

Public Document Pack

Date of meeting **Wednesday, 2nd December, 2015**

Time **7.00 pm**

Venue **Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Merrial Street,
Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 2AG**

Contact **Justine Tait Ext 2250**

Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee

AGENDA

PART 1 – OPEN AGENDA

- 1 Apologies**
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive declarations of interest from Members on items included in this agenda
- 3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** (Pages 3 - 8)
To agree as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 2nd September 2015
- 4 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY**
Report to follow.
- 5 Tourism Awards within the Borough** (Pages 9 - 10)
- 6 Homelessness Strategy** (Pages 11 - 98)
- 7 Housing Strategy** (Pages 99 - 136)
- 8 Newcastle Housing Advice Contract Progress - Quarter 2 Performance Statistics** (Pages 137 - 138)
- 9 Newcastle Town Centre Partnership - Quarter 2 Performance Statistics** (Pages 139 - 150)
- 10 Kidsgrove Town Centre Partnership** (Pages 151 - 152)
- 11 WORK PLAN** (Pages 153 - 158)
To discuss and update the work plans to reflect current scrutiny topics
- 12 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**
Any member of the public wishing to submit a question must serve two clear days' notice, in writing, of any such question to the Borough Council.

13 URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972

14 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 24th March 2016, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1

Members: Councillors Burgess, Hambleton, Holland, Huckfield, Johnson, Loades, Matthews, Northcott, Stringer (Chair), Stubbs and Williams (Vice-Chair)

PLEASE NOTE: The Council Chamber and Committee Room 1 are fitted with a loop system. In addition, there is a volume button on the base of the microphones. A portable loop system is available for all other rooms. Should you require this service, please contact Member Services during the afternoon prior to the meeting.

Members of the Council: If you identify any personal training/development requirements from any of the items included in this agenda or through issues raised during the meeting, please bring them to the attention of the Democratic Services Officer at the close of the meeting.

Meeting Quorums :- 16+= 5 Members; 10-15=4 Members; 5-9=3 Members; 5 or less = 2 Members.

FIELD_TITLE

Officers will be in attendance prior to the meeting for informal discussions on agenda items.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 2nd September, 2015

Present:-	Councillor David Stringer – in the Chair
Councillors	Burgess, Hambleton, Holland, Huckfield, Johnson, Loades, Matthews, Northcott, Stubbs and Williams
	Kidsgrove Town Council Representative, Councillor J Williams Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing
Officers	Head of Housing and Regeneration Services Scrutiny Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Executive Director, Regeneration and Development.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chair advised that the next meeting of the Strategic Transport Working Group, formerly HS2, had been arranged for Tuesday 8th September 2015.

4. ASPIRE HOUSING LETTING SYSTEM

A presentation was carried out by Aspire Housing's Customer Services Manager and Head of Housing on how Aspire's letting system operated.

Aspire Housing have got 8,340 rental properties in Newcastle and 186 properties in Cheshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

The aims of the policy were:-

Band A – transferring tenants of Aspire requiring an emergency move.

Band B – transferring tenants of Aspire with a defined housing need with top priority awarded to those with community contribution.

Band C – Non Aspire tenants with top priority awarded to those with community contribution.

The following questions were raised by Members and answers presented:-

Q1: How difficult would it be to downsize and were there properties to accommodate this?

A1: The tenant would have to apply to the letting system, Home Hunt, and to Newcastle Housing Advice to be included on their waiting list. Any

nomination sent over would be considered. There was a specialist team, as well as an allocations team, who provide a money advice service which worked on those most at risk.

Q2: It was commented that the percentage of nominations that were let in Quarter One was significantly below the target of 75%.

A2: It was reported that this fell with the agency who managed the nominations.

A Member objected to this comment, informing Aspire they were wrong to blame the agency who managed the nominations, in light of not applying for the contract themselves.

A Member objected to this comment.

Q3: How was equity assessed?

A3: Individual cases were considered.

Q4: The residents of Newcastle need to have priority over residents outside the Borough.

A4: Priority was given to residents living in Newcastle.

Q5: Home Hunt seemed a complicated system, were there other ways a resident could access Home Hunt rather than the internet?

A5: Home Hunt was internet based but there were Officers who supported customers.

Q6: How many new builds does Aspire Housing own at the end of the financial year?

A6: Aspire Housing to supply the information on their new build programme.

Q7: What was your policy when a dependent family member of a disabled child became ill?

A7: The policy would be to find the most suitable property.

Q8: As a housing authority are you encouraging development?

A8: Yes from social landlords but it was Newcastle Borough Council's responsibility to identify the need.

Q9: Most residents felt Aspire Housing was being unreasonable with allocations.

A9: In terms of the upsize the eligibility rules had changed. Customer satisfaction was measured alongside the letting process.

Q10: Over the last twelve months what number of customers had down sized and how many evictions had there been?

A10: There had been no evictions due to the bedroom tax. The Officer did not have figures available on the number of customers who down sized.

Resolved:-

- (a) Aspire Housing to supply Committee with the following information:-
1. A written explanation of the reason for their nominations being significantly below target for quarter one.
 2. The number of new builds completed at the end of the financial year.
- (b) That Aspire Housing is invited back to Committee on the 24th March 2016 to provide a further update.

5. NEWCASTLE HOUSING ADVICE CONTRACT MONITORING - QUARTER ONE

The Head of Housing and Regeneration Services presented quarter 1 statistics on Newcastle Housing Advice (NHA).

Targets were being met on homelessness applications and good customer satisfaction was being received. There had been a significant drop in Aspire Nominations. Regular meetings were being held with Aspire and Newcastle Borough Council to address this concern.

It was asked how many residents, outside the area, had been awarded lettings and why were Aspire Housing selling properties at auction and not re-letting?

It was advised that Aspire Housing had a disposal policy to dispose of properties that no longer met the needs of their clients or business, this included low demand 3 bed homes, certain types of properties and those that were in a high value areas.

Resolved:-

Committee received the report.

6. NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP - QUARTER ONE

The Head of Housing and Regeneration presented Newcastle Town Centre Partnership Quarter One report.

Focus had been based on delivering the Business Improvement District which resulted in a successful ballot. A new Business Improvement had been established with the new company to commence on the 1st October 2015 with letters being dispatched mid-September 2015.

Key Performance Indicators

The vacancy continued to show the town centre being successful in attracting new businesses and retaining businesses. There had been a 4% drop in vacancies.

Footfall

There had been a high number of visitors on festival days. The website had been attracting between 250 and 300 hits every day, with greater interest on event weekends.

Ryecroft Development

The Town Centre Partnership was seen as a key development that will revitalise the town and attract further essential investment.

Events

Discussions were ongoing with Harvest Festival Event, Market Square Group, Pink Week and Britain in Bloom. Ways were being looked at in supporting the town centre lights.

Student Night Initiative

The group had been doing a lot of work with the bar and food operators, including new energy from two recently opened bars.

Purple flag Accreditation Scheme

Fully supported.

Liaison with Market Traders

The Town Centre Manager had been tasked to encourage Market Traders to establish a resilient operational relationship with TCP/BID to become the county's Best Market Town.

CCTV Monitoring Volunteer Project

Discussions were going ahead with Newcastle Partnership against business crime.

The Chair asked that his thanks be passed on to the author of the report, Doug Morris.

Resolved:-

That data from the Retail Index Scheme be presented at the next meeting.

7. KIDSGROVE TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP

The Portfolio Holder for Town Centres, Business and Assets reported that he had spoken to Kidsgrove Town Centre Partnership and chaired a meeting with the partners and interested parties, who agreed to work together. The Partnership wished to concentrate on the economy of the town.

A discussion took place surrounding the Joint Local Plan and Kidsgrove wished to be part of the Plan and wanted to look at the Local Plan for Kidsgrove.

"Go Kidsgrove" had made plans for the Christmas lights. They would also seek to secure extra funding for projects such as the signage at the canal.

The Partnership was looking to hire a different company for their website.

Bi-monthly meetings were being held.

The Chair was pleased that progress had been made and was reassured that the £10,000 allocated would not be withdrawn.

It was asked if colleges had been approached to design their website. The Portfolio Holder advised he would take this suggestion back to the next meeting.

A Member reported that Kidsgrove Town Council were producing a Neighbourhood Plan for the five wards and were going to submit it to Full Kidsgrove Council.

Resolved:-

That Committee received the update.

8. PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTION TIME

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing presented Committee with two topics:-

- Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Local Plan
- Progress made in implementing the Action Plan agreed by Council in response to the report of the Planning Peer Review Team

Joint Local Plan

Members were reminded that the Joint Local Plan was currently in the pre-production phase.

A Member raised concern that the report demonstrated that some of the projects, which formed the overall Local Plan Programme, had experienced slippage. The Member went on to ask if the problems experienced were outside the Council's control?

The Member was advised the problems were not outside the Council's control. The slippage had been unavoidable.

A Member asked for assurance that Newcastle Borough Council was putting pressure on Staffordshire County Council and to see evidence that, as an authority, we had ensured that Staffordshire County Council was fully aware of the need of this Council to interact and engage as regularly as possible.

Planning Peer Review

A Member commented that some of the action related to the creation of new posts and Planning seemed to have resource problems.

The Portfolio Holder advised that a recruitment process was in place for more staff to be employed as soon as possible.

Action 5 – "That Officers be authorised to spend up to £20,000 on the securing of short term assistance to the Development Management Function." A Member informed that Person Specifications and Job Descriptions were not going to be produced as it was employment of Consultants, which the Council was undergoing a number of discussions with. This paragraph did not reflect this and asked for the paragraph to be amended.

Resolved:-

That Action 5 on the Planning Peer Review report is amended.

9. **WORK PLAN**

Resolved:-

That the following items are added to the Work Plan:-

2nd December 2015

Housing Strategy
Homelessness Strategy
Community Infrastructure Levy

24th March 2016

Aspire Housing are invited
Joint Local Plan
Planning Peer Review

10. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

11. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

12. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 2nd December 2015, 7.00pm in Committee Room 1.

COUNCILLOR DAVID STRINGER
Chair

Portfolio Holder item

Tourism Awards within the Borough

Businesses and organisations from Staffordshire's tourism industry gathered for the third annual Enjoy Staffordshire Tourism Awards at Drayton Manor Theme Park on Monday 16th November. The event was attended by 150 people and was compered by BBC radio and TV presenter, Joanne Malin.

Awards were given out at the ceremony in 18 different categories:

- Access for All Tourism
- Sustainable Tourism - **The Dorothy Clive Garden was awarded Silver**
- Business Tourism - **Keele University Conferences & Events was awarded Silver**
- Best Tourism Event
- Best Tourism Experience of the Year
- Tourism Pub of the Year - **The Limestone Vaults was awarded Silver**
- Food Retailer of the Year
- Tea Room / Coffee Shop of the Year
- Restaurant of the Year
- Taste of Staffordshire Tourism
- Holiday Park of the Year
- Self-Catering Holiday Provider of the Year
- Guest Accommodation of the Year
- Small Hotel of the Year
- Large Hotel of the Year
- Visitor Information Provider of the Year
- Small Visitor Attraction of the Year
- Large Visitor Attraction of the Year

The awards were independently judged and verified by Service Science, where entrants were reviewed and marked on their commitment to delivering excellent customer service, training and skills for employees, sustainability and environment, along with dedication to best practice, quality of service and product.

In total 94 nominations were received from businesses and organisations across the county – the highest figure since the awards began in 2013.

Councillor Mark Winnington, deputy chair of Enjoy Staffordshire and Staffordshire County Council cabinet member for economy, environment and transport, said: "The Enjoy Staffordshire Tourism Awards is a great way of acknowledging large and small businesses that bring so much to the region's economy. In the past the Enjoy Staffordshire Tourism Awards have acted as a platform for Staffordshire businesses to receive national exposure and we are hopeful it will continue to do just that."

Those businesses awarded gold and silver will now automatically go forward to the 2016 VisitEngland Awards for Excellence which will be held in March 2016 during English Tourism Week.

An annual report on the economic impact of tourism is compiled for the Destination Management Partnership which breaks the data down to district level. Headline figures are that tourism is worth almost £150m to the Borough and accounts for over 4% of the total employment (1,923 full time equivalent jobs).

Key points

- Tourism is of value to the borough in terms of spending in the local economy and employment.
- The Awards highlight the quality of the tourism offer in the county, particularly when entrants go on to do well in the national awards.
- We should highlight the success of borough based businesses to promote the area and encourage more businesses to become part of Enjoy Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership.

Report to the Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2nd December 2015

Newcastle under Lyme draft Homelessness Strategy



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Introduction

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider and comment on the priorities and key actions of the draft Homelessness Strategy 2016 – 2021 prior to going out for consultation in January 2016.

Background

The Council has a statutory duty under the Homelessness Act 2002 to publish a Homelessness Strategy every five years. Newcastle's last Homelessness Strategy was published in 2010 and covered the period of 2010 to 2015.

Newcastle has had significant success in preventing homelessness over the past 5 years, however is starting to see an increase in the number of homelessness presentations in the Borough.

The draft Homelessness Strategy provides the framework for the delivery of our services designed to prevent homelessness and support those who become homeless over the next five years.

During 2015, the Council's Housing Strategy Team have undertaken a comprehensive review of the current Homelessness Strategy to determine:

- an up-to-date understanding of homelessness and housing need in Newcastle;
- current and likely future levels of homelessness and homelessness trends;
- services currently provided to prevent homelessness, to secure housing for homeless people and to provide them with support;
- the resources available to the Council, other statutory organisations and voluntary organisations to provide services for homeless people; and
- gaps in provision

Stakeholders and Service Users have been consulted on the findings of the review, Homelessness Forum members have been briefed on the contents of the draft strategy and urged to take part in the consultation process post scrutiny.

All partner agencies, community and voluntary groups that attend the quarterly Homelessness Forum are key to the future success and delivery of the new Homelessness Strategy and Multi Agency Action Plan.

A Proactive Preventative Approach

Preventing and reducing homelessness remains a key priority for Newcastle, the proposed future Strategic Priorities within this draft Strategy are:

Priority One – To prevent homelessness

Priority Two – Support Households into sustainable housing solutions

Priority Three – Work in partnership to address homelessness in Newcastle

These priorities support all the Council's corporate priorities to provide a A Clean, Safe and Sustainable Borough, a Borough of Opportunity, a Healthy Active Community and Becoming a Co-operative Council, delivering high quality community driven services.

Preventing homelessness is far more cost effective than dealing with its consequences, however there is growing evidence that the impact of welfare reform and downturn in the economy is putting increased pressure on housing advice and homelessness prevention services in the borough.

- Customers are facing difficulties in managing their income and sustaining affordable accommodation.
- There has also been a noted increase in cases of people presenting to services with complex needs (those with mental health problems, addictions, negative behaviour, poor life skills).
- Year on year there has been a slight increase in the number of people accessing our rough sleepers service.
- Finally there is recognition that the current accommodation options for young homeless people are not suitable and Newcastle no longer has any specific young person supported accommodation schemes operating in the borough.

These findings are evidenced by people approaching Newcastle housing advice and other homeless prevention services that operate in the Borough.

The new Homelessness Strategy builds on the success of the old strategy and proposes to continue to focus on prevention and early intervention, whilst undertaking targeted work on the identified issues above.

The draft Strategy takes into account good practice and Government Guidance to assist the Councils in achieving the 'Gold Standard' in the delivery of homelessness services. The 'Gold Standard' has been developed by the Government and is based on the Government's Strategy for Homelessness 'Making Every Contact Count' 2012.

Further detail on how we will achieve our priorities are in the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan. The action plan will be monitored by the Homelessness Forum who will be responsible for ensuring the actions and outcomes contained in the action plan are implemented. This forum will advise on each review of the homelessness strategy, consider progress made during the year and to look forward to the priorities in the new year.

There is flexibility within the action plan over the next five years, to allow for change dependent on future homelessness trends.

Question: Scrutiny members are invited to provide any comment on the the draft homelessness strategy

Relevant Portfolio Holder

Councillor Bert Proctor – Planning and Housing

Appendices

Draft Homelessness Strategy 2016 -2021

Draft Homelessness Review 2015

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[Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council](#)

[Homelessness Strategy 2016](#)

Foreword

Welcome to Newcastle under Lyme's fourth Homelessness Strategy, which sets out our priorities and future actions for preventing and tackling homelessness over the next five years.

The priorities of this strategy have been developed from the findings of the Homelessness review and in consultation with our partners. Our homelessness review has highlighted many key findings but it is very clear that a focus on prevention remains the key to tackling homelessness.

The Council is committed to preventing homelessness and we recognise that we can't achieve this on our own. Partnership working is fundamental to this strategy both to prevent homelessness and offer sustainable housing options. Our stakeholders have the specialist knowledge and expertise to provide assistance to our residents when faced with homelessness issues. In short, effective solutions to homelessness require a joined up multi agency approach and our partners are key contributors to the successful delivery of our priorities.

This strategy is supported by an action plan which will set out how Newcastle and its partners will address homelessness issues specific to Newcastle under Lyme. We will review our plan annually to ensure that this strategy remains responsive to the emerging needs of our Borough.

Introduction

We published our last homelessness strategy in 2010 and this strategy will build upon the achievements we made in our last strategy. Under the Homelessness Act 2002, we have a statutory duty to review and refresh our Homelessness Strategy every five years. In 2015 we commenced a thorough review of homelessness in our borough.

In addition to the requirement to review and refresh our Homelessness Strategy, we also have a statutory duty to provide advice and assistance to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness under Part V11 1996 Housing Act. Our homelessness and housing advice service is carried out by Midland Heart on our behalf under a legal contract, whilst the strategic function is retained with the Council.

This is our fourth homelessness strategy, it aligns closely with our Housing Strategy and represents our corporate commitment to provide a high quality homelessness service, which prevents homelessness and allows us to fulfil our statutory responsibility to secure accommodation where there is a legal duty to do so. This strategy will assist in ensuring that this commitment is Council wide and includes working with all our partners to deliver our long term goal of keeping homelessness levels in Newcastle under Lyme as low as possible.

Our vision

Our overall vision for our strategy remains the same;

'To ensure that homeless levels in the borough remain as low as possible through prevention and to provide in partnership effective and quality services to those affected by homelessness'.

From this vision stems our three key priority areas;

- Prevention
- Supporting households into sustainable housing solutions
- Working in partnership to address the causes of homelessness in Newcastle

Our strategic priorities for the next five years are based upon the findings of our Homelessness review, consultation responses and consideration for the Government's Gold Standard.

The Gold Standard is a benchmark for local authorities to work towards (from 'Making Every Contact Count, A Joint Approach to Preventing Homelessness' August 2012). 'Making Every Contact Count' clearly states that 'there is no place for homelessness in the 21st century'.

The 10 challenges in the Gold Standard are:

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

Our Homelessness Review recognised the need for us to consider whether we are prepared to contribute both financially and strategically in order to achieve the Gold standard.

Consideration has been given to whether we should participate in the Gold Standard process and to date we have made the commitment to consider the elements of these challenges with particular focus being given to the ones we feel will make the most difference to our borough. We will use the Gold Standard process as an internal review exercise to identify any areas where our current service provision could benefit from improvement. To show this commitment we have identified and made reference to the relevant challenges when discussing our strategic priorities within this Strategy.

We are pleased to report that our previous Homelessness Strategies have developed efficient and effective services that not only meet the needs of those affected by homeless but also align with the working practices at our Council.

Homelessness Review

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires us to carry out a homelessness review of our area and formulate and publish a strategy based upon its findings every five years.

During 2015 the Council's Housing strategy team have undertaken a comprehensive review of the current homelessness situation in Newcastle under Lyme. The review has identified the causes of homelessness, the needs of those faced with or experiencing homelessness and the services currently available to meet those needs. It has taken into consideration the views of our stakeholders and service users, which has enabled us to identify any issues and gaps in the current provision. Finally, it informs the reader of current Government policy.

The information from the Review, plus Government guidance has enabled us to develop this Strategy. It sets out the direction we want to take over the next five years in order to prevent and address homelessness. In doing so, it sets the key strategic priorities which will inform the allocation of resources by the Council and its partners. Delivery of these priorities is set out in the next section. We recommend that it is read alongside our strategy.

Copies of the Review can be found at www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk or by contacting the Housing Strategy Team direct on 01782 742456.

Consultation

To test our findings of our homelessness review, we consulted with our partners. The purpose was to share our evidence and seek further information from our partners which may strengthen our review. Partners were given a full 12 week consultation period on the review findings.

We have involved our partners throughout the whole development of our strategy.

We have produced this draft homelessness strategy based upon the findings of our homelessness review, statistical information and consultation. This draft strategy has been considered by the Council's Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee. *To complete once strategy has been to Scrutiny.*

Context and purpose

Definition of homelessness for the purpose of this strategy:

The statutory definition of homelessness was unaltered by the Homelessness Act 2002 and remains as that defined by the Homelessness Act 1996 s.175,

‘A person is homeless if he or she has no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere which is available for his or her occupation and which that person has a legal right to occupy. A person will also be homeless where he or she has accommodation but cannot secure entry to it, or where he or she has accommodation that is a moveable structure (such as a caravan or a house boat) and there is no place where it can be placed in order to provide accommodation. A person who has accommodation is to be treated as homeless where it would not be reasonable for him or her to continue to occupy it’

Also a person is considered to be threatened with homelessness if he or she is likely to become homeless within 28 days.

If a local authority has reason to believe that a person is homeless or threatened with homelessness, it is required to make enquiries and decide whether it owes the applicant a duty to find accommodation for them. In each case an assessment will take place to determine whether the applicant is actually homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need and not intentionally homeless. If an applicant meets these criteria the authority has an immediate duty to provide temporary accommodation for them and anyone who normally resides with them.

Local authorities owe a lesser duty to applicants who are not in priority need or who are intentionally homeless. Local authorities may have a duty to provide them with advice and assistance in finding new accommodation. Information and advice about homelessness and housing options can be provided by the local authority and also external agencies. However it is essential that the advice and assistance provided is up to date, robust and will help with the aim of preventing homelessness.

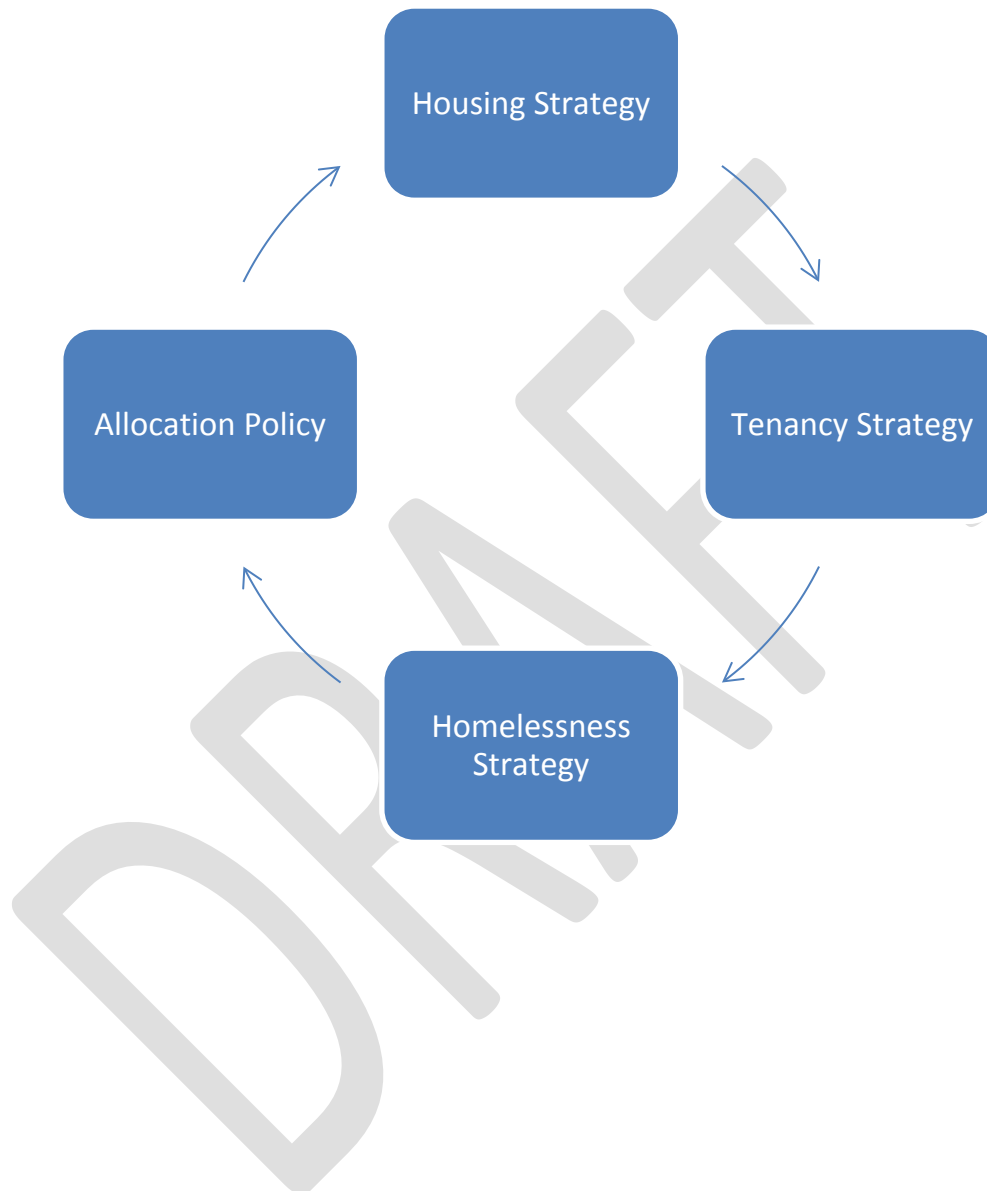
Where an applicant is threatened with homelessness and meets the above criteria, local authorities have a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that the accommodation remains available for their occupation.

The test local authorities should now apply is whether a homeless applicant is more vulnerable than ‘an ordinary person if made homeless’ rather than an ‘ordinary actual homeless person’.

Coverage

This strategy covers the borough of Newcastle under Lyme. Some of our services are delivered across local authority boundaries and even on a sub-regional basis. This is due to the various partnership projects we are involved in where we recognise the benefits and efficiencies of working together and the funding opportunities that have been made available to us.

This strategy has also been developed to ensure that appropriate links have been made to other relevant strategies and action plans, especially our Housing Strategy which is the overarching document for our service.



Priority 1

To Prevent Homelessness

Achieving this priority contributes to our corporate aim of creating a borough of opportunity.

1.1 Early Interventions

Homelessness prevention is at the heart of this strategy. Early intervention to prevent homelessness is our starting point; it's cost effective and provides positive outcomes for our residents. Our main priority will always be to prevent homelessness wherever possible, ideally through the provision of robust housing advice early on which enables a household to remain in its current accommodation or where this is not possible supporting the transition into alternative accommodation. This approach is firmly embedded within our Newcastle Housing Advice service and over the period of our last strategy the service has successfully delivered 2725 preventions.

Our Newcastle Housing Advice Service (NHA) has a range of prevention options available to residents. We want to ensure that the interventions we offer are effective in preventing homelessness, which in turn will reduce the demands on our frontline staff and also assist in reducing the need for us to use temporary accommodation.

We recognise for early intervention, there is the need to ensure that there is a wide range of easily accessible information available to enable those who can self-help to access our resources and follow advice and guidance to remedy their personal situations. As our service continues to get busier we want to enable customers who are able to self-serve, can do so by offering comprehensive online advice and self-help tools, which in turn will reduce demands on the team. This will also enable the team to focus their time and expertise on our more complex and vulnerable customers.

For customers who are more complex and vulnerable, we recognise there is the need to identify any underlying issues and risks they may have as early as possible and ensure that relevant services are able to intervene to prevent homelessness. We will only achieve this where agencies all work together and refer customers to the correct services. This means encouraging our partners to work with us by fully embracing the prevention ethos in the delivery of their services. We understand that just like us, there is an uncertainty for our partners in relation to what demands are going to be placed upon them in the future and therefore it is important to ensure that all our services run efficiently and customers are swiftly referred to organisations already providing assistance rather than other agencies trying to fix issues on their own and taking on unnecessary responsibilities.

1.2 Continuous Service Improvement

We are committed to providing excellent fit for purpose homelessness and housing advice services to our customers. Our commissioning processes ensure that agencies who deliver services on our behalf have experience and can demonstrate a wealth of knowledge and expertise.

Our NHA service is no exception, we have a professional team who possess an in depth knowledge with many years of experience in housing advice and homelessness issues. There are processes in place to ensure that this knowledge is retained and developed further. Staff have regular refresher training to ensure that the service is able to respond to developments in homelessness and housing law.

Since the last re-tender our service has been re-shaped and within the new contract is the requirement to continually improve and develop provision for an efficient, effective service which is compliant with legislation

We will do this by regularly reviewing the prevention options we offer, by measuring the usage and effectiveness of each scheme. Funding for the schemes will be prioritised according to the methods that are most effective and have a positive impact on the main causes of homelessness in Newcastle. We will continue to monitor our service through our regular performance monitoring, customer feedback, quality assurance and quality checks. We will continue to utilise the resources that are made available to us by the National Homelessness Advice Service, in particular the free training that is made available to all housing options teams.

We will use the gold standard toolkit as a review exercise to assist us in achieving continuous improvement to our service. A mock diagnostic peer review commenced in September 2015. Feedback from this will inform future actions and developments in service improvement and will dictate the pace of our involvement in the official gold standard process.

1.3 Annual Review of Homelessness Strategy

The Gold Standard process considers it best practice for Local Authorities to review their homelessness strategies on an annual basis. We remain in an extremely financially challenging time and this strategy has the role to ensure that resources ploughed into homelessness services are used to their full potential. We must be realistic about the fact that there is the potential for further cuts to services across our authority. This means that during the life of this Strategy, if budgets dictate we may need to look at what is currently being delivered, prioritise and if required reshape and restructure that provision in accordance with the demands of the changing market. With this in mind, our Strategy will in effect be constantly under review and its purposefulness and effectiveness considered annually in line with Gold Standard best practice. We will produce an updated action plan, which will be approved annually by our Portfolio holder.

1.4 Commission Services to Prevent Homelessness

Our Newcastle Housing Advice service is supported by a number of complementary homelessness services which are commissioned by the Council. These services offer practical assistance to specific groups in order to prevent homelessness. We will continue to strategically commission specific services with our partners in order to deliver effective proactive services that will prevent homelessness and ensure that repeat homelessness is minimised.

As we plan to review the position of this Strategy on an annual basis, the findings will inform our future commissioning processes and enable us to respond to emerging local issues. Our

commissioning processes ensure that services are compliant to equality and diversity issues and accessible to all our residents.

1.5 Manage Service Expectations

Due to the increase in demand for our service and the reduction of properties available through our housing register, we need to continue to manage the expectations of our customers. We must ensure that whilst fulfilling our legal obligations to homelessness households and those at risk of homelessness, our customers understand that the advice our service provides is based upon the best housing options available to them as individuals and that there are many influencing factors that can be specific to their own personal circumstances that can be instrumental in that choice.

There is an ongoing requirement to educate people about the realities of homelessness and perceptions on accessing social housing.

1.6 Corporate Commitment

The Council is committed to preventing homelessness; within the Council there are a wide range of overarching strategies that have impact upon the homeless or those at risk of homelessness. Our homelessness review recognises that although there are a number of overarching strategies, few mention homelessness in any great detail.

This strategy aims to ensure that all our Council departments are signed up to the prevention ethos. We will do this by providing awareness / update sessions to staff, elected members and partners in relation to local responses to homelessness and the importance of preventing homelessness. We will continue to ensure that housing is represented at corporate working groups within the Council.

1.7 Housing Pathways

The Gold Standard process identifies the need for local authorities and their partners to develop housing pathways that include accommodation and support for key client groups. We acknowledge that for some of our most vulnerable customers a more bespoke pathway approach would benefit their journey from institutional and supported accommodation into more settled and sustainable long term accommodation. We have identified that at present the key client groups that would benefit most from a housing pathways approach are vulnerable adults with complex needs and young people.

1.7.1 Vulnerable Adults

Our NHA service has seen an increase in the number of vulnerable adults with complex needs seeking assistance. It is our aim to work with relevant agencies to develop a multi-agency pathway approach which will form the basis of a process that best meets the individuals housing and support needs, whilst developing their abilities to achieve the most appropriate level of sustainable independent living that makes the best use of the support and services that are available.

Our key partner's for this work include Staffordshire County Council Adult's Services, housing providers, probation, police, health and the third sector.

1. 7.2 Young People

Young people who experience homelessness issues are an extremely vulnerable group. Services for young people need to be effective with focus on early prevention.

The 2009 Southwark judgement clarified the legal position surrounding Section 20 of the Children's Act 2989 and Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 in relation to a Child in Need. It also placed an obligation on local authorities to strengthen their joint working procedures for care leavers and homeless young people.

A joint protocol has been established between all the Staffordshire housing authorities and Staffordshire County Council, at the time of writing the protocol is going through its final stages of adoption at County. The protocol will provide a more co-ordinated approach to enable homelessness to be prevented and support to be made available.

We recognise for the protocol to be successful we need to continue to develop and strengthen our partnerships between agencies working with young people in Newcastle. We also need to develop further housing options both temporary and long term with young people specifically in mind. The current accommodation options for young people are extremely limited and there is no longer any young person specific accommodation within our area.

Our key partner's for this work include Staffordshire County Council Children's Services, housing providers, probation, police, health and the third sector.

1.8 Preventing Repossessions

Much work has been done both nationally and locally on preventing repossessions over the last five years. We want to ensure that we have measures in place to prevent repossessions wherever possible. We have been actively involved in the Government's mortgage rescue scheme and 12 households were rescued in our borough when the scheme was in operation.

National guidance and standards for mortgage lenders has been introduced, including Conduct of Business rules and a requirement to notify local authorities of impending possessions through the nationally agreed Mortgage Repossession Pre-Action Protocol. We can confirm that we are notified of households in the Borough with impending possessions and in response we contact the households to offer advice and assistance. The type of advice ranges from assistance from NHA, debt and welfare advice from our debt advice service, which includes representation at court to referrals to other local agencies who may be able to offer support.

In addition to this, there is a Court Desk service that operates at the Stoke on Trent combined court, this service gives last minute legal advice to households who are facing hearings but have not previously sought advice.

We also received a 'one off' DCLG grant to help prevent repossessions by creating a scheme which would offer interest free loans where it may prevent repossessions. We developed a scheme in partnership with the Staffordshire Credit Union and as the homeless review has highlighted, despite the promotion of the availability of these loans there has

been a very low take up. We are currently considering a more appropriate use to prevent homelessness for the remainder of this funding.

Our homelessness review findings demonstrated mortgage repossessions have fallen and is on a downward trend within our Borough; however this is in contrast to the number of legal actions sought by landlords, where we have seen an increase in numbers. We will continue to monitor trends in our area and where possible will work closely with registered providers to proactively prevent evictions from social tenancies.

Relevant Gold Standard Challenges for Priority 1:

Challenge 1 – To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services

Challenge 2 - To actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs

Challenge 3 - To offer a Housing Options prevention service to all clients including written advice

Challenge 5 - To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support

Challenge 7 - To actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions

Challenge 8 - To have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs

Priority 1 - Summary of issues:

- Early Intervention is the starting point of this strategy
- We are committed to continuous service improvement
- Our Homelessness Strategy will be reviewed annually
- We recognise the need for services that provide assistance in preventing homelessness and will utilise the findings of the annual review of this strategy to inform future commissioning to ensure we respond to local emerging needs
- There is corporate commitment to prevent homelessness
- The key client groups that would benefit most from a housing pathways approach of Young people and vulnerable adults with complex needs
- Mortgage possessions have been decreasing whilst legal action by landlords have been on the increase

Priority 2

Support Households into sustainable housing solutions

Achieving this contributes to our corporate aim of creating a clean, safe and sustainable borough.

2.1 No Second Night Out (NSNO)

We are committed to the principles of the NSNO initiative for rough sleepers. NSNO seeks to ensure that no rough sleepers end up sleeping out for a second night.

Our homelessness review has shown that although we have a relatively low number of rough sleepers in Newcastle, there has been an upward trend over the last few years, which is consistent with national figures. DCLG data has shown that since 2010 there has been an increase in rough sleeping nationally year on year. We have always ensured that there is service provision in our borough to address rough sleeping and plan to develop our current approach further by implementing more widely the philosophy of 'NSNO'. Working with our partners we will ensure that we have a clear understanding for the needs of rough sleepers and offer a proactive approach to assessing their needs and helping them off the streets. We need to ensure that all the organisations who deliver services to rough sleepers focus on ending rough sleeping not sustaining a rough sleeping lifestyle.

We will review the access to emergency beds and ensure that support and resources are available to re-connect individuals who sleep rough and have no local connection to our borough.

2.2 Short Term Temporary Accommodation

We have a duty to secure short term temporary accommodation for unintentionally homeless households in priority need under Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act (as amended). The circumstances when we will usually place households in temporary accommodation are:

- pending the completion of inquiries into their homeless application
- when an application is accepted until suitable secure accommodation becomes available
- under severe weather provisions

The range of temporary accommodation options available to us are: Bed and breakfast accommodation, temporary accommodation units, hostel accommodation in other local authority areas (although places are limited), private rented stock and refuges for women fleeing domestic violence.

We try to limit the use of all types of temporary accommodation in the borough for alternative more long term sustainable options. Historically we have been extremely successful in our low usage by managing our requirements through our temporary accommodation unit and occasional use of Bed and Breakfasts. However, during the past couple of years we have seen an increase in the need for and use of temporary accommodation; in particular we have seen an increase in the need for interim accommodation whilst a homelessness investigation is carried out.

Unfortunately, the increase in demand has occurred at a time when the range of accommodation options available to us has become more restricted. Funding restrictions, local connection criteria, competing demand for bed spaces by other statutory agencies and scheme closures have led to a reduction in the choice of appropriate temporary accommodation options available to us. This has meant that we have become more reliant than ever upon Bed and Breakfast accommodation which is seen as the most unsuitable choice of temporary accommodation.

In performing our duties to homeless households under Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act, we are obliged to have regard to the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities. The Guidance states:

'that housing authorities should avoid using B&B accommodation wherever possible. Where B&B accommodation has been used in an emergency situation, applicants should be moved to more suitable accommodation as soon as possible. The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003 provides that B&B accommodation is not suitable for families with Children and households that include a pregnant woman unless there is no alternative accommodation and then only for a maximum of six weeks'. CLG, Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, July 2006, para 7.6

To exacerbate our problems further, we have also been faced with the challenge that many of the bed and breakfast providers we have used in the past are no longer willing to accommodate our customers or accept our business, deeming them too high risk.

This increase in numbers and limited accommodation options available to us is a cause for concern and we are looking for innovative solutions. We are in the final stages of completion for a second temporary accommodation unit to be added to our range of options. The model duplicates our initial temporary accommodation unit and shall be a valuable addition particularly where it is necessary to assist larger households who would require for multiple rooms to be booked in a bed and breakfast. We anticipate that by the time this homelessness strategy is adopted by our Cabinet that our second unit will be in full operation.

We will conduct a review of our current temporary accommodation options and explore more innovative approaches to develop a range of temporary accommodation options that meets our needs. We acknowledge that Universal Credit will have an impact upon the funding arrangements for short term temporary accommodation and this will need to be factored in to the development of future delivery models.

We understand that there will always be circumstances when we will need to use temporary accommodation, where we can, we will look at ways to reduce our usage and hope that many of the actions within this strategy, particularly those focused around early intervention and long term accommodations will assist us in that goal. Finally when we have had to use temporary accommodation we will continue our focus of moving people out of temporary accommodation and into more sustainable long term accommodation as quickly as possible.

2.3 Long Term Affordable and Sustainable Accommodation

During the period of our last homelessness strategy we experienced a slowdown in the housing market, this impacted significantly upon our ability to provide additional affordable

housing in Newcastle. Developers stated they could not make the affordable housing elements of schemes add up, there have been limited funding opportunities for Registered Providers (RP's) to develop and many more people have faced problems in securing mortgages.

The need for affordable and sustainable housing in Newcastle goes above and beyond homelessness, improving access to permanent accommodation is a much broader priority and meeting the need for more permanent affordable housing is fully addressed in our Housing Strategy. We recognise that the provision of affordable housing can reduce the length of time homeless households have to wait for re-housing and in certain circumstances can help people address their housing needs at an earlier stage without having to make a homelessness application. Therefore this strategy will focus upon what improvements we can make on the long term housing options for households who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness.

2.3.1 Long Term - A Suitable Private Rented Sector Offer

Our objective is to provide affordable sustainable accommodation as quickly as possible for homeless households, as this will remove the need to provide temporary accommodation. It is clear that we are no longer able to meet this objective by relying solely on the social rented accommodation in our borough. The pressures on waiting lists for social rented housing mean it's really important that we also make the best use of the alternative stock available, especially in the private rented sector.

The private rented sector has an important role to play especially for households who cannot access social housing or afford to buy. Our homelessness review has identified the need for further work to be delivered in order to better access the private rented sector for households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

2.3.1.1 Discharge of Homelessness Duty into the Private Rented Sector

The Localism Act 2011 has enabled all local authorities (since 9 November 2012) to discharge their duty towards homeless households in priority need by using privately rented housing irrespective of whether the household is in agreement with this.

Our Tenancy Strategy states that we can use this option, but only if it is a suitable and sustainable option for the household. To date, we have only used this power once.

We recognise that we have the opportunity to make better use of the power to discharge into the private rented sector than we currently do. By using this power, we will be able to accommodate households into suitable affordable sustainable accommodation, whilst negating the need for them to wait for long periods on the various housing registers available in our borough. We will still maintain our policy to consider the circumstances of each individual household as to whether it is appropriate when deciding to use this power.

We will need to ensure that we have access to a good supply of private rented stock, the properties meet the correct standards of repair and that tenancies are granted for at least 12 months with the expectation that the landlord would enable the tenants to stay for longer.

We are aware that affordability is likely to be a major factor when offering any property in the private rented sector, in particular the impact of Universal Credit and other Welfare reforms may have on our customers. When considering whether to discharge our homelessness duties in the private rented sector, if it was not affordable we simply would not place a household in a situation where the tenancy is likely to fail.

2.3.1.2. Promoting Access

We shall continue to explore innovative ways to secure access to affordable and good quality accommodation in the private rented sector for our customers. We plan to review the current incentives that are offered to private landlords and develop a suitable private rented sector offer in the Borough.

We will continue to maintain the good working relationship we have with our housing benefit department. Discretionary Housing payments regularly assist in preventing homelessness and we believe that there is scope for it to be even more targeted.

We also recognise that Estate and Letting agents also play a key role in the provision and access of private rented stock. We need to explore ways of engaging with estate and letting agents similar to what we already do with private landlords.

Our housing services have been very successful in working with a range of partners to encourage empty property owners to bring their empty properties back into use. We will continue to work closely with owners to advise and assist them into bringing their properties back into use and if necessary will use the enforcement powers we have available to us. We would like to further develop this work and investigate opportunities where our homeless households can access these properties.

2.3.1.3. Quality of Stock

Our Housing Services Team will continue to work within the private rented sector to ensure that the condition of the stock is of good condition. The service will continue to take a proactive approach in the provision of advisory services, sign posting and providing advice on grants and loan facilities that may be available to improve property condition. They will continue to support and promote the North Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme and facilitate training to help landlords understand best practice and legal requirements. We hope these actions will continue to drive up the standard of the private sector stock in our borough.

2.3.1.4. Supporting Landlords

The right landlord for our customers is someone who is accredited, understands their letting responsibilities and works with us to keep the rents low in return for the range of services / incentives we are able to offer.

We provide support to landlords through a variety of ways including our website, NHA, regular newsletters, forums and officer advice and assistance. We will continue to ensure that this information is readily available to landlords to facilitate understanding of the responsibilities involved in rented properties. We recognise that by supporting the landlords who operate in our borough, not only creates better relationships to access the private

rented sector but also to enable tenants to remain in the private rented sector once they have a tenancy.

2.3.1.5. Supporting Tenants

The ideal tenant is someone who cares for and keeps the property tidy, doesn't cause anti-social behaviour or a nuisance to neighbours and pays the rent.

We recognise that an effective way of preparing customers for independent living and giving them a greater chance of sustaining their tenancy successfully is to provide pre-tenancy training. A number of our partner agencies provide types of this training and have reported upon its successes in making customers 'tenancy ready'.

In order to ensure that our customers can afford the rental requirements of a private sector property, we will continue to ensure that our customers are offered a full range of advice and assistance to maximise their income. Our debt advice service will provide customers with income and expenditure assessments to effectively manage their budgets.

Our housing service will support tenants if property standards are not acceptable and how these issues can be addressed.

2.3.2 Long Term – Social Housing

We have already acknowledged that we are no longer able to meet our objective of providing affordable sustainable accommodation as quickly as possible for homeless households solely through social housing stock alone. The turnover of register provider's (social landlords) stock has slowed, which means we have fewer opportunities for re-housing homeless households in this type of tenure. Therefore it is important for us to ensure that effective use is made of the housing stock that is available.

Since our last Homelessness Strategy our Homelessness, Housing Advice and Housing Register Service has been re-tendered and our Housing Allocations policy revised. The implementation of our new policy will ensure the best use of our nomination rights to Social Housing Stock. We will continue to work with our register provider partners to ensure that the nominations through the Homes Direct Housing register are working and we gain appropriate access to Social Housing Stock.

We will continue to work with registered providers to increase the supply of social housing. Opportunities for this are through section 106 agreements with private developers or through registered providers undertaking their own independent housing developments. The Housing strategy will continue to monitor and feed into this area of our activity.

Relevant Gold Standard Challenges for Priority 2:

Challenge 2 - To actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs

Challenge 3 - To offer a Housing Options prevention service to all clients including written advice

Challenge 4 - To adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative

Challenge 6 - To develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both client and landlord

Challenge 9 - To not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation

Challenge 10 - To not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than 6 weeks

Priority 2 - Summary of Issues:

- We are committed to the principles of NSNO
- Whilst reducing the current usage of temporary accommodation there is still the requirement for appropriate accessible provision in our Borough
- We need to develop of suitable private rented sector offer for the Borough
- Social housing stock plays a vital role in accommodating our homelessness households however it can no longer be the single solution

Priority 3

Work in partnership to address homelessness in Newcastle

Achieving this contributes to our corporate aim of a co-operative council delivering high value community driven services.

3.1 Partnership Working

This priority is about having a strong focus on working with a wide range of partners to enable us to address homelessness issues in Newcastle. Our Homelessness services are commissioned by the Council in partnership with a number of organisations who deliver services on our behalf. In addition to the services we commission there are a wide range of organisations who provide services which assist in tackling homelessness, these include support providers, housing providers, the advice sector, the voluntary sector, charities, churches and other faith groups. Other statutory agencies such as probation, health and social care providers and education also have a pivotal role. We believe that through the work of our previous homelessness strategies we have built and developed a wide range of successful partnerships, in this strategy we will continue to strengthen those relationships with particular focus being given to mitigating the impacts of Welfare Reforms and improving the health and wellbeing of our customers.

3.1.1 Mitigating the impact of Welfare Reform - through partnership working

The impact of welfare reform is something we cannot address in isolation. The reforms have reduced the income levels of many households, placed restrictions upon the type of housing a household can apply for and resulted in additional rental costs for those who are seen as under occupying tenancies.

We anticipate that the roll out of Universal Credit will also bring about further changes. Universal Credit which is administered by the Department of Works and Pensions, provides a single monthly payment to one member of the household, this is paid in arrears and includes any contribution there may be towards the rent.

Potential implications for our customers include debt, rent arrears, an increased demand for smaller properties and housing transfers, budgeting and money management issues as households move onto Universal Credit and a higher risk of those in financial difficulties of becoming homeless. In order to limit the risk of homelessness arising from the changes brought about by welfare reforms, we will need to manage the impacts and work closely with our partner agencies.

To date we have been proactive in addressing the impacts of the reforms and have trained staff so they are able to prepare, support and advise households affected by the changes. We signpost and refer customers to appropriate services, provide financial and money advice about benefits, budgeting and debt management.

We will continue to work with our partners to monitor trends and deliver services which will prevent affected households from becoming homeless as a result of welfare reforms.

We need to build partnerships that enable our customers to access opportunities to employment, education and training and support to raise and meet aspirations.

3.1.2 Improving the health and wellbeing of our customers

We believe that by jointly working with all our partners, we can improve the health and wellbeing of our customers. Housing has always had a significant role in helping to improve people's health, be it through the homelessness prevention work we deliver to the provision of grants and adaptations that enable people to stay in their own homes. These services have always been part of our role, however, historically there has been little co-ordination between the delivery of housing and health services. Local clinical commissioning groups are now responsible for the commissioning of healthcare services and local health and wellbeing boards are now responsible for determining their commissioning priorities.

We need to respond to the changes in the delivery of health services and develop new partnerships to meet these needs. It's essential that homelessness is recognised on the district Health and Wellbeing partnership board. We will continue to build our relationship with Public Health.

The links between health and homelessness are recognised but there remain health inequalities for those that are homeless or insecurely housed. Our team at NHA are increasing seeing more people with complex needs.

Mental health, drug and alcohol services are vital, as are basic primary health care requirements such as being able to see a GP, health visitor or a dentist, and access routine health screening services. We need to ensure we understand the new arrangements, identify our local needs, and be able to feed these into the new strategic arrangements.

3.2 Housing Pathways – through partnership working

Supporting people funding has been mainstreamed and the ring fenced removed, as a result services in our borough have experienced partial and complete cuts in funding. We have further work to ensure that the needs of our customers who used to benefit from the services provided under the supporting people framework are able to access alternative and adequate service provision to meet their needs.

Our work around developing sustainable housing pathways is an important element which also contributes to priority 1 – to prevent homelessness. We will continue to work on the development of protocols with statutory and voluntary providers which will enhance access opportunities.

3.3 Newcastle under Lyme Homelessness Forum

In addition to partnership working for front line delivery our homelessness forum plays a key role in the delivery of this strategy. The forum meets on a quarterly basis and has been the vehicle for key partners to come together not only to monitor our homelessness strategy's action plan but also to identify local issues. We know that sharing good practice and information is so beneficial to the development of our homelessness service provision and we will continue to use the forum to ensure this is done as effectively as possible.

The forum has an open membership to any organisation that considers it to be a stakeholder in the prevention of homelessness in our borough. We will continue to review and improve the performance of this group and the communication processes that we use to support the group.

3.4 Shropshire, Staffordshire and Telford & Wrekin Homelessness Prevention Partnership

We are an active partner of the Shropshire, Staffordshire and Telford and Wrekin Homelessness Prevention Partnership (SSHPP). The partnership was formed in response to a single one off funding allocation from the DCLG. The allocation was to enable Councils to work collaboratively to develop and share solutions that will help to reduce rough sleeping and single homelessness. Shropshire County Council is the accountable and commissioning body for the partnership. The partnership has supported the funding of our extremely successful shared accommodation pilot for under 35 year olds.

We aim to continue to play an active role in this partnership, through this group we will continue to work to highlight any gaps in current homelessness service provision, share best practice and wherever possible secure for future funding to prevent homelessness.

Relevant Gold Standard Challenges to Priority 3:

Challenge 2 - To actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs

Challenge 5 - To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support

Priority 3 - Summary of issues:

- Partnership working is fundamental to this strategy both to prevent homelessness and offer sustainable housing options
- Poor financial situations can place households at risk of homelessness
- Housing has always had a significant role to play in improving people's health and wellbeing
- Our Homelessness Forum plays a key role in the delivery of our homelessness strategy

Resources

Financial resources for tackling homelessness are extremely limited and we anticipate that further cuts will have to be made.

Revenue funding is used to meet the ongoing cost of homelessness services and capital funding is used to meet the initial cost of a new service (including accommodation).

The Council's General Fund

Each local authority funds the majority of their revenue expenditure on homelessness and related activities through their General Fund. This includes the costs of providing a housing options and advice service, grant funding to third sector organisations that provide services to homeless people, the cost of providing emergency accommodation to homeless households and support to facilitate the Homelessness Forum.

Newcastle Housing Advice (NHA)

The Council discharges its statutory homelessness duty by contracting Midland Heart to deliver the Newcastle Housing Advice Service. The service delivers the Housing Register, the Housing Options Service (which includes the delivery of the prevention schemes) and the Homelessness functions on behalf of the Council.

Funding for Third Sector Organisations

At present a number of our complementary homelessness services are funded via the Newcastle Partnership Commissioning Process and the Council's Voluntary Grants Panel. Over the duration of this Strategy, the decision to continue funding these services will lie with how they strategically align to the priorities of both the Council and this Strategy and how successful service delivery is. For both processes, applications for the provision of services are invited in accordance with the Council's procurement regulations and processes.

Emergency / Temporary Accommodation

As part of our temporary accommodation provision, we commission Midland Heart to deliver and manage one unit of accommodation to use in times of emergency for homelessness households, as an alternative to placing them in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. The approximate delivery costs (excluding set up costs) per annum for the unit are approximately £7,500.

The unit has enabled us to avoid placing homeless families in bed and breakfast accommodation. However, when the unit is full and there have been no hostel spaces available bed and breakfast accommodation has still had to be used. In response we have recently commissioned a second unit of temporary accommodation to be added to our provision.

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Homelessness Grant

The DCLG have provided funding to each local authority based on the level of identified need for homelessness prevention initiatives in each area. The funding is rolled into the

Business Rate Retention Scheme (BRRS). The amount is no longer ring fenced to homelessness, although the DCLG do expect Local Authorities to use the funding to prevent homelessness in their areas. For Newcastle, the funding has enabled us to develop and operate the prevention schemes available to individuals. The current allocation is guaranteed till the end of the financial year 2015/2016. At present we have not been given any indication as to whether there will be any further funding after 2015 /2016.

We have received £124374.08 from the DCLG to deliver homelessness prevention services during 2015.

Clearly this has major implications for the Council as at present this funding allocation enables us to deliver the wide range of prevention schemes on offer in the borough. It also reiterates the importance to have robust monitoring systems in place that enable us to evidence our work and highlight the value for money and cost savings it delivers.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)

DHPs are not part of the normal Housing Benefit / Local Housing Allowance or Council Tax schemes. They are a discretionary payment made in certain circumstances to those people whose Housing Benefit or Council Tax payments do not meet their housing needs. They are funded by Central Government on a yearly basis and the funding is limited. Nevertheless they are a valuable asset towards the prevention of homelessness in certain cases.

We have received a government contribution of £159,189 for discretionary housing payments in 2015.

Implementing and monitoring our Strategy

In order to meet our commitment to deliver our priorities within this strategy a delivery plan has been developed.

The Homelessness forum will be the group responsible for the delivery and monitoring of this plan. The plan shall be regularly monitored and reviewed annual to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and meets any emerging needs and policy / legislative changes.

The adoption of this Homelessness strategy also demonstrates the corporate commitment of the Council to prevent homelessness in the borough.

Publication

A copy of this strategy is available at www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

If you would like more information in relation to this strategy, please contact housing services on 01782 742456.

DRAFT

**Newcastle under Lyme
Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2016 - 2021**

Priority 1	To Prevent Homelessness						
Number	Action	Output	Impact	Resources	Lead(s)	Planned Activity	When
	Achieving this will contribute to all of the Council's Corporate priorities – Priority 1 A clean, safe and sustainable borough, Priority 2 A borough of opportunity, Priority 3 A Healthy Active Community, Priority 4 Becoming a co-operative council, delivering high quality community driven services						
1.1	Ensure that corporately staff and elected members have sufficient information and knowledge of homelessness	Improves knowledge and expertise of staff and members Works towards Gold Standard	Enables informed decisions regarding the allocation of future resources Promotes shared responsibility for homelessness	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy	Provision of awareness / briefing sessions. Briefing notes and Corporate reports. Housing Strategy staff representation at working groups	Ongoing
1.2	Review Homelessness Strategy annually	Up to date and fit for purpose homelessness strategy Works towards Gold Standard	Responsive to emerging needs	Within current housing resources	Housing strategy	Annual review of strategy plus major review every five years	May 2017
1.3	Complete internal mock diagnostic peer review of service	Identification of areas of good practices and weakness in current service provision	Continuous Improvement of service delivery	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy	Internal peer review Report findings corporately which will dictate future involvement and	April 2016

		Works towards Gold Standard				timing in the Gold Standard process	
1.4	Enhance the range of self-help options available to customers seeking housing advice	Improved range of self-help services available to customers Frees up NHA staff resources for more complex cases	Customers able to tailor realistic and appropriate advice efficiently Empowering customers to help themselves	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy NHA Midland Heart	Map current provision Enhance online accessibility	Ongoing
1.5	Explore new and alternative approaches to enhance early homelessness preventions	Reduce number of homeless acceptances Improved homelessness prevention toolkit of options available	Staff will have more prevention tools available to tailor assistance to each case	With current housing resources	Housing Strategy	Map current provision, consider best practice and the feasibility of implementing in the Borough	Annually
1.6	Continue to deliver debt advice for homeless or potentially homeless households	Homelessness prevented through timely debt advice and assistance	Better money management for homeowners and tenants	Within current resources	Housing Strategy Aspire Housing	Raise awareness of service Monitor service provision	Ongoing quarterly monitoring of current service provision. Evaluation of service provision Re-commissioning

							of service
1.7	Monitor the customer satisfaction within the homelessness service	Continuous service improvement Management of service expectations	Better understanding of customers for us Better understanding for customers in relation to realities and perceptions of what our service can offer	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy NHA Midland Heart	Align with continuous improvement work of the NHA contract	Ongoing via NHA quarterly contract monitoring meetings
1.8	Ensure appropriate advice and assistance is in place for homeowners threatened with eviction	Homelessness due to repossessions is prevented	Up to date information in relation to repossession activity in area	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy NHA	Review the range of options currently available	Ongoing via NHA quarterly contract monitoring meetings
Priority 2	Support Households into sustainable housing solutions						
	Achieving this aim will contribute to the Council's Corporate Priority by creating a clean, safe and sustainable borough						
2.1	Continue to develop the NSNO principles for the Borough	Reduction in the number of rough sleepers having to sleep rough for a second night	Improved access to emergency accommodation	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy Stoke High Risk Commissioning Team Brighter	Review current service provision in line with NSNO Gold Standard Model, develop action plan to enhance current service provision via rough sleeper's outreach service	August 2016 (1 st annual review of current rough sleeper's outreach contract)

					Futures		
2.2	Delivery of appropriate temporary accommodation	<p>Increase of temporary accommodation options available to NHA staff when accommodating under homelessness duties</p> <p>No families are placed in B&B (unless in an emergency) for more than 6 weeks</p> <p>No 16 & 17 year olds are placed in B&B</p>	Appropriate temporary accommodation to meet the needs of borough residents	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy	<p>Conduct a review of the temporary accommodation provision in the borough</p> <p>Identify future needs</p>	Ongoing through the duration of the strategy
2.3	Continue to develop the Private rented sector offer available to borough residents	Increase the number of sustainable move on into the private rented sector	Sustainability of long term tenancies	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy Private Sector Housing Service	Promoting access to PRS Housing Services continue to take a proactive approach Supporting landlords Supporting tenants	Ongoing through the duration of the strategy
2.4	Develop a Private rented discharge policy	Increase number of suitable 'discharge of duty' into the	Reduction in the requirement to use temporary accommodation	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy	<p>Develop draft policy</p> <p>Gain corporate approval for policy</p>	August 2016

		private rented sector	Homeless household re-housed in Sustainable accommodation				
2.5	Monitor the impact of the allocations policy	Allocations policy working	Responsive to emerging needs and policy impacts	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy NHA	Regular reviews of waiting list and letting statistics	Ongoing through the duration of the strategy
2.6	Monitor Nominations that take place in the Borough	Nomination agreements and target met	Policy objectives are met	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy Lettings Forum Members	Quarterly review of nominations	Ongoing via Quarterly letting forum
Priority 3	Work in Partnership to Address homelessness in Newcastle						
	Achieving this will contribute to all of the Council's Corporate priorities – Priority 1 A clean, safe and sustainable borough, Priority 2 A borough of opportunity, Priority 3 A Healthy Active Community, Priority 4 Becoming a co-operative council, delivering high quality community driven services						
3.1	Continue to identify key partners to work with in relation to the homelessness prevention agenda and causes of homelessness	Homelessness is prevented	Clear effective and inclusive partnership working	Within existing resources	Housing Strategy Homelessness Forum stakeholders		Ongoing through duration of strategy
3.2	Continue to work with partners to ensure that customers affected by	Homelessness is prevented	Clear effective and inclusive partnership working	With existing resources	Housing Strategy Housing Benefits Newcastle		Ongoing through the duration of the strategy

	welfare reforms are supported to prevent homelessness				Partnership Registered Providers		
3.3	Develop working relations with Public health and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to explore the links between poor health and housing and ways to tackle these jointly	Impact of homelessness and health considered in health and wellbeing agenda and public health outcomes Prevents homelessness Increases awareness of housing and homelessness issues amongst health professionals	Health and wellbeing of customers improved Improves partnership working	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy Public Health CCG Stoke and Staffordshire Moorlands Local Authorities	Housing reps from Newcastle Staffordshire Moorlands and Stoke to meet Bi monthly with reps from Public Health and CCG Ensure housing representation at relevant working groups	Ongoing through the duration of the strategy
3.4	Work with partners to ensure that there is appropriate accommodation options available for young people, especially 16 & 17 year olds	Prevents homelessness for young people Suitable accommodation options are available for young people No 16 & 17 year olds are	Contributes to Gold standard challenge Improved partnership working	Consideration for will need to be given regarding investment of new housing schemes	Housing Strategy Children's Services (County Council) Key Service Provider Stakeholders	Monitor the number of YP presenting at NHA Explore alternative accommodation options Work with partner agencies to deliver	Ongoing through the duration of the strategy

		placed in B&B			Shropshire, Staffordshire and Telford and Wrekin Homelessness Prevention Partnership		
3.5	Work with commissioning partners to provide support to homeless households or those at risk of homeless, to receive appropriate support, especially those with complex needs	Provision of appropriate support services to meet the needs of homeless households or those at risk of homeless	Fill gaps in provision Future needs identified	Within existing resources	Housing Strategy Partner agencies	Continue to monitor delivery of current service provision and align with future needs	Ongoing through the duration of the strategy
3.6	Review current membership of Homelessness Forum	Appropriate representation at forum	Focus on prevention at a strategic level	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy	Conduct review Amend / update membership	January 2017

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Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council
Homelessness Review 2015

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1. Introduction and Review Process

1.1 Introduction and Context

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires each local authority to carry out a review of homelessness within its area every 5 years and to use the findings to publish a Homelessness Strategy in consultation with other local partners and stakeholders.

In line with this legislation Newcastle's first strategy was developed in 2003. There have been 2 further reviews and strategies. The third strategy was adopted in 2010 and covered the five-year period to 2015. Newcastle's third strategy had the following priorities:

- **Priority 1 - Prevention**

To continue to prevent homelessness by earlier intervention and strong partnership working

- **Priority 2 - Accommodation**

Ensuring sufficient accommodation is available for people who are or may become homeless

- **Priority 3 - Support**

Securing the satisfactory provision of support for people who may be or are at risk of becoming homeless or who have been homeless and need the support to prevent them from becoming homeless again

1.2 Achievements since our last Strategy

The 2010 Strategy achieved the majority of its objectives; substantial developments and improvements during the five-year period are outlined below. Any actions that have not yet been completed from the previous Homelessness Strategy Action Plan will either be brought forward into the next strategy or disregarded if the outcomes of this review find they are no longer fit for purpose.

- **Retendering of the Newcastle Housing Advice Service (NHA)**

During the period of the last strategy the council has re-tendered its Newcastle Housing Advice service. The new contract continues to focus on homelessness prevention and the provision of housing advice to residents in the Borough.

- **Joint commissioning of the rough sleeper's outreach service**

Over the past 10 years, both Newcastle Borough Council and Stoke on Trent City Council have commissioned a rough sleeper's outreach service in their areas. During the current strategy, the Councils have worked together to jointly commission a service, which provides outreach services to rough sleepers in both Newcastle and Stoke on Trent.

- **A new temporary accommodation (TA) unit**

Previously the Council has piloted the feasibility of a temporary accommodation unit in the borough. The provision has proved to be a successful alternative to using emergency bed & breakfast accommodation, for a number of homeless households. Using the lessons learnt from the pilot, the Council now has arrangements in place

for the use of a new temporary accommodation unit to accommodate homelessness households for the next two years.

- **The Shropshire and Staffordshire Homelessness Prevention Partnership**
During the period of the current strategy, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCGL) made £528,000 of funding available to regional groups of local authorities to invest in the prevention of homelessness. The Borough Council is a member of the Shropshire and Staffordshire regional group and together the eleven local authority members have worked closely to commission a range of services across the region, which will assist in the prevention of homelessness for rough sleepers and the single homeless.
- **Re-commissioning of the debt advice service**
The Council has re-commissioned its Homelessness prevention debt advice service, which is of central importance in the overall prevention of homelessness. The service provides targeted and proactive money advice to households at risk of homelessness.
- **A Countywide Welfare Advice Service**
The Borough Council has worked with Staffordshire County Council to jointly commission a countywide welfare advice service. This approach improves the consistency of welfare advice throughout the County, whilst creating efficiencies and economies of scale, which could not be achieved through individual local authority services.
- **Delivery of 370 affordable homes**
Since the production of the last homelessness strategy in 2010, 370 affordable homes have been delivered in Newcastle under Lyme.
- **Increase in the number of homelessness preventions**
Each year the number of households who have had their risk of homelessness prevented has increased.

1.3 Review Process

The aim of this review is to understand the current situation in Newcastle and identify any changes that may have taken place since the last Homelessness review in 2010. On completion of the review it will enable the Council to identify the key aims and objectives to inform the future strategic direction of local homelessness services and shape actions that will effectively prevent and tackle homelessness between now and 2020.

Each Homelessness Review must consider the following:-

- a. Current and likely future levels of homelessness
- b. The activities, which are carried out for any of the following purposes (or contribute to achieving any of them)
 - Preventing homelessness in the Borough
 - Securing that accommodation is or will be available for people in the Borough who are or may become homeless
 - Providing support for people in the Borough who are, or may become, homeless or have been homeless and need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again
- c. The resources available to the local housing authority, the social services authority, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons for the activities outlined in (b) above

The Council's existing Housing Strategy, its Allocations Policy and the Strategic Tenancy Strategy have been considered as part of this review to ensure a coherent strategic approach to reducing homelessness is delivered in Newcastle.

In order to complete this review the following activities have taken place:

1.3.1. Data Collection

Research data was taken from the following sources:

- Statutory returns
- Monitoring Information from the Newcastle Housing Advice Service
- Monitoring Information provided by stakeholders and partners

1.3.2. Service Mapping

Staff collated information on the services currently available in the Borough that assist people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

1.3.3. Consultation

Consultation is vital to inform the development of the strategy and improvement to Council services.

Please note, the data collated for this review has been provided through a variety of sources, some of which are monitored on a calendar year basis whilst others are measured in financial years and therefore the totals reported may be different depending on which method has been used.

2. Context

Homelessness is a key strategic issue for Newcastle Borough Council and its partners. However the Homelessness Strategy does not exist in isolation, national, regional and local policies influence its aims, objectives and priorities.

2.1 National Context

Since the 2002 Homelessness Act, homelessness prevention has been a key priority for the Government. The focus has been on those who are not statutory homeless. This group includes rough sleepers, single homeless and couples without dependants. The rationale being that by taking a more considered and holistic approach when these groups present to services this will enable authorities to reduce the repeated demands these groups place on services, not only for housing, but also health and the criminal justice system.

This policy priority is particularly associated with the work of the Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness (MWG) chaired by the Housing Minister. The group brings together eight departments with responsibility for issues that affect homeless people. The group's first report, focused on rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping and was called a "Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out Nationwide" (2011). The report reiterated the Government's commitment to work together across departments and with voluntary sector partners to end rough sleeping in England. The report also made a series of commitments on improved access to healthcare and employment support for homeless people, including early access to the Work Programme. Help was also promised to local authorities with significant numbers of migrant rough sleepers to assist in reconnecting them with their home countries.

In addition, Homeless Link was made responsible for a new £20 million Homelessness Transition Fund to fund voluntary organisations to deliver strategic rough sleepers services across England and Crisis was granted £10.8 million to fund voluntary sector schemes to improve access to the PRS for single homeless people.

There was also a commitment to a national roll – out of the 'No Second Night Out (NSNO)' project, first piloted in London in 2011. The NSNO model is focused on ensuring, via better intelligence and public awareness, a rapid outreach response to people sleeping rough. The report recognises the need to tackle the broader issues that led to homelessness in the first place.

The second MWG report, Making Every Contact Count (2012) focuses on a joint approach to homelessness prevention, based on early intervention. The vision centres on the principle that agencies will work together to make sure that everyone at risk of homelessness can get the help they need to prevent them from losing their home.

The report sets out the government's commitment to make sure that every contact a vulnerable person or family makes with a local agency really counts to:

- tackle troubled childhoods and adolescence - through interventions to turn around the lives of the most troubled families; and by promoting innovative approaches to youth homelessness
- improve health - including improving outcomes for homeless people with dual drugs / alcohol and mental health needs; and helping to ensure medical professionals discharging patients know who to approach for help to meet housing needs
- reduce involvement in crime - through support to the new Police and Crime Commissioners; improving offender access to private rented sector accommodation; and measures to help those on short sentences retain their tenancy

- improve skills; employment; and financial advice - through new housing demonstration projects which help claimants budget and manage rent payments; a commitment to explore a payment by results approach for those some distance from the labour market; and piloting community learning trusts
- pioneer social funding for homelessness - through a world first Social Impact Bond for rough sleepers and support to other local commissioners to turn social investment propositions into reality

The Gold Standard

In April 2013, based upon the 10 local challenges set out by the MWG, the Government announced a new support and training scheme for homelessness services called the Gold Standard. The Gold Standard is designed to help local authorities deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services. The standard requires local authorities to pledge to strive for continuous improvement in front line housing services through peer review, expert support and professional training. Participating authorities benchmark against neighbouring authorities and learn from examples of good practice.

To attain the Gold Standard Status, local authorities need to meet a number of key commitments:

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

★ Review findings

The Council needs to consider whether it is prepared to contribute both financially and strategically to achieve the Gold Standard.

Localism

The Localism Act came into force in November 2012, and supports the improvement of local housing options. The Act includes a number of key provisions in relation to homelessness:

- Local Authorities are given the power to discharge their homelessness duty with an offer of accommodation in the private rented sector.
- Social housing tenure reform which will allow social landlords to grant fixed term tenancies with limited security of tenure;

- The need for Local Authorities to set out their approach and response in a Tenancy Strategy.
- Social Housing allocation reform which allows Local Authorities to set allocation policies appropriate to the local area.

Following from the Act, came the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation)(England) Order 2012. This is the Statutory Guidance to which local authorities must have regard when discharging (ending) their duties to homeless households by using private rented accommodation. The guidance describes situations in which private rented housing should be regarded as unsuitable.

Welfare Reform

The Coalition Government introduced a series of welfare reforms and changes to the welfare to work provision under the Welfare Reform Act of 2012. The Act was designed to simplify the benefit system and help more people move into work whilst also seeking to support vulnerable people. The most significant implications for housing and homelessness are:

- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) reductions including total LHA caps and the limiting of LHA to the 30th percentile of market rents
- Total Benefit Cap limiting maximum benefits that a household can receive to £500 per week with the benefit removed from housing benefit payment towards rent
- Spare room subsidy (known as the Bedroom Tax) reducing housing benefit entitlement to social housing tenants considered to be under occupying their homes
- The Single accommodation rate limit applied to young people up to the age of 34
- Transfer of responsibility of social fund payments to local authorities and to council budgets (in Newcastle this is a responsibility for Staffordshire County Council)
- Disability Benefit Charges and the replacement of Council Tax benefit with local council tax support, reducing benefit income to a wide range of working age adults
- Introduction of the Universal Credit to provide a single stream-lined benefit paid to residents directly rather than to their landlords

★ Review findings

Welfare Reform does not have appeared to have produced a direct increase in homelessness, so far.

We are yet to see the full effect of Universal Credit in Newcastle as it has only been introduced for certain customers from April 2015.

Consideration must be given on ways as how to identify households at risk of falling into arrears under Universal Credit.

Health

There is a direct correlation between homelessness and poor health. Homeless people can face great inequalities in accessing health services, yet their health can often suffer from being homeless or living in poor quality temporary accommodation. Poor health – physical, mental or both can also cause a person to become homeless in the first place. Homeless people may often leave health problems untreated until they reach crisis point and then present inappropriately at A&E. This combines to make health problems more expensive to treat, hospital waiting lists longer and leads to people being less able to support themselves in their homes.

Improving the health of the homeless is dependent on effective commissioning of appropriate healthcare services, under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, reducing health inequalities is now a requirement. Since April 2013 the new NHS Commissioning Board and local clinical commissioning groups are responsible for the commissioning of healthcare services. Local Health and Wellbeing boards will be responsible for determining their commissioning priorities based on strategic needs assessments. Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) have the duty to provide services for all patients in their locality whether registered or not, including services for the homeless.

★ Review findings

We need to be aware of the new structures within health and plan how to maximise partnership opportunities. We also need to identify our respective roles in coordinating the achievement of shared outcomes (as detailed in the Public Health NHS and Adult Social Care Outcome Frameworks).

There is currently little analysis nationally or locally about the cost of homelessness to health.

Temporary Accommodation

The Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 placed a duty on local housing authorities to secure permanent accommodation for unintentionally homeless people in priority need. Authorities' duties towards homeless people are now contained in Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act (as amended). In performing their duties to homeless people under Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act (as amended) local authorities are obliged to have regard for the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities. The Guidance was revised to take account of the changes made by the 2002 Homelessness Act and the extension of the priority need categories.

Where an authority is providing interim accommodation for a homeless household pending a decision on their application under section 188 of the 1996 Act, the Guidance notes the use of B&B should be avoided where possible.

'Housing authorities should avoid using Bed & Breakfast (B&B) accommodation wherever possible. Where B&B accommodation has been used in an emergency situation, applicants should be moved to more suitable accommodation as soon as possible. The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003 provides that B&B accommodation is not suitable accommodation for families with children and households that include a pregnant woman unless there is no alternative accommodation available and then only for a maximum of six weeks.'

CLG, Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, July 2006, para 7.6

Where an authority accepts a duty to secure accommodation for a household that is unintentionally homeless and in priority need, the accommodation provided must be 'suitable.' The Code of Guidance provides the following advice for authorities on using B&B accommodation for discharging a re-housing duty:

Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation caters for very short-term stays only and generally will afford residents only limited privacy and may lack certain important amenities, such as cooking and laundry facilities. Consequently, where possible, housing authorities should avoid using B&B hotels to discharge a duty to secure accommodation for applicants, unless, in the very limited circumstances where it is likely to be the case, it is the most appropriate option for an applicant. The Secretary of State considers B&B hotels as particularly

unsuitable for accommodating applicants with family commitments and applicants aged 16 or 17 year who need support.

CLG, Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, July 2006 16.28

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) produced a report entitled 'No Place Like Home' in July 2013. The report identified a 'worrying trend' of young people and homelessness families being placed in bed and breakfast and has issued five LGO reports on homelessness involving the inappropriate use of bed and breakfast accommodation. The LGO considers bed and breakfast accommodation as unsuitable and that councils must secure alternative accommodation within no more than six weeks and has explicitly warned that the LGO may find fault even where a family has spent less than six weeks in bed and breakfast if the LO is of the view that the council could have moved an applicant sooner.

★ Review findings

TA usage has increased both locally and nationally

Customers who need assistance have more complex needs

TA providers are becoming more reluctant to allow our customers to access

Councils are accessing TA provision outside their local authority boundaries

2.2 Local context

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council's Corporate Plan (2013-16)

Newcastle Borough Council is committed to four corporate priorities within its Corporate Plan:

- A clean, safe & sustainable borough
- A borough of opportunity
- A healthy and active community
- A co-operative council delivering high value community driven services

The Homelessness Strategy is one of a number of strategies within the Authority that will deliver the Council's Corporate Plan.

The Newcastle Partnership

The Newcastle Partnership is the overarching strategic partnership for the borough; it was formerly the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and Community Safety Partnership. The vision for the partnership is '*Newcastle Communities together, securing a prosperous future*'.

In seeking to translate the Partnership's vision into a reality, a number of key outcomes have been identified: -

- People being part of an active, local community and involved in how public services are delivered
- People living, working and prospering in safe environments, free from crime and the causes of crime
- People having a supportive family life and a decent place to live
- People enjoying longer, healthier and more rewarding lives

The key objectives of the partnership are to:

- improve People's lives;
- improve the Places in which we live, work and visit and
- working together as Partners to achieve improvements.

The Partnership reviewed its structures as a result of national, regional and local changes to policy and process in 2012 and put two key priorities at the heart of the Partnership's work – delivering economic growth and tackling vulnerability.

★ Review findings

The Council has a wide range of overarching strategies that affect and impact upon the lives of the homeless or those who are at risk of homelessness. However few mention this in any detail.

Newcastle under Lyme's Housing Strategy

Newcastle's Housing Strategy (2011 -16) is the overarching document for all housing activity and investment in the borough by the Council and its partners.

The Council's vision for housing is to 'ensure that present and future residents of the Borough have greater choice in being able to live in a home that is affordable, in good condition and adequately meets their needs'.

The strategy has four strategic objectives;

1. To improve the sustainability of the local housing market
2. To prevent homelessness and ensure support is available to vulnerable people
3. To meet the decent homes standard by improving the condition and energy efficiency of homes across all tenures
4. To provide greater choice in housing in response to resident's needs.

The strategy sets out how these objectives have been prioritised and the action plan demonstrates how these objectives will be met. The Council is currently in the process of reviewing and developing a new Housing Strategy for the period of 2016 to 2021.

Newcastle under Lyme's Tenancy Strategy

The Tenancy Strategy sets out the type of social rented housing tenancies the borough expects Social housing providers to provide in Newcastle.

The Tenancy Strategy has the following four strategic aims:

- To encourage better use of existing housing stock to meet housing need in the Borough
- To tackle overcrowding and under occupation in social housing stock in the Borough
- To contribute to balanced, sustainable and cohesive communities within the Borough
- To protect and support vulnerable people who require housing in the Borough

2.3 Legal context

Local authorities have a duty to find accommodation for the homeless under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002. Under the 1996 Act, local authorities have responsibilities to those who they believe are either homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The statutory definition of homelessness was unaltered by the Homelessness Act 2002 and remains as that defined by the Homelessness Act 1996 s.175,

‘A person is homeless if he or she has no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere which is available for his or her occupation and which that person has a legal right to occupy. A person will also be homeless where he or she has accommodation but cannot secure entry to it, or where he or she has accommodation that is a moveable structure (such as a caravan or a house boat) and there is no place where it can be placed in order to provide accommodation. A person who has accommodation is to be treated as homeless where it would not be reasonable for him or her to continue to occupy it’

Also a person is considered to be threatened with homelessness if he or she is likely to become homeless within 28 days.

If a local authority has reason to believe that a person is homeless or threatened with homelessness, it is required to make enquiries and decide whether it owes the applicant a duty to find accommodation for them. In each case an assessment will take place to determine whether the applicant is actually homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need and not intentionally homeless. If an applicant meets these criteria the authority has an immediate duty to provide temporary accommodation for them and anyone who normally resides with them.

Local authorities owe a lesser duty to applicants who are not in priority need or who are intentionally homeless. Local authorities may have a duty to provide them with advice and assistance in finding new accommodation. Information and advice about homelessness and housing options can be provided by the local authority and also external agencies. However it is essential that the advice and assistance provided is up to date, robust and will help with the strategic aim of preventing homelessness.

Where an applicant is threatened with homelessness and meets the above criteria, local authorities have a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that the accommodation remains available for their occupation.

The Council fulfils its legal duty through Newcastle Housing Advice (NHA), which is a housing advice, options and homelessness service, delivered on behalf of the Council under contract by Midland Heart Ltd.

3. Homelessness in Newcastle

3.1 The Borough Profile

Newcastle under Lyme is part of the North West conurbation of North Staffordshire. It is the most populated borough in Staffordshire with a population of around 125,200 (2013 mid-year estimates) and has an area of 81 square miles. The two main towns within the borough are Newcastle under Lyme and Kidsgrove, there is also an extensive rural area in the West of the borough.

The industrial base of the borough has changed significantly in the last century with the closure of the mines and the development of distribution and manufacturing sectors. Service industries are now the largest employers in the area, with the number of people employed in water, energy and construction industries being higher than the national average. The presence of Keele University with the development of its innovation centres for small businesses, medical school and the growth of hi tech and research industries demonstrates the potential and vibrancy of the area. Newcastle town centre is recognised as being one of the strategically important centres in North Staffordshire, taking advantage of its good connections to major transport routes.

Overall the level of deprivation in the Borough is about average; the Borough has areas of considerable affluence, but also includes three areas that fall into the 10% most deprived in the Country.

The Borough is becoming a safer place to live, work and visit, with long-term crime rates falling over the last few years. Reports of anti-social behaviour have also been fallen steadily over the past four years. However, fear of crime remains a concern for residents despite falling crime rates.

Population

Population estimates for 2013 tell us that Newcastle's population has grown by around 2.6% per cent since 2001 and there are now an estimated 125,200 residents in the borough. The average age of the population is slightly higher than the national average and the population is ageing, with around 17% more residents aged 65 and over living in the borough than in 2001.

Population projections for Newcastle-under-Lyme from 2012 to 2021 suggest there will be a growth in the total population of 4.3%, (around 5,400 residents); this is lower than the expected growth across England of 7.7%. There will be a small increase in the number of children aged under 16 - 3.3% compared with 11.6% nationally and a projected growth in people aged 65 and over of 18.3% - slightly less than England (19.1%). The biggest increase will be amongst residents aged over 85. It is likely that there will be almost 37% more people in this age group by 2021. This increasing old-age dependency ratio will have wide ranging implications on the economy of the borough.

Economic Activity

The level of unemployment in Newcastle increased dramatically following the economic downturn of 2008, with rates peaking at 4.1% in April 2009. However, in line with the trend across the country, the rate of people claiming Job Seeker's Allowance has gradually fallen. In June 2014 the rate of unemployment stood at 1.9%, lower than the national average of 2.4%.

The economic downturn has had a significant effect on the number of jobs available in the borough. Between 2007 and 2011 the number of jobs fell by 4,000 or around 8.5%. However, figures for 2012 suggest that the number of jobs available in Newcastle has increased by around 1,600 compared to 2011.

Business start-up rates in Newcastle are relatively low, but survival rates for those that do get off the ground are relatively good.

The proportion of people claiming out of work benefits in Newcastle is slightly lower than the national and regional average; however there are areas in the Borough where these proportions are significantly higher. Worklessness due to ill health, particularly poor mental health, in some areas is a long-standing issue.

The 2011 Census tells us that the proportion of working age residents with no formal qualifications is around 27%. However the Office for National Statistics annual population survey for 2013 suggests that only around 10% of residents have no qualifications.

Despite falling unemployment rates overall, unemployment locally continues to disproportionately affect people aged between 16 -24. Currently this group accounts for around a quarter of JSA claimants in the borough. It is widely accepted that reducing the number of young people who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) within Newcastle is likely to result in positive outcomes around reducing the risks of homelessness, improved community safety, better health and an improved academic and vocation skills base. Between 2006 – 2007 and 2008 – 2009, the percentage of 16 – 18 year olds who were NEET in Newcastle reduced from 8.7% to 5.7%. The most recent data available shows that this percentage has fallen further and stands at 4.9% in December 2012. Currently, educational attainment in Newcastle is reasonable with average proportions of 16 year olds achieving five or more A*-C GCSEs.

In 2013 the average gross annual income for residents in the Borough was £24,769 and the average gross household income is around £34,600.

Number of dwellings and tenure

There are currently 54790 dwellings in Newcastle of which 9800 are Registered Provider stock, 449910 are within the owner occupied and private rented sector, 10 are owned by the local authority. (*source: number of dwellings by tenure, table 100 dwelling stock England 2013 www.gov.uk*).

Property condition

In 2008 the Housing Stock Condition Survey reviewed the levels of stock condition in the Borough. The survey estimated that 8,209 private sector dwellings exhibit Category 1 hazards; these are not evenly distributed throughout the Borough and tend to be more prevalent in the following areas: Newcastle Town Centre, Thistleberry, Cross Heath, Knutton, Silverdale, May Bank, Porthill, Wolstanton and Butt Lane.

Right to Buy

In 1980 the Housing Act gave tenants who rented local authority stock an opportunity to buy their homes. Between 2010 and 31st May 2014 there have been 77 Right to Buy sales in Newcastle under Lyme.

AFFORDABILITY

The Strategic Market Housing Assessment (SMHA) (2014) concluded that ‘Newcastle needs an estimated 163 affordable homes each year for the next five years to cover the existing backlog and meet current needs’.

Average house prices in Newcastle are nearly 7 times the average individual income.

Information from the Land Registry shows that between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2014 the average house price for Newcastle was £162,085.

Area	Average Sold Price	Average Detached Price	Average Semi-Detached Price	Average Terraced Price	Average Flat / Maisonette Price
Borough Average	£162,085	£213,302	£145,315	£131,282	£80,418
Urban Average	£160,833	£196,665	£147,497	£129,219	£89,483
Newcastle	£173,311	£213,971	£158,943	£161,741	£81,068
Kidsgrove	£148,356	£179,399	£136,051	£96,696	£97,897
Rural Area	£189,977	£260,531	£154,184	£209,707	£79,050
Urban / Rural Mix	£152,739	£192,047	£115,743	£94,414	

Source: Land Registry

Renting

Renting from a Registered Provider

The table below illustrates the average weekly Registered Provider rent within Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Registered Provider Average Weekly Rents for Newcastle-under-Lyme				
2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
£54.85	£59.56	£60.89	£65.44	£70.64

Source: DCLG live tables 704

Aspire Housing is the largest registered provider within Newcastle. During 2013 Aspire owned and managed 8,458 residential properties, of which 91% are let at a social housing rent, 7% are designated for older people (including extra care) and 2% are let at affordable rents. The table below illustrates its average weekly rents per number of bedrooms.

Aspire Housing – Average Weekly Rent – April 2013	
Number of Bedrooms	Average Rents
Bed Sit	£68.86
1 Bedroom	£71.47
2 Bedrooms	£76.86
3 Bedrooms	£82.53
4 Bedrooms	£93.09
Overall Average	£77.32

Source: Aspire Annual report 2012-13

Note: figures are shown over 52 weeks – average rent over a 48 week is £83.76

The tables, in comparison to the private rented data shown further on in this review, demonstrate that renting from a social landlord is clearly still the most affordable tenure.

The affordability gap has increased the demand for affordable rented housing. The table below shows the number of households waiting for housing on the Joint Housing Register in Newcastle by bedroom requirement (excluding transfer applications);

Households on Joint Housing Register as 1st April by bedroom requirement						
	2009	2010*	2011	2012	2013	2014**
Households requiring 1 Bedroom	1322	1111	1356	1534	1161	1195
Households requiring 2 Bedrooms	975	423	504	590	528	498
Households requiring 3 Bedrooms	386	313	150	266	149	165
Households requiring more than 3 Bedrooms	88	47	128	54	42	41
Total	2771	1894	2138	2444	1880	1899

Source: Local authority housing statistics

*In 2010 the Joint Housing Register was reviewed as part of the introduction of Choice Based Lettings.

**Snapshot of Joint Housing Register as at Aug 2014

The table above illustrates that the highest demand on the register is for one and two bedroom properties.

The table below demonstrates that the number of registered provider dwellings let to households in response to a nomination has increased significantly between 2012 and 2013.

Number of Registered provider dwellings let to households in response to a nomination from NBC			
2011	2012	2013	2014
641	627	860	671

Source: Local Authority Housing Statistics

The information within the tables above also highlights that the numbers on the waiting list in the Borough far outweighs the number of relets per year of social housing stock.

The Private Rented Sector

The table below gives a summary of the average rents per property type for Newcastle under Lyme, the West Midlands and England between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2014.

Type of Property	Newcastle Average Rent	West Midlands Average Rent	England Average Rent
1 Bed House	£408 Monthly £94 Weekly	£442 Monthly £102 Weekly	£606 Monthly £140 Weekly
2 Bed House	£474 Monthly £109 Weekly	£538 Monthly £124 Weekly	£677 Monthly £156 Weekly

3 Bed House	£552 Monthly £127 Weekly	£638 Monthly £147 Weekly	£771 Monthly £178 Weekly
4 Bed or more House	£764 Monthly £176 Weekly	£996 Monthly £230 Weekly	£1348 Monthly £311 Weekly

Source: Valuation Office Agency – June 2014

In comparison, the local housing allowance (LHA) is a flat rate of housing benefit for people who rent from private landlords and are entitled to assistance with their rent.

The table below illustrates the LHA for Newcastle in 2013, 2014 and 2015

	1 Bed shared	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
Weekly 2013	£48.10	£79.62	£91.25	£109.62	£144.23
Weekly 2014	£50.02	£80.00	£91.15	£109.62	£138.46
Weekly 2015	£52.02	£80.55	£90.90	£109.32	£139.84

Source: LHA rates-NBC website

The data indicates that for many households who are in receipt of benefits or are working but on low incomes finding affordable accommodation in the private sector may still be difficult.

★ Review findings

There are less social rented homes available and an increasing need to rely on the private sector. This may influence our ability to give people a wide housing choice.

3.2 Current Levels of Homelessness

Levels and natures of Statutory Homelessness

On a regular basis, the Council collates a wide range of statistics relating to all aspects of homelessness in the Borough. From this data the Council reports its findings to a number of sources. On a national level the Council is required to submit to the DCLG on a quarterly basis statistics relating to approaches made to them by homeless applicants. These statistics are known as the P1E returns. They provide data on people who have approached the Council and following enquires have been deemed to be eligible, homeless, in priority need and not intentionally homeless (this is termed as the number of acceptances). The data also includes the number of decisions made, the main reasons for homelessness, a breakdown of the priority need categories and the numbers in temporary accommodation.

The P1E returns give a useful insight into the levels and nature of homelessness within the Borough; however it must be remembered that the figures only account for people who approach the Council and not the other services that operate in the Borough. In addition, it needs to be noted that the vast amount of homelessness prevention work that takes place in the Borough should lead to a reduction in the numbers reported on the P1E. All people who approach Newcastle Housing Advice who are in housing need or facing homelessness will see a Housing Advisor to discuss the range of options available to them. Wherever possible, the Advisor will work with the individuals to prevent the homelessness occurring either by working with them to find alternative accommodation, referring them to partner organisations for support and assistance or accessing one of the homelessness prevention schemes which operate in the Borough.

Homelessness Decisions

The table and chart below show the number of decisions in the past 5 years.

	Eligible, unintentionally homeless & In Priority Need	Eligible in Priority Need but Intentional	Eligible Homeless but in no Priority Need	Eligible but not homeless	Ineligible households	Total
2014	11	13	71	8	3	106
2013	18	18	41	20	1	98
2012	11	11	8	6	1	37
2011	6	11	10	14	3	44
2010	7	7	6	16	0	36
2009	18	13	6	16	4	57

Source: NULBC Contract Monitoring Stats

The table shows that between 2009 and 2010 the total number of homeless households owed a duty decreased. In 2011 the total numbers began to increase, and whilst 2012 showed a small reduction, in 2014 the total number of homeless households rose to 106. It is worth noting if a person is deemed to be non-priority or intentionally homeless, the Council does not owe a duty to provide accommodation, however the Council recognises these groups of people should not remain homeless and there is still the need to provide them with advice and assistance.

The table below shows the level of activity carried out by NHA over the past five years.

Activity	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/14
Telephone Enquiries	34449	15307	12175	14341	10229
Reception Enquiries	1970	4970	5553	6650	3286
NHA Homelessness Enquiries	1283	449	457	1299	106
Interviews (by appointment)	737	668	587	456	639
Interviews (walk ins)	94	97	90	67	162
Homeless Decisions	64	40	47	39	99
Number Placed in temporary accommodation	32	26	19	2	12

Source: NULBC Contract Monitoring Stats

When considering this information compared to the number of homeless decisions, a significant number of people are also being assisted through the housing options route. The tables below show how many housing advice enquires there have been in Newcastle compared to homelessness decisions made over the past six years.

	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Enquiries	Decisions	Enquiries	Decisions	Enquiries	Decisions	Enquiries	Decisions
2012/13	358	6	311	7	287	9	363	11
2011/12	121	11	145	15	72	10	119	11
2010/11	100	11	123	7	80	11	146	11
2009/10	242	26	352	12	319	13	370	13

Source: NULBC Contract Monitoring Stats

	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Quarter 3		Quarter 4	
	Applications	Decisions	Applications	Decisions	Applications	Decisions	Applications	Decisions
2014/15	36	29	28	26	36	28	31	19
2013/14	31	21	25	21	35	34	25	34

Source: NULBC Contract Monitoring Stats

* From 2013/14 the information for decisions was recorded from a customer making a full homelessness application.

The statistics show that there has been an increase in the decisions over the past five years, which has risen significantly over the past two years. This increase is in line with an increase nationally and can be attributed to a number of factors, including impacts from the introduction of the Localism Act, welfare reforms and a decrease in the resources for support and access to accommodation, especially for customers with complex needs.

★ Review findings

2013/15 has shown an increase in the number of homeless decisions the service has made.

Consideration needs to be given as to whether the new strategy can realistically address the needs of all homeless and potentially homeless people within the borough.

3.3 Who becomes homeless?

The tables below illustrate the age, household type and ethnicity breakdown of those people who have been accepted as homeless in Newcastle.

Age

The majority of those accepted as homeless fall within the age group of 25 – 44 year olds. The number of homeless acceptances for 16 to 24 year olds increased in 2013 as did acceptances for those aged 45-59 years. Part of this increase may reflect the lack of opportunity to prevent homelessness through the provision of alternative accommodation for single people who may have been affected by welfare reforms.

	2010		2011		2012		2013	
Age	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
16-24	2	22%	1	17%	1	10%	3	22%
25-44	4	44%	5	83%	10	90%	7	50%
45-59	1	12%	0	0%	0	0%	3	22%
60-64	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
65-74	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
75 & Over	2	22%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%
Total	9	100%	6	100%	11	100%	14	100%

Source: NULBC Contract Monitoring Stats

Household Type	2010		2011		2012		2013	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Couple with or expecting dependant children	0	0%	5	83%	2	20%	0	0%
Lone parent (male) household with or	1	14%	0	0%	0	0%	4	18%

expecting dependant children								
Lone parent (female) household with or expecting dependant children	4	57%	0	0%	5	50%	6	27%
One person household (male)	0	0%	1	17%	2	20%	4	18%
One person household (female)	2	29%	0	0%	1	10%	6	27%
All other household groups	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	10%
TOTAL	7	100%	6	100%	10	100%	22	100%

Source: NULBC Contract Monitoring Stats

As the data shows the more than half of the households accepted as homeless by Newcastle over the past four years are lone females either with or without children, over the past three years the data also shows an increase in the number of lone males with or without children.

Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	2010		2011		2012		2013	
	No	%	No	%	No	100%	No	100%
White	32	88%	43	98%	34	92%	93	95%
Black or Black British	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Asian or Asian British	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Mixed	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	3%
Other ethnic group	0	0%	1	2%	3	8%	2	2%
Not Stated	4	12%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
TOTAL	36	100%	44	100%	37	100%	98	100%

Source: NULBC Contract Monitoring Stats

Data collected on the ethnicity of priority need homeless households suggested that the proportion of household found to be in priority need that has been recorded as belonging to a black or minority ethnic group (BME) is less proportionate to the percentage of BME households in Newcastle. This can be partially explained due to the Borough having 'affluent' pockets of ethnicity, which have not historically required the Council's homelessness services. However a full Equality Impact Assessment will be completed before the Homelessness Strategy is published.

Reasons for Priority Need

Priority Need	2010	2011	2012	2013
Dependent Children	4	5	7	7
Household includes a pregnant women and there are no other dependent children	1	0	0	0
Applicant aged 16 /17 years	0	0	0	0
Vulnerable – having fled the home because of threat of violence	2	0	1	5
Vulnerable – mental illness or disability	0	1	2	3

Applicant formerly in care and aged 18 to 20 years old	0	0	1	1
Homelessness due to emergency (fire or flood etc)	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	2
Total	7	6	11	18

Source: NULBC Contract Monitoring Stats

The table shows that the majority of priority need homeless households are those with dependent children. This reflects that when children are part of the household, the household will automatically be placed in priority need. The numbers of homeless households with children has also increased over the past four years.

The numbers also demonstrate an increase in the number of people in priority need who are vulnerable. This reflects messages we are receiving from stakeholders that they too are experiencing about the increased levels of vulnerability in their customers.

Finally it is worth noting, that many households may fall into more than one priority need category but for the purposes of P1E recording, which is where these figures are taken from, households are only recorded against the main priority need category.

Why do people become homeless?

The table below reports upon the main reasons for loss of settled accommodation for applicants found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need in Newcastle.

Reason	2010		2011		2012		2013	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Parents / Relatives / Friends no longer able / willing to accommodate	1	14%	2	33%	1	10%	2	11%
Non Violent Relationship Breakdown	0	0%	0	0%	1	10%	0	0%
Loss of rented or tied accommodation	1	14%	0	0%	1	10%	1	5%
Other forms of violence	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Domestic Violence	4	57%	1	17%	4	30%	12	78%
Harassment	0	0%	1	17%	0	0	1	5%
Mortgage Arrears	1	15%	0	0%	1	10%	0	0%
Rent arrears on private sector dwellings	0	0%	0	0%	2	20%	0	0%
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other Reasons	0	0%	2	33%	1	10%	2	11%
Total	7	100%	6	100%	11	100%	18	100%

Source: NULBC Contract Monitoring Stats

The causes of homelessness in Newcastle do reflect the national main causes of parental / relatives / friends no longer willing / able to accommodate and the loss of rented or tied accommodation (termination of assured tenancy). However the figures evidence that in the past four years Domestic Violence has been the main cause of homelessness for residents

in Newcastle. The figures also show that there is a small number of those accepted as homeless are homeless as a result of mortgage arrears or lost tenancies due to rent areas.

It should be noted that the number of statutory applications and decisions do not reflect the levels of potential homelessness in the Borough; many customers assisted through NHA are prevented from becoming homeless without the need for a homelessness application. Also of those who do make an application, some may be refused assistance based upon not meeting the eligibility criteria laid down in legislation.

★ Review findings

Not all NHA customers will make a statutory homelessness application and many potential homelessness cases are prevented due to the actions and assistance from the team

Housing Benefit Information

The Housing Benefit Department (HB) fulfils two major functions with regard to homelessness prevention, the provision of subsidy to enable people to afford their rented homes and the provision of discretionary housing payments to prevent hardship by covering a shortfall between benefit levels and rent.

Delays in HB payments, problems with under and over payments and failures to renew claims create rent arrears, which can result in evictions. In Newcastle the HB team works to process HB claims swiftly with a three week target. In addition the team works closely with officers from the Council's Housing Strategy Team and Officers at NHA, which further reduces the likelihood of claimant problems.

The housing benefit provision for private rented and social housing tenants is different in so much as for private tenants the provision is known as the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), which is paid to the tenant rather than the landlord for all but the most vulnerable tenants. This was designed to encourage a greater level of tenant responsibility and greater certainty over what they will be expected to pay.

The LHA does open the risk of tenants defaulting on rent payments, although the scheme does allow for direct payments to be made to landlords for tenants who are unable to manage their finances or fall into arrears. The Council is working with various partners to ensure that where those customers are considered to be at risk (e.g. many of those who receive housing support services) will have their LHA paid direct to the landlord.

Discretionary Housing Payments are used by the Benefits Team at Newcastle to can assist those who might otherwise suffer hardship, including homelessness. These are considered on a case by case basis. The Council's budget for the financial year 2013-2014 was £135,044 of which £124,878.63 was spent.

The NHA team work closely with the Council's housing benefit team in order to prevent homelessness and the application of discretionary Housing Benefit payments.

Mortgage and Landlord Possessions

It is apparent that activity for mortgage repossessions has fallen and is on a downward trend. However, this is in contrast to the legal actions sought by landlords, which has shown an increase in numbers.

The tables below show the number of mortgage possession and landlord claims leading to orders made in Newcastle under Lyme and the comparative tables for the West Midlands and the national figures.

Newcastle under Lyme	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Annual Mortgage Claims for Possession	167	128	126
Annual Mortgage orders for possession	138	102	250
Annual Landlord Claims for Possession	193	234	250
Total Claims for Possession	360	362	379
Total Orders for Possession	279	269	268

Source: Ministry of justice court possession statistics online

West Midlands	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Annual Mortgage Claims for Possession	7,871	6,317	6,063
Annual Mortgage orders for possession	5,799	4,665	4,293
Annual Landlord Claims for Possession	13,237	14,405	14,804
Annual Landlord Orders for Possession	9,574	9,949	10,015
Total Claims for Possession	21,108	20,722	20,867
Total Order for Possession	15,373	14,613	14,308

Source: Ministry of justice court possession statistics online

National	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Annual Mortgage Claims for Possession	67,890	55,473	53,162
Annual Mortgage orders for possession	51,183	41,040	38,658
Annual Landlord Claims for Possession	136,372	144,952	148,838
Annual Landlord Orders for Possession	93,606	98,917	101,310
Total Claims for Possession	204,262	200,425	202,000
Total Order for Possession	144,789	139,957	139,968

Source: Ministry of justice court possession statistics online

The Council and Partners have developed a number of initiatives to respond effectively as possible to the economic downturn. The steps taken include:

- Implementing the Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme.
- Developing in partnership with Aspire housing a specific Money Advice drop in service to prevent homelessness.
- Writing to each household in Newcastle where proceedings for possession of the property have commenced, to offer advice and assistance.

However, despite measures to ensure that repossession is the very last resort for lenders, there is the fear that when that interest rates have remained at an all-time low may have helped some borrowers to afford repayments and once interest rates begin to increase again, this may result in affordability issues for further people.

★ Review findings

At present interest rates are low, any upward changes may impact on both home owners and buy to let landlords

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4. Preventing Homelessness and Meeting Housing Need

The adoption of the homelessness prevention ethos has had a considerable impact on the homelessness work in the Borough. A prevention centred approach means a pro-active rather than a reactive approach with increased emphasis on networking, negotiation and creativity.

4.1 Homelessness Services in Newcastle

Newcastle Housing Advice Service (NHA)

The homeless legislation places a duty on the Council to provide up-to-date, advice and assistance to our residents, not only about housing options but also on the broad range of factors that can contribute to homelessness. Reasons for housing need and homelessness can be due to a range of environmental and personal circumstances.

The Code of Guidance states that the duty to provide advice can be fulfilled by the local authority or through another agency on their behalf. Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council has fulfilled its duty to provide advice and assistance through the Newcastle Housing Advice Service (NHA).

The NHA service is delivered by Midland Heart Ltd under a contract for the Council to deliver homelessness, housing advice and housing register services to residents of the Borough. The current service contract is for a period of three years with the option for a further three year extension subject to satisfactory performance and funding. The current contract commenced on 1st April 2014.

The service offers customers advice and assistance in enabling them to remain in their homes or to assist with moves into more suitable and sustainable accommodation by offering a range of housing options. Advice is provided regardless of priority and intentionality and tailored towards the needs of the customer. This approach enables all alternative options to be explored and wherever possible resulting in the prevention of homelessness. If it is inevitable that the homelessness will not be able to be prevented the service will take a formal homeless application and carry out investigations as to whether they are eligible for assistance under the homelessness legislation.

The service operates 37 hours per week from premises within Newcastle town centre and operates an emergency out of hour's service at all other times. NHA offers the following services:

- General Housing Advice
- Specialist advice and assistance on tenancy law and security of tenure
- General Benefits advice
- Access to homelessness prevention schemes
- Referrals to specialist support providers
- Assistance in accessing accommodation
- Homes Direct (online housing options advice toolkit and online registration system for the housing register)
- Links to private sector assistance and adaptations of home
- Money advice

The Council works with Midland Heart to regularly review the service to ensure that it remains responsive and effective focusing on prevention and early intervention.

★ Review findings

It should be noted that all the staff within the team have been in post for a number of years and have amassed valuable knowledge and expertise. It is clear that the team show passion and commitment towards tackling the issue of homelessness and those affected by it.

The NHA service is a busy service, responding to the growing demand for housing advice and assistance.

There are also a range of agencies that provide services in the borough that complement the work of NHA. Some of these services receive funding from the Council to assist service delivery.

Commissioning in Newcastle

For many years a commissioning framework has been in place for Council commissioned services. The framework ensures that the Council receives outcome-led, value-for-money, services from the organisations that better meet the Council's priorities while providing a fair and transparent funding allocation process.

There are three key objectives: -

1. To make better use of Council resources
2. To provide a transparent and equitable process for the Voluntary and Community (Third Sector) and Private Sector to access funding
3. To deliver against the Council's Corporate Priorities and the Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities

Newcastle Partnership Commissioning

In an attempt to deal with the ongoing reductions in funding, the Council recognises that more can be achieved collectively by partnership working than individually. Therefore work has taken place to develop the commissioning role within the Newcastle Partnership. In 2015 the partnership took over the role of commissioning services which were previously delivered by the Council's third sector commissioning process.

There are three homelessness prevention services that are commissioned via the Newcastle partnership. These services enrich the main NHA service by providing bespoke homelessness assistance and prevention services for specific client groups.

These are:

Young Person's Homelessness Prevention

The service aims to prevent homelessness amongst young people by delivering a homeless prevention education programme and providing short term tenancy support. The programme enables young people to learn about the realities of homelessness and how it may impact on their lives. It aims to encourage young people to think about their future move from home as being part of a planned journey into adult life and not a crisis response to immediate problems. The short term support works towards equipping young people with the necessary skills to maintain a tenancy and to broaden the housing opportunities available to young

people. The service is currently known as Independence First and delivered by Arch North Staffs.

Furniture Re-use

The Furniture Re-use service provides recycled furniture to people from the Borough who may have been re-housed through the statutory homelessness service and are in need of furniture to able them to live in a property. The service plays a significant role in the prevention of homelessness because being able to furnish a property helps to sustain a tenancy and therefore prevent the reoccurrence of homelessness. The organisation currently delivering this contract is The Furniture Mine is the organisation which currently provides this service on behalf of the Council.

Homelessness Prevention Debt and Financial Advice Service

The Homelessness prevention debt and financial advice service is available to customers approaching our NHA service who are experiencing financial hardship and will benefit from assistance given when their debt situation is putting their home at risk. This includes both residents who rent accommodation and are home owners in the borough.

The current debt and money advice service is being delivered by the Income Maximisation Team within Aspire Housing. The service is an extremely valuable homelessness prevention tool for the Council, especially in the current financial climate.

Joint Commissioning with Stoke on Trent City Council

The Rough Sleepers Outreach Service

In 2011, Cabinet gave approval for Officers to embark on a joint commissioning process with Stoke on Trent City Council to combine the resources from both local authorities and develop a service which meets the needs of both authority areas whilst maximising efficiencies. Following a robust re-tendering exercise, Brighter Futures Housing Association currently delivers the service across the two authority areas.

The service operates in line with NSNO principles and responds to reports of rough sleepers. The sessions provide advice and guidance for rough sleepers on what options are available to help to secure accommodation and support services for them. The service plays a key role in helping people get off the streets and is the key partner in the delivery of the rough sleepers 'winter provision' service that local authorities have a responsibility to provide.

Following the success of the first jointly commissioned rough sleeper's outreach service, the service is currently being re-commissioned again in partnership with Stoke on Trent City Council.

Voluntary Organisation Homelessness Grants below the value of £5000

Any grants provided by the Council to voluntary organisations that are for a value less than £5000, are administered through the Council's Grant's Assessment Panel. The Panel considers the applications in line with the Council's priorities. Through this process, the Council currently funds three services which contribute to homelessness prevention. These are:

Elizabeth House – DV helpline

Elizabeth House is situated in the Borough and provides emergency and temporary accommodation to women and their children who have experienced domestic violence and

they are unable to remain in their previous accommodation. The Council provides funding which contributes to the costs of operating a 24 hr DV helpline.

Gingerbread – refuge

Gingerbread provides residential and non-residential housing and tenancy advice to vulnerable lone parent families and single pregnant women who may be at risk of becoming homeless. The funding provided by the Council enables Gingerbread to provide a service to Newcastle residents, who meet their eligibility criteria.

Arch North Staffs – private sector housing options

Arch North Staffs has a wealth of experience working within the Private rented sector in North Staffordshire and the grant's assessment panel has agreed to fund a Private Rented Sector Project Officer for 5 hours each week. The Officer will work closely with Newcastle Housing Advice Staff in order to extend the current offer within the private rented sector in the Borough for our customers.

In line with improvements to other areas of commissioning and the provision of funding within the Council, consideration will be given as to how any further funding which may become available will be commissioned.

Shropshire & Staffordshire Homelessness Partnership

Shared Housing Pilot for under 35 year olds

Through the partnership the Council has benefited from the development and delivery of the Shared Accommodation Pilot for under 35 year olds. The partnership commissioned a service to be developed which would provide support and assistance to people aged 34 and under in obtaining and managing shared tenancies. The Service would also deliver a matching service for both tenants and landlords and work with landlords to ensure that the accommodation used is of a high standard. The service has been provided by Arch North Staffs and it has been a resounding success, Arch are currently exploring ways to continue and develop the service now that the original funding streams are coming to an end.

Homelessness Prevention schemes and services

In order to successfully prevent homelessness before crisis occurs, the Council needs to have various options available that they can offer to customers.

The use of prevention initiatives is proven to be far more cost effective than reactive responses to crisis situations. The challenge for the Council is to find the right balance between the need to make immediate savings in services and investment in measures which will result in long term savings.

Deposit Guarantee Scheme

The scheme operates by the Council guaranteeing the value of the rent deposit with the private landlord for two years and reimbursing the landlord if any damage occurs during the two year tenancy period. The scheme has been in operation for a number of years and has enabled customers to access private rented accommodation, who otherwise would have been at risk of homelessness due to them being unable to access the amount of money required for a rent deposit.

During the period of the current strategy, the number of customers accessing a deposit guarantee has fallen dramatically compared to previous years where this particular scheme was deemed to be the council's most successful homelessness prevention scheme.

An issue that had previously been identified was that the Council guarantee's the tenancy for two years with the expectation that the tenant should have saved the equivalent amount to replace the deposit amount when the two year period is complete. In response to this, the council amended the scheme to include the requirement that the customer must have a bank account to enable saving, in order to be eligible for the deposit. If customers did not already have a bank account it would be necessary for them to set one up. The Council had made arrangements that customers could arrange for an account with the Staffordshire Credit Union. The aim of stipulating the requirement of an account was not only to encourage customers to save for their deposit, but also to improve the financial inclusion options for customers, unfortunately after introducing this step, the take up of the scheme has dropped and staff at NHA believe that the requirement of a registering with the Credit Union is a factor in the decline. The Council has therefore removed the requirement to register with the Credit Union.

★ Review findings

Take up of Deposit Guarantee has fallen

Some landlords would prefer a cash deposit over a guarantee

Tenants are not saving for the deposit during the Council's two year guarantee period

Some landlords have indicated that they do not intend to let to customers in receipt of Universal Credit

Despite removing the requirement to join the Staffordshire Credit Union if customers do not have a bank account, take up numbers are still low.

Rent Guarantee

In addition to the requirement for customers to provide a deposit when accessing private rented accommodation, it is also usual practice for private landlords to request at least four weeks rent in advance before considering someone for their property. This adds to the financial burden for our customers, so the Council has agreed to guarantee the rent for a four week period, in a similar process as the deposit guarantee. The take up of the rent guarantee has declined since previous years.

★ Review findings

Take up of the Rent Guarantee scheme has fallen

Some landlords would prefer cash over a guarantee for rent

One off payment fund

This scheme enables one off payments to be made which will assist in the prevention of someone becoming homeless. Cases are considered on an individual basis and Advisers at NHA are given the opportunity to be innovative and flexible in how this funding is spent, as long as the outcome is the prevention of homelessness. Previous examples as to how this has been used are to cover the cost of removal fee's or a credit reference check, which will enable someone to move into a property.

During the period of the current strategy, the Council has now incorporated into the one off payment fund, the budget for mediation and legal advice services. If a customer will benefit from either mediation or legal advice, these services will now be spot purchased on an individual customer basis as opposed to the council commissioning a particular provider to offer these services.

Also during the period of the current strategy, a robust review of the Council's Sanctuary scheme was conducted. Following the review the decision was made to end the scheme in its current format and deliver some of the original schemes objectives with lower level target hardening works. This work is now also delivered through the one off payment fund.

★ Review findings

The One of Payment fund is currently underutilised with funds remaining at the end of the financial year

Homelessness Prevention Loans

The homelessness prevention fund has been used to prevent homelessness in the form of the provision of interest free loans, repayments are then recycled back into the fund. It is delivered by the Staffordshire Credit Union in partnership with NHA and the debt advice service. The aim of the service was to provide an interest free loan to customers who may alternatively have struggled to obtain a required sum of money needed to purchase or pay for something which would prevent them being at risk of homelessness. Examples of what the fund has been used for in the past have been to assist in the repayment of rent arrears and to clear a pay day loan. It was also the intention of the scheme to introduce customers to the Credit Union who may have previously experienced financial exclusion or turned to loan sharks as methods of obtaining sums of money. Unfortunately, there has been very little take-up of the fund. The fund has an eligibility criterion which includes a financial assessment of a customer's income and expenditure to ensure that the customer has the means to pay back the loan at 0%. Through the eligibility process we have found that a number of customers who would benefit from accessing a homelessness prevention loan have such tight income and expenditures that a three year loan at 0% is still unsustainable

★ Review findings

Customers are unable to afford homeless prevention loans, even at zero APR

4.3 Supply of Accommodation

The provision of new housing and other affordable options can in certain circumstances help people to address their housing issues / needs at an earlier stage thus preventing homelessness. However as the evidence in this Review highlights the demand for housing continues to increase at a faster rate than the supply of affordable housing options.

There has been a decrease in property development in the Borough, both in the private and social sectors of the housing market. It is therefore essential that the Council looks at every possible opportunity available to increasing access to long term accommodation in the Borough. One area of work is that of bringing empty homes back into use. Empty homes represent waste, financial expense and missed opportunity. They can blight communities, attract fly tipping and vandals and tie up the resources of the Council and the emergency services. Bringing empty homes back into use is a sustainable way to contributing to meet future housing demand.

The Council's Private Sector Housing Team in line with the Council's Empty Home's Strategy work hard to bring long term empty homes back into use. In 2014/15, a total of 322 empty homes including 66 long term empty homes have been brought back into use through Council intervention.

Emergency and 'short term' Temporary Accommodation

The Council is not only faced with supply issues in the 'permanent' housing market but also in the provision of temporary accommodation. Despite the prevention work delivered in the Borough, there are still instances where people do become homeless and the Council has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation, either whilst investigations are being carried out or a more permanent housing solution is found. For example, the Council has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation for eligible homeless families, until their homeless duty ends. The accommodation also needs to be suitable for the needs of the household and it is nationally recognised that families should not be placed in B&B accommodation for longer than 6 weeks.

In some emergency situations, the Council has to use B&B style accommodation; however it will where possible avoid it for more suitable alternatives. The Council fully acknowledges that B&B accommodation it is not the most user friendly option for households faced with homelessness, particularly if they have children.

Historically the Council has been extremely successful in preventing the need for temporary accommodation when discharging its duties to homeless households. However, after a long period of minimal bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation usage, the trends are reversing, during 2013 the numbers in temporary accommodation have begun to rise and the Council has accommodated 42 households in temporary accommodation compared to 14 households in 2012.

Work has been carried out to try and find hotels within Newcastle willing to accommodate homeless households on a more regular basis. However many of the businesses contacted in Newcastle are smaller, family-run businesses and are not set up to manage the clients placed through the homeless service, who are often vulnerable or present with challenging circumstances.

The table below shows the breakdown of the type of household assisted and the average length of stay for each year.

Category	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Single Person households	26	10	17	12	36
Two person households, no children	2	0	2	0	2
One or two person households with children	6	5	9	2	4
Total Households	34	15	28	14	42
Average length of stay (nights)	15.5	4	9	6	15

★ Review findings

It is getting increasingly more difficult to source emergency accommodation due to various accommodation providers not wishing to accommodate our customers.

We have placed customers in temporary accommodation who have then misbehaved themselves, this has resulted in certain providers refusing to accommodate any more of our customers

The emergency accommodation available to NHA is in high demand due a number of North Staffordshire agencies using it for their customers

The introduction of Universal Credit may have an impact upon the future choices we have for TA options for certain customers

In emergency situations despite our desire not to we may have to place young people in emergency accommodation.

Permanent – sustainable accommodation

Home ownership has been increasingly more difficult and this has led to increased demand for social and affordable housing options.

Homes Direct - Choice Based Lettings

The Housing Register is composed of households seeking housing association rented accommodation as well as existing housing association tenants seeking to transfer. The housing register comprises of many different household groups including single people, childless couples, families with children and elderly people. Households are registered in accordance with their housing needs and based upon their household size and type. The housing register is managed by NHA.

The Council's choice based lettings (CBL) scheme known as Homes Direct, allows those on the housing register to search and bid for available properties. The scheme is managed by NHA according to the Council's Allocation's Policy.

Preventing homelessness through allocations, the council can't reward re-housing priority to every household that is at risk of homelessness, however the Allocation's policy does provide alternatives to making a homeless approach for households in need. The Allocation's policy gives priority for households that are severely overcrowded, living with significant disrepair or has a move on priority from planned moves from home or supported housing schemes.

The Council also has nomination rights of at least 50% from all registered providers in the Borough. This is a system whereby partner social housing providers inform NHA of a vacancy and suitable applicants are nominated from the housing register. The type of accommodation that is nominated depends upon the stock that has become available from the social housing provider.

Housing Allocation's Policy

Under Part V1 of the Housing Act 1996 local authorities are required to have an Allocations policy and procedure in place to allocate social housing and under Part V11 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by Homelessness Act 2002) to make provision for homeless households. Therefore alongside the housing register, the Council's Allocations Policy outlines how an applicants' housing need will be assessed and prioritised against other applicants and the mechanism for letting social housing in the borough.

In 2010 at the beginning of our third homelessness strategy the Council had a joint allocations policy with Aspire Housing, the largest social housing provider in the Borough. In 2012 the Allocations Policy was reviewed to take into account some changes that had been introduced in legislation. In addition to this, Housing Officers together with Aspire Housing identified further amendments which needed to be made to the policy following the introduction of Homesdirect and the introduction of Aspire Housing's own Allocation Policy for the 25% of properties that are not let through Homesdirect. The Allocation Policy Review has been completed and approved by cabinet in March 2015. The revised policy is due to go live in September 2015. We are confident that the review has resulted in a policy which is robust and reflects the current and future local environment for social housing.

Demand for Housing

A snapshot at the beginning of April 2015, highlighted that there were a total of 1437 applicants registered on the Homesdirect Housing Register. Of these 993 were waiting list applicants and 444 were existing housing association tenants seeking a transfer to alternative housing.

The Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector offers an alternative source of accommodation that can prevent homelessness. By taking into account the needs and aspirations of both landlords and households, working with the private rented sector can help to avoid homelessness and provide more settled homes for those in insecure accommodation. The demand for private rented properties is high in Newcastle, which means that low income / benefit dependant households may be in competition with working people for the same properties. More people are also turning to the sector since mortgages have become more difficult to obtain. Nevertheless the Council believes that working with the private rented sector is essential in order to increase housing opportunities for our customers.

Nationally there are approximately 22.4 million homes in the PRS and over 1.4 million landlords (CIH Housing in the west midlands July 2013). In the West Midlands the sector has increased although it still remains smaller than the social housing sector. The tenure provides a huge range in terms of costs and standards, 40 per cent were built prior to 1919, and therefore are more likely to fail to meet modern standards (37 per cent failed the decent homes standard in 2010). There are accreditation schemes which help to raise standards and support landlords. Newcastle is part of the North Staffordshire landlord's forum

Discharging the Homelessness Duty into the Private Rented Sector

The Localism Act introduced a new power that allows Local Authorities to meet their statutory homelessness duty by providing good quality privately rented homes.

Past homelessness legislation enabled homeless households to refuse offers of accommodation in the private rented sector and insist that they should be housed in temporary accommodation until a long-term social home becomes available.

Following approval of the Council's Strategic Tenancy Strategy, cabinet members supported the notion that where appropriate and by no means to the detriment of the household, Newcastle could use this power to discharge its homelessness duty into the private rented sector.

Whilst this option offers an alternative solution for people experiencing homelessness in Newcastle, the power comes with a number of duties and responsibilities for the Council. These were set out by Government in the suitability of accommodation order

The Council sees improving access to private rented properties, as part of the wider homelessness prevention agenda, rather than specifically for the new power to discharge our homelessness duty.

The private rented sector offers an additional source of good quality accommodation across the borough and working with private landlords can therefore not only help to avoid homelessness but also provide an alternative housing option for those in housing need.

At present the Council assists customers to access accommodation into the private rented sector, via the Rent Deposit and rent in advance guarantee schemes. As mentioned already in this review, these schemes provide a financial guarantee to landlords and letting agents (instead of a cash deposit) to enable households to secure privately rented accommodation.

In the past the two schemes have been an effective homelessness prevention tool for the Council, however, as this review has already highlighted, the number of households assisted through the scheme has fallen significantly over the past 12 to 18 months.

It is thought that this is the result of a number of factors which include:

- The policy requirement for customers to join the Staffordshire Credit Union
- It is becoming more difficult for customers to find properties that are affordable and within the LHA rates
- There is an increased demand for private sector stock from other groups of people, who in the past would have gone into home ownership

★ Review findings

Access to the private rented sector is crucial in both addressing and preventing homelessness

There is competition for properties in the private rented sector.

Some Private Landlords are unwilling or have no need to let to customers who seek assistance from NHA

Landlords must feel confident that there will be support available should tenancies start to fail

There are many properties in the private rented sector which are unaffordable

Landlords have raised concerns regarding the introduction of UC and housing costs no longer being paid direct to the landlord

Assistance and incentives are fundamental in enabling better access to the PRS in Newcastle, however the current service has limits on capacity on the work that can be done.

Supporting Vulnerable People

A vulnerable person is someone who is or may be in need of services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and / or who is unable to take care of themselves against harm or exploitation. Such vulnerability can mean that people have a greater risk of homelessness for either short or long periods of their lives.

Young people (including those leaving care)

Young people who are experiencing homeless issues are an extremely vulnerable group, who may have often encountered educational and / or family disruption, violence at home, and mental health and / or substance misuse issues. A high proportion may also not be in education, employment or training. It is clear that providing accommodation alone is not the sole solution for this group as their needs go far beyond a simply a roof over their head.

Historically, the Council has had a duty to house 16 & 17 year olds affected by homelessness who were defined as children, under the Children (leaving Care) Act 2000 as they have a priority need when it came to assessing their homelessness situation. However in 2009 case law (G v LB Southwark 2009) 16 & 17 year olds are now defined as being the responsibility of Children's Services and may fall under the criteria of the Children's Act 1989. This means that if found to be in need, the 16 / 17 year will be become the

responsibility of Children's services and be assisted as a 'child in need' rather than under homelessness legislation.

Despite the Southwark judgement work is still ongoing between the council, partner authorities and the Children's services at County in order to develop an effective process for jointly assessing the housing and support needs of this group to ensure that they receive prompt assistance to remedy their homelessness issues.

The risk of homelessness does not however only affect 16 & 17 year olds, young people with or without children and on low incomes can be particularly vulnerable to homelessness and its consequences. They have restricted access to the private rented sector due to local housing allowance eligibility rules. This may be exacerbated further if the young person is trying to complete studies or training.

★ Review findings

It is becoming increasingly more difficult to access accommodation specifically for young people, who seek assistance at NHA

During the period of the last strategy, Newcastle saw the closure of its only supported accommodation for young people, due to County Council funding cuts

Due to funding criteria in Stoke on Trent access into the North Staffordshire YMCA is extremely limited.

The LHA rates have led to a reduction in the availability of properties for younger people, as the shared room rate was increased to 35 years

People at risk of Domestic Violence

Domestic abuse can affect women, men and children. The abuse may be physical or psychological, causing severe harm. The principle consideration for most escaping violence is to find safety. For many this may mean leaving the family home as they no longer feel it is a safe place to be. Newcastle has a well-established multi agency response to domestic violence.

Arch North Staffs – Elizabeth House Refuge

Elizabeth House provides 15 bed spaces for women and children (boys must be under the age of 15). The service offers advice and advocacy, offer emotional and practical support to residents and assists them to overcome the trauma of abuse helps them to develop new confidence and achieve independence. It also supports the development of skills and access to employment and had referral mechanisms in place for additional forms of support (for example drug abuse or mental health issues).

★ Review findings

In 2013 Domestic violence and relationship breakdown is the highest cause of homelessness in our borough.

Rough Sleepers

In response to the revised government guidance, we have carried out annual rough sleeper autumn estimates. The estimates were based on consultation with and verification by local partners likely to encounter rough sleepers during the course of their activities, such as the Rough Sleeper's Outreach Team, members of the Homelessness Forum, and Voluntary Groups. The returns to government over the last five years are shown in the table below.

Year	Annual Rough Sleeper Estimate
2010	1
2011	0
2012	1
2013	4
2014	3

Source: NBC annual estimate submission to DCLG

The levels of rough sleeping in Newcastle based upon year on year statistics are increasing, however overall figures still remain low, the Council believes this is due to the work of the jointly commissioned Rough Sleepers Outreach Service (currently delivered by Brighter Futures) that operates in the borough.

The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is implemented by the Council, when the temperature has been sub-zero for three consecutive days or when the weather is severe enough to increase the risk of serious harm to people sleeping rough. Extreme weather includes cold, wind and rain. Measures are in place to address this, namely emergency temporary accommodation is arranged for anyone sleeping rough (following verification) until the weather improves. Whilst in the accommodation the Rough Sleeper's Outreach Team will work with NHA to provide advice and assistance in order to prevention the reoccurrence of rough sleeping. During the 2014 – 2015 we accommodated 1 person under SWEP provision.

The Council is committed to tackling rough sleeping and will continue to work with local agencies and the community to ensure incidences of rough sleeping are minimised and where possible eliminated.

★ Review findings

The number of rough sleepers in the borough has increased since the last review, however overall figures still remain low and are monitored through the data provided by the Rough Sleeper's outreach service.

The Council believes that the reason the number of rough sleepers in the borough still remain low is due to the provision of a rough sleeper's outreach service.

Mental Health and Homelessness

People with mental health issues are known to be at a higher risk of homelessness and have further difficulties in tenancy sustainment. It is also widely accepted that there are high rates of mental health issues for people who are already experiencing homelessness.

Arch North Staffs operates a scheme called 'Up' which offers accommodation and support to people with mental health issues

Brighter Futures and North Staffs Mind operate a service called 'New Days' in Newcastle. New Days provides support to anyone who has concerns about their mental health.

The majority of mental health illness is treated through primary care; therefore GP registration is very important. Homeless people who sleep rough or are placed in homeless hostel may not be registered with a local GP. Due to the difficulties experienced in accessing primary care, homeless people have used A&E departments for health care which is expensive and inappropriate.

★ Review findings

Health and Wellbeing boards are in the best position to ensure that the mental health needs of the whole local population are understood and prioritised appropriately in local commissioning

People with Drug and Alcohol issues

Those with drug and alcohol issues run the risk of homelessness when their addiction affects their ability to manage their affairs and / or exacerbates behaviour that may result in them losing their home. Also those who are homeless are at a higher risk of developing a drug or alcohol problem, which in turn can make re-housing more difficult as they are more likely to be excluded from supported accommodation. Whilst there are alcohol and drug services, not all are accessible to or geared to the needs of homeless people.

Homeless people with complex drug and/or alcohol problems face particular difficulties in finding accommodation or help and support to meet their needs.

However the numbers of those accepted as homeless because of a dependency are low. The reason for this could be that decisions in case law have directed that an alcohol or drug dependency relates to a life style choice and is not a relevant factor of establishing a priority need.

The Burton Addiction Centre & O'Connor Centre Newcastle offers 21 units of accommodation for rehabilitation. The service also offers 15 units of floating support for people aged between 18 & 74 years old. The floating support service is available for people in Newcastle, Cannock, Stafford and Staffordshire Moorlands.

★ Review findings

Health and Wellbeing boards are in the best position to ensure that the drug and alcohol needs of the whole local population are understood and prioritised appropriately in local commissioning

People with Disabilities (physical, learning or sensory)

We do not have any reportable data that suggests customers are presenting as homeless or at risk of homelessness due to their disability. Available information suggests that the biggest area of unmet need for people with physical disabilities is for adaptations in their own properties.

Choices housing association delivers a range of services to individuals who want to live independently.

Offenders

Many offenders can lose their accommodation during custody. It is a well-recognised fact that stable accommodation can also reduce the risk of re-offending therefore preventing homelessness for this client group has a much wider benefit for the community.

The West Midlands move on protocol assists offenders in gaining suitable accommodation on release from prison. The protocol is regularly reviewed to ensure that it is up to date and fit for purpose.

Currently Heantun Housing receives funding from Staffordshire County Council to provide 150 units of floating support to high risk offenders throughout Staffordshire.

The Saltbox offers support to ex-offenders aged between 21 and 65 years old. The scheme offers the person accommodation in a property under a license with a support package, although the service predominately operates in Stoke on Trent, there is a property in Newcastle which offers support to 6 ex-offenders.

★ Review findings

There are very low levels of prison leavers who present as homeless to NHA

Older People

The main housing issues for older people tend to relate to the need for repairs and adaptations to enable them to remain in their own accommodation.

The Private Sector Housing Team and the Countywide Revival Home Improvement Agency supports older and disabled people with the installation of major disabled adaptations in their homes.

The NHA service does not encounter many older people presenting as homeless in Newcastle, however when an older person does present it can be extremely difficult to find services that meet the older person's needs.

★ Review findings

Whilst the older population is increasing, at present our homelessness service does not encounter many older people presenting as homeless

Gypsies and Travellers

There is an established Traveller's Site within the Borough, which is managed by Aspire Housing, following an assessment, funding was gained in order to increase the number of pitches from 17 to 19. Feedback from both NHA and housing register data indicate that there have been no incidents of this group presenting either in an emergency homeless situation or seeking housing assistance.

Complex Needs

Vulnerable people with complex needs are often identified by their multiple support needs. Services tend to be structured around single issues and this group may struggle to access support that meets all their needs. Sometimes a person's support need may be not severe enough to qualify for support or is too high to deal with under mainstream support services.

★ Review findings

Vulnerable people with complex needs may not be able to access services which offer the required level of support for multiple needs.

Providing services for people with complex needs can be challenging due to the diverse mix of needs a person may have.

Support Services

Prior to April 2011, Staffordshire County Council had an annual grant to provide 'housing related support' known as Supporting People (SP) funding. Removal of the ring fence on SP funding coincided with reductions in central government grant to local authorities which impacted upon this budget. Newcastle has always benefited from SP funding which has provided housing related support available to vulnerable customers at risk of homelessness. In particular for young people, people with mental health needs and people with substance misuse and / or an offending history. The support is either provided in a person's own home, to enable them to sustain their accommodation (e.g guidance on how to manage bills or operate their home in a way which does not put their tenancy at risk), or as part of the accommodation package offered to them.

During 2014 many of the borough's SP services experienced significant cuts in their funding streams. In some cases services have been able to remodel service delivery or raise funds from alternative sources. There will undoubtedly be impacts from the reductions, experienced by the service users, the services themselves and the borough. However on a positive note, affected organisations have been forward thinking and have developed innovative solutions in response of the cuts.

The table below lists the services in Newcastle that receive County Council funding.

Service Name	Provider	Service Type	Primary Client Group	Units	Newcastle
Rocklands Sheltered Scheme	Alpha (R.S.L.) Limited	Sheltered Housing	Older people with support needs	43	100.0%
Regent Court Sheltered Scheme	Alpha (R.S.L.) Limited	Sheltered Housing	Older people with support needs	27	100.0%
Extra Care Mill Rise	Aspire Housing Limited	Extracare Housing	Frail Elderly	60	100.0%
Funding contribution -The BAC O'Connor Centre Supported Accommodation Newcastle	Burton Addiction Centre	Supported Housing	Substance Misuse	21	100.0%
Funding contribution - Community Re-integration Support Project Newcastle	Burton Addiction Centre	Floating Support	Substance Misuse	15	25.0%
Extra Care Lea Court	Housing 21	Extracare Housing	Frail Elderly	63	100.0%
Sheltered Housing	Anchor Trust	Sheltered	Older people with	155	20%

		Housing	support needs		
Floating support to socially excluded groups	Arch (North Staffs) Ltd	Floating Support	Socially Excluded Groups	79	50%
Domestic Abuse Support Services	Arch (North Staffs) Ltd	Floating Support Refuge	People at risk of Domestic Abuse	97	50%
Sheltered Housing	Aspire Housing Limited	Sheltered Housing	Older people with support needs	594	50%
Sheltered Housing	Sanctuary Housing Association	Sheltered Housing	Older people with support needs	314	25%
Staffordshire Countywide Offender Service	Heantun Housing Association Limited	Floating Support	Offenders or People at risk of Offending	150	12.5%
Revival Home Improvement Agency	Staffordshire Housing Association	Home Improvement	Older people with support needs		12.5%

Resources

DCLG Homelessness Funding

The government has continued to provide funding for homelessness prevention both to local authorities direct and through regional partnerships. The purpose of the funding is to enable local authorities to deliver prevention initiatives which will address homelessness in their local areas.

Local authorities receive an annual Homelessness Prevention Grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) which is rolled in the Business Rate Retention Scheme (BRRS). The amount is no longer ring fenced to homelessness; although the DCLG do expect Local Authorities to use the funding to prevent homelessness in their areas.

We have received £124374.08 from the DCLG to deliver homelessness prevention services during 2015.

Discretionary Housing Payments

The Council's Discretionary Housing payments (DHP) assist customers who rent and receive housing benefit, but still have a shortfall in their rent. The DHPs are intended to be short-term payments, to help households whose tenancies are at risk due to them being unable to meet their housing costs. The provision of DHPs can assist us in our aim of homelessness prevention and many of the DHP issued have been included in our homelessness prevention figures.

We have received a government contribution of £159,189 for discretionary housing payments in 2015.

Accessing external funding sources

The Council is proactive in identifying funding sources that will assist us in preventing homelessness. When opportunities arise we have been successful in bringing in additional resources, through the following partnerships:

- Single Homelessness Funding – expansion of the Stoke Community matron Service to North Staffordshire
- Domestic Violence refugee funding

The delivery of these services assists us in our aims to prevent homelessness.

★ Review findings

We have a very uncertain future in relation to the funding of services which assist us in preventing homelessness.

Future aspirations to achieve the Gold Standard will require resources to be made available

There is expectation that Homeless Grant allocations will be reduced in future spending reviews

Many Government funding opportunities are now made with the expectation to match fund and also have further funding in place to continue services once the initial funding is exhausted

Homelessness grant allocations are not ring fenced

It is anticipated that reductions in funding for supported accommodation and floating support services for vulnerable people at risk of homelessness is likely to have a knock on effect across the homelessness and housing advice service.

Partnership approach

The production and delivery of a Homelessness Prevention Strategy is the statutory responsibility of the local authority. We acknowledge that the development and implementation of a meaningful strategy is not possible in isolation and requires multi-agency input at all levels.

A partnership approach to devising and delivering a Homelessness Prevention Strategy is relevant now more than ever before. We live in a different world to that in which homelessness prevention activities were launched 10 years ago.

Challenges include:

- high levels of deprivation and poverty
- difficult housing market conditions
- recession, economic downturn and increased unemployment
- frugal government fiscal policy (including budget cuts and reform to welfare spending)

Ultimately, this environment means that there is increasing demand for services and assistance but reduced resources and capacity to deliver. Clear strategic direction and effective partnership delivery is crucial in these difficult times if we are to maintain delivering our successful programme of homelessness prevention.

Newcastle has strong and established partnerships across the community, voluntary and statutory sector. In order for the Homelessness Prevention Strategy to achieve its aims and objectives will be the result of a wide range of partners involved in homelessness prevention working together.

5. Issues & Recommendations for the Homelessness Strategy

5.1 Summary of Homelessness Review Findings

- The Council needs to consider whether it is prepared to contribute both financially and strategically to achieve the Gold Standard.
- Welfare Reform does not have appeared to have produced a direct increase in homelessness, so far.
- We are yet to see the full effect of Universal Credit in Newcastle as it has only been introduced for certain customers from April 2015.
- Consideration must be given as how to identify households at risk of falling into arrears under Universal Credit.
- We need to be aware of the new structures within health and plan how to maximise partnership opportunities. We also need to identify our respective roles in coordinating the achievement of shared outcomes (as detailed in the Public Health NHS and Adult Social Care Outcome Frameworks).
- There is currently little analysis nationally or locally about the cost of homelessness to health.
- TA usage has increased both locally and nationally
- Customers who need assistance have more complex needs
- TA providers are becoming more reluctant to allow our customers to access
- LA are accessing TA provision outside their local authority boundaries
- The Council has a wide range of overarching strategies that affect and impact upon the lives of the homeless or those who are at risk of homelessness. However few mention this in any detail.
- There are less social rented homes available and an increasing need to rely on the private sector. This may influence our ability to give people a wide housing choice
- 2013 / 14 showed an increase in the number of homeless decisions the service was making
- Consideration needs to be given as to whether the new strategy can realistically address the needs of all homeless and potentially homeless people within the borough
- Not all NHA customers will make a statutory homelessness application and many potential homelessness cases are prevented due to the actions and assistance from the team
- At present interest rates are low, any upward changes may impact on both home owners and buy to let landlords
- It should be noted that all the staff within the team have been in post for a number of years and have amassed valuable knowledge and expertise. It is clear that the team show passion and commitment towards tackling the issue of homelessness and those affected by it.
- The NHA service is a busy service, responding to the growing demand for housing advice and assistance.
- Take up of Deposit Guarantee has fallen

- Some landlords would prefer a cash deposit over a guarantee
- Tenants are not saving for the deposit during the Council's two year guarantee period
- Some landlords have indicated that they do not intend to let to customers in receipt of Universal Credit
- Despite removing the requirement to join the Staffordshire Credit Union if customers do not have a bank account, take up numbers are still low
- Take up of the Rent Guarantee scheme has fallen
- Some landlords would prefer cash over a guarantee for rent
- The One Off Payment fund is currently underutilised with funds remaining at the end of the financial year
- Customers are unable to afford homeless prevention loans, even at zero APR
- It is getting increasingly more difficult to source emergency accommodation due to various accommodation providers not wishing to accommodate our customers.
- We have placed customers in temporary accommodation who have then misbehaved themselves, this has resulted in certain providers refusing to accommodate our customers
- The emergency accommodation available to NHA is in high demand due a number of North Staffordshire agencies using it for their customers
- The introduction of Universal Credit may have an impact upon the future choices we have for TA options for certain customers
- In emergency situations despite our desire not to we may have to place young people in emergency accommodation.
- Access to the private rented sector is crucial in both addressing and preventing homelessness
- There is competition for properties in the private rented sector.
- Some Private Landlords are unwilling or have no need to let to customers who seek assistance from NHA
- Landlords must feel confident that there will be support available should tenancies start to fail
- There are many properties in the private rented sector which are unaffordable
- Landlords have raised concerns regarding the introduction of UC and housing costs no longer being paid direct to the landlord
- Assistance and incentives are fundamental in enabling better access to the PRS in Newcastle, however the current service has limits on capacity on the work that can be done.
- It is becoming increasingly more difficult to access accommodation specifically for young people, who seek assistance at NHA
- During the period of the last strategy, Newcastle saw the closure of its only supported accommodation for young people, due to County Council funding cuts
- Due to funding criteria in Stoke on Trent access into the North Staffordshire YMCA is extremely limited.
- The LHA rates have led to a reduction in the availability of properties for younger people, as the shared room rate was increased to 35 years
- In 2013 Domestic violence and relationship breakdown is the highest cause of homelessness in our borough
- The number of rough sleepers in the borough has increased since the last review, however overall figures still remain low and are monitored through the data provided by the Rough Sleeper's outreach service.
- The Council believes that the reason the number of rough sleepers in the borough still remain low is due to the provision of a rough sleeper's outreach service.
- Health and Wellbeing boards are in the best position to ensure that the mental health needs of the whole local population are understood and prioritised appropriately in local commissioning

- Health and Wellbeing boards are in the best position to ensure that the drug and alcohol needs of the whole local population are understood and prioritised appropriately in local commissioning
- There are very low levels of prison leavers who present as homeless to NHA
- Whilst the older population is increasing, at present our service does not encounter many older people presenting as homeless
- Vulnerable people with complex needs may not receive the required level of support for multiple needs.
- Providing services for people with complex needs can be challenging due to the diverse mix of needs a person may have
- We have a very uncertain future in relation to the funding of services which assist us in preventing homelessness.
- Future aspirations to achieve the Gold Standard will require resources to be made available
- There is expectation that Homeless Grant allocations will be reduced in future spending reviews
- Many Government funding opportunities are now made with the expectation to match fund and also have further funding in place to continue services once the initial funding is exhausted
- Homelessness grant allocations are not ring fenced
- It is anticipated that reductions in funding for supported accommodation and floating support services for vulnerable people at risk of homelessness is likely to have a knock on effect across the homelessness and housing advice service.

5.2 Recommended Priorities for the new Newcastle under Lyme Homelessness Strategy

After careful consideration of the evidence gathered during the production of this review and the issues identified and consulted upon with our partners and stakeholders, we have identified the following priorities for the Homelessness Strategy 2016 – 2021.

1. Prevention of Homelessness
2. Support homeless households into sustainable housing solutions
3. Work in partnership with other agencies to address the causes of homelessness in Newcastle

**Newcastle under Lyme
Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2016 - 2021**

Priority 1	To Prevent Homelessness						
	Achieving this will contribute to all of the Council's Corporate priorities – Priority 1 A clean, safe and sustainable borough, Priority 2 A borough of opportunity, Priority 3 A Healthy Active Community, Priority 4 Becoming a co-operative council, delivering high quality community driven services						
Number	Action	Output	Impact	Resources	Lead(s)	Planned Activity	When
1.1	Ensure that corporately staff and elected members have sufficient information and knowledge of homelessness	Improves knowledge and expertise of staff and members Works towards Gold Standard	Enables informed decisions regarding the allocation of future resources Promotes shared responsibility for homelessness	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy	Provision of awareness / briefing sessions. Briefing notes and Corporate reports. Housing Strategy staff representation at working groups	ongoing
1.2	Review Homelessness Strategy annually	Up to date and fit for purpose homelessness strategy Works towards Gold Standard	Responsive to emerging needs	Within current housing resources	Housing strategy	Annual review of strategy plus major review every five years.	May 2016
1.3	Complete internal mock diagnostic peer	Identification of areas of good practices and	Continuous Improvement of service delivery	Within current housing	Housing Strategy	Internal peer review. Report findings	April 2016

	review of service	weakness in current service provision Works towards Gold Standard		resources		corporately which will dictate future involvement and timing in the Gold Standard process	
1.4	Enhance the range of self-help options available to customers seeking housing advice	Improved range of self-help services available to customers Frees up NHA staff resources for more complex cases	Customers able to tailor realistic and appropriate advice efficiently Empowering customers to help themselves	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy NHA Midland Heart	Map current provision Enhance online accessibility	Ongoing
1.5	Explore new and alternative approaches to enhance early homelessness preventions	Reduce number of homeless acceptances Improved homelessness prevention toolkit of options available	Staff will have more prevention tools available to tailor assistance to each case	With current housing resources	Housing Strategy	Map current provision, consider best practice and the feasibility of implementing in the Borough	Annually
1.6	Continue to deliver debt advice for homeless or potentially	Homelessness prevented through timely debt advice and assistance	Better money management for homeowners and tenants	Within current resources	Housing Strategy Aspire Housing	Raise awareness of service Monitor service provision	Ongoing quarterly monitoring of current service provision.

	homeless households						Evaluation of service provision Re-commissioning of service
1.7	Monitor the customer satisfaction within the homelessness service.	Continuous service improvement Management of service expectations	Better understanding of customers for us. Better understanding for customers in relation to realities and perceptions of what our service can offer.	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy NHA Midland Heart	Align with continuous improvement work of the NHA contract	Ongoing via NHA quarterly contract monitoring meetings
1.8	Ensure appropriate advice and assistance is in place for homeowners threatened with eviction	Homelessness due to repossessions is prevented	Up to date information in relation to repossession activity in area	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy NHA	Review the range of options currently available	Ongoing via NHA quarterly contract monitoring meetings
Priority 2	Support Households into sustainable housing solutions Achieving this aim will contribute to the Council's Corporate Priority by creating a clean, safe and sustainable borough						

2.1	Continue to develop the NSNO principles for the Borough	Reduction in the number of rough sleepers having to sleep rough for a second night	Improved access to emergency accommodation	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy Stoke High Risk Commissioning Team Brighter Futures	Review current service provision in line with NSNO Gold Standard Model, develop action plan to enhance current service provision via rough sleeper's outreach service	August 2016 (1 st annual review of current rough sleeper's outreach contract)
2.2	Delivery of appropriate temporary accommodation	Increase of temporary accommodation options available to NHA staff when accommodating under homelessness duties No families are placed in B&B (unless in an emergency) for more than 6 weeks No 16 & 17	Appropriate temporary accommodation to meet the needs of borough residents	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy	Conduct a review of the temporary accommodation provision in the borough Identify future needs	

		year olds are placed in B&B					
2.3	Continue to develop the Private rented sector offer available to borough residents	Increase the number of sustainable move on into the private rented sector	Sustainability of long term tenancies	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy Private Sector Housing Service	Promoting access to PRS Housing Services continue to take a proactive approach Supporting landlords Supporting tenants	Ongoing through the duration of the strategy
2.4	Develop a Private rented discharge policy	Increase number of suitable 'discharge of duty' into the private rented sector	Reduction in the requirement to use temporary accommodation Homeless household re-housed in Sustainable accommodation	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy	Develop draft policy Gain corporate approval for policy	August 2016
2.5	Monitor the impact of the allocations policy	Allocations policy working	Responsive to emerging needs and policy impacts	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy NHA	Regular reviews of waiting list and letting statistics	Ongoing through the duration of the strategy
2.6	Monitor Nominations that	Nomination agreements		Within current	Housing Strategy	Quarterly review of	Ongoing via Quarterly letting forum

	take place in the Borough	and target met		housing resources	Lettings Forum Members	nominations	
Priority 3	Work in Partnership to Address homelessness in Newcastle						
	Achieving this will contribute to all of the Council's Corporate priorities – Priority 1 A clean, safe and sustainable borough, Priority 2 A borough of opportunity, Priority 3 A Healthy Active Community, Priority 4 Becoming a co-operative council, delivering high quality community driven services						
3.1	Continue to identify key partners to work with in relation to the homelessness prevention agenda and causes of homelessness	Homelessness is prevented	Clear effective and inclusive partnership working	Within existing resources	Housing Strategy Homelessness Forum stakeholders		Ongoing through duration of strategy
3.2	Continue to work with partners to ensure that customers affected by welfare reforms are supported to prevent homelessness.	Homelessness is prevented	Clear effective and inclusive partnership working	With existing resources	Housing Strategy, Housing Benefits, Newcastle Partnership, Registered Providers		Ongoing through the duration of the strategy
3.3	Develop working relations with Public health and the Clinical Commissioning	Impact of homelessness and health considered in health and	Health and wellbeing of customers improved	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy Public Health CCG Stoke and	Housing reps from Newcastle, Staffordshire Moorlands and	Ongoing through the duration of the strategy

	Group (CCG) to explore the links between poor health and housing and ways to tackle these jointly.	<p>wellbeing agenda and public health outcomes</p> <p>Prevents homelessness</p> <p>Increases awareness of housing and homelessness issues amongst health professionals</p>	Improves partnership working		Staffordshire Moorlands Local Authorities	<p>Stoke to meet Bi monthly with reps from Public Health and CCG</p> <p>Ensure housing representation at relevant working groups</p>	
3.4	Work with partners to ensure that there is appropriate accommodation options available for young people, especially 16 & 17 year olds	<p>Prevents homelessness for young people</p> <p>Suitable accommodation options are available for young people</p> <p>No 16 & 17 year olds are placed in B&B</p>	<p>Contributes to Gold standard challenge</p> <p>Improved partnership working</p>	Within current housing resources	<p>Housing Strategy</p> <p>Children's Services (County Council)</p> <p>Key Service Provider Stakeholders</p> <p>Shropshire, Staffordshire and Telford and Wrekin Homelessness</p>	<p>Monitor the number of YP presenting at NHA</p> <p>Explore alternative accommodation options</p> <p>Work with partner agencies to deliver</p>	Ongoing through the duration of the strategy

					Prevention Partnership		
3.5	Work with commissioning partners to provide support to homeless households or those at risk of homeless, to receive appropriate support, especially those with complex needs	Provision of appropriate support services to meet the needs of homeless households or those at risk of homeless.	Fill gaps in provision Future needs identified	Within existing resources	Housing Strategy Partner agencies	Continue to monitor delivery of current service provision and align with future needs	Ongoing through the duration of the strategy
3.6	Review current membership of the Newcastle under Lyme homelessness Forum	Appropriate representation at forum	Focus on prevention at a strategic level	Within current housing resources	Housing Strategy	Conduct review Amend / update membership	January 2016

Report to the Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2nd December 2015

Newcastle-under-Lyme draft Housing Strategy 2016-2021



Report Author: Joanne Halliday
Job Title: Head of Housing and Regeneration
Email: joanne.halliday@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk
Telephone: 01782 742451

Introduction

To enable Members to consider and comment on the priorities and key actions of the draft housing strategy 2016 – 2021 prior to going out for consultation in January 2016.

Background

The current five year housing strategy expires in 2016. Officers have drafted a new strategy to cover the period 2016-2021 and will be seeking comments from all interested parties through a formal consultation in the New Year.

Questions to be Addressed

Members are requested to consider the draft strategy.

Do Members agree with the five key priorities identified in the draft strategy?

Do members consider that there is more we can do to:

- A) Increase the supply of affordable housing
- B) Provide help and advice in finding a home
- C) Bring empty homes back into use
- D) Improve housing conditions in the private sector
- E) Promote energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty
- F) Help our most vulnerable residents to remain independent at home

Outcomes

Members can give their views during the meeting and also forward written submissions directly to the Housing and Regeneration Service as part of the open consultation.

Supporting Information

The quality of housing, its cost and location is of primary importance to ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate in their community. Moreover, housing has a significant role in people's quality of life; their wellbeing and health.

Since the publication of the last Housing Strategy which covered the period 2011-2016, there has been significant change to both the national and local approach towards housing policy and funding opportunities for building and improving homes.

To ensure we are prepared for the challenge ahead, it is essential that we work with our partner Registered housing Providers, developers, stakeholders and residents to embrace the opportunities which will support our priorities. We have therefore developed this draft Housing Strategy in consultation with them and identified five key priorities:

- Priority 1 To support the delivery of affordable housing and development**
- Priority 2 To provide help and advice for finding a home**
- Priority 3 To reduce the number of empty homes**
- Priority 4 To give support to the Private Sector**
- Priority 5 To promote independence and inclusion to our most vulnerable residents**

To achieve these, we will continue to work within the Council's core objectives to ensure investment is targeted to achieve maximum outcomes, and extend our enabling role to guide, direct and influence developments and services by working with partners, local people and communities.

We have put in place a service delivery plan for measuring progress and will use this to evaluate our outcomes and share this information with our residents and partners through a variety of communication mediums.

Conclusions

Comments from the Committee and individual representations are welcomed and will be considered. This will enable appropriate revisions to be made to the strategy prior to Cabinet adopting the final strategy in the New Year.

Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)

Planning and Housing.

Appendices

The Draft Housing Strategy 2016 – 2021.

**Newcastle-under-Lyme
Borough Council
Housing Strategy
2016 - 2021
Draft for Consultation**

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Priority 4: To give support to the Private Sector

Priority 5 To promote independence and Inclusion to our most vulnerable residents

Housing Strategy delivery plan

Appendix - Strategic Housing Review

Consultation

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council has now produced a draft housing strategy for the period 2016 – 2021 and would now like to invite you to make comments.

The consultation runs for eight weeks from **Monday 4th January 2016** with a deadline for response by **Monday 29th February 2016**.

There are two ways to provide us with your comments about the contents of the draft Strategy;

Online: Visit www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/all-services/get-involved and complete the short survey

By email: housingmailbox@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

Foreword

Welcome to the Newcastle-under-Lyme Housing Strategy for 2016 to 2021. The strategy has five key priorities which allows us to focus on what matters to our communities and supports the Councils vision and corporate priorities to:

- A clean safe and sustainable borough.
- A borough of opportunity.
- A healthy and active community.
- Becoming a co-operative council, delivering high quality community driven services.

Since the publication of our last Housing Strategy, there have been significant changes to the local and national political policy and funding landscape. This new Housing Strategy reflects these changes and is underpinned by relevant policies and strategies which will enable us achieve our priorities for housing within the Borough.

We have been extremely busy since the publication of the previous strategy. We have successfully worked with our partners to deliver over **200 affordable homes** since 2011 as well as brought over **193 empty homes** back into use over a period of two years. We have also increased opportunities for residents to find a home through Newcastle Housing Advice by empty providing access to over **2500 homes** for households from the Housing Register. We have also increased our relationships with private rented landlords and provided support for our most vulnerable residents

There is still a lot more work to do. We will continue to provide strategic direction, ensure we meet our objectives and monitor our services to verify they are responsive to local needs and are able to contribute to a sustainable and prosperous Borough.

We hope that you are able to consider this draft strategy and provide comments so that we can be confident that the final strategy fully addresses the needs of the Borough.

Councillor B Proctor: Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning

Introduction

Welcome to the draft Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Housing Strategy for the period 2016-2021. The strategy seeks to support the Council to achieve its aims and objectives for housing within the Borough, working to improve the quality, choice, supply and access to housing for current and future residents.

In the process of achieving successful outcomes it is acknowledged that the strategy will have a key role to play in contributing to the continued economic regeneration and development of the Borough and to sustain the Borough's character and identity.

The quality of housing, its cost and location is of primary importance to ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate in their community. Moreover, housing has a significant role in people's quality of life; their wellbeing and health.

Since the publication of the last Housing Strategy which covered the period 2011-2016, there has been significant change to both the national and local approach towards housing policy and funding opportunities for building and improving homes.

To ensure we are prepared for the challenge ahead, it is essential that we work with our partner registered housing providers, developers, stakeholders and residents to embrace the opportunities which will support our priorities. We have therefore developed this draft Housing Strategy in consultation with them and identified five key priorities

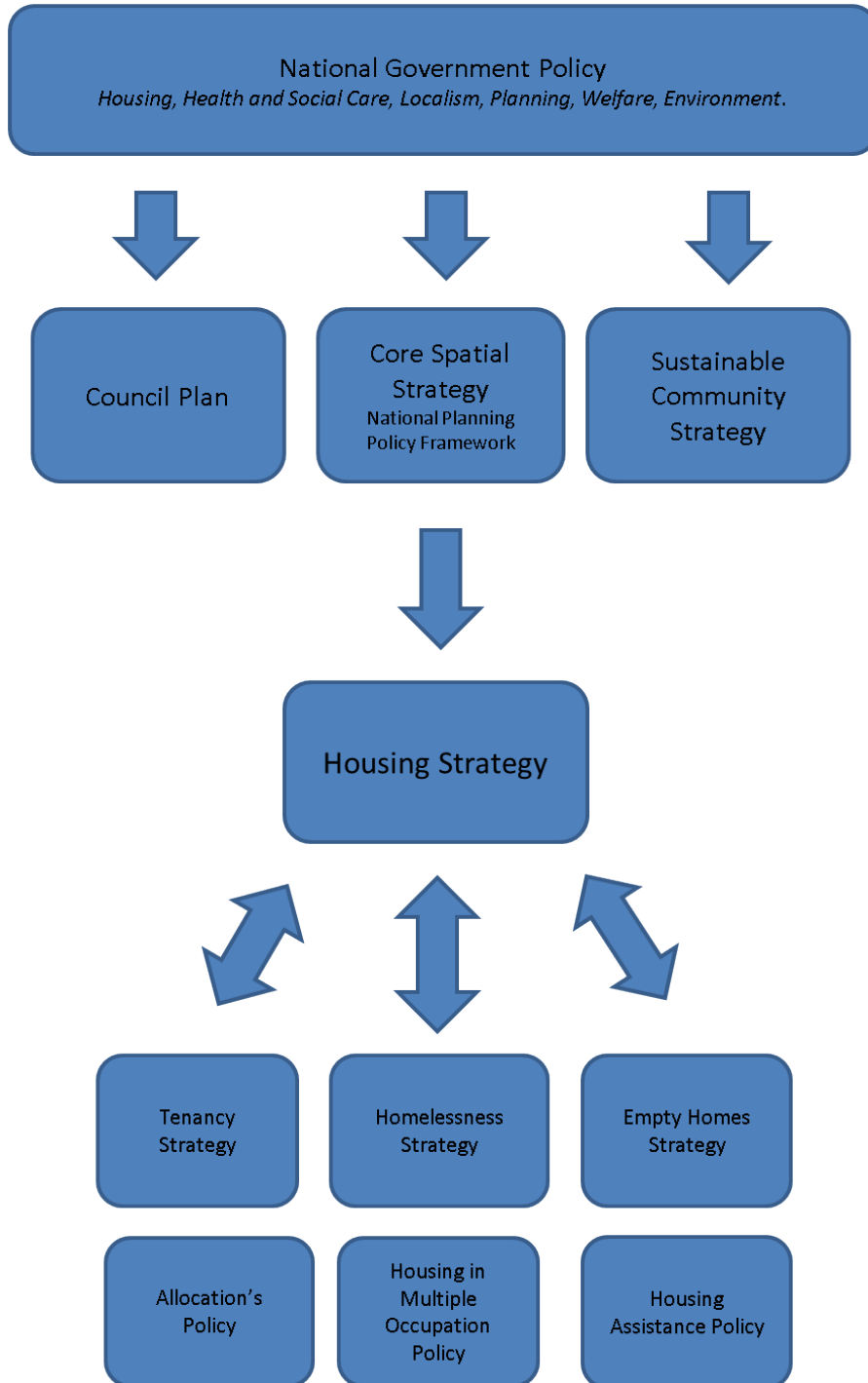
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To achieve these, we will continue to work within the Council's core objectives to ensure investment is targeted to achieve maximum outcomes, and extend our enabling role to guide direct and influence developments and services by working with partners, local people and communities.

We have put in place a delivery plan for measuring progress and will use this to evaluate our outcomes and share this information with our residents and partners through a variety of communication mediums.

National and Local Policies

The structure of a housing strategy is shaped and influenced by national, regional and council policies, guidance and strategies.



Legislation and national policy

Housing and Health

Housing plays a major role in good health, with warm, dry homes, and access to green space boosting people's wellbeing. The provision of high quality affordable housing reduces health inequalities by preventing illness associated with damp and overcrowding.

Specialist housing and support allows older people and those living with long term conditions and other health issues to live independently. Joint working between housing and health authorities can reduce hospital admissions, speed up hospital discharge and reduce persistent health inequalities.

Health and Social Care Act 2012

The aim of the **Housing and Social Care Act 2012** is to modernise the health service by cutting back on unnecessary administration in the system and giving responsibility for commissioning to clinicians, giving providers the freedom to innovate and improve services and supporting local authorities to take on new roles to improve public health.

Housing has a lot to offer to health and care. Safe, healthy homes underpin good health and wellbeing. The home is also an important delivery channel for services that enable vulnerable and older people to access or stay in contact with a variety of services they need to maximise independence. The Act should bring new opportunities for housing and health providers to deliver better outcomes through more integrated services.

Care Act 2014

The **Care Act 2014** looks to ensure that the social care system is based on the principles of prevention, early intervention, and is focused on an individual's well-being and ability to maintain their independence. Housing is referenced throughout and included in the key definitions of wellbeing, prevention and integration.

Localism Act

The **Localism Act 2011** introduced a number of key reforms in relation to housing and planning with the primary objective of decentralising power to local areas. This provided the legislative framework to promote the delivery of the Government's policy priorities.

National Housing Strategy

Laying the Foundations a housing strategy for England

The Government's housing strategy, published in 2011, set out a clear agenda to boost the economy by stimulating the housing market and building new homes. The strategy sets out a range of measures including the change to funding of affordable housing, requirements in relation to design, quality and improved environmental standards of new and existing homes; making best use of existing stock (including empty homes) and the introduction of fixed term social housing tenancies.

The National Planning Policy Framework

In 2012, the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which aimed to reduce the amount of planning guidance and simplify the planning process. The NPPF signalled a shift in emphasis towards a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The NPPF requires councils' to identify the full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable homes in the housing market area and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. The NPPF makes it clear that it is Government policy that there should be a significant boost in the supply of housing.

The NPPF also sets a definition of affordable housing for planning purposes. This includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

Planning Policy for Traveller Sites came into force at the same time as the NPPF and requires the Council to set pitch targets for travellers and plot targets for travelling show people.

Planning and Housing Bill

The Housing and Planning Bill was presented in October 2015. The purpose of the Bill is to provide the legislative means for the creation of more affordable homes, increased home ownership and to improve the way housing is managed.

The Bill is made up of eight parts, the first five focus on:

- starter and custom/self-built homes;
- rogue landlords;
- recovering abandoned premises;
- reforming social housing; and
- other changes to simplify and improve legislation on housing and rents.

The main planning changes are included in part six of the Bill. The proposed planning reform focuses on seven key areas:

- neighbourhood planning;
- local planning;
- planning in Greater London;
- local registers of land and permission in principal;
- planning permission;
- nationally significant infrastructure projects; and
- urban development corporations.

Changes to the compulsory purchase regime are included in part seven of the Bill and are aimed at making compulsory purchase "clearer, fairer and faster".

The Bill will need to pass through the House of Commons, the House of Lords and receive Royal Assent before being enacted, a process which is expected to take 12 to 18 months. This strategy seeks to consider the likely changes required from this Bill.

Welfare Reform

The Government's commitment to reform the welfare system has significant implications for both tenants and landlords in the private and social housing sector. A range of benefit changes have been introduced over the last four years, to housing benefit regulations and through the Welfare Reform Act 2012. The Act provides for a radical overhaul of the benefit system through the introduction of Universal Credit, a single benefit for people of working age, which will replace existing benefits such as Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance and Housing Benefit.

A number of other changes have taken place since 2011 that affect local residents. This includes the introduction of Local Council Tax Support Service and new regulations on Housing Benefit. These restrict and reduce the level of funding many households are able to claim, such as lower rates of local housing allowance for private tenants, a cap on the level of benefit for families, and size criteria for the homes of social housing tenants.

Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council Corporate Strategies

Council Plan 2013 – 2016

Housing forms a key component of the four corporate priorities:

Priority 1: A clean, safe and sustainable borough.

Priority 2: A borough of opportunity.

Priority 3: A healthy and active community.

Priority 4: A co-operative Council, delivering high-value, community-driven services.

It also forms an important part of the Sustainable Community Strategies two priorities of supporting vulnerability and economic development.

Local Strategies

The Borough Council has three main strategies linked to delivering its priorities. These show how the council is planning to work with partners and other organisations to improve and develop local communities to deliver our vision for the Borough.

Economic Development Strategy 2012 - 2017

This strategy shows how the Council by working with the business community and local partners can improve the economic prospects of the area

The strategy has four themes:

- Business – strengthening the business base.
- Place and infrastructure – physical transformation.
- People – transforming ambition.
- Image and marketing – transforming perceptions.

Stronger and Safer Communities Strategy 2012 – 2017

This strategy aims to create a community centred on the Council's vision – a community that:-

- Is strong, resilient, supportive and encourages people to take responsibility for their own lives whilst supporting them through the difficult times.
- Is free from crime, disorder and danger.
- Lives, works and studies in areas which are organised, planned effectively and allow equal access to all services and facilities.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013 -2018

The vision of this strategy is to contribute to the improved health and wellbeing of our residents by supporting them to adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

To deliver this vision we will:

1. Look at ways to reduce health inequalities.
2. Promote healthy lifestyles and healthy communities.
3. Collate local information on health and wellbeing issues and address them.
4. Work with partners to develop and implement an action plan to meet the vision.

Key Housing Issues

As a precursor to the draft strategy a Strategic Housing Review has been completed. The review can be found as an appendix. The information below summaries the key issues:

Demographics

During the period of the last census, 2010/11, the population of the Borough rose from 122,048 to 123,871. There has been a significant increase in the numbers of single person households to 16,263, which accounts for 30% of total households. This demographic change has also impacted upon the housing register, where the largest group seeking housing are single person households requiring one bedroom properties.

The population of the Borough is ageing and it is projected that in 2030, there will be a total of 12,202 households over the age of 65 who will be living alone within the Borough. This will have implications for housing within the Borough, as appropriate dwellings will have to be provided for older people both within the private and social sectors.

Conversely the Borough is home to Keele University and there are a significant number of students living within the Borough. The University has ambitions to increase the student population from 10,000 to 13,000 and the need for accommodation may be met through either additional purpose-built student accommodation or Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in the private rented market.

Housing Stock

There are currently 54,790 dwellings in the Borough of which approximately 70% are owner-occupied, 11% private rented with 19% let by social landlords.

In the last five years there has been a marked increase in the level of private renting sector, which, whilst it averages 11%, is much higher in the former coalfield estates and the Town Ward.

In 2008 the Housing Stock Condition Survey reviewed the levels of stock condition in the Borough. The survey estimated that 8,209 private sector dwellings exhibited Category 1 hazards; these are not evenly distributed throughout the Borough and tend to be more prevalent in the following areas: Newcastle Town Centre, Thistleberry, Cross Heath, Knutton, Silverdale, May Bank, Porthill, Wolstanton and Butt Lane. Furthermore poor housing conditions are concentrated in the private rented sector

Local Economy

The level of unemployment in Newcastle increased dramatically following the economic downturn of 2008, with rates peaking at 4.1% in April 2009. However, in line with the trend across the country, the rate of people claiming Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) has gradually fallen. In June 2014 the rate of unemployment stood at 1.9%, lower than the national average of 2.4%.

Despite the falling unemployment rates overall, unemployment locally continues to disproportionately affect people aged 16-24. Currently this group accounts for around a quarter of JSA claimants in the Borough.

In 2013 the average gross annual income for residents in the Borough was £24,769 and the average gross household income around £34,600.

The housing market performs better than neighbouring Stoke-on-Trent but still falls below regional and national averages. The market is stronger in the rural areas in the south of the Borough.

Affordability has worsened since 1997 and is an issue for first time buyers and those who wish to live in rural communities.

The level of private rents within the Borough may present affordability issues for those households in receipt of Local Housing Allowance rates, as the level of rents paid by housing benefit is less than the average and in some cases the lower quartile private rents. Renting from a registered housing provider is a more affordable option.

In 2015, DECC reported that 14.3% of households in the Borough were in fuel poverty. However, there are particular wards within the Borough; Town, Butt Lane, Knutton and Silverdale which have a greater level of fuel poverty than the Borough average.

Homelessness

204 Homeless decisions were made during 2013-2014 of which 29 households were accepted as statutory homeless.

The majority of those accepted as homeless fall within the age group of 25 – 44 year olds. The number of homeless acceptances for 16 to 24 year olds increased in 2013 as did acceptances for those aged 45-59 years. Part of this increase may reflect the lack of opportunity to prevent homelessness through the provision of alternative accommodation for single people who may have been affected by welfare reforms.

More than half of the households accepted as homeless over the past four years are lone females either with or without children, there has also being an increase in the number of lone males with or without children.

The causes of homelessness in the Borough reflect the national picture of parental / relatives / friends no longer willing / able to accommodate and the loss of rented or tied accommodation (termination of assured tenancy). Domestic Violence is the main cause of homelessness with fewer of those accepted as homeless being so as a result of mortgage arrears or lost tenancies due to rent arrears.

Priority 1

To support the delivery of affordable housing and development

Within our Council Plan, we have said that ‘Housing will be available and accessible to meet a range of diverse needs.’ Building homes and specifically building affordable homes within the Borough will help to achieve this key priority for the Council.

We believe that a vibrant housing market in the Borough is important. This is a housing market where people want to live and then in turn, where developers want to build. New houses and affordable homes will meet the needs of the residents that live within the Borough and those that want to live here. This will also bring about economic growth – as housing construction, repairs and maintenance has a direct impact on economic output. There is also a very close relationship between job growth and housing as councils wanting to see job growth will need to ensure homes to accommodate the local workforce are made available.

Housing Development

The Council has commissioned a Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This provides an assessment of housing needs for the housing market area, including affordable housing with recommendations on house types, tenures and sizes. Once published, the evidence will be used in developing housing policies in the Local Plan, and these policies will play a key role in delivering the Council’s Housing Strategy. We have also been involved with the Local Enterprise Partnership for Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire in commissioning a Housing Investment Strategy. This will enable councils in Staffordshire to set out a clear plan of action to help achieve appropriate housing development across Staffordshire.

Definition of Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is housing that is provided at below market prices to those people who are unable to afford to purchase or rent houses generally available on the open market without financial assistance, as their only home.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out what affordable housing is in planning terms. It says that affordable housing is ‘social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market’.

Key evidence

- The Borough has seen the development of 1,362 homes over a period of five years.
- Many people particularly first time buyers are unable to buy and are left outside of the housing market. The greatest obstacle in buying a home is a high purchase price and the availability of a mortgage and deposit. This is an issue both nationally and within the Borough. The level of home ownership has fallen since 2001.
- The measure of house prices to earnings is used to assess affordability. Households will not be able to afford and buy on the open market when and where house prices to earnings are greater than a ratio of 3.5. In Newcastle the affordability ratios are 5.17 for lower quartile properties and 5.29 for average priced properties.

- The draft Strategic Housing Market Assessment has calculated that there is an annual need of at least 163 affordable homes every year within the Borough.
- Starter homes are suitable for dual income couples with no children as other household types are unlikely to be able to afford this option (Shelter, 2015).

Achievements include

Within the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance, which sets out the Council's position for affordable housing, we said that we would require 'affordable housing' on developments where 15 units or more units were being built in the urban areas and 5 or more units on developments within the rural areas. We said that we would want the affordable housing to be both social rented and shared ownership, which would be owned and managed by housing associations.

We have been committed to the development of affordable homes within the Borough and have achieved notable successes:

- 210 affordable homes have been built by Registered Social Landlords in the Borough over a period of 3 years from 2011-2014 (*Homes and Communities Statistics*). These have been social rented properties and shared ownership homes. The Council has supported the Registered Social Landlords in their development programmes.
- 144 affordable homes were secured by way of Section 106 Agreements; a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom properties, to meet the diverse need of our residents.

The draft Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is saying that there continues to be an identified need for affordable housing within the Borough. The draft SHMA has calculated that there is a continuous annual need of 163 affordable homes every year within the Borough.

The draft SHMA has identified that the private rented sector is playing a significant role in accommodating people who have a housing need. Although, this is not formally recognised as affordable housing, evidence shows that a significant number of people in social housing are moving to the private rented sector.

Future Influences

The Borough Council remains committed to affordable housing but recognises that the affordable housing landscape is changing.

The Government has announced that the 'right to acquire' will be extended on the same basis as right to buy tenants. It is anticipated that this will give tenants who have had tenancies for period of 5 years or more, the ability to purchase their rented properties at significant discounts to housing.

It has also been announced that there would be a reduction in social rents by 1% a year for four years. This will represent a very substantial reduction in associations' anticipated rental income.

Starter homes, which are homes built by private developers and sold at 80% of their market prices to first time buyers will become a major affordable housing building policy of the Government. It seems that starter homes may replace other forms of affordable housing.

Continuous service improvements

Housing Development

Housing development will remain a key objective to support the economic development of the Borough and to meet housing needs.

- As a planning authority we will agree upon an objectively assessed need for the Borough and to develop robust plans both for planning and housing to bring about appropriate development within the Borough. We will seek to investigate suitable housing sites for future consideration in the Joint Local Plan Site Allocations.
- As a strategic housing authority we recognise the benefits of working with partner organisations to deliver better development schemes and to meet a wider range of objectives. We recognise the significant opportunity available to work with Keele University and the County Council with the support of ATLAS (the specialist planning section of the HCA) to take forward a master plan for a Newcastle Western Urban Expansion at Keele. This will enable the Council to fully consider the opportunities to deliver a wide range of housing to meet both affordable housing needs, student accommodation and to provide quality housing to meet the expectations of higher earning households. The master planning will also seek to support the development of Keele University as a key educational and high value employment site.
- We will seek to ensure that housing is provided to meet and support economic development. The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Local Enterprise Partnership has signed a concordat with Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership to work together to support economic development. The Government's decision on HS2 investment will bring an emerging consensus that there is great potential for the area to derive significant economic benefit and that the Local Enterprises Partnerships and Local Authorities in the area should work together to optimise the economic benefits for all parties. A new growth focussed partnership is emerging to deliver plan-led sustainable growth with infrastructure to deliver connectivity being crucial. We will ensure that housing is effectively planned as the Northern Gateway Development Zone (NGDZ) develops.
- As a strategic housing authority we will work with Developers, the Council's Development Management Team and the Homes and Communities Agency to bring forward new development sites and consider the barriers to development to wherever possible seek to address issues to unlock sites to ensure development is brought forward.
- We will promote home ownership and support first time buyers to become property owners. We have encouraged home ownership within our Affordable Housing Policy

whereby a proportion of the affordable housing requirements are in the form of shared ownership for qualifying person, which includes first time buyers. These are units that allow people to part buy and part rent.

The Government has said that it will focus on home ownership for the first time buyers by encouraging the development of starter homes and by facilitating self-build and custom build. The Council will seek to compliment these policies and promote the supply of starter homes through the planning process.

Affordable Housing

Whilst starter homes provide access to home ownership for many young working couples, there is an affordability issue within the Borough where certain households with very low incomes are unable to realise their aspirations of owning a property nor renting decent accommodation from the private rented sector and these would require the greatest affordable accommodation, which is social rented and affordable rented.

The reduction in social tenancy rents, the extension to Right to Acquire and the changes to the Welfare Benefits will have a fundamental impact on all Registered Social Landlords, including those within the Borough.

The landscape for affordable housing development is likely to change and will present challenges for both the Council and the Registered Providers. It is therefore important that:

We will work in partnership to gain an understanding of the impacts of policy changes on the Registered Provider's business plans and to develop an understanding of their future direction.

- We will continue to meet with Registered Providers, to understand the likely impact of these changes and to develop appropriate plans for affordable housing, homelessness and allocations.

We will support the development of affordable housing

- We will continue to support Registered Providers with developing affordable homes within the Borough. We will do this by continuing to give strategic support by identifying housing need within the Borough, both by tenure and type, then where appropriate we will give extended support to providers through the HCA Affordable Housing Programme. We will also negotiate with developers at a planning stage to secure Section 106 contribution in the form of affordable homes on site or to secure off-site affordable housing contribution and using this as match funding for the development of affordable homes.
- Our Asset Management Strategy identifies where land within the Council's ownership which is considered to be surplus to operational needs may be considered for disposal for development. Where this is the case the Council seeks to generate a land receipt for the Council to fund the Council's Capital Strategy requirements to deliver corporate priorities. Going forward we will assess the suitability of land disposals for housing development on a case by case basis to ensure that maximum

benefit is secured for our residents. This will include an assessment as to if we will meet or exceed the affordable housing requirements.

We will work with the private rented sector to develop greater choice for households in housing need

- The private rented sector has grown significantly and will continue to be an important tenure. Although, the private rented sector is not suitable for all households needs it is appropriate and suitable for accommodating certain households.

Priority 2

To provide help and advice for finding a home

It is essential we ensure residents have access to advice on their individual housing needs and promote the ability for individuals and households to make informed choices for their own housing needs, whether it is ensuring access to affordable housing to purchase, access for intermediate housing or advice about renting in the social or private rented sector.

Key evidence

- In terms of the Housing Register, of the 1800 customers registered as at September 2015, 80% per cent of those registered are seeking 1-2 bedroom sized accommodation, while 20% per cent are seeking the more traditional 3 - 4 bedroom family size accommodation.
- In comparison, the availability of stock from the major registered housing provider Aspire highlights that the majority of the stock is the more traditional family size.
- Evidence indicates that the majority of housing need is within Kidsgrove and Talke wards (SHMA 2014).
- The most sought after type of property is a family size 2 bed house or 1 bedroom apartment, which is needed to form a new household, downsize or to assist with overcrowding.

Newcastle Housing Advice

Improvements to how customers can access housing advice and options.

The Housing Register is managed by **Newcastle Housing Advice**, as part of the homelessness and housing advice contract currently administered by Midland Heart. The contract has been in place since April 2014 and will be reviewed within the life time of this strategy. Customers access the Housing register on line through Homesdirect. Through partnership working Registered Providers and Private Landlords can advertise available properties to enable those registered with NHA to express an interest.

Homesdirect promotes the ability for individuals and households to make informed choices for their own housing needs and encourages customers to update and access their information when their circumstances change.

Achievements include

Since the launch of Homesdirect in 2014, we have focussed on:

- Promoting the service continually to raise awareness of Homesdirect.
- Completing a customer survey of the service to increase the number of customers accessing the service in the first 12 months of the service going live.

- Successfully working with housing register providers who have joined the system to improve the choice and quality of accommodation.
- Reviewing the nominations agreement with our housing providers to improve not only the quality of information but also to reduce the time between when a tenant moves from a property, it being advertised and then let.

“The results of the survey were very encouraging, highlighting satisfaction with the system and service and the helpful advice of the staff provided.” This is extremely pleasing considering that the majority of customers surveyed were still waiting to be housed’. Homesdirect customer satisfaction survey.

In response to our customers and housing providers needs we will continue to focus our attention on:

Promotion and improvements to the Homesdirect service. This will include clearer information to help customers access information and working with our partners to continuously monitor customer satisfaction by regular reviews and engagement with customers.

Monitoring the effectiveness of the Homesdirect system and supporting users by making it easier for customers to use the website and also for administrators of our partner registered housing providers. The website has recently undergone a revision to the functionality that will be available which includes:

For our housing register customer

- The homepage that customers see when they access the website has been improved to make it easier to use the site. The property search menu is user friendly for customers use. It is more comparable to commercial sites like rightmove.co.uk.
- There are additional sections on the website that can be configured to display news about new developments, or any other lettings related activity for customers to see.
- There is improved integration of recent let information and local services throughout the site which will give customers more information on local facilities and a better understanding of their possibility of obtaining a property in a specific area.

For our Registered housing providers

- There is a bulk messaging function which will allow staff to send messages to a group of customers for example mailshots to a group of customers requiring specific facilities.
- Pop up highlights of specific information on adverts where necessary for example to highlight that a property has particular facilities such as aids or adaptations. Adverts will be more detailed to give customers better information before placing a bid. Properties of alternative tenures can be advertised as a separate advert type
- The upgrade will be accessible via mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets so it will fit the screen of the relevant device.

- Appointments for viewings and sign ups can be managed on Homes Direct. A verification check of customers contact details before a bid is placed. This will ensure that correct contact details are known to arrange a viewing.

Continuous service improvements

We will work to continue to improve the effectiveness and performance of Newcastle Housing Advice

- To monitor and support the delivery of NHA in line with best practice and any emerging changes to legislation and policy.

We will work to continue to encourage more providers to participate with Homesdirect

- To focus on encouraging more providers to participate with Homesdirect, and include Registered Provider and Private Sector Landlords to further develop choice for our customers.

We will work to continue to monitor our processes for nominations to our Registered Housing Providers

- To monitor how we process nominations to our registered providers and stream line systems to ensure that they are fair, transparent and allow us the flexibility to change as and when required.

We will work to continue to encourage our customers to use self- help aids and digital resources

- To promote the ability for individuals and households to make informed choices for their own housing needs, by using social media, interactive web applications and ensure that all our customer access hubs have information and help available for our customers to access.

Priority 3

To reduce the number of empty homes

Empty homes represent waste, financial expense and missed opportunity. They blight communities, can attract anti-social behaviour and tie up the resources of the Council and the emergency services. Bringing empty homes back into use is a sustainable way to contribute to future housing demands and contributes positively to the whole community.

Empty homes figures are collated from Council tax records where they are classed as short term; under two years and long term; over two years. Where a property has been empty for over two years council tax is charged at 150%. Empty homes brought back into use attract new homes bonus income providing an additional incentive for this work.

There has been a significant reduction in the number of empty properties within the Borough, where properties empty for more than 6 have fallen from 757 in the year 2013 to 564 in the year 2015. Evidence from the DCLG suggests that the vacancy rate in 2013 both regionally and the national level was 2.7%. On this comparative basis, the vacancy rate for the Borough is not considered to be problematic, as the housing market, at any given period of time, will always have a number of empty properties, as this is indicative of turnover of properties and its dynamics. However, analysis of the vacancy rate shows that particular wards within the Borough do have a higher rate of empty properties and it is these wards and that will need to be addressed in terms of policy actions, particularly if there are a higher number of properties within particular localities.

Key evidence

- The Housing Review breaks down empty properties by Ward and shows it is a matter affecting all areas both rural and urban, with Town and Loggerheads and Whitmore both having relatively high numbers (Strategic Housing Review - Appendix 1).
- Approximately 10% of the properties have been empty for many years often for complex reasons. These properties are the most challenging both in resources and time but have a significant impact on their communities when brought back into use.

Achievements include

- A significant decrease in empty properties which have fallen by 26% over a period of two years
- Working with Registered Providers to access Homes and Communities Agency funding to buy and renovate empty homes.
- Working with accredited landlords to bring empty town centre buildings into use as accommodation.
- Prompted owners to invest at least £63,000 in empty homes in the last two years through match funded grants.

Continuous Service Improvements

The Council approved an Empty Homes Strategy in 2013 and an update to it in 2014 outlining our intended use of enforced sale where appropriate.

We will continue to work on the following key areas which will support:

- The longer term empty and problematic properties,
- Encouraging reuse through information, support and incentives,
- Offering match funded grant aid,
- Using enforcement action as appropriate to reduce adverse impacts on neighbouring properties and where appropriate to force a change in ownership,
- Engaging with partners to help owners wishing to sell their properties,
- Setting annual targets for return to use including a separate target for long term empty properties monitored and reported through the annual service plan.

Priority 4

To give support to Private Sector Housing

This priority focusses on the existing private sector properties both in terms of private renting and owner occupation. Increasingly the supply of good quality and well managed property within this sector will become increasingly important to meeting housing need.

The role of the private rented sector is set to increase in meeting the aims of the homeless strategy it is therefore important we provide support to the sector to ensure homes are maintained free from hazards and are well managed by knowledgeable landlords. In the last five years there has been a marked increase in the level of private renting sector, which whilst it averages 11% is much higher in the former coalfield estates and the Town ward.

The 2008 Housing Stock Condition Survey reviewed the levels of stock condition in the Borough. The survey estimated that 8,209 private sector dwellings exhibited Category 1 hazards and were not evenly distributed throughout the Borough and were more prevalent in certain areas, with the poorest of housing conditions being concentrated in the private rented sector.

We are at present, commissioning an updated Housing Stock Condition Survey. This will be complete and published by mid-2016.

Key evidence

- There has been a 103% growth in private renting since the 2001 census, with 11% of housing in the borough privately rented. Certain areas of the borough have significantly high levels rising to over 40%. The evidence supports the important role it has for housing provision as an alternative option to home ownership or social renting.
- There are approximately 45 three storey licenced HMOs, 61 three storey HMOs that do not need a licence and 400 two storey HMOs. We are seeing a growing trend of new three storey estate properties, above shop conversions and new purpose built developments being used as HMOs.
- The Housing Review shows that the around 21% of owner occupied housing contains a serious hazard to health.
- Keele University has plans to increase its student population and changes to Staffordshire University which will influence the private rented market.

Achievements include

Since 2013 we have focussed on;

- removing 264 serious hazards to health from properties in the Borough,
- inspecting 195 houses in multiple occupation,

- increasing membership of the landlord accreditation scheme to 193 members with houses in the borough,
- promoting landlords to invest at least £62,335 in improvements to their properties,
- investing £87,545 in the homes of owner occupiers improving energy efficiency, removing hazards to health and dealing with emergency repairs.

Continuous Service Improvements

We will continue to develop our understanding of problematic areas to focus on,

- Estate action such as our work within Kidsgrove to present evidence on housing conditions, housing need, antisocial behaviour and crime in order to develop estate based interventions which may include selective licensing. The outcome of this pilot review in Kidsgrove will influence our approach in other areas.

We will continue to respond to complaints from tenants for;

- Housing inspections and undertake pro-active inspections in areas of identified need. Through our housing inspections we will provide advice to tenants and landlords then where appropriate will serve notices on landlords to rectify any safety defects. Key to all our action will be ensuring that tenants have a safe home to live in. We will develop links with health colleagues so that interventions can be based on health intelligence.

We will maintain our proactive inspection programme for Houses in Multiple Occupations (HMOs)

- To ensure HMOs have adequate fire precautions, are well managed, safe and hazard free.

We will work to develop of knowledge of;

- Houses converted to flats properties to include them in proactive inspection programmes.

We will continue to improve the physical and management standards using the;

- Landlord accreditation scheme for the private rented sector by providing encouragement, support and incentives to landlords through the accreditation scheme.

We will continue to work with higher education establishments to ensure;

- Student accommodation is of good quality, well managed, safe accommodation. Keele University has ambitions to increase student numbers and to provide more modern en-suite facilities. In the short term this may mean a reduction in available units on campus as property is retrofitted to provide en-suites. There are, however, a number of new development proposals in the town centre which incorporate student accommodation and may change student choices and the role of traditional shared student houses. We will monitor developments and continue to work with landlords and the universities regarding the provision of accommodation.

We are at presently commissioning an update to the Stock Condition Survey;

- Results should be known by mid-2016 and will guide future proactive interventions; support estates based initiatives and assess the impacts of activities over the last five years.

We will continue to target financial support to low income and vulnerable owners of all ages to help them maintain a healthy, safe home;

- Whilst it is the primary responsibility of the home owner to maintain the home intervention in tackling disrepair is a key to preventing ill health. In emergency situations we are able to assist with small scale repairs to ensure the home owner's life is not endangered. We are also able to provide a new loan service helping residents not eligible for grants to be able to invest in their home to protect their health. As the loan scheme funds are repaid the money can be reinvested to allow more loans to be issued to more vulnerable households over the years to come.

Priority 5

To promote independence and inclusion to our most vulnerable residents

The importance of housing to people's wellbeing and quality of life is a principal priority for us. As we work towards improving people's opportunities to access the right housing for their own personal circumstances, so too should we work towards developing a strategic link to the wellbeing of the person, an essential contribute to the health of the individual and household.

Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board 5 year strategy 'Living Well' directly links with our priority for promoting independence and inclusion and more closely aligns within the three key areas of statutory homelessness, Ageing Well and tackling Fuel Poverty.

Key evidence

Homelessness decisions and acceptances

- 204 Homeless decisions were made during 2013 - 2014, of which 29 households were accepted as statutory homeless (Source P1E Homelessness data).
- Households and individuals contacting Newcastle Housing Advice during 2013-2014 increased significantly in line with the national trend.

Statutory Homelessness - Providing housing advice and support

Through Newcastle Housing Advice we will ensure everyone will have access to advice about their individual housing options, particularly those struggling with housing costs or facing homelessness.

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, we have a statutory duty to review and refresh our Homelessness Strategy every five years.

We continue to have homelessness prevention as the starting point for our Homelessness Strategy 2016 - 2020. Our fourth Homelessness Strategy, focuses on increasing the access and measures we have in place to prevent homelessness, whilst addressing new issues that arose during the period of our previous strategy. There is a detailed action plan, which identifies the ways in which we will work with our partners to prevent homelessness.

Our overall vision for our strategy is;

'To ensure that homeless levels in the Borough remain as low as possible through prevention and to provide in partnership effective and quality services to those affected by homelessness'.

From this vision stems our three key priority areas;

- Prevention
- Supporting households into sustainable housing solutions
- Working in partnership to address the causes of homelessness in Newcastle

Our key priorities are based upon the findings of our Homelessness review, consultation responses and consideration for the Government's Gold Standard benchmark programme.

Achievements include

- Shropshire, Staffordshire and Telford and Wrekin Homelessness Prevention Partnership (SSHPP). The partnership was formed in response to a single one off funding allocation from the DCLG. The partnership has supported the funding of our extremely successful shared accommodation pilot for single people under 35.
- SSHPP and Children's Services at the County Council have developed an effective process for jointly assessing the housing and support needs of 16 & 17 year olds to ensure that they receive prompt assistance to remedy their homelessness issues. At the time of writing the protocol is going through its final stages of adoption at the County Council. The protocol will provide a more co-ordinated approach to enable homelessness to be prevented and for suitable accommodation and support to be made available.

Newcastle Partnership Commissioning

In an attempt to deal with the ongoing reductions in funding, the Council recognises that more can be achieved collectively by partnership working than individually. Therefore work has taken place to develop the commissioning role within the Newcastle Partnership. In 2015 the partnership took over the role of commissioning services which were previously delivered by the Council's third sector commissioning process.

There are currently three homelessness prevention services that are commissioned via the Newcastle Partnership. These services enrich the main NHA service by providing bespoke homelessness assistance and prevention services for specific client groups. The services support the homelessness strategy delivery for preventing homelessness and are reviewed within the strategy action plan.

Voluntary Organisation Homelessness Grants

Any grants provided by the Council to voluntary organisations that are for a value less than £5000, are administered through the Council's Grant's Assessment Panel. The Panel considers the applications in line with the Council's priorities. Through this process, the Council currently funds three services which contribute to homelessness prevention.

Continuous service improvements

We will continue to review and monitor the progress of the action plan that has been developed within the fourth Homelessness Strategy and;

- We will build on the developed efficient and effective services that meet the needs of those affected by homeless from our previous homelessness strategies'.
- Support where resources allow the continuation of homelessness prevention services which are commissioned within the, SSHPP, Newcastle Partnership Commissioning and any smaller grant contributions that are made available through the Council and voluntary organisations.

Ageing well - Older Vulnerable People

Key evidence

- By 2030 the number of people 65 plus is projected to grow significantly
- 12,202 households will be single people age 65
- 20.8% (25,800 people) will have a limiting long term illness (LLTI)

The population of Newcastle under Lyme is 125,000 (2015) and by 2030 is estimated to grow to approximately 130,000 a 5 % increase at approximately 1.5 % per year. The population profile over people aged 65 and over will increase the highest, with the proportion of people aged 65 and over to grow to 25% from the total population.

As an indicator of health the Limiting long term Illness measure is a self-reported measure of someone's health, asking if a person has any long term illness, health problem or disability which limits work or daily activities. The 2011 census found that 20.8% (25,800 people) had a limiting long term illness (LLTI) in the Borough. This is higher than the England average of 17.6% (2011 census).

Increased life expectancy makes it important we continue to respond to the changing needs of our older population and specific population groups through new developments, refurbishment works to existing homes and improved access to and range of housing options.

Informing our strategic priorities in accordance with our core evidence base has been essential as we continually seek to adjust to a differing housing need for the Borough. For example, this has been achieved by working with providers who develop innovative projects which redesign existing provision of stock that meets today's needs and expectation for appropriate housing.

Achievements include:

- Completed 331 Disabled Facility Grants over the last three years with £1,996,069 invested in the homes of disabled residents to make their homes accessible and enable them to live independently the home of their choice.
- Completed 475 adaptations between 2011 and 2015 providing direct support to keep people safe in their own home and facilitate the care from hospital from home.
- Continued with the provision of the Revival Home Improvement agency service for older disabled and vulnerable persons, guiding them through the often complex and worrying process of carrying out repairs and adaptations to their home.
- The Council in partnership with Staffordshire County Council has enabled the development of two extra care schemes within the Borough; Millrise Extra Care Scheme and the Madeley Extra Care Scheme.

Continuous service improvements

We want residents to have the choice to remain in their own home and where practicable;

- We will work towards promoting such independence through our Disabled Facilities Grants, closely working with the occupational therapy service to identify necessary and appropriate adaptations and with Revival our Home Improvement Agency to deliver them as quickly as possible.

We will continue to use Revival's innovative outcome star assessment process to consider a wide range of help and options available including.

- Supporting and advising on the wider range of housing options available through Newcastle Housing Advice.

We will encourage and support new development and remodelling of existing housing stock

- To meet the needs of our older persons by working in partnership with our registered providers, developers and private sector landlords. A further extra care scheme is planned within Maybank; The Homestead, which will provide a further 65 units of specialist accommodation.

Tackling Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty affects our most vulnerable residents and can have an adverse effect on their health. A household is considered to be in fuel poverty if they have required fuel costs that are above average and were they to spend this amount that they are left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

The key drivers behind fuel poverty are:

- The energy efficiency of the property (and therefore, the energy required to heat and power the home).
- The cost of energy.
- Household income.

Key evidence

- In 2015 according to Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) statistics, 14.3% of households within the Borough were in fuel poverty. This is lower than the West Midlands average of 15%.
- There are areas within the Borough that have significant levels of fuel poverty, above the average rate of 14.3% within the Borough.
- The wards where the highest proportion of households who are fuel poor live include, Butt Lane, Town and Knutton / Silverdale.

Achievements include

- Supported the North Staffordshire Warm Zone which delivered over 8,000 energy efficiency measures and secured £600,000 in new benefits income to low income households in the Borough.

- Secured funding from the Government Fuel Poverty Fund towards insulation and heating measures to 30 households
- Secured Warm Homes Healthy People funding to help approximately 200 vulnerable households keep warm in the winter.
- Targeted Emergency Repair Grants to low income householders to repair or where necessary replace heating systems at short notice.
- Provided funding to meet a shortfall in funding not met from energy company obligation payments to replace boilers and heating systems into the homes of low income households.
- Promoted to residents, a collective energy switching scheme to reduce energy costs

Continuous service improvements

We will adopt the first stage government target and will ensure that as many fuel poor homes in the Borough as is reasonable practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of band E by 2020 but will also encourage owners to install measures beyond this minimum. We will achieve this by:

- Working with our partners to seek opportunities for funding from the Government, energy companies and Health Sector.
- Introducing a loan scheme to help low income households finance more extensive, costly energy efficiency measures.
- Continuing to make funds available for Emergency Repair Grants targeted at low income households to replace heating at short notice.
- Using Energy Performance Certificate data to inform us in targeting area based action and find energy inefficient homes likely to be occupied by the fuel poor
- Improving standards in the private rented sector by:
 1. Enforcing the Housing and Health Rating System contained within the Housing Act 2004
 2. Providing advice to landlords to improve beyond the requirement to meet the minimum rating of Band E by 2020
- Encouraging standards above the minimum through the North Staffordshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme which is endorsed by the Council.

Housing Strategy Delivery Plan 2016-2021

The actions contained within the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan will be refreshed as part of the annual service plan with quarterly monitoring through the housing service team meetings and reporting to the Portfolio Holder.

Our Priority 1	How we will achieve	Who will help us achieve	Outcome/Target	When by
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
<p>To support the delivery of Affordable Housing and development</p> <p>To facilitate the provision of good quality homes to meet residents needs</p>	<p>Work with our RP's to support the development of affordable homes of all tenures to regenerate and to meet identified need</p> <p>To assist Planning Policy to develop a local plan based upon the needs identified (SHMA) and to consider updated affordable housing guidance to reflect national and local issues.</p>	<p>Registered providers</p> <p>NHA</p> <p>Strategic intelligence</p> <p>Homes and community agency</p> <p>Registered Housing Provider</p> <p>Private House Developers</p> <p>Spatial planning policy</p> <p>Elected members</p> <p>Residents</p>	<p>% of affordable housing as planning policy</p> <p>Annual and quarterly monitoring report of;</p> <p>a) Affordable housing delivery</p> <p>b) Mix and size of homes and provision for rural housing</p> <p>c)s106</p> <p>Monitoring of take-up of homeownership products/ intermediate housing</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout duration of strategy</p>

Our Priority 2	How we will achieve	Who will help us achieve	Outcomes/Target	When by
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
<p>To provide help and advice for finding a home</p> <p>To meet housing needs and develop housing choice for Newcastle Residents</p>	<p>Monitor and support the delivery of the NHA service</p> <p>Review nominations agreement with Registered Providers</p> <p>Continue to promote Homes Direct including, promotion of self help aids and resources</p> <p>Promote and encourage Private Sector Landlords to participate with Homesdirect to increase access to housing for those on the housing register</p>	<p>Newcastle Housing Advice</p> <p>Strategic Housing</p> <p>Private Sector Housing</p> <p>Registered providers</p> <p>Private sector landlords</p> <p>Elected members</p> <p>Residents</p>	<p>Annual and quarterly agreed monitoring of annual service delivery plan</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout duration of strategy</p>

Our priority 3	How we will achieve	Who will help us achieve	Outcomes/Target	When by
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
<p>To reduce the number of Empty Homes</p> <p>To contribute to the prosperity and sustainability of Newcastle</p>	<p>To implement the priorities within the empty homes strategy, focusing on;</p> <p>Problematic properties which are impacting on the local community,</p> <p>Identifying / unlocking barriers preventing return to use, including working on a Council wide basis</p> <p>Encouraging re use through support/incentives to owners to invest in their properties through match funding.</p>	<p>Private sector housing</p> <p>Strategic housing</p> <p>Revenues and benefits</p> <p>Police</p> <p>Registered Providers</p> <p>Legal services</p> <p>Residents</p>	<p>Annual and quarterly agreed monitoring of annual service delivery plan</p>	<p>Year on year reduction in empty homes ongoing for duration of strategy</p>

Our priority 4	How we will achieve	Who will help us achieve	Outcomes/Target	When by
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
<p>To give Support to the private sector</p> <p>To support a sustainable private landlord sector</p>	<p>Utilise the results of the stock condition survey to target action at priority issues.</p> <p>Increase membership of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme to recognise, support and promote good knowledgeable landlords.</p> <p>To develop a proposal for selective licensing in Kidsgrove and to take this forward to consultation.</p> <p>Proactive inspections of HMOs which are high risk for fire safety, hazards to health and</p>	<p>Private sector housing</p> <p>Strategic housing</p> <p>Revenues and benefits</p> <p>Police</p> <p>Registered Providers</p> <p>Legal services</p> <p>Residents</p> <p>Private sector tenants</p> <p>Landlord accreditation scheme</p>	<p>Annual and quarterly agreed monitoring of annual service delivery plan</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout duration of strategy</p>

	<p>management practices</p> <p>Promote owner occupiers incentives to those on low incomes to help maintain safe homes</p> <p>Maintain our understanding of our student accommodation including new town centre developments to ensure access to safe and well managed accommodation.</p>			
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Our priority 5	How we will achieve	Who will help us achieve	Outcomes/Target	When by
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
<p>To Promote independence and Inclusion to our most vulnerable residents</p> <p>To support vulnerable people and</p>	<p>Maximise the effectiveness of priorities identified in the fourth homelessness</p>	<p>Newcastle Housing Advice</p> <p>Strategic Housing</p>	<p>Annual and quarterly agreed monitoring of annual service delivery plan</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout duration of strategy and homelessness strategy</p>

<p>prevent homelessness in Newcastle</p>	<p>strategy</p> <p>Progress all eligible Disabled Facility Grants referrals in partnership with Revival HIA</p> <p>Develop appropriate partnerships for fuel poor homes to achieve minimum energy efficiency Band E by 2020</p> <p>Promote Revival's housing options service to enable older people to make informed housing choices</p> <p>Supporting remodelling of existing housing stock and conversions to meet emerging housing needs for older people</p>	<p>Private Sector Housing</p> <p>Registered providers</p> <p>Private sector landlords</p> <p>Elected members</p> <p>Residents</p> <p>Third sector and voluntary organisations</p> <p>Revival Home improvement agency</p> <p>Other government agencies and commissioned services</p>		
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Agenda Item 8

Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny 2nd December 15 NHA Performance Q2 July - Sept 2015/16

Performance Area	Q1	Q2
Calls to service	2137	2358
Housing Options enquiries @ reception	347	350
Housing Register enquiries @ reception	654	733
Emergency out of hours calls	7	12
Interviews - appointments	139	127
Interviews – walk ins/emergency	17	14
Homelessness applications	24	13
Decisions Homelessness (100% within 33 day target)	11	9
Preventions	152	192
Temporary Accommodation	3	1
Letters received and responded to within 10 days (100% on target)	11	19
Emails received and responded to within 10 days	372	561
Total Housing Register applications received	632 WL 438 Transfer 194	614 WL 438 Transfer 176
Housing Register Appeals (100% on target)	5	5
Homelessness Decision Appeals	0	1
Complaints	0	0
Medical Applications (100% on target)	40	72
Waiting List Applicants	1157	1216
Transfer Applicants	555	594
Total Applicants	1712	1810
BME Applicants	72	22
Lettings	114	150
Nominations (All RP's) %	58%	68%
Exclusions	5	17

Aspire Nominations 15/16

PERIOD	NUMBER	TOTAL LETS	75% TARGET
QUARTER ONE	124	103	55%
QUARTER TWO	127	105	65%

REASON FOR NOMINATIONS BEING BELOW TARGET

Aspire have explained that they choose to advertise their voids through the two CBL systems Homeshunt and Homesdirect dependent on which day and reason a void notice is given. Homesdirect provides for one cycle of adverts to be run weekly, whereas Homeshunt allows for advertisements to be placed on a day by day basis. Aspire have confirmed this is why more of their voids are being advertised through Homeshunt, allowing flexibility with time for advertisements and bidding which can reduce their void time.

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Newcastle Town Centre Partnership / Business Improvement District **Update December 2015**

BID progress

- BID official start date was 1st Oct 2015. The terms of reference for the BID management structure are outlined below.
- Levy demands have been sent out – as of 4th Nov, around a third of eligible businesses have paid totalling almost £72k, which is just under 50% of the total money to be collected.
- Matt Taylor is now contracted with the BID, Amy Williams in post as administrator and two ambassadors appointed.
- The town centre ambassadors started work on 16th Nov with initial meetings arranged with relevant council officers for 20th Nov.

Christmas Lights

- Town centre Christmas lights have been organised by the BID. A licence agreement has been set up between NBC and the BID to carry out this function.
- This includes sourcing all lights, a tree and installation services and completing all necessary H&S documentation. This has been a steep learning curve for the BID as this was previously undertaken by the council.

Switch-on event

- Once again the Town Centre partnership has organised a weekend of activities, culminating in the switch-on at 5pm on Sunday 29th Nov.
- Activities include specialist Christmas market, funfair, magic show, music and dancing provided by schools, dance troupes and community groups and a town centre procession. This year's special guest will be Paddington Bear.
- Free parking will be available all weekend on council car parks.

December events

- Events will be taking place every Saturday throughout December
- Main event will be the Lantern Parade on 12th Dec, which includes lantern making workshops every Sat up to 5th Dec. Last year the procession comprised over 100 lanterns and this year will be even bigger.
- The Roebuck Shopping Centre will be open for late-night shopping on Wednesday nights until 7pm on the following dates: 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd of December - on the run-up to Christmas. The BID partnership is encouraging all other retailers to follow suit, as this means that the Roebuck Centre and Midway car park will be open, to support these extra trading times.
- There will also be FREE PARKING EVERY DAY FROM 3pm from the day of the lights switch on until Christmas and all day Sundays (on council car parks only).

Student Night Thursdays

- Student nights have been relaunched, with its own website featuring food and drink offers from a number of venues.

- These run every Thursday up to 17th Dec.

Other activities

A continental market ran during October which came to town in place of the planned Harvest Moon market. The official launch of the Newcastle Lanterns took place 30 October taking over the former International shop on the Ironmarket. This is supported by the BID and will be taking place Dec 12.

Town centre vacancy rate

The vacancy rate rose slightly over the three months from June to Sept from 12% to 13.8%. However, there has been some significant inward investment over the last few months. Lymelight Boulevard is now almost full, a café, three fast food outlets, a bowling alley and Laser Quest having joined Pizza Hut and Bar Social. Also, Milletts are back in town in their old shop, and two more shops opened on Castle Walks – JD Sports and Moments Cards. The bakery is making progress in Fogg Street and RAWR have over 4,000 FB likes!

Footfall

The footfall counter has now been operational for more than 12 months so comparative data is now available for each month and as a comparison for the previous year.

Compared To Previous Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2015	-30.97	3.54	-7.40	5.27	15.01	25.48	-13.92	-3.62	5.16	16.82		
2014							20.12	151.79	-21.04	60.06	8.04	3.36

Compared To Last Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
2015						*	*	17.74	56.81	14.45		

NB The comparative data for June and July is not complete as in the early months there were issues with vehicles being parked in front of the camera blocking correct footfall recordings. Overall it is pleasing that there is greater footfall this year compared to 2014.

Town Centre Partnership Future

The Council contracted with the TCP to provide support until December 2015, with a financial contribution of £22,500 for these three quarters. This funding and officer support has been provided in line with the contract.

Several meetings have taken place whereby the TCP Board have considered the future of the Partnership. Board members were keen to ensure that the partnership is able to provide additional value to the BID rather than duplicate and waste resources. Having considered all of the options the Board members have agreed to fully appraise the option to cease the Partnership. Discussions will take place over the forthcoming months to ensure that contracts can be fulfilled and information can be transferred over to the BID.



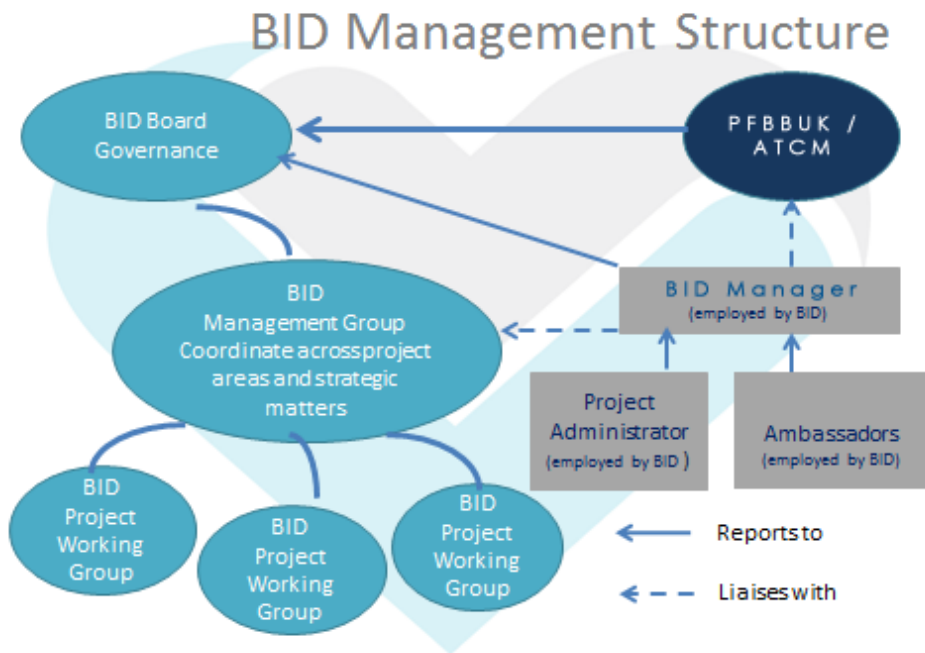
DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BID BOARD AND MANAGEMENT GROUP

1. NAME

1.1. The name of the body will be the 'Board/Management Group of the Newcastle-under-Lyme BID. (hereafter called the 'BID Board /BID Management Group').

2. BID MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



2.1. The management structure of the BID will be

A Board - made up of BID directors: responsible for governance. This includes financial direction, ensuring the BID plan is being adhered to and that the organisation is on course.

A Management Group: responsible for working with the BID delivery team (BID manager, administrator and ambassadors) to help steer and oversee the coordination of activity and delivery.

Individual members of the Board or Management Group may act as BID Champions to support the BID Manager in advocating particular projects and acting as press spokespeople on behalf of the BID in relation to that project or business sector (see section 3.4).

Working Groups can provide support to the Management Team as a forum for helping to shape projects, and as a critical friend for idea and project development of individual projects. These will be formed as necessary and as determined by the Management Board. Some working groups may exist on an ongoing basis, whereas others may be formed as 'task and finish' groups to work on specific projects.

A BID Management Team comprised of a BID Manager, a part-time (at the outset) admin assistant and Street Ambassadors will be the operational lead; responsible for the actual coordination and delivery of projects and activities in accordance with the BID plan. This group will work closely with and provide information to the Management Group and Board

- 2.2. The BID Company will take strategic and project advice and support from Partnerships for Better Business Ltd (pfbb UK) as consultants, where necessary, as well as from the ATCM, through annual membership.
- 2.3. The Board will be elected by the members of the BID Company, drawn predominantly from those paying a levy in the area and made up of a representative cross-section of the businesses and stakeholders of the area and key agencies associated with the successful delivery of the BID project. It will be driven by the private sector and will include one Councillor from the local Council as a Director and one Council Officer who will act as an advisor, but not as a Director.
- 2.4. All businesses will be encouraged to be actively involved in the Management Group and associated Working Groups to represent the levy-payers.
- 2.5. The Management Group will report to the Board. Through specific working groups, the Management Group will be instrumental in prioritising the requirements of the levy payers into deliverable projects which address their needs, within the framework of the business plan.
- 2.6. Each group (Board, Management Group and Working Groups) will have a representative from the BID Management Team

3. ROLES

- 3.1. The Board and Management Group will provide a consistent, collective and effective voice for the businesses in Newcastle-under-Lyme.
- 3.2. All roles on the Board, Management Group and specific working groups are voluntary and are undertaken with a commitment to represent the interests of all businesses in the area.
- 3.3. The Board, Management Group and BID Management team have a responsibility to ensure that the BID operates and delivers in line with the BID Vision and Objectives as outlined in the BID Business Plan.

- 3.4. BID Board and Management Group Members are encouraged to become project champions
- Projects will be identified within the BID action planning document by the BID Manager
 - The role of a champion will be to act as an advocate and provide constructive support to the BID Project manager. They will champion the project and the BID to other businesses/partners
 - Project Champions may be asked (by the BID Management team) to provide quotes or speak to the media about the project and benefit of the BID, on behalf of the BID (as opposed to their own personal view. These requests will only come via the PR team, not from the media direct.

4. ROLE OF THE BOARD & CHAIR

- 4.1 The main role of the Board is to safeguard the interests of levy payers by ensuring that the business operates in line with the BID plan as voted on in July, is professional and offers consistent value for money in line with its targets.
- 4.2 To ensure that the development of action plans address the objectives of Newcastle-under-Lyme Business Plan within the agreed budgets and work towards achieving the vision and its related strategic objectives.
- 4.3 The Board will ensure that the implementation of the BID will be monitored and delivered cost-effectively, through keeping overheads to a minimum and using methods which will optimise the use of the revenue budget and add real value to the delivery of the plan.
- 4.4 To consider the development of a Business Plan and a successive Business Improvement District to succeed the current one which covers the period up to 30th September 2020.
- 4.5 To administer the operation of the Newcastle-under-Lyme BID and to ensure that all legal, financial, contractual and corporate obligations of the Newcastle-under-Lyme BID are met in accordance with the BID Regulations and an annual audit, review and report are undertaken and communicated to the businesses of the BID area.
- 4.6 To monitor and review the progress of the BID Business Plan to ensure that it is within budget to ensure it works towards the vision, objectives and activities identified in the Business Plan and does not deviate from it.
- 4.7 Collaborative working will be actively encouraged to build upon the sense of the business community in the BID area and ensure that the skills and resources available for delivery of the BID are enhanced and deliver best value.
- 4.8 In order to ensure that the projects remain relevant and continue to address needs and priorities of the businesses in the BID during its five year life, the Management Group may from time to time make recommendations to the Board that budget allocations are modified for each of the main projects and the management and administration of the BID.

4.9 It will be the responsibility of the Board to assess these recommendations and make adjustments to the allocations of expenditure budget as and when they deem appropriate. It will be the responsibility of the Board to ensure that all the main aims of the BID, continue to be addressed and that all BID activity contributes towards the achievement of the vision. The Board will also monitor and gauge the effectiveness of the BID operations and activities.

4.10 The Chair must be a representative from a business levy payer in the BID area and not a member of the Local Authority. Their role is:

- To lead the group in the fulfilment of its role and adherence to its terms of reference.
- To ensure that the BID Company Board leads the BID in the fulfilment of the vision, aims and objectives and its activities identified in the BID Business plan and not deviate from it.
- ensure that meetings of the Board are efficient and productive, all agenda items are covered within the appropriate timescale.

4.11 The role of the Vice Chair is to:

- support the Chair in his or her role.
- substitute for the Chair in his or her absence in meetings of the Board.

5. BOARD MEMBERSHIP

5.1 Unless otherwise determined by the Board from time to time, the Board shall be between 3 and 10 people and shall comprise the following (extract from the Articles of the Company):

5.2 Up to 7 individuals representative of BID Levy Payers and who shall at any time represent more than one half of the Board;

5.3 Up to 2 individuals representative of partnership organisations including but not limited to Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council (“Local Authority Directors”) and shall at no time represent more than one third of the Board;

5.4 The Council to provide a senior council officer to act as advisor (not to become a Director of the BID Company) to the BID Board and to provide a business-focused dynamic link on all BID matters with senior Council staff.

5.5 Up to 2 individuals representative of the Voluntary Members (the “Voluntary Member Directors”) and shall at no time represent more than a third of the Board;

5.6 Up to 1 such individual who, in the view of the Board, have particular skills or experience which will assist the Company to promote its Objects (the “Independent Directors”) and who shall at no time represent more than one third of the Board;

- 5.7 Members of the Management Group will not form more than one third of Directors at any one time.
- 5.8 The Board will require 3 members to be present to be quorate
- 5.9 Chair and Vice Chair to be elected at each AGM immediately after the election of Directors to stand for one year. The Chair will remain in post until the re-election of his or her successor and will therefore Chair and govern the proceedings at the Annual General Meeting until the point of succession. (refer to the Articles of the Company for more details).

6. ROLE OF THE MANAGEMENT GROUP (and chair)

- 6.1 To support the BID Project Team
- In determining priorities, coordinating activity and maintaining active business involvement in the implementation of the Business Plan.
 - In securing funding from a variety of sources including public and private sector contribution, revenue generation from sponsorship of specific activity.
 - To bring together stakeholders from all aspects of business in the BID area centre to work in partnership and co-ordinate their activities towards the BID vision, ensuring regular, accurate two-way flow of information between the BID and these other stakeholders of Newcastle-under-Lyme.
 - To encourage all members of the BID business community to become involved in influencing and shaping the future of their business environment and supporting the BID objectives.
- 6.2 To make recommendations to the Board that budget allocations are modified for each of the main projects and the management and administration of the BID, in order to ensure that the projects remain relevant and continue to address needs and priorities of the businesses in the BID area during its five year life.
- 6.3 The role of the Chair is to:
- be a Director of the BID Board (but not the Chair of the Board) and thereby act as a key link between the Management Group and the Board
 - lead the Management Group in the fulfilment of its role and adherence to its terms of reference.
 - encourage all members of the Management Group to be actively involved in the support of the delivery of the BID Business Plan and the fulfilment of its objectives
 - work closely with and support the BID Project Team in identifying opportunities to optimise value for money and further the fulfillment of the Business Plan objectives.

- ensure that meetings of the Management Group are efficient and productive, all agenda items are covered within the appropriate timescale.
- lead by example to Management Group members, in the commitment to the Management Group's role

6.2 The role of the Vice Chairs is to:

- support the Chair in his or her role.
- substitute for the Chair in his or her absence in meetings of the Management group but not the Board.

6.3 Spokesperson

Whilst the Chair or Vice Chairs will be the primary spokespersons for the BID in press and media relations, it may be that any Management Group member may be asked to be a 'BID Champion' and spokesperson for a specific project.

In all instances, the person is to speak on behalf of the BID and not their own individual business (See section 3.4)

7. MANAGEMENT GROUP MEMBERSHIP

- 7.1 Any business that is a levy paying businesses operating in the Newcastle-under-Lyme Business Improvement District as defined by the BID Business Plan is welcome to join the Management Group or Working groups.
- 7.2 Businesses or organisations located outside of the area, with direct business interests in the area, are welcome to join by invitation of the BID Project Team as a voluntary member
- 7.3 The group should have a broad representation from across business sectors and the geography of the Business Improvement District area.
- 7.4 The maximum size of the group should be no more than 15 people of which no more than 2 people should be permanent advisors or observers to the group.
- 7.5 The Management Group will require 5 members to be present to be quorate
- 7.6 The Management Group should have a Chair and up to 2 Vice Chairs, to be elected at each AGM immediately after the election of Board Directors. The Chair and Vice Chairs will remain in post until the re-election of his or her successor. In the event of a Chair or a Vice Chair stepping down from the role or being removed as a result of any condition under section 8, then members of the group should appoint a replacement as soon as practical.
- 7.7 Members of the Management Group will not form more than one third of

Directors of the Board of the BID at any one time.

- 7.8 Members should commit themselves to attend on a regular basis and a minimum of 2 meetings over a period of one year. If a representative member is unable to attend a Management Group meeting, a substitute from the same business can attend in his / her place but they should be fully briefed, and able to fulfil all representative responsibilities during that meeting.
- 7.9 Advisors and observers in addition to the permanent advisors and observers will be asked to join the group from time to time as and when appropriate.
- 7.10 Chairs for the Working Groups (BID Champions) will be drawn from the Management Group based on specialist knowledge or interests and can act as advocates and press spokespersons as required.. Other members of the project teams or committees will be co-opted/invited from relevant businesses/public sector organisations.

8. DISQUALIFICATION AND REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

The Management Group shall have the right to terminate the membership to the Management Group of a member and request an alternative representative be nominated for their sector if

- 8.1 A member of the Management Group fails to attend three consecutive meetings without notification to the BID Project team.
- 8.2 In the opinion of Management Group or Board, a member has committed an act of gross misconduct, acted in a manner which is contrary to these terms of reference or any act which is likely either directly or indirectly to bring the BID into disrepute.

9. MEETING FREQUENCIES, DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND MINUTES

- 9.1 The Board and the Management Group should each meet at least every quarter with additional meetings as required. It is recommended that these meetings should alternate. It is aimed that the duration of any meeting would not exceed two hours.
- 9.2 A meeting can only be held if a representative from the BID Project Team and the Chair or vice chair is present.
- 9.3 At the start of any meeting, members must declare any interest in any matter in which he or she has directly or indirectly an interest or duty, which is material, and which conflicts or may conflict with the interests of the BID, for any item on the agenda to be discussed, and this must be recorded in the minutes.
- 9.4 The BID Project Team will ensure that minutes are kept of proceedings, which will include entries recording any decisions made. Minutes from each previous meeting must be checked for accuracy and maintained as a record.

10. ALTERATION TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 10.1 No alteration or addition shall be made to the Terms of Reference, except at a meeting of the Board which has sufficient members present to act as a quorum.

11. MEMORANDUM AND ARTICLES

- 11.1 All other arrangements will be governed by the company's memorandum and articles the law of England.

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Go Kidsgrove Update Dec 2015

KIDSGROVE CHAIRS' MEETING

Next meeting scheduled for 24th November

CHRISTMAS

- Order placed with EON for one feeder pillar for Christmas tree in King Street (not two as originally planned as this proved too expensive). Invoice paid and feeder pillar installed.
- An alternative scheme to bring lights to King Street has been implemented. Go Kidsgrove is funding power sockets to the two lighting columns opposite the parade of shops and will wrap these columns in the same way as Liverpool Road. Order has been placed with EON and invoice paid but completion of work awaited at the time of writing.
- Order placed with CMT Ltd for the testing of the columns (14 in total). It was hoped that this could be avoided by using wraps rather than the motifs used in previous years but at least testing should only be required every other year if wraps are used.
- Order has been placed with Blachere and invoice paid to purchase the column wraps (14 plus two spare for future years) and lights for the tree in King Street.
- Order placed for installation with CMK Electrical, a company suggested by Blachere. Although this company has previously worked with Blachere, they have not done work on the highway and therefore need to get additional accreditation before erecting the column wraps. This training will be completed on 17th Nov. Invoice to be paid when training completed.
- It has been a steep learning curve for the volunteers involved with Go Kidsgrove, particularly ensuring that we comply with all relevant H&S requirements. All of this work has previously been undertaken by the council and Go Kidsgrove is indebted to Graham Williams for the guidance in completing the necessary paperwork and assisting with technical queries.
- Go Kidsgrove also wishes to acknowledge thanks to Steve Middlehurst's team for repairing the brick wall round the bed where the tree will be planted. Steve has also offered his expertise in the purchase of a growing Christmas tree to be planted in the New Year and ways of keeping the bed tidy during the year.
- Go Kidsgrove ensured that the Town Council was aware of the scheme they were undertaking in case they wished to supplement it. We also passed on the Blachere contact details which they used for the Jack Beech tree.
- The town mayor will switch on the lights for the Jack Beech tree as usual. Go Kidsgrove decided to offer the opportunity to switch on the King Street lights to a member of the community and implemented a nomination procedure via Facebook. The winner will be chosen and notified a couple of days before the event. We are currently consulting the mayor on whether this switch on happened before or after the Jack Beech tree.

WEBSITE

The www.gokidsgrove.co.uk website has been revamped to include features such as 'Activities', 'Gallery' and events calendar and a section for minutes of board and theme group meetings. Each

page will also allow the community to engage by uploading additional information. The new site will be launched at the Victorian market on 28th Nov.

SIGNAGE

The Heritage Lottery Fund application for the interactive map will be submitted in early 2016. Additional information is awaited about proposed app before the submission is completed. This will be available in January 2016.



Members: Stubbs, Mrs Burgess,
Hambleton, Holland, Loades, Matthews,
Northcott, Wilkes and Huckfield

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

Chair: Councillor Stringer
Vice Chair: Councillor Mrs Gill Williams

Portfolio Holder(s) covering the Committee's remit:
Councillor John Williams (Town Centres, Business and Assets)
Councillor Bert Proctor (Planning and Housing)

Work Plan correct as at: Monday 3rd August 2015

Remit:

Economic Development and Enterprise Scrutiny Committee is responsible for:

- Building Control
- Design and Heritage Champion
- Economic Development
- External Regeneration Funding
- Housing and Homelessness
- Inward Investment/Marketing
- Land and Property (Asset Management)
- Local Enterprise Partnership
- Planning Policy and Development Control
- Transport Strategy and Policy (Planning)

Date of Meeting	Item	Reason for Undertaking
1st July 2015 (agenda dispatch 19th June 2015)	Superfast Staffordshire Project	Paul Chatwin to be invited back to provide an update on proceedings
	Aspire Housing Letting System	Item to be kept on the agenda. The Customer Services Manager from Aspire Housing will be attending on the 2 nd September to provide an account of how their letting system operates
	Kidsgrove Town Centre Partnership	An update to be provided on developments
	Newcastle Town Centre Partnership	Quarter 4 performance statistics to be reported for information and any variances will be highlighted for consideration
	Local Government Association Peer Review of Decision Making Arrangements	To advise Members on the recommendations of the LGA Peer Review and to request feedback on the recommendations
	Land Asset Disposal	A potential cross party working group to be established to listen to the concerns of local residents before any green space is sold for development
	Newcastle Housing Advice Contract Progress	Quarter 4 performance statistics to be reported for information and variances highlighted for consideration
	High Speed 2	All Members, at the last meeting, were in agreement for the Working Group to continue, as once a decision was made on a preferred route, to optimise the economic benefits
	Ryecroft Regeneration and Redevelopment Project	A verbal update on proceedings to be provided by the Executive Director Regeneration and Development
Work Plan and Scrutiny Topics for 2015/2016	To discuss the work plan and potential topics that Committee members would like to scrutinise over the forthcoming year	
2nd September 2015 (agenda dispatch 21st August 2015)	Newcastle Housing Advice Contract Progress	Quarter 1 performance statistics to be reported for information and variances highlighted for consideration
	Aspire Housing Letting System	The Customer Services Manager from Aspire Housing to attend to provide an account of how their letting system operates
	Newcastle Town Centre Partnership	Quarter 1 performance statistics to be reported including key Performance Indicators listed below:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footfall monitoring • Property Vacancy Rate • Trading Figures

Date of Meeting	Item	Reason for Undertaking
	Portfolio Holder Question Time	An opportunity for the Committee to question the Portfolio Holder on their priorities and work objectives for the next six months and an opportunity to address any issues or concerns that they may currently be facing. It is also an opportunity for the Portfolio Holder to flag up areas within his remit that may benefit from scrutiny in the future
	Work Plan and Scrutiny Topics for 2015/2016	To discuss the work plan and potential topics that Committee members would like to scrutinise over the forthcoming year
2nd December 2015 (agenda dispatch 20.11.15)	Kingsgrove Town Centre Partnership	A promotion/marketing strategy to be produced as agreed at the meeting on the 1 st July 2015
	Housing Strategy	To present to Members the Housing Strategy consultation draft. The strategic housing role is at the heart of achieving the social, economic and environmental objectives that shape a community and create a sense of place.
	Homelessness Strategy	To present to Members the Homelessness Strategy consultation draft. The Strategy acknowledged the need to deliver quality services that will both prevent homelessness and alleviate the effect of homelessness when it occurs.
	Newcastle Housing Advice Contract Progress	Quarter 2 performance statistics to be reported for information and variances highlighted for consideration
	Newcastle Town Centre Partnership	Quarter 2 performance statistics to be reported for information and any variances will be highlighted for consideration
	Community Infrastructure Levy	To provide Members with a progress update
	Work Plan and Scrutiny Topics for 2015/2016	To discuss the work plan and potential topics that Committee members would like to scrutinise over the forthcoming year
16th December 2015 (Agenda dispatch 4th December 2015)	Asset Management Strategy and Capital Strategy Update	Joint meeting with the Finance, Resource and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee. To receive an update on the finance and resource implications of the Asset Management Strategy 2014-2017 and to seek approval of how the Council deploys its capital resources in order to assist it to achieve its corporate and service objectives

Date of Meeting	Item	Reason for Undertaking
24th March 2016 (agenda dispatch 11th March 2016)	Newcastle Town Centre Partnership	Quarter 3 performance statistics to be reported for information and any variances will be highlighted for consideration
	Economic Development Strategy Year 4 Progress, Year 5 Action Plan	The Strategy Year 4 progress, Year 5 Action Plan sets out a number of actions which are planned to be taken over the coming 12 months in pursuit of the Strategy
	Aspire Housing Letting System	As agreed on the 2 nd September 2015 Aspire Housing to be invited back to provide Committee with an update on their letting system
	Newcastle Housing Advice Contract Progress	Quarter 3 performance statistics to be reported for information and variances highlighted for consideration
	Joint Local Plan	An update on the process in preparing a Local Plan, in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council, to ensure that over the next twenty years there is sufficient land in the borough, and in Stoke-on-Trent, to help its communities prosper in a sustainable manner
	Planning Peer Review	To update on the progress made in implementing the Action Plan agreed by the Council in response to the report of the Planning Peer Review Team
	Work Plan and Scrutiny Topics for 2015/2016	To discuss the work plan and potential topics that Committee members would like to scrutinise over the forthcoming year

Task and Finish Groups:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Transport
Future Task and Finish Groups:	
Suggestions for Potential Future Items:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Infrastructure Levy • Superfast Broadband • Ryecroft Redevelopment – an update report to be provided on the final scheme
DATES AND TIMES OF CABINET MEETINGS:	Wednesday 10 th June 2015, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 22 nd July 2015, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 16 th September 2015, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 14 th October 2015, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 11 th November 2015, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 9 th December 2015, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 20 th January 2016, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 10 th February 2016, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
Wednesday 23 rd March 2016, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1	

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