

HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report To: Cabinet
9 June 2015

Subject: **HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2015-2020**

**All Wards outside the North York Moors National Park
Portfolio Holder for Environmental and Planning Services: Councillor B Phillips**

1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 This report requests the approval of the Homelessness Strategy 2015 - 2020 which has been subject to partner and public consultation.
- 1.2 Annex 'A' of this report contains the finalised version of the Hambleton District Council Homeless Strategy and an Executive Summary. There is also a copy of the Strategy in the Members' Lounge.
- 1.3 The Council is already signed up to North Yorkshire and York Housing and Homelessness Strategy which was subject to a light touch review in summer 2012. However, adoption of a Hambleton Homelessness Strategy that sets out local priorities is crucial if the Council is to achieve Gold Standard for its Housing Options Service.
- 1.4 The five year Strategy focuses on achieving the Housing Options Service ten gold standards listed below:-
 - To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has a buy in across all local authority services.
 - To actively work in partnership with local partners.
 - To offer a Housing Options prevention service including written advice.
 - To adopt a "No Second Night" out model.
 - To have a young people's pathway.
 - To develop a suitable private sector offer for all client groups, including landlord support.
 - To actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions
 - To have a Homelessness Strategy which sets out key priorities for the organisation.
 - To not place any 16 or 17 year old in bed and breakfast accommodation.
 - To not place families in bed and breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks.
- 1.5 The draft Strategy provides more detailed guidance on the interpretation and implementation of the Council's Housing Options Service and key homeless interventions.

The Strategy:-

- Is user friendly, easy to navigate and includes hyperlinks to other relevant documents.
- Indicates the need to assess actions in the light of Welfare Reform changes.
- Explains how we will deal with vulnerable groups.
- Clearly articulates the work the Council does with partner organisations, including Registered Providers, Homes and Communities Agency and Foundation Floating Support.
- Clearly articulates the work the Council does with young people to assist in their specific housing needs.
- Supports the role of the Rural Housing Enabler and Housing staff in respect of delivering more affordable housing.
- Includes a clear action plan for the way in which the service will be delivered over the next five years.
- Refers to Hambleton District Council's joint North Yorkshire "No Second Night Out" protocol that Members signed off in October 2013.
- Highlights Hambleton District Council's commitment to the Gold Standard service provision which will be ongoing over the next 2 years.

The policy approach and key actions are set out under 6 priorities:-

Priority 1 – Prevention of Homelessness

Priority 2 – Preventing Youth Homelessness

Priority 3 – Working with Vulnerable Groups.

Priority 4 – Improving Access to Services and Advice

Priority 5 – Delivering Affordable Homes

Priority 6 – Working with our Partners.

- 1.6 An 8 week partner consultation from 2 December to 2 February 2015 has taken place. This comprised of an online survey and a consultation event on Wednesday, 21 January 2015. All responses have been considered and revisions have been made where appropriate.

2.0 LINK TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

- 2.1 Meeting housing needs, including all aspects of housing advice and assistance and dealing with homeless clients within the district, is a statutory duty of Hambleton District Council.
- 2.2 The Council's priority which links to this is "To prevent homelessness by providing direct support to District residents in need."

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- 3.1 There are no financial implications relating to this report.

4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

- 4.1 There are no implications.

5.0 EQUALITY/DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 Undertaking a review of the current Homeless Service will enable us to develop services that are more accessible to customers, (particularly vulnerable and hard to reach groups) provide better advice on housing options to younger and old clients, thereby enabling them to make informed housing choices and to offer improved support to residents who are threatened with homelessness. An Equalities and Impact Statement has been prepared to support the Homelessness Strategy.
- 5.2 In publicising and making the document available the Council must ensure everyone is aware of it and can access it, including hard reaching groups.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION:

- 6.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Homelessness Strategy and recommends to Council that it is adopted.

MICK JEWITT

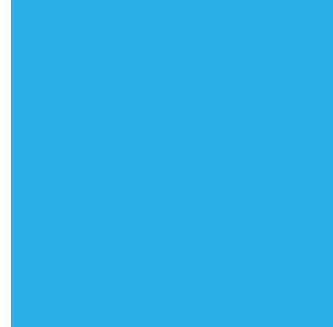
Background papers: North Yorkshire and York Housing and Homeless Strategy
2010 - 2015
Council Plan 2011 - 15
Equalities and Impact Statement.

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HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

2015 - 2020






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Foreword

Welcome to Hambleton District Council's Homelessness Strategy for 2015-2020.

My vision is to make sure there is a decent home within reach of every citizen within of Hambleton district. I want Hambleton to be a place where individuals, couples and families affected by homelessness have simple and effective access to a range of housing services and other opportunities, to enable them to rebuild their lives and make a success of their futures.

This strategy is the product of thorough consultation with our partners, homeless services/providers and citizens. We are now in the midst of very difficult times - recession, budget cuts to statutory and voluntary services, and extensive welfare reforms pose enormous challenges in a rural community such as Hambleton District Council. Many Hambleton people live in crisis, and one of the worst crises of all is to be without a home.

The causes of homelessness and its effects are complex and intertwined, and inevitably there are no simple solutions. It is not just about buildings and beds - it is about many social problems that may go wrong in people's lives, such as health, income, family breakdown. And things can go wrong for any one of us in such a climate. So, although this strategy is focused around the details of our policies and services for homelessness for the next five years, it does not do this in isolation.

Within this strategy the Council Housing Options team and its partners at North Yorkshire County Council are working hard to deliver a comprehensive economic action plan. A new Health and wellbeing strategy, a Children and Young People's plan and the recommendations of the Hambleton child poverty commission and just a few of the strategies that seek to impact on some of the causes and effects of homelessness - links to them are provided within this document.

No one organisation can tackle homelessness effectively alone - it is a countywide issue requiring action from many organisations. Housing support agency Foundation - which provides support for homeless clients and their families - harnesses the skills and hard work of many people to deliver sensitive and tailored solutions to our diverse communities, often from within those communities themselves.

Much has already been achieved and we have much more to do. I am very conscious of - and grateful for - the hard work that council staff, and our statutory and voluntary partners are doing.

I look forward to working together with all our partners to deliver this strategy and tackle homelessness in Hambleton District Council together.



Brian Phillips

Cllr Brian Phillips
Portfolio holder for Environmental and Planning Services
Hambleton District Council




Introduction

Hambleton's five year strategy sets out the council's aims to tackle homelessness across the District.

It details how the Council will provide straightforward and effective access to a range of housing services, support and other opportunities for Hambleton residents affected by homelessness to help them rebuild their lives.

The 2015-20 strategy has been shaped by national policy, the North Yorkshire Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2012) and a thorough review of homelessness and homeless services in Hambleton. It takes account of customer feedback and partner views.

A holistic approach towards homelessness is vital since the causes and effects are complex and intertwined. Solutions need to be more than the simple provision of accommodation. They need to address the things that go wrong in people's lives - such as poor health, loss of income and relationship breakdown. This strategy recognises the important role that other partners and stakeholders have to play in harnessing skills and delivering sensitive and tailored solutions to some of these issues within our communities.

The strategy will be informed by a Homelessness Review undertaken between November 2014 and February 2015 which provided a detailed analysis of:

- services that are currently provided across the district
- utilisation rates, gaps in services and perceived need
- resources available to meet this need.

During the review, meetings were held with more than ten partner organisations, including homeless service providers and support agencies, talks were held with senior managers and front-line staff to gain an understanding of the issues they face on a daily basis and a staff survey was carried out. And most importantly the service users were consulted to gain a direct insight into their experiences.

Two consultation events were held - a Homelessness Review meeting in January 2015 and an online survey - to consult all partners in the district. From this, we developed the principles to be implemented and embedded through the strategy and identified a number of key priorities.

Context

National policy

In 2011 the Government published its first national housing strategy, 'Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England', outlining its approach to homelessness prevention, meeting the needs of vulnerable people, managing the consequences of those made homeless and addressing rough sleeping. This strategy also enables local authorities to give extra priority to working households, those making a community contribution, and ex-service personnel when it allocates council housing.

In the same year it also published its strategy vision to end rough sleeping - 'No Second Night Out'.

In August 2012 the Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness published its national homelessness strategy 'Making Every Contact Count' - a joint approach to preventing homelessness which includes a number of challenges for local authorities, in the light of the Localism Act 2011 and Welfare Reform changes introduced in 2012.

The Localism Act provides local authorities with the option to introduce fixed-term tenancies and gives greater flexibility when allocating social housing and operating waiting lists. It also enables local authorities to cease their homelessness duty by using an offer of private rented accommodation.

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced Universal Credit, changes to Housing Benefit, Local Housing Allowance, Council Tax Benefit and child support and reforms to the Disability Living Allowance.

- In April 2013 a cap was introduced on the total amount of benefits that working age people can receive. The cap applies to the combined income from the main out-of-work benefits, plus Housing Benefit, Child Benefit and Tax Credits. The cap is £500pw for couples and lone parents and £350pw for single adults.

- Council Tax Benefit no longer exists and has been replaced by Localised Council Tax Support Schemes administered by local authorities.
- Following the introduction of the 'Bedroom Tax' in social housing children of different sexes are expected to share a bedroom until the age of ten and children of the same sex are expected to share a bedroom until they are 16 years old. Housing benefit is calculated on this basis and in households where families are viewed as 'under-occupying', tenants are required to meet any shortfall in rent.
- Housing benefit for under 35s is based on the single room rate - the rate of a room in shared house. Therefore any single tenants occupying a one bedroom flat and receiving housing benefit are required to meet any shortfall.
- In April 2013 community care grants and crisis loans were abolished and replaced by locally administered schemes.
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) has replaced Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people aged 16 to 64 making new claims. This is based on how a person's condition affects them, not the condition they have.
- Universal Credit will combine and replace a number of existing benefits for people who are out of work and tax credits for people in work. It is expected to be delivered 'digital by default' People will now be responsible for paying their rent and council tax and for many this will be for the first time in their lives. This could lead to increased levels of homelessness as households struggle to manage their finances. Local authorities can apply for funding via Discretionary Housing Benefit Payments for people struggling to pay the rent because of an imposed sanction through welfare reform.

Finally, the Government is reducing public spending, including the ending of ring fenced 'Supporting People' funding within its overall grant to local government. This will have significant impact on the level of support services available to residents.

Sub Regional Context

North Yorkshire Housing and Homelessness Strategy - www.northyorkshirestrategichousingpartnership.co.uk/index.php/north-yorkshire-housing-strategy

Hambleton's Homelessness Strategy is underpinned by the North Yorkshire Housing and Homeless Strategy which was approved in October 2012. This document sets out the shared housing and homelessness priorities of the seven North Yorkshire local authorities and the City of York. The strategy includes shared strategic homeless priorities for 2012-15, which are largely articulated through two of its six priorities:

Strategic Priority 4: Improving access to Housing Services

We want to put the customer at the heart of decision making and to increase housing choices for all, through the provision of universal, clear and transparent advice about existing housing and housing support services. The sub region proposes to:

- Increase housing choices and improve housing advice for older people
- Offer improved housing services, advice and assistance for specific vulnerable groups
- Offer services and support to help residents with disabilities to live comfortably
- Embrace cultural and religious diversity
- Better understand and address the housing and support needs of gypsies and travellers, black and minority ethnic groups and migrant workers

- Offer support and help to match people with homes that are the right size and type to meet their needs
- Develop a North Yorkshire Tenancy Framework
- Work in partnership with local landlords to develop a strategy to increase and improve services across the private rented sector

Strategic Priority 5: Reducing Homelessness

Our homelessness levels remain relatively high because of the acute shortage of affordable housing and increasing pressure on households due to welfare reform. Tackling homelessness remains a key priority within North Yorkshire and York. This is an area where a well-established practice of joint working has brought about a number of positive outcomes. The sub-region proposes to:

- To sustain and improve the prevention of homelessness.
- Continue to reduce the use of temporary accommodation and improve the temporary accommodation used.
- Sustain and improve progress made in tackling youth homelessness.
- Continue to ensure that housing support is available for homeless and vulnerable people

The strategy also seeks to tackle the challenges facing local communities, including the impact of welfare reform through **Strategic Priority 3: Delivering Community Renaissance** which includes commitments to:

- Work with partners to better manage our local neighbourhoods, promote social cohesion and embrace cultural and religious diversity
- Begin to address issues of financial inclusion and worklessness

North Yorkshire County Council's Children's Trust and Young People's Plan 2012-15

The North Yorkshire Children and Young People's Plan and the work of the North Yorkshire Health and Wellbeing Board also run concurrent to this strategy and underpin key aspects of it, particularly in respect of priorities around tackling youth homelessness.

The Children and Young People's Plan is the single, overarching plan for North Yorkshire County Council's Children's Trust. It sets out the strategic direction and priorities for improvement for children and young people across North Yorkshire including Hambleton for the period 2012-15. It brings together the key priorities for everyone working with children, young people and families and sets out in detail the actions needed to improve outcomes. It focuses on improving the life chances of those most vulnerable through:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all vulnerable children and young people.
- Improving children's health and reducing the gap between the most and least deprived.
- Raising achievement to national averages and higher, and narrowing the gap between the lowest achievers and other children.
- Developing an integrated children's workforce that 'thinks family' and intervenes early to narrow the gap between vulnerable and other children.
- Reducing and mitigating the effects of family poverty on children's life chances
- Improving outcomes for particularly vulnerable groups of children and young people - looked after children, children and young people with special educational needs, learning difficulties and/or disabilities, young offenders and children and young people who are carers for others. Many of these issues are covered in the 'Housing Solutions for Young People's Hub.'

Click here to download the strategy - [North Yorkshire's Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14](#)

North Yorkshire's Health and Wellbeing Board

From April 2014, new arrangements have taken effect to deliver public health priorities across North Yorkshire, and a new Health and Wellbeing Strategy is being developed. A number of strategic priorities are set out within the strategy that will help to reduce many of the health and wellbeing problems that can lead to homelessness or arise from it. These focus on work to reduce lifestyle factors that can lead to ill health, improving access to and take up of services, providing support and care services for people who are vulnerable to enable them to live independently, and continuing work to break the cycle of poor health and deprivation by focussing on the wider determinants that influence health over the long term - such as low educational attainment, deprivation, skills and worklessness.

Click here to download the strategy - [North Yorkshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2013-18](#)

2020 North Yorkshire Care and Support 'Where I Live Strategy'

North Yorkshire County Council is consulting on a strategy that will transform services to ensure people can remain safe and independent in their own homes, improve the amount and quality of accommodation with care and support across the county by 2020 and meet financial savings. This strategy replaces the out of date 'Our Future Lives Policy' and reflects changes in economic circumstances and the County Council's extra care ambitions. It explores different models of providing accommodation for vulnerable groups and young people including sheltered accommodation, residential and nursing care and homeshare - an initiative that matches someone who needs help to live independently in their own home with someone who has a housing need and is willing to provide a

little help and support in exchange for accommodation. This scheme can help people who own or rent a home who need low-level support as well as those who cannot afford housing such as key workers, students, people who have a low priority housing need, or those living in hostel accommodation. It also pledges to increase the availability and choice of accommodation and services for people with complex needs, mental health issues, and learning and physical disabilities - and to enable the development of supported living schemes for younger people living with a learning disability. Additionally the strategy commits to:

- continue to work with colleagues in Children and Young People's Services to ensure the smooth transition of young people between services and to identify their needs and the care and support they may require as they move from childhood into adulthood and to use this information to plan any future housing developments.
- continue to work with partners to put in place employment and training opportunities, especially within extra care housing schemes, for people who cannot access these through traditional routes.

Our Partners

The Council works closely with a range of partners to deliver services to homeless clients and clients who are struggling to remain within their own homes. These are detailed under **Priority 6: Working with Partners**



Homelessness Priorities for Hambleton 2015 - 2020

This chapter sets out the key homelessness issues for Hambleton and our responses under six priorities:

Priority 1
Prevention of Homelessness

Priority 2
Preventing Youth Homelessness

Priority 3
Working with Vulnerable Groups

Priority 4
Improving Access to Services and Advice

Priority 5
Delivering More Affordable Homes

Priority 6
Working with Partners

Priority 1: Prevention of Homelessness

Key Issues

- Grant funding is reducing - Hambleton District Council's overall grant funding will be reduced by 22% in the next financial year (2015/16) and this is a pattern that is likely to continue into the future
- In 2012/13 the government awarded Hambleton District Council a grant of £85,000 for Discretionary Housing Benefit Payments (DHP) and we used this to assist 424 clients to stay in their existing homes. The DHP for the district has since been reduced to £83,000 for 2013/14 and is likely to continue to decrease in the future.

- In 2013/14 289 households were affected by the bedroom tax - which means people are not entitled to Housing Benefit for extra rooms that are not being used within their homes.
- The main reasons that families become homeless in Hambleton are:
 - family and friends can no longer accommodate them
 - loss of a private sector assured short hold tenancy
 - loss of job or reduction in working hours
- The main reasons that single people become homeless are:
 - family and friends can no longer accommodate them
 - no fixed abode (including 'sofa surfers')
 - loss of job or reduction in working hours
 - shortage of suitable affordable accommodation in the district
- In recent years there has been an increase in the number of homeless presentations from single people. This is likely to continue, particularly since there is a shortage of accommodation for people under 35 in receipt of housing benefit who now qualify for the shared room rate only.

Homeless Prevention Measures

We have adopted a more pro-active approach towards preventing homelessness and in 2011 our housing advice department re-branded its services in line with the new housing options approach - by offering advice to everyone seeking our service and focusing more on prevention services instead of taking homeless applications. Central to this has been a move towards early intervention. During

2013-14, 487 households were prevented from becoming homeless as a result of housing advice, compared to 302 in the previous year - an increase of 185 households.

In March 2013 councillors agreed a two year **Investment Plan to Prevent Homelessness**, after the Homelessness Grant became no longer ring fenced but instead forming part of a wider Business Rate and Retention Scheme. This plan is a vital tool for investing in the prevention of homelessness.

It supports other agencies in prevention activity and is the basis upon which the work of the housing options service has been refocused. Two major items of the plan were the appointment of an additional full time officer for two years and the continued provision of a Homeless Prevention Fund which provides financial tools - including bonds and rent in advance - to assist clients.

In 2012-13, 177 families and single people facing homelessness accessed our Housing Options Service. During 2013-14, this fell to 151, and we are continuing to see this pattern of decrease as a direct consequence of our investment of resources - both staffing and funding - in prevention measures.

However, our homelessness levels remain relatively high because of the acute shortage of good quality affordable housing, particularly shared accommodation for single people, and the increasing pressure on households due to Welfare Reform. There is also a shortage of smaller properties for those affected by the bedroom tax and wanting to downsize.

Because of high house prices and lending restrictions the private rented sector has become the only option for many of our clients. However, whilst this tenure offers more flexibility in terms of the requirements of households to have savings, more stringent deposit and bond requirements

represent a challenge for some households. Additional administration fees and credit check fees can also cause financial barriers for those wishing to access this tenure. Indeed, the Housing Options Team has seen a substantial increase in the number of bond and rent in advance applications in 2013/14 compared to 2012/13.

Temporary Accommodation

During 2013-14, 28 families and eight single people were referred into temporary council accommodation managed by Broadacres or into bed and breakfast for a temporary period. No families were accommodated in bed and breakfast because they faced a crisis.

Our review showed that temporary accommodation, while essential in a crisis, is not solving the long term problem for many single people, many of whom experience numerous episodes of homelessness. The review found that to some extent we fund a crisis and rescue service instead of an enablement model of homelessness.

We currently have agreements with two local housing providers to manage good quality temporary accommodation on our behalf. There were on going void issues with some of these properties, so we have reduced the number of properties used for this purpose to ensure full occupancy.

We only use bed and breakfast (B and B) accommodation in an emergency and for a limited period and do not use this type of accommodation for families, young people aged 16-25yrs and/ or pregnant women - in line with government guidelines and strict legislation. We liaise with our Environmental Health Department to make sure that the temporary accommodation we have is suitable and complies with health and safety regulations.

We are in an environment of reducing resources and rising need, so it is essential that we make sure that the temporary accommodation that we do have goes to those that are most in need.

Access to temporary accommodation for vulnerable clients needs improving. There are various access policies in place amongst providers. We recognise that providers want to have a say in who is coming into their supported housing, particularly in terms of maintaining the house balance but we need to ensure the most vulnerable and entrenched people are not being excluded from services and that bed spaces are used as efficiently as possible.

Our focus must be on enabling people in temporary accommodation to move on to settled accommodation as quickly as possible. The review found that single people are not supported as well as families to do this. We therefore need to provide more and better support.

Further details on services for homeless families, pregnant women, single people and childless couples are set out in Appendix A.

Rough Sleepers

Rough sleeping is not a particular issue in Hambleton. There was only one known rough sleeper in Hambleton during 2012-13 year and there were no rough sleepers when a snapshot count was taken in November 2013. However, if we do have any rough sleepers, the Housing Options Service is committed to providing customers with advice and support to help them get off the streets and into suitable affordable accommodation before they become entrenched. This is also further outlined in our "No second Night out" protocol which has been set out and agreed by the eight districts within North Yorkshire - Hambleton, Richmond, Ryedale, Selby, York, Scarborough, Harrogate and Craven.



Single People

For single homeless people there is a culture of crisis and rescue in the district. We need to develop a model of enablement to ensure homeless people are able to access opportunities to be able to live as independent members of the community. However, we must also recognise that there will always be a small number of people who will always need support to be able to live independently, and we will need to develop sustainable support options for them for the long term.

It is more difficult to prevent homelessness for single people and to track the eventual outcome. In comparison, families tend to stay in touch until they are in settled accommodation. Where we do not know the outcome of support this is recorded as a failure - in line with government reporting requirements.

Response to key issues

- We have reviewed our temporary accommodation over the last financial year and as a consequence reduced the number of properties from 19 to 10. There is still the option to increase this if we have an unexpected rise in temporary accommodation need.
- We have piloted new eligibility criteria to ensure that our temporary accommodation goes to those in need. Our new criteria are set out in Appendix B.
- We continue to provide for the needs of rough sleepers and in October 2013 signed up to the 'No Second Night Out' joint protocol alongside other districts in North Yorkshire.
- Amendments to the Home Choice allocations policy have been agreed to reflect changes to housing benefit rules. The aim is to avoid the possibility of rent arrears for future tenants and to help those who will be affected by the 'bedroom tax' to move to a smaller home if they wish.
- Hambleton rent deposit and bond schemes have been further developed via the Homelessness Investment Plan to assist people to obtain private sector rented accommodation. The Council's Rent Bond Scheme helped 64 clients into private sector rented accommodation.
- The severe weather beds policy has been reviewed and amended to enable easier access to beds during inclement weather. This will still mean B and B accommodation in an emergency but will be for a maximum of three nights if the temperature remains below freezing - to allow us to find alternative accommodation in the meantime.

- Housing Options Advisors look at 'Move-On' in the private sector as well as Broadacres Housing Association to address barriers to move-on from temporary accommodation. A specific 'crisis worker' was employed to look at this area of work in 2013 and although this funding has ended new funding streams have been identified in order to continue this important work and to assist in homeless prevention work. However we can only discharge our homeless duties into the private sector if the tenancy is for 12 months or more. We therefore need to undertake more work to bring private landlords on board.
- We have developed the 'Revolving Door Service' in partnership with all local authorities in North Yorkshire to work with entrenched homeless people which is successfully reducing repeat homelessness and repeat stays in temporary accommodation.
- We signed up to the 'Breathing Space' scheme which is run by Wakefield Council. This aims to assist people in mortgaged property with an interest free loan in order to assist them to stay in their own homes where they would have faced re possession. The Mortgage Rescue scheme ceased to operate in April 2014, due to local government funding stopping for this across the country.



Desired Outcomes

We need to:

- focus a higher proportion of resources on prevention and floating support for single people which provides support to people where they live, to reduce the risk of homelessness and repeat homelessness
- further develop our relationship with private rented sector landlords so they are ready and willing to take on tenants who are at risk of homelessness
- increase the amount of affordable housing, in particular smaller and shared accommodation that is more affordable to single people
- maximise the use of existing housing stock
- embed a holistic approach to developing homeless services
- work more closely with health and mental health colleagues
- develop better ways of tracking the outcomes for single homeless people that we have helped
- make sure that landlords provide accommodation that is legal and sustainable so as not to exploit other people's vulnerability as some do.

Key Actions

We will:

- Continue to ensure that there is an adequate supply of affordable accommodation within the district through input into the forthcoming Local Plan review, refreshing the Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance, continued support of the North Yorkshire Rural Housing Enabler programme and continuing to secure affordable housing via Section 106 agreements.

- Work with partners within the North Yorkshire County Homelessness Group to help us access funding to assist our work with landlords within the private sector.
- Continue to work with our Housing Benefits Department in order to allocate our budget for Discretionary Housing Benefit payments to clients who fulfil the criteria for this payment to assist them to remain in their homes.
- Continue to work in partnership with Environmental Health colleagues to inspect our bed and breakfast accommodation on a yearly basis so that it is a safe and adequate means of temporary accommodation if needed in an emergency. Environmental Health will be involved in discussions around HMOs. Some of the worst housing conditions are found in this classification of dwelling including disrepair, inadequate means of escape from fire, lack of basic amenities, minimum room sizes and unsatisfactory management.

Because of this and the unpredictable nature of tenant behaviour, additional regulation exists for this housing type to ensure specific standards are maintained. Licensing also exists for larger HMOs of three or more storeys containing five or more occupants.

This classification also applies to owner occupiers who rent out rooms to two or more lodgers - and shared properties.

- Use £5000 funding from the County Homelessness Group, and match fund this with re-aligned funding from our Investment Plan to Prevent Homelessness 2013/15, to employ a project officer to work with private sector landlords for one year from October 2014.
- Explore with private landlords the possibility of providing a three or four bedroom House in Multiple Occupation, initially in Northallerton or Thirsk.

- Work with the Homes and Communities Agency and partners to identify any affordable housing schemes that could be funded through the Affordable Housing Programme 2015-18, Continuous Market Engagement and other emerging funding programmes.
- Continue to work closely with Housing Benefits to maximise the use of Discretionary Housing Benefit.
- Continue to work closely with Mental Health Team colleagues to ensure the best outcomes for this vulnerable client group.
- Continue to work with 'No Second Night Out' protocol and work with the Salvation Army in York to contract them to provide good quality services to rough sleepers as and when needed in our district.

Priority 2: Preventing Youth Homelessness

Key Issues

- Young people can struggle to access adequate, good quality housing and because of their age can be vulnerable and need extra support.
- Whilst returning to live at home is often the best option for young people, there are circumstances where this is not appropriate or safe. In such instances we need to ensure there is good quality accommodation available for them, that floating support is in place to help them budget and sustain a tenancy, and that they are given priority for housing in the future after this supported period has ended.
- There is a shortage of accommodation for young people with high support needs in Hambleton and this is impacting on the service we provide. New national funding programmes such as 'Platform for Life' may provide the opportunity to fund these types of schemes in the future.

Response to key issues

We work with our partners across North Yorkshire to provide a consistent, holistic approach to dealing with young people - working with social services, Safe and Sound Homes (SASH - emergency accommodation), Foundation, Barnados, Broadacres Housing Association and all support providers of accommodation.

Homelessness and advice services for young people in Hambleton have been brought together under one roof - 'Young People's Housing Solutions at the Hub'. All young people aged 16-25yrs who are homeless or at risk of homelessness should be referred to the Hub. It is made up of the Hambleton Housing Options team, Hub Coordinator, Time out/mediation worker (Foundation) and a homelessness prevention worker from children and young people's service. The Hub offers universal support and advice on housing-related issues to all young people aged 16 to 25. For those at risk of homelessness, the service offers advice and mediation to help young people remain in/return to their home or make alternative suitable living arrangements with friends or family. Where this is not successful, young people who require more intensive support will enter into the 'Pathway.'

Pathway process

Pathway 1 - this continues to offer support to try to help young people return home. Young people may be provided with emergency accommodation with a host family (for up to two weeks) or with short-term accommodation (for up to six weeks) whilst this is happening.

Pathway 2 - this offers longer term support where young people have been unable to return home. The support required will be determined following assessment of need and may include generic floating support without accommodation or more intensive support with accommodation for up to two years. This will be followed by a period of resettlement and priority for housing.

Case study: Young People's Housing Solutions at the Hub - The Crossing resident

Mr X went into supported housing in July 2013. His relationship with his Mum and three younger siblings had broken down and mediation had been tried without success in getting him back home (under pathway 1 - see above). He was a casual drug user and often stole from shops and sold the produce to fund his habit. Mum was worried about the effects on his younger siblings and the unsavoury characters hanging around the house so she made a referral into the Hub. After the mediation sessions had failed Mr X went into emergency housing with a host for a short period - until a supported housing scheme came up with a vacancy. The Hub coordinator referred him for this vacancy and Mr X was offered this supported housing for up to two years (under pathway 2). Whilst in this housing the support worker managed to get Mr X on a course with Harcas to manage his drug dependency and enrolled in the local college to embark on a plastering NVQ. Mr X spent a total of 13 months in the supported scheme, when he was then ready to fill out a resettlement report to get him prioritised for a property with Broadacres Housing Association. Mr X has since bid for properties through North Yorkshire Home Choice and has been re-housed permanently into his own property with Broadacres Housing Association. He continues with his course and has a part time job in a local takeaway restaurant. Mr X is looking forward to passing his course so he can start to look for work as a plasterer.

We have commenced work with Foundation and a local housing provider to identify a suitable site for a scheme of between four and six supported flats for young people in Northallerton to replace

provision previously in Thirsk. This scheme will consist of six units instead of the existing four, each self-contained with kitchens and bathroom facilities with communal areas and a garden. The scheme will also offer an extensive support programme for each individual and this will be tailored to their needs.

The Crossing

A group of young homeless people are settling into their new homes in a £1.4million purpose built new development. Broadacres Housing Association has built nine one-bedroom apartments on the site of the former station house next to the train station in Northallerton. This is known as "The Crossing". The scheme has replaced the previous Broadacres homeless service for young people at 57 South Parade in Northallerton. The nine self-contained apartments all have their own bedroom, bathroom and living area with kitchen. There is also a communal area - 'the underground.'

Stephen O'Brien Broadacres Scheme Manager for young people said: "We are absolutely delighted with the new building and everyone is settling in well. Unfortunately, for many reasons, young people can find themselves without a roof over their head so schemes like this play an important part in supporting them to transform their lives for the better and assist them into permanent sustainable housing in the future."

Through North Yorkshire County Council's Supporting People, we have designated Time Out worker and a Children and Young Person's Service (CYPS) worker who provide training in schools to teach young people about homelessness and how their behaviour can impact on their housing and lifestyle.

Desired Outcomes

- To increase the provision of supported housing for young people with high support needs.
- To continue to provide universal support and advice on housing-related issues to all young people aged 16 to 25.
- To continue to provide homeless and advice for young people under one roof.

Key Actions

We need to:

- continue to participate in and support Young People's Housing Solutions at the Hub
- work with the Homes and Communities Agency, a social housing provider and Foundation Housing to provide a scheme of four to six high support flats in Northallerton through 'Platform for Life' and other funding streams
- continue to work with Foundation to refer all young people who present to the Housing Options Team for floating support, to assist with applying for benefits, debt advice, mental health issues, drug and alcohol issues, and any other problem they may have with access to suitable housing provision due to their age and vulnerability
- continue to attend MAPS (Multi Agency Problem Solving) meetings to work in partnership with the local police and local Housing Associations for successful management of anti-social behaviour of young people
- continue to develop and provide training in schools through our designated Time Out and Children and Young Person's Service (CYPS) workers
- provide tenancy training to new tenants so they are clear of their rights and responsibilities and their relationships with landlords.

Priority 3: Working with Vulnerable Groups

Key Issues

- In Hambleton we work with lots of vulnerable groups who may find themselves homeless through a lifestyle choice, mental illness, or domestic abuse.
- We need to further develop and improve the way in which we involve this client group in service planning and development decisions.
- It is vital that we engage with hard to reach groups when developing our service and that our services and communication methods are accessible to all. This is particularly challenging in rural areas where there are fewer groups and facilities and where access to wi-fi can be problematic.
- North Yorkshire Home Choice is the key tool for accessing housing within Hambleton. It is therefore critical that we - along with our partners - ensure that it is accessible to everyone in housing need. The Housing Manager is chair of the North Yorkshire Home Choice Equalities Group.
- MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements) and MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) meetings are pivotal forums for close working with housing providers, the Probation service, the Police, and other agencies - and in developing procedures to provide safe housing solutions for offenders leaving prison, victims of domestic violence and helping to keep adults and children safe from violent partners. More strategically we have recently worked closely with the probation service and other North Yorkshire local authorities to review the process for housing ex-offenders.

- We refer to Yorkshire Housing to provide a 'making safe' service to victims of domestic violence to help them stay safe in their own homes.
- We work with the local support group, Hambleton and Richmondshire Community Addiction Service (HARCAS), which supports people with drug/alcohol addiction, assists homeless people with drinking problems into accommodation, and helps support them to sustain tenancies.
- In July 2009 a Women's Refuge was opened in Northallerton for Hambleton and Richmond residents fleeing domestic violence (DV). This was funded in part by commuted sums received by the Council in lieu of affordable housing provision.



Women's Refuge

On July 27, 2009 the women's refuge was opened in Northallerton for women fleeing DV in Hambleton and Richmond areas. The facility cannot be identified by its name or exact whereabouts, in order to provide a safe environment for women and their children who are the victims of DV and in the middle of an established network of support. Broadacres Housing Association has worked with Hambleton and Richmond councils to create a refuge which can hold a number of different families and can be reconfigured dependant on numbers and family make up. The facility includes an ICT suite, a fully equipped children's room, a sensory garden, quiet spaces, individual consultation rooms and shared living space. Each apartment is fully equipped and furnished and has been designed to recreate a homely but safe environment.

The refuge was created with the help of grants from the Homes and Communities Agency, Hambleton District Council and North Yorkshire County Council. Local businesses in Northallerton and Thirsk have also offered support.

Women in crisis from across Hambleton and Richmondshire can now find a local place of safety and get the support they need to help to rebuild their lives in a supportive and caring environment.

Response to key issues

- We sit on panels dealing with the procurement of supporting people services such as those for gypsies and travellers and Disabled Facilities Grants

Response to key issues

- We sit on panels dealing with the procurement of supporting people services such as those for gypsies and travellers and Disabled Facilities Grants
- The Multi Agency Public Protection Authority (MAPPA) protocol has been refreshed and improved to provide greater clarity around protocols and timescales for securing accommodation for offenders leaving prison.
- We currently chair the North Yorkshire Home Choice Equalities Group and more locally the Mental Health panel meetings - and liaise with support services to ensure that the views and difficulties faced by vulnerable groups such as older people and those with dementia, gypsy and traveller groups, domestic violence cases and MAPPA and young people are taken on board when developing services.
- We train our staff to ensure that vulnerable clients are fairly represented and supported when using our services.
- We signpost people to appropriate services and work closely with the credit union in Northallerton to refer people with debt and in need of debt advice.
- We undertook a call for gypsy sites and worked with the gypsy and traveller community to bring forward additional pitches at Sutton on Forest and Thirsk.

Desired Outcomes

- To achieve planned moves for clients that are being released from prison - safe housing for the clients as well as looking at risks to the community.
- To continue to offer specialist housing support to vulnerable clients once they have been housed.

- For our partners to continue to provide specialised support services to enable clients to sustain tenancies no matter what their vulnerability may be.

Key Actions

We will:

- continue to support and participate in a joint working approach with our partner agencies
- deliver support services to vulnerable groups through the procurement of services and regular liaison.

Priority 4: Improving Access to Services and Advice

Key Issues

- Footfall into the Housing Options Service was 585 in 2013-14 an average of 11.25 people per week.
- The Council's Supported People funded Foundation service provided floating support to 207 households and gave advice to a further 100 during 2013/14.
- There were also 70 applications and awards for North Yorkshire Local Assistance Funds in 2013/14.
- Increasingly people turn to our service when seeking help to buy food.
- In the past people have found that access to our services has been over complex and fragmented. We have developed a single access and referral service in partnership with other service providers and rebranded ourselves as a Housing Options Service. More people are now accessing the new service and are receiving the support and help they need.

- In 2011 Hambleton became a partner of North Yorkshire Home Choice, a choice based lettings partnership which operates across all of North Yorkshire, except Harrogate. Home Choice replaced traditional housing waiting lists and offers eligible residents improved housing choice, flexibility and transparency when looking for a property.
- In 2012 Hambleton signed up to the North Yorkshire Tenancy Strategy www.northyorkshirestrategichousingpartnership.co.uk/images/documents/NY_Tenancy_Strategy_Oct_2012.pdf. This framework articulates a number of shared goals in respect of tenancy policy across North Yorkshire. It seeks to protect and provide for the interests of vulnerable groups, increase choice, advice and access for customers and address issues of equality, diversity and fairness and consistency across North Yorkshire.
- We want to further improve our Housing Options service by increasing our customer focus and improving the information and advice we provide - so it is universal, clear, transparent and accessible to all. We recognise the importance of offering choice to customers.
- We are keen to help older people for whom moving may be very traumatic and staying put with adaptations or support may be a preferred option. Removing barriers to equality will be at the heart of all of the work that we do and addressing all areas of inequality will form part of any future performance monitoring of our service.
- We are striving to deliver an excellent service to our customers that is streamlined, efficient and modern - achieving the Gold Standard will be a critical milestone in demonstrating that we are well on our way to achieving this.

- Many clients are facing housing difficulties and accessing our services as a result of financial inclusion and worklessness. We need to help these people to rebuild their lives by ensuring that they have access to appropriate financial services that will enable them to manage their money on a day to day basis, plan for the future and cope with financial pressures.

Response to key issues

- The Council has pledged to run a “Gold Standard” Housing Options service over the next five years. This will involve peer group inspections of our service by neighbouring local authorities and benchmarking to make sure that advice and assistance for our clients - both written and face to face - is of a “gold standard” service.
- Faith groups, along with the Council and Broadacres Housing Association have set up a food bank in Northallerton and Easingwold to provide people with food parcels if benefits have been sanctioned - to allow families struggling to have a three day supply of food provided.
- Many clients are supported to make life changes by colleagues at Foundation. There is also a need for support for people with complex needs. Floating support can be the least expensive and most effective intervention to help people achieve independent living.
 - We signpost clients to other agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Foundation and local Credit Unions to help them manage their money, plan for the future and cope with financial pressures.

- Increasingly housing providers and housing support providers across Hambleton are helping vulnerable groups by offering advice and assistance to maximise their incomes and also signposting them to the best support services possible. This includes helping debt awareness and prevention, tackling fuel poverty, providing assistance and advice to cope with rising food and energy bills, helping residents to access affordable credit and ethical financial services and helping them to avoid court action and repossession, thus increasing homelessness.
- In 2013 the Council partnered with Broadacres, Age UK and North Yorkshire County Council to set up a Senior Home Moves Service to help older people to make informed housing choices.
- We currently assist older people and people with disabilities to remain in their homes through Disabled Facilities Grants delivered via a local Homes Improvement Agency (HIA), Swale Home Improvement Agency which is part of the Yorkshire Housing group.

Desired Outcomes

- To develop and maintain an excellent Housing Options Service that is more customer facing
- Continue to offer support and services that help to match those people with homes that are the right size and type to meet their needs

- To make life for all our residents as easy as possible for as long as possible by making sure there is flexibility and choice in their housing, care and support
- Offer improved housing services, advice and assistance for specific vulnerable groups including gypsies and travellers, black and minority ethnic groups and migrant workers supported by access to appropriate and comprehensive advice services
- To ensure that comprehensive information on housing options in both the private and social housing sectors is made readily available and accessible to all.
- To ensure that clients have continued access to housing related support
- To extend the availability of credit union services and local access points to both urban and rural areas within Hambleton and deliver specialist education services and savings clubs for vulnerable groups and young people.

Hambleton District Council is currently working towards ten gold standards for the Housing Options service. The process will start off with a peer review of the service - a structured assessment to make sure the best outcomes for the customer are being achieved, staff are supported and provided with appropriate training and the best use of current resources are made.

The review will, through a snapshot but detailed assessment, highlight gaps in service provision, recognise good practice and make recommendations for service improvements. Fundamentally, it is a 'critical friend' assessment of how a local authority is performing in its efforts to tackle homelessness. The inspection will follow the customer's journey by talking to and shadowing staff; speaking to partner agencies and organisations, both external and internal; and completing off-site and on-site assessments.

The inspectors will be Housing Options staff from a neighbouring local authority - it is advantageous to have an experienced pair of eyes reviewing the service, that have a similar understanding of the challenges faced, is not making any financial gain from the process but recognise that good practice can and will be shared.

Hambleton District Council's inspection is due at the end of February - with our target to reach 60% or more. We will then set ourselves one year to carry out each of the ten gold standard challenges listed below:-

■ Ten Gold Standards

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
8. To have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually to be responsive to emergency 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 six weeks

Key Actions

We will:

- Achieve Gold Standard by March 2017
- Remain a partner of North Yorkshire Home Choice
- Continue to work with Foundation to provide floating support for clients needing this service
- Continue to offer support and financial assistance for older people and people with disabilities to maintain and adapt their existing homes
- Improve our website and literature to make them more customer facing
- Work with private sector landlords to improve access and improve services across the private rented sector
- Continue to support the North Yorkshire Tenancy Strategy
- Continue to work with North Yorkshire County Council, Horton and the Traveller Community to address the housing and support needs of gypsies and travellers, including the procurement of this service in November 2014
- Continue to provide the existing food bank in the areas of Northallerton and Easingwold.

Priority 5: Delivering More Affordable Homes

Key Issues

Shortage of Affordable homes

There is a shortage of affordable homes throughout Hambleton. Many homes are out of the reach of local people. In 2013 Hambleton's average house price was £229,496. This is 8.69 times the average median income.

The North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (North Yorkshire SHMA) identified a need for an additional 320 homes per year for the period April 2010 to 2016. This impacts on our homeless service. At 10 March 2014, Hambleton had 1,378 households registered as awaiting social housing.

The work of our Rural Housing Enabler has seen over 150 much needed rural affordable homes delivered since 2011, through the development of rural exception sites and negotiation through planning gain.

There is a high demand for private rented accommodation, particularly around Thirsk and Northallerton. Because demand is so strong, rent levels are relatively high - £325-£500, for a one bed flat, £500-600 per calendar month for a two bed house, £600-750 per calendar month for a three bed house (Rightmove July 2014). As a consequence, rent levels are unaffordable to many single people. Annual household income levels required to access this tenure were reported in the NY SHMA as being £21,940 for a one bed property £26,781 for a two bed property and £29,589 for a three bed property, compared to a median household income of £24,700 at that time.

Within Hambleton, the North Yorkshire SHMA identifies that intermediate housing products can play an important role in helping to bridge the gap between social renting and owner-occupation, some products enable occupants to staircase - rent and acquire further equity in their home. This

tenure can be an attractive option for younger working people on low income who are otherwise unable to access the housing market, either in lending terms or because of challenges in saving for a deposit.

Welfare Reform has had a massive impact on residents housed within this sector as people below the age of 35 cannot get the single room rate for private rented accommodation when claiming housing benefit. They can only claim the shared room rate which is a difference of £40 per week in our area, thus making private rented one bedroom accommodation unaffordable.

New affordable homes delivered through planning gain on market housing sites have been mainly two or three bedroom properties. Traditionally the social housing stock across Hambleton has been dominated by larger properties and historically this allowed people to move in when they were single and to remain there when they found a partner and had a family. However, now the bedroom tax impacts on social housing properties many single people housed in this sector can no longer afford to live in homes they are under-occupying.

The shortage of one bedroom accommodation is having a massive effect on young homeless single people as many are being housed in areas such as Darlington and Middlesbrough where private properties are smaller and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) are much more affordable and common.

Response to key Issues

- We need to continue to deliver more affordable homes across the district, particularly smaller and single person homes - including some one bedroom properties to meet the housing need of couples.
- In the light of Welfare Reform changes we need to enable more shared homes across the district to provide affordable housing options for single people, both in the private and social rented sector.

Desired Outcomes

- To ensure the delivery of more affordable homes schemes across the district to meet local housing needs ensuring that they are of the right size and of good quality.
- To provide more settled accommodation for single people and improve their housing choices.

Key Actions

We will:

- Continue to work to increase the supply of affordable accommodation within the district through close working with the Homes and Communities Agency, Registered Provider Partners and continued support of the Rural Housing Enabler Programme.
- Employ a Private Sector Worker to explore with local landlords the scope and appetite to provide an HMO in the Thirsk and Northallerton areas and build better working relationship with private rented sector agents and landlords.

Environmental Health officers can assist with this process in the following ways:

- local knowledge of many landlords from complaint investigations and aware of particular sized properties that may fit housing need - for example single occupancy units
- working to produce a landlord's database and subsequent newsletter to update them on changes within the sector
- work closely with letting agents and have recently given free training on HHSRS assessments
- working to produce an HMO database of licensable and non-licensable HMOs following a district wide survey

- consulters as part of the planning process and consultees on housing or flat conversions or large HMO classifications.

The Localism Act 2011 has given freedom to local authorities to discharge a homelessness duty in private sector accommodation in any area. This presents a positive opportunity for officers from Environmental Health to work jointly with Housing Options to:

- engage with private landlords and improve joint working
- drive improvements to property and management standards
- tackle rogue landlords
- ensuring tenants have the right property and support at the initial stages to sustain a tenancy
- engage with other local authorities who want to discharge their homeless duty within the district.

This increased involvement will improve access to good quality, well managed accommodation in the private rented sector which, within Hambleton district, now exceeds the number of properties provided by social housing.

- Work closely with our planning department to negotiate an element of smaller (one bedroom) homes as part of the affordable housing provision on market housing sites.

Priority 6: Working with Partners

Key issues

- We are a member of the North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Partnership which is led by the Local Government North Yorkshire and York Housing Board. This Board comprises political members from

each North Yorkshire local authority, North Yorkshire County Council, the two National Parks and representatives from two Registered Providers and the house building industry, with advice and support from the Homes and Communities Agency. Its role is to identify shared strategic housing ambitions and priorities and to monitor performance and delivery against them.

- Under the Board sits a number of officer groups headed by the North Yorkshire Chief Housing Officers Group. This group is made up of Chief Housing Officers from all the local authorities, plus representatives from North Yorkshire County Council, the two National Parks and key local Registered Providers. It offers technical support and advice to local Housing Options Services.
- The Chief Housing Officers Group is further supported by specialist technical groups, significantly for this strategy, the County Homelessness Group. This is a group of Housing Managers and Team Leaders who meet quarterly to champion good practice, develop shared protocols and identify funding opportunities. The group also ensures that accurate performance and monitoring information is reported and make recommendations to the Chief Housing Officers on how best to respond to any new challenges and flag delivery issues as they arise. Locally members of this group also play a key role in liaising with colleagues from other disciplines both within their own local authorities and through other sub-regional groups. The County Homelessness has been the main driver pushing for local authority pledges to sign up to delivering the Gold Standard housing options team service for each local authority. It will also be pivotal in ensuring the delivery of the Gold Standard responsible for the sharing of good practice across the sub region and carrying out a Diagnostic Peer Review through the Peer led Practitioner Prevention Partnership.

- The County Homeless Group also contributed to the development of the Homelessness Review and Homelessness Strategy, and will continue to provide us with feedback and ideas and government funding opportunities across the North Yorkshire partnership.

- North Yorkshire County Council is a key partner which provides funding for services and staffing through Supporting People including those that support the Young People's Hub, services to gypsies and travellers and is a partner of Hambleton's Senior Move Service. The County also worked alongside Hambleton and other North Yorkshire local authorities on the sub regional procurement of services to deliver improvements and adaptations to assist vulnerable clients.

Priorities in response

We work with partners to ensure that we share good practice with other North Yorkshire local authorities across all areas of homeless work.

We have re-written the Multi Agency Public Protection Assessment (MAPPA) procedures in conjunction with the North Yorkshire Home Choice allocations system and the Probation service in North Yorkshire, thus providing services for ex-offenders -supporting and dealing appropriately with ex-offenders and housing needs.

We provide housing services for victims of domestic violence and attend Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) - supporting and dealing appropriately with clients who, as victims of domestic violence, are vulnerable and need support to manage their affairs and future housing options.

We work in partnership with support workers from the women's refuge in Northallerton to assist with the re-housing of women and families who are the victims of domestic abuse and are ready to move on from the supported safety of the refuge.

We look to increase access to settled accommodation, and we seek to make better use of the private rented sector as settled accommodation and improve access to floating support services (Foundation) when vulnerable clients are placed in private rented accommodation.

We also work closely with our partners at North Yorkshire County Council and sit on procurement panels for our supported services within North Yorkshire- gypsy and travellers supported services and floating support services (Foundation and Broadacres refuge support worker services).

Membership of the North Yorkshire Housing Partnership provides a vehicle for collaborative working with other North Yorkshire local authorities - developing shared strategic priorities and increases our ability to access funding as well as being a forum to share good practice and innovation.

The Council is a partner of North Yorkshire Home Choice - North Yorkshire's Choice Based Lettings scheme - which provides greater choice for residents looking to move to an affordable home.

To get the best outcomes for our clients we also work closely with North Yorkshire County Council (through supporting people funded services), Registered Provider partners, Foundation (our floating support agency which is supporting people funded) and other agencies such as the Police, Probation and Horton Housing.

Through partnership working the Council has also signed up to joint protocols for Multi Agency Public Protection Assessments (MAPPA) and No Second Night Out (NSNO) and attend Multi Agency Problem Solving (MAPS) to deal with offenders of anti-social behaviour. We attend Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) to ensure victims of domestic violence have safe places to live.

We also work with partners at North Yorkshire County Council for advice and assistance on drug, alcohol and mental health problems.

We have close working relationships with other sections of the Council including Housing Benefits, Planning, Environmental Health and Legal.

We are committed to working with our Environmental Health colleagues as housing is a basic need and for many households represents their biggest expense - from rental payments to energy bills. The private rented sector has higher rents than in social housing, and despite one in five people now renting privately the sector is still relatively weakly regulated for an industry of this size. Homelessness within the sector is intrinsically linked to poverty.

Supporting people into housing should also mean ensuring properties are not only suitable but a sustainable option for their needs both now and in the future - and not just a stop gap. This has a big influence on income poverty and whether a person's situation is sustainable and able to improve.

Private rented households have the highest rates of non-decency and damp problems and the rates are even higher for those in poverty. Many low income households may have to tolerate poor living conditions in order to make their housing costs more affordable. Unsuitable or poor quality housing and housing support have as much impact on health and well-being as illness, by causing additional unforeseen problems.

- Damp includes problems of rising damp, penetrating damp and excess condensation and mould.
- Non decent homes fail to meet at least one of the following: the statutory minimum standard under the Health and Safety Rating System, be in a reasonable state of repair, have reasonably modern facilities and services and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

Case Study - Partnership working with Environmental Health

Around 12 months ago Mr Smith's marriage broke down and he came to the Council's homeless team for assistance. He found his own private rented property which the Foundation Housing team inspected and determined as suitable. The Council paid the bond and the first month's rent.

Last December the Environmental Health team received a complaint from Mr Smith regarding

damp conditions within the property. A Housing inspection was carried out under the Housing, Health and Safety Rating system (HHSRS) which found:

- the property had inadequate heating - the tenant had replaced the main electrical fire in the living room because it was broken - at his own expense and bought an additional portable room heater. This was in addition to the two oil filled portable radiators provided by the landlord. The fixed heating in the bathroom was defective and not being used. No improvement in warmth had been achieved but the tenant estimated the cost of trying to heat the house was £10 per day.
- damp in the bedroom with blown plaster since the start of the tenancy - repairs had been done to leaking guttering, thought to be the source of the problem, but the damp plaster was not addressed.
- the fire escape through the kitchen offered no protection in the event of a fire starting in the kitchen. The early warning detection was in the wrong place - the tenant was at risk of being trapped.
- unsuitable stair construction to the lower level bathroom presenting a risk of falling.

The officer identified that three category 1 hazards existed: 'Excess cold', 'Fire safety' and 'Falling on stairs' - which the landlord is legally required to address and make improvements.

If you rent a house or self-contained flat, your landlord or Management Agency must show you an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) before you move in. The tenant advised he had not been shown a copy of the EPC. The property had solid walls, high ceilings, single glazed windows and no gas central heating - all of which together indicate poor thermal efficiency. The subsequent EPC confirmed the property had a 'G' band rating which meant it had no energy efficiency with high running costs.

The Energy Act 2011 provides powers to ensure that from April 2018 it will be unlawful to rent out a residential or business premise that does not

reach a minimum energy efficiency standard - the intention is for this to be set at EPC rating "E".

The tenant was paying £390 per month for a two bedroomed house - however because it was so cold and damp he refused to have his children staying with him and was not using the main bedroom. He now wants to leave because of the conditions and being too expensive to heat.

These issues could have been addressed by Environmental Health at the beginning of the tenancy rather than at the end. The Category 1 hazards could have been addressed without any extra expense to the tenant. Conditions may have been improved to a level that he felt happy to have his family stay and continue with the tenancy.

The tenant is now in a further year of unsettlement and possibly in a position where if he makes himself intentionally homeless he will not be eligible for further support from the Council.

Further emphasis needs to be placed on housing standards as a key priority to provide sustainable housing options that support the tenant and ensure a positive outcome for individuals who go through the process.

Desired Outcomes

- To develop the best holistic outcomes for our clients.
- To further improve and develop our services in an environment of reduced funding.

Key Actions

- Continue to remain as a partner of the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership and North Yorkshire Home Choice.
- Continue to support the young people's pathway.
- Continue to work with providers and agencies such as Probation and the Police to deliver services.

Delivering the Homeless Strategy

Resources

Partners

Whilst the provision of a Housing Options Service is a statutory duty of the Council, the actual delivery of the service relies on the support of many formal and informal partners including other North Yorkshire local authorities, North Yorkshire County Council, Registered Providers, local delivery agents, support agencies and private sector companies. Moving forward we will need to work closely with these partners if we are to realise the ambitions of the strategy. Partnership working will become increasingly critical in light of government funding cuts and as we increasingly need to demonstrate value for money.

Investment

Major programmes of investment such as the delivery of new affordable homes are overseen, facilitated and in part funded by the Homes and Communities Agency. We will need to work closely with the agency to explore funding opportunities through the Affordable Homes Programme 2 and Continuous Market Engagement to enable more affordable provision on Registered Provider led sites in our towns and rural areas and also to discuss the potential for funding through 'Platform for Life' for increased provision for young and single people.

As a minimum to deliver the Strategy we will require the financial provisions set out in the Investment Plan to Prevent Homelessness 2013/15 to be rolled forward annually for the life of the strategy, subject to annual review if we are continue to provide and build upon the services we already provide. This funding pot is critical in terms of supporting the employment of one of our Housing Options Advisors, contributing towards the Rural Housing Enabler post, supporting Choice Based Lettings, working with private sector landlords and the Homeless Prevention Fund (the fund from which we provide Bonds and rent in advance to homeless clients or clients facing homelessness). For the past two years we have spent the Homeless Prevention Fund of £20k within the first six months of the year and relied on carried forward money to enable us to continue to offer this assistance. In 2012/13 we spent £59,000 on bonds and this year

we are on track to spend a similar amount. This will leave no carry forward for next year and in future we will have to consider how to prioritise clients and how this 'prioritisation' will impact on other resources unless additional funding is made available.

Staffing Levels

The Housing Options service at Hambleton has recently gone through a restructure and current staffing levels are:

- Housing and Planning Policy Manager
- Housing Option Team Leader
- Three Housing Options Advisors (two permanent FTE and one temporary fixed term contract until July 2015)
- Temporary Private sector worker - one day per week (initially for one year) starting October 13, 2014 - subject to funding in the future.

This is the minimum staffing required to deliver our strategic priorities and our service and as such we will seek to secure funding for the temporary posts to become permanent in the 2015/16 budget.

Additionally the service benefits from the support of two key roles provided by partners:

- 0.5 Children and Young People Homeless prevention worker (provided by North Yorkshire County Council) to support 16/17yr olds and care leavers for the HDC Young People's Hub
- 0.5 Time Out Worker (Provided by Foundation) to support 18-25yr olds for the HDC Young People's Hub.

Monitoring and Implementation

We have identified a number of tasks set out in our Action Plan overleaf that we will need to complete in order to deliver the ambitions set out within our six priorities.

The Action Plan will be a tool for monitoring progress against key milestones and targets. It will be monitored and reviewed by the Council annually.

Implementation/Action Plan

Task No	Task	Lead	Performance Indicator/ Specific Actions	Risk	Resources Required	Target date
Preventing Homelessness - Strategic Priority 1						
1	<p>Maximise all prevention options at the Housing Options Service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Maintain advice and assistance given to households to prevent homelessness ■ Liaise with landlords seeking to evict ■ Maintain mediation and reconciliation work ■ Maintain resettlement work in prisons ■ Liaise with similar local authorities to learn about effective preventative services 	Housing Options Team Leader - Alison Morton	Number/percentage of households prevented from becoming homeless after housing advice and assistance	Prevention is main focus of our service if this does not remain the main focus then there will be an increase in homeless applications leading to financial implications for HDC	Officer time and sufficient officers to deal with duty rota, visits and answering phones etc	Ongoing priority
2	<p>Improve access to private sector properties</p> <p>Increase the portfolio of private sector properties by incentivising landlords to get involved in the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bond scheme (for families) ■ Bond Scheme (for singles) ■ HMO Housing Multiple Occupancy - Thirsk (for singles) ■ Shared house scheme 	Housing Options Team Leader - Alison Morton Environmental Health Officer - Joy Swithenbank	Number/percentage of households placed in the PRS and number of properties available	RSL properties are scarce and number of 1 bed accommodation is scarce so private sector links must be achieved and maintained.	Officer to take on duty to facilitate this Private sector worker project To work closely with environmental health for inspection of suitable standards of properties (eg no CAT 1 hazard and high CAT 2's)	Bid successful - due to start in October 2014 for initially 1 year - bid for funding for future years dependant on this year's success

Task No	Task	Lead	Performance Indicator/ Specific Actions	Risk	Resources Required	Target date
3	Introduce ceasing the homeless duty into the private rented sector	Head of Service - Sue Walters-Thompson Housing Options Team Leader - Alison Morton Environmental Health Team Leader- Joy Swithenbank	Number/percentage of households placed in the PRS and number of properties available	Failure to carry on working with Private landlords in this area will increase homelessness duty for our local Authority and increased waiting times for social housing	Officer time and resources to liaise and negotiation with private landlords. Environmentl Health to provide legal information to private landlords and carry out Cat 1 and 2 Hazard Inspections	Ongoing
4	Explore the option of a private sector renting for single people and houses in multiple occupation scheme.	Housing Options Team Leader - Alison Morton Environmental Health Team Leader- Joy Swithenbank	To be identified if a scheme is implemented Bid for funding through sub regional county homeless group	If not there will be an increase in single homelessness due to affordability issues and caused by benefit reform - eg bedroom tax	Officer to take on duty to facilitate this Private sector worker project Environmental Health with regard to inspection of Hazards and legal Health and Safety inspections	Bid successful - due to start in October 2014 for initially 1 year - bid for funding for future years dependant on this year's success
5	Discretionary Housing Benefit Payments (DHPs)	Housing Options Team Leader - Alison Morton and Housing Benefits Team Leader - Michelle Shaw	Number of clients being awarded a DHP -budget monitoring and allocation of money through weekly meetings	Bedroom tax clients -increased homeless applications	Officer Time	Ongoing subject to budget

Task No	Task	Lead	Performance Indicator/ Specific Actions	Risk	Resources Required	Target date
Preventing Youth Homelessness - Strategic Priority 2						
1	Represent HDC as Hub Coordinator meetings	Housing Options Team Leader - Alison Morton	Bi-monthly meetings	If not attended services to Young People will be cut in HDC	Officer time and management time	Ongoing for the duration of time for the young people's hub established in 2011
2	Chair HDC Pathway meetings and invite support providers to this	Housing Options Team Leader - Alison Morton	Bi-monthly meetings	If do not hold these meetings strategic priorities for HDC for Young People will cease	Officer time and management time	Ongoing for the duration of the young people's hub established in 2011
3	Implementation Group meetings for Young People's pathway	Head of Services - Sue Walters- Thompson	Bi-monthly meetings	If do not attend meetings -strategic priorities for HDC for young people will cease	Officer time and management time	Ongoing for the duration of the young people's hub established in 2011
4	Day to day management of Time out worker (TOW)and Children and Young People's worker (CYPS)	Housing Options Team Leader - Alison Morton	Two weekly Hub Meetings	Failure to manage the hub workers will reduce services for Young People and also reduce supported accommodation provision for and support for young people	Officer time and management time	Ongoing for the duration of the young people's hub established in 2011
5	Continuous improvement of Young People's Pathway policies and procedures to ensure continuous improvement and good practice	Head of service - Sue Walters- Thompson and Housing Options Team Leader - Alison Morton	Through attending Implementation and Pathway meetings	Young People's pathway would fail	Officer time and management of Hub staff	Monthly

Task No	Task	Lead	Performance Indicator/ Specific Actions	Risk	Resources Required	Target date
Working with Vulnerable Groups - Strategic Priority 3						
1	Identify client groups who are at a high risk of homelessness and develop options to prevent this	Housing Options Team Leader -Alison Morton	Number of households prevented from becoming homeless	RSL properties are scarce and number of 1 bed accommodation is scarce so private sector links must be achieved and maintained	Officer to take on duty to facilitate this Private sector worker project	Bid successful - due to start in October 2014 for initially 1 year - bid for funding for future years dependant on this year's success
2	Explore accommodation options and support for those entrenched clients who struggle to live independently	Housing Options Advisors (HOA)/ floating support service officers/ North Yorkshire County Council supporting people funding	The number of single people on the repeat homelessness list - if any	Supported housing is already scarce so utilisation of this is vital	Officer time and supporting people funding	Monthly multi agency meetings with lead staff
3	Every person housed in accommodation services to have a plan for their next step into independent accommodation and to address any barriers	Housing Options Team Leader - Alison Morton Housing Options Advisors Housing Support Officers - Foundation and Broadacres	Percentage of vulnerable people achieving independence	Inappropriate housing for vulnerable clients	Officer time	Ongoing
4	Review partnership working with Mental Health Support workers to improve service delivery	Housing Options Advisors and Housing Options Team Leader	Number of clients of council funded homelessness services supported by Mental health	Mental health clients being housed inappropriately without support	Officer time	Ongoing
5	Help to develop support plans to ensure clients have access to Mental health services	Housing Options Advisors - for each client	Number/percentage of clients having access to mental health services	Making sure mental health clients are treated with respect with correct support	Officer time	Ongoing

Task No	Task	Lead	Performance Indicator/ Specific Actions	Risk	Resources Required	Target date
Improving Access to service and Advice - Strategic Priority 4						
1	Accommodation based support services to actively engage clients to enable them to achieve independence.	Broadacres Housing Association - Carl Doolan Foundation - Debbie Finlayson	Number/percentage of clients of council funded homelessness support services achieving independence	Worklessness and job prospects -support is needed to assist with this	Support provider supporting people funding reduction	Ongoing - meetings held to discuss - first one in September 2014
2	Work with partners to ensure all support staff receive necessary training which gives them the skills and knowledge to work with clients to obtain positive outcomes.	North Yorkshire Training Group member - Housing Options Advisor - Claire Clayburn	Number/percentage of clients of support referrals/preventions from homelessness services achieving independence. Nominations for courses through North Yorkshire Training Group	Staff will not be trained in new services and government legislation -leading to a poor service delivery	Officer time away from the office	Monthly 1 day courses
3	The Revolving Door Service to work in partnership to identify and overcome barriers which are prohibiting a move to independent living	Homelessness Support Manager - Debbie Finlayson	The number of single people on the repeat homelessness list	Not breaking the cycle of repeat homelessness	Foundation support officer time	Ongoing
4	Gold Standard - organising and undertaking a diagnostic peer review of our service - benchmarking with other local authorities in North Yorkshire to aim to provide a gold standard Housing Options Service.	Housing Manager - Sue Walters - Thompson Housing options Team Leader - Alison Morton - peer review Housing Options Advisors Partners to our service	To be awarded the gold standard in service provision of our housing options service. To manage and measure our service and pass inspection of it.	Failure to meet the ten gold standards and peer review will demonstrate that we cannot achieve our overall goal to provide a gold standard service to our customers, this is something that corporately we have pledged to do	Officer time Peer led reviews of service - HOT leaders time and HOT Advisors inspection of service delivery Peer led reviews of other LA services - HOT Leader time	Complete by April 2016

Task No	Task	Lead	Performance Indicator/ Specific Actions	Risk	Resources Required	Target date
5	Improve access to training and employment opportunities for homeless people	All service providers	Number of people supported by Foundation floating support. Number of clients of homelessness services accessing training and employment through their support	If not done then this does not assist clients to maintain tenancies and subsequently this can lead to issues to do with worklessness	Support office time assisting with filling out with job and college applications by this is monitored through core forms by supporting people funding	Ongoing - subject to reviews regarding reduced Supporting People funding however
Delivering more affordable Homes - Strategic Priority 5						
1	Work with partners to provide 106 local connection criteria properties - affordable housing for local people - through Rural Housing Enabler role	Sarah Hall - RHE manager and Rural Housing Enabler - Amanda Madden	Number of 106 lets	Poor performance and or failure to deliver will prevent the sub region providing much need affordable homes could lead to further homelessness if not delivered	Officer time from partners	Ongoing
2	Work with partners to identify and develop new affordable housing options	Head of Service - Sue Walters- Thompson and Rural Housing Enabler - Amanda Madden	Number of affordable homes built	As above	HCA investment local authority investment and private sector investment	2011-15 programme underway

Task No	Task	Lead	Performance Indicator/ Specific Actions	Risk	Resources Required	Target date
Working with Partners - Strategic Priority 6						
1	Develop effective partnership working with probation to ensure offenders leaving prison can access appropriate accommodation. Re write MAPPA procedure/staff training	Housing Options Team Leader - Alison Morton	Number/percentage of offenders accessing suitable accommodation	Perpetrators of crime being housed inappropriately and risk to themselves and others	Officer time	New MAPPA protocol written and implemented in July 2014
2	Review the role of floating support in the prevention of homelessness	Housing options team Leader - Alison Morton Project Manager - Debbie Finlayson	Number/percentage of households prevented from becoming homeless - partner preventions as per PIE	Failure of this service or funding cuts will reduce the service we can offer to clients - thus increasing homelessness dramatically	Officer time and supporting people funding resource	Meetings held - first one due in September 2014 monitoring the service and balancing with supporting people funded to prioritise the most vulnerable clients groups
3	Improve links with Private Lettings agents	Housing options Manager - Alison Morton - and Housing Options team staff	Number of single homeless clients housed in the private rented sector. To be identified if a scheme is implemented Bid for funding through sub regional county homeless group	RSL properties are scarce and number of 1 bed accommodation is scarce so private sector links must be achieved and maintained	Officer to take on duty to facilitate this Private sector worker project	Bid successful - due to start in October 2014 for initially 1 year - bid for funding for future years dependant on this year's success
4	Improve access to floating support including intensive support	Housing Options Team Leader - Alison Morton Foundation Project TL - Debbie Finlayson	Monthly liaison Meetings with Foundation	Vulnerable clients not getting support they need to maintain tenancies	Lead officer and ground workers time	Ongoing

Task No	Task	Lead	Performance Indicator/ Specific Actions	Risk	Resources Required	Target date
5	Ensure all services are culturally sensitive, equality monitoring to take place as part of contractual and monitoring arrangements	Head of Service - Housing Options Advisors Housing Options Team Leader - Alison Morton Support service - foundation - Debbie Finlayson BHA - Carl Doolan	The number of people from protected groups accessing services and satisfied with services Monitoring through choice based lettings equality group chair	Making sure vulnerable groups can access services with support and equality is measured	Lead officer time	Ongoing
6	Develop and implement the NSNO project. This will be implemented through the North Yorkshire County Homelessness Group	Team Leaders - from all LA's in North Yorkshire	The number of people who repeatedly rough sleep The number of single people on the repeat homelessness list	Not breaking the cycle of rough sleeping and not fulfilling government guidelines through this area	All housing options team staff	Ongoing
7	Discuss cases to consider each rough sleeper to ensure they receive support. A more robust and supported case management approach to be introduced	Team Leader - Alison Morton	The number of people who repeatedly rough sleep	Service provision in the area - if we have a rough sleeper provision should be there	Lead officer time	Ongoing
8	Continue to work in partnership with County Homeless Group through joint 'No second night out protocol'	Housing Options Team Leader - Alison Morton	The number of people who repeatedly rough sleep	Not breaking the cycle of rough sleeping	Salvation army and officer time	Ongoing
9	Breathing Space - liaise with Wakefield Council re this scheme to put in referrals for clients struggling to keep up with mortgage payments - interest free loans to assist	Housing Options Team Leader - Alison Morton Housing Options Advisors Staff at Wakefield Council	Referrals Made and outcomes recorded on a monthly basis	Increase in home owners homeless applications if we do not offer this valuable service	Officer time - but this is reduced as Wakefield facilitate the applications for the loans	Ongoing

Appendix A

Services to Homeless Families and Pregnant Women

1. All homeless families and pregnant women will continue to be offered help to find and keep a settled home. This is not only policy it is backed by statutory duties. If a family fear they are facing homelessness for whatever reason and they get in touch with either Housing Options (by phone or visit) or a local Housing Office they will firstly be offered support and advice to either keep their existing home (e.g. debt and welfare advice, check Housing Benefits, negotiating with their current landlord) or assistance to find a new house (e.g. join the Housing Register, look in private rented sector with the help of the HDC housing options Team or a rent bond scheme). During 2013/14 families came to Housing Options saying they faced homelessness. They helped the majority of families to keep or find a settled home this is what is meant by **prevention**.
2. Between April 2013 and March 2014 homelessness was prevented or the length of stay in bed and breakfast was kept as short as possible by helping families into settled accommodation as follows:
 - Move into a Housing Association or North Yorkshire Homechoice. (357 families)
 - Get a private let for use as their settled home, with the help of our Bond Scheme (486 Single people and Families)
3. If homelessness cannot be prevented or it is unreasonable for the household to stay where they are (e.g. fleeing domestic violence) then the Council will arrange temporary accommodation.
4. Nearly all refugee families need to go to social services because the Border Agency give very short notice of asylum decisions and funding can often not come from a local authority due

to the client not having access to public funds. We manage domestic violence cases arising for such clients by the effective use of the Housing Allocation Scheme - North Yorkshire Homechoice and temporary accommodation can be provided through the refuge based in Northallerton, which means families are transferred directly into alternative North Yorkshire Homechoice accommodation. If the person fleeing cannot return to the home that they have fled from. In other cases, we refer some domestic violence cases to the local funded 'making safe project to enable victims of domestic violence to stay in their homes with safety options put in if the perpetrator is taken away. Referrals to temporary accommodation are based on risks presenting to the family. If domestic violence is discussed or suspected officers always tell service users about the range of services available in the District and outside the district. If a person is fleeing domestic violence they can present anywhere in the country they do not have to present to their local council. This is to ensure that the client is safe and feels safe and they will not be subject to local connection requirements as with other client groups.

5. Between April 2013 and March 2014 42 families went into a private rented house as a temporary measure. The Council believes that with very few exceptions, it is better for a family to be offered a family home rather than bed and breakfast accommodation. Certainly bed and breakfast will only be used as a last resort in an emergency. Between April 2013 and March 2014 3 families had to use bed and breakfast for very short periods of time usually less than 4 nights before moving into another temporary or settled accommodation.
6. If no settled home is immediately available and the family is in crisis then a bed and breakfast will be offered for as short a period as is possible. But better still would be an independent home. That is why we have temporary accommodation which is leased

to HDC through either Broadacres HA and/ or Endeavour Housing association so we can offer this to families who need housing temporarily till a permanent home can be found.. Families have generally welcomed this; it has given people access to homes in more parts of the District as well as independence. The proposal now is to cease the Council's homelessness duty to the private rented sector also and as well as a registered social landlord property if a private sector tenancy can be offered for more a minimum of 12 months.

7. We agree that some teenage parents will need a specialist supportive environment so there is currently provision for this in the District through our supported housing schemes for under 25 yr olds. The Council aims to continue to work in partnership with Children's Services who will work with Housing Options to identify who needs this accommodation. The length of stay in this supported accommodation will be assumed to be longer than in other accommodation services. However, there will still be an emphasis on families being helped to get their own settled independent home within a maximum period of 2 years.
8. To reduce the risk that our calculations are wrong and to give some buffer if homelessness rises we have previously given notice on some of our temporary accommodation due to high costs of running these. However we have made agreements with Broadacres and Endeavour Housing Associations in order to ask for more units again if required in the future for temporary accommodation if the need arises and homeless applications start to rise. We will not simply place clients in Bed and breakfast if this need arises.
9. Housing related support will be provided within the temporary accommodation that the council provides to all homeless clients through Foundation homeless prevention support service, but Housing Options will track progress made by the provider in meeting

support needs and finding independent settled accommodation. Where appropriate, on-going floating support will be provided by foundation (when the family move into permanent accommodation) and by Foundation provider if moving into Housing Associations or a private let. If Children's Services have particular concerns then the Family Support Service CYPS - Children and young people's service will provide the support. The majority of homeless families need little further housing related support once they have their own settled home. We do not generally get repeat homeless families (i.e. very different to the situation with homeless single people). Currently some refugee families receive housing related support through a specialist provider in social services. All of which are North Yorkshire County Council funded floating support providers.

How is this different to the current service?

The proposed differences are-

10. **Any family who faces homelessness and wants council funded temporary accommodation will need to contact Housing Options Team based at the Civic centre council offices in Northallerton.** This is good practice because they can be told of their housing rights, their correct band on North Yorkshire Homechoice, and be offered alternatives where appropriate.

At the moment, most families who enter social services first are referred by individual social workers, police, support/advice services, other Domestic Violence refuges and self-referrals.
11. Some families will be offered a private sector let as their settled accommodation, not just as a temporary measure. This will avoid or reduce the time waiting in temporary accommodation for an offer of a housing association let. This is what is meant by **ceasing duty into the private rented sector.**

There will be careful processes to ensure that these offers are suitable and that they are made with due regard to equitable treatment. One reaction from some families may be that they no longer come to us as homeless, because they just look themselves for a private sector let. If they approach Housing Options for help we will continue to offer a rent bond to help them to do this. This is becoming more common. The availability of private family homes for rent has grown considerably in recent years.

12. Family Support will be available to vulnerable families, not just in the women’s Refuge. Where Children’s Services or the local Housing Options team identifies that a homeless family is facing difficulties that might mean they will lose their home and whole family support is needed, then they will refer that family to the Family Support Service (FSS) as well as Foundation floating support.

At the moment (FSS) is funded for those families already involved with social services. The proposal is that a family who needs this help can be offered the service to either prevent homelessness, during a temporary accommodation stay, or when they have moved into settled accommodation. Children’s Services will advise housing on the need and priority.

Housing Services for Single People and Childless Couples

1. Generally speaking, the state expects single people and couples without children to make their own housing arrangements. This is unlike the situation for families, where homelessness and other legislation give a comprehensive safety net, to ensure children have somewhere to live, almost always with their families.
2. Statute and case law recognise that some single people and couples are “vulnerable” which is defined as “when homeless, a person is less able to fend for himself than

an ordinary homeless person so that injury or detriment to him will result, when a less vulnerable person would be able to cope without harmful effect.” Also known as the ‘Pereira’ test.

3. For these people the Council must make suitable accommodation available and this may include a period in temporary accommodation while their vulnerability is assessed and then, if vulnerable, while suitable accommodation is found.
4. Housing authorities have a duty to provide advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness to all its citizens. The provision of comprehensive advice plays an important part in delivering the Council’s strategy for preventing homelessness in the District. The type and amount of advice is not defined and can for some people be advice on a website which can therefore be universally available. The amount of detailed one to one advice and further assistance that a Council offers is for the Council to determine.
5. Hambleton District Councils policy is to:

- offer personalised housing advice to all who ask for it.
- offer further housing assistance, which may include temporary accommodation to those single people and couples:
 - who will not be able to make their own housing arrangements without more help and who therefore may become vulnerable giving rise to the duty to make accommodation available to them, if they face a crisis (prevention)
 - who may develop other problems in society if they become or continue to be homeless. For example, it is evidenced that ex-offenders are more likely to reoffend if they become homeless, people who become homeless have greater health needs, homeless people

may rough sleep giving a City a poor image. These people may not meet the definition under the housing acts as vulnerable but we have included them in our criteria for eligibility for temporary accommodation.

6. Hambleton District Council therefore needs to identify the best way to target its limited resources so as to give the right level of advice and assistance to prevent homelessness. This will include:

- Giving advice to all those who contact us, including help to allow people to continue living with, or return to, family or friends, and persuading private landlords to allow a tenant a little more time before serving a notice to quit. The Housing Options Service gives telephone advice to about 33 callers per week (this figure includes families, single people and childless couples). The service interviewed and gave personalised written advice to 585 single people, families and couples between April 2013 and March 2014.
- Providing Housing Association housing, prioritising those most in need through our housing allocation policy, and using North Yorkshire Homechoice to match people to properties.
- Arranging that a proportion of the new affordable housing the council enables is one bedroom accommodation. Over the last 2 years, 8 one bedroom homes for social rent/affordable rent have been built. This is 10.5 % of the total 76 Affordable Housing homes built in Hambleton in that period.
- Obtaining help in getting a tenancy in the private sector.

Giving rent bonds - a total of 486 rent bonds given totalling £47,891.08 (April 2013 - March 2014)

It is not always easy to predict the level of advice and assistance that a person will need to prevent the crisis of homelessness. Ideally a single person or couple will live with family or friends or in their current home, until they are successful in bidding on North Yorkshire HomeChoice or they find their own private let, perhaps with the aid of a council bond, or other housing arrangement, i.e. they make their own arrangements.

However, as recognised above, for some single people who reach that crisis point it will be reasonable to offer a period of time in temporary accommodation while they are given intensive assistance to find their own tenancy in council, housing association, or private housing or to return to living with family and friends. Support will also be given, where required, to gain the life skills needed to maintain a tenancy once they find one and prevent repeat homelessness.

The Council has identified the groups of people that in its experience, find it most difficult to make their own arrangements, and who if they become homeless may therefore need council funded temporary accommodation. This is the basis of the Eligibility Criteria for Temporary Accommodation (Appendix B) which have been consulted on. They arose from previously used criteria, but were different in defining more closely which ex-offenders and people with drug and alcohol problems would be eligible.

Except where there is a duty to provide temporary accommodation, Hambleton District Council makes it clear that temporary accommodation will only still be offered where the Council has a bed space available (where there is a duty and there is no suitable temporary accommodation unit available) bed and breakfast will be used for a limited period of time. This will also be used in severe weather provision periods.

In summary, our review of housing provision for single people and childless couples concluded that:

- in allocating one bedroom Council and Housing Association housing the Allocation Policy gives reasonable priority to prevent homelessness for single people and childless couples and to help those who become homeless.
- the current priorities for deciding the size and mix for new affordable housing should continue.
- the private sector letting scheme is very helpful for families, but it is more difficult to find accommodation for singles and progress on solving this may be slow and offers may be made out of area to cheaper areas such as Darlington for example.
- that the current rent bond scheme is a further effective safety net in helping single people and the budget should be increased not decreased to meet predicted demand.
- that offering floating support to some single people in the private sector and in Housing Associations to sustain tenancies. It will reassure landlords and may increase supply.
- the provision of temporary accommodation for single people and young people aged 16-25yrs is kept under review.

- that because the strategy emphasises prevention, the provision of floating support for private and housing association tenants should be the same or increased depending on Supporting people funding priorities.
- that the underlying issue is the shortage of permanent, not temporary accommodation and that because there is a shortage of affordable housing in the District many single people will not be able to afford their own independent accommodation within the district but may need to look at Darlington and/ or Teesside areas for more affordable housing. This can lead to frustration and sometimes conflict and crisis with family and friends. In addition other pressures in single people's lives, including unemployment, low income, and relationship breakdown, mean that some single people, usually men, find creating a stable home difficult and they will from time to time require support.
- Hambleton District Council will continue to make representation to government about the need for further housing, affordable housing and employment and training opportunities within the District and better resources to support those with drug, alcohol abuse and mental health issues.

Appendix B

Eligibility criteria for offer of emergency or temporary accommodation - August 2013

These criteria may be reviewed in response to experience of their impact.

1st criteria: are homeless or threatened with homelessness and eligible for public assistance (unless found rough sleeping).

2nd criteria: fall into one of the following categories.

No changes to previous criteria.

Category	Duty arises from
a. Family, pregnant woman (no change to previous criteria)	Housing Act 1996
b. Vulnerable Adult (no change to previous criteria)	Housing Act 1996
c. Children leaving care (no change to previous criteria)	Children's Act 1989 Referrals from Children's Division and Housing Act 1986
d. High risk offenders (no change to previous criteria)	Criminal Justice Act 2003 Duty to co-operate with Police, Probation and Prison Services under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
e. Ex-offenders leaving approved premises (no change to previous criteria)	Criminal Justice Act 2003 Referrals from Probation Service
f. Vulnerable adults and families (no change to previous criteria)	National Assistance Act 1948 Referrals from Adult Social Care Division
g. Young offenders and ex-offenders (no change to previous criteria)	Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 referrals from Youth Offending Service
h. Council tenants in an emergency (no change to previous criteria)	Identified within Housing Division (payment made by HRA, most council tenants would be rehoused within council house stock)
i. People over 60 (no change to previous criteria)	Who do not fall within above categories, identified by Housing Division

Changes in criteria

Category	Duty arises from
k. Other ex-offenders: under current eligibility criteria offences from many years ago taken into account. This new threshold will reduce numbers of people offered temporary accommodation and focus on those most likely to be facing problems.	Crime and Disorder Act 1998 General duty to prevent Crime and Disorder. Usually people approaching us within one year of leaving custodial sentence who do not fall within above categories. Identified by Housing Division with Probation Service.
l. People on identified drug and alcohol programmes or eligible for them and on waiting list. Under current eligibility criteria a client saying they use drugs or alcohol is taken into account. This new threshold will reduce numbers of people offered temporary accommodation, and focus on those with most problems.	Who do not fall within above categories. Referrals from agencies identified by ASC Drug and Alcohol Services

Notes

- Categories a: and b: are homelessness duties.
Categories c: to g: may be regarded as arising directly from other Council statutory duties.
Categories h: to l: support other high Council priorities.
- Access to emergency or temporary single homeless accommodation is primarily for those applicants that have had a settled address in the District of Hambleton for the last 6 out of 12 months immediately prior to presentation (rough sleeping will not count towards this connection) or if the applicant has always been connected to Hambleton but has been in prison/institution away from the District and is now homeless immediately post release/discharge.(exceptions to this policy will apply where there is a statutory homeless duty.)
- The Council may refuse to provide a bed space when there are no vacancies and there is no statutory duty to do so. Advice will be given. Where there is a duty and other temporary accommodation will be offered.
- The Council imposes sanctions on homelessness service users who fail to comply with accommodation and other agreements (e.g. failure to comply with rent payments or arrears agreements, threatening behaviour etc.) These sanctions can include eviction and discharge of the councils duty to accommodate due to actions such as acts of anti-social behaviour or non-payment of rent which result in a warrant for possession being issued.

This information is available in
alternative formats and languages

Further information...

If you have any housing comments or questions you would like to ask
please email housing3@hambleton.gov.uk

**You can call Customer Services on 01609 779977
to speak to a customer adviser and you can write to us:**

**Hambleton District Council - Housing Service
Civic Centre, Stone Cross, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL6 2UU**

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

2015 - 2021



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hambleton District Council's five year strategy to tackle homelessness across the district aims to shape and focus services from 2015-21.

It sets out the priorities that will help us provide the services needed by our housing options and homeless clients to improve their economic, social and environmental well-being and enable improved outcomes for them.

The strategy builds on the wider strategic priorities set out within the North Yorkshire Sub-Regional Housing and Homelessness Strategy approved in October 2012. It addresses priorities and circumstances particular to Hambleton in the context of delivering against the sub-regional objectives. Check it out here:

www.northyorkshirestrategichousingpartnership.co.uk/index.php/north-yorkshire-housing-strategy

The over arching aim of the strategy is to prevent homelessness. We hope to achieve this by building on the current success being achieved through prevention measures and increasing our focus on positive outcomes for single and young people. It will help us prioritise limited resources and deliver innovative projects that will positively impact on our clients and improve the lives of people in Hambleton facing homelessness.

The Strategy is based six key principles:

- providing anyone at risk of homelessness with advice and support to prevent this
- focussing resources on measures that will prevent homelessness
- working to the joint protocol of the North Yorkshire 'No Second Night Out' for new rough sleepers
- continuing to support the Young People's Homeless Hub
- providing continued access to appropriate care services to meet the health and well-being needs of homeless clients
- enabling opportunities - with support - for homeless clients to access training, education, employment and enterprise to help them rebuild their lives

It identifies six priorities:

- Priority 1** Prevention of Homelessness
- Priority 2** Preventing Youth Homelessness
- Priority 3** Working with Vulnerable Groups
- Priority 4** Improving Access to Services and Advice
- Priority 5** Delivering More Affordable Homes
- Priority 6** Working with our Partners

Under each priority we articulate local issues, set out key activities that will help us address them and indicate how we will measure our success. Key actions include:

- working towards the achievement of the Gold Standard for our service
- closer working with private sector landlords including investigating the scope to provide more shared accommodation for single people under the age of 35
- continuation of the Young People's Hub
- working with support agencies and providers to develop a scheme of four to six units for young people with high support needs in Northallerton - to replace units currently in Thirsk.
- continuing to provide bonds and rent in advance to assist clients to find accommodation within the private sector, and maximising the use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) wherever possible
- continued participation in North Yorkshire HomeChoice and close working with other North Yorkshire local authorities via the North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Partnership

To deliver these actions we will:

- maintain existing staffing levels as a minimum
- provide a dedicated staff resource - initially for one day a week - to work with private sector landlords
- ensure that funding is ring fenced for the provision of bonds and rent in advance through the review and rolling forward of the Homelessness Prevention Fund from April 2015.
- work with the Homes and Communities Agency, social housing providers and support agencies to increase affordable housing provision generally - and more specifically to encourage bidding through the Affordable Homes Programme emerging funding programmes such as 'Platform for Life', to deliver more shared accommodation (particularly in Thirsk and Northallerton) and a scheme for young people with high support needs in Northallerton.