

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

CABINET

21 JULY 2011

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR

RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO LEADER: HOUSING

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2011-2016

KEY DECISION – NO

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider a proposed Homelessness Strategy 2011-2016.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council be recommended to approve the proposed Homelessness Strategy 2011-2016 attached as Annex 1.

3. Summary (inc. brief overview of relevant background history)

- 3.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires the Council to undertake a periodic review of homelessness and homeless services and then to publish a strategy to tackle homelessness in the future. The strategy is required to set out how the Council plans to:
- (a) Prevent homelessness occurring in the first place.
 - (b) Ensure there is sufficient accommodation available for people who are, or who may become homeless.
 - (c) Ensure there is satisfactory support for people who are, or who may become homeless, or need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again
- 3.2 An initial Homelessness Strategy was published in 2003, with a further strategy being formulated for the period 2007-2010. This latter strategy is now out of date and it is necessary to have a revised strategy in place which outlines the current homelessness issues facing the District and the actions which are being put in place to tackle and prevent homelessness.
- 3.3 A Homelessness Review was undertaken last year and this report presents a Homelessness Strategy for the period 2011-2016 in response to the findings of the review.

4. Key Issues and Implications

4.1 A proposed Homelessness Strategy 2011-2016 is attached as Annex 1. This sets out:

- (a) The strategic context and aims for the strategy;
- (b) How the strategy was developed through the Homelessness Review and details of consultation and partnership working;
- (c) Achievements since the 2007-2010 Homelessness Strategy;
- (d) Findings from the Homelessness Review 2009-10;
- (e) The key issues and priorities in relation to homelessness.

4.2 The proposed Homelessness Strategy has been subject to a 6 week consultation process with some 50 stakeholders being invited to comment on the document. Consultees included Registered Providers, voluntary organisations, the PCT and Staffordshire Probation. Actions and amendments have been incorporated into the document where appropriate.

4.3 The key aims of the proposed strategy are to:

(a) Prevent and reduce levels of homelessness

To reduce the level of homelessness in the District by providing a range of effective prevention measures and support services to homeless people and those at risk of repeat homelessness. Work with partners to ensure rough sleeping does not become a problem.

(b) Improve choice and access to housing

To ensure that sufficient affordable accommodation is available for people who may become homeless. Ensure that appropriate advice and effective and efficient homelessness procedures are available to quickly secure permanent sustainable accommodation.

(c) Support vulnerable households to live independently

To ensure that there is available provision of support services for vulnerable households that require support to live independently. Work with partners to provide the advice and support services that will help people successfully maintain tenancies and prevent cycles of homelessness.

4.4 The three key aims will be delivered through a number of actions as presented in the strategy and accompanying Action Plan, which include:

- Continuing to promote the Housing Options team and their out of hours service
- Ensuring the continuation of the CAB debt advice service
- Continuing to provide an effective One Stop Shop for the Mortgage Rescue Scheme
- The further development of relationships with private landlords to explore opportunities to increase provision of accessible shared houses and one bed units for single people

- Ensuring the continuation of the Safe As Houses domestic violence scheme by providing the necessary funding with partners
- Continue facilitating Disabled Facilities Grants and works to Council dwellings to allow people with physical disabilities to remain in their home

5. Conclusion(s) and Reason(s) for the Recommendation(s)

A revised Homelessness Strategy is required in order that the Council meets its statutory duties under the Homelessness Act 2002. The current strategy is now out of date and it is proposed that this is replaced by the proposed Homelessness Strategy 2011-2016. The proposed strategy will also ensure that the Council provides a clear strategic response to the homelessness issues facing the District.

6. Other Options Considered

- 6.1 If a revised Homelessness Strategy is not in place there is a risk the Council will not meet its statutory duties under the Homelessness Act 2002.

7. Report Author Details

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SCHEDULE OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Section 1

Contribution to Council Priorities

The Homelessness Strategy is a key statutory document that helps to deliver the outcomes detailed in the Corporate Plan 2011/14.

Section 2

Contribution to Promoting Community Engagement

The proposed Homelessness Strategy has been subject to a consultation process with approximately 50 organisations and partners and has therefore contributed to promoting community engagement.

Section 3

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications for the Council as a result of this report. Any costs associated with the new Homelessness Strategy will need to be contained within existing approved budgets.

Section 4

Legal Implications

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires the Council to ensure that a homelessness strategy for their district is reviewed and a new one published after 5 years. The Act requires the Council to take the homelessness strategy in to account in the exercise of its functions.

Section 5

Human Resource Implications

There are no human resource implications associated with this report.

Section 6

Section 17 (Crime Prevention)

There are no Section 17 (Crime Prevention) issues arising from this report.

Section 7

Human Rights Act Implications

The Homelessness Strategy 2011-16 will assist the Council to comply with Article 8 (Right to respect for private and family life).

Section 8

Data Protection Act Implications

There are no Data Protection Act implications arising from this report.

Section 9

Risk Management Implications

If a revised Homelessness Strategy is not approved, the Council will be at risk of not meeting its statutory requirements.

Section 10

Equality and Diversity Implications

The aims and actions contained within the Homelessness Strategy 2011-2016 contribute to meeting the needs of specific groups who are vulnerable and therefore contributes positively to equality and diversity.

Section 11

List of Background Papers

Homelessness Review 2009/10

Section 12

Report History

- (a) Cabinet, 3 July 2003 – Homelessness Strategy 2003-05
- (b) Cabinet, 19 July 2007 – Homelessness Strategy 2007-10

Annexes

Annex 1 – Homelessness Strategy 2011-2016

Homelessness Strategy 2011-16

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1. Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the Cannock Chase Homelessness Strategy 2011-2016, which covers our homelessness priorities and plans for the next five years.

The Council's Homelessness Strategy 2007-2010 was effective in delivering our priorities and objectives over the last three years and as a result we have made significant progress in improving services to homeless and potentially homeless people in the District. An updated strategy is now needed to ensure that suitable housing and support services continue to be in place.

The Homelessness Strategy 2011-16 continues to promote an array of services to prevent homelessness. However, national housing policies and the availability of resources may require us to change the way we deliver services in the future. We therefore need to regularly renew our actions to ensure we achieve the best outcomes for homeless and potentially homeless people.

I would like to thank all partners who have contributed to the production of this strategy.

Councillor Frank Allen
Housing Portfolio Leader

2. Introduction

Cannock Chase Council is committed to reducing the levels of homelessness in the District. High priority is placed on both the prevention of homelessness and ensuring effective procedures and support services are in place for those who do become homeless. Homelessness can have a devastating effect on an individual or household's life and is not just a housing problem but a symptom of broader issues. Becoming homeless can have an impact in many ways, including personal health, education attainment and access to, or sustainment of, employment. The reasons for homelessness are often complex and necessitate a wide range of support needs.

This strategy supports a holistic approach to tackling homelessness. Whilst there is a need to increase the supply of affordable temporary and permanent accommodation in the District, there is also need for a wide range of support services to meet the needs of different household groups. Tackling homelessness contributes towards the Council's corporate aims, objectives and vision.

The Council's Corporate Vision is that "By 2021 Cannock Chase will be a place where people have the opportunity to enhance their quality of life and achieve economic prosperity."

In acknowledgement of the evidential needs of the District, public consultation, and the changing local government environment, the Council will focus on four priority outcomes in achieving its vision:

- **People** – active and healthy lifestyles
- **Place** – an improved living environment
- **Prosperity** – economic resilience
- **Transformation** – changing the way services are provided to ensure value for money

The Homelessness Strategy 2011-16 sets out:

- The strategic context and aims for the strategy;
- How the strategy was developed through the Homelessness Review, including details of consultation and partnership working;
- Achievements resulting from the 2007-2010 Homelessness Strategy;
- Findings from the Homelessness Review 2009/10;
- The key issues and priorities in relation to homelessness.

The Strategy closes with an action plan for the strategy period which will be regularly updated.

This strategy has been formulated at a time of significant economic difficulty and spending reductions in the public and voluntary sectors. This results in a need to meet an increased demand for services within a context of reduced resources. The Homelessness Strategy therefore focuses on making best use of available resources and ensuring that services are delivering value for money.

3. Context and Aims

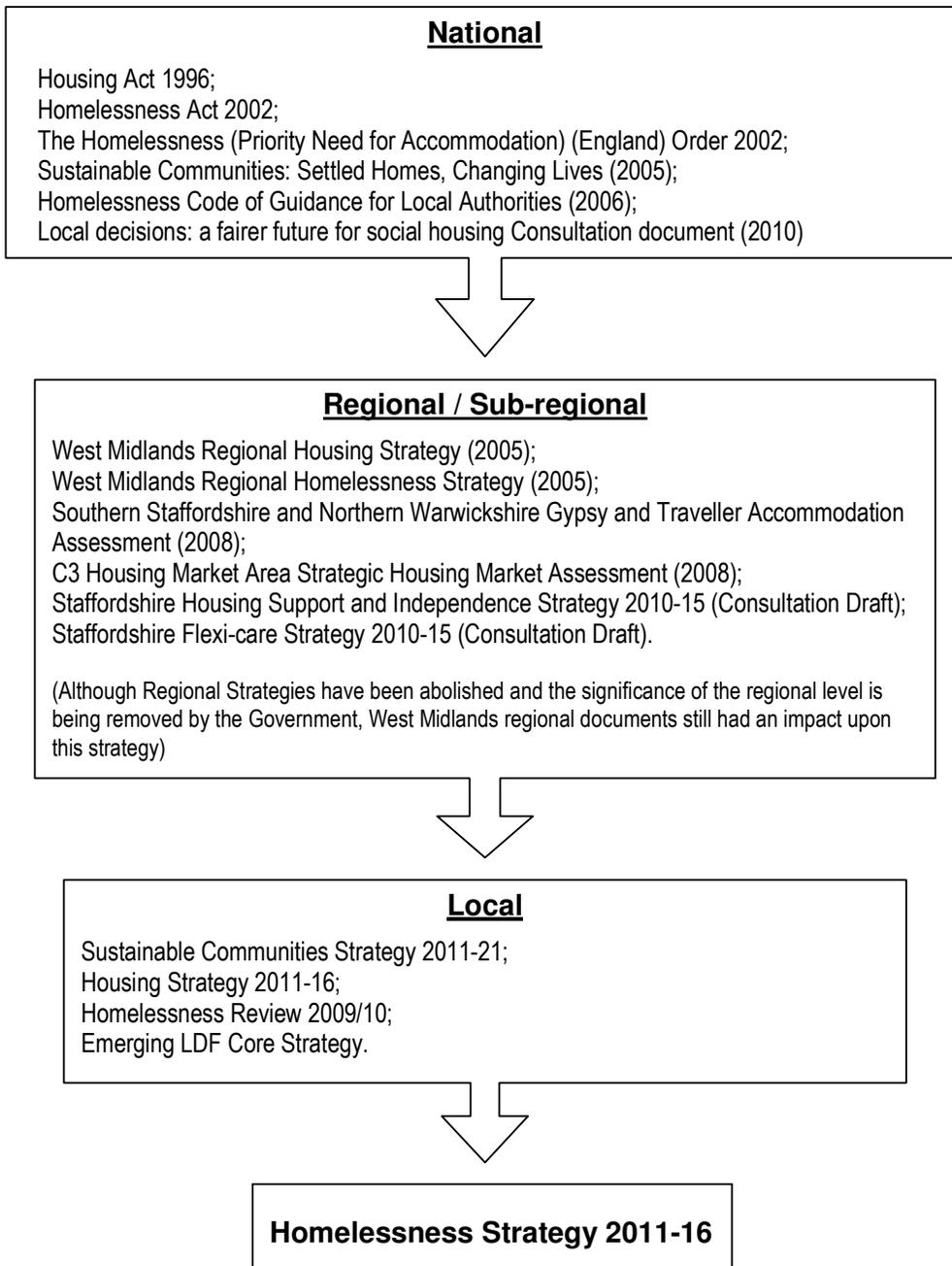
Local authorities have a statutory duty towards vulnerable households under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), including a duty to provide advice and assistance to all people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, which can extend to securing a permanent, settled home.

The Government has acknowledged that the public sector cannot tackle the problem in isolation or necessarily provide the best housing solution in every case. *'Local Decisions: a fairer future for social housing'* sets out the Government's intention to give local authorities greater flexibility in bringing the homelessness duty to an end with offers of accommodation in the private rented sector, without requiring the applicant's agreement. By giving local authorities more flexibility in how to meet the housing needs of people accepted as homeless, they will be better able to use their social housing stock to the maximum effect.

Since the Homelessness Act 2002, successive Governments have required local councils to produce Homelessness Strategies. These strategies are to be informed by a review of performance, current service provision and estimated future need. The Act states that these strategies should focus on prevention measures, and emphasises the importance of offering advice to all people in housing need.

The 2009/10 Homelessness Review provides a detailed assessment of homelessness and homelessness needs in the District. This strategy will provide a strategic response to the issues highlighted by the review and will be intrinsically linked with the overarching Housing Strategy 2011-16.

The key research documents, strategies and legislative requirements that have shaped the Homelessness Strategy are set out in the following diagram:



The Homelessness Review contains a further examination of all the legislation and strategic documents that have shaped this Homelessness Strategy.

The Review can be found online at www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/housing under the Strategic Housing section.

The Homelessness Review also identifies a number of areas where current services could be improved or where additional provision is required if homelessness is continued to be tackled over the next five years. As a result the following overarching aims have been identified for this strategy.

1. Prevent and reduce levels of homelessness

To reduce the level of homelessness in the District by:

- Providing a range of effective prevention measures and support services to homeless people and those at risk of repeat homelessness;
- Working with partners to ensure rough sleeping does not become a problem.

2. Improve choice and access to housing

To ensure that:

- Sufficient affordable accommodation is available for people who may become homeless;
- Appropriate advice and effective and efficient homelessness procedures are available to quickly secure permanent sustainable accommodation.

3. Support vulnerable households to live independently

To ensure that:

- The availability of support services to enable vulnerable households to live independently and successfully maintain tenancies.

The Homelessness Strategy is intrinsically linked with the overarching Housing Strategy document. Working towards achieving the above aims will help to deliver upon the priority outcomes of the overarching Housing Strategy:

Priority Outcome 1: To increase the supply of Affordable Housing

Priority Outcome 2: To support vulnerable households to live independently in their own homes

Priority Outcome 3: To maintain the Council's housing stock to the 'Decent Homes' Standard

4. Consultation and Partnership Working

Consultation and partnership working has played an important role in the formulation of this strategy and the supporting review document.

Prior to the production of this Homelessness Strategy, a review document was produced and subjected to two consultation exercises to determine the issues and priorities surrounding homelessness in the District. A questionnaire was sent to all the main providers in the area requesting information regarding homelessness prevention advice, accommodation and support provided by the partner agencies to specific client groups. The questionnaire also sought to identify the main causes of homelessness for the agencies' customers together with the contributory factors. Following the production of the review partners were again consulted to agree the issues and priorities in this strategy.

The subsequent Draft Strategy itself has also been subject to a six week consultation period where all partners were again consulted. Annex 1 provides a list of all our partners, who were consulted with during the formulation of this strategy, and whose contribution is invaluable in enabling the Council to deliver its homelessness services.

The Homelessness Strategy consultation is supported by other consultation measures undertaken throughout the year. These include:

- A critical stakeholder group held twice a year where the Housing Options team consult partners on service delivery including access arrangements and information leaflets and literature;
- Customer surveys regarding the use of temporary accommodation are used to gauge their satisfaction at the service they have received;
- Consultation with private landlords individually and through the bi-annual landlord forum events.

The Council consider it important that the views of customers who use the service are obtained. The Housing Options team have sought to gain the views of their customers through a range of methods; including questionnaires, telephone and face to face surveys. In 2009/10, 84% of customers surveyed were satisfied with the service they received.

5. Achievements since 2007

Cannock Chase Council is committed to reducing the level of homelessness in the District and since 2007 has facilitated a range of initiatives to help prevent homelessness and ensure that support services are in place for those in need.

In 2008 Strategic Housing, consisting of the Housing Strategy and Housing Options teams, were transferred back to the Housing Division from Planning and Regeneration, with the Housing Options team relocating to the Civic Centre. The Cannock Chase Churches Housing Coalition was also relocated to the Civic Centre in order to maintain a close working relationship with the Housing Options team.

The achievements, actions and improvements arising from the last Homelessness Strategy detailed within the Homelessness Review 2009/10 are summarised below against the aims of the Strategy. However, some actions and achievements contribute to more than one and often all three of the aims, as a result of their intrinsic links.

1. Prevent and reduce levels of homelessness

- The prevention approach adopted by the Housing Options team increased prevention levels with 220 households being successfully prevented from becoming homeless during 2009/10;
- There has been a continual reduction in the number of homeless acceptances made by the Council. In 2007/08 167 homeless acceptances were recorded whilst in 2009/10 only 28 acceptances were recorded, an 83% reduction;
- The Housing Options 'Out of Hours' homelessness service was introduced and is now promoted through the Council website, the housing options booklet and on posters in Council buildings;
- Three service level agreements have been formulated between bed and breakfast accommodation providers for use as good quality temporary accommodation;
- A unit of Council stock has been removed from the general needs supply to provide another temporary accommodation option;
- The Council has taken the lead on local delivery of the Mortgage Rescue Scheme and provides a one stop shop for advice and assistance on the MRS. The scheme is designed to help people faced with property repossession to stay in their own homes. There were eleven successful MRS completions during 2010/11;
- Cannock Citizens Advice Bureau now provide a fast track money advice service, which has been part funded by the Council in 2009/10 and 2010/11. Applicants to the MRS receive valuable advice from this service;
- A Hardship Fund has been established;
- Mediation is now provided in-house, following additional training to the Housing Options team.

2. Improve choice and access to housing

- The Cannock Chase Churches Housing Coalition has been continually funded to help low income households access private rented accommodation. In 2009/10 36 households accessed private rented accommodation with rent advances or loss and damage guarantees;
- A sub-regional Choice Based Lettings scheme, UChoose Homes, is in operation. Which has improved access to affordable rented housing in the District and provides eligible households with a choice over the location and type of property;
- The Housing Options team have developed strong working relationships with a number of landlords in the District and have established a private rental waiting list to match up landlords with prospective tenants. In 2009/10 92 lettings were enabled by the Housing Options team, a 29 unit increase compared to 2008/09, when 63 successful lettings were facilitated;
- The Council endeavours to increase the quality of private rented sector property, through a property accreditation scheme, which recognises landlords with good standards of property, and regular landlord forums to share good practice and update landlords on changes to legislation or regulations;

- Affordable Housing delivery reached a high in 2009/10, when 157 new affordable dwellings were provided in the District.

3. Support vulnerable people to live independently

- A Private Sector Tenancy Support programme is provided by Bromford Housing Association through Supporting People funding.
- The 'Safe As Houses' scheme assists those at risk of domestic violence to remain in their own home and feel safe;
- A Domestic Violence Outreach Worker employed by Staffordshire Women's Aid has been part funded by the Council;
- Support to the Chase PAIRS Domestic Violence Forum and the *Chase Council for Voluntary Service's* Home Comforts Scheme.

6. Homelessness in Cannock Chase

This section summarises the findings from the Homelessness Review 2009/10; by setting out recent trends, gaps in provision and needs of different customer groups; and concludes with the main priorities for this Strategy.

6.1 Homelessness Trends

During 2010/11 the Council received 222 applications from households presenting as homeless. All applicants now receive a housing options interview so their housing needs can be fully assessed and information is provided regarding the options available to solve their housing situation. Whilst this has increased the housing options interviews carried out, it has reduced the number of households facing homelessness. Until 2009/10 homelessness applications and acceptances had seen a downward trend. However, as a result of an unimproved if not worsening economic climate, the number of applications increased by 23% in 2010/11. Subsequently acceptances also increased on the previous year - from 28 acceptances in 09/10 to 51 acceptances in 10/11.

Priority Need Group	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Applications Taken	408	301	180	222
Priority Need	167	75	28	51
No Duty Owed	241	226	152	171

Homelessness trends from the last four years show that the main reasons for homeless acceptances were violent relationship breakdowns, loss of rented accommodation and parents being unable to accommodate.

Reason for Homelessness	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Parents unable to accommodate	27	13	5	9
Relatives/friend unable to accommodate	12	5	2	1
Violent breakdown In relationship involving partner	31	18	7	12
Non-violent breakdown of relationship with partner	20	7	3	5

Violent breakdown of relationship involving associated persons	7	3	0	0
Mortgage arrears	19	6	0	4
Rent arrears on Local Authority/Public Sector accommodation	0	0	0	0
Rent arrears on RSL accommodation	1	0	0	0
Rent arrears on private sector accommodation	2	1	0	0
Loss of rented accommodation	39	15	6	18
Racially motivated violence	0	0	0	0
Other forms of violence	4	3	1	0
Left institution or care	3	2	2	2
Racially motivated harassment	0	0	0	0
Other forms of harassment	0	1	0	0
Other	2	1	2	0
Total	167	75	28	51

The number of homeless acceptances as a result of mortgage arrears has decreased over the last four years. The introduction of the Mortgage Rescue Scheme in May 2009 has significantly helped to reduce acceptances, along with the CAB fast track debt advice service, to such an extent that no homeless acceptances were recorded in 09/10 as a result of mortgage arrears. Acceptances increased to 4 in 10/11 but as previously discussed a worsening economic climate has meant that a few households could no longer sustain mortgage payments to the extent that their properties became repossessed and they became homeless.

The reasons of 'Parents unable to accommodate' and 'non-violent relationship breakdown with partner' have also decreased as major causes of homelessness. Two members of the Housing Options team have been trained in family mediation and have the skills to be able to reduce the occurrence of homelessness due to these issues.

As previously mentioned, the prevention approach of the Housing Options team has significantly reduced the numbers of homeless acceptances. In 2008/09 213 households were prevented from becoming homeless, and this level of prevention was maintained during 2009/10 and increased slightly to 220 households. The prevention figure for 2010/11 was recorded as 203, therefore a good level of homelessness prevention has been maintained during difficult times.

Prevention Tool	2008/09	2009/10
Housing Advice	69	91
Tenancy Support	63	54
Churches Housing Coalition	41	36
Safe As Houses	33	36
CAB	7	3
Total	213	220

General housing options advice has prevented homelessness for the majority; tenancy support has also played an important role whilst the Churches Housing Coalition and Safe As Houses schemes have contributed significantly to the prevention approach.

The Citizens Advice Bureau's fast track debt advice service has recently been added to the prevention toolbox for Housing Options, and has prevented ten households from becoming homeless since its introduction in Autumn 2008.

Preventing and reducing the levels of homelessness cannot be achieved without the important work and provision provided by partners. There are a number of other organisations that work in partnership with the Council to help deliver both accommodation and support services. These organisations are listed in Annex 1 and each of their services are considered in the Review document in more detail.

6.2 The Needs of Homeless Households

The main purpose of the Review was to identify the gaps in provision for each client group in the District to enable informed decisions to be made concerning the provision of appropriate accommodation and support services. The Review looked at the following groups and identified the gaps in provision that may exist for each group.

Young Vulnerable People

There is no direct access accommodation within the District. The YMCA's Rugeley Foyer currently provides the only supported accommodation specifically for young homeless people, but young people from the Cannock and Hednesford area often do not view Rugeley or hostels outside the District as suitable locations to live.

However, research has shown that direct access is unpopular with young people and is often used as a last resort. Alternatives being examined in Staffordshire include 'Night Stops' and Supported Lodgings placements. The Council is also looking to explore opportunities with private landlords for shared houses to provide accommodation for young single homeless people.

Teenage Parents/Vulnerable Families

Cannock Chase District has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy within southern Staffordshire both in the 11-15 and 16-19 year old age groups. The strategic approach for teenage pregnancy is based on the principle that all young people should receive good quality information and support services. Bromford provides a housing scheme for young families aged 16-29, (couples or single parents) with first step accommodation and support for vulnerable families allowing them to develop independent living skills, parenting skills, budgeting, setting up benefits and managing a home. Alongside this, a floating support scheme provides support for young parents to live successfully in their own tenancies by supporting them to develop the necessary skills.

Mental Health

One in four of the adult population will, at some stage in their life, experience mental health problems. These problems manifest themselves in differing degrees, in extreme cases this can result in the person suffering from social exclusion and stigma. A range of housing options for this client group is provided within the District, from mainstream social housing to specific

mental health schemes. The Council will work with partners to ensure that accommodation and support provision are meeting the needs of this client group.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is mostly perpetrated by men against women and children over long periods, with severe impact on the physical and mental well-being of victims. The Council recognises that domestic violence is a serious problem for the District and will continue to work with partner organisations to monitor the problem. The economic climate could have a significant impact on domestic violence, by increasing job losses and financial pressures placed on families which may lead to break-ups and potentially as a result, domestic abuse (physical and/or financial). The Council will ensure the continuation of the Safe As Houses scheme, which has delivered demonstrable and positive outcomes for many victims and their families since its introduction in 2002.

Older People

Cannock Chase District has an increasingly ageing population. The provision of sheltered housing and support services will need to be monitored to ensure that they meet residents' needs. If appropriate to their needs, the Council aims to assist older people to sustain their tenancies. Homelessness can remain hidden across all age groups and the older age group is no exception. Older people may be more reticent to present themselves as homeless, but could be living in situations where their support needs are not being met. The Staffordshire Flexi Care Strategy 2010-15 revealed that the extra care housing requirement for the District is 1,034 units up to 2030, of which 434 are required for social rent. In 2010, the backlog need stands at 558 units, of which 234 units are required for rent.

The completion of Vine Court in Bridgtown, at the end of 2010, has gone some way towards meeting the identified need and the Council will work with partners to identify further development opportunities for Flexi Care schemes in the District.

Physical Disabilities

The picture for this diverse group of people is quite complex as the range of needs and the individual impacts of disabilities ranges enormously. The Council co-ordinates the provision of aids and adaptations to the homes of people with physical disabilities. These improvements are funded through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs) and allow people to remain in their home. By undertaking these improvements people will be able to maintain their tenancy more easily, live independently and avoid the possibility of homelessness or the frustrations of having to move to another property.

Learning Disabilities

The Council recognises the difficulties that people with learning difficulties have with accessing and managing accommodation. Staffordshire County Council provides the only residential service for people with learning disabilities. Brunswick House is a residential home for adults with learning disabilities located on Pye Green Road near Cannock town centre. There are also two countywide floating support services provided by Choices and Bromford that operate throughout the District.

The Council will work with partners on the Cannock Chase Learning Disability Locality Board to deliver change and improvements within the community for people with a learning disability. Housing has been made a priority area for the Locality Board, with the aim of improving the housing options and accessibility for people with learning disabilities.

Substance Misuse

The Council recognises that some people with drug and alcohol dependency problems require support to maintain their home. Nationally there is substantial over-representation among the homeless population of those with drug and alcohol misuse problems. Homelessness and substance misuse are linked to social exclusion and are often closely associated with one another. Whilst homelessness can exacerbate drug use, substance use is also a cause of homelessness. Social Services (Adult Services) see support services for people with drug and alcohol problems as a priority for the District. A number of projects for dealing with substance misuse are supported by the Council through the Cannock Chase Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

Ex-offenders

Research for the Housing Support and Independence Strategy indicated the need for pre-tenancy work and training for young people and/or people taking up their first tenancy after a spell in prison. There is a need to investigate opportunities for pre-tenancy work and training for young people and for people taking up their first tenancy after spending time in prison. Some providers in the area are able to offer support services to this group. Heantun operate a floating support scheme, which recently increased its provision to 130 units across the County and covers low and high level support needs.

Multiple Needs

It should be remembered that many homeless people may have multiple needs and solving one problem will not resolve other areas of concern. Some homeless people may need help from a range of services in the District which necessitates agencies working together and signposting to one another if necessary. Discussions with Staffordshire County Council are ongoing to deliver a housing related floating support scheme for young people with complex needs (i.e. multiple) for implementation across Cannock Chase, Lichfield and Tamworth authority areas.

Rough Sleepers

Rough sleeping is considered the most visible form of homelessness. Current and recent historic levels of rough sleeping in the District have not been considered to be significant or high enough to merit performing a physical count. Under previous reporting mechanisms the level of rough sleeping has been recorded as 0-10 cases for the past few years. As part of the new reporting requirements, the Council consulted with partners on calculating an estimate of rough sleeping in the District. A 'nil' return was reported and the services of the Housing Options team was widely advertised to partners so they could refer any rough sleepers they may come into contact with.

The Council will continue to monitor the level of rough sleeping in the District via the annual estimate or count and more regularly through housing options information. We will also complete a study to enable the Council and partner agencies to gain an independent evidenced assessment of whether there is a rough sleeping problem in the District and to gain a clearer picture on the extent of young people 'sofa surfing' on a long term basis.

Gypsies and Travellers

In 2008 the Council jointly commissioned a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) for the southern Staffordshire and northern Warwickshire area, with the local authorities of Rugby, Lichfield, South Staffordshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, North Warwickshire and Tamworth. The GTAA recommends that there is a requirement for 35 residential pitches in Cannock Chase District for the period 2007-2017, plus a further

requirement of 5 transit pitches. There is also a Staffordshire wide recommended allocation of 23 additional plots for Travelling Showpeople. The Council will look to make provision for this client group as part of the Local Development Framework process.

6.3 Priority Issues

The review has established the following priority issues for the District, which have been aligned to the three overall aims of the Strategy.

1. Prevent and reduce levels of homelessness
2. Improve choice and access to housing
3. Support vulnerable households to live independently

Priority Issue	Contributes towards Strategic Aim
<p><i>High level of domestic violence and violence generally causing homelessness.</i></p> <p>The level of homelessness applications and acceptances during the past few years has remained high due to domestic violence. The economic climate could create a more pressured home environment for some households with the level of domestic violence and violence increasing as a result. The Council will need to work with partners to ensure the current level of support is maintained to meet the increased need.</p>	<p>Aim 1</p>
<p><i>High level of young people with housing need.</i></p> <p>Currently, there are approaching 400 young people registered with UChoose who need accommodation in the District. There are also a number of vulnerable young people in the District, who have approached other agencies, and need support to live independently. Accommodation provision for young single homeless is very limited. The Young Persons Accommodation Review highlighted the shortages in the provision of move on accommodation and support and a shortage of private rented stock of one bed/studio units and shared houses. The Council will need to work with partners to ensure move on accommodation and support is utilised to its full potential. Relationships with private landlords need to be further developed to investigate opportunities to increase the accessible provision in the private rented sector.</p>	<p>Aim 1, 2 and 3</p>
<p><i>Lack of accommodation provision for single homeless.</i></p> <p>There are few temporary accommodation options in the District, with only Rugeley Foyer offering temporary accommodation for young single homeless people, and there is no direct access accommodation in the District. However, recent research has shown that Direct Access accommodation does prove unpopular with young people and is often used as a last resort, therefore alternatives are currently being</p>	<p>Aim 1 and 2</p>

<p>examined for Staffordshire which include 'Night Stops' and Supported Lodgings placements; The Council will also explore the opportunities in the private rented sector to provide shared houses for young single people.</p>	
<p><i>Need for further older persons accommodation and support services.</i> The Staffordshire Flexi Care Strategy 2010-15 revealed that the extra care housing requirement for the District is 1,034 units up to 2030, of which 434 are required for social rent, 558 bed spaces are required for 2010. The review also found that limited support services exist in the District despite a high level of assessed need. Discussions with the County Council are on-going to identify potential sites for Flexi care schemes.</p>	<p>Aim 2 and 3</p>
<p><i>Shortage of affordable housing.</i> Annual need is calculated as 335 affordable units per annum, although due to the economic downturn this may have increased. An update to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment will be needed to give an update of the housing need for the next few years. The Council will endeavour to enable the development of further affordable housing and a target of 55 units has been set for 2011/12.</p>	<p>Aim 2</p>
<p><i>Shortage of move-on accommodation and support.</i> A number of young people who have entered supported housing and become ready to live independently only their route is blocked by a lack of move-on accommodation and support. Further accommodation options are required, as well as further tenancy support schemes (such as a specialist vulnerable young persons support scheme) or extending existing support provisions.</p>	<p>Aim 2 and 3</p>

The action plan on pages 19-22 will further set out how we plan to deliver on our strategic aims and tackle the identified priority homelessness issues in the District.

7. Your Views

As a reader of this strategy your views on our priorities and actions are important, so please contact us if you have any comments on any aspect of this Homelessness Strategy.

For further information please contact:

Louise Tandy, Principal Housing Strategy Officer; or
Julie Cope, Principal Housing Options Officer.

Civic Centre, Beecroft Road, PO Box 28, Cannock, Staffordshire, WS11 1BG.

Telephone: 01543 462621

Fax: 01543 464211

Email: strategichousing@cannockchasedc.gov.uk

আপনি অনুরোধ জানালে এই কাগজপত্রগুলোর বাংলা অনুবাদের ব্যবস্থা করা যেতে পারে।

如有要求的話我們可將此文件翻譯成中文

વિનંતી કરવાથી તમને આ દસ્તાવેજ તમારી માતૃભાષામાં મળી શકે છે.

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਚਾਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ

یہ دستاویز آپ کی زبان میں، گزارش پر دستیاب کی جا سکتی ہے۔

Ten document jest dostępny na żądanie w twoim języku

This document can be provided in braille, on audio cassette tape/disk, **Large print** and in other languages on request to Cannock Chase Council on 01543 462621.

8. Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2011-16

1. Prevent and reduce levels of homelessness				
Action	Responsible Officer(s)	Resources	Partner Organisation(s)	Timescale
Continue to promote the Housing Options team and their out of hours service; via the website, on posters and through the front line staff.	Julie Cope	Officer time		Ongoing
Continue the use of Hardship Grant/Loan Fund, where appropriate, to prevent vulnerable people from becoming homeless.	Julie Cope	DCLG Homelessness Grant		2011-12 Sum to be reviewed annually
Ensure the continuation of the CAB debt advice service. (Note: Although the advice service is available to households from all tenures it has proved particularly useful in conjunction with the work for the Mortgage Rescue Scheme).	Julie Cope	DCLG Homelessness Grant	CAB	2011-12 Sum to be reviewed annually
Conduct quarterly promotion and information events with CAB for the debt advice service.	Julie Cope Sharon Mehic	Officer time	CAB	2011-12
Continue to provide an effective One Stop Shop for the Mortgage Rescue Scheme.	Sharon Mehic	Officer time	Orbit	Ongoing
Increase the awareness of the Housing Options service amongst vulnerable and isolated groups.	Julie Cope	Officer time		Review progress annually

Improve monitoring and reporting systems to provide a better evidence base on homelessness trends, needs of customers and their outcomes.	Julie Cope James Morgan	Officer time		To be in place for 2011-12
Complete a study to assess the potential need for a night shelter in the District. The study will assess sofa surfing and any rough sleeping in the District.	Janet Baldasera Louise Tandy	DCLG Homelessness Grant	Chase Night Shelter Housing Vision	August 2011

2. Improve choice and access to housing				
Action	Responsible Officer(s)	Resources	Partner Organisation(s)	Timescale
Further develop relationships with private landlords to explore opportunities to increase provision of accessible shared houses and one bed units for single homeless people.	Julie Cope	Officer time	Private Landlords	Review progress annually.
Provide funding to Churches Housing Coalition to enable people to access private rented accommodation through rent deposit and loss and damage guarantee schemes.	Julie Cope Louise Tandy	DCLG Homelessness Grant	Churches Housing Coalition	2011-12 Sum to be reviewed annually.
Support the delivery of a minimum 55 additional affordable housing units in 2011/12, with the target being reviewed annually.	Louise Tandy	Officer time. Partners financial resources.	Developers and Registered Providers HCA	2011-12

Update housing needs data to ensure a robust evidence base.	Louise Tandy James Morgan	To be confirmed	Consultants to be appointed.	March 2012
Investigate further opportunities for Flexi-care schemes in the District.	Louise Tandy	Officer time. Partners financial resources.	Staffordshire County Council Developers and Registered Providers	Ongoing
Encourage owners of empty properties to rent out their properties, and for Housing Options team to refer suitable tenants. Overall empty property target of 4 to be brought back into use for 2011/12. Target to be reviewed annually.	Julie Cope David Chaplin	Officer time	Private Landlords	March 2012
Work with Registered Providers to improve the access to social housing for homeless households.	Julie Cope	Officer time	Registered Providers	Review progress annually
Continue to promote the private rented sector as a viable long term housing solution.	Julie Cope	Officer time		Ongoing

3. Support vulnerable people to live independently				
Action	Responsible Officer(s)	Resources	Partner Organisation(s)	Timescale
Investigate young persons with complex needs in partnership with Staffordshire County Council.	Louise Tandy James Morgan	Officer time Supporting People Grant Funding	SCC	2011-12
Continue to fund the Safe As Houses scheme.	Louise Tandy	DCLG Homelessness Grant	Staffordshire Police Staffordshire Women's Aid	2011-12 Sum to be reviewed annually
Part-fund a Domestic Violence Outreach Worker in partnership with Staffordshire Women's Aid.	Julie Cope Louise Tandy	DCLG Homelessness Grant	Staffordshire Women's Aid	2011-12 Sum to be reviewed annually
Continue working with the Learning Disabilities Partnership Board to provide a pro-active approach to meeting the housing and support needs of people with learning difficulties in the Cannock Chase locality.	James Morgan	Officer time	Staffordshire County Council and Partnership Board Members	Ongoing
Continue facilitating DFG's to allow people with physical disabilities to remain in their own home. Target of 62 grants to be delivered during 2011/12. (Works are specified and commissioned by Spirita, the Councils nominated	David Chaplin	Total DFG budget of £518,000. Government grant of £323,000.	Spirita	2011-12

Home Improvement Agency)				
Work with Housing Benefit to instigate direct payments to landlords and discretionary housing payments to support vulnerable people to maintain their tenancy.	Julie Cope	Officer time		Ongoing

Annex 1

Below is a list of all our partners, who were consulted with during the formulation of this strategy, and whose contribution is invaluable in enabling the Council to perform its statutory housing functions.

Accord	Job Centre Plus
Addaction	Mask
ADS	Masonic
Adullam	Mencap
Age Concern	Midland Heart
Anchor	Midstaffs MIND
Autism West Midlands	Nacro
Barnados	Pathway Project
Beth Johnson/Sanctuary	Relate
Bid	Rethink
Bromford	Shelter
Cannock Advice Centre	Spirita
Cannock Chase Children Centre	Staffordshire Buddies
Cannock PCT/South Staffs PCT	Staffordshire County Council (inc. Social Services, Leaving Care, Through Care, Adult Services, Youth Offending, Substance Misuse Commissioning, Housing Enablement and Support teams)
Cannock Social Services	Staffs Mediation
Chase Council for Voluntary Services	Staffordshire Police
Chase Tenants and Residents Federation	Staffordshire Probation
Chase Night Shelter	Staffordshire Women's Aid
Choices	Sure Start
Churches Housing Coalition	The Project
Citizens Advice Bureau	Waterloo
Connexions	YMCA Rugeley Foyer
Family Focus	
HealthNet	
Heantun	
Housing 21	
Housing Plus (SSHA)	