



HOMELESSNESS REVIEW FEBRUARY 2013

**(To inform the
Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018)**

CONTENTS

	Page
Executive Summary	3
Chapter 1 - Introduction.....	5-7
1.1 Outcomes of the 2008 Homelessness Strategy	5
Chapter 2 - Profile of Homelessness in South Cambridgeshire	8-16
2.1 The South Cambridgeshire Area	8
2.2 Current Levels of Homelessness	9
2.3 Levels of Rough Sleeping.....	9
2.4 Profile of Needs.....	10
2.5 Reasons for Homelessness.....	12
2.6 Ethnicity.....	13
2.7 Future Levels of Homelessness.....	16
Chapter 3 - Existing Housing and Support	18-30
3.1 Temporary Accommodation.....	18
3.2 Permanent Accommodation	23
Chapter 4 - Homelessness Prevention Activities.....	31-36
4.1 The Housing Advice and Options Team	31
4.2 Floating Support	32
4.3 Young Person's Scheme	32
4.4 Cambridge Mediation Scheme.....	33
4.5 Settled Homes Scheme	33
4.6 Deposit Guarantee Partnership	33
4.7 Home finder Scheme for single people	34
4.8 Government funding for single homeless.....	35
4.9 Empty Homes Project.....	35
4.10 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)	35
4.11 Sanctuary Scheme/Safe at Home.....	36
4.12 Spend to Save.....	36
4.13 CAB – Money Advice Service.....	36
Chapter 5 - Partnership Working and Consultation	37-38
5.1 Key Forums	37
5.2 Consultation	38
Chapter 6 - Performance Monitoring	39-40
6.1 Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2003-2007	39
6.2 Value for Money Exercise.....	39
6.3 Meeting the '10 Local Authority Challenges' – Gold Standard	40
Chapter 7 - Resources	41-42
7.1 Expenditure & Income	41
7.2 Grants to External Organisations.....	41
Chapter 8 - Conclusion.....	43

Executive Summary

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

Demographic Profile

The 2011 census identified South Cambridgeshire as having the largest numerical increase in population of 18,800 across England since the last census undertaken in 2001. Forecasts predict a further increase of 25% by 2031, with one person households comprising the biggest proportion of the change at 57%

Housing affordability is an acute issue for residents in South Cambs. Average property prices have increased by 15%-23% since June 2009 and average private rents exceed local housing allowance rates. The lower quartile house price to income ratio is 10.6 for South Cambridgeshire – generally house prices of 3 to 3.5 times income are considered affordable.

Profile of Homelessness

Levels of homelessness show that the type of case work completed by the staff is changing, and whilst prevention work continues to be important there is an increase in the volume of homeless applications that are being received. 83 in 2009/10 rising to 150 in 2012/13 (a 70% increase).

The highest priority group for homeless acceptances is from households that include dependent children, followed by those who are expecting their first child.

The third priority group accepted as homeless are households that include someone who is vulnerable due to mental illness or handicap. As a percentage of acceptances this was decreasing to 3.2% in 2011/12 but has seen a large increase to 11.8% in 2012/13.

Those aged between 25-44 make up more than 50% of all homeless applications.

The three main reasons for becoming homeless are consistent with the previous Review: parental eviction, termination of an assured shorthold tenancy and relationship breakdown (violent).

Termination of an assured shorthold tenancy has increased over the last two years – from 11 in 2008/09 to 30 in 2011/12 and 20 in 2012/13 (between 175% and 81% increase).

Relationship breakdown of a violent nature has seen a 57% increase in homeless acceptances in the last year (from 7 cases in 2011/12 to 11 in 2012/13).

South Cambridgeshire does not have a specific problem with rough sleeping – nil rough sleepers in the last rough sleeper count. It is unlikely that this will become a problem in the future since rough sleepers tend to migrate to Cambridge City where there are support services/facilities.

7.2% BME households approached the Council as homeless in 2012/13, compared to 6.7% of the population as a whole. Previous needs surveys have not identified any particular housing needs for any BME groups.

On average 5 Gypsy & Travellers families have been housed through the Home-Link CBL Scheme per year. However, it is widely recognised that Gypsy & Travellers have little desire to move into houses but require the land and permission on which to pitch their caravans. HCA Funding has been secured to refurbish the Gypsy & Traveller site at Whaddon and for the provision of a new site if a suitable location can be found.

22 homelessness acceptances in the last 5 years have been from EEA nationals, with the majority being polish and a further 7 from non EEA nationals. 2011 and 2012 have seen an increase in homelessness acceptances from EEA nationals, equating to 11% in 2011/12 and 9% in 2012/13 of all acceptances.

Future homelessness – based on current trends, homeless acceptances could reach a high of between 147 to 207 households in 2017/18 compared to 63 at its lowest in 2009/10.

Existing Housing & Support

Use of bed & breakfast as temporary accommodation – In 2012/13 the Council have housed more than 50 households in B&B costing £99,766, compared to none in 2007/08.

Redevelopment of existing hostel site at Robson Court, Waterbeach – providing better quality of living standards and an increase in units from 16 to 30 overall.

Future challenges to the viability of the Private Sector Leasing Scheme following the introduction of Universal Credit and further changes through welfare reforms.

Few options available for single people in the District, the level of social rented stock for single person accommodation and arising vacancies are very small. With the introduction of changes to the LHA meaning those aged under 35 would have their Housing Benefit restricted to a single room rent, it is identified that access to suitable accommodation in the private sector is needed.

Launch of the Homefinder Service with KSH to help secure accommodation for single people in the private sector. In its first year 2012, 96 referrals made to the scheme, of which 12 have been assisted into tenancies.

Loss of specialist young persons floating support following its amalgamation with the generic floating support service in 2011.

The number of temporary licences allocated to homeless households within the Council's own stock has increased to 48 in 2012/13 compared to 21 in 2008/09. This is in line with the corporate priority *"increase the supply of temporary accommodation, prioritising council-owned properties whilst not restricting options in other sectors"*

Changes to the Allocations Policy to give greater priority to those identified as under-occupying may impact on the availability of smaller homes for those living in temporary accommodation.

Local Authorities are able to discharge their homeless duty into the private sector following an amendment to the homeless legislation in 2012. A policy will need to be developed prior to the Council being able to use this option.

The number of affordable housing completions has reduced year on year since 2010/11, with only 101 new affordable homes built in 2012/13.

Prevention Activities

Rising numbers of homeless applications and the difficulties finding suitable accommodation in the private sector has meant there has been a steady decrease in the numbers prevented/relieved from homelessness through positive action. 185 cases in 2010/11 to 131 in 2012/13.

Growing number of debt related cases coming forward for housing advice.

Performance Monitoring

Introduction by Government of the 'Gold Standard' – 10 local authority challenges'

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires councils to compile a Homelessness Strategy and to renew this at least every five years. South Cambridgeshire District Council published its first Homelessness Strategy in July 2003 and a subsequent strategy in July 2008 following a comprehensive review of homelessness and services available within the District. Since that time the actions within the Strategy have been monitored closely to ensure that the key objectives have been achieved.

1.1 Outcomes of the 2008 Homelessness Strategy

Monitoring the impact of the new choice based lettings scheme on homelessness

- A dedicated Homeless Prevention module was introduced to the Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings scheme (Home-Link) 2011.
- The scheme was reviewed in 2012 and further improvements were introduced including a self-service approach to housing applications and options advice.
- Implementation of a new Lettings Policy from 1st April 2013 following new government guidance on the Allocations of Accommodation.

Further reduction in temporary accommodation, including minimal use of bed and breakfast

- Decision taken not to renew the lease for The Poplars hostel due to increasing void costs associated with the reduction in need for temporary accommodation and value for money
- Reduction in the numbers living in temporary accommodation (57 households at the end of 07/08 compared to 42 at the end of 2012/13).

Increase homeless prevention

- Housing Advice & Options Team restructured in 2007, with an emphasis on increased preventative work
- Increased prevention work including a successful settled homes scheme managed by King Street Housing Society.
- Reduction in the number of homeless acceptances from 128 in 2006/07 to 63 in 2009/10. Unfortunately due to the economic climate and changes to welfare reform we are now seeing a steady increase in applications.

Focus on the accommodation needs of young people

- Young Persons Floating Support Scheme implemented in February 2006 (Cambridge Housing Society)
- Development of a Home Finder Scheme in 2012 in conjunction with King Street Housing Society

Support to Travellers

- Specialist staff member in place who has developed relationships with expert agencies that offer support services to the Gypsy and Traveller community.

Potential Hostel re-provision

- Ownership of the Robson Court hostel site has been transferred to

Sanctuary-Hereward to enable future development and re-provision. Planning permission is in place for new self-contained hostel accommodation and building work is expected to begin during the latter part of 2013.

Ensure Value for Money

- Reduction by almost 54% in the net expenditure of the Council's homelessness services for 2006/07

Maximise opportunity raised by Regional Champion Status

- Peer reviews and the provision of advice to other Local Authorities have been undertaken. However, the Regional Champion Status no longer exists and so work has now ceased in relation to this objective.

Increase Access to the Private rented sector

- Continued work with King Street Housing Society in respect of the Rent Deposit and Private Sector Leasing Scheme
- Sub-regional partnership work in relation to Local Lettings Agency and Single Homelessness

Equality and Diversity needs

- Floating Support Service extended to clients living in all tenures and service achieved a 'B' rating in accordance with the Supporting People Quality Assessment Framework.
- The Sanctuary Scheme was established in April 2006 to assist victims of domestic violence.
- Translation service provided for households who require information in another language or format

Housing Futures

- Housing Futures was the Council's proposal to transfer ownership of the Council's housing stock to another organisation. In the event of the decision to transfer, detailed consideration would have been required as to how the Council continued to provide a Housing Advice and Options Service. However, the transfer did not proceed and so no further work has been undertaken in this respect.

Meet Audit Commission KLOE requirements relating to the service

- The Council's Strategic Housing Service was reviewed by the Audit Commission in December 2010 and received a two star (good) rating

Develop Partnership working opportunities

- Continued partnership with King Street Housing Society
- Joint working with the County, particularly in relation to Young People and the development of joint protocols
- Sub-regional partnership in relation to Home-Link and the cross partner review of the Lettings Policy
- Sub-regional work in relation to Single Homelessness and a Local Lettings Agency

The 2008 Homelessness Strategy has achieved its main objectives and now needs to be replaced with a new five-year plan. In formulating the next Strategy, a further Review was

undertaken in 2012/13 to help identify any gaps in services and help to redefine the priorities and actions to be taken forward. The Review and new Strategy take into account the legislative changes since the election of the new government in May 2010 that have a direct impact on the way in which local housing authorities deliver allocations, lettings and homelessness services.

In particular, the Review considered:

- the levels and likely future levels of homelessness in the district;
- the existing housing and support available
- the activities and services provided which help to prevent homelessness
- resources and partnership working

Chapter 2

Profile of Homelessness in South Cambridgeshire

2.1 The South Cambridgeshire Area

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

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was first published in June 2008 for the Cambridge Sub Region. This is a 'live' document which is continuously updated and brings together a wealth of information about housing markets, housing needs, past delivery of homes and plans for the future. The SHMA is becoming increasingly important as the evidence base for housing need when local authorities develop their Local Plans. Information following the 2011 Census has been fed into the SHMA and identifies that the population has increased by 10% since 2001 and is forecast to increase by a further 25% by 2031, with one person households comprising the biggest proportion of the change at 57%. Most of the population is in the age groups of 25-39 and 40-64, although the overwhelming majority change is accounted for by households aged 65 and over, with an estimated increase of over 65's by a further 70% by 2031.

Future demand for housing estimates a further 19,000 homes will need to be built up to 2031 (a 31% increase in dwellings for South Cambs). This is based on the assumption that occupancy ratios will fall in future because of an aging population and more single person households forming. Projections up to 2031 indicate a need for 11,838 additional affordable homes will be required to meet demand.

[Source: SHMA Chapter 12 draft]

Affordability remains an acute issue for South Cambridgeshire with the cost of buying or renting on the open market consistently high; with South Cambridgeshire being the second most expensive district for house prices in the county after Cambridge City. The average house price in December 2012 was £313,000, which is a 23% increase on property prices from June 2009. The lower quartile house price to income ratio is 10.6 for South Cambridgeshire – generally house prices of 3 to 3.5 times income are considered affordable.

Around a third of households in the District have an income below the level needed to afford market entry (lower quartile) private rent and there is further pressure through the availability of private rented homes in the District. With the changes to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates set at 30th percentile of local rents instead of the average, this has reduced the number of private rented homes available to those dependent on benefit. The average monthly rental for a two bedroom house is £750 – the LHA rate for Cambridgeshire is £585.

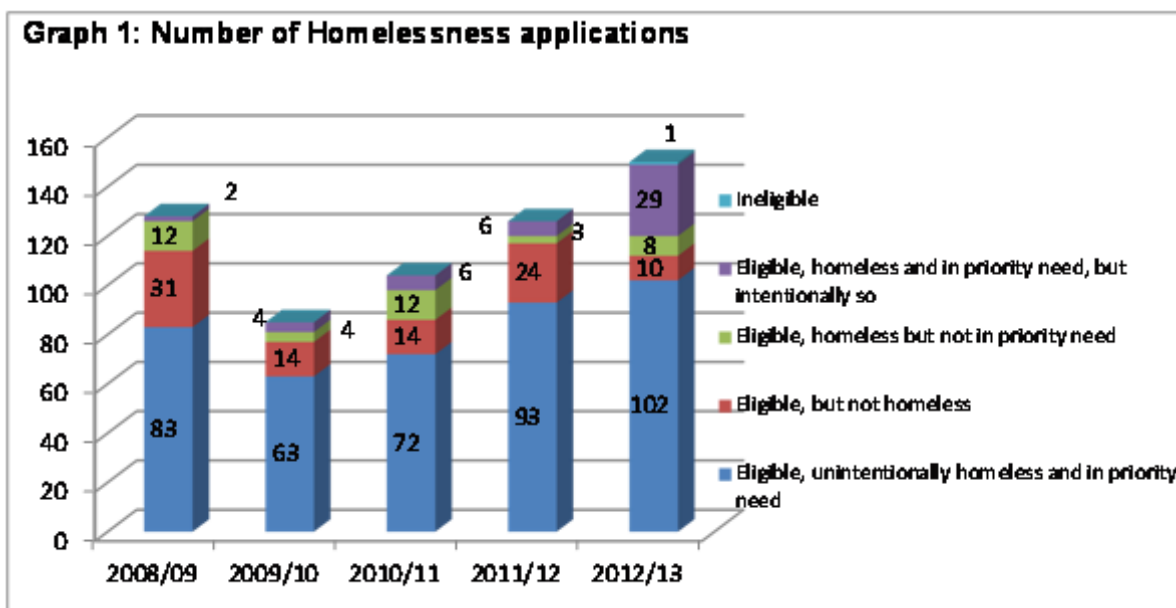
[Source Housing Market Bulletin – Issue 16].

2.2 Current Levels of Homelessness

A significant number of people make enquiries to the Council's Housing Advice and Options Team regarding their current housing situation. The way in which cases and enquiries are recorded has changed since the period of the last review and so it is not possible to make a direct comparison. However, it is clear that there is a continued demand for the service.

The number of cases worked on by staff in 2010/11 was 495, whilst the figures for 2011/12 indicate that the team received 598 requests for advice appointments.

The contact figures also show that the type of case work completed by the staff is changing, and whilst prevention work continues to be important there is an increase in the volume of homeless applications that are being received. At its lowest, the figure was 85 in 2009/10 but by 2012/13 this had increased to 150.



The increase in homeless applications over the last three years identifies a 76% change. Nationally the number of applications has also increased but at a considerably slower rate of 27%.

2.3 Levels of Rough Sleeping

Because of the rural nature of the District and the relatively few numbers of rough sleepers it was not feasible to undertake a proper rough sleeper count across the District on a particular night. It was decided that it would be more practical and useful to obtain local information for each village. Therefore, all parish councils were written to asking whether there were any known rough sleepers in their parish. In addition, local agencies such as the police were contacted and asked to respond with details of any rough sleepers they were aware of.

This method of estimating the number of rough sleepers was used to inform the Council's figure for the National Rough Sleepers count in November 2012 and will also be used for the purposes of the Review. From the responses received, although there were initial indications of rough sleepers, once these were investigated in more detail, they did not fall within the DCLG definition of rough sleeping. Consequently, a figure of nil rough sleepers was recorded at the last count, although it is acknowledged that from time to time there could be a small number of rough sleepers in the district. Therefore, in conclusion, South Cambridgeshire does not have a specific problem, in proportion to its population, of those sleeping rough in the District and it is unlikely that this will become a problem in the future.

since rough sleepers tend to migrate to Cambridge City where there are support services/facilities.

2.4 Profile of Needs

The homelessness legislation defines 'priority need' categories that determine people who may be vulnerable and at greater risk if homeless. 102 of the 150 households making an application in 2012/13 (68%) were found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless (not having brought homelessness on themselves) and in one of the 'priority need' categories. The Council therefore accepted these as homeless with the duty to provide an offer of permanent housing.

This compares to the figures quoted in the 2008 review for the year 2006/07 in which 170 households made a homeless application and 122 (72%) were accepted as being owed the main duty. Although the number of homeless applications has reduced since the 2008 Review, the percentage of households found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need remains roughly similar.

The table below outlines the priority need categories accepted over the last five years and shows a similar pattern to the trend identified in the previous review for the period 2002-2007. The highest reason for accepting homeless applications by far is from those households that include dependent children, followed by those who are expecting their first child. The third priority group are households that include someone who is vulnerable due to mental illness or handicap. Over the past 4 years the number of acceptances in this category have significantly reduced as a % of all acceptances, falling from 12.3 % in 2008/09 to 3.2% in 2011/12, however in 2012/13 this has increased again to 11.8%. The reason for this could possibly be attributed to the general reduction in funding available for voluntary support services including those that support people with mental health issues. It should also be noted that in 2012/13 the % of acceptances from households fleeing violence had increased to 4.9% from 1.2% in 2008/09.

Table 1: Homelessness Acceptances - Priority Need Categories

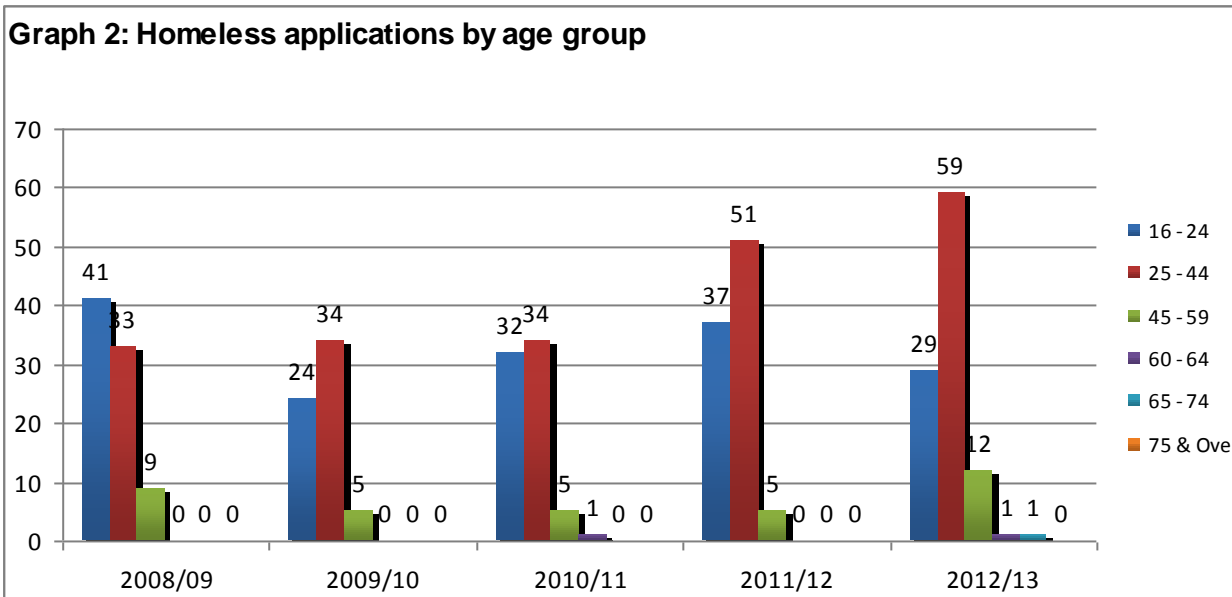
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Applicant whose household includes dependent children	49	32	53	66	70
Applicant is, or household includes, a pregnant woman and there are no other dependent children	14	13	11	18	11
Mental illness or disability	10	9	4	3	12
Having fled their home because of violence/threat of violence	1	2	1	4	5
of which: domestic violence	1	1	0	3	1
Physical disability	0	5	2	0	1
Other (please specify in notes box)	3	0	1	1	0
Applicant aged 16 or 17 years old	3	0	0	0	0
Having been "in care"	1	1	0	0	2
Applicant formerly "in care", and aged 18 to 20 years old	0	1	0	0	0
Having been in custody/on remand	0	0	0	1	0
Total homeless applications accepted	82	64	72	96	102

Source: P1E data

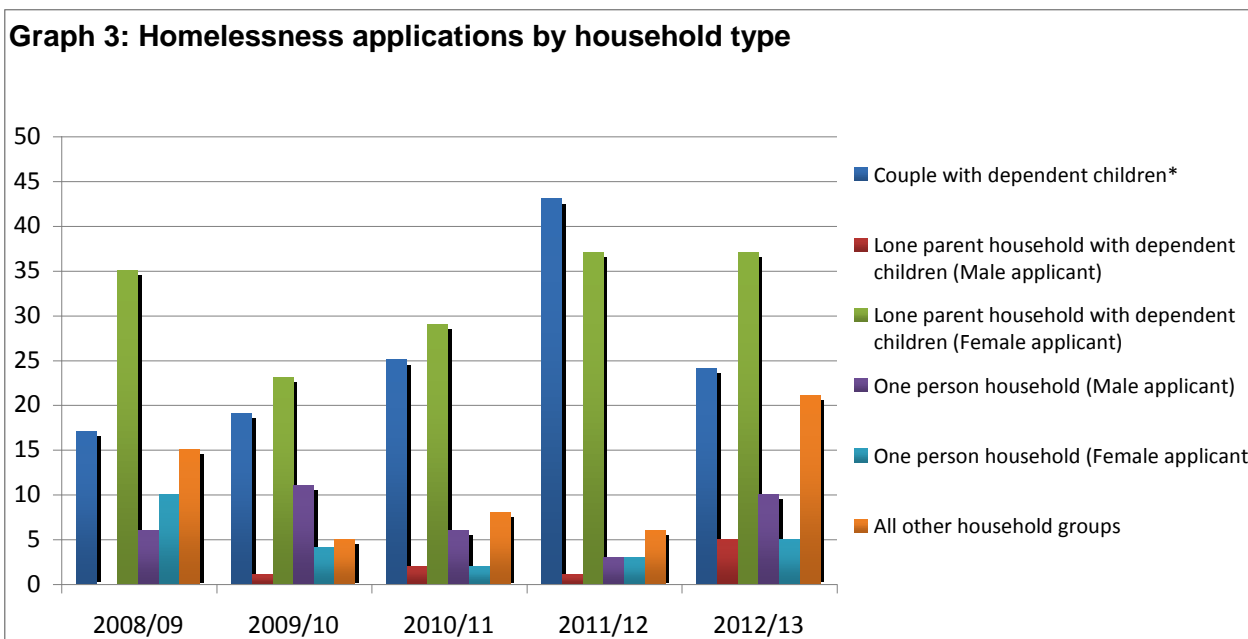
The profile of needs for those accepted as homeless reflects the national picture of the top three priorities – dependent with children (65%), pregnant (16%) and mental illness (9%).

Breakdown of Homeless Applications by Age Group

The following graph shows the age groups of those making a homeless application during the past 5 years. With the exception of 2008/09, the highest number of homeless applications were made by people aged between 25-44. Throughout the five year period this age group have made more than 50% of all homeless applications, which is consistent with the information provided in the previous review period, and also with the national profile.



Source: Homelessness Database



Source: Homelessness P1E

The information provided for the five years is consistent and show that the majority have dependant children (87% in 2011/12 and 65% in 2012/13), with single parents making up an average of 41% of all applications received.

2.5 Reasons for Homelessness

Looking at the trends over the last five years, parents who are no longer willing or able to accommodate remains the highest reason for becoming homeless for each year. In 2011/12 this accounted for 35% of all acceptances and 26% in 2012/13.

In the last two years there has been an increase in those facing homelessness due to termination of an assured shorthold tenancy (32% of all acceptance in 2011/12 and 20% in 2012/13). This can be attributed to the changes in the Local Housing Allowance Rates from April 2011 where the basis for setting LHA rates changed from the median (50th) to the 30th percentile of local market rents, capping LHA rates by property size and scrapping the five-bedroom rate. This has meant that there are fewer properties available that are below the LHA rates and landlords are becoming increasingly unwilling to let to households on benefits.

Looking at the percentages for the last two years on the reasons for homelessness, there is evidence that very little has changed in the causes of homelessness for South Cambridgeshire, albeit that the total number of applications and acceptances is steadily increasing since 2009/10 from 63 at its lowest to 102 in 2012/13. The third highest reason for homelessness is relationship breakdown of a violent nature, which has seen a 57% increase in the last year.

Table 2: Homelessness Acceptances - Reasons for becoming homeless

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate	35	20	19	33	27	134
Termination of assured shorthold tenancy	11	10	18	30	20	89
Violent breakdown of relationship, involving partner	12	7	3	7	11	40
Reasons other than termination of assured shorthold tenancy	4	5	7	5	4	25
Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	3	6	4	4	6	23
Other reason (e.g. homeless in emergency, sleeping rough or in hostel, returned from abroad)	3	5	5	4	6	23
Non-violent breakdown of relationship with partner	3	2	7	1	4	17
Left HM-Forces	4	0	1	3	4	12
Mortgage arrears (repossession or other loss of home)	1	0	3	2	5	11
Other forms of violence	1	1	2	1	5	10
Harassment, threats or intimidation	0	2	2	0	4	8
Left hospital	3	3	0	0	2	8
Violent breakdown of relationship involving associated persons	0	0	1	3	2	6
Rent arrears in the Private Sector	2	1	0	0	0	3
Left other institution or LA care	1	0	0	0	1	2
Racially motivated violence	0	1	0	0	0	1
Left prison/on remand	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total applicant households	83	63	72	93	102	413

[Source: P1E]

The main reasons for homelessness within South Cambridgeshire are consistent with the national figures provided by the DCLG.

2.6 Ethnicity

BME Households

BME data currently available does not include information on European Union migrant workers. Housing issues for migrant workers and the needs of Gypsies and Travellers are dealt with separately within this section.

The BME population is small and dispersed throughout the district, with no particular pockets with high concentrations of BME communities. Previous Needs Surveys have not identified any particular housing needs for any BME groups.

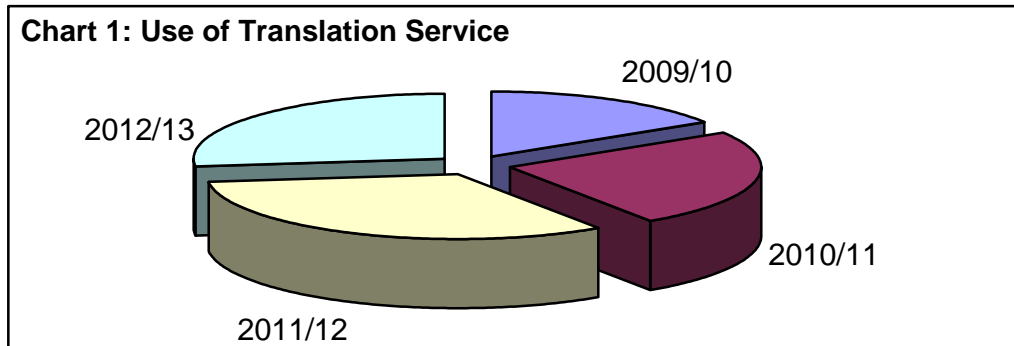
. [Source: *Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2012 Chapter 15*]

In looking at the number of homelessness applications received in comparison to population figures, it would appear that there is a slightly higher percentage of non-white applicants (7.2%) approaching the Council as homeless compared to the population (6.7%). However, these figures can be somewhat misleading as the actual numbers are relatively small, with the highest proportion of 3.3% 'Other White' ethnic origin translating into only 5 actual homelessness cases, and three applicants (2%) of 'Other Ethnic Group'.

Table 3: Ethnic Origin by Population and Homelessness Applications

	% of population 2011 census	% Homelessness acceptances 2012/13
White British	87.3	65.3
White Irish	0.7	0.0
White Gypsy/Irish Traveller	0.3	2
Other White	5	3.3
British Indian	1.5	0.6
British Pakistani	0.3	0.6
British Bangladeshi	0.1	0.0
British Chinese	0.8	0.0
Other Asian	1	0.0
British Black African	0.5	0.6
British Caribbean	0.2	0.6
British Black Other	0.1	0.6
Arab	0.2	Not measured
Other Ethnic Group	0.3	2.0
White and Black Caribbean	0.4	0.0
White and Black African	0.2	0.0
White and Asian	0.7	0.0
Other mixed	0.5	0.0
Ethnicity not stated		20.6
White	93.3	92.8
Non White	6.7	7.2

A translation service is provided on request for those who need information about any Council services. Over the last four years since 2009/10, the Housing Advice & Options Team have used the translation service 37 times, costing £5,369. Since the 2008 Review, the Council has seen an increase in the number of instances where there has been a need for a translation service, going from none in 2006/07 to 10 in 2012/13.

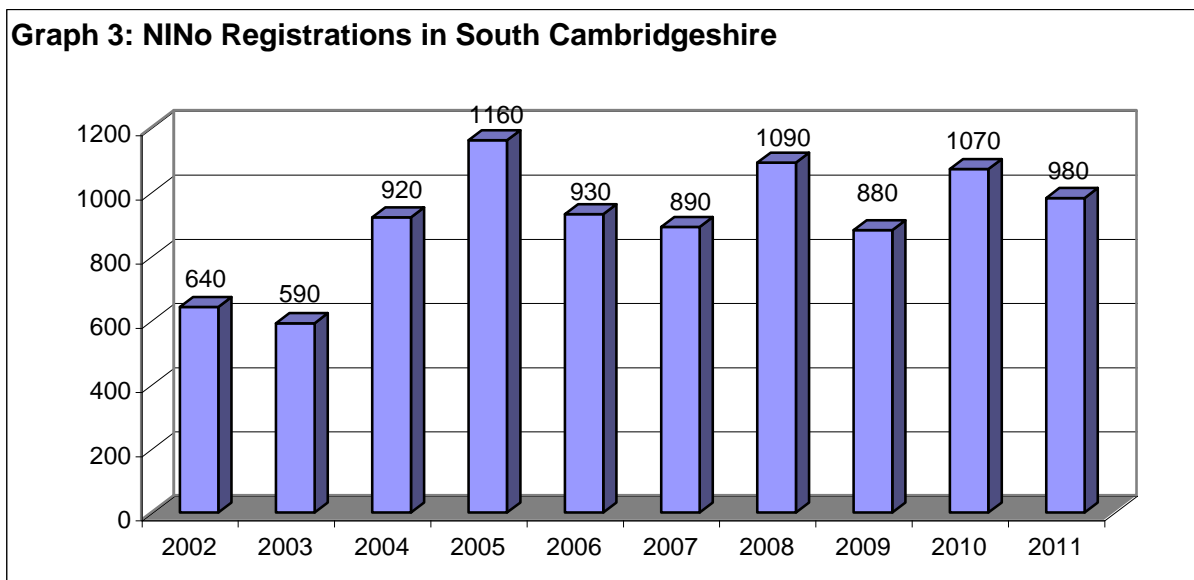


Foreign Nationals

Between 2002 and 2011 more than 74,000 foreign nationals registered for a National Insurance Number (NINo) in Cambridgeshire. Of these, approximately 47% resided in Cambridge, 16% in Fenland and the remaining three districts – Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire and East Cambridgeshire – each accounted for 12% of the registrations. Monitoring NINo registrations gives an indication of the number of foreign nationals coming to the district, although this information does not show how many people are leaving or whether or not people are coming as individuals or with dependants.

There has been just over 9,000 registrations made in South Cambridgeshire between 2002-2011. NINo registrations in Cambridgeshire increased sharply between 2004 and 2005, reflecting the EU expansion in 2004, which allowed higher numbers of migrants from the A8 countries.

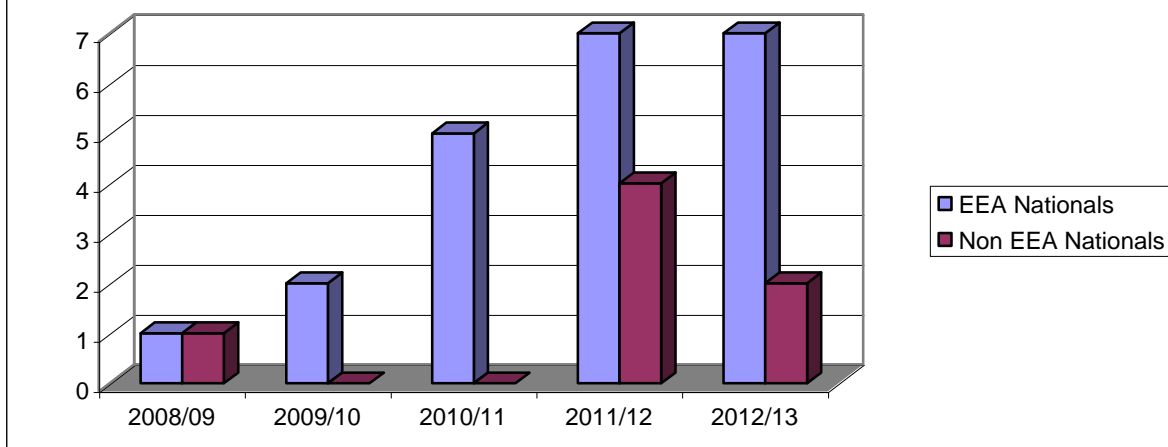
2011 has seen a slight decrease in registrations in South Cambridgeshire from 1,070 in 2010 to 980 in 2011, reflecting the county and national trend.



[Source: Migrant Workers Report 2011, CCCRG]

Since April 2008 information has been recorded on the numbers of homelessness acceptances from foreign nationals in South Cambridgeshire. In total, over the last 5 years there has been 29 acceptances, 22 of which were EEA nationals (the majority being Polish) and 7 were non EEA nationals. 2011 and 2012 have seen an increase in homelessness acceptances from both EEA and non EEA nationals, with the total number of homeless acceptances equating to 12% in 2011/12 and 9% in 2012/13. However, these figures can be somewhat misleading as actual numbers are relatively small, with 11 acceptances in 2011/12 and 9 in 2012/13.

Graph 4: Homelessness Acceptances from Foreign Nationals



[Source P1E data]

Asylum Seekers

Between 2000 and 2010, South Cambridgeshire was home to the Immigration Reception Centre at Oakington accommodating up to 470 Asylum Seekers. Those who gained asylum did not impact on the housing needs of the District as they were dispersed to other parts of the country through the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). The centre closed in November 2010.

Information from the P1E forms, show that since April 2004 there have not been any former Asylum Seekers accepted by the Authority as homeless, with one household accepted as homeless in 2006 who was required to leave NASS accommodation.

Gypsy & Travellers

The Gypsy & Caravan Count undertaken in July 2012 identified 1059 caravans in Cambridgeshire, with 479 (45%) located in South Cambridgeshire. For many years Gypsy & Travellers represented the largest ethnic minority in the District, but information provided by the Census 2011 indicates that Gypsy & Travellers make up only 0.3% of the population compared to 5% of 'Other White', 1.5% British Pakistani and 1% 'Other Asian'.

The Cambridge sub-region Traveller Needs Assessment, was updated in 2011 and identified a need for a further 65 pitches up to 2016 and a further 20 pitches to be provided between 2021-26. At the time of the assessment there were 69 caravans with temporary planning permission and the Council is currently looking at the options for these sites. Since January 2011, 81 pitches have been given permanent planning permission.

Funding from the Homes & Communities Agency was secured to refurbish the Council managed sites at Milton and Whaddon, providing better facilities and increased capacity of

an additional three pitches. Further funding has been allocated for the provision of a new site and the Council is currently investigating potential sites for development.

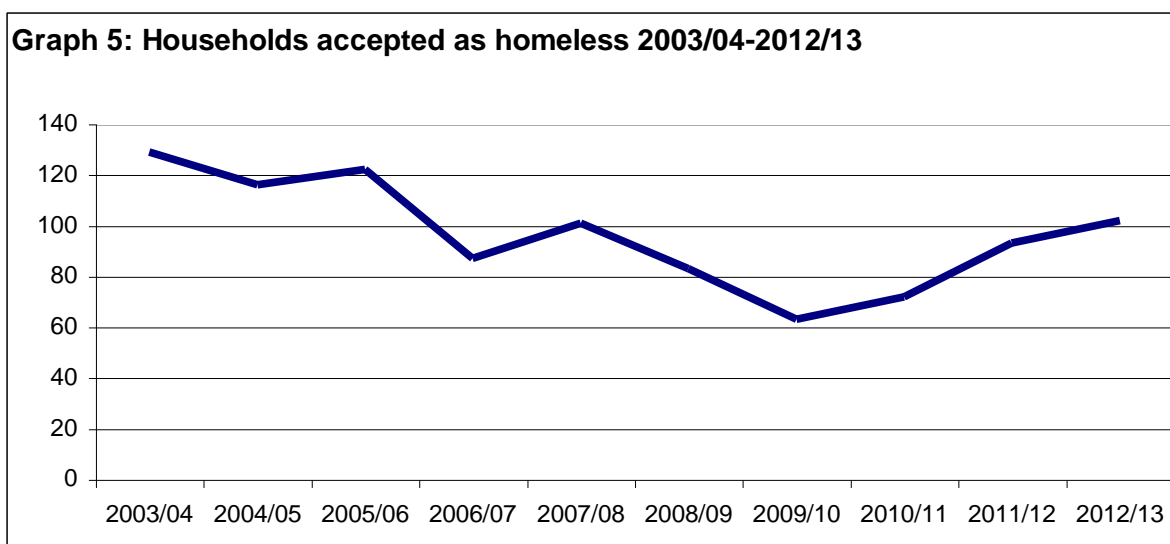
There are currently 37 Gypsy & Travellers registered for an affordable pitch on one of the Council managed sites, but generally there is only turnover of one pitch per year over the two sites. An exercise carried out in 2012, identified 8% (24) of the Gypsy and Traveller community were registered with Home-link looking for bricks & mortar accommodation. Over the last 5 years 23 Gypsy & Travellers have been housed through Home-link, averaging 5 per year. However, it is widely recognised that Gypsies and Travellers have little desire to move into houses but require the land and permission on which to pitch their caravans.

From the Gypsy & Traveller Caravan Count undertaken in July 2012, it identified 101 caravans sited with temporary planning permission and 12 caravans that were on unauthorised sites. Although it is recognised that there could be a high risk of homeless applications from Travellers if they are evicted from unauthorised sites, figures for the last 5 years of Gypsy & Travellers housed identify only 6 that were statutory homeless and a further 6 that were prevented from being homeless.

The Traveller Site Team Leader employed by South Cambridgeshire District Council has developed effective working relationships with a wide range of expert agencies that offer specialist services to the Traveller and Gypsy community, ensuring welfare, health and educational needs are met.

2.7 Future Levels of Homelessness

In the seven years from 2003/4 to 2009/10, homelessness decreased both locally and nationally, mostly because of efforts to prevent homelessness, for example through family mediation, rent deposit guarantee provision, and tenancy sustainment services etc. Since 2009/10 numbers of households accepted as homeless have started to increase again, which is consistent with the sub-region and nationally.

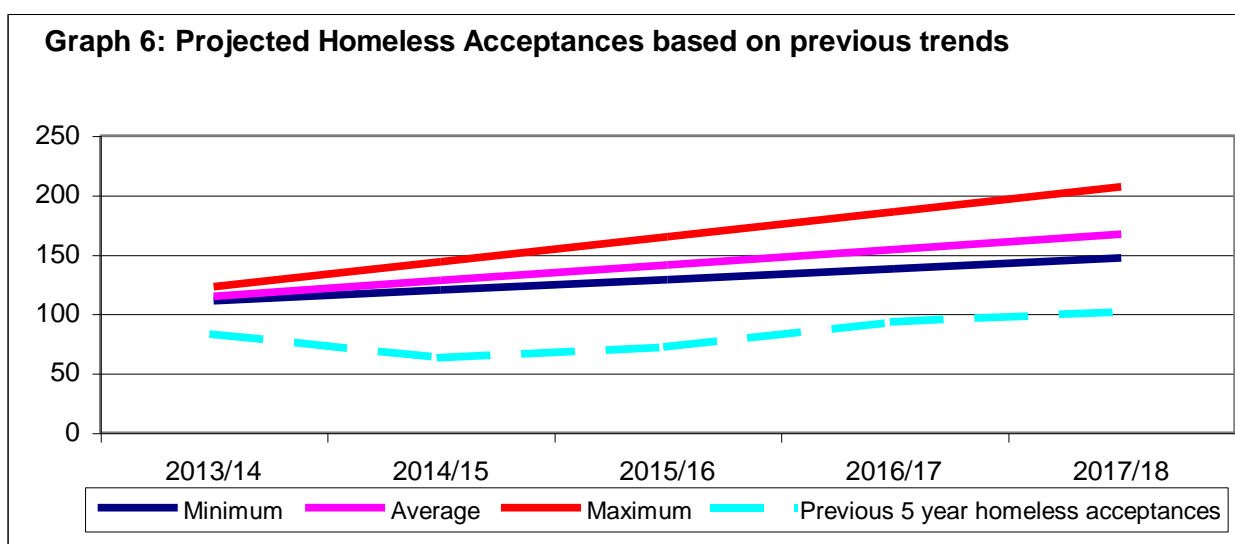


The Cambridge Sub Regional Housing Board (CRHB) has been working on a Housing Projections Project to consider the overall changes to the affordable housing sector across the Cambridge sub region over the next ten years. This work was commissioned following policy changes affecting housing since the Coalition Government came into power in 2010.

The [first phase](#) of the project looked to establish an estimate of the number of homes of each affordable tenure, ie. social rented, shared ownership and affordable rent, over the next ten years; with the [second phase](#) looking at affordability. The third phase of the project looks at how some of the current policy decisions may impact on lettings of social rented housing in the future, in particular, lettings to homeless households and households affected by the benefit changes around under-occupation. It identifies that assuming the number of lettings remain about the same year on year, the proportion required to house predicted numbers of households accepted as homeless will increase from 21% to 28% across the sub region by 2017.

It has been well documented that organisations such as Shelter and Crisis are concerned that the range of changes to housing and the welfare system are weakening the housing safety net and are likely to contribute to the increase in households becoming homeless.

With the current economic climate, compounded with the changes to welfare benefits and the lack of affordable accommodation in South Cambridgeshire, it is likely that based on current trends the number of households accepted as homeless will increase over the foreseeable future. The upward trend since 2009/10 shows a year-on-year increase of between 10% and 29%. The graph below projects anticipated homeless acceptances over the next 5 years based on a minimum increase of 9 per annum, an average of 13 and a maximum of 21 additional households accepted as homeless per year.



Based on this analysis, it is anticipated that homelessness acceptances could reach a high of between 147 to 207 in 2017/18 compared to 63 at its lowest in 2009/10.

One of Corporate key actions for the Council identified for 2013/14 is to “*increase the supply of temporary accommodation, prioritising council-owned properties whilst not restricting options in other sectors*”. This is to help mitigate the anticipated impact of a continuing increase in homelessness acceptances and the need for more suitable temporary accommodation.

Chapter 3

Existing Housing and Support

3.1 Temporary Accommodation

In January 2005, the previous Government set all local authorities a target to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010. The target for the Council was to have no more than 74 households in temporary accommodation by the end of 2010. During the first half of the 2008-13 Homeless Strategy, the Council was able to exceed these targets. The number of households in temporary accommodation was at its lowest in June 2011 when there were 26 households accommodated in this way.

This was achieved through the housing advice and homeless prevention work, including a settled homes scheme facilitated through private sector leasing arrangements. There was also a clear intention amongst staff to identify areas of concern and to develop new initiatives and methods of working that not only reduce the numbers in temporary accommodation, but also provide better rehousing solutions and options for people in housing need. However, during the latter part of the 2008-13 strategy, the demand for temporary accommodation has increased. This mirrors the increase in homeless applications that are being made and which appear to be as a direct result of the current economic climate and the welfare reforms. It is therefore recognised that the Council will need to actively increase the supply of temporary accommodation available and will work to ensure that the accommodation offers good value for money and is of an appropriate standard.

The main forms of temporary accommodation available to the Council are a private sector leasing scheme provided through King Street Housing Society, temporary tenancies provided within our own stock and hostel accommodation. The following table shows the numbers occupying different forms of temporary accommodation and also provides a comparison between the 2007 and 2013 figures

Table 4: Temporary Accommodation Occupancy

Type of Temporary Accommodation	Number of households residing in this type of temporary accommodation on 30 th March 2007	Number of households residing in this type of temporary accommodation on 31 st March 2013
Bed & Breakfast	0	1
Hostel	23	19
Private Sector Leasing Scheme	47	0
SCDC Stock	30	21
Other RSL Stock	9	1
Other	3	0
Total	112	42

Bed & Breakfast Accommodation

During the first half of the 2008-13 Homeless Strategy, the Council was able to significantly reduce its use of temporary accommodation, and in particular Bed and Breakfast accommodation which is accepted to be both unsuitable and a very expensive source of temporary accommodation. However, more recently the use of Bed and Breakfast

accommodation has increased in response to the increased number of homeless applications that the Council is receiving.

The use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation was at its lowest in 2007/08 when no Bed and Breakfast placements were made at all, and only one was made in 2008/09. However, since then the figure has steadily increased and at the end of 2012/13 the Council will have housed more than 50 households in Bed and Breakfast at some point during the year.

As expected, the expenditure in Bed and Breakfast has also increased in accordance with the increased demand, rising from a zero spend in 2007/08 and a spend of £74 in 2008/09 to a spend of just under £100,000 in 2012/13. The Council recognises that it is important to develop appropriate alternatives to the use of Bed and Breakfast and it is now a corporate priority to increase the provision of other forms of temporary accommodation.

Hostel Accommodation

The Council currently has two hostels that provide shared temporary accommodation for statutorily homeless households. Details of the accommodation are contained in Table 5. The Bungalow is owned by the Council, whilst Robson Court is owned by Sanctuary - Housing. Both hostel sites are managed on behalf of the Council by Sanctuary-Housing.

Table 5: Hostel Accommodation

Hostel	Shared Facilities
Robson Court, Waterbeach (16 rooms)	Each room has a kitchenette and microwaves are permitted. Residents have their own separate toilet and sink. They do share bathing, laundry, kitchen and lounge facilities.
The Bungalow, Sawston (4 rooms)	One room has an en-suite shower. The others share all facilities

Sanctuary undertakes satisfaction surveys with new residents of the hostels and the vast majority find the facilities and overall conditions good or adequate. However, it is recognised that the age, condition and layout of the accommodation at the hostels is dated and in need of improvement.

Research into the effects on living in shared temporary accommodation indicates that such living conditions, alongside the uncertainty of their situation, can impact both physically and mentally on homeless individuals and families. The lack of privacy and space to play can have a detrimental effect on families and children.

In view of the outdated nature of the hostel accommodation, the Council has entered into an agreement with Sanctuary- Housing to re-provide the hostel accommodation. This will involve demolishing the current accommodation at Robson Court, and replacing with purpose built, self contained units. Planning permission for the new accommodation has recently been approved and it is anticipated that building work will begin in 2013 and will be completed towards the end of 2014. The final site will include 24 x1 bedroom and 6 x 2 bedroom properties. It is expected that the self contained nature of the accommodation will prove more suitable for households who are unable to live in shared accommodation as well as providing a better quality of living standards for all households accommodated in this way. In addition, the overall increase in the number of units available will assist the Council in reducing its use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

Alternative forms of temporary accommodation will be used during the building period.

Private Sector Leasing Scheme

The private rented sector has been an essential factor in addressing urgent housing need and preventing homelessness in South Cambridgeshire. The Council work closely with King Street Housing, who has built up strong connections with many landlords within the district.

Whilst the Council and King Street Housing have been very successful in utilising the private sector, we recognise that this will become more difficult as a result of the changes to the local housing allowance, through the welfare reforms.

One of the schemes managed by King Street to provide accommodation in the private rented sector is the private sector leasing scheme. Under the scheme, there are two types of accommodation provided, one being on a temporary basis upon acceptance of a homeless application, and the other offered as a settled home under an assured shorthold tenancy.

There are now approximately 100 properties in South Cambs leased to King Street from private landlords. The majority of these are used as settled homes, where households threatened with homelessness are nominated to vacancies to prevent them from becoming homeless. This is an option put forward to applicants, and they choose whether to proceed with this. It enables applicants to have choice over their accommodation and provides suitable privately rented accommodation managed by King Street Housing.

A small proportion of the private sector leasing scheme is also used to provide temporary accommodation for applicants who have made a homeless application.

Although the provision of temporary accommodation under the Private Sector Leasing Scheme was seen to be the best type of temporary accommodation available for families with school age children, this did have an adverse affect on the time spent in temporary accommodation, with some living temporarily for over 2 years before being offered suitable alternative accommodation.

The settled homes scheme is seen as a much more attractive option and pro-active in preventing homelessness. Applicants do not have to go down the homeless route, therefore not facing the stigma associated with becoming homeless. They have a wider choice of where to live and security in knowing they have an assured shorthold tenancy, that is more likely to be renewed as King Street Housing Society have longer term leases with the individual landlords. It is important that the Housing Options Team start working with potentially homeless applicants as early as possible, as this allows officers more time to try to secure a settled home in an area of their choice. All applicants who take this option are able to remain on the housing register and have more choice over their permanent rehousing.

With changes through the welfare reforms, the Council and King Street Housing will need to monitor the impact on the private sector leasing scheme. A formula is currently used by the DWP to determine the amount of rent eligible for housing benefit. This takes into account the need to incorporate a management fee on such properties, and rents charged within the scheme are within these limits. The government are yet to announce how these levels will be set in future, however, there is some suggestion that a separate management fee will be paid directly to local authorities. As these changes are confirmed, the Council will need to consider if sufficient provision has been made available to support the private sector leasing scheme.

The introduction of universal credit will bring additional challenges. Tenants may have their benefits capped (making any accommodation difficult to afford), and will have their benefits

for payment of rent paid directly to them, increasing the risk of rent arrears. The Council and King Street Housing will need to consider how best to deal with these issues in order to maintain a viable private sector leasing scheme (that provides a critical element of housing provision) whilst taking into account the needs and interests of the tenants.

Council Properties Let On Non-Secure Tenancies

Temporary accommodation within the Council's housing stock is used when necessary and is a preferable option ahead of bed & breakfast accommodation. With the increasing numbers requiring temporary accommodation and the need over the last year to use bed & breakfast again, the Council have made it a corporate action to prioritise the use of council-owned properties as temporary accommodation. Previously council-owned accommodation was generally used as temporary accommodation only where the property had been identified for redevelopment and could not be allocated on a secure tenancy.

This commitment has seen the housing management team restructured, with the two Neighbourhood Support Officers providing an intensive housing management support package to those households placed in temporary council-owned accommodation. This additional support has helped to ensure community cohesion and tenancy sustainment. Over the last five years, 171 temporary licences were allocated to homeless households, of which 8 have since been converted to a secure tenancy.

Table 6: Temporary Licences issued to homeless households (Council stock)

	Number of temporary licences issued	Number of conversions made to secure tenancies
2008/09	21	2
2009/10	34	2
2010/11	27	0
2011/12	41	1
2012/13	48	3

Empty Homes Project

In 2013/14, £1M has been allocated for the purchase of up to 6 suitable empty properties for use as temporary accommodation. This scheme will ensure that we are able to increase the provision of decent temporary accommodation to help deal with the increasing numbers of homeless acceptances, as well as meeting one of our key objectives to bring empty properties back into use. This scheme provides good value for money in terms of financial investment as we have the provision to resell the properties at a later date when no longer required for temporary accommodation, it also reduces the costs spent on bed & breakfast and also provides social benefits to homeless households.

Since the scheme went live in April 2013, one two-bedroom flat has been purchased with three more currently in the pipeline.

Other Accommodation/Specialist Support

Specialist temporary accommodation is provided mainly within Cambridge City, as it is close to facilities, transport links, education etc. Although South Cambridgeshire does not have specific nomination rights to most of the specialist schemes, allocations can be made via referral, mainly through the Joint Allocations Panel.

In 2012/13 Peter Maitland Court Young Parent and Baby scheme received 16 referrals from applicants with a connection to South Cambridgeshire. In the same period Cambridge Cyrenians accommodated 6 new residents who were known to have a local connection to South Cambs. This illustrates that although there is limited specialist accommodation within

the district, there is a demand from South Cambridgeshire residents for this provision. At present it appears that much of this demand can be accommodated via existing schemes in other districts. This should not however rule out the exploration of future opportunities to provide specialist accommodation within district, particularly if provision can be sourced in an area of the district with relatively good transport links to other parts of the district and/or to Cambridge City.

The Council does have nomination rights to the YMCA for 10 bed spaces, as well as joint nominations with the City Council for an emergency bedspace, all of which are well utilized. It should be noted that referrals/nominations can only be made when accommodation is available.

The following table gives a summary of the different types of specialist accommodation and support available mainly in the City, and at page 41 gives details of grant funding provided by South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Table 7: Specialist Accommodation/Support

Specialist Accommodation/Support - Summary of Service Type
<p>Cambridge Women's Aid - Cambridge Provides accommodation and support for 11 women, with or without children. Also provide outreach support to women living in their own homes – By self or agency referral.</p>
<p>Corona House (formerly Cambridge Women & Homelessness Group) - Cambridge Direct access hostel with 6 bed spaces. Providing counseling and support. Also provide outreach support for ex-residents – By self or agency referral.</p>
<p>Cyrenians - Cambridge Provision of community houses with live-in volunteer workers. Provides support and advice to vulnerable homeless single people with a focus on alcoholics, those over 50 and those with a mental illness. Outreach and resettlement service – By agency referral only. Subject to Cambridge City Council's Reconnections Policy</p>
<p>English Churches Housing Group – Victoria Road, Cambridge 74 bed hostel accommodation that provides accommodation to vulnerable single homeless people – By agency referral only. Subject to Cambridge City Council's Reconnections Policy</p>
<p>English Churches Housing Group – Willow Walk, Cambridge 22 single rooms providing support and accommodation to vulnerable single homeless people – Referral by Cambridge Street Outreach Team only. Subject to Cambridge City Council's Reconnections Policy</p>
<p>Jimmy's Night Shelter - Cambridge Warm, safe night shelter for 20 men and women. Provision of supper, shower and laundry facilities. Non judgemental support available - By self referral at the door Subject to Cambridge City Council's Reconnections Policy</p>
<p>Emmaus - Landbeach Community living project for up to 30 homeless people and residential staff. Self financed through a second-hand business site – By self or agency referral.</p>
<p>Castle Project - Cambridge Accommodation - 17 beds in shared flats & supported lodgings Offering support and advice (practical and emotional) to young people on all aspects of their lives – By agency referral only.</p>
<p>Railway House – Cambridge (Cambridge Housing Society) Provides accommodation and support towards independent living. 12 spaces for 16-21 yr olds By agency referral only.</p>

Stonham Services (Home Group UK) – Elizabeth Way, Cambridge

14 bed spaces providing a safe & secure environment whilst service users try to adjust after a period in prison – Referral through either probation or via a Prison Resettlement Officer.

Whitworth House – Cambridge (Orwell Housing)

Provides accommodation and support to 13 young single women (16-25) – By self or agency referral.

YMCA – Cambridge (Queen Anne House)

Provision of 80 units of temporary supported accommodation offering advocacy, counselling, life skill training, help with health services, keyworking, move-on work and floating support – By agency referral only.

Young Parent & Baby Project – Cambridge (Cambridge Housing Society)

Provision of 7 units of temporary supported accommodation. Providing support/guidance on all areas of child care/parenting, independence - budgeting, shopping, cleaning, appointments and social relationships. Continuing support provided after move-on – By self-referral, family, friends or agency.

Supported accommodation for the mental health client group is administered by the monthly accommodation forum at CPFT (Cambridge and Peterborough Foundation Trust) Move-on accommodation for residents of supported housing is incorporated through the Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme, where priority will be awarded in Band A/B.

Any new identified need has to be prioritised countywide alongside other schemes within the resources available. Reducing budgets make it difficult to implement new initiatives without corresponding savings elsewhere.

3.2 Permanent Accommodation

Council Housing

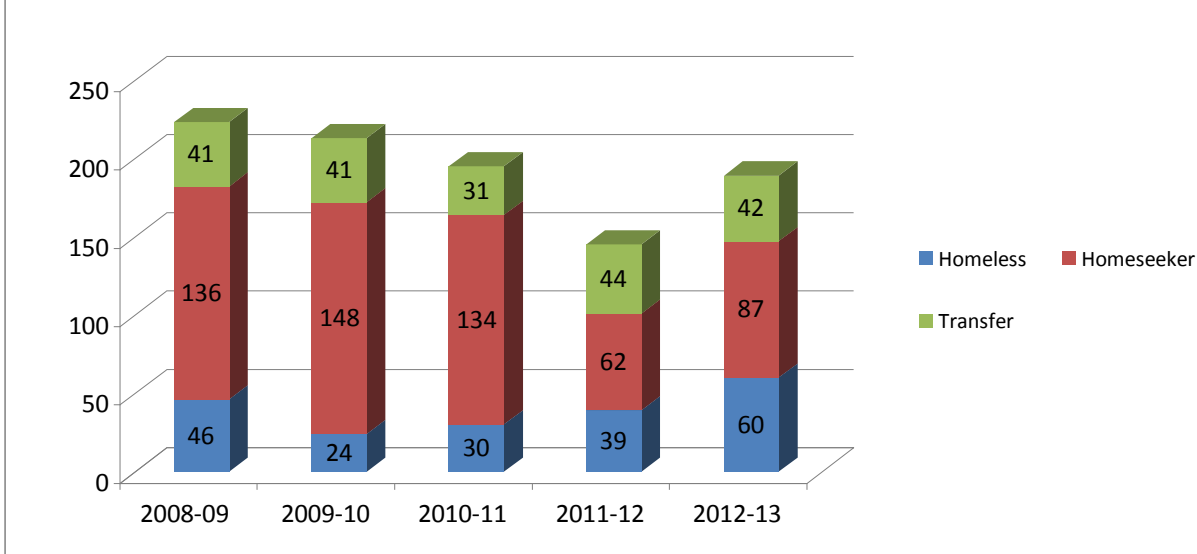
As at 1st April 2013, 5,633 homes are owned and managed by South Cambridgeshire District Council, of these 1,384 (24.5%) are for sheltered accommodation (this includes 314 sheltered properties that are currently leased under the equity share scheme for the elderly). The 2011 census identifies that 9% of households rent from the local authority.

The Council remains a stock holding authority following the 'No' vote to transfer to a housing association in 2009. Since that time there has been a change in direction regarding Council housing finances, with the Council's landlord functions becoming self-financing from April 2012. This has meant that the Council took on a debt of £205M but is able to keep its full rental income, which has enabled the Council to reinvest into existing stock and begin to build new affordable homes. The Council's New Build Strategy identifies up to 200 new homes to be built in the next 10 years, helping to provide long term solutions for homeless families rather than temporary accommodation options.

Over the last five years, on average between 300 and 340 allocations have been made per annum, 40% of which are generally for sheltered accommodation and would not normally be suitable for homeless households. Graph 7 below shows the number of properties allocated by application type that excludes sheltered accommodation lets, as this gives a truer reflection on the distribution of allocations suitable for homeless households. In the last two years there has been an increase in the percentage of lets going to homeless households, from 21% in 2008/09 to 31% in 2012/13. With changes to the Allocations Policy from 1st April 2013 giving greater priority to those under-occupying or overcrowding (see page 26 for further details), lettings will need to be monitored closely to ensure these changes do not

have an adverse impact on homeless applicants looking for permanent accommodation through the Home-Link scheme.

Graph 7: Allocations by application type for General Needs Housing

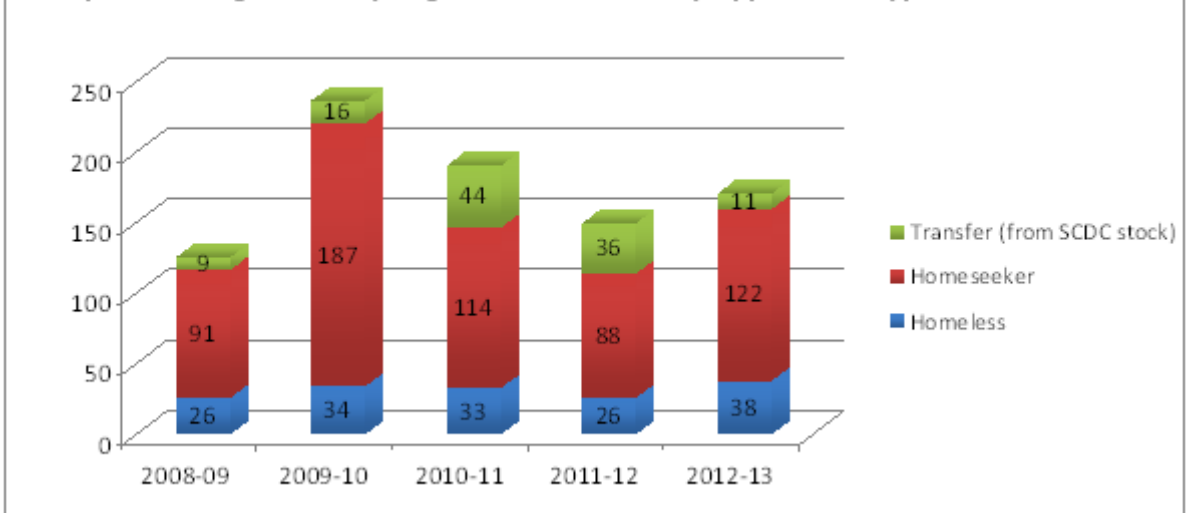


Housing Associations/Registered Social Landlords

Information from the 2011 census show that 5% of the total housing stock in the District is rented from ‘other social’ accounting for 3082 properties. Overall there has been a tenure change of –0.2% of households in social rented accommodation (both local authority and housing association) since the last census in 2001.

Graph 8 shows the number of allocations made to registered providers through the Choice Based Lettings Scheme and shows the percentage going towards homeless households. Although the majority of allocations go to those on the housing register, the figures for homeless households being allocated a property has remained relatively stable between 14% and 24%. The number of total lettings has decreased over the last three years and this can be attributed to the economic downturn where fewer affordable properties have been completed due to reduced funding available and fewer private developments coming forward providing an affordable housing contribution.

Graph 8: Lettings made by Registered Providers by Application Type



Choice Based Lettings Scheme

In February 2008, the Council introduced the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme, Home-Link. This is a sub-regional scheme with six other local authority areas covering Cambridge City, Fenland, Huntingdon, East Cambridgeshire, St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath. A recent survey of Home-Link applicants showed that 93% of respondents were satisfied (73% very, 20% fairly) with how their application had been dealt with.

Each local authority has its own Local Lettings Policy, following sub-regional principles, to ensure that applicants are prioritised accordingly based on their housing needs and waiting time. As a result of the welfare reforms and changes to Local Housing Allowance for social rented tenants, the sub regional partners reviewed the lettings policy and significant changes were introduced from 1st April 2013. These include:

■ **Local Connection** - Applicants will need one of the following local connections to be eligible to apply:

- ✓ The applicant works in the local authority area for sixteen hours or more per week; or
- ✓ The applicant has lived in the local authority area for at least 6 of the last 12 months, or 3 of the last 5 years; or
- ✓ The applicant has family members who are resident in the local authority area. Family members are defined as parents, sons and daughters or brothers or sisters who have been resident in the local authority for a period of 5 years or longer. Other close family ties will be considered on a case by case basis; or
- ✓ The applicant is owed a full housing duty under the relevant homelessness legislation by the local authority; or
- ✓ The applicant is a member of the Armed Forces and former Service personnel, where their application is made within five years of discharge; or
- ✓ The applicant is a bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the Armed Forces leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner; or
- ✓ The applicant is a serving or former member of the Reserve Forces who needs to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service; or
- ✓ There are special circumstances that their local authority considers give rise to a local connection.

■ **Armed Forces Personnel** – Current and former Armed Forces personnel (including bereaved families) will be allowed onto the Housing Register even if they don't have a local connection. They will be awarded additional priority by applying the total period of length of military service to their banding date. This will have the effect of raising their priority above applicants in similar circumstances who have not undertaken military service.

■ **Under-occupying** - There will be increased priority for households in social housing who are under-occupying their homes. This is to ensure best use of housing stock by landlords and to help people move into housing that is the right size for them.

■ **Overcrowding** - There will be new assessments of overcrowding based on the new Housing Benefit Local Housing Allowance (LHA) regulations. These regulations will make it harder to be considered as overcrowded. However, once assessed as needing extra bedrooms a higher priority will be awarded. Generally the LHA regulations allow one bedroom each for:

- Every adult couple
- Any other adult aged 16 or over
- Any two children (aged under 16) of the same sex
- Any two children, regardless of sex, under the age of 10
- Any other child aged under 16
- A non-resident carer (claimant/partner have disability and need overnight care)

■ **Size of property applicants are eligible to bid for** - Generally, the size of property applicants will qualify for will be in line with the Local Housing Allowance size criteria (stated above).

■ **Homeless applicants** - Prior to April 1st, homeless applicants were able to bid in the normal way for 3 months through the Home-link scheme for properties, after which time a direct let could be offered. With the changes to the welfare reforms and impact on the numbers in temporary accommodation, as part of the changes to the lettings policy, the three month period was removed. We will monitor the bidding patterns of homeless applicants and where necessary will either place a bid on their behalf or offer them a direct let, in order to discharge our duties and help us to manage the increased demand for temporary accommodation.

■ **Housing Options assessment** - In addition new enhancements to the process of applying for housing were introduced. Applicants are now required to complete an on-line housing options assessment prior to registration. This will notify the applicant if they are eligible to register and the housing options available to them.

Under-Occupation

As mentioned above, as part of the welfare reforms, from April 2013 tenants of social rented properties who are in receipt of housing benefit and considered to be under-occupying will have their benefit entitlement reduced by the following rates:

- 14% for under occupying by 1 bedroom
- 25% for under occupying by 2 or more bedrooms

This adds increased pressure on the housing needs of the district. Historically, the Council has made the best use of its housing stock, which includes a higher proportion of three bedroom properties as opposed to smaller homes. For example, under our previous lettings policy households with two children, regardless of gender, would typically be allocated a three-bedroom property. Such households will now be considered to be under occupying their homes. There are 330 households affected by these rules in SCDC owned properties and a further 275 in other RSL properties in the district.

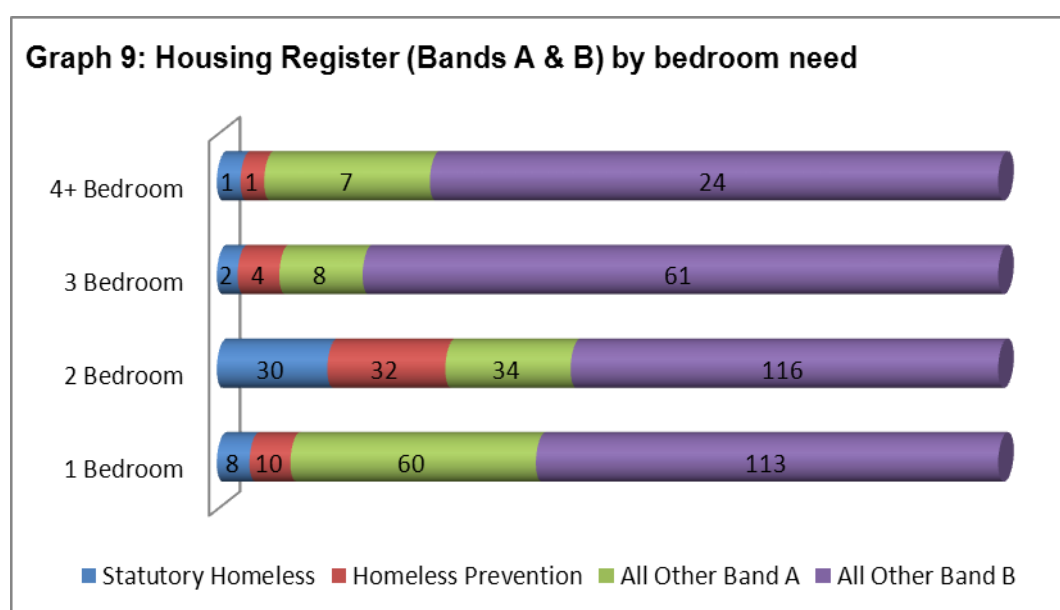
The impact of this is significant in terms of the pressure this puts on our demand for smaller homes with one or two bedrooms. As such the Council have created a dedicated job role, Under-Occupation Officer, to work with tenants in this position and develop strategies for dealing with these housing needs.

To date 103 tenants have indicated they would consider moving and 19 (up to end of May 2013) have been moved to smaller suitable accommodation. However, the solution may not always be to move house, and other assistance being explored is money advice and employment training etc.

However, the impact of this increased demand on one and two bedroom properties is likely to result in longer stays in temporary accommodation for homeless applicants who are

waiting for this size of accommodation. It will therefore be important to continue to consider all other housing options, such as privately renting.

There are currently 511 applicants on the Housing Register who are allocated a high priority need of Band A and Band B. Applicants who are statutorily homeless will be competing with all other applicants in Band A and those who are classified as homeless prevention will be competing with all other applicants in Band A and B. Graph 9 below demonstrates the competing demands for properties by bedroom size from the various high priority need categories on the housing register.



Privately Rented Accommodation

12% of households in South Cambridgeshire privately rent. This is based on the 2011 census data which shows a tenure change increase of 3.1% of households privately renting since the last census in 2001.

Table 8 summarises the average median private rents for South Cambridgeshire against the Local Housing Allowance Rates.

Table 8: Median Rents –v- Local Allowances Rates

	Weekly Median Rent	Local Housing Allowance
One Bedroom	£150	£120
Two Bedroom	£173	£135
Three Bedroom	£206	£157

[Source: [Cambridge Housing Sub Region Housing Market Bulletin – Dec 2013](#)]

With the change in LHA rates to the bottom 30% percentile rather than the average at 50%, this has meant that LHA does not cover the cost of a median rent in the District.

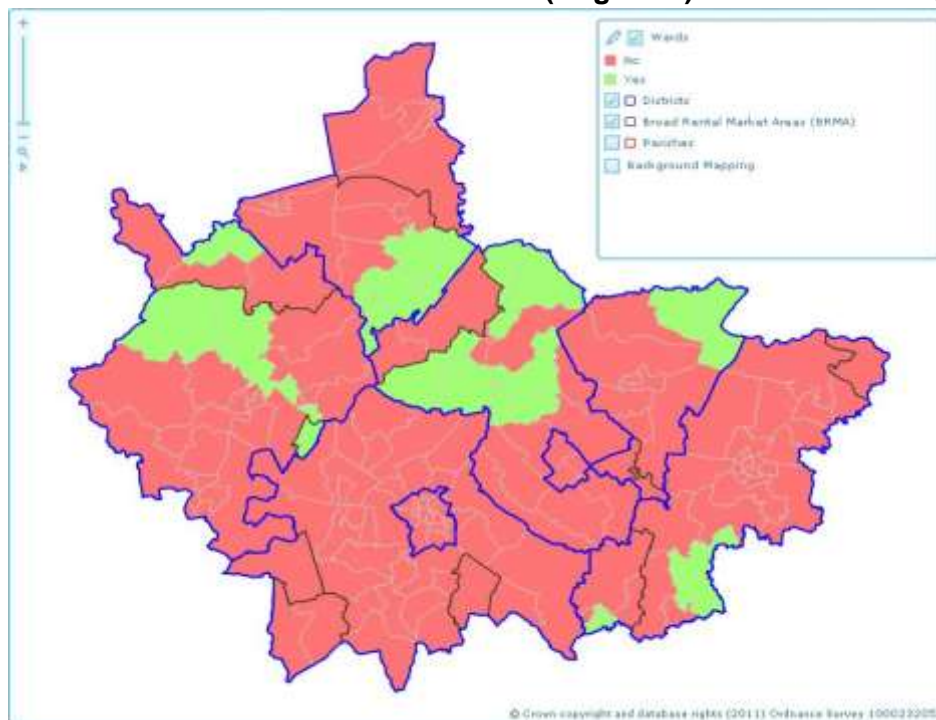
The average annual income for private rented households is estimated at £29,985 (gross median) which would account for over 30% of income being spent on rent alone without taking into consideration other housing costs such as utilities.

[Source: *SCDC Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2011*]

Chart 2 below depicts the sub region and highlights the stark evidence that there are no properties available within the privately rented sector that are within the LHA rates in South

Cambridgeshire; therefore making private rented accommodation inaccessible for many on lower incomes.

Chart 2: Areas where the full LHA rate (Aug 2011) covers the average market rent



Source: County Council
Research &
Performance, 2011

An amendment to the homeless legislation, which came into effect from November 2012, allows local authorities to discharge their homeless duties into the private rented sector. Prior to this a local authority could only discharge its duty through this type of accommodation with the agreement of the applicant. We anticipate that this will have little impact on SCDC, as our main access to the private rented sector is through our PSL scheme with King Street Housing, and most of those accommodated through this route have chosen to take properties through the settled homes scheme to prevent their homelessness. However there may be other opportunities and as the need to explore all options is likely to become increasingly important, SCDC will need to develop a policy around this.

Settled homes

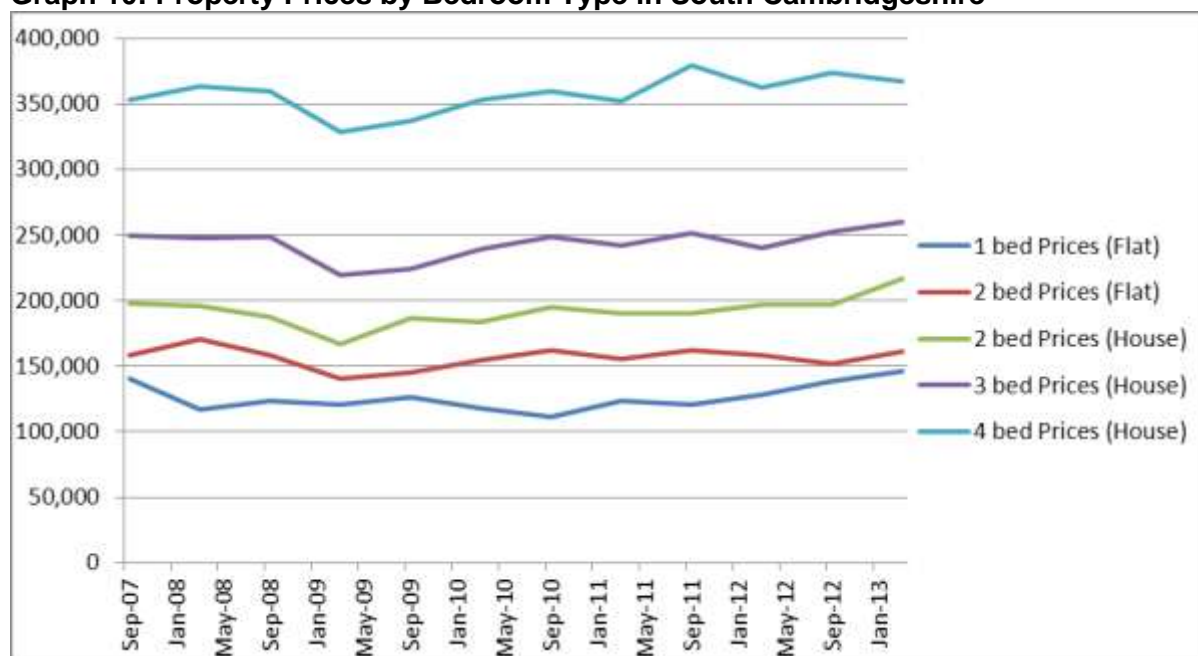
As mentioned earlier (under Temporary Accommodation), the private sector leasing scheme with King Street Housing provides settled homes for those in housing need and at risk of homelessness. The properties are managed by King Street Housing who lease properties from individual landlords. It provides many families with access to suitable, secure and affordable private rented accommodation and provides a preferable alternative to temporary accommodation.

Privately owned Housing

The average house price for South Cambridgeshire in 2012 was approximately £313,543 and the average earnings come in at £37,200 per annum. This means that the average house prices in the District are around 7 times the average annual earnings. When the lower quartile prices and wages are compared, house prices are about 10.6 times the annual earnings. As a general rule, house prices of 3 to 3.5 times income are considered affordable. [Source: *Housing Market Bulletin (May 2013) and SHMA Chapter 10*]

The following graph shows the average sale prices since June 2007 to December 2012 and highlights that there has been little decrease since the recession. During the last quarter there has been an increase in average prices for all, with only 2 bedroom flats holding steady.

Graph 10: Property Prices by Bedroom Type in South Cambridgeshire



For many households living in the District purchasing on the open market is therefore beyond their financial resources. The Government has introduced various schemes under the Home Buy initiatives to help people on intermediate incomes access housing. Orbit Homebuy are the government appointed “one stop shop” for all home ownership schemes in Cambridgeshire.

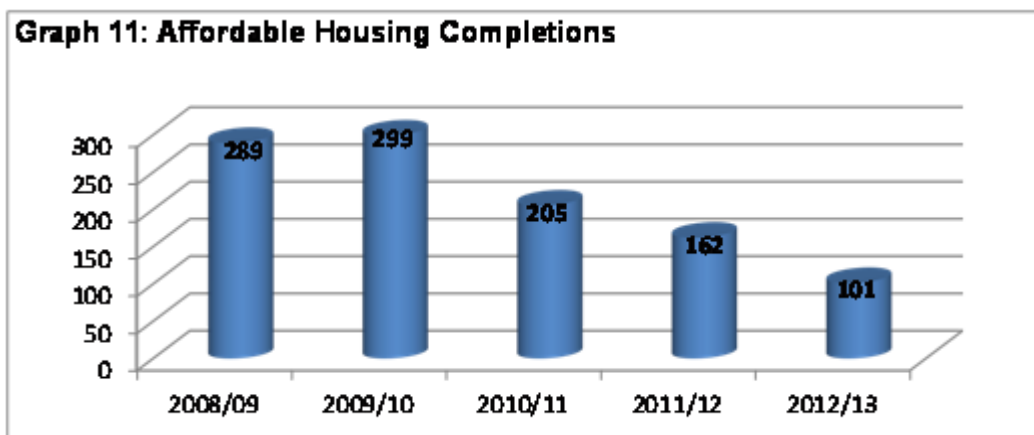
As of February 2010 there were 1,024 households registering an interest in intermediate tenures, of which 204 either live or work in the District. The majority of applicants either privately rent at the moment or live with family/friends and are either single persons or couples without children. The average annual income of applicants is £28,700. Between 2007/08 and 2009/10 there were 32 recorded equity loans awarded and 129 shared ownership properties sold. The average cost for equity loans in 2009/10 was £182,092, requiring a mortgage of £115,003 and an average deposit of £24,890. For shared ownership properties, the average property price was £180,177, requiring a mortgage of £61,503 for a 45% share, a deposit of £24,890 and a monthly rental of £236.

Since the Government’s new Equity Loan scheme launched in April 2013, known as ‘Help to Buy’, Orbit Homebuy has seen a 235% increase in applications.

Affordable Housing Programme

Funding for new affordable housing is via the Homes & Communities National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP). Due to the way the 2011-15 NAHP is administered information is not available at a district level on funding awarded, Overall the 2011-15 NAHP will invest £4.5 billion in affordable housing through this programme; the majority of the new programme will be made available as Affordable Rent (up to 80% market rent) with some affordable home ownership, supported housing in some circumstances and social rent.

Nationally, the 2011-15 NAHP will provide 60% less public subsidy per unit of housing than the previous three year investment programme. Graph 11 below shows the number of new affordable homes built in South Cambridgeshire over the last 5 years. Since 2009/10 the numbers completed has decreased significantly due to the change in funding and the downturn in the economic market.



Estimated predictions on sites already identified anticipate a further 707 affordable homes being built over the next 5 years in South Cambridgeshire (excluding Northstowe). The Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies that there will still be a shortfall of 1474 homes per annum taking into account current supply and projected new affordable housing over the next 5 years.

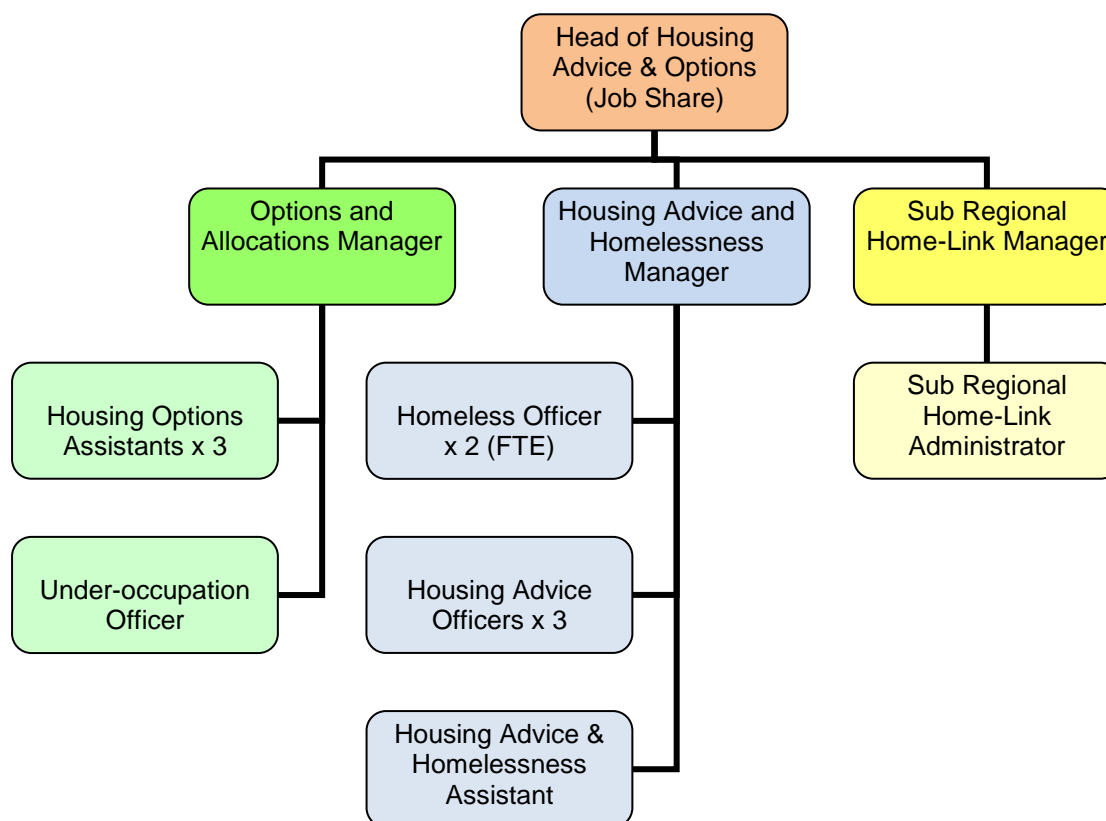
Chapter 4

Homelessness Prevention Activities

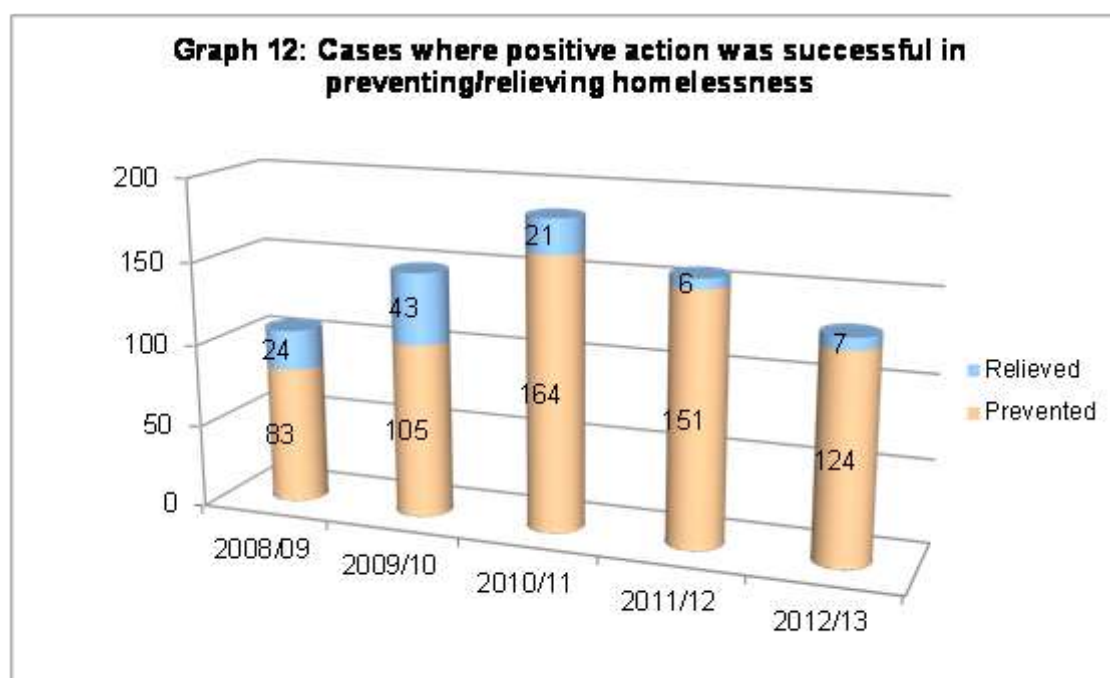
4.1 The Housing Advice and Options Team

The Housing Advice and Options Team sits within the Affordable Homes section of the Council and is responsible for providing free and confidential advice (including homeless prevention) to local people in housing need, implementing the Council's statutory duties under the Homeless Act 2002, and letting social rented homes in the district under the sub regional choice-based lettings scheme – Home-Link .

The team has expanded over the last few years and now includes:



Since the last Strategy was published in 2008, the Housing Advice and Options Team focus has been on prevention and the number of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless was steadily increasing from 2008/09 to 2010/11, with 185 households prevented from becoming homeless through positive action by the team at its peak in 2010/11. Unfortunately, due to the economic downturn and the welfare reform changes, it has become more difficult to take positive action to prevent homelessness and there has been a steady decrease in the numbers assisted from 2011/12. This can be attributed to the lack of privately rented accommodation available in the District that is affordable and where landlords are willing to take tenants who are on benefits.



4.2 Floating Support

A County Wide Floating Support service is in place to support a range of clients, aged 16 - 64 who may have a need to access housing related support with tasks around prevention and tenancy sustainment. This may be to:

- stop them losing a tenancy, perhaps moving to more suitable accommodation
- provide assistance in understanding bills and budgeting
- help to access other services ie day time activity
- support to access the community
- help with other general housing related type support.

There are two providers that cover the County.

- ▶ The Cambridge Housing Society PIP consortium, which covers Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire
- ▶ Circle Support, covering Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and Fenland.

Housing related support services for vulnerable adults are commissioned, funded and monitored by Cambridgeshire County Council. The programme is managed by a small team (now known as the Housing Related Support Team) who are placed in the Adult Social Care Directorate and are located in Cambridge.

4.3 Young Person's Support

The Young Persons Floating Support Service previously developed in partnership between the Council and Cambridge Housing Society has now been amalgamated into the generic floating support service provided by Circle Support. However, the Council recognizes the importance of providing support and advice to young people at risk of homelessness, particularly as changes to the Local Housing Allowance mean that young people under the

age of 35 years are no longer entitled to the same rates of housing benefit and are expected to share accommodation with others. Two new initiatives are in the process of being developed. These are the Home Finder service and the government funded sub regional work on the prevention of rough sleeping amongst single homeless people. Both of these schemes are discussed in further detail below.

4.4 Cambridge Mediation Scheme

The council previously had an on-going agreement with Cambridge mediation scheme, to provide mediation for young people being asked to leave the family home. We recognised that by the time a young person arrived at the Council at risk of homelessness, it was often too late for the mediation to be put in place and to be effective. As a result we were not getting value for money from the financial resources used to fund this.

During 2011/12 we undertook joint work with the mediation service, other districts in the County and the County council to try and raise awareness of the scheme and re-emphasise the part this could play in homeless prevention for young people.

After monitoring this closely during the year, it was decided not to continue, due to the lack of referrals. This was largely due to the changes brought about by case law and our subsequent protocol, for 16/17 year olds, with the County Council, where the primary responsibility for this age group lies with the social services authority.

4.5 Settled Homes Scheme

As previously mentioned at page 33, the Settled Homes scheme was introduced in February 2006 as an alternative to temporary accommodation through the Private Sector Leasing Scheme. The implementation of this scheme has been vital to the reduction in the numbers living in temporary accommodation.

4.6 Deposit Guarantee Partnership

The rent deposit guarantee scheme has also been in operation for a number of years. The scheme provides either the deposit or a guarantee of the deposit to private landlords. King Street housing manage this scheme on behalf of the Council, but their role relates to facilitation of the lettings and not management of the property.

The scheme offers applicants the ability to choose their own accommodation and provides an alternative to temporary accommodation. Whilst priority will be given to assist those to whom the council would owe a statutory homeless duty, we have also been able to assist non priority households through the scheme, where resources allow. During 2012, 71 households were assisted under this scheme, with an average placement cost of £1,108.

Again it is anticipated that as changes to the local housing allowance and the introduction of universal credit take effect, it will be harder for households to secure affordable accommodation in the private sector, although to date we are still being able to assist a reasonably high number of households through this option.

4.7 Home finder scheme – for single people

In 2011, the Council worked with King Street housing to make a successful bid to Crisis to help fund a project worker specifically to help secure accommodation for single people in the private rented sector. The Council have also part funded this initiative.

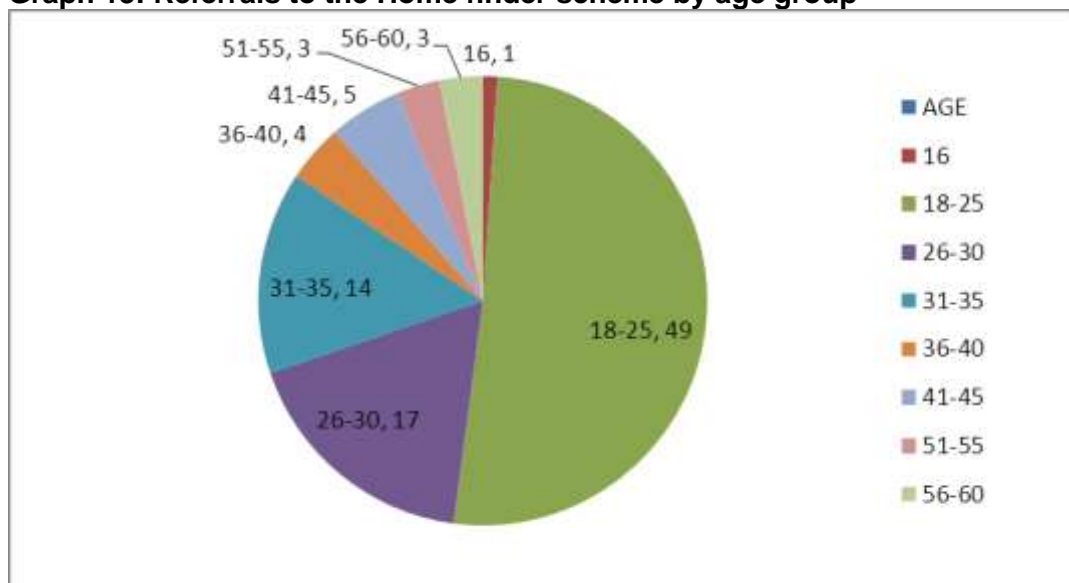
There are very few options available for single people in the district, and the level of social rented stock and arising vacancies are very small. With the introduction of changes to the LHA which would mean anyone under the age of 35 would have their housing benefit restricted to a single room rent, it was identified that access to suitable accommodation in the private sector was needed.

The funding from Crisis was for a one-year period and this has not been renewed. On reviewing the budget King Street are able to continue the post for an additional year, with budget already set aside. King Street will continue to look for opportunities to help accommodate single people in the private rented sector, such as rooms in shared houses and lodgings.

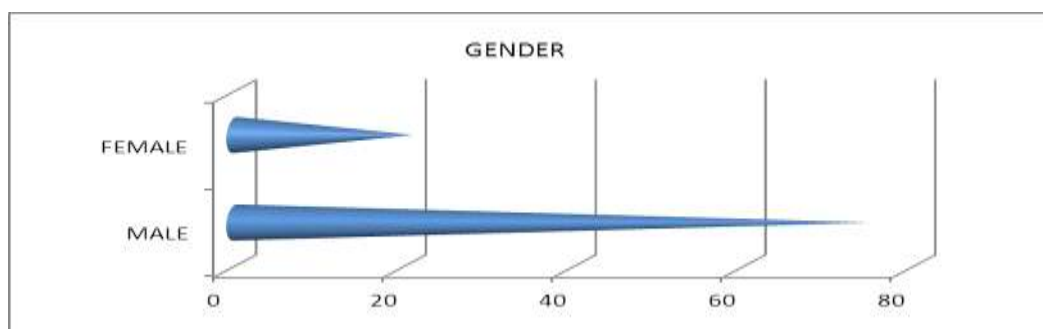
During the first year, there have been 96 referrals into the Scheme. Twelve have been assisted into tenancies to date, of which three are self-contained. Four are in the KSH shared house and five are in shared accommodation. The project worker continues to offer support to those taking up a tenancy.

Graph 13 and 14 demonstrates the demographics of all referrals to 26th February 2013

Graph 13: Referrals to the Home finder scheme by age group



Graph 14: Referrals to the Home finder scheme by gender



4.8 Government funding for single homelessness

In February 2012 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched a single homelessness prevention fund. Nationally £20 million was made available and the Cambridge sub-region received an allocation of £323,000. The funding has to be spent on homelessness prevention for those at risk of rough sleeping, but can be carried forward through financial years. Cambridge City Council has been asked to act as the lead authority for the sub-region. The other authorities in the cluster are Peterborough, St Edmundsbury, Forest Heath, South Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire. All authorities are members of the Home-Link partnership with the exception of Peterborough.

The purpose of the funding is to help develop a scheme that will enable local authorities to make single applicants an offer of accommodation. Discussions around this are currently on-going; however, it is likely to include both an emergency offer of accommodation and a subsequent longer-term solution, such as renting privately. To date, it has been agreed that the funding will be used to create a Coordinator role, based at the City Council and a Rapid Response service, that will provide initial support to single people offered accommodation under this scheme.

As part of this work a feasibility study has also been completed regarding access to private renting across the sub region. The proposals from this include a Local Lettings Agency which specialises in shared accommodation across the sub region. Discussions are still taking place as to if and how this will be carried forward by the Local Authorities within the cluster group.

4.9 Empty Homes Project

As part of the Council's commitment to bring empty homes back into use, the Council launched an Empty Homes Grant Scheme in 2011 in partnership with King Street Housing. This scheme offers grants of up to £10,000 to help pay for necessary repairs in return for the property being let for a period of 6 years through the Private Sector Leasing Scheme.

So far one property has been returned to use through this scheme. This was an old farmhouse which was converted into four units for shared accommodation for single people.

4.10 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

Discretionary Housing Payments are extra payments to assist with housing payments, such as rent and can be paid to households to help prevent homelessness. Funds for Discretionary Housing Payments are allocated from Central Government. In response to welfare reform the Government has increased the national funding for Discretionary Housing Payments to £155 million for 2013/14. This is primarily aimed at mitigating some of the impact of welfare reforms on vulnerable people during the first year.

For 2013/14 the national funding of £155m is made up as follows:

- Original baseline before Local Housing Allowance reforms £20m
- Local Housing Allowance Reforms £40m
- Social Sector Size Criteria £30m
- Benefit Cap £65m

The funding from 2014/15 will then reduce to £135 million.

In South Cambridgeshire, the grant awarded in 2012/13 was £65,408 but for 2013/14 this has increased by over double to £151,251. The Council's Housing Benefit section administers the DHP award and has worked closely with the Housing Options & Advice Team to review the Discretionary Housing Payments Policy. Although the amount of grant has significantly increased, demand for DHPs has also dramatically increased in response to the welfare reforms.

4.11 Sanctuary Scheme/Safe at Home

The Council's Safe at Home Project is available to all tenures and those placed in temporary accommodation who are experiencing domestic violence. The scheme provides free security checks and mobile panic alarms which are connected to a control centre. Any remedial repairs for security purposes are fast-tracked to enable victims of domestic violence to feel safe and secure in their existing home.

From April 2006 the Sanctuary Scheme was set up to assist victims of domestic violence. The scheme aims to ensure there is a safe room in the victim's house that would ensure safety for at least 30 minutes until assistance is received. The room would be adapted and have a direct link to call for assistance in an emergency. This scheme is being run throughout Cambridgeshire and is funded through the Council.

In 2012/13 two referrals were made to the Safe at Home scheme and none to the Sanctuary scheme.

4.12 Spend to Save

As well as the prevention schemes mentioned above, funding is also available through the prevention budget for "spend to save" initiatives. This allows for individual payments to be made for the prevention of homelessness, which would provide a better outcome for the applicant and be more cost effective in the long term. Payments made under "spend to save" could include help with clearing arrears where this would prevent eviction proceedings.

4.13 CAB – Money Advice Service

Since August 2011, the Council have been working in partnership with Cambridge CAB to provide a money advice service as part of our homeless prevention activities. This was in response to a growing number of debt related cases coming in for housing advice. An advisor from the CAB now comes in one day a week to see pre-arranged appointments made by our Housing Advice officers.

The scheme has proved to be extremely successful, with the additional money advice helping to prevent many cases of homelessness.

Chapter 5

Partnership Working and Consultation

5.1 Key Forums

A better future through partnership is one of the three Corporate Aims of the Council and is key to the success of tackling homelessness in South Cambridgeshire, as many homeless applicants have diverse and complex needs. The Housing Advice & Options Team have established good links with many of the support agencies and providers to ensure a joined up approach in meeting the needs of those facing homelessness in the District, and in the wider Sub Region.

Table 9 lists the key forums that have an input in the development and monitoring of the homelessness service:

Table 9:– Key Forums

Chronically Excluded Adults Service (CEA)	The CEA service works with the most chaotic and excluded individuals in the county. CEA Board meet regularly to ensure strategic engagement and ensure local agencies can provide prompt and flexible support to CEA clients.
County Homeless Executive	Meets quarterly with representatives from the County, Districts, City, and voluntary homeless services in the County
County Protocol meeting	Representatives from the County and district/ city councils meet regularly to review the protocols for young people and intentionally homeless families etc.
Homelessness Strategy Working Group	Small in-house working party convened for a limited time to assist in the review of the new Homelessness Strategy.
Home-Link Management Board	Meets quarterly – chief officers from 7 local authorities and 7 registered providers overseeing the management of Home-Link CBL Scheme
Home-link Operations Group	Meets quarterly with representatives from local authorities and registered providers in the sub region to ensure the Home-Link CBL Scheme is operationally fit for purpose
Hostel Managers Meeting	SCDC & Sanctuary Hereward hold regular meetings to discuss voids, move on, anticipated voids and rent arrears. Enables Housing Options Team to forward plan hostel temporary accommodation, support prevention of repeat homelessness & plan supported move on.
Joint Allocations Panel	Monthly panel meeting to prioritise individual young people for allocations to specialist supported housing services.
King Street Meeting	SCDC and KSHS bi-monthly meeting to discuss voids, anticipated voids, property handbacks, new stock, rent arrears. Enables Housing Options Team to forward plan temporary accommodation and settled allocations and support homelessness prevention.

Mental Health Accommodation Forum	Monthly meeting to match applicants with Mental Health Illness to available units within specialized services.
Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements	Multi Agency quarterly meeting to manage risk associated with high risk individual offenders in the community
Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference	To assess and manage risk associated with Domestic Violence.
Sub Regional Homelessness Group	Quarterly meeting to develop a Sub Regional Action Plan, develop shared working protocols and identify common and emerging themes.

5.2 Consultation

The consultation activities employed to develop the Strategy included consulting with previous homeless applicants via a questionnaire to understand their experiences with the service. A total of 123 people were surveyed but the response rate of 9% was very poor with only 11 returning the questionnaire. Although the analysis cannot be considered robust due to the low response, it does give some indication of the level of satisfaction within the service, with the condition of temporary accommodation being an area of concern.

Headline results include:

58% of respondents were satisfied overall with the Housing Advice & Options service, with a further 25% neither satisfied or dissatisfied.
Generally staff were found to be helpful at 83%
25% of respondents said they found it difficult to get advice.
83% said they found the information received either adequate or helpful, with 67% accessing information from our website.
33% felt we were unable to give the information/advice that they needed
55% of those responding were made an offer of temporary accommodation – all of which stated some form of dissatisfaction with the condition of the property. This could be either the location, size or cleanliness.
The majority of respondents (67%) earn below £10,000 and work part-time

The Homelessness Strategy will take into account these findings to help us to continue to improve the service. We have already begun to look at options for improving the temporary accommodation available (see page 18) and will review the information currently available to those facing homelessness.

Key partners such as voluntary organisations that deal with homelessness and other statutory agencies such as social services, etc. will be consulted on the draft Review and Strategy, with their comments taken into account prior to formal approval of the Strategy by the Housing Portfolio Holder in October 2013.

All Parish Councils will also be consulted on the Homelessness Strategy under the Housing Consultation Protocol.

Chapter 6

Performance Monitoring

6.1 Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

The Action Plan forms a vital part of the Homelessness Strategy. This defines the actions to be progressed as a consequence of the strategic review and will be monitored and reviewed on a 6-monthly basis by the Homelessness Strategy Internal Review Group. It is expected that some actions may evolve over the lifetime of the Strategy; any such changes will be agreed by this Group.

6.2 Value for Money (VFM)

Value for money is about maximising the use of resources and customer service. The Council is currently in the process of renewing its VFM strategy for housing. The draft strategy currently defines VFM as follows:

“We will achieve our aims in the most efficient manner at the best possible price and be able to demonstrate it”.

This will include:

- Doing the right things to meet the aims of Affordable Homes and the priorities of our customers (effectiveness)
- Having the right assets to deliver these services (asset management)
- Having the right processes in place to deliver these services (efficiency)
- Achieving the right outcomes – meeting the standards aimed for (quality)”

VFM is a basic principle in everything we do – such as looking at options to provide better quality temporary accommodation, as bed & breakfast represents poor value for money in terms of both social benefits and financial costs. In undertaking the Homelessness Review it identifies key areas for improvement to ensure we are providing value for money in terms of both customer satisfaction, legislative requirements and our priorities, service quality and social and economic benefits to individuals.

Following the Audit Commission Inspection of our Strategic Service in 2010, the inspectors recommended an improved focus on value for money, in that the Council needed to measure and respond to comparative VFM indicators more comprehensively, to make the best use of its resources. In 2011 we commissioned a desktop analysis of the Housing Advice & Options Service to compare costs with other similar organisations. The results identified that the Council was overall performing well in terms of cost, ranking 6th out of 16 comparative authorities for the cost per homelessness decision, 8th for the cost per total accommodated and 8th for the cost of services as a % of net budget requirements.

The Council are also a member of Housemark and we have been working closely with them over the last year to benchmark and cost compare our landlord service. We will continue to develop this over the coming year with the intention to include benchmarking information for both homelessness and housing advice.

6.3 Meeting the '10 Local Authority Challenges' - The Gold Standard

The government has recently launched the gold standard for homeless services. Local authorities are invited to apply for gold standard and will need to demonstrate achievement of the ten local challenges listed below:

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

A National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) has been created which provides local authorities with support and free resources, such as good practice guidance, self-help toolkits and training. NSPP have produced a 10-step approach to helping local authorities, which includes these free resources and begins with the local authority pledging to "strive for continuous improvement in front line housing services". We have started this process by making this pledge.

A peer review process is a key part of the gold standard challenge and we are aiming to work with our sub-regional partners to complete this, once a revised handbook is available (expected Summer 2013).

On completion of the peer review we will be able to decide whether to apply in part or in full for the Gold Standard.

Chapter 7 Resources

7.1 Expenditure and Income

The following table shows a comparison of income and expenditure in respect of the Council's services for homelessness and potentially homeless people since the implementation of the last two Homelessness Strategy in 2003 and 2008.

Table 10: Expenditure and Income

	2002/03	2006/07	2012/13
Payments for Accommodation	£245,160	£47,479	£152,324
Associated costs for homeless households (storage of Household Goods, etc.)	£5,569	£5,361	£10,861
Provision for Irrecoverables (bad debt)	£1,379	£0	£3,800
Rent Deposit Partnership Scheme	£11,025	£36,642	£51,825
Charitable Payment Scheme	£1,617	£29	£331
Prevention Measures (Cams Mediation, Sanctuary Scheme, Spend to Save, etc.)	£0	£8,808	£18,157
Consultation on Homelessness Strategy (CIPS)	£9,995	£0	£0
Staff & Central Support Costs	£94,072	£126,606	£265,739
Total Expenditure	£368,817	£224,925	£503,036
Income – Contributions	£20,392	£2,690	£71,586
Income – Government Grant	£10,000	£40,700	£55,166
Total Income	£30,392	£43,390	£126,752
Net Expenditure	£338,425	£181,535	£376,284

The increase in homelessness acceptances in 2012/13 has meant additional spend on payments for accommodation, in particular bed & breakfast which cost £99,766 in 2012/13 compared to none in 2007/08. The service has continued to invest in preventative measures, with expenditure increasing by 106% since 2006/07. The cost of the Rent Deposit Partnership Scheme also increased by over £15,000 which has enabled more people to be assisted.. The greatest investment for the service has been the expansion of the Housing Advice & Options Team, focusing on prevention and housing advice, which has meant an increase in expenditure for staff and central support costs of £139,133 in 2012/13.

Income contributions have also seen a dramatic increase from £2,690 in 2006/07 to £71,586 in 2012/13, which relates to the housing benefit contribution towards the use of bed & breakfast accommodation.

7.4 Grants to External Organisations

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

In 2013 the Housing Portfolio Holder approved the following grants for the next three years. It was no longer considered appropriate to fund Corona House (formerly known as Cambridge Women & Homelessness Group) due to its management takeover by the CHS

Group which provides a much more secure financial structure for the organisation. The surplus amount was distributed between the three remaining organisations who applied for grant funding.

Table 11: Housing Grants to Voluntary Organisations 2013/14 to 2015/16

Cambridge Women's Aid	£22,140
Cambridge Cyrenians	£5,034
Cambridge Re-Use (formerly known as SOFA)	£4,326
Total (3 years funding)	£31,500

Voluntary Sector Service Support Grants are also available to organisations that benefit residents in South Cambridgeshire, including Citizens Advice Bureaux, support groups, etc. Although these organisations are not specific to housing, many involved do play a role in meeting the diverse needs of homeless/potentially homeless applicants, especially in the provision of advice following the changes to welfare reform.

Table 12: Voluntary Sector Service Support Grants 2013/14 to 2015/16

General Welfare Advice and Specialist Advice Cambridge, Uttlesford, West Suffolk and North Herts Citizen Advice Bureaux	£252,950
Community Transport Royston & District CT, Cambridge DAR, 3 Counties Transport and Care Network	£36,204
Independent Living Age UK, Arts & Minds, Care Network and COPE	£49,500
Supporting Parishes and Communities Cambridge CVS and Care Network	£33,000
Total (3 years funding)	£371,654

Chapter 8

Conclusion

In conclusion the Review highlights the difficulties currently facing the housing advice & options service within the current economic climate. In particular changes to welfare reform are likely to continue to impact on the increasing numbers of households experiencing housing difficulties and approaching the Council for advice and assistance. Although prevention is still the main objective, it cannot be ignored that it is expected that more households will become homeless over the next few years and that the Council needs to be in a position to be able to provide good quality suitable temporary accommodation.

The bullet points below outline the six key themes identified within the Review that will help to inform the new Strategy:

Homeless Prevention

- Continued demand for the provision of advice and support in relation to finances and budgetary assistance.
- Lack of affordable private sector housing in the District.
- Lack of accommodation in the District to cater for single people, especially those with additional support needs.
- Increased focus on prevention of homelessness for those suffering with a mental health problem in response to the increase in proportion of priority need.
- Outcome from the applicant survey - to review the information on offer for households looking for housing advice and improve accessibility to information through the use of social media and other formats.

Increase provision of Temporary Accommodation

- Increased demand for good quality temporary accommodation to provide for the upward trend in homeless acceptances over the next few years.