of homelessness", available at: <http://tinyurl.com/o6ywkj>, estimate that the annual costs of homelessness to local authorities range

from £24,000 to £30,000 (gross) per person. It is now recognised that preventing homelessness is better and far more cost effective for Councils than seeking to assist households through statutory homelessness provisions. As a result the focus is now on providing advice and assistance to households threatened with homelessness.

Priorities of the strategy

Outcome 1: Develop our Housing Options

- Enhance access to the private sector
- Provide appropriate interim accommodation
- Encourage tenants to find their own solution

Outcome 2: Support vulnerable people and those in priority need who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

- Alleviate the causes of rough sleeping
- Relieve rough sleeping
- Alleviate homelessness and the causes of homelessness amongst sixteen and seventeen year olds
- Review the needs of the travelling and show people community
- Provide active support for offenders and ex-offenders
- Support victims of domestic abuse
- Work with supported housing providers to refer vulnerable people to their supported schemes
- Support people with mental health problems and learning difficulties,

Outcome 3: Working with partners and agencies to prevent homelessness

- Ensure the provision of housing advice and assistance to all households
- Work with external partners and agencies to create dedicated pathways to housing solutions and prevent homelessness.
- Collaborate to mitigate the effects of welfare reform

Outcome 4: Monitoring the strategy

- Measure effective outcomes
- Measure against corporate plan

Develop our housing options – Renting houses through registered private provider's remains available only to a select few, the constant challenge that the council has to address is to make best use of the limited housing stock available in the borough given the high demand for social housing.

No.	Objective	Action	Target/Measures	Key Partners
DHO1	Enhance access to the private sector	Continued engagement with private landlords via the bi-annually held landlord forums, sub regional landlord accreditation scheme and improved information supplied through the web.	Number of cases where homelessness is prevented through facilitated access to private rented sector.	BBC Strategic Housing and Housing Options, Private landlords.
		Review the rent deposit scheme administered by Housing Options Seek to ring fence and reinvest deposits in order to maximise the numbers of households assisted	Number of cases where homelessness is prevented through facilitated access to private rented sector	Housing Options, Landlords.
		Use enforcement powers to ensure acceptable standards in the rented sector and where necessary take formal action regarding complaints of harassment/ illegal eviction	Ensure complaints made by tenants are logged and followed up with appropriate action taken.	Environmental Health
		Continue to secure affordable housing through the planning system to meet identified needs.	Yearly target for housing to be decided by department managers, reviewed yearly. LDF due in 2014 will identify housing need	Housing Options, BBC strategic Housing.

No.	Objective	Action	Target/Measures	Key Partners
DH01	Enhance access to the private sector	Continue to look to secure a supply of affordable accommodation in the private sector including HMOS	Quarterly review the number of properties/rooms sourced.	Housing Options, Environmental Health
		Keep a list of licensed HMOs held by Environmental Health		Environmental Health.
DH02	Provide appropriate temporary and interim accommodation	Continue to avoid using unsuitable interim temporary accommodation for families wherever possible in order to meet government targets.	Place families in hostels & self-contained nightly lets where possible.	Housing Options, Family Mosaic,
		Ensure that the interim and temporary accommodation provided is appropriate for the client needs	Conduct regular customer surveys and act on any issues highlighted	Housing Options
		Continue to provide support to customers in interim accommodation as well as during transition to permanent accommodation to prevent repeat approaches.	% of customers who repeatedly approach homelessness services	Housing Choice
DH03	Encourage Tenants to find their own solutions	Continue investment in a new I.T and customer facing information system to enable customers to find information regarding their private sector housing options/solutions.	Reduce number of phone calls and face to face contact	BBC, Customers Services, I.T. Housing Strategy, MARCOMS
		Actively promote Mutual Exchange schemes to enable tenants to find their solutions to overcrowded housing.	Monitor the number of mutual exchanges taking place, assist residents in facilitating a ME.	Moat Homes, Housing Choice
		Implement a downsizing incentive scheme thus maximising the utilization of housing stock.	Number of tenants contacted and successfully moved into smaller accommodation.	Re-Housing department
DH03	Encourage Tenants to find their own solutions	Train Customer Service team on the Mutual Exchange scheme software located in the foyer enabling them to best support customers.	Provide training to Front of House staff on the I.T. system.	Other RP's, Housing Benefits, Tenancy & Estate Management. Rents Team, Customer Contact Centre.

Support vulnerable people and those in priority need who are homeless or threatened with homelessness – Target resources at the households in most need of assistance. As part of the homelessness review seven groups that need a higher level of support have been identified.

No.	Objective	Action	Target/Measures	Key Partners
SVP1	Prevent and relieve rough sleeping	New rough sleepers should be identified and helped off the streets immediately so that they do not fall into a dangerous rough sleeping lifestyle.	Number of people identified and provided with emergency accommodation / advice.	Sub-region, SBC leading
		Take action on any rough sleeping intelligence brought to the attention of the Council by the public/external agencies.	% referrals to Basildon Council by public/Street Link that result in action being taken.	Street Link, Housing Options
		Provide Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEPE) accommodation. Once accommodation provided offer support to solve individual's situation and support them through reconnection.	Reduce numbers of clients requiring accommodation during periods of severe weather.	Voluntary Sector, Housing Options South Essex Sub Regional Partnership
		Work with partner organisations and the sub-region to ensure no person endures a second night out.	Grant administered by Southend Borough Council for rough sleeper project	South East Essex Local Authorities
SVP1	Prevent and relieve rough sleeping	Develop a 'hub' for rough sleepers which will provide advice and assistance across the region. Rough sleepers should be helped to access a place of safety where their needs can be quickly assessed and they can receive advice on their options.	Sub regional rough sleeper action plan to be monitored.	South East Essex Local Authorities chaired by Southend Borough Council
SVP2	Prevent homelessness among 16 and 17 year olds.	Target individuals from a young age and change the perception that social housing is easily accessible by working with Essex County Council to	Focus on prevention methods in order to avoid young people being made homeless in the first instance	BBC, Marcoms, Essex County Council, EHO Secondary Schools, Colleges

		deliver a project that aims to dispel myths about social housing.	Deliver project to all schools/colleges in the Basildon area.	
		Use the countywide joint protocol developed by ECC for 16/17 approaching homelessness services to identify and solve the issue that caused homelessness in the first instance allowing the return of the young person to their home.	Number of cases where homelessness amongst young people is prevented as a result of protocol use.	Housing Options, Essex County Council
		Offer mediation to families who have experienced relationship breakdowns in an effort to prevent parental evictions.	Number of referrals made to mediation. % success rate. Captures quarterly	Housing Options, ECC Mediation team.
NO.	Objective	Action	Target/Measures	Key Partners
SVP3	Review the needs of the travelling and show people community	Complete an "Assessment of Needs" for Travellers and Show people.	Assessment ongoing, review results when completed.	BBC Strategic Housing and Housing Choice
		Create a local lettings policy for the planned 16 pitch traveller's site when planning approval is given.	Await the result of planning application	Housing Choice
		Explore initiatives to resolve homelessness with traveller community	Project group established	BBC/ECC
SVP4	Support victims of domestic abuse	A representative from Housing Services to attend the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) to identify high risk perpetrators and victims and to encourage multi-agency working to prevent homelessness.	Meetings to take place twice a month	Housing Choice, Essex Police, Parklands, IDVA, Probation, Basildon Hospital, CMHT, CDAS, Social Services
		Refer victims of domestic abuse to the Sanctuary scheme.	Number of cases where homelessness is prevented through the project, aimed	Housing Options, Safe Partnership, Police, IDVA, landlords

			at making homes more secure.	
		Relocate victims of domestic abuse, regardless of gender to safer accommodation if it is impossible for them to stay in their current property.	Number of cases where homelessness is prevented by relocating victims to refuges/ alternative accommodation	Basildon Women's Aid (BWA), Housing Choice, ASB
		Monitor usage of Basildon Women's Aid.	Monitor access to refuge placement for P1Es	Housing Options, Basildon Women's Aid
No.	Objective	Action	Target/Measures	Key Partners
SVP5	Work with supported housing providers to refer vulnerable people to supported housing	Continue to support the Foyer & Nacro joint assessment panels and ensure appropriate move on arrangements are put in place for young people.	% of referrals to service that result in homelessness being prevented. Monthly meetings between stakeholders.	Re-Housing, Nacro, Swan
		Continue working to standardise referrals and acceptances to support programmes (Nacro, Foyer, and Floating Support) across all referring and accepting organisations.	BBC to attend monthly referral panel meetings	Rehousing, Nacro, Foyer, Probation Service, Family Mosaic.
		Work closely with Social Services to identify those under 21 who have been in care to ensure that the correct services (including placement in specialist accommodation) are provided.	Meetings to take place as appropriate	BBC Re-Housing, ECC
SVP6	Support people with mental health problems and learning difficulties	Continue to attend a joint working mental health panel to ensure clients are "moved through" a variety of supported housing with varying support services	Monitor client's movement through various forms of supported housing	Community Mental Health Team, Re-Housing
		Provide additional support to those clients struggling to maintain a tenancy without assistance	% of clients accepted as needing additional support using the service resulting in homelessness avoided.	Family Mosaic, CMHT, ECC Social Services, Housing Choice.

Working with partners and agencies to prevent homelessness – When we do not have a duty to house someone then we need to ensure that there are support schemes and partners to refer applicants to. Moreover, Housing Choice cannot work in silo and continues to work with multiple departments and agencies to prevent homelessness.

No.	Objective	Action	Target/Measure	Key Partners
WP1	Ensure the provision of housing advice and assistance to all households	Ensure that advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness, is available free of charge to any person in the district or borough.		CRC, Housing Options, Housing Assessments.
		Refer those who we have no statutory duty to house to the Community Resource Centre for further advice and guidance.	Monitor via existing Service Level Agreement	CRC, Housing Options
		Financial adviser funded by the Council to be based in the CAB to assist tenants who find themselves in financial difficulty	Service level agreement – Number of people who have been assisted & outcomes	Housing Choice, CAB
		Continue work already begun with voluntary/third sector groups including Shelter/food banks/religious organisations		Housing Choice, Shelter, Churches.
WP1	Ensure the provision of housing advice and assistance to all households	IMPACT to provide welfare benefits information and advice services to those faced with homelessness. Referrals made by Housing Advice Service and Family Mosaic	Service Level Agreement – Number of people who have been assisted & outcomes to be reviewed by Councils Housing and Community Safety scrutiny committee	IMPACT, Housing Options, Family Mosaic.
WP2	Work with external agencies and create dedicated pathways to housing solutions and prevent homelessness.	Continue to develop, strengthen and review pathways from hospitals, mental health, care and other institutions to ensure there is a planned discharge with the appropriate housing solutions in place.	Meetings held with other members of the Basildon Health Partnership	Basildon Health Partnership, Basildon Hospital (general), SEPT, Housing Options, Foyer, NACRO, Dundee Court.

		Work with Essex County Council to incorporate values of the Family Intervention Project into the broader Housing Choice program	% of families referred to this service who are subsequently able to maintain their tenancies	ECC Family Solutions Programme, Housing Choice
WP3	Collaborate to mitigate the effects of welfare reform	Housing Services, Customer Services and Revenues and Benefits to collaborate on training and information provision so staff understand welfare reforms.	Training sessions to be held with all staff	Neighbourhood working Group, Housing service Teams, Revenues and Benefits, CSC, Customer Services
		Housing Services, Revenues and benefits and customer services to work collaboratively to ensure that the public are fully aware of measures being introduced including providing publicity via media, websites and leaflets	Meetings between team leaders. Production of relevant publicity material	Neighbourhood working Group Housing service Teams, Revenues and Benefits, Customer services, CSC. MARCOMS
WP3	Collaborate to mitigate the effects of welfare reform	Work with the Revenues and Benefits Department to ensure tenants requiring extra Discretion Housing Payments are identified.	% of people approaching the services for support and successful extra DHP being granted.	Revenues & Benefits Team, Housing Options.
		Assist under occupying tenants affected by new benefit system in obtaining more affordable accommodation using downsizing incentive/home swapper schemes.	% of tenants accommodated in accommodation that better suits their housing needs. Monitor Mutual Exchanges, Arrange Special Events	Re-Housing applications, MARCOMS
		Investigate and seek to implement future schemes aimed at relieving pressure of welfare reform programs		
		Work with other departments to develop and promote a Debt Policy		Housing Services, Revenues and Benefits, BBC customer services.
		Improve working relationship with Housing Benefits and research into joint working protocol to increase information sharing		BBC Housing Choice, BBC, Housing Benefits, BBC strategic Housing

Monitoring the Strategy – Ensure that the strategy meets the targets set out and fulfils expectations.

No.	Objective	Action	Target/Measure	Key Partners
MS1	Ensure the goals of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy are properly monitored	Collect performance information on a monthly basis and record on a central management system (Covalent). Ensure P1E returns completed	Analysis conducted by senior managers monthly and quarterly by overview and scrutiny committee	Housing Choice, BBC members
		Link performance information to Policy Development Framework, budget control.		
MS2	Ensure proper performance of the strategy	Poor performance to be picked up and addressed at an early stage		
MS3	Implement Civica IT system to support the work of the department	Monitor implementation plan with milestones	Milestones & targets set within IT plan.	Housing Choice, I.T.

Appendix 4 – Current demand, trends and performance

The homeless prevention strategy evidence base collates the key housing related data used for the homelessness review. It draws on a number of local and national sources and can be used to identify the key trends and anticipate the challenges that will develop around homelessness and housing in Basildon Borough in the future.

Lettings Activity

Year	Homeless applicants	Housing Register applicants	Transfers	Stage 2 temporary	Decants	Total lets
2015/16	268	410	304	250	101	1,333
2016/17	148	336	215	204	9	912 ↓ 31%
2017/18 YTD (April –Dec 2017)	118	205	142	133	24	622 ↓ 32%

Figure 1: The annual lettings made by Basildon Council. (BBC, 2017)

National homelessness statistics

Overall, across England, local authorities took action to prevent and relieve homelessness for 52,190 households between 1st July and 30th September 2017. Figure 2 below, shows the increase in the number of homeless acceptances since 2014.

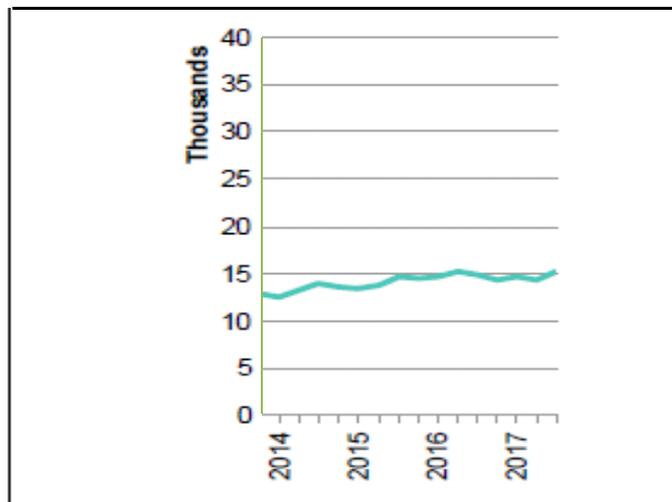


Figure 2: Households accepted by local authorities as owed a main duty each quarter, England. (MHCLG, 2017)

The Ministry for Housing, Communities, and Local Government has suggested that the rise in homeless acceptances is due to the loss of homes as a result of the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy.

Temporary Accommodation figures

Area	Households in TA 30th September 2017	Previous quarter: 30 June 2017	Percentage change	Same quarter last year: 30 September 2016	Percentage Change
England	79,190	78,170	↑ 1%	74,750	↑ 6%
London	54,660	54,180	↑ 1%	53,480	↑ 2%
Rest of England	24,530	24,000	↑ 2%	21,270	↑ 15%

Figure 3: Households accommodated in temporary accommodation by 30th September 2017, compared to previous quarter and year. (MHCLG, 2017).

The increase of people in temporary accommodation reflects the national increase in homeless acceptances, and the high percentage change from quarter three last year shows that homelessness is a worsening problem.

Predicted housing demand

The Thames Gateway South Essex (TGSE) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) highlights wider trends, such as higher levels of population growth in Basildon that reflects an increasing flow of migrants from London. The SHMA predicts that approximately between 3,272 and 3,744 new dwellings per annum are needed across South Essex to cope with the demand.

	Lower end of range	Upper end of range
Basildon	763	837
Castle Point	326	410
Rochford	312	392
Southend-on-Sea	953	1,132
Thurrock	919	973
TGSE	3,272	3,744

Source: Turley, 2015; Edge Analytics, 2015

Figure 4: Summary of objectively assessed need range. (TGSE, 2016)

The SHMA also indicates that there is a significant level of unmet need for affordable housing across TGSE, with a calculated need for 1,877 affordable homes annually over the next five years to clear the backlog and meet newly arising needs. Once the backlog is cleared then only newly arising needs will need to be met, requiring 1,767 affordable homes annually.

	Annual shortfall in affordable housing to meet current backlog	Annual net new need	Net annual affordable housing need (five years)
Basildon	103	152	254
Castle Point	62	236	298
Rochford	59	210	268
Southend-on-Sea	77	573	650
Thurrock	-191	597	406
TGSE	110	1,767	1,877

Source: Turley, 2015

Figure 5: Affordable housing needs assessment. (TGSE, 2016)

Current homelessness prevention work

Figures 6 and 7, below, show the early intervention work carried out by the Council in 2016/17 to prevent homelessness and help customers remain in their home or find alternative accommodation.

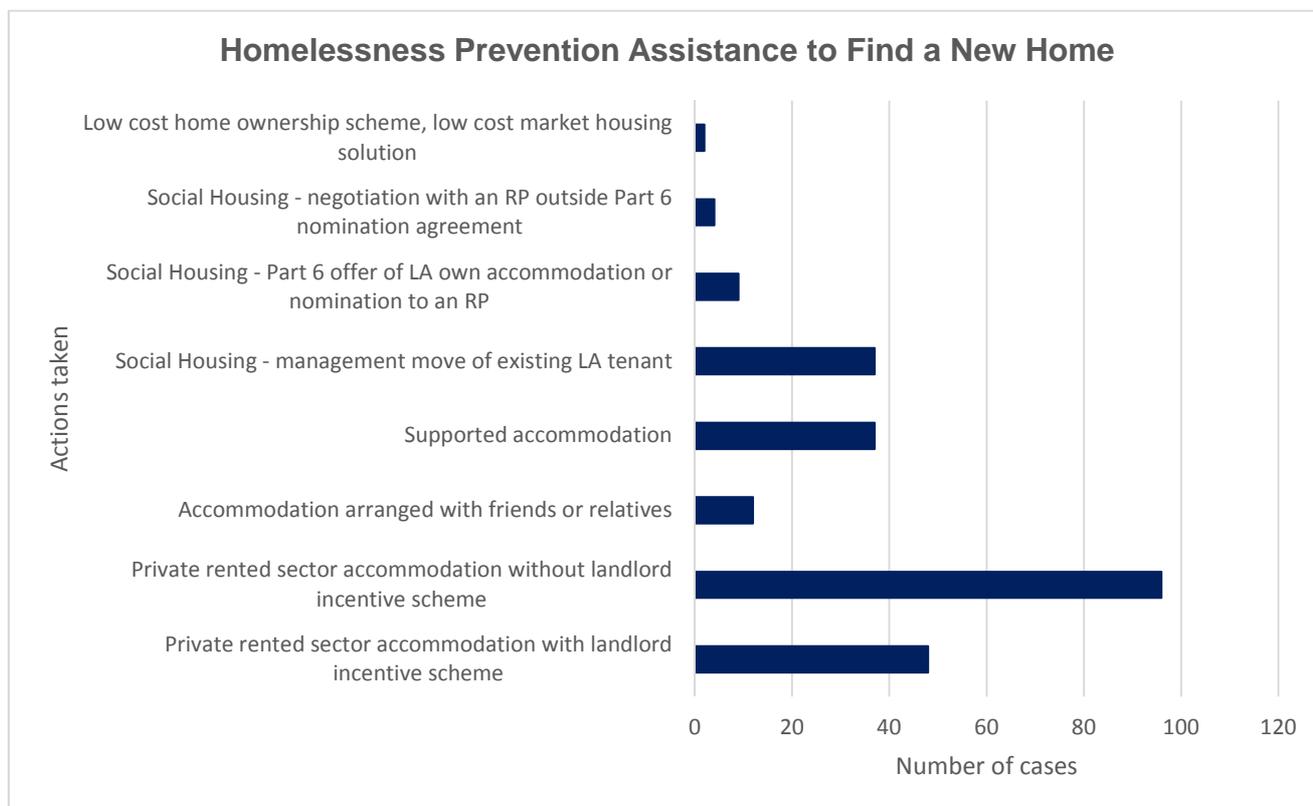


Figure 6: Homelessness prevention assistance to find a new home. (BBC, 2017)

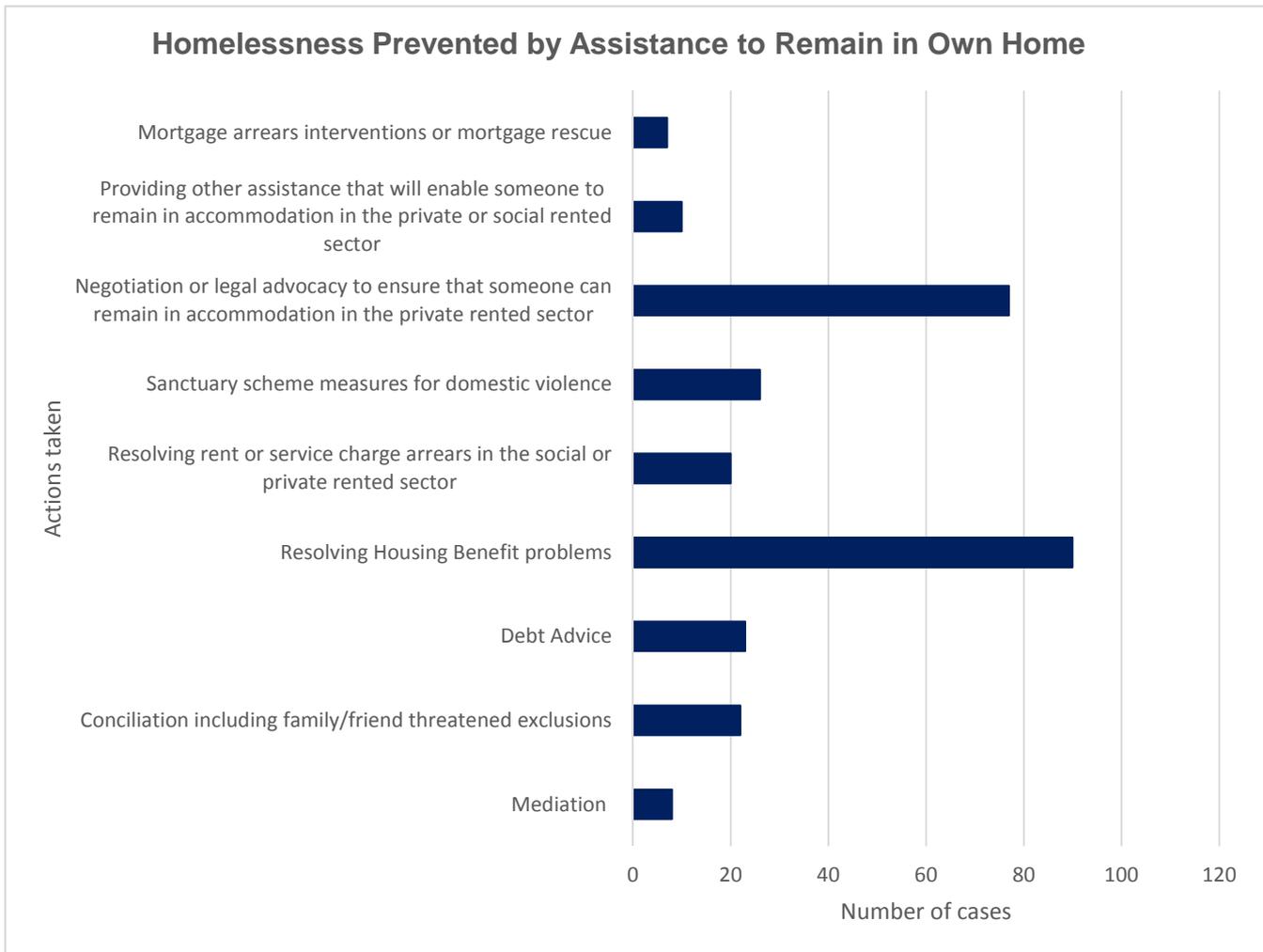


Figure 7: Homelessness prevented by assistance to remain in own home. (BBC, 2017)

Traditionally, the single biggest cause of homelessness in Basildon has been friends or family being no longer able or willing to accommodate (FLT)s). In 2016/17 the ending of a private rented tenancy (AST) overtook this to become the single biggest cause of homelessness, which reflects the national trends and demonstrates the success of the service’s new approach to assisting FLT)s).

The FLT team have had 121 cases so far for 2017/18 and have successfully closed 105 of these. They can also refer cases to the Property Solutions team, which helps customers to find alternative accommodation in the private rented sector.

Property Solutions also work closely with the housing advisors and the homeless officers, as well as holding regular forums to build a network of landlords. They made 57 lets in 2016/17, and have increased this to 66 lets so far in 2017/18.

Figure 8, below, shows the successful outcomes of the 105 closed FLT cases for 2017/18 so far.

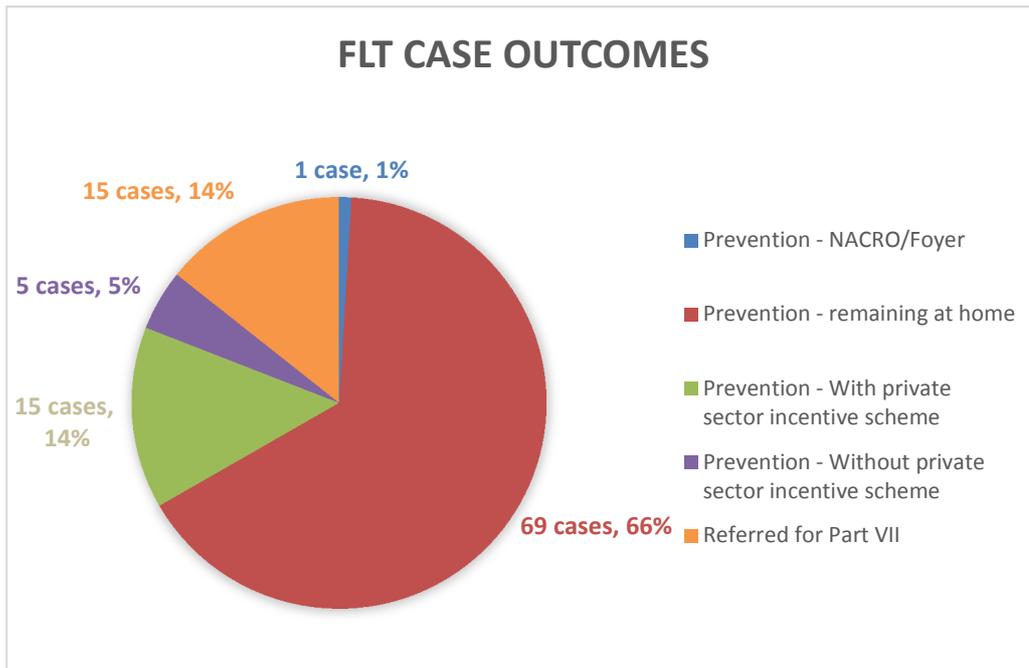


Figure 8: Family License Termination case outcomes so far for 2017/18. (BBC, 2018).

Homeless acceptances

In 2016/17 the strong focus on prevention work and early intervention led to a decrease in homelessness acceptances, due to helping applicants to secure alternative accommodation or remain in their property.

Figure 9, below, shows the demand for homelessness assistance in the Basildon Borough over the last three years.

It illustrates the number of homelessness applications received, the number of households assisted with interim and temporary accommodation due to being homeless, and the number of households where the Council was successful in preventing them from becoming homeless.

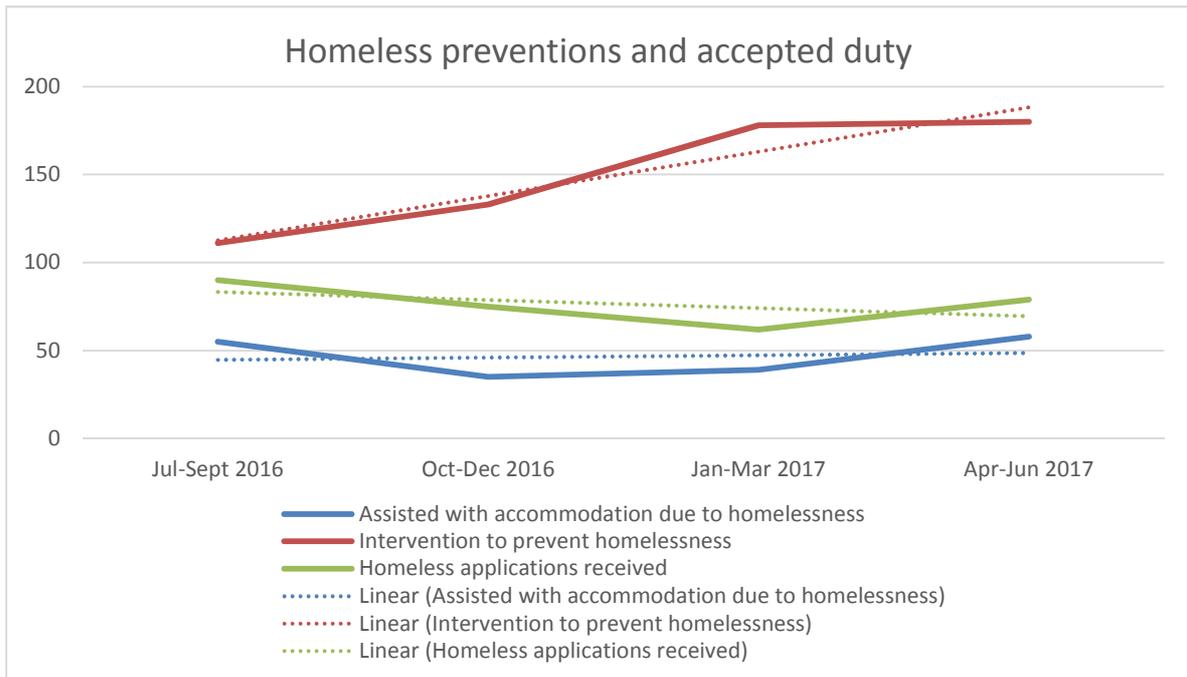


Figure 9: Homeless preventions and accepted duty. (BBC, 2017).

The trend for younger people to be the most affected by homelessness can be seen when analysing homeless applications. Figure 10 below illustrates the percentage of people assisted by Basildon Council due to being homeless in 2016/17 by age. The 16-24 age group make up the highest amount, 43% of those assisted, but only 11% of the population of the borough. They are followed by the 25-44 age group, which counted for 42% of those assisted due to homelessness.

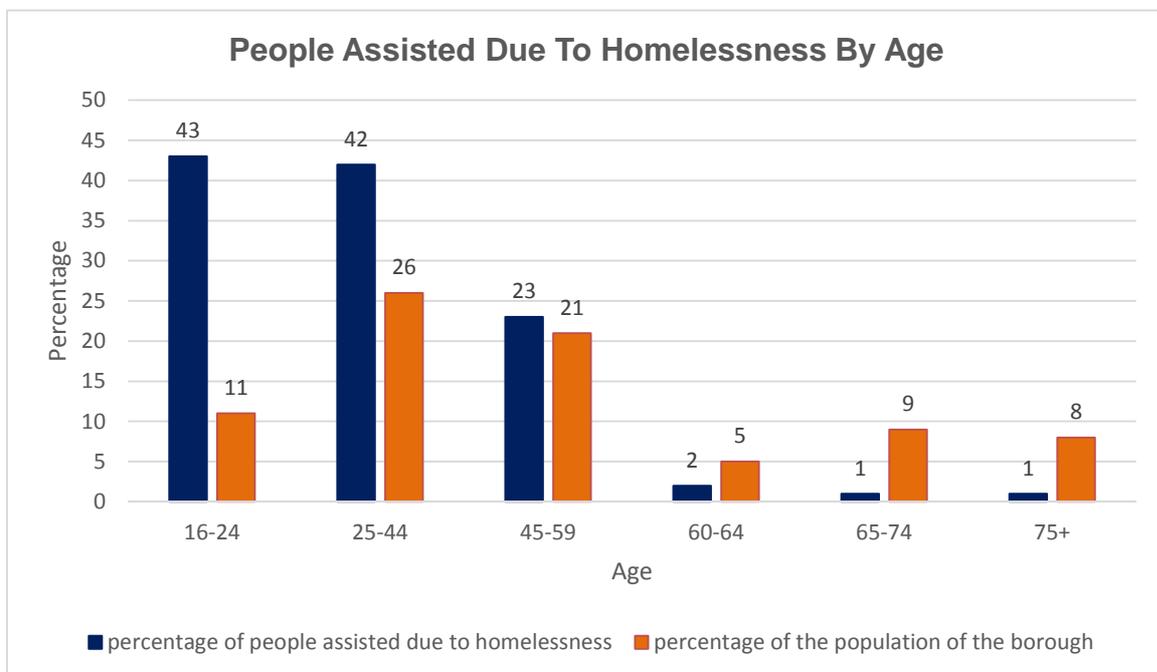


Figure 10: People assisted due to homelessness by age. (BBC, 2018)

The number of rough sleepers in the borough is relatively low; however, figure 11, below, shows that it is an increasing issue.

2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
9	9	6	4	0	13	17	24

Figure 11: The rough sleeper count in Basildon Borough. (MHCLG, 2018).

The Council recognises that rough sleeping is a growing problem and works in partnership with St. Mungos to help provide intensive support to rough sleepers.

Overall, 83% of their cases from July to September 2017 were supported to settle in more secure accommodation and did not return to rough sleeping within six months. The Council also works jointly with faith groups in the borough to run a winter night shelter, which gets on average 10 to 12 guests a night.

Violent relationship breakdown can also be a reason for homelessness. Such incidences require specific resources to ensure the safety of survivors, and it is for this reason that we have set up the South Essex Domestic Abuse Hub (SEDAH) jointly with Changing Pathways and South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre.

This aims to provide advice and information about the options that survivors have, and has a range of services based in the hub, including the police and support workers from the women’s refuge, which help with early intervention to prevent homelessness due to domestic violence. So far, SEDAH has had 115 cases from August 2017 to January 2018. Overall, at the end of October 2017, 16% of cases were made safe in their own home, 60% of cases were made safe in other accommodation, 20% of cases were resolved on first contact, and 4% of cases were withdrawn or lost contact.

Figure 12, below, shows the different authorities making referrals to the hub from August to October 2017.

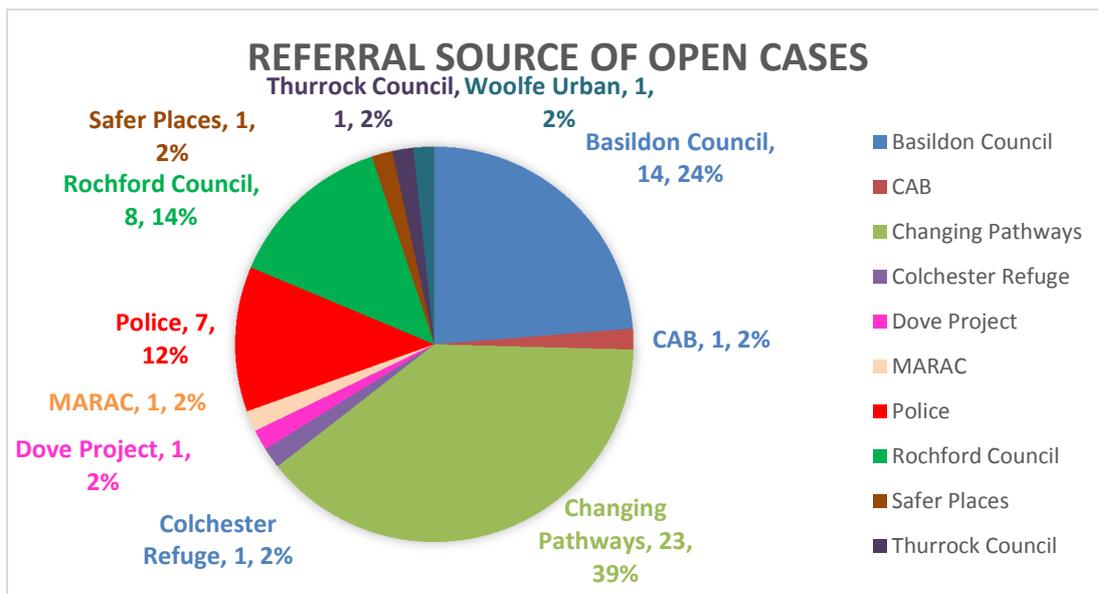


Figure 12: Referral source of open cases for August to October 2017. (BBC, 2018)