

Blackpool Council

6 April 2018

To: Councillors Benson, Blackburn, Cain, Campbell, Cross, Jackson, Kirkland, Smith, I Taylor and Mrs Wright

The above members are requested to attend the:

EXECUTIVE

Monday, 16 April 2018 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room A, Town Hall, Blackpool

A G E N D A

ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC TO COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Head of Democratic Governance has marked with an asterisk (*) those items where the Committee may need to consider whether the public should be excluded from the meeting as the items are likely to disclose exempt information.

The nature of the exempt information is shown in brackets after the item.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests in the items under consideration and in doing so state:

(1) the type of interest concerned either a

- (a) personal interest
- (b) prejudicial interest
- (c) disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI)

and

(2) the nature of the interest concerned

If any member requires advice on declarations of interests, they are advised to contact the Head of Democratic Governance in advance of the meeting.

2 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2018 TO 2021)

(Pages 1 - 22)

Report to:	EXECUTIVE
Relevant Officer:	Alan Cavill, Director of Place
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gillian Campbell, Deputy Leader of the Council (Tourism, Economic Growth and Jobs)
Date of Meeting:	16 April 2018

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2018 TO 2021)

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the proposed three year Local Transport Plan works programme attached as Appendix 2a, to be implemented over the financial years 2018/2019 to 2020/2021. This programme has been incorporated with the objectives and vision from the 2011 Local Transport Plan Strategy to form Blackpool's Local Transport Plan (Implementation Plan 2018 to 2021), attached as Appendix 2b. It is also proposed in the longer term to that a joint Local Transport Plan is developed in conjunction with Lancashire County Council and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To recommend to Council to approve the indicative three-year Local Transport Plan works programme 2018/2019 to 2020/2021 attached at Appendix 2a.

2.2 To recommend to Council to approve that the programme incorporated with the objectives and vision from the 2011 Local Transport Plan Strategy forming Blackpool's Local Transport Plan (Implementation Plan 2018 to 2021) attached at Appendix 2b.

2.3 To recommend to Council that authority is granted to the Director of Place, following consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council (Tourism, Economic Growth and Jobs) subject to a published officer decision, to vary the programme as required to deliver overall objectives and ensure spend of the indicative grant allocations.

2.4 Subsequent to the approval of the above recommendations by the Council, to delegate authority to the Head of Legal to enter into any legal documentation that may be required to implement the plan.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 In order that an objective-led Local Transport Plan programme for financial years 2018/2019 to 2020/2021, incorporated with continuing elements from the 2011 Local Transport Plan Strategy, to form Blackpool's Local Transport Plan (Implementation Plan 2018 to 2021) can be put in place.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

To not approve the item, which will mean Blackpool Council will not have an approved Local Transport Plan or works programme in place.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is: The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) Programme 2018 to 2021 is shown at Appendix 2a. The draft programme is structured around the six Local Transport Plan strategic objectives outlined below.

5.2 Objective 1: Highway maintenance. It is proposed that the Highways Capital Allocation (£3,063m over three years) be spent on maintenance for roads and bridges, supplemented by a vired element from the Integrated Transport Block allocation to help address the condition of the Borough's classified roads, mainly principal roads. Other elements include a contribution to ongoing Project 30 repayments and match funding for a scheme that will make further repairs to Yeadon Way.

5.3 Objective 2: Road safety. To support this objective and the Lancashire Partnership for Road Safety, it is proposed to spend £200,000 of the Integrated Transport Block allocation over three years on road safety measures to reduce casualties on Blackpool's roads.

5.4 Objective 3: Congestion. From the Integrated Transport Block allocation, it is proposed to spend £465,000 on traffic control enhancements and £703,000 on

highway network enhancements. These are to improve the highway network, in the town centre in particular, by enhancing traffic light control systems and by modifying the highway network to enhance resilience.

- 5.5 Objective 4: Economy. The proposed Integrated Transport Block allocations are for the following:
- Match funding towards the Town Centre Quality Corridors scheme (£537,000).
 - A £200,000 contribution towards the Tramway Extension.
 - A bus hub on Corporation Street, to increase the number of bus stops, similar to the improvements recently carried out on Market Street (estimated to cost £600,000).
 - A contribution of £525,000 to help address the poor condition of the Borough's classified roads.
- 5.6 Objective 5: Parking: The proposal is to assist with renewing facilities at the Coach Station and for signage within parking zones so they can be effectively enforced. The funding from the Integrated Transport Block allocation would be £66,000.
- 5.7 Objective 6: Accessibility: From the same allocation it is proposed to spend:
- £450,000 on the Bispham Village District Centre improvement scheme.
 - £145,000 on new bus shelters and on refurbishing existing ones where possible.
 - £30,000 on small-scale measures to assist cyclists and pedestrians.
- 5.8 The following items, all funded from the Integrated Transport Block allocation, support the Local Transport Plan Programme elements described above:
- Monitoring, for automatic and manual traffic counts (£49,000)
 - Match funding for the Yeadon Way scheme (£335,000)
 - Provision for developing schemes and a contribution towards the South Fylde Line Community Rail Partnership (£30,000)
 - Electric vehicle charging points in town centre car parks (£52,000)
 - A further Project 30 contribution (£75,000)
 - Staff costs for monitoring and managing the capital programme (£53,000)
- 5.9 All the programme elements above are included in the Draft Local Transport Plan (Implementation Plan 2018 to 2021) which is shown at Appendix 2b.
- 5.10 Is the Corporate Delivery Unit aware of this report? Yes

The Corporate Delivery Unit has been consulted and has no issues to raise.

5.11 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.12 **List of Appendices:**

Appendix 2a: Draft Local Transport Plan Programme 2018 to 2021

Appendix 2b: Draft Local Transport Plan (Implementation Plan 2018 to 2021)

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 Providing a Local Transport Plan (LTP) and programme to expend the Council's highways and transport grant allocation appropriately is a statutory requirement.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 The majority of the Local Transport Plan programme can be delivered in-house. However, some specialist consultancy support may be necessary for certain programme elements.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 The Local Transport Plan aims to achieve improved connectivity for all in Blackpool's society and its impacts are overwhelmingly positive for the equalities agenda.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 The proposals will be funded from the council's Local Transport Plan Highways Capital Allocation and Integrated Transport Block allocation, as notified by the Department for Transport. However, these allocations remain indicative.

9.2 The programme must be monitored effectively to ensure that it is delivered overall and that each year's allocation is expended within the two year limit.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 Without approval of this item, Blackpool Council will not have a Local Transport Plan or programme in place.

10.2 Risk assessments are carried out for each scheme implemented under the Local Transport Plan programme.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 Collaborative working has taken place between officers to agree the indicative programme.

12.2 The Local Transport Plan Strategy was consulted upon during its development, including questionnaire surveys and direct stakeholder engagement. The programme is carefully considered during its development, with reference to known stakeholder issues.

12.3 A draft Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Masterplan was published in December 2014 and was subject to an extensive consultation exercise in early 2015.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None

14.0 Key decision information:

14.1 Is this a key decision? Yes

14.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number: 10/2018

14.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No

14.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

15.0 Call-in information:

15.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

15.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

16.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: 6 April 2018 Date approved:

17.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

17.1

18.0 Executive decision:

18.1

18.2 Date of Decision:

19.0 Reason(s) for decision:

19.1 Date Decision published:

20.0 Executive Members in attendance:

20.1

21.0 Call-in:

21.1

22.0 Notes:

22.1

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APPENDIX 2a: DRAFT Local Transport Plan Programme 2018 to 2021				£ ,000s
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Corporate top slice 12.5%	146			
Total Highways Capital Allocation spend	1021			
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Yeadon Way scheme match	10	100	57	167
Project 30 repayment	463	403	343	1209
Principal road maintenance	548	443	511	1502
Highways Capital Allocation spend	1021	1021	1021	3063
Integrated Transport Block	1720			
Corporate top slice 12.5%	215			
Total Integrated Transport Block spend	1505			
	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	Totals
Objective 2: Road safety				
Road safety measures	40	60	100	200
Objective 3: Congestion				
Traffic control enhancements	90	150	225	465
Highway network enhancements	100	248	355	703
Objective 4: Economy				
Town centre quality corridors	279	258	0	537
Tramway extension	200	0	0	200
Bus hub phase 2	53	260	287	600
Maintenance	40	200	285	525
Objective 5: Parking				
Renewal of coach / parking control infrastructure	25	25	16	66
Objective 6: Accessibility				
District centres (Bispham Village)	400	50	0	450
Bus shelters	80	20	45	145
Cycling & walking minor works	10	10	10	30
Supporting items				
Monitoring	15	19	15	49
Yeadon Way scheme match	20	180	135	335
Programme & scheme development	10	10	10	30
Electric vehicle charging points	15	15	22	52
Project 30 contribution	75	0	0	75
Staff costs	53	0	0	53
Integrated Transport Block spend	1505	1505	1505	4515
Total spend	2526	2526	2526	7578

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APPENDIX 2b

DRAFT Local Transport Plan (Implementation Plan 2018 to 2021)

Blackpool Council

CONTENTS:

1. Introduction	Page 2
2. Strategic objectives	Page 2
3. Transport vision	Page 2
4. Policy update	Page 3
5. Policies: key issues	Page 5
6. Policies: modes	Page 6
7. Programme 2018 to 2021	Page 9
8. Contact details	Page 12
TABLE 1: DRAFT Local Transport Plan Programme 2018 to 2021	Page 11

1. Introduction

1.01 Blackpool Council published its Local Transport Plan Strategy in April 2011, which covered the years 2011 to 2016. The council has commenced work with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Lancashire County Council to produce a new joint Local Transport Plan (LTP) Strategy.

1.02 In the interim this document has been produced to reiterate Blackpool's transport policies; also referencing other key Blackpool Council policy documents that have been produced in recent years. This document will be Blackpool's Local Transport Plan while work on the new pan-Lancashire plan is progressed, which is scheduled to be complete by the end of calendar year 2019.

1.03 Effective transport is essential to the resort's economy and vital to its regeneration. The council in partnership with Transport for the North will seek opportunities for further transport improvements in the town.

1.04 Finally, this document sets out a three year works programme for financial years 2018/19 - 2020/21 structured around the strategic objectives below.

2. Strategic objectives

2.01 This is not a new strategy so Blackpool's strategic objectives from the 2011 LTP remain in place:

- Objective 1 – Improve, maintain and make best use of Blackpool's transport network; in particular its roads, footways and bridges.
- Objective 2 – Improve road safety by interventions that reduce the number of people, particularly children, killed and seriously injured on Blackpool's roads.
- Objective 3 – Manage congestion levels on Blackpool's roads, especially where it impacts on local economic performance.
- Objective 4 – Improve transport to and within the resort, particularly by more sustainable modes, to enhance the visitor experience and support the local economy.
- Objective 5 – Improve the efficiency and management of parking to support the local economy, especially for shoppers and visitors.
- Objective 6 – Improve access to healthcare, education, employment, shops, social/leisure opportunities and resort attractions, particularly by sustainable modes.

3. Transport vision

3.01 Blackpool's Transport Vision is also carried forward from the 2011 LTP:

'[By 2021] Blackpool will have a well maintained and integrated transport network, which will be safer and more secure for all users. Journeys will be more reliable and less affected by congestion, which will contribute to sustained economic growth and a reduction in carbon emissions. There will be improved access to Blackpool by all transport modes to support the local economy, with more sustainable travel within the resort as part of an improved visitor experience. People will have more travel choices and better access to their destinations, particularly by walking, cycling and improved public transport, and will be healthier due to greater use of active travel options. Higher quality parking will be more efficient and effective in providing for the needs of residents and visitors.'

4. Policy update

4.01 The following key documents have been produced in recent years:

Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Masterplan (July 2015) Lancashire County Council / Blackpool Council

4.02 In order to determine its transport planning and investment priorities, Lancashire County Council produced a set of five highways and transport masterplans to cover all 12 districts of Lancashire and the two unitary authorities of Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen, to begin to make the case for multi-million pound investments in the transport infrastructure needed to support future housing and business development. The Fylde Coast Highways and Transport Masterplan, produced with Blackpool Council, covers Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre.

Council Plan 2015-2020 (November 2015) Blackpool Council

4.03 The Council Plan sets the strategic direction for the organisation until 2020 and contains two priorities for the second half of the decade:

- Priority One: The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool
- Priority Two: Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience

4.04 The council's vision for Blackpool is that it will be: The UK's number one family resort with a thriving economy that supports a happy and healthy community who are proud of this unique town.

Blackpool Road Asset Management Strategy (2015-2045) Adopted April 2016

4.05 The Road Asset Management Strategy sets out the aims, objectives and processes involved in managing Blackpool's highway network, assisting the council in:

- Managing limited funding and resources and directing them to the areas of greatest need.
- Understanding the condition of the network in order to make sound decisions on investment.
- Ensuring that the decision making process is open to scrutiny, ensuring that the 'rules' for investment meet the needs and aspirations of the council.
- Enabling decisions on highway maintenance to be consistent with delivering sustainable objectives for the community.

Blackpool Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (2012-2027) Adopted January 2016

4.06 The Core Strategy forms part of the statutory planning framework for Blackpool which will facilitate the physical, economic and social change which is seen by the council and its partners as being essential to the town's future. It sets out where new development, including housing and employment, retail and leisure should be located to meet Blackpool's future needs to 2027; identifies areas which will be regenerated, protected or enhanced; and sets out key development principles such as for design and affordable housing. Blackpool's transport policy is aligned with Policy CS5, which is set out below:

4.07 Policy CS5: Connectivity – A sustainable, high quality transport network for Blackpool and a quality arrival experience will be achieved by the following measures:

1. The provision of a modern, frequent, convenient and well-integrated public transport network by:
 - a. Working with Network Rail and operators to:
 - i facilitate increased rail capacity and frequency on the Blackpool – Preston – Manchester line and new services including direct services to major destinations;
 - ii upgrade the South Fylde line, increasing capacity and frequency of services; and
 - iii provide major enhancement of all rail arrival points, particularly Blackpool North Station.
 - b. Providing a new tram link from the promenade to Blackpool North Station and maintain options to link the tram network to the South Fylde Line.
 - c. Working with bus operators and developers to provide enhanced bus services with efficient, comprehensive routing served by high quality infrastructure, providing bus priority measures where appropriate to enable services to operate efficiently.
 - d. Working with coach operators and developers to provide sufficient, high quality, conveniently located coach passenger facilities and coach parking.
2. Encouraging integration of Blackpool Airport with public transport modes, enabling efficient passenger connections and onward journeys to and from the town and wider airport catchment; and supporting improvements to airport parking and the expansion of routes.
3. Improving interchange between transport modes by providing improved high quality infrastructure including buildings, facilities and public realm, making transport interchange easy and convenient for all users.
4. Reducing road congestion by eliminating identified 'pinch-points'; providing long-term solutions to structural issues where these arise at bridges and other infrastructure assets; and providing advanced directional signage on all main routes.
5. Addressing parking capacity issues by providing sufficient, high quality and conveniently located car parks, to support the town centre and resort economy and address wider issues of parking provision across the Borough.
6. Developing a safe, enhanced and extended network of pedestrian and cycle routes to increase the proportion of journeys made on foot or bike by:
 - a. Connecting neighbourhoods with the town centre, district and local centres, employment sites and community facilities, green spaces and adjoining countryside;
 - b. Providing the town centre and resort core with new and improved convenient pedestrian and cycle links between main car parks, transport hubs, major attractions and development sites; and
 - c. Providing suitable levels of secure cycle parking at new developments and public transport hubs as well as links to existing networks, where feasible.
7. Providing improved, clear and co-ordinated signage for all transport modes and visitor information, particularly within the town centre and resort core, to ease movement and provide a clear sense of orientation and direction.
8. Changing travel behaviour by pro-actively working with developers and other organisations to increase the proportion of journeys that use sustainable transport, while working with

residents and businesses to reduce the need for work related journeys where alternative means or technologies make this possible.

5. Policies: key issues

5.01 This section highlights the key issues from the 2011 LTP Strategy, which relate to the six objectives, including updates from the strategies and plans described in the section above or from other policy initiatives and partnerships.

Highway maintenance

5.02 Road maintenance underpins and enhances efforts to manage traffic congestion and improve road safety which are also areas regarded as important by residents. With a robust approach to prioritisation of maintenance it is also possible to support a number of wider transport policy objectives.

5.03 The Project 30 initiative has successfully re-surfaced and enhanced large portions of Blackpool's highway network (contributing to reductions in tripping claims) and the bridge renewal programme, currently being implemented, will see many of Blackpool's structures repaired and strengthened.

5.04 The council's Road Asset Management Strategy is a series of documents that set out how road infrastructure in Blackpool will be managed over the medium term (5-10 years) and long term (10-30 years).

Road safety

5.05 Road safety is a particular issue in Blackpool, where analysis shows that the authority has a higher rate of accidents than the national average. Blackpool is a member of the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership, which aims to reduce road casualties through the management of speed, speed enforcement, driver education and training and through developing collaborative approaches to education, awareness, engagement and other measures.

Congestion

5.06 The council monitors congestion levels on the network as part of its Traffic Management Act duty. Through this, Blackpool is committed to reducing road congestion by eliminating identified 'pinch-points'; providing long-term solutions to structural issues where these arise at bridges and other infrastructure assets; and providing advanced directional signage on all main routes.

5.07 Enhancements to the resort's existing Urban Traffic Management Control system will provide an Intelligent Transport System that will improve overall traffic management, benefit public transport and assist with the management of events. Variable Message Signage will minimise parking search trips, thus increasing visitor dwell time and reducing traffic congestion.

Economy

5.08. Visitors are the local economy's lifeblood and transport and travel is an integral part of the visitor experience. In recent years there has been an upturn in visitor numbers, with most arriving by

car. Good access to car parks is therefore important as are the clear benefits of not driving around the resort needlessly. There is a clear need to manage visitor traffic more effectively. The use of more sustainable modes can reduce congestion and improve environmental quality.

5.09 The Leisure Quarter lies on Blackpool's former Central Station site and is a prime 7.15ha area of land in Blackpool town centre. The site is largely in public ownership and has for many years represented the ultimate development opportunity for the resort. Typical leisure development could incorporate a mix of a major visitor attraction, hotels and retail.

5.10 Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone will be a significant destination and focus of economic development. Partners are working together to maximise the potential of the site in a way which creates employment and sustainable economic development opportunities for Blackpool and the Fylde Coast.

Parking

5.11 The council is aiming to produce a comprehensive, long-term parking strategy, developing actions to ensure that parking provision in Blackpool assists the visitor economy, the town as a shopping destination and as an attractive place for residents and businesses. There is a need to ensure Blackpool's existing parking facilities are used in the most efficient and effective way and set out a strategy for future provision, linked to development and regeneration.

5.12 Where possible, the council will ensure that the quality of Blackpool's main parking provision is improved in relation to its accessibility, ease of use, internal and external appearances and the personal safety and security of its users.

Accessibility

5.13 The council will help to improve access to key destinations. Good access to Blackpool's town and district centres by all modes of transport is vital to support the local economy. The council will work with developers to influence locations for new development, aiming to reduce the need to travel and also to ensure adequate accessibility through improvements to the transport network. Key will be siting development in locations that are easily accessible by sustainable modes, managing congestion and minimising future carbon emissions.

5.14 Travel plans should be implemented to improve and encourage more sustainable access (by walking, cycling and public transport, and through car sharing) to workplaces and educational establishments. All travel plans should be reviewed at least annually.

6. Policies: modes

6.01 This section reaffirms the council's policy and outlines key initiatives for each main mode of transport. Also, please see Policy CS5: Connectivity above.

Walking

6.02 The council sees walking as the primary mode of transport for journeys under one mile. Walk to School initiatives are offered to the majority of Blackpool's primary schools. The council has

worked collaboratively with both Blackpool and the Fylde College and Blackpool Victoria Hospital on walking initiatives.

6.03 The Quality Corridors project is improving the public realm on key roads in the town centre, such as Church Street, creating a better environment for walking.

6.04 The council is committed to maintaining and improving public rights of way, where resources allow, and has worked with Lancashire County Council and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council to develop a new Rights of Way Improvement Plan, which runs to 2025.

6.05 The Steps to Health scheme continues to increase the amount of physical activity that people take, and to assist with the challenge of encouraging the recommended 30 minutes of moderate activity per day on five or more days of the week.

Private transport

6.06 The council recognises the importance of private motorised transport to Blackpool residents, allowing them to access the opportunities they need and to improve their quality of life. The car is the primary mode of transport and the numbers are likely to increase, putting added pressure on the highway network and parking provision.

6.07 Town centre shopper parking will be given priority in the emerging parking strategy, considered vital to support the local retail sector. Traffic management will be improved to efficiently guide visitors to the most appropriate car park, making resort attractions more accessible and reducing unnecessary mileage. Resort-wide, sufficient parking to support a regenerating and diversifying tourism economy will be provided but the use of cars whilst in the resort will be discouraged. The council will support the safe use of powered-two-wheelers by ensuring free parking is provided in the town's car parks. The council will prioritise trips that benefit the local economy, including by goods vehicles.

Public bus

6.08 Buses are a key element within Blackpool's transport system, reducing congestion, providing more sustainable personal mobility and making an essential contribution to Blackpool's economy. Buses carry over 10 million passengers annually in Blackpool. Services afford people a viable alternative to the car for important journeys to work, education and healthcare. The council will continue to support socially-necessary services, if resources are available. The council will also maintain a Bus Operators' Forum and liaise with individual operators as appropriate. Developer contributions will continue to be sought to enhance bus stops.

Taxi

6.09 The council recognises the important role taxis and private hire vehicles play in supporting the visitor and night-time economies. The role landaus play in providing pleasure trips is also acknowledged. Regular dialogue occurs between representatives of the trade and council officers concerning network and ranking issues. New development and regeneration projects will be required to provide sufficient taxi ranks in favourable locations.

Coach

6.10 The council recognises coach's potential for sustainable tourism access as complementary to rail travel. The coach industry will receive the council's support where possible. Regeneration proposals, especially the Leisure Quarter development, would significantly increase the demand for coach drop-off, pick-up and layover. The wider regeneration process presents an opportunity to replace the resort's basic coach handling facilities. High quality passenger facilities and a permanent layover facility, that has adequate space for coaches and good facilities for drivers, are required. The VisitBlackpool website promotes coach travel and provides information to coach operators and group travel organisers.

Rail

6.11 The electrification of the railway lines between North Station and Preston and between Preston and Manchester / Liverpool, together with an associated increase in rolling stock capacity and quality, will allow electric trains to operate all services between Manchester (and Manchester Airport), Liverpool, Preston and Blackpool North.

6.12 Rail travel will be promoted through workplace travel plans and VisitBlackpool will continue to work with train operating companies to promote rail services as a sustainable alternative to car-borne tourism.

6.13 The extension of the Blackpool Tramway from North Pier to North Station will improve access to the UK rail network from Blackpool, Fleetwood and Cleveleys.

Tram

6.14 The Blackpool Tramway Extension to North Station scheme has recently been granted Full Approval by the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership and been granted a Transport and Works Act Order by the Secretary of State for Transport which gives the powers to build and operate the scheme.

6.15 The scheme will:

- Improve public transport in the Blackpool area.
- Provide connectivity and integration between the existing tramway and the national rail services at North Station.
- Provide benefits to commuters and visitors travelling to and from the town.
- Support regeneration and economic growth by improving accessibility to jobs and services and improving the connectivity between the economically important seafront and the redeveloping town centre.
- Complement and support the continued development and regeneration of the Talbot Gateway area.
- Facilitate urban realm enhancements in the town centre and provide improvements to the Talbot Road area.
- Provide on street parking and servicing along Talbot Road.

Cycling

6.16 All new developments will be required to provide cycle parking/storage for residents, workers and visitors; workplaces should provide secure clothing storage, changing/washing facilities and a drying room.

6.17 The council will ensure provision of Advanced Stop Lines (ASLs) and other cycle friendly infrastructure, where appropriate. More cycling is seen as important to help reduce congestion, improve accessibility and health, and combat Climate Change. Bikeability, the national standard cycle training programme, will continue to be offered.

7. Programme 2018 to 2021

7.01 The Draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) Programme 2018 to 2021 is shown in Table 1 below. The programme is structured around the six LTP strategic objectives.

7.02 Objective 1: Highway maintenance. It is proposed the Highways Capital Allocation (£3,063m over three years) be spent on maintenance for roads and bridges, supplemented by a vired element from the Integrated Transport Block allocation to help address the condition of the Borough's classified roads, mainly principal roads. Other elements include a contribution to ongoing Project 30 repayments and match funding for a scheme that will make further repairs to Yeadon Way.

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7.07 Objective 6: Accessibility: From the same allocation it is proposed to spend:

- £450k on the Bispham Village District Centre improvement scheme.

- £145k on new bus shelters and on refurbishing existing ones where possible.
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DRAFT

TABLE 1: DRAFT Local Transport Plan Programme 2018 to 2021				£ ,000s
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Objective 6: Accessibility				
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Cycling & walking minor works	10	10	10	30
Supporting items				
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Yeadon Way scheme match	20	180	135	335
Programme & scheme development	10	10	10	30
Electric vehicle charging points	15	15	22	52
Project 30 contribution	75	0	0	75
Staff costs	53	0	0	53
Integrated Transport Block spend	1505	1505	1505	4515
Total spend	2526	2526	2526	7578

8. Contact details

8:01 For further information, please contact the council's Transport Policy team:

Postal address: Blackpool Council, PO Box 17, Blackpool, FY1 1LZ

Telephone: 01253 476172 / 476173 / 476176

E-mail: transport.policy@blackpool.gov.uk

DRAFT

Report to :	EXECUTIVE
Relevant Officer:	Andrew Foot, Head of Housing
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Mrs Christine Wright, Cabinet Member for Housing
Date of Meeting:	16 April 2018

HOUSING STRATEGY 2018- 2023

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 This report seeks approval to adopt a new Housing Strategy 2018-2023 – ‘Building a Better Blackpool’ following public consultation.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To adopt the Housing Strategy 2018- 2023 – ‘Building a Better Blackpool’ as attached at Appendix 3a.

2.2 Subject to 2.1 above, to delegate authority to the Head of Legal to enter into any legal documentation that may be required to implement the strategy.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 Addressing housing issues in Blackpool is central to the delivery of the objectives of the Blackpool Council Plan, supporting economic improvement and helping to establish more resilient communities. The new Housing Strategy presents an ambitious approach to tackling the housing issues within the town and sets the principles that will guide investment and service delivery.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priorities are:

“The Economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool”

“Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The new Strategy provides an up to date public statement of the housing challenges and priorities for action in Blackpool. While there has been a clear focus on the most important housing issues, the Council has not had a comprehensive public statement of housing priorities for a number of years. The development of the new Housing Strategy has enabled the Council to review priorities with partners. Having a new strategy in place will enable the Council to demonstrate a coherent approach and plan delivery more effectively. It is intended that the Housing Strategy will cover the approach for housing for the next five years but there is a potential for an earlier review in the event of changes in the situation.

5.2 The Strategy provides the overarching context for more detailed work, including:

- Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018 that has been prepared alongside the new Housing Strategy
- The Housing Plan for an Ageing Population 2017 adopted last year but still in the early stages of delivery
- Further work on affordability and housing needs to be undertaken in 2018, updating the Fylde Coast Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 and reviewing how we use capacity within the Housing Revenue Account business plan to maximise Council housing delivery
- Further development of regeneration plans for inner Blackpool for discussion and negotiation with Government
- Informing the production of the housing elements of Part 2 of the Local Plan

5.3 The new Housing Strategy sets out the challenges that continue to face the town and the priorities and opportunities for action. The Council and partners have delivered ambitious new housing initiatives and services improvements over the last few years, improving opportunities for Council tenants such as through Decent Homes investment and the re-development of Queens Park, intervening in the sub-standard private rented sector, and developing a better housing offer in inner Blackpool through Foxhall Village and the work of My Blackpool Home.

5.4 However, major challenges remain with the greatest challenge the need to help

create more sustainable neighbourhoods in inner Blackpool through the re-modelling of the building stock to a wider range of attractive homes, alongside the strengthening of communities in those areas. There is a wider need to improve the range and quality of homes available in the town and to help people to access high quality accommodation that they can afford on low average incomes. There remain high levels of homelessness driven by social issues and poor quality private rented housing, and a challenge to provide coherent support to help people with multiple and complex needs to turn their lives around. There is also a need to respond to growing numbers of older people by providing suitable housing and help for people to support themselves in their own homes.

5.5 The Housing Strategy sets out how the Council will now extend the impact through further bold action, under three priorities:

I. New Housing Supply

- Promote the further development of a high quality new housing offer at Foxhall Village / inner Blackpool through site acquisition and, where necessary, clearance
- Complete new development at Queens Park and facilitate new development at Grange Park
- Identify delivery routes for the Council to build more new quality housing for rent, inside and outside of the Housing Revenue Account
- Adoption of Part 2 Local Plan with site allocations and updated housing Supplementary Planning Document to encourage market investment
- Pro-active use of Council land to bring forward more high quality new housing development

II. Improving our Private Rented Sector

- Expansion of development activity, and establishing a strong management offer that is attractive to private landlords and investors by My Blackpool Home
- Continue strong enforcement activity to reduce the impact of unacceptably poor accommodation on local residents, using all available powers
- Push for reform of Housing Benefit / Universal Credit to incentivise private investment in higher quality homes for rent in inner Blackpool

- Further extend tenancy training, and help landlords to access high quality training and advice

III. Stabilising Lives

- Review of the Housing Options service to meet the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act, continue to get upstream of the issues, and coordinate with wider support services, as set out in the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018.
- Further develop a positive pathway for young people, providing effective housing with support.
- Strengthen opportunities for Council and private tenants to get into work.
- Build on the Transience programme to develop effective neighbourhood based service delivery that strengthens and stabilises embattled communities.
- Delivery of the Housing Plan for an Ageing Population
- Continue to be pro-active in accessing funding for affordable warmth / healthy homes measures

5.6 A further theme seeks to increase capacity between the Council, its housing companies, and external partners and better coordinate cross-cutting action between housing, health and social services. The agreement of the new Housing Strategy should help to establish a clear shared agenda.

5.7 The Strategy ends with contextual indicators that will be updated annually by the Housing Strategy team to track key measures of the local housing market, and activity indicators that will monitor the delivery of work by the Council and its companies to improve the housing supply, raise standards in the private rented sector, and tackle homelessness.

5.8 Is the Corporate Delivery Unit aware of this report? Yes

The Corporate Delivery Unit has been central in the development of the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Prevention Strategy. It will be further involved in the development of a monitoring framework.

5.9 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.10 List of Appendices:

Appendix 3a:Housing Strategy 2018-2023 - Building a Better Blackpool

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 There is no statutory requirement to publish a housing strategy but a clear statement of housing issues and priorities underpins statutory work on homelessness and Planning.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 The work set out in the Housing Strategy will be delivered using existing human resources, with the structure and role of housing work by the Council and its housing companies kept under review.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 The Strategy seeks to improve access to high quality housing for all local residents and there are no adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 The Strategy can be delivered within existing financial resources but also seeks to achieve more radical change by attracting additional funding from Government to address Blackpool's acute housing issues. Currently most capital funding for housing is directed towards areas with higher house prices but the Council is in constant dialogue with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Homes England to find ways of delivering more investment to deliver the improvement in the quality of homes that is essential to the town's future prosperity.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 There are no new risks associated specifically with the development of the new Housing Strategy. Risks around the delivery of new developments and policies, and the management of Council homes, are managed through corporate risk management frameworks.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 The Strategy has been developed through consultation within the Council and with the Council's housing companies. Members of the public and stakeholders were given the opportunity to comment on this strategy over the six weeks ending on 20 March 2018. The responses were generally supportive, emphasising the need to enable former guest houses to convert to sustainable family homes, commenting on the need to address the lack of affordability of housing for sale for many households in the town, and the need for more high quality affordable housing for rent through social landlords.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 Full Consultation responses at summarised at Paragraph 12 above.

14.0 Key decision information:

- 14.1 Is this a key decision? Yes
- 14.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number: 19/2017
- 14.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No
- 14.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

15.0 Call-in information:

- 15.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No
- 15.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

16.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: 6 April 2018 Date approved:

17.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

17.1

18.0 Executive decision:

18.1

18.2 Date of Decision:

19.0 Reason(s) for decision:

19.1 Date Decision published:

20.0 Executive Members in attendance:

20.1

21.0 Call-in:

21.1

22.0 Notes:

22.1

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Blackpool Council

Housing Strategy 2018-2023

Building a Better Blackpool



1.0 Executive Summary

3

2.0	Introduction	8
3.0	Recent Successes	9
4.0	The Blackpool Story	11
5.0	Housing and Our Health	15
6.0	Our Future Housing Need	19
7.0	Our Priorities	23
8.0	Outcomes	27
9.0	Key Performance Indicators	28

1.0 Executive Summary

Blackpool is a town with a big profile. After substantial recent investment in the key visitor attractions and sea front, Blackpool is starting to see growing visitor numbers. Further investment is on its way, including a new conference centre extension to the Winter Gardens, tram link from Blackpool North railway station, and new high quality hotels. Investment in town centre offices and retail, and in the new airport Enterprise Zone is starting to help turn around poor productivity, low wages, and high levels of worklessness.

But there are too many poor quality private rented sector properties housing people with chaotic lifestyles. The market is fuelled by former hotel accommodation reaching the end of its life where the next logical business step is to convert with or without permission to privately rented small flats and bedsits. Owner occupiers are currently reluctant to invest in these areas and property prices are determined by rental yields. Over 80% of tenants receive Housing Benefit, and rents are set at Local Housing Allowance levels which achieves the maximum return if landlords deliver the minimum quality in as many small units as possible.

While the latest local planning policies require higher quality conversions, the town has a legacy of 3,000 poor quality Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) producing high rental yields for landlords, fuelled by Housing Benefit payments and a constant demand from people running away to Blackpool from other parts of the country. Surrounding areas of small terraced houses have also become part of this transient market. As over 50% of homes in inner Blackpool are privately rented, this creates entrenched deprivation and is the antithesis of stable communities.

We are planning to transform the inner area of Blackpool through refurbishment and new build, and working with residents, enabling a transition to high quality residential neighbourhoods by the sea alongside a rejuvenated visitor economy. Delivering our ambitions will not only make the town fit for the next 100 years but will remove the current drag on the local economy of transience and the re-cycling of poverty, and at the same time reduce the cost to the public purse by creating stable and self-sustaining communities.

We have already:

- Got control of new conversions to HMOs through effective use of the Planning system to allow a managed transition to a wider range of high quality units.
- Used to the maximum existing enforcement tools, such as selective and additional licensing, with comprehensive multi-agency inspection programmes. As much as we continue to apply pressure with these tools we know that we are enforcing to statutory standards that are low and at best we are containing the situation.

- Proactively managed and invested Housing Revenue Account resources in Council homes through Blackpool Coastal Housing, including investing in excess of £60m through the decent homes programme. We have been able to demolish our tower blocks and replace them with high quality family accommodation for affordable rent. This required significant subsidy but has produced a product that is aspirational and a tenant profile that is stable and as a consequence requires less public intervention than before.
- Formed a new wholly owned company to acquire a market changing stake in the private rented sector and deliver better quality and more stable private rented properties. Two years in to the acquisition and investment phase “My Blackpool Home” have acquired and refurbished 200 properties and despite tough financial conditions are starting to have a positive impact in the inner core of Blackpool.
- Encouraged ambitious private sector development for market sale with the assembly and preparation of an inner area site for Hollinwood Homes to develop 400 new homes at Foxhall Village. To date 150 homes have been successfully delivered and are now being occupied. This site would not have happened without significant multi agency cooperation and funding around site assembly and remediation and significant subsidy from the Council. While difficult to deliver the development shows what can be achieved and how far Blackpool can stretch resources and manage risk to achieve the necessary strategic change.
- Invested in high quality services to keep people in stable home situations by preventing and responding to homelessness, and establishing new support for young people and families – Better Start and Head Start – and people with Multiple and Complex Needs.

We know we need more of the same sorts of interventions but on a larger scale and more quickly.

There is continuing deprivation and poor health across the town, with investment in tackling poor housing conditions and energy efficiency important to improve living environments and affordability.

While the total population of the town is forecast to remain static, increasing household numbers will result from an ageing population. We need to plan to meet these changing needs and ensure that older people get the housing and support that they need.

We also need to plan to meet the needs of people with disabilities through the development of bespoke new housing.

Although house prices remain low compared with other parts of the country, very low incomes and the difficulty of getting a mortgage mean that many people struggle to get access to a quality home that they can afford. As well as improving the quality of housing in the private rented sector, we need to provide more social

rented housing and actively assist people into home ownership. New homes will be delivered across a range of tenures, with new social rented homes focused on family houses that are in the shortest supply.

Our Priorities

1. New Housing Supply

We will deliver more new homes by:

- identifying and releasing local authority owned land to market
- working with developers to deliver more high quality housing for sale
- working with housing associations and developers to deliver more affordable housing in Blackpool
- maximising the delivery of new Council housing for rent
- investigating the potential to deliver new build housing for market rent
- adopting a new Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- working with Homes England on delivering new programmes
- maximising new units developed from existing buildings through My Blackpool Home

We will also:

- Work with other Lancashire local authorities and the LEP to establish joint approaches to increase new housing investment linked to economic plans
- Undertake further work to update and expand understanding of affordability and housing needs in Blackpool, updating the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014
- Develop Part 2 of the Local Plan to confirm site allocations and development management policies
- Complete Queens Park re-development by November 2018, and take forward plans for re-development of land at Grange Park
- Continue to support delivery of the 400 new homes at Foxhall Village, establish plans for the development of a further phase, and work to bring forward other new build development sites in support of regeneration in inner Blackpool
- Establish needs and funding models to bring forward specialist units of accommodation, such as for the growing older population and for people with learning disabilities
- Focus on identifying available land and bringing sites forward to market, offering proactive assistance for developers, and using voluntary acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers to assemble development sites
- Review the New Homes from Old Places SPD to manage the transition from guest houses to quality homes in the inner area.

Delivering new supply in inner Blackpool is difficult, with a lack of available sites and low income levels that do not support a vigorous home ownership market at scale. We need commitment to provide funds to assemble

and clear key sites alongside those in public ownership to build market changing developments; our experience should give confidence that with the right support we can deliver and create attractive new residential neighbourhoods by the sea.

2. Improving the Private Rented Sector

Establishing a much better housing offer in the private rented sector is essential to transforming inner Blackpool and providing the quality homes that local people need. We will:

- Deliver investment in high quality conversions within inner Blackpool through the work of My Blackpool Home to buy up failing HMO's/guest houses and undertake refurbishment work with the aim of improving quality and reducing density. We will also promote better standards in the private rented sector through lettings and management of other landlords' stock.
- Take forward new approaches to licensing, and investigate a wider offer for landlords.
- Review and extend opportunities for pre-tenancy training to raise skills, and bespoke training for landlords, to give confidence to landlords when they look for new tenants.
- Lobby for benefits changes to reduce the number of poor quality flats through the introduction of a Blackpool specific Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate, linked to standards, offering lower payments for small/low quality flats and higher payments for larger/better quality homes.
- Help residents to buy their own homes where they are working but on low incomes, giving them more control and reducing their housing costs compared with renting.

We need support from Government to address the negative impact of the design of the LHA system. This currently finances inappropriate housing and perpetuates landlords' high density and low investment model by applying market rates from a wide sub-region to inner Blackpool and paying the same for good and bad homes in a town that is dominated by the housing benefit funded "market". We need a new model that creates incentives to produce better quality accommodation and does not pay too much for slum housing in desperately poor areas.

3. Stabilising Lives

The provision of support to prevent and resolve homelessness, and enable recovery, is central to enabling people to get back on their feet and making our communities more resilient. We also need to plan to meet the needs of residents who are the most vulnerable. We will:

- Continue to develop our Housing Options service to prevent and respond to homelessness and help people find appropriate accommodation and support, deliver the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer programme and prepare to work with new statutory duties in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Provide a clearer framework of strategy and guidance for partners and voluntary organisations to co-ordinate support for vulnerable people, through our new Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018

- Work with partners to review how social housing is allocated and introduce upgraded lettings systems
- Establish better coordinated housing and support with Children’s Services for those aged 16-24 through a positive pathway
- Develop and implement new approaches to supporting older people in their own homes and the provision of specialist care, accommodation and support through our new Housing Plan for the Ageing Population
- Continue to offer adaptations to home owners through Disabled Facilities Grants and maximise access to ECO and other sources of energy efficiency funding.
- Invest in holistic support for our people, and especially routes into employment
- Invest in asset based community development work and the development of plans in inner Blackpool

4. Increasing Delivery Capacity

We need to organise our housing companies and internal capacity to deliver this ambitious agenda, but also maximise the contribution and investment from partners. We will:

- Ensure delivery of this strategy and the associated Plans:
 - Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018
 - Housing Plan for an Ageing Population 2017
 - New regeneration framework for inner Blackpool
- Review how Blackpool Coastal Housing and My Blackpool Home operate and work together with the Council, ensuring effective coordination and enabling us to take advantage of new opportunities
- Ensure that we provide clarity and opportunities for partners and investors on the roles that they can play in delivering better housing in Blackpool.
- Join up service delivery to provide the best possible services to help residents meet their housing needs and aspirations.
- Further develop links between housing work and the provision of health and social care.

Successful delivery of our housing ambitions will achieve:

- The ability to support sustainable economic growth by providing better quality and more stable accommodation of all tenures
- The removal of poor quality but costly private rented stock with better quality affordable options with a variety of tenures, so that there is a range of affordable aspirational housing that people want to move into
- An ongoing reduction in cost to the public purse by creating stable and self-sustaining communities

2.0 Introduction

Blackpool is a town with a big profile. In geographic terms it is by far the smallest Lancashire authority covering just 35 square kilometres, but it is much loved by millions of holiday makers from across the UK.

After substantial recent investment in the key visitor attractions and sea front, Blackpool is starting to see growing visitor numbers. Further investment is on its way, including a new conference centre extension to the Winter Gardens, tram link from Blackpool North railway station, and new high quality hotels.

Blackpool is also the economic centre of the wider Fylde Coast area. New town centre offices and retail developments are underway, and a new Enterprise Zone at the airport is starting to deliver new employment opportunities. Plans are in place that will help turn around poor productivity, low wages, and high levels of worklessness.

But we are still dealing with the legacy of poor quality homes, especially in inner Blackpool where many former guest houses have been converted to small flats. People run away to Blackpool when life gets hard and find themselves struggling in this sub-standard housing, perpetuating poverty.

A core ambition is to deliver a more successful transition from traditional holiday accommodation to new residential neighbourhoods with a mix of house types by the seaside, close to new employment and leisure opportunities.

We will create the conditions where if individuals can stabilise their lives and aspire to a more stable employed future they can find attractive homes

and want to stay in the inner town, reducing the churn and inflow.

We will support sustainable economic growth by providing better quality and more stable accommodation of all tenures, with a range of affordable aspirational housing that people want to move into. There is a great opportunity to help meet the housing needs of the wider sub-region.

This strategy also focuses on the changing needs of Blackpool residents. Great quality housing and strong support services are vital to improving the physical health and mental wellbeing of our communities, especially as the population gets older. Decent housing promotes independence, opportunity, educational attainment, access to work and a better quality of life for local people.

Much has already been achieved but there is still a long way to go before we realise our ambitions. We need to increase the pace of delivery, working with public and private partners.

This Housing Strategy presents an ambitious and distinct approach to tackling the housing issues within our town. It sets out our vision and our priorities to help deliver Blackpool Council's plan to make Blackpool the UK's number one family resort,



with a thriving economy that supports a happy and healthy community who are proud of this unique town.

3.0 Recent Successes

We have been pro-active in delivering the transformation of the housing offer in Blackpool over the last few years.

New Housing and Supply

The ‘New Homes from Old Places’ planning policy was introduced to manage the quality of new homes created from former guest houses, alongside the Holiday Accommodation Areas SPD that widened the areas of potential conversions. The policies have been successful in significantly improving the quality of conversions coming forward whilst maintaining the new supply from conversions at the rate of approximate 80-100 homes per year.

Foxhall Village new build development adjacent to South Beach started on site in 2014 following site assembly and remediation by the Council. Due for completion by 2022 Foxhall Village pioneers a new home ownership market in the inner town, and will provide 410 distinctive and high quality new homes.



Queens Park estate re-development commenced in 2012 and will be completed later in 2018. The scheme demolished 500 flats, including 5 high rise blocks and replaces them with a total of 103 new houses and 88 flats for Council tenants.

Improving our Private Rented Sector

My Blackpool Home, a new Council-owned housing company was established in 2015. It acquires properties that need improvement, converts and refurbishes them to a high standard, and lets them at market rents to local tenants. My Blackpool Home also offers a social lettings agency service which places residents with a housing need in approved private rented accommodation. The service currently accommodates around 90 households in each three month period, nearly half as many as all social housing lettings.



Selective Licensing schemes have been introduced to two parts of inner Blackpool - in South Beach in 2012 and Claremont in 2014. Additional licensing in the Central area went live on 4th July 2016. The schemes aim to improve management standards, reduce ASB and consequently the adverse impact of privately rented accommodation on the inner area neighbourhoods.

The **Clusters of Empty Homes Fund** helped refurbish and bring back into use 100 empty homes, using £1.6 million of grant assistance.



Decent Homes investment by Blackpool Coastal Housing in our Council owned homes has delivered major investment over the last few years, including an additional **£60 million** invested in the Council's 5,000 homes to meet the Decent Homes Standard by March 2015.



Blackpool Coastal Housing

Energy efficiency has improved as we have taken a pro-active approach to Energy Company Obligations (ECO) to improve domestic energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty. As a result, 700 private homes in the Revoe area of inner Blackpool have benefitted from external solid wall insulation. Most recently, the Central Heating Fund has improved EPC ratings so that 96% of homes



receiving investment achieved an EPC rating of level A-D.

We have **reduced domestic carbon emissions by 35%** over the last 10 years, the biggest reduction across the UK; this represents a quarter of a million fewer tonnes of carbon being emitted into the atmosphere from the town.

Homelessness was prevented or relieved for over 1,300 households in 2016/17. While social issues lead to high numbers of people seeking help, rough sleeping has been contained in Blackpool compared with other areas.

The Transience Programme, aligned with licensing schemes, has supported 2,000 vulnerable residents. This has included vital community development work, building social networks to improve confidence and increase community cohesion.



4.0 The Blackpool Story

Blackpool is a British institution, and a global phenomenon – the world’s first mass market seaside resort, with a proud heritage stretching back over 150 years. However, while the town continues to attract millions of visitors, Blackpool has one of the country’s greatest concentrations of socio-economic deprivation as a consequence of decades of decline in traditional tourism sectors.

Blackpool is characterised by an oversupply of poor quality one-person accommodation, limited choice of family housing particularly in the inner area, and a shortage of good quality affordable housing across the Borough. The concentration of small, poor quality housing in the inner areas enables vulnerable households who are running away from problems in other parts of the country to stay. At the same time, poor quality and unstable tenancies lead to a churn of people within inner neighbourhoods, leading to high levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and unstable, fragmented communities with high levels of transience. The inner areas of Blackpool present one of the most testing social and economic challenges in the country.

Changing the structure of the housing offer in Blackpool is our most important objective, and especially the legacy of poorly converted guest houses in inner Blackpool. This is fundamental to improving the economic fortunes, and health and wellbeing of the communities that live here. There is an ongoing dynamic of a reduction in guest house accommodation and being able to manage this transition from poor quality guest houses to an

attractive residential offer in the inner areas is our biggest challenge.

It is important to adopt an **area based approach to regeneration**, responding to the different priorities, needs and aspirations of each community.



Figure 1: Foxhall Village Development

Alongside changing the structure of the inner areas, **promoting decent conditions** in an is especially important, and our Housing Enforcement team lead on this, working with good landlords to offer training and advice, whilst enforcing against those landlords who fail to offer a decent standard of accommodation.

The Housing Options team has an essential role to play in **helping residents** to find and maintain the right accommodation for them, reducing the transience that is so harmful to local communities.

While In Blackpool over two thirds of households who receive housing benefit live in the private rented sector, the social rented sector has a key role to play in providing a range of high quality homes.



Figure 2: Queens Park demolition

As the owner of 5,000 Council homes (8% of all homes in the borough), Blackpool Council and our Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) Blackpool Coastal Housing will work hard to use the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to deliver ongoing investment in homes and surrounding neighbourhoods, and deliver more **new Council homes**. Some of our Council estates are very deprived, so we will work with residents to improve economic opportunities.

It is also important to deliver the better quality new market homes that our communities need. Adopted in 2016, Part 1 of **Blackpool Council's Local Plan** sets out a requirement for 280 new homes per year, 100 of which are anticipated to be conversions from existing buildings, with the remainder new build properties across the borough.

By bringing together these different elements we can deliver real change within our communities.



Figure 3: New build development at Queens Park

4.1 Key Facts and Figures

As of February 2017 the **average house price** in the UK was £217,502, an increase of £40,241 from the average price of £177,261 in February 2007, shortly before the 2007 peak. However the Blackpool average in February 2017 was £102,401, which represents a decrease of £21,479 over the same period from the 2007 average of £123,880.¹

But house prices in Blackpool are now stable and have started to rise slowly – up slightly over the last five years from £97,305 in July 2012 to £103,985 in July 2017.

¹ HM Land Registry

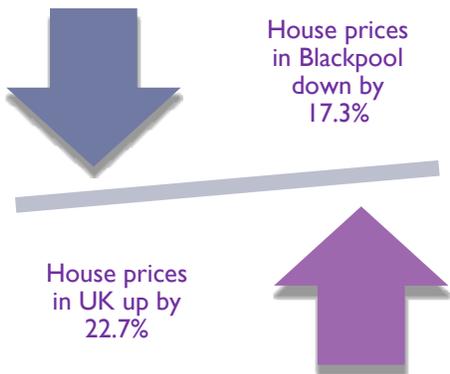


Figure 4: House Prices 2007-17

House prices are significantly lower in Blackpool than in the surrounding areas of Wyre and Fylde. This partly reflects the large number of smaller properties in Blackpool but also the lack of attractiveness of some areas. In Fylde, homes are larger on average, but there is a premium of at least £40,000 over comparable properties in Blackpool. In Wyre, 70% of the housing stock is detached or semi-detached. Properties in Wyre tend to be at least £20,000 more expensive than a comparable property in Blackpool.²

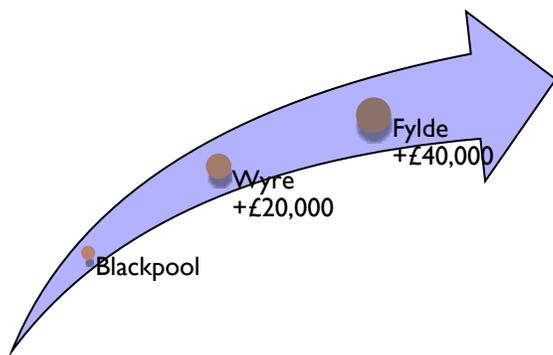


Figure 5: House price comparisons across the Fylde Coast

Although house prices are relatively low in Blackpool and it is currently cheaper to buy than rent, many residents still do not have the stable employment and income levels necessary to buy their own home.

House prices are so low in some parts of the borough that new development is not viable; this presents challenges for delivering a better quality housing offer.

Despite low house prices, renting in Blackpool is more expensive and less affordable to local residents than in some other towns in Lancashire. The median monthly **private sector rent** in Blackpool in 2016 was 30% of the median gross monthly salary, compared with around 21% in Blackburn, Burnley and Lancaster and 23% in Preston. This reflects very low salaries in Blackpool, but also shows how rents are propped up by Housing Benefit levels.

There are around 4,500 **empty properties** in the Fylde Coast, of which over half are located in Blackpool. In inner Blackpool, empty homes can be part of a natural transition and we would expect to see higher levels of empty homes in this area. This is indicative of poor stock, and of enforcement work being undertaken to shut down these properties prior to redevelopment.

There is a **lack of developable land** because Blackpool is intensely urban and compact in form, largely built up to its boundaries. Approximately 80% of the urban area is developed; undeveloped land largely consists of protected open space providing important recreational and amenity benefits for residents and visitors, or small sites

² Fylde Coast Strategic Market Assessment, 2014
Page | 13

more suited to small-scale (often windfall) development. Larger sites associated with the Blackpool urban area are located in the neighbouring boroughs of Fylde and Wyre.

Establishing a better housing offer through the development of new homes is especially important to economic prosperity in Blackpool because of the imbalance and poor quality in the existing housing stock.



Blackpool has a very **large private rented sector** compared with other towns (26% of all homes), a relatively small social rented sector (11% of homes), and a declining owner occupied sector (62%). Between 2001 and 2011 around 5,000 homes changed from owner occupation to private rent. There is an especially large concentration of private renting in inner Blackpool – 50% of all homes there.

Transience has been an identified issue in Blackpool for a long time. Population turnover statistics identify that inner Blackpool has

extremely high numbers of people moving into and out of the town, and also movement within the town.

Analysis of new Housing Benefit claims shows that 85.5% of entirely new claims from April 2013 to March 2014 came from people whose last address was outside of the borough. 63% of these moved into a home in the inner area of the town.

The total number of households in receipt of Housing Benefit in the private rented sector in Blackpool almost doubled between 2003 and 2013, to 14,980, although has since stabilized.

Analysis of the private rented sector in inner Blackpool based on the Council's Enforcement database in 2015 showed that nearly 65% of households were single person households.

The proportion of Housing Benefit claimants in Blackpool living in the private rented sector is the highest in the country at 73%, and around 80% of all private tenants receive Housing Benefit. A significant concentration of this stock is in the most deprived inner areas of Blackpool.

In Blackpool only 22% of housing benefit claimants in the private rented sector are in employment, compared to the national average of 36%. Within Blackpool the proportion of claimants in employment for those receiving the Shared Room Rate and 1 bedroom rate of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is only around 10%.

The **social housing stock** is concentrated in large Council housing estates which are also deprived. Lettings policies have focused on providing social housing for those in the greatest

need, however as a consequence pushing out those low paid, economically active potential renters. Over recent years welfare reform has changed the way social housing providers work, forcing them to challenge their existing services and make tough financial decisions in order to maintain their operational delivery.

5.0 Housing and Our Health

The health of people in Blackpool is generally worse than the England average. Blackpool is one of the most deprived districts in England and around **30% of children live in low income families**.

Although across Blackpool as a whole, life expectancy has risen for both males and females over a 20 year period, it has not risen as quickly as across the country as a whole. Since approximately 2011 improvement in life expectancy across England has started to flatten and this is also seen in Blackpool.



Figure 6: Walter Robinson Court before demolition

Deaths at ages well below average national life expectancy are what make Blackpool very different from elsewhere. Worryingly we have seen an increase in these deaths in 2015 and Blackpool's mortality rate for people under 65 is twice that of England.

Blackpool's housing stock is a critical driver of poor health, to a greater extent than other deprived towns:

- Blackpool is attractive to people running away from other areas and the extensive and easily accessible poor quality private rented sector imports vulnerable people in poor health to the town.
- The large concentration of HMOs compounds poor health – for example, 48% of drug related deaths are among the 16.5% of Blackpool's population in the Mosaic L50 Renting a Room social group
- A generally old and poorly maintained housing stock worsens conditions such as cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases and depression and anxiety.³ Poor housing conditions nationally are estimated to cost the NHS at least £600 million per year.

The challenges faced by Blackpool's economy are closely related to the health of its population and the association between low income, poverty and poor mental and/or physical health is well

³ http://www.parliament.uk/documents/post/postpn_371-housing_health_h.pdf

established. High levels of chronic illness in Blackpool contribute to lower levels of employment. 12.9 per cent of Blackpool’s working age population claim ESA or Incapacity Benefit; this is more than double the national average of 6.2 per cent.⁴ In Blackpool, 52% of ESA claimants have a mental health disorder (compared to 46% nationally), and although statistics are not available for JSA customers, Job Centre Plus surveys suggest a very similar picture.

Studies have also consistently shown that unemployment increases the chances of poor health. The negative health experiences of unemployment also extend to families and the wider community. The average earnings for those in work in Blackpool is lower than any other local authority in England. A smaller proportion of the Blackpool labour market is economically active compared to England, and a high proportion of those inactive are long term sick.

According to recent Public Health Annual Reports, the **causes of shorter life expectancy** in Blackpool and major causes of early deaths are:

- Higher levels of harmful drinking and drug use
- Smoking
- Unhealthy diets and excess weight, and
- Inactive and sedentary lifestyles

But the impact of all of **these harmful behaviours is compounded by poor housing** and environmental conditions.

Interventions that improve housing conditions have been shown to result in improvements in mental health, including reduced anxiety or depression, psychological distress, and improved patient reported health score. Providing a warm home has been clearly shown to benefit both young and old in relation to their feeling of wellbeing as well as reducing the physical and mental health risks that can arise from cold homes.



The evaluation of the UK Warm Front Scheme, found that increasing the warmth of homes had a clear positive impact on mental health – those with bedroom temperatures of 21 degrees C were 50% less likely to experience depression and anxiety than those whose bedrooms were only 15C. Other housing hazards such as condensation, damp and mould, noise, and pests have also been shown to have some connection to mental health.

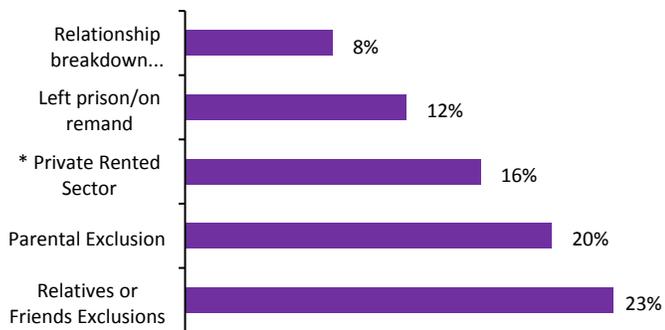
⁴ <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Health-and-social-care/Documents/HWB-Strategy-2016-19-final.pdf>

Key vulnerable groups in Blackpool include:

5.1 Rough Sleepers and the homeless

Approximately **2,500** households approach the Council’s Housing Options service each year. Over 1,000 households receive formal homelessness assessments, with around 650 found to be homeless each year. This level has risen slightly over the past two years, but the underlying high level of homelessness reflects the myriad of **chaotic lifestyles, vulnerability, social issues and high transience levels** particularly in the private rented sector in the inner areas.

The top reasons for homelessness in Blackpool reflect the sofa surfing in the town, with a higher proportion of exclusions by family and friends than the national average.



* includes rent arrears & termination of AST

Figure 7: Top five reasons for homelessness in Blackpool

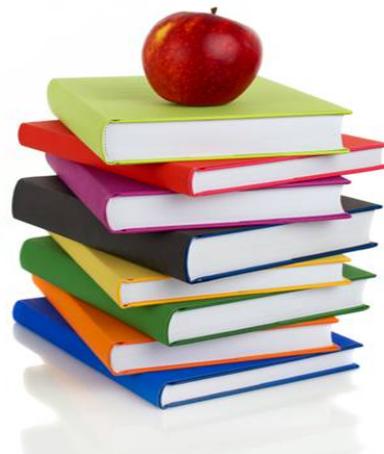
Those suffering from homelessness are more likely to have long term health and mental health problems and are also more likely to misuse drugs and alcohol.

The number of rough sleepers in Blackpool was found to be 13 in November 2017, a rise from 11 in November 2016. Rough sleepers often have multiple and complex needs and are at very high risk of serious health issues including: cold, hunger and fear; lack of basic facilities for personal care and drug and alcohol addictions.

5.2 Young children affected by transience

Families generally become transient when they are fleeing a difficult situation or lose their rented accommodation. Transience can **reduce community cohesion and increase social isolation**, as well as contributing to poor social and economic outcomes for individuals and families.

Frequent residential and school mobility has a negative effect on early educational attainment, with school moves having the biggest impact.⁵



⁵ DCLG English Housing Survey 2015

Across Blackpool approximately 15% of children transfer between schools each year with mobility levels at school range from <5% to 37%. In 2014/15 2,668 Blackpool children changed schools.⁶

5.3 Vulnerable Young People

Under the Children Leaving Care Act 2000 all local authorities have a statutory duty to provide suitable accommodation to children in care and to care leavers, and further duties apply to homeless 16 and 17 year olds. The proportion of children in care in Blackpool is currently by far the highest in the country, and outcomes are typically poor compared with those not in care. The Council is committed to reducing the numbers of children in care, preventing family breakdown, providing better alternatives to homeless 16 and 17 year olds, and better homes with support for care leavers.

5.4 People in properties with poor heating and insulation

Out of an estimated 65,501 households in Blackpool, 8,633 of those households are deemed to be fuel poor. This equates to **approximately 13.2% of households living in fuel poverty** as defined by the 'low income/high costs (LIHC) fuel poverty indicator. 6 wards are above 25%, compared with the national average figure of 11.2%. However, since the introduction of the Energy Company Obligation, Blackpool Council has helped residents access **more measures per 1,000 households** than anywhere else in the UK

apart from Bradford. Blackpool Council is part of Cosy Homes in Lancashire (CHiL) a collaboration of 15 Councils across Lancashire, offering residents access to grants, advice and support on money saving energy measures to help **improve energy efficiency** in their homes.



The total number of measures installed under ECO in Blackpool stands at 16,361, which has helped thousands of residents reduce their energy bills and access more efficient boilers and better insulation for their homes. Reducing the amount of energy needed to keep homes warm, cutting down on carbon emissions as well as reducing monthly energy bills.

5.5 People with long term support needs

An ageing population in Blackpool will increase the number of people whose mobility is impaired by physical disability. When people live in poor quality housing or housing that is not appropriate for their needs, poor mobility and risk of falls increases, and demand increases for adaptations.

Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) manages most sheltered accommodation in Blackpool, on behalf of the Council, with 800 properties designed for this use. The majority of renters are over 55 years of age. The purpose of these units is to offer residents the **security and support** they need

⁶ Blackpool Council, School Mobility Summary 2014/15

whilst allowing them to remain independent. With the exception of Dunsop Court the accommodation mostly comprises of ground floor flats in groups of 30-60 homes, often with an associated community centre. Other social housing providers offer sheltered housing services in Blackpool including Great Places Housing Group.



Figure 8: Sheltered accommodation block in Blackpool

Whilst there is still a demand for sheltered housing in Blackpool the number of residents expressing an interest when properties become vacant has reduced over time with some schemes in less popular locations being more difficult to let. Some sites are currently being reviewed and remodelled to ensure they meet future needs.

There are currently over 620 individuals with learning disabilities who are in receipt of some level of Council intervention or support to manage their long term needs. The majority of these people will require future support in maintaining suitable accommodation or moving as their needs change. There is a need to develop an accommodation

strategy as well as deliver planned new homes that maximise independence.

6.0 Our Future Housing Need

In Blackpool there is a complex link between **employment change and housing provision** and the authority's existing labour force profile, which is defined by comparatively high levels of worklessness and economic inactivity. The alignment of **future housing growth to economic prosperity** is particularly **critical** for Blackpool.

Priority One of the Council Plan stresses the need to be alive to **new economic opportunities**, and in order to encourage people of working age to live in Blackpool we need quality homes close to jobs in the centre of town. Currently in the inner areas of the town, there is a lack of choice, with too many small flats for rent and a lack of larger properties suitable for family occupation. This requires development at scale to create new neighbourhoods that give confidence to home buyers and working tenants.

Outside of the inner areas the housing stock is generally of a better standard, comprising predominantly semi-detached and terraced housing, providing more choice for higher income households, but there is still a lack of the very best new homes.

We need homes that are affordable to people at all income levels. Currently incomes in Blackpool are among the lowest in the country as a result of low pay and insecure work and because of high levels

of economic inactivity. People on the lowest incomes are typically able to access homes relatively easily compared to other parts of the country with the help of Housing Benefit. But there is very limited social housing stock and most people on low incomes are housed in the private rented sector, with lower security of tenure and often very poor quality.

While the most affordable tenure is social renting, the second most affordable tenure currently is **owner occupation**, because of low house prices and low interest rates.

Despite this, there continues to be a decline in home ownership and rise in private renting, fuelled by the difficulty in accessing home ownership and the ease of accessing private renting with Housing Benefit support. There is an opportunity to help get working people on low wages into home ownership through new flexible shared ownership / shared equity products, and at the same time help stabilise communities in inner Blackpool.

There is also a need for new market housing for sale that includes larger homes that meet aspirations for all types of households who can afford it. This housing is currently in relatively short supply within the Blackpool boundaries.

There will continue to be **significant demand for social rented** housing from private rented tenants looking for better quality accommodation and more security of tenure. The Fylde Coast Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) illustrates a particular demand for larger affordable properties to meet the needs of families with children.

The Housing Register currently shows that most applicants need 1 and 2 bedroomed properties, with 84% of current applicants being assessed as requiring this size of property (Fig 9), but because the current supply of social rented housing is dominated by smaller units, the average waiting times are highest for larger homes (Fig 10).

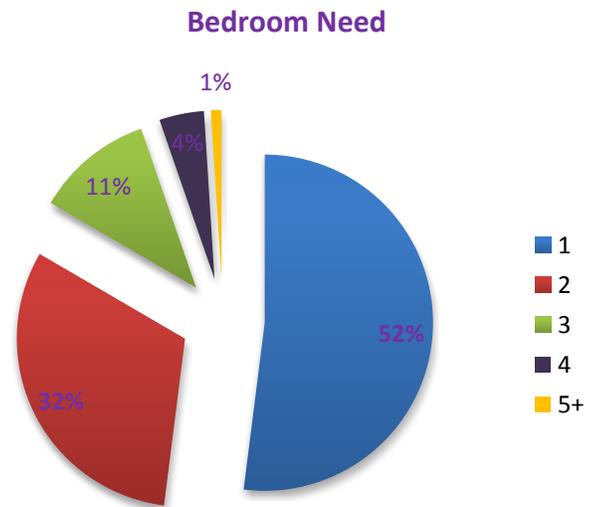


Figure 9: Housing Waiting List Bedroom Need

Average Waiting Time on Housing Waiting List

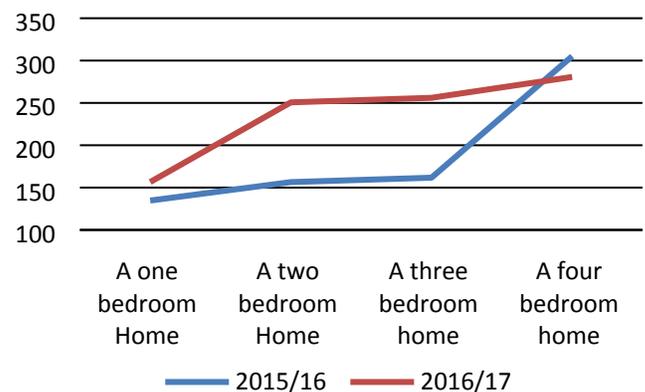


Figure 10: Median waiting times 2015/16 and 2016/17

There has been a marked increase in average time waited from 2015/16 to 2016/17. The increase in waiting times reflects strong demand and fewer and fewer lettings as turnover in social housing reduces.

The town requires more social housing for rent to be provided, with an emphasis on two, three, and four bedroom houses, along with homes for the growing number of older people.



Figure 11: New family homes at Queens Park redevelopment

The **private rented sector** will continue to play an important role in meeting housing needs for people on low incomes, but it is critical that the range and quality of homes is improved. There should be less emphasis on housing people on Housing Benefit. The stock must become more diverse and more attractive to tenants with good incomes.

There is a strong demand for better quality homes for rent from local workers, and it is important to

meet the needs of this market to underpin economic improvement.

Growth in the **older person population** accounts for a significant proportion of the projected increase in couple and one person households.

Blackpool's population pyramid (Fig 12) displays a higher proportion of people over 45 years of age, and a much lower proportion in ages younger than 45 than the England average.

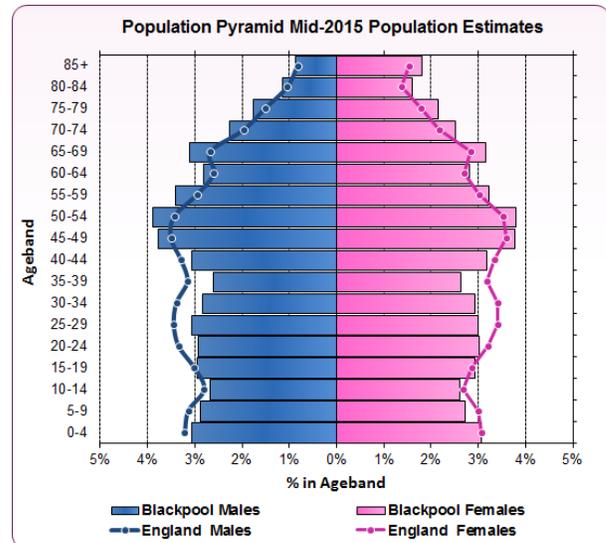


Figure 12: Population Pyramid (Mid 2015 Estimated Resident Population) - Blackpool

Projections of the population of Blackpool indicate that the number of residents over 65 will show a considerable increase within the next 25 years, far in excess of the levels of increase shown in all other age bands. The over 65 population is projected to rise by 28% from 28,500 in 2014 to 36,500 in 2039 and will then make up over a quarter (26%) of Blackpool's total population.

Whilst the older person (aged 65+) population is forecast to grow within Blackpool by 19% over this period, it is mitigated by net out-migration of those aged 55+ from the authority to neighbouring Fylde and Wyre and the different social profile of Blackpool. The highest rate of growth is in the 85+ age group, which will necessitate the provision of specialised accommodation with support as well as homes with level access and adaptations to meet specific housing requirements.

Older people in Blackpool typically opt to own their own home, although there will be increasing numbers of older private renters in future. Given that a substantial proportion of older person households currently under-occupy their homes and there is a lack of provision of homes designed for older people's needs, it is important to provide more appropriate and accessible new homes in the general market.

Blackpool Council's Housing Plan for the Ageing Population 2017 provides further detail on the needs of older people in Blackpool Objective 6 of the Plan details provision of a strategic framework for commissioning new specialist housing to meet the growing needs and aspirations of older people⁷

The 2016 **Gypsy and Traveller** Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) Update Report identified a need for 5 additional pitches for gypsies and travellers over the period 2016 - 2031. It also identifies a need for 5 travelling show people plots over the same period. In terms of additional need for non-travelling gypsies and travellers the Update

Report indicates a need for 35 pitches over the period 2016 - 2031.

⁷ Blackpool Council Housing Plan for the Ageing Population 2017

7.0 Our Priorities

Our **four priorities** are:



These priorities reflect the key challenge in Blackpool to create a new and better housing offer in the inner town, while meeting local housing needs and supporting vulnerable residents.



Local authorities are uniquely placed to address housing supply, acting as both a direct provider and as an enabler of private and social housing developments. We have to take advantage of every possible opportunity to improve the quality of homes in Blackpool through new supply.

We will take advantage of capital grant funding opportunities to deliver affordable housing, and further opportunities to borrow at low cost to

deliver homes through conversions and high quality new housing for market rent and sale.

But to reduce the density of established HMOs and bring forward new quality housing stock in the inner area requires public subsidy because of high existing use values driven by Housing Benefit funded rental yields, and low market values for new development. We need commitment from Government to provide funds to assemble and clear key sites alongside those in public ownership to build market changing developments; our experience should give confidence that with the right support we can deliver and create attractive new residential neighbourhoods by the sea.

We will:

- ▶ Increase the supply of housing to at least 280 homes p.a by:
 - identifying and releasing local authority owned land to market
 - working with developers to deliver more high quality housing for sale
 - working with housing associations and developers to deliver more affordable housing in Blackpool
 - maximising the delivery of new Council housing for rent
 - investigating the potential to deliver new build housing for market rent
 - adopting a new Affordable Housing SPD
 - working with Homes England on delivering new programmes
 - maximising new units developed from existing buildings through My Blackpool Home

- Undertake further work to update and expand understanding of affordability and housing needs in Blackpool, updating the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014
- Work with other Lancashire local authorities and the LEP to establish joint approaches to increase new housing investment linked to economic plans
- Develop Part 2 of the Local Plan to confirm site allocations and development management policies
- Complete Queens Park re-development by November 2018, and take forward plans for re-development of land at Grange Park
- Continue to support delivery of the 400 new homes at Foxhall Village, establish plans for the development of a further phase, and work to bring forward other new build development sites in support of regeneration in inner Blackpool
- Establish needs and funding models to bring forward accommodation for the growing older population and for people with learning disabilities
- Focus on identifying available land and bringing sites forward to market, offering proactive assistance for developers, and using voluntary acquisition and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers to assemble development sites
- Review the New Homes from Old Places SPD to manage the transition from guest houses to quality homes in the inner area.

Improving our Private Rented Sector

Establishing a much better housing offer in the private rented sector is essential to transforming inner Blackpool and providing the better quality homes that local people need. We need support from Government to address the negative impact of the design of the Local Housing Allowance system. This currently finances inappropriate housing and perpetuates landlords' high density and low investment model by applying market rates from a wide sub-region to inner Blackpool and paying the same for good and bad homes in a town that is dominated by the housing benefit funded "market". We need a new model that creates incentives to produce better quality accommodation and does not pay too much for slum housing in desperately poor areas.

We will:

- Deliver investment in high quality conversions within inner Blackpool through the work of My Blackpool Home to buy up failing HMO's/Guest Houses and undertake refurbishment work with the aim of improving quality and reducing density
- Promote better standards in the private rented sector through lettings and management of landlords' stock by My Blackpool Home
- Take forward new approaches to licensing, and investigate a wider offer for landlords through a new Blackpool Standard

- Review and extend opportunities for pre-tenancy training to raise skills, and bespoke training for landlords, to give confidence to landlords when they look for new tenants
- Lobby for benefits changes to reduce the number of poor quality flats through the introduction of a Blackpool specific LHA rate, linked to standards, offering lower payments for small/low quality flats and higher payments for larger/better quality homes.
- Help residents to buy their own homes where they are working but on low incomes, giving them more control and reducing their housing costs compared with renting.

Stabilising Lives

The provision of support to prevent and resolve homelessness, and enable recovery, is central to enabling people to get back on their feet and making our communities more resilient. We also need to plan to meet the needs of residents who are the most vulnerable. Pressures on revenue budgets mean that housing-related support funding has been withdrawn, and many services are under pressure. But there are also new funding opportunities – for example, the Council has been successful in bidding for specific funding programmes to alleviate homelessness, helping to maintain a strong service to support vulnerable people and address transience.

We will:

- Continue to develop our Housing Options service to prevent and respond to homelessness and help people find appropriate accommodation and support, deliver the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer programme, and work with new statutory duties in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Provide a clearer framework of strategy and guidance for partners and voluntary organisations to co-ordinate support for vulnerable people, through our new Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018
- Work with partners to review how social housing is allocated and introduce upgraded lettings systems
- Establish better coordinated housing and support with Children's Services for those aged between 16-24 through a positive pathway
- Develop and implement new approaches to supporting older people in their own homes and the provision of specialist care, accommodation, and support through our new Housing Plan for the Ageing Population
- Continue to offer adaptations to home owners through Disabled Facilities Grants and maximise access to ECO and other sources of energy efficiency funding.
- Invest in holistic support for our people, and especially routes into employment
- Invest in asset based community development work and the development of plans in inner Blackpool

Increasing Delivery Capacity

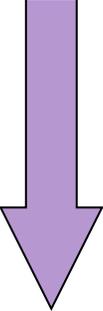
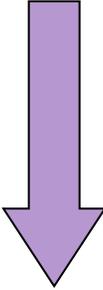
We will organise our housing companies and internal capacity to deliver this ambitious agenda, but also maximise the contribution and investment from partners.

We will:

- ▶ Ensure delivery of this strategy and the associated Plans:
 - Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018
 - Housing Plan for an Ageing Population 2017
 - New regeneration plans for inner Blackpool
 - Updated work on affordability and housing needs in Blackpool
 - ▶ Review how our housing companies operate and work together with the Council, ensuring effective coordination and enabling us to take advantage of new opportunities
 - ▶ Ensure that we provide clarity and opportunities for partners and investors on the roles that they can play in delivering better housing in Blackpool.
- ▶ Join up service delivery to provide the best possible services to help residents meet their housing needs and aspirations.
 - ▶ Further develop links between housing services and interventions and the provision of health and social care.

8.0 Outcomes

In delivering this strategy, we expect to see positive housing and economic outcomes over the long term:

	Housing Outcomes	Economic Outcomes
<p>Year 1-5 <i>Stabilisation</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of homelessness stabilise, with continuing investment in prevention and relief work • More Council and private tenants in employment through the More Positive Together programme • Better standards in the private rented sector through the growing ownership and influence of My Blackpool Home and effective work with landlords and • Further development of new family homes at Foxhall Village • Stronger communities in inner Blackpool as housing regulation and public service delivery is pro-active and coordinated at neighbourhood level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved skills and reduced long term worklessness assisted by reducing transience through stable and better quality housing and neighbourhood environments • Improved educational attainment, linked to reductions in concentrations of deprivation and more balanced communities • Movement to a higher value tourism offer, with higher quality tourist accommodation, supported by the creation of a more stable and higher value residential offer in the immediate vicinity
<p>Years 6-10 <i>Persistent and visible change</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market starts to produce more attractive homes in inner Blackpool and transition to sustainable residential neighbourhoods • More new housing for sale and rent across the town • More options for older people through investment in existing homes and development of a wider range of new homes • Significant improvements in the state of repair and energy efficiency of the existing housing stock • More general reduction in numbers of poor quality private rented homes in inner Blackpool and transition to sustainable residential neighbourhoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved transport connections assisted by a focus of new housing development close to employment centres / transport nodes • New business startups, and existing high value manufacturing retained within the area, assisted by the further development of attractive housing at every level of the market
<p>Years 11-15 <i>Entrenching permanent change</i></p>		

9.0 Key Performance Indicators

Key performance indicators for the strategy are split into two sections. Firstly the ‘Key *Contextual* Indicators’ which are indicators that relate to the vision and aims of the strategy, but which can be influenced by factors outside the control of the strategy. In some cases this is simply because the level of resource available to deliver the strategy is limited, and in others because there are external factors which influence the indicators more widely.

The second section consists of ‘Key *Activity* Indicators’ are indicators that are based directly on activity identified in the strategy.

9.1 Key Contextual Indicators

Priority	Key Contextual Indicator	Responsibility	Frequency	Desired Improvement Measure
New Housing and Supply	# of new homes completed (net / gross)	Planning Strategy	Annually	
	# new conversions completed (net / gross)	Planning Strategy		
	# properties empty for more than 2 years	Council Tax		
	Average time on housing register by priority bands A, B and C	Housing Options		
	Housing affordability (Ratio of median house price to median gross annual residence-based earnings)	Housing Strategy		
	Median rental value in £	Housing Strategy		
	# Houses in Multiple Occupation	Housing Enforcement		
Stabilising Lives	% of population in fuel poverty	Housing Strategy	Annually	
	% of households with A – E EPC Rating	Housing Strategy		
	% households classified in Transient MOSAIC types	Housing Strategy		
	% private rented sector properties rented to people in receipt of Housing Benefit /UC	Housing Strategy		

9.2 Key Activity Indicators

Priority	Key Activity Indicator	Responsibility	Frequency	Improvement Measure
New Housing and Supply	# New conversions completed by My Blackpool Home	My Blackpool Home	Quarterly	
	# New homes completed facilitated by the Council			
Improve our private rented sector	# new units delivered by My Blackpool Home	My Blackpool Home	Quarterly	
	# units let by My Blackpool Home			
	# units managed by My Blackpool Home			
	# properties subject to improvement/intervention in licensing areas	Housing Enforcement		
Stabilising Lives	# energy efficiency measures per 1000 households	Housing Strategy	Annually	
	Average length of private sector tenancy in My Blackpool Home properties	My Blackpool Home		
	# people repeatedly presenting as homeless within a 12 month period	Housing Options	Quarterly	
	# people presenting at risk of homelessness, whose potential homelessness is prevented			
	# people for whom homelessness is successfully relieved			
	# repeat rough sleepers within a 6 month period			
# Council tenants in employment or support routes into employment	Blackpool Coastal Housing	Annually		

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Notice of:	EXECUTIVE
Relevant Officer:	Andrew Foot, Head of Housing
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Mrs Christine Wright, Cabinet Member for Housing
Date of Meeting:	16 April 2018

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY 2018-2023

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to adopt a new Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018-2023 as set out in Appendix 4a following public consultation.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To approve the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018-2023, as attached at Appendix 4a.
- 2.2 Subject to 2.1 above, to delegate authority to the Head of Legal to enter into any legal documentation that may be required to implement the strategy.
- 2.3 To note the development of a detailed action plan with partners through Blackpool Homelessness Partnership.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 There is a statutory requirement to have an up to date Homelessness Prevention Strategy and new duties on local authorities following the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 come into force from April 2018. Continuing to prevent and respond effectively to homelessness in Blackpool is central to reducing transience and establishing more resilient communities.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is: “Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”.

5.0 Background Information

5.1 There are a number of reasons why it is important for the Council to develop and adopt the new Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018 at this time:

- Homelessness is a prominent issue locally and nationally, with increasing demand for support from people at risk of homelessness across the country, including Blackpool.
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduces from April 2018 significant new duties on local authorities in how they respond to people at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness.
- Local authorities must publish a homelessness prevention strategy at least every 5 years to meet statutory requirements, and Blackpool’s last strategy was adopted in 2014.

5.2 As part of a Homelessness Prevention Strategy, Councils must also publish a review setting out an update on the homelessness issues locally. The Review in the 2018 Strategy has found that:

- Blackpool Council receives around 80 homelessness applications a month. While 78% were found to be eligible and homeless, only 7% were found to be homeless and in priority need. This means that while Blackpool had over 3 times the national average number of homeless households per head of population, it had lower than average numbers of homeless households in priority need and owed a duty of immediate housing. This is because most people who are homeless in Blackpool are single people and the rules around priority need focus on families with children. The number of households presenting to the Council as homeless has increased slightly over the last 3 years.
- The most common reasons for homelessness in Blackpool are people being evicted by relatives or friends or parental exclusions. This is different from the national picture where the breakdown of private tenancies is the most common reason. This reflects that social issues are a more important driver of

homelessness in Blackpool than the unavailability of accommodation. But among people in priority need, an increased proportion of households (over 20%) was homeless and in priority need because of violent relationship breakdown.

- The number of rough sleepers is rising in Blackpool, although at a slower rate than national rises. The reasons for rising numbers of rough sleepers are likely to be the impact of welfare reform and reducing support services.
- The number of households who have had homelessness prevented as a result of the work of Blackpool Council has also increased in recent years, with an 8% shift from the number of cases of homelessness to the number of prevention cases.

- 5.3 There has been significant progress in the provision of homelessness services in Blackpool since the adoption of last strategy, but also a more challenging environment of increasing demand and a reduction in the availability of supported housing following recent funding cuts. Temporary accommodation hostels owned by the Council and managed by Blackpool Coastal Housing have had very high levels of occupancy for the last 24 months, and this has led to fairly frequent use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation.
- 5.4 Rough sleeping has become more prominent in Blackpool in the last couple of years, linked to begging and street drinking. Multi-agency teams have been established to address these issues in the town centre, balancing enforcement with support. Around a third of people found on the streets during the day time are rough sleepers, with the November 2017 count identifying 13 rough sleepers in the town at that point, and this is consistent with the numbers who have been given shelter over the winter. Frequent outreach offers help to get into housing with support for people with a local connection, and support to return home for people who are new to the town. A new Housing First project that provides a home and intensive support for rough sleepers has been introduced over the last 6 months with funding from Blackpool Fulfilling Lives; early signs are that the project has been very successful in overcoming entrenched issues and it has recently been agreed to increase funding to support 18 individuals in this way.
- 5.5 Increased resources have been secured through a successful Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer bid for additional funding to March 2019, and the Council has also received Flexible Homelessness Support Grant funding for the first time from 2017/18.
- 5.6 The new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduces significant new statutory duties on local authorities that can be summarised as requiring local authorities to work to prevent and relieve homelessness for everyone regardless of priority need.

The work under the new duties is focussed on agreeing and working through Personal Housing Plans with every person at risk of homelessness, so although the Council has always sought to assist everyone with a local connection, there is likely to be an increased workload from the new formal requirements. New Government reporting requirements will monitor the detailed circumstances and outcomes for every individual but there are no specific targets set by Government.

5.7 The Strategy sets out some key principles. These are:

Prevent people becoming homeless in the first place by working with partners to identify risk and intervene earlier.

The targets under this theme are for an increasing proportion of households to stay in their own home without ever becoming homeless, an increasing proportion to have homelessness prevented, and for even fewer households to need support again within a year (the current baseline is 11%).

Resolve homelessness rapidly when crisis occurs, so that harm is minimised

The targets are for people placed in temporary accommodation to move to permanent housing more quickly than the current average of 56.5 days, and for an increasing proportion of people who are homeless to have their homelessness relieved within 56 days (the statutory period of the new relief duty).

Recover - Help more people avoid repeat homelessness by getting them back on their feet by providing long term solutions

The targets are to have fewer rough sleepers who end up on the streets again, and for more households who receive tenancy support to remain in their tenancies for at least 12 months.

5.8 The Strategy sets out a number of actions to achieve these targets but a more detailed action plan will be developed with partners to ensure that there is ownership and consistent delivery between agencies across the town.

5.9 The Strategy has been subject to consultation with partner public and voluntary sector agencies as well as being available for the public to comment. In general there was support for the Strategy, with some of the key points and raised and the strategic response set out below:

- More services and emergency accommodation for rough sleepers are required, including daytime activities.

There are already day time services provided by the Salvation Army through The Bridge project and the strategy is to further expand the Housing First project that provides permanent independent accommodation with support.

- Substance misuse and recovery services need to be better linked to rough sleeper outreach and the response to homelessness, and local connection should be reviewed for recovery housing.

These are issues that are best taken forward through the development of the new drug and alcohol strategies and the Council will ensure that the link is made.

- Voluntary sector services need to be well linked in, and there were a number of offers of support for further development of the action plan.

There will be on-going dialogue on the development and delivery of the action plan through Blackpool Homelessness Partnership.

5.10 In summary, the Strategy provides a clear vision and policy direction for a range of homelessness prevention and related services provided by the Council and partner agencies. The development of a more detailed action plan with partners through Blackpool Homelessness Partnership will ensure that the Council continues to address the wide-ranging issues that can lead to homelessness and provide an effective response. The plan will be kept under review to respond to on-going changes in local demand.

5.11 Is the Corporate Delivery Unit aware of this report? Yes

The Corporate Delivery Unit has been central in the development of the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Prevention Strategy. It will be further involved in the development of a monitoring framework.

5.12 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.13 **List of Appendices:**

Appendix 4a – Homelessness Prevention Strategy

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 requires a local authority to carry out a homelessness review and formulate and publish a strategy based on that review. The local authority must take a strategy into account in the exercise of their housing and social services functions. The purpose of the homelessness strategy is to prevent

homelessness in the authority's area, secure that sufficient accommodation is and will be available in the area for people who are or may become homeless and provide support for such people or those who have become homeless and need support to prevent it recurring. Section 153 of the Localism Act 2011 provides that the local authority must have regard to its current allocation scheme and current tenancy strategy when formulating the strategy. Before adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy the authority shall consult such public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons as they consider appropriate. The outcomes of the consultation must conscientiously be taken into account when a decision is made.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

- 7.1 The total staff resource within the Housing Options service has been slightly increased recently, enabled by extra Government funding and in anticipation of the additional legal duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The staff resource will be kept under review as the new duties and consequent new ways of working take effect from April 2018 to ensure that they continue to be sufficient.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

- 8.1 The Strategy has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment and there are no adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics. One of the more contentious aspects of the Strategy is the continuing maintenance of a robust local connection policy for access to social and private rented housing sourced through the Council. It is important to maintain this position so that the resilience of Blackpool communities is protected. The approach to local connection is consistent with the new duties of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

9.0 Financial considerations:

- 9.1 The Strategy can be delivered within existing levels of resource. The Council's budget for Housing Options services has been maintained, with some additional resources provided by Government over the last 3 years.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

- 10.1 The principal risks are in reductions to budgets of both the Council and its partners, and a risk of the Council failing to meet the new legal duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Government has made some new funding available to help meet the additional burdens which together with extensive training of staff and investment in new systems will enable the Council to meet its new legal duties. But there are financial pressures on the continuing provision of supported accommodation, including both hostels and support for chaotic people housed independently. These

will be kept under review.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 Responding to homelessness is not just a legal but also an ethical issue. The Strategy helps to ensure that the Council and partners continue to use their resources to prevent and relieve homelessness effectively.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 In accordance with the legal requirements, public and voluntary organisations were contacted to give their views on the draft Strategy, and members of the public were given the opportunity to comment over a six week period ending on 20 March 2018. A summary of the comments received and a response are included in Paragraph 5.9 of this report.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 Consultation responses as summarized at Paragraph 5.8
Equality Impact Assessment

14.0 Key decision information:

14.1	Is this a key decision?	Yes
14.2	If so, Forward Plan reference number:	9/2018
14.3	If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days?	No
14.4	If yes , please describe the reason for urgency:	

15.0 Call-in information:

15.1	Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process?	No
15.2	If yes , please give reason:	

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

16.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: 6 April 2018 Date approved:

17.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

17.1

18.0 Executive decision:

18.1

18.2 Date of Decision:

19.0 Reason(s) for decision:

19.1 Date Decision published:

20.0 Executive Members in attendance:

20.1

21.0 Call-in:

21.1

22.0 Notes:

22.1

Appendix 4a Homelessness Review and Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018-2021

Blackpool Council



Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018-2021

Contents

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Introduction	4
PART 1 – The Review	5
3. National Context	5
4. Local Context	9
5. Review of Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2014	12
6. Homelessness In Blackpool	17
7. How we respond to Homelessness/ Resources available to tackle homelessness in Blackpool	26
PART 2 – The Strategy 2018 - 2021	31
8. Scope	31
9. Objectives	34
10. Governance and Performance Indicators	37

Chapter 1: Executive Summary

The review of homelessness in Blackpool over the last three years shows that:

- Levels of homelessness in Blackpool that are three times the national average per head of population continue to be driven by chaotic lifestyles, social issues, and poor quality housing and not by an absolute shortage of housing. Most cases are single people who are not classed as being in priority need. A growing proportion of homelessness is precipitated by the violent breakdown of a relationship.
- Levels of homelessness presentations and rough sleeping have increased slightly over the last three years, although have increased at a lower rate than rising national averages.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation has increased but is still low compared with other areas; B&Bs are used only for occasional emergencies and for a few days at a time.
- The percentage of basic advice cases has reduced and more cases have been dealt with as prevention – indicating increased difficulty in households being able to maintain accommodation without support due to a combination of housing market issues, deprivation, and complex needs. But the number of cases where we have successfully prevented homelessness has increased and we continue to be able to help most people who need new accommodation to find it.

Strategically, reducing homelessness and helping people to establish themselves and maintain a stable home is critical to Blackpool's future prosperity, both for individuals themselves and the wider town. A stable home underpins successful education and employment and the maintenance of good health. Enabling people to stay in their homes and contribute to more stable communities is important to our aim of establishing flourishing residential neighbourhoods in inner Blackpool.

There have been cuts in funding to Housing Options, supported housing, and tenancy sustainment work but we have managed to continue to provide a wide range of services in the town. We are confident of successfully delivering the Homelessness Reduction Act's new duties from April 2018.

The strategy has three key areas:

- 1) Prevent people becoming homeless in the first place by working with partners to identify risk and intervene earlier
- 2) Resolve homelessness rapidly when crisis occurs, so that harm is minimized
- 3) Help more people avoid repeat homelessness by getting them back on their feet by providing long term solutions

We know that we still need to strengthen approaches to:

- Ensure that effective pathways to prevent homelessness are in place for all at risk groups
- Further develop and embed the "Positive Pathway" for young people
- Help ensure that staff across the homelessness system in Blackpool are trained in consistent therapeutic approaches, and focus on positive outcomes including employment
- Develop a more joined up offer of support with partners in substance misuse, mental health, social services, probation, and multiple and complex needs services

The priorities will be delivered through a new action plan to be developed with partner agencies.

Chapter 2: Introduction

The Homelessness Act (2002) places a statutory duty on each local authority to carry out a review of homelessness and develop a strategy every 5 years. While the last strategy was approved in 2014, the impact of new legislation – the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 – and fast pace of change means that it is important to develop a new strategy now to inform future activity in preventing homelessness in Blackpool.

This strategy is in 2 parts:

Part 1 – The review:

Part 1 contains a review of homelessness data and activity from 2013 to 2017 which seeks to establish the current picture of homelessness in Blackpool, including patterns and trends, and compares this against the previous strategy and also national data sets.

This section also contains a progress review on actions and objectives of the last strategy and an overview of the resources and services undertaking various levels of activity.

Part 2 – The Strategy:

Part 2 sets out the objectives and priorities for the life of this strategy, 2018 – 2021

The 2018 Homelessness Strategy focuses on how Blackpool Council and local partners will prevent and respond to homelessness by working in partnership.

The strategy will be delivered through an action plan which will be regularly updated so that we are able to respond to changes and developments in real time.

This is a particularly exciting time to be producing a new Homelessness Prevention Strategy as we are on the cusp of the implementation of most significant change in legislation in this field since the 1970's from April 2018.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY PART 1 – The Review

Chapter 3: National Context

This strategy is written at a time of considerable change within the homelessness sector.

The Homelessness Reduction Act will be the most significant piece of new legislation for homelessness services since 1977 and will commence from April 2018.

There are also a number of other key national policies and initiatives which will influence Blackpool Council's response to homelessness:

Legislation

Homelessness services are currently covered by the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and the Homelessness Act 2002.

However case law often affects the interpretation of the above acts and there have been a number of significant cases since the last review, perhaps most notably that of *Johnson v Solihull* which effectively ended the era of the *Pereira* test and introduced a modified test of priority need.

There are also a number of key pieces of non-housing related legislation that have a direct impact on homelessness services to which we must have regard. These include the Children's Act, and since time of last strategy, the introduction of the Care Act.

From April 2018 the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 will place duties on local housing authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness and to take reasonable steps to help those who become homeless to secure accommodation.

It requires local housing authorities to provide some new homelessness services to all people in their area and expands the categories of people who they have to help to find accommodation.

The Act changes the point at which a person is classed as being threatened with homelessness from 28 days before a person is likely to be homeless, to 56 days.

A new duty is placed on local housing authorities to assess all eligible applicants' cases and agree a plan.

There will also be a duty for other public services to refer cases to the local housing authority.

Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out Nationwide (NSNON)

In its strategy "Vision for ending rough sleeping: No Second Night Out Nationwide" the Government has called on every local authority to adopt the No Second Night Out standard. There is recognition that every community is different, so how each one achieves this will be different. However, in the strategy the Government notes that this requires communities having right services in place, so that:

1. New rough sleepers can be identified and helped off the streets immediately
2. The public can alert services if they see anyone sleeping rough so they get help
3. Rough sleepers can go to a place of safety, where their needs can be assessed and they can get help
4. Rough sleepers are able to get emergency accommodation and other services they need
5. Rough sleepers from outside their area can be reconnected with their community¹

More recently local authorities have been encouraged to go one step further and consider adopting a “no first night out” approach which aims to predict potential rough sleepers and provide accommodation and support before a single night is spent on the streets.

Making Every Contact Count – “Gold Standard”

As a follow up report to a ‘Vision to end rough sleeping: No Second Night Out’ published in 2011, the Government’s Ministerial working group for Homelessness introduced a range of changes as set out in the report ‘Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness’, published in August 2012.

The report aims to ensure that every contact local authorities make with vulnerable people and families really counts, bringing together the Government’s commitment to:

- Tackle troubled childhoods and adolescence
- Improve health
- Reduce involvement in crime
- Improve skills, employment and financial advice
- Pioneer social funding for homelessness

The report details the ‘ten local challenges’ set by central Government:

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

¹ http://www.nosecondnightout.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Reconnection-Guidance_29November11.pdf

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

These standards have since been adopted as the “Gold Standard” by the government funded National Practitioner Support Service as a way of evaluating services through peer review.

Welfare Reform

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced a wide range of reforms aimed at reducing public expenditure on benefits and using the welfare system to incentivise people toward employment and to ‘make work pay’. A number of these have had an impact on homelessness and the availability, and sustainability, of affordable housing.

The key elements of reform include:

- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) reductions including total LHA caps and the limiting of LHA to the 30th percentile of market rents
- The Total Benefit Cap - limiting the maximum benefits that a family can receive
- Spare Room Subsidy (‘Bedroom Tax’) reducing housing benefit entitlement to social housing tenants considered to be under occupying their homes
- The Shared Accommodation Rate limit applied to single young people up to the age of 34
- Transfer of responsibility for Social Fund payments to local authorities and to Council budgets
- Disability Benefit changes 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.

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 further reduced the benefit cap set by the Welfare Reform Act 2012 to £20,000 per year for couples and lone parents and £13,400 per year for single people.

Additionally under the Act, certain social security benefits and child tax credits have been frozen for four years from April 2016 and social housing rents have to be reduced by 1% per year for 4 years from April 2016.

Localism Act 2011

The stated policy objective is to enable local authorities to better manage housing demand and access to housing within the context of local circumstances. The key changes introduced by the Localism Act include:

- Local authorities are given the power to end their homelessness duty with an offer of accommodation in the private rented sector
- Social housing tenure reform to allow social landlords to grant fixed term tenancies with limited security of tenure
- The requirement for local authorities to set out their approach and response to fixed term tenancies in a Tenancy Strategy
- Social Housing allocation reform which allows local authorities to set allocation policies appropriate to the local area.

The Government introduced the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 as a guidance to respond to concerns about the standards of accommodation that may be used by local authorities as temporary accommodation, and to end the homelessness duty. The statutory guidance includes requirements about the quality of accommodation and of landlords, as well as the suitability of the location for a household's needs and circumstances.

Deregulation Act

The Deregulation Act 2015 introduced protection for private rented tenants against so called retaliatory evictions. Retaliatory eviction is where a tenant makes a legitimate complaint to their landlord about the condition of their property and instead of making the repair the landlord serves them with an eviction notice. All new Assured Shorthold Tenancies starting on or after 1 October 2015 will be covered by the provisions in the Act.

Housing and Planning Act

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 contains measures that could have an impact on social housing and homelessness including:

- the extension of the right to buy to housing association tenants
- local authorities will be required to sell their higher value homes as they become vacant, impacting on the supply of social housing
- local authority tenants with higher incomes could be required to pay a higher rent
- measures to tackle rogue landlords in the private sector including banning orders, a national database of rogue landlords and the extension of when a tenant can apply for a rent repayment order
- private landlords will be able to regain possession of a property they believe has been abandoned without a court order (a specific procedure is in place)

However, not all of these measures have been implemented by Government, with RTB for housing association tenants now voluntary, no announcement on whether or how "high value" Council homes will need to be sold, and Government confirming that it will not be compulsory for local authorities to charge higher rents to tenants with higher incomes.

Chapter 4: Local Context

Area profile

Blackpool lies at the heart of Lancashire's Fylde Coast, acting as the main service centre and commercial and leisure hub for the area. Blackpool's primary economic sector remains the tourist industry. Approximately 20,000 local residents are employed within the visitor economy during the traditional season, which extends beyond the typical British summer period and into early November, due to Blackpool Illuminations. Some of the UK's most well-known visitor attractions and companies engaged in the visitor economy can still be found in Blackpool.

Blackpool has a total population of 142,065 (Census 2011) which is made up of 49% males and 51% females. The ethnic background for majority of residents is 'White English' (94%) – census 2011. The town's socio-economic profile may be seen as challenging, as it suffers from high level deprivation across many areas. Of the 39,000 small areas of England (LSOAs) identified in the 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), five out of the ten most deprived were within the Blackpool Borough boundary. However, deprivation in Blackpool in the IMD "domain" of Barriers to Housing and Services was less severe than in the other domains because of the relative ease of access to housing in Blackpool, physical accessibility of services in an urban borough, and strong homelessness services.

In 2011, 30% of young people in Blackpool were living in child poverty, and 2012 educational statistics showed that less than 50% of students in Blackpool attained 5 A*-C grades at GCSE level, whilst 14.5% of the working age population had no formal qualifications at all. Skills levels are shown to be improving, though. Public health is also a key issue in the town, with most statistical indicators sitting below the national averages. The average life expectancy across the town is one of the lowest nationally, and health priorities for Blackpool include alcohol and drug misuse, mental health, smoking and obesity. The percentage of adults of a working age claiming Incapacity Benefit/ESA is approximately double the national average.

The Housing Market

Blackpool has an unbalanced housing market, characterised by an oversupply of poor quality one-person accommodation, limited choice of family housing particularly in the inner area, and while there is relatively easy access to accommodation in the private rented sector there is a shortage of affordable housing that is better quality. The concentration of small, poor quality housing in the inner areas attracts low income and vulnerable households, leading to high levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and unstable, fragmented communities with high levels of transience and homelessness

Tenure breakdown:

Authority	Owned Outright	Owned with Mortgage/ Loan	Shared Ownership	Social Rented	Private Rented: Landlord/ Agent	Private Rented: Other	Living Rent Free
Blackpool	30.3%	31.6%	0.4%	10.9%	24.2%	1.9%	1.1%
Inner Blackpool	17.2%	19.3%	0.5%	10.1%	50.0%	1.8%	1.2%

<i>Rest of Blackpool</i>	33.5%	34.9%	0.4%	11.1%	17.1%	1.9%	1.1%
England	30.6%	32.8%	0.8%	17.7%	15.4%	1.4%	1.3%

The proportion of Housing Benefit (HB) claimants who live in the private rented sector is the highest in the country at 73% of all HB claimants.

The household profile of this population is heavily skewed towards single people, with 55% of claimants receiving the Shared Room Rate or 1 bedroom rate of Local Housing Allowance. In the inner areas nearly two thirds of claimants are single person households.

The economic activity levels of Blackpool claimants on HB living in the private rented sector are lower than the national figure. Only 22% of these claimants are in employment as opposed to 36% nationally. The overall rate in some of the inner areas is around 12% (from DWP data Feb 2015).

Council plan

A new Council plan was published in 2015 to take us up to 2020, and this contains 2 clear priorities:

- Priority 1 - The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool
- Priority 2 - Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience

The Council Plan sets out the need to reduce demand for crisis services by facilitating prevention work that intervenes early to de-escalate problems before they become more serious.

Preventing and responding to homelessness are critical to delivering Priority 2, and mitigating the transience and instability that affects all other services. In line with the Council Plan, we aim to move more of our work to the earlier prevention stage to reduce the number of people who ever become homeless in the town.

Overlapping Strategies

It has been important within the review and formulation of the new Homelessness Prevention Strategy to have regard to a number of key strategies within the Council that may impact upon or complement this strategy:

These include:

- Blackpool Council Plan 2015 - 2020
- Housing Strategy 2018
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Domestic Abuse Strategy
- Early Help Strategy
- Housing Plan for an Ageing Population 2017
- Drug and Alcohol Strategies

Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer

Blackpool has been awarded Trailblazer status, for two years from April 2017, following a Fylde Coast bid alongside neighbouring Fylde and Wyre Councils.

This means that we will “become one of a network of Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer areas, to go further and faster with reform and support more people to avoid a homelessness crisis in the first place”.

For the Fylde Coast this means a more upstream approach to predicting and preventing homelessness across all client groups using a range of tools and interventions, and will form a key stream in the new strategy.

Blackpool Fulfilling Lives (BFL)

Blackpool is one of 12 areas in England that has received Big Lottery Fund funding to support people with multiple needs. The programme started in September 2014 and will continue for seven years.

BFL engage and support people who are living with a combination of issues including homelessness, offending, substance misuse, and mental ill health.

Service users are at the heart of Fulfilling Lives. People with lived experience are closely involved in delivering the programme.

The ambition of the BFL project is, with the support of key partners, to deliver better pathways and services for people with multiple and complex needs through systems change.

As homelessness is a key element of Multiple and Complex Needs the Council is committed to supporting the delivery of this work and is involved at both strategic and operational levels.

Chapter 5: Review of Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2014

Review of achievements

Objectives from previous strategy

Objective 1: Focus support on people with a strong local connection and discourage people requiring support from moving in to the area and accessing cross agency services.

Objective 2: Embed local connection in to all local authority strategies and policies

We have:

- Aligned housing related support funded accommodation with the social housing allocations policy, introducing a 3 year residency requirement for all services, with the exception of tenancy support
- Promoted a local connection approach to related services
- Continued commitment to working with people to return to their home area and support networks in a safe and managed way to ensure sustainable reconnection
- Established a joint reconnection policy with Fulfilling Lives
- Continued to promote the principles of local connection and reconnection at both strategic and operational levels to ensure the message remains relevant and consistent

Objective 3: Achieve a strong alignment of homelessness prevention with all services, providing support to vulnerable people, including statutory and non-statutory services and public and voluntary sectors

We have:

- Developed and delivered a ½ day Homelessness Prevention Awareness presentation for statutory and non-statutory services and agencies to ensure processes are understood and triggers are recognised
- Facilitated shadowing opportunities for a range of partner services and agencies
- Developed a network of link workers and referral processes within other services and agencies to ensure early intervention, planning and multi-agency co-ordination where required (e.g. Probation)
- Developed an accredited Tenancy Training Course, in partnership with Adult Learning aimed at educating residents on their rights and responsibilities as tenants

Objective 4: Support the improvement of housing and neighbourhoods within Blackpool

We have:

- Established and embedded the Tenancy Training Course for all Blackpool residents which aims to educate tenants on their rights and responsibilities, including around issues such as disrepair
- Continued to establish links with reputable landlords through BC Lettings (now part of My Blackpool Home) to promote good practice and property conditions and enable access to such for Blackpool residents in housing need.

- Created a wholly owned housing company – My Blackpool Home - (incorporating BC Lettings) to regenerate inner areas both by working with existing landlords and taking on a landlord function by buying, remodelling and letting formerly sub-standard accommodation
- Continued to challenge and report poor landlord practice and property conditions where appropriate
- Work in a co-ordinated way with other services (Enforcement, ASB etc) to build cases against rogue landlords and support displaced tenants
- Challenge the perception that poor housing is just something we have to live with in Blackpool and encourage other partners to do the same

Objective 5: Utilise the power given in the Localism Act (2011) to discharge the main homelessness duty into the private rented sector

We have:

- Established a procedure for discharging homelessness duties via a Private Rented Sector Offer
- Discharged approximately 12% of cases in this manner in 2015/16

Objective 6: Consider the potential effect of other local authorities discharging their homelessness duty cases into Blackpool Council

- Liaised with other services to raise awareness of this issue and request that such cases be flagged at the earliest opportunity
- Worked closely with out nearest neighbours (Fylde and Wyre) to request that temporary placements (i.e. in B&B) are rehoused in their home area.
- Challenged out of area authorities and agencies on inappropriate placements when these have occurred

Objective 7: Further develop prevention work so that it is more pro-active and provides assistance to people earlier

We have:

- Extended the Hospital Link Worker role
- Established protocols with prisons (Lancashire wide)
- Established local and early notification protocols with Probation Services
- Re-configured tenancy sustainment to a generic model that is person centred and has no waiting list
- Invested in a new IT system that enables officers to capture information at pre –statutory level which reduces duplication and enables better understanding of service demand.

Objective 8: Establish a coherent approach to dealing with the housing needs of 16 & 17 years olds

We have:

- Raised the profile of the Positive Pathway for young people within the town and secured appropriate buy in from key services
- Reviewed internal pathways to make best use of existing provision
- Facilitated a pilot for shared housing for Care Leavers
- Reviewed the role of the Mediation Officer

Objective 9: Ensure an effective approach to dealing with rough sleeping which balances “the need to unsettle” from a street homeless lifestyle whilst “never giving up on the most vulnerable”

We have:

- Developed a multi-agency Rough Sleepers Forum which enables effective information sharing and joint planning
- Through this forum developed with partners a support and enforcement approach which distinguishes between those genuinely rough sleeping and those that are begging
- Worked with a range of partner agencies (Streetlife, Horizons, Blackpool Fulfilling Lives) to maximise resources and deliver effective joint outreach
- Worked with partners to establish a consistent 3rd sector SWEP provision (St. Pauls Church) which is safe, cost effective and person centred.

Objective 10: Achieve an appropriate balance between effective support for those who need it and encouraging personal responsibility and accountability for continuing to make bad personal choices

We have:

- Worked with hostel providers to promote appropriate management procedures
- Worked with Public Protection, Community Safety, and the Police on issues associated with anti-social behaviour, both within tenancies and on the streets.
- Established a Tenancy Training course recognised by many providers as a reference and targeted at those with a poor tenancy history

Objective 11: Fully embed comprehensive housing pathways that enable people to move from homelessness to settled accommodation and from support to independent living

We have:

- Embedded single point of access within Housing Options which enables access to suitable accommodation for both priority and non-priority households, with planned and structured move on pathways into either social housing or private rented with resettlement/tenancy support.
- Developed additional pathways for offenders in order to remove some of the barriers to accessing services (i.e. those who are High Risk and/or in Prison)
- Introduced the concept of the Positive Pathway for young people, which is now under further development with Children’s Services
- Conducted a joint review (Housing Options and Commissioning) of the Tenancy Sustainment service to ensure it provides a robust approach to homelessness prevention and is able to support customers in the community with complex needs

- Funded an Employment Advisor within the Council's Positive Steps team to enable timely access to employment support for all customers accessing Housing Options and associated services

Objective 12: Provide access to quality housing options and support in the private rented sector as an incentive where people are committed to turning their lives around and taking responsibility for their own actions

We have:

- Continued to enable access to good quality private rented accommodation through BC Lettings (now part of My Blackpool Home)
- Worked with other providers of quality private rented accommodation to enable rehousing of customers with complex needs in the private rented sector with support
- Started to develop a Housing First model in partnership with Fulfilling Lives for customers with extremely complex needs who cannot access or maintain traditional housing options.
- Successfully resettled a small group of Syrian Refugees into the community via the private rented sector.

Objective 13: Provide an effective approach for dealing with service users who have been identified as high risk and where there is no duty to rehouse

We have:

- Ensured consistent representation at MAPPA meetings and been accountable for relevant actions
- Worked with partner agencies (Probation, CRC, Calico) to deliver creative solutions where there are gaps in provision
- Focused on providing access to independent accommodation with wrap around support which manages the risk within the community

Summary

Shortly after the implementation of the last strategy Housing Options experienced significant cuts in funding which resulted in the loss of several key members of staff and a radical restructure and change in approach.

But this has not affected performance against the objectives within the strategy, and the new generic approach is now fully embedded, ensuring that the service is highly efficient with a focus on prevention remaining at the heart of the service.

Although the majority of objectives have been met there are a number of specific actions which have not been achieved and remain relevant:

- Further work on educating other services on recognising the signs and symptoms of homelessness and developing pathways

- Continuing to develop and promote tenancy training, including a specific tailored course for young people, and work closely with landlords, tenants and partners to improve housing standards
- Continue to review processes and develop new ways of working, using examples of best practice from elsewhere
- Revise and review the joint protocol with Children's Services for the assessment of homeless 16/17 year olds.
- Continue work with young people and relevant services/stakeholders through Positive Transitions
- Continue to develop pathways and relationships with offender management services.
- Review supported housing and floating support provision and pathways
- Develop provision for high risk customers

These will be taken forward under the new strategy.

CHAPTER 6: HOMELESSNESS IN BLACKPOOL

6.1 Homelessness and Council Duties

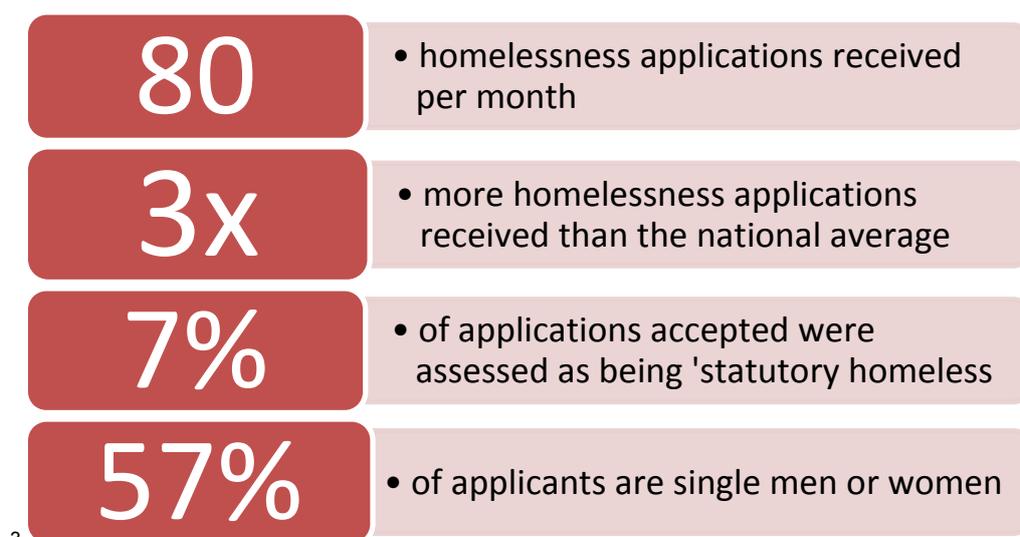
Homelessness is a term that is used to describe various situations of housing need, and it is important to be clear about the different circumstances in which people are considered to be homeless. To summarise:

Statutory homelessness refers to those people who have made a homeless application and have met the criteria in legislation (Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002) to be accepted by the Council as eligible for assistance, homeless and in **priority need**. This includes families, pregnant women and single people who are particularly vulnerable. A household may be accepted as 'homeless' because they are going to be evicted or are living in accommodation so unsuitable that it is not 'reasonable' for them to remain there. The Council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation to statutory homeless households.

Non-statutory/non-priority homeless people are primarily single people/childless couples who are not assessed as being in 'priority need' and therefore only entitled to 'advice and assistance' if homeless. However, the Council may exercise its "powers" to provide additional support if it chooses to do so.

Rough sleepers are people who are literally roofless and are bedded down on the streets, parks or other places where they may or may not be seen by the public. This group are a normally a minority of the much larger group of non-priority homeless people, with a larger proportion of single homeless people sofa surfing (often described as the 'hidden homeless' because we have no means to calculate their numbers). Housing legislation does not set out specific statutory duties to people sleeping rough, but there is a strong policy focus on this group.

6.2 Homelessness Applications in Blackpool ²

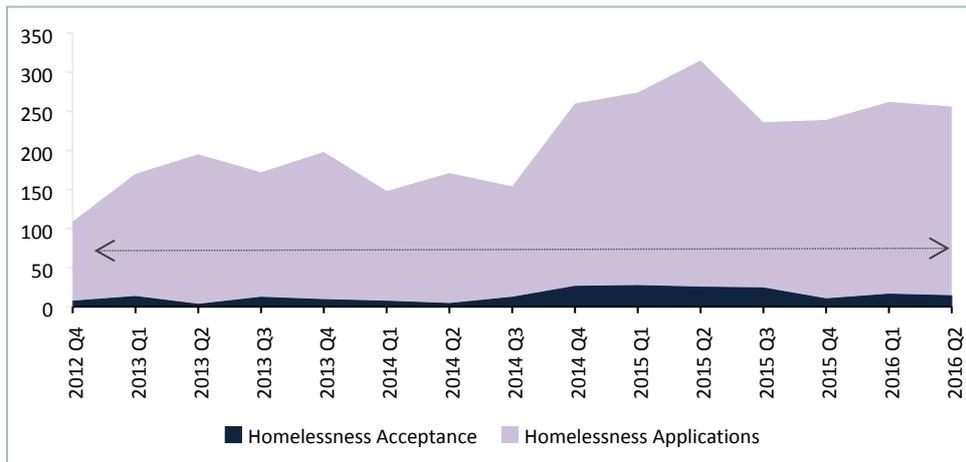


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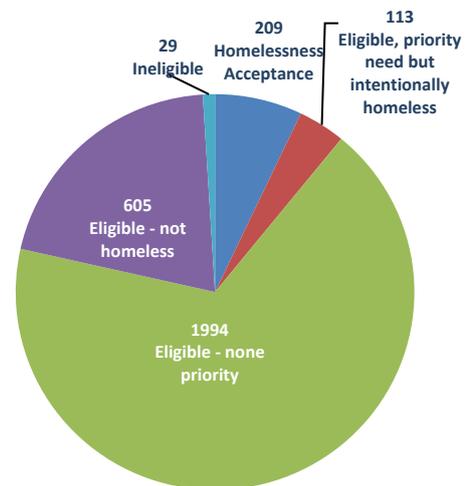
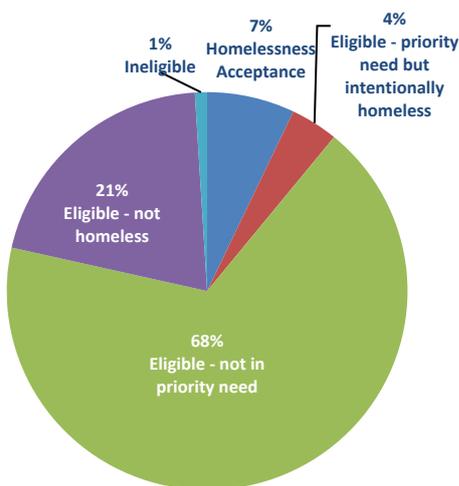
² P1E Data (January '13 – September '16) – Blackpool Council

³ Based on 2016 figures for applications received per 1000 household – NPSS <http://home.practitionersupport.org>

Homelessness Applications (Jan '13 – Sept '16)



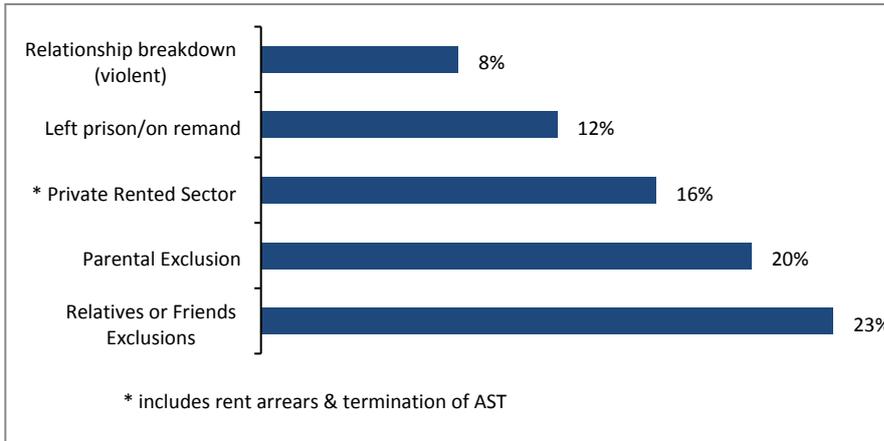
Breakdown of Homelessness Applications by category



To put this into some national perspective, in 2014/2015 Blackpool received 6.89 homeless applications per 1,000 of the local population compared to an average of 2.02 per 1,000 population nationally.

However the nature of homelessness in Blackpool is predominantly from single non-priority households and Blackpool only actually accepted the full statutory duty for 0.54 per 1000 as opposed to 1.07 per 1000 nationally in the same period.

Top 5 reasons for Homelessness (all categories) (April '15 – March '16)



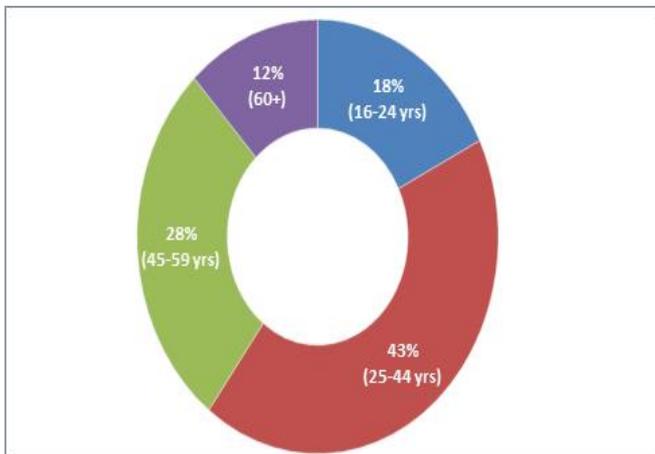
The above data represents the main causes of homelessness across all categories (statutory and non-statutory).

Nationally the main cause of homelessness is now loss of accommodation in the private rented sector; however in Blackpool it remains eviction by friends or relatives. This is still the second highest cause nationally so the picture is not significantly different, but perhaps reflects the high levels of transience and numbers of “sofa surfers” in Blackpool.

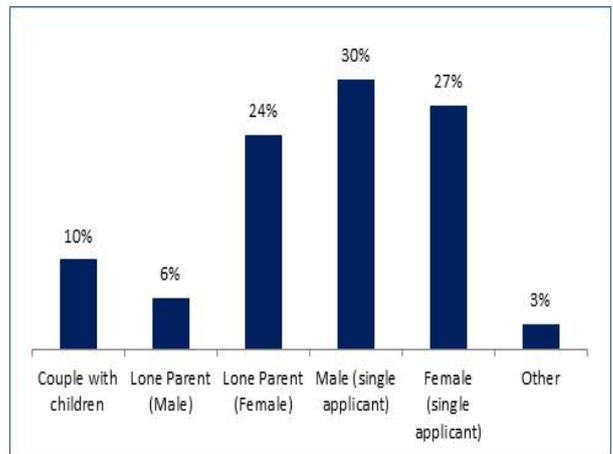
It should also be noted that nationally reasons for homelessness are only recorded for statutory households and so the comparison is not a direct one.

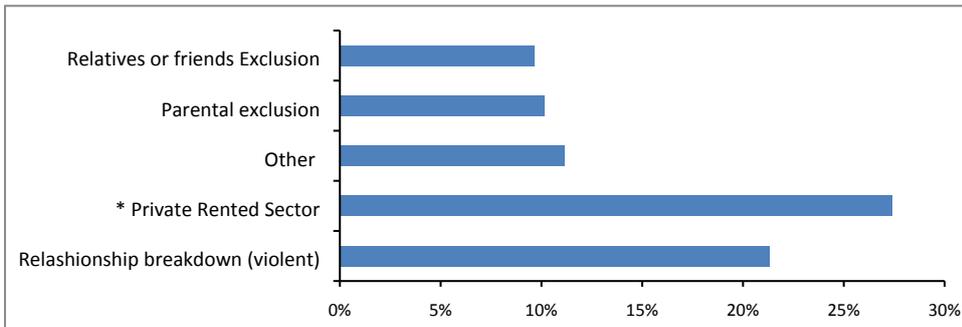
6.3 Statutory Homelessness in Blackpool

Eligible applicants (priority need) by Age Band (Jan '13 – Sept '16)



Eligible applicants (priority need) by Household Type (Jan '13 – Sept '16)



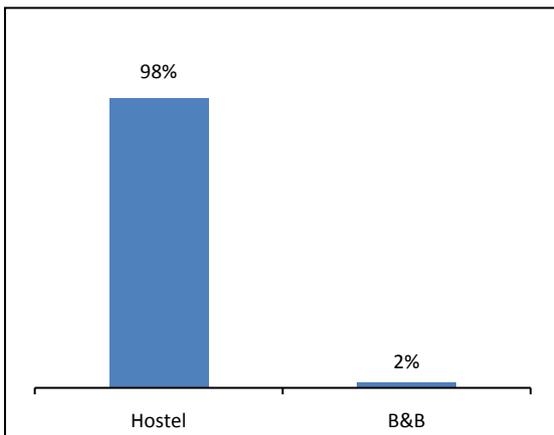


It is notable that when looking specifically at the main reasons for homelessness within the statutory groups loss of private rented sector accommodation is now the highest, which mirrors the national picture. However this is followed closely by violent relationship breakdown involving partner, which does differ from the national picture which sees an average of 12% in this category.

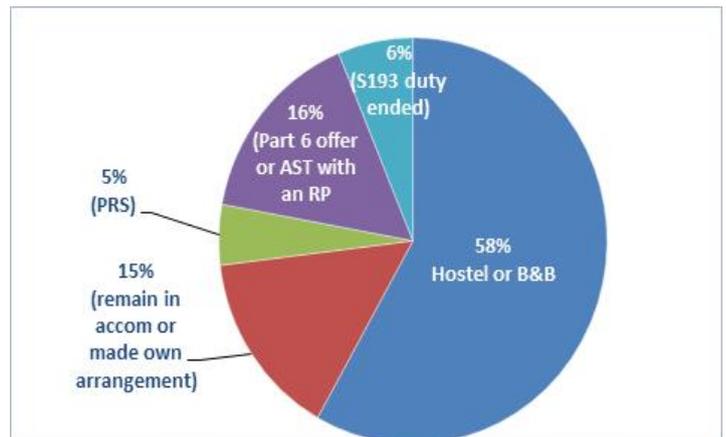
Interestingly though the North West average in this category is reported by NPSS as being 27%, so Blackpool lies somewhere in between.

6.4 Temporary accommodation and ending of duty

Accommodation at the point of initial placement (Jan '13 – Sept '16)

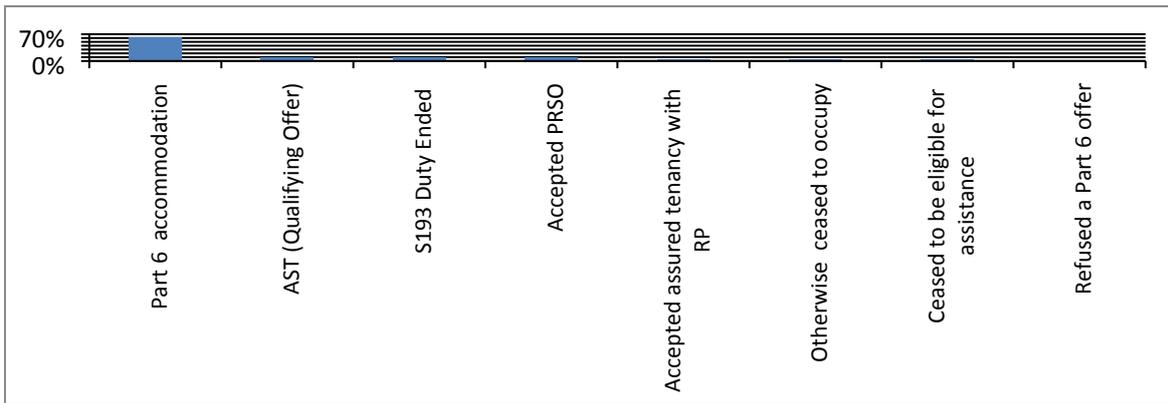


Accommodation at the point of acceptance (Jan '13 – Sept '16)



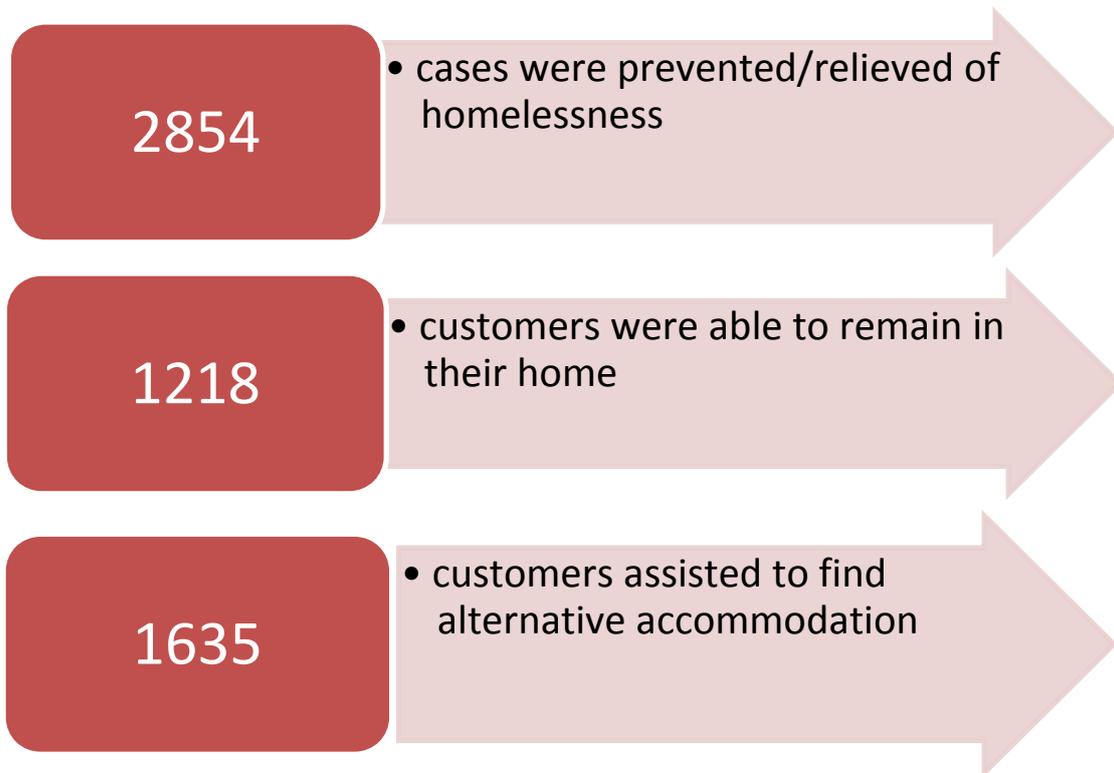
Average length of stay within temporary accommodation within the most recent year (2015/2016) was 65 days, with 98% of residents being supported to find alternative accommodation within 6 months of being placed

Ending of duty (Jan '13 – Sept '16)



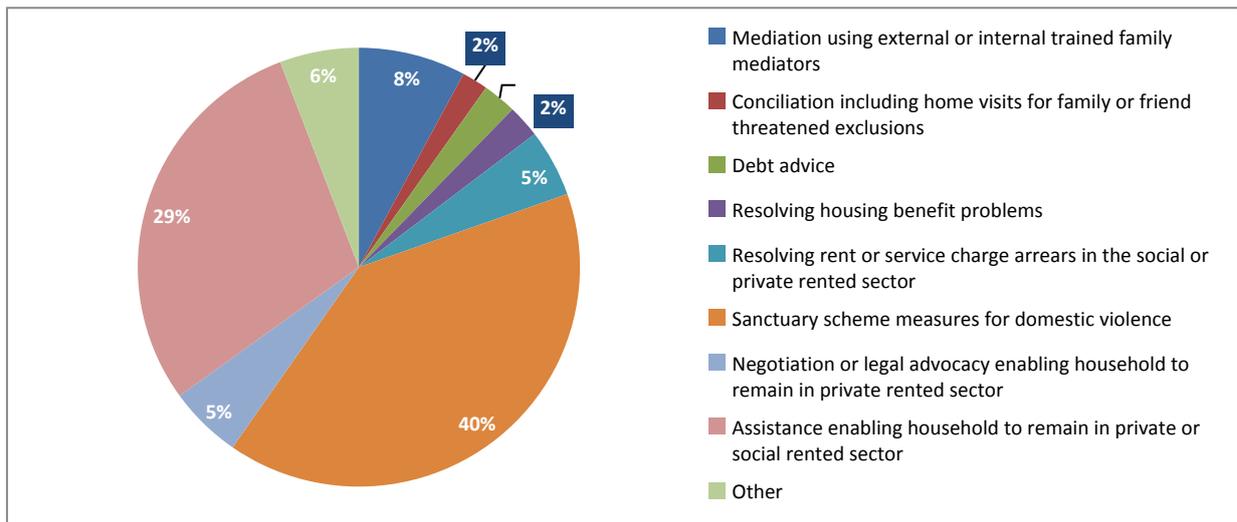
Blackpool embraced the powers in the Localism Act 2011 and has utilised the ability to discharge duty via a Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO). The table above illustrates that the majority of applicants within the period of the review have been rehoused into the social housing sector. However within the last year (2015/2016) 12% have been by way of a PRSO.

6.5 Prevention of Homelessness⁴



⁴ P1E Data (January '13 – September '16) – Blackpool Council

Prevention – able to remain in existing accommodation (Jan '13 – Sept '16)



The high levels of domestic abuse in Blackpool are reflected in the use of Sanctuary scheme measure being a key prevention tool.

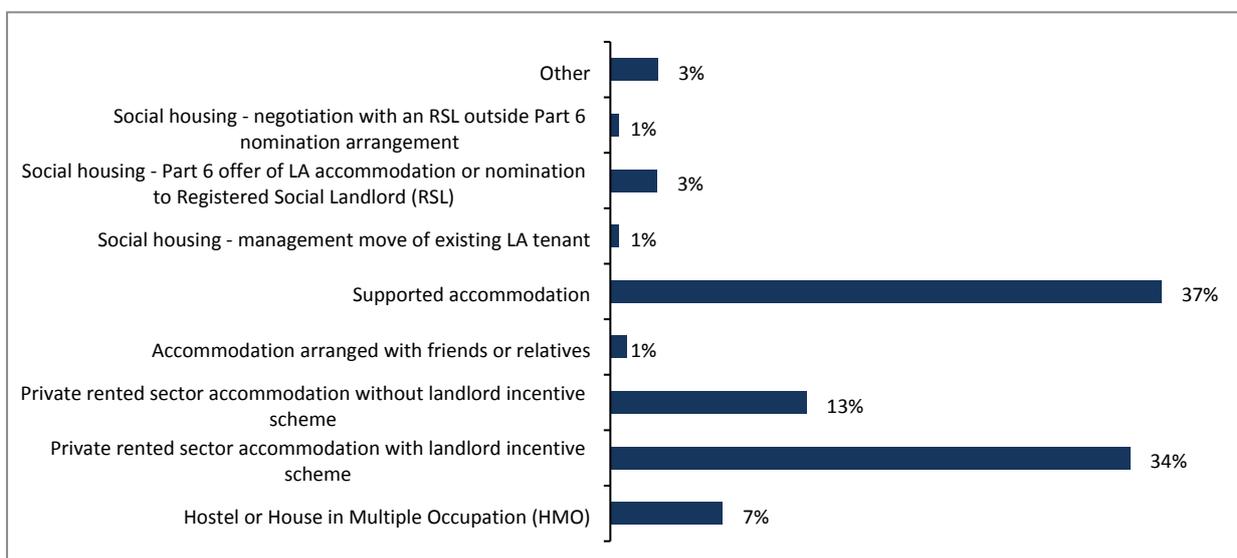
However much of the work of the Housing Options team is spent in helping people to retain their existing accommodation within the private rented sector. When adding these categories together this accounts for a total of 39% of prevention activity.

This includes the commissioned tenancy support service provided by Calico until July 2017 for which Housing Options acted as a gateway and triage service. This ensured that any crisis issues were immediately addressed and referrals for support were timely and appropriate with no waiting times.

Additionally there is a joint working process in place with the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) team, although data on how DHPs have been used to prevent homelessness has not been collated until recently.

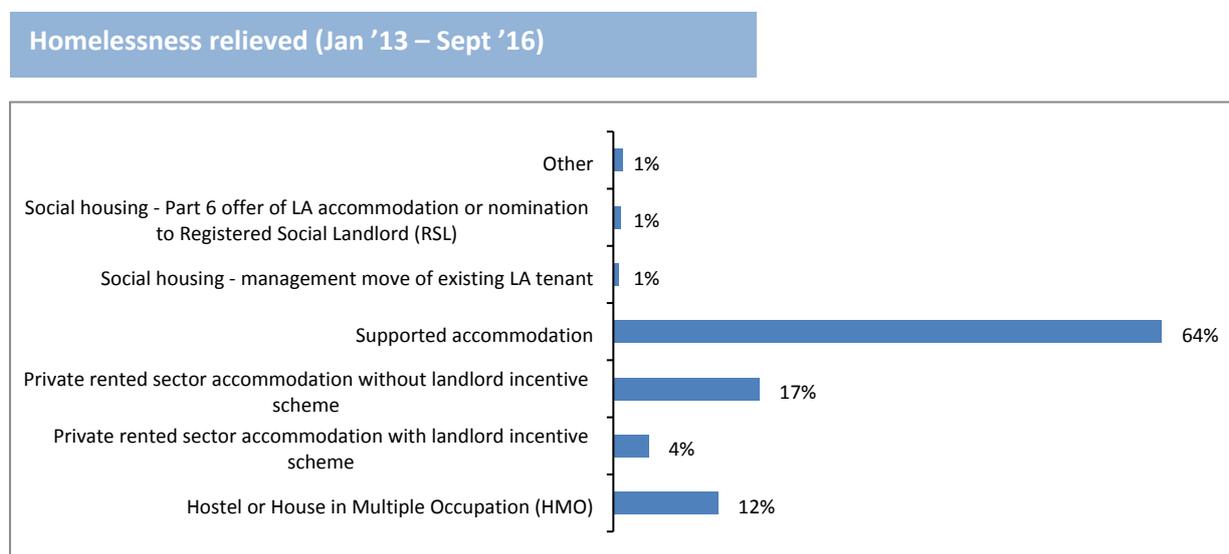
Although improvements have been made in data collection with the introduction of an IT system in 2014, there is still work to do in this area and prevention is still likely to be under recorded.

Prevention - alternative accommodation (Jan '13 – Sept '16)



BC Lettings (now My Blackpool Home) remains a key prevention tool and ensures that customers at risk of homelessness are able to access good quality, affordable accommodation in the private rented sector, with appropriate support to maintain their tenancy.

My Blackpool Home is a Council wholly owned company with a focus on regeneration but will continue to provide a much needed resource for households at risk of homelessness.



The high levels of use of supported accommodation, both in prevention and relief, reflect the nature of homelessness in Blackpool and the importance of the single point of access through the Housing Options team.

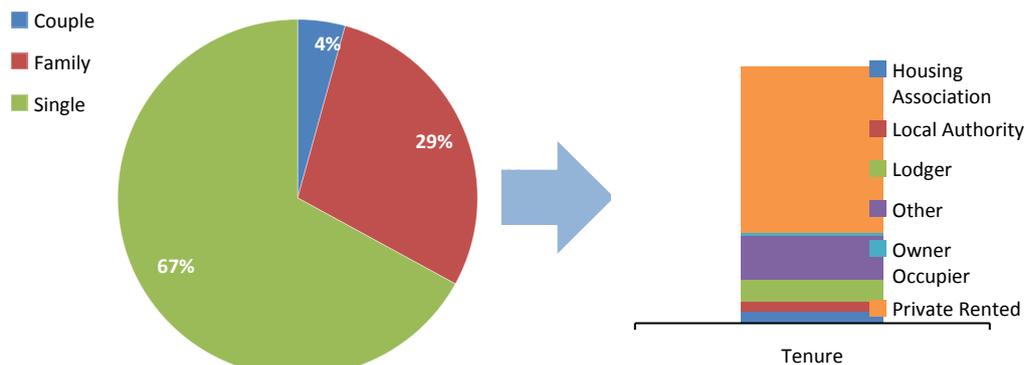
When considering earlier data on types and causes of homelessness we know that the highest concentrations of homelessness are from single people with no priority need, and the main cause of homelessness in this group is eviction from friends or relatives.

The high levels of transience and sofa surfing mean that without applying gatekeeping techniques we will inevitably we will see high levels of single homelessness.

There are a significant number of people in Blackpool who are vulnerable and lack the skills for independent living (reflected in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation) and so a provision of supported accommodation is vital; however this is often used more as “emergency” accommodation and people are able to move on quite quickly.

6.6 Housing Advice

The Council supported a total of 4,298 customers in the 18 months between April 2015 and September 2016, and of these, 1,236 received basic housing advice or guidance, compared with 1,466 triggering a full homelessness assessment and 1,596 receiving help to prevent or relief of homelessness.



Where we have been able to capture the resident’s tenure, the majority of residents receiving housing advice lived in the private rented sector, which is reflective of the local housing market.

6.6 Rough Sleeping⁵

- 125** • individuals sleeping rough in 2015/16
- 11%** • increase since last strategy
- 18%** • repeat or "chronic" rough sleepers

Although the numbers of rough sleepers are not as high as might be expected in a deprived coastal town this is still a significant issue and the impact on tourism cannot be ignored.

Whilst there has been an increase in rough sleeping this has been a smaller increase than nationally due to a proactive outreach and multi-agency approach.

Housing Options also works hard to re-connect single homeless people with no local connection to their home area. This may be to their own accommodation, accommodation with family or friends, or to support services such as the local Council.

Approximately 1/3 of all single homeless applications are from customers with no local connection; and of these approximately 2/3 are successfully reconnected back to their home town.

⁵ * Based on rough sleepers count (April 2014 – September 2017) – Blackpool Council.

** Based on Outreach Work (April 2015 – September 2016), Blackpool Council

Conclusion – position since last review

It is important to bear in mind that this review covers a 3 year period, although where relevant the last 12 months' data has been highlighted to draw out the most recent trends. There are some clear patterns and conclusions we can draw:

Things that have remained fairly consistent:

- Low levels of statutory homelessness
- High levels of single non-priority homelessness
- Very low levels of B&B usage for families
- No B&B placements for 16/17 year olds
- Sanctuary measures, assistance with obtaining private rented sector housing with landlord incentive, and use of supported housing remain the key areas of prevention and relief.
- Proportions of prevention to homelessness remain roughly the same throughout the 3 year period; and overall levels of homelessness have stabilised.

However there are some changes:

- The second highest reason for homelessness is now violent breakdown of relationship (this was previously the 3rd highest)
- Rough sleeping figures have increased – although not at the rates seen nationally
- There was a gradual but significant increase in homelessness applications taken from 2012 to 2015. This peaked in Quarter 2 of 2015, marking a 50% increase in presentations since 2012, but has remained fairly consistent since this point. This is at least partly explained by changing procedures within Housing Options, and looking further back shows that the numbers in Q2 2015 were similar to 2010/11 and still lower than 2008/9.
- In 2016/2017 there was an 8% shift from homelessness to prevention – which is positive
- However equally in that same period the percentage of basic advice cases has reduced and more cases have been “worked” as prevention – indicating increased difficulty in households being able to maintain accommodation without support due to a combination of housing market issues, deprivation and complex needs.

CHAPTER 7: HOW WE RESPOND TO HOMELESSNESS IN BLACKPOOL

Housing Options

Since the beginning of the austerity measures Housing Options, along with a number of services in Blackpool, has experienced year on year cuts, the most significant of these occurring in 2011 and again in 2014.

In 2014 a radical restructure took place which fundamentally changed the way in which the service was delivered. The service was streamlined and now has a team of generic officers who deal with everything from basic advice and assistance, to full homelessness assessments, and also applications for social housing. This allows for greater consistency and efficiency with customers normally only having to tell their story once.

To complement the new approach the reception area was also completely refurbished in 2014 to create a more welcoming environment for customers introducing a mixture of private and semi-private assessment areas, comfortable seating, access to IT and telephony, children's toys and plants.

Housing Options have consciously made the decision not to invest in automated self-assessment tools as it is felt these are a method of gatekeeping which creates a barrier between customers and professionals, and face to face contact is a much more effective method in preventing homelessness.

Additionally Housing Options have resisted embracing gatekeeping practices and will assist a customer at any stage if there is a potential risk of homelessness rather than advise people to come back later, and if an application is triggered staff are empowered to follow due process.

A range of services are currently available from Housing Options which effectively creates a "one stop shop" for anyone in housing need:

Statutory Responsibilities:

- Provide housing advice to all
- Determine homelessness applications within statutory framework
- Provide temporary accommodation to those owed a duty
- Provide long term housing to those owed a duty
- Assess and process applications for Social Housing within statutory framework (Allocations Policy)
- Provide statutory returns relating to homelessness and prevention (P1E) to Central Government
- Investigate and prosecute landlords where appropriate (e.g. illegal evictions)

Homelessness prevention:

- Mediation for young people (mainly 16-17 but can go from 15 – 19 in certain cases)
- Negotiation with landlords
- Mortgage, Debt and benefit advice
- Resolving Housing Benefit issues
- Tenancy Sustainment support
- Assist with court paperwork and intervene where necessary
- Interventions within supported housing to prevent evictions

Accommodation options:

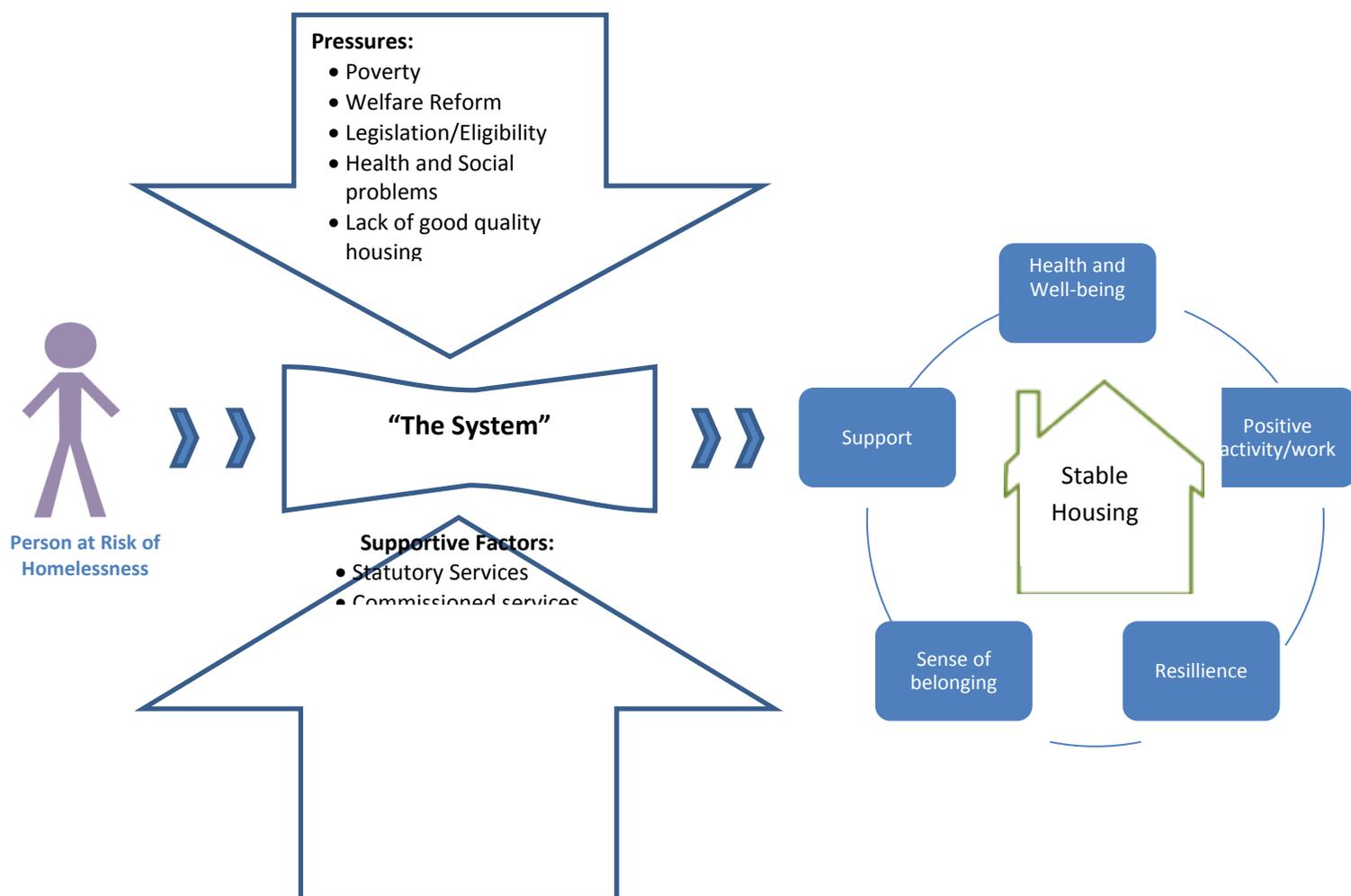
- Access to supported housing (range of providers)
- Facilitate temporary accommodation provided by BCH (priority homeless households)
- Single point of access for all social housing in Blackpool (and Fylde and Wyre) via the sub regional housing register *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast*
- Access to good quality affordable private rented housing through My Blackpool Home (Council wholly owned housing company)

Other services:

- Hospital /Health link worker
- Street Outreach
- Responsibility for the Council’s Severe Weather Emergency Protocol
- Multi Agency working, referrals, and signposting
- Homeless prevention awareness raising/training for professionals
- Enforce Council’s local connection policy and provide a re-connection offer to home area for those with no local connection
- Tenancy Training course “Key to Your Home”
- Access to Employment Advisors

Housing Options is just one part of a wider system that supports people at risk of homelessness in Blackpool:

The Homelessness System



Partnership Working

In order to alleviate the pressure on the system and increase the supportive factors, strong partnership working is critical. The Council cannot tackle homelessness alone and homelessness itself is rarely just a “housing issue”.

The issues that lead to homelessness in Blackpool are the same issues that are addressed by a number of services and agencies – homelessness is one symptom of a cocktail of transience, poverty, and social problems. So it is essential that services work together effectively to address these issues holistically.

Blackpool has an array of excellent services, and both staff and volunteers, who are passionately committed to reducing homelessness and the associated issues.

Housing Options partners include a range of internal and external stakeholders.

Internally key stakeholders include colleagues in Adult Social Care, Children’s Social Care, Public Protection, Community Safety, Public Health and Benefits.

Externally key stakeholders include:

- Blackpool Coastal Housing (the Council’s ALMO)
- My Blackpool Home (the Council’s Housing Company)
- Social Housing Providers
- Supported Accommodation Providers – both commissioned and non-commissioned
- Blackpool Food Partnership and Food Bank
- Local churches and soup kitchens
- Fulfilling Lives - lottery funded project to work with those with most complex needs
- Local drug and alcohol services
- The Police
- Probation Services – both NPS and CRC
- Shelter

Pathways and multi-agency approaches

Our commitment to partnership working has enabled us to successfully implement a number of key pathways and solutions.

These include:

- Offender Pathways – joint working with National Probation Service to identify offenders at risk of homelessness prior to release
- Rough Sleepers – multi agency targeted response to understand the demands of the client group. Enables partners to identify those that are genuinely homeless (as opposed to street drinkers/beggars) and provide effective and holistic solutions.
- Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) – partnership working with local church/soup kitchen using volunteers to deliver the town’s SWEP.

- *MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast* (Choice Based Lettings Scheme) – partnership of main social landlords across the Fylde Coast. Applications to the scheme are processed by the Housing Options team for the whole Blackpool area.

In addition, there are a number of key multi agency working groups that enable coordinated responses to protect and support people at risk of homelessness among other issues:

- MARAC – domestic abuse
- ASBRAC and ASB Working Group – anti social behaviour
- Fulfilling Lives – Strategic Board and Operational Group
- MAPPA – public protection
- Child protection conferences and team around the family meetings
- Early Help Sub Group - joint working with Children’s Social Care
- Blackpool Young People’s Service/YOT Board

Cross Boundary working and innovation

More recently a series of opportunities to work with neighbouring authorities has resulted in us being able to attract additional funding to Blackpool and share best practice.

These include:

- Help for Single Homeless Fund (2015-17) - Joint work with local authorities in Fylde, Wyre, Preston and Lancaster to develop innovative solutions to assist single (non-priority) homeless households.
In Blackpool this included the development of the Tenancy Training course, which is now funded by Adult Learning
- Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer (2017-2019) - Work with local authorities in Fylde and Wyre, using an additional £600,000 over two years for upstream prevention and innovation across the Fylde Coast.
- Domestic Abuse Accommodation (2017) - Lancashire wide bid to secure accommodation-based wrap around support, including access to employment, for DA victims with complex needs.
- More Positive Together (2017-19) – European Social Fund programme across Lancashire to provide access to education training and employment for tenants furthest away from the jobs market, via housing stabilisation and support. In Blackpool, More Positive Together work is led by Blackpool Coastal Housing and also includes Great Places.
- Fulfilling Lives Multiple and Complex Needs – This Big Lottery Fund programme has a funding allocation of £10 million over 7 years, and has been operational since September 2014. The programme partnership has made available funding to introduce a Housing First project in Blackpool from 2017.

Resources and value for money

The Housing Options budget is made up of core Council funding and funding from the Housing Revenue Account in respect of maintaining systems to access social housing. The core budget for Housing Options has reduced incrementally over the last 5 years, but especially by around a third from 2014/15.

The Housing Related Support budget, which funded supported accommodation and floating support was cut in 2014 and then ceased in October 2017. This has led to the loss of a commissioned Tenancy Sustainment service and the loss of some supported housing, with other providers struggling under increased financial pressure.

More positively, the successful Trailblazer bid has resulted in new resources being made available for 2 years to March 2019 to maintain a specialist Health Link Worker and establish new Tenancy Support provision.

Other new funding opportunities include:

- The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant – recently allocated on a new national formula that provides resources to Blackpool Council for the first time from 2017/18, and ring fenced to help reduce homelessness for at least the first two years.
- Homelessness Reduction Act New Burdens funding – £40-50,000 p.a for three years but not ring fenced.
- Discretionary Housing Payments – This essential localised fund to assist applicants eligible for housing benefit with additional housing costs has continued to be funded at consistent levels by Government.
- Housing Benefit funding for supported housing – still in consultation at time of writing but new localised funding arrangements are expected to be in place from April 2020

The introduction of the new duties in the Homelessness Reduction Act from April 2018 will place significant new burdens on Local Authorities and so it will be critical for national and local funding commitments to be secured before implementation in order for the Council to meet its new duties.

The Housing Options service currently represents good value for money with the average prevention case costing the public purse approximately £560, compared with the national average of £800. Despite a reduction in the core budget of around a third since 2011, a good service has still been maintained to similar numbers of people at risk of homelessness with increasingly complex needs.

As Blackpool already has prevention focused services, adapting to the new legislation may not be as challenging as in some areas; but we anticipate an increase in terms of both footfall created by the duty to refer, and case management with the introduction of personal action plans. In Wales the introduction of similar new duties led to the need for a 25% increase in staff numbers to manage the new burdens. The primary means of resourcing additional duties will be to make use of the new Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and New Burdens funding.

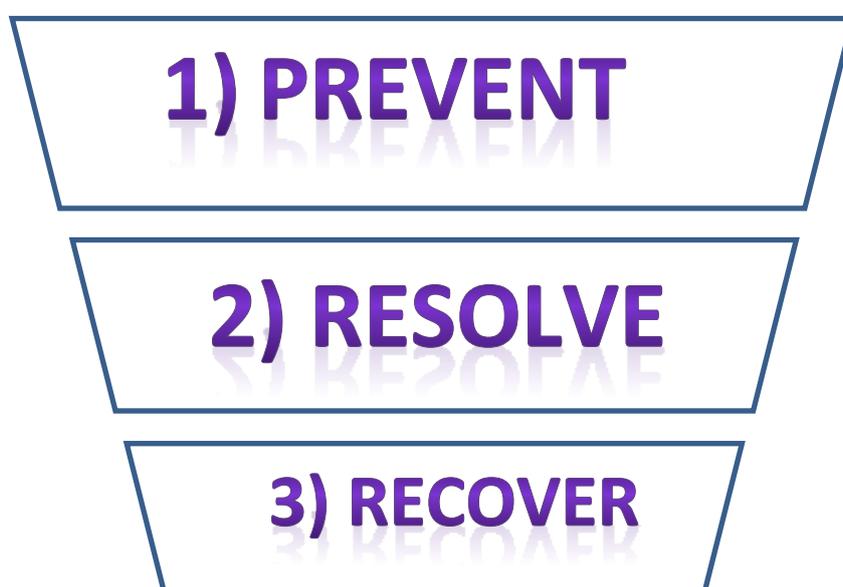
For supported housing providers, the Government's planned move from higher rate Housing Benefit payments to new local funding allocations through the local authority from April 2020 will be a fundamental change in the funding model. The level of funding awarded to Blackpool is yet to be determined, but the change represents an important opportunity and responsibility to review local needs and agree a new support strategy for the town.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGY PART 2 – The Strategy

The Scope:

The strategy focuses on three key areas, and is set within the context of the Homelessness Reduction Act:

- 1) **Prevent people becoming homeless in the first place by working with partners to identify risk and intervene earlier**
- 2) **Resolve homelessness rapidly when crisis occurs, so that harm is minimized**
- 3) **Help more people avoid repeat homelessness, getting them back on their feet by providing long term solutions**



It is equally important to ensure strong approaches in all three areas, but we aim to reduce the need for crisis resolution and recovery by providing support to more people at the prevention stage. The findings from the review indicate the following key pressures and challenges in working in these key areas:

- Domestic Abuse is the second highest reason for homelessness in Blackpool and there is a distinct lack of suitable accommodation for complex needs victims
- Rough sleeping has increased and this requires a proactive and continuous targeted approach
- There is still some work to do upstream to increase the proportion of customers whose homelessness is prevented, to those whose isn't.
- There are an increasing proportion of clients presenting with multiple and complex needs, who require a holistic approach

- The poor quality private rented sector and low wage economy continues to drive transience and deprivation, which directly impacts on the levels of homelessness.
- There is very limited budget provision for supported housing locally, and the national funding mechanism remains unclear.
- The Homelessness Reduction Act will bring further challenges in respect of new ways of working and increased demand for advice, support and accommodation.

There are, however, a number of strengths and opportunities which will support Blackpool to achieve its ambitions:

- Blackpool already has a prevention focus and provides support to non-statutory groups so the principles of the Homelessness Reduction Act will be relatively easy to adopt, and new funding should mitigate against the impact of increased workloads
- Housing Options has a relatively stable team of motivated experienced officers which enables organisational resilience.
- There are strong partnerships in the town with other statutory and non-statutory services, that enable us to pool resources
- There is a strong and co-ordinated 3rd sector response which provides vital additional services to homeless people, particularly rough sleepers
- There continues to be a large supply of private rented accommodation that is accessible to people who need to find a new home, with the team at My Blackpool Home (formerly BC Lets) working to ensure that homes are better quality
- Blackpool, with partners across Lancashire, has recently been successful in bidding for funds to secure accommodation based wrap around support, including access to employment, for Domestic Abuse victims with complex needs.
- The More Positive Together project, managed by Blackpool Coastal Housing, will provide access to education training and employment for those furthest away from the jobs market, whilst stabilising the living conditions of tenants both in the social and private rented sector
- The development of Blackpool Young People's Service allows an opportunity to support young people at an earlier stage through robust joint working arrangements and the application of the Positive Pathways model

There are also particular opportunities as a result of Blackpool Council working in partnership with Wyre and Fylde Councils as part of a national network of Homelessness Prevention Trailblazers, who are charged by Government, in advance of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA), with "going further and faster with reform to homelessness services, and preventing more homelessness up stream".

The Trailblazer activity, which takes us up to 2019, includes 6 key work streams which directly relate to the three key focus areas:

1. Raise awareness of the signs and impacts of homelessness within other public services
2. Early Identification and tracking of housing issues across the Fylde Coast
3. Further develop access to the private rented sector in Fylde and Wyre
4. Better accommodation options for all individuals, regardless of statutory duties
5. Meaningful housing support for people with multiple and complex needs
6. Create pathways from homelessness to education, training and work

This strategy will help deliver the Council's priorities within the Council Plan:

Priority one - The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool

Social and economic drivers are clear factors in the high incidence of homelessness in Blackpool. But delivering effective support to prevent and relieve homelessness has an important role to play in supporting the local economy.

Reducing transience and rough sleeping has a direct positive impact on the local visitor economy which remains the town's largest economic sector.

Homelessness services also have an important role to play in driving forward regeneration and helping to tackle the issues associated with the private rented sector. We can only bring about sustained improvements to make areas more attractive by combining physical changes with people-focused interventions that help strengthen the local community and promote more positive lifestyles.

As we take a more holistic approach to dealing with the issues in individuals' lives that can precipitate homelessness, we are looking to help people to find more meaningful activity and in time find work. A crisis event like the threat of homelessness can be an important opportunity for people to be open to accepting support and looking for work, so it is important for homelessness services to be working hand in hand with employment support services.

Effective homelessness prevention services also reduce costs to other public services. Examples include providing accommodation for an estranged 17 year old who might otherwise be accommodated by Children's Social Care, or accommodating an older person in adapted accommodation which reduces the need for an extensive package of care. An average person rough sleeping over 12 months is estimated to cost the public purse in the region of £24,000 through additional local authority, health and police service costs.

Priority two - Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience

In trying to create stronger communities it is essential that we tackle homelessness, and the causes of homelessness.

The impacts on health and health services are significant:

- 41% of homeless people reported a long-term health problem compared with 28% of the general population.
- 45% had been diagnosed with a mental health problem compared with 25% of the general population.
- 36% had taken drugs in the past compared with 5% of the general population
- 77% are regular smokers compared with 20% of the general population
- Accident and Emergency visits per homeless person are four times higher than for the general public

And in relation to children and families:

- Homeless children are two to three times more likely to be absent from school than other children
- Children in unfit and overcrowded homes miss school more frequently due to illnesses and infections.
- Homeless children are more likely to have behavioural problems such as aggression, hyperactivity and impulsivity

There are also impacts on criminality with offenders who are homeless being almost twice as likely to be reconvicted in the first year after release, compared with those with stable accommodation.

The key therefore to avoiding both ruined lives for the individual, and escalating costs to services, has to lie in prevention and rapid response, and building resilience with those at risk of homelessness, so that they are able to play a full and productive role in their community.

Objectives

Under the 3 key focus areas sit a number of objectives that make up the body of the strategy and direct the action plan.

Focus Area 1 – PREVENT

Prevent people becoming homeless in the first place by working with partners to identify risk and intervene earlier

Homelessness has a knock on effect on people's lives and life chances resulting in an increase in negative health outcomes, school attendance and even offending. The power of decent accommodation and timely intervention cannot therefore be underestimated.

In order to stem the tide of increasing homelessness we need to tackle the underlying issues of poverty and the social factors associated with this.

Objectives under the focus area:

- Raise awareness with other agencies of early signs of homelessness
- Analyse where demand originates from to ensure pathways are in place for all at risk groups.
- Ensure pathways to work are embedded in all homelessness services, including those offered by 3rd sector partners
- Provide an appropriate range of accommodation, support, and advice for all young people, not just those who are homeless
- Ensure clear and integrated housing pathways are in place with Blackpool Young People's Service and ensure that the Council is safe from legal challenge following the Southwark ruling so that 16/17 year olds presenting as homeless receive an effective response
- Actively target customers known to have a history of repeat homelessness and use strength based and psychologically informed techniques to "break the cycle" helping them to access and maintain appropriate accommodation
- Adopt "no first night out" principles to prevent rough sleeping

Examples of actions associated with this Focus Area

- Awareness raising with internal and external stakeholders around initial signs and symptoms of potential homelessness and respective duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act
- Referral pathways/joint processes in place with public services to facilitate the “Duty to Refer” and enable demand to be managed.
- Pathways for all key at risk groups in place, including, but not limited to, those listed within the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- Joint working with More Positive Together to build pathways from homelessness to work
- 16/17 year old joint protocol in place and integrated into Blackpool Young People’s Service.
- Housing provision for young people continually monitored and developed through the Positive Transitions Steering Group.

Focus Area 2 – RESOLVE

Resolve homelessness rapidly when crisis occurs, so that harm is minimized

It is relatively easy to arrange for a roof over someone’s head to relieve immediate homelessness in Blackpool. We have a strong service that can help most residents who find themselves homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. The Homelessness Reduction Act is likely to lead to even more demand, so it is important to further strengthen systems and access to accommodation.

But it is increasingly difficult to house people with a history of unacceptable behaviour, and we know that appropriate support and help to address destructive habits is the only way to get people settled.

We also continue to see thousands of people arriving in Blackpool each year at a time of crisis in their lives looking for somewhere to escape to. For many people who already have chaotic lives, coming to a new town that already has a number of entrenched social issues with no family or support networks, only exacerbates their problems. We maintain a robust disconnection policy to help get people back home but cannot make people return. One indicator of this is that the majority of rough sleepers in Blackpool have no local connection.

Objectives under the focus area:

- Ensure that both families and single people can access decent quality emergency accommodation when it is needed and ensure the quickest possible transition to a permanent new home
- Further improve access to quality private sector accommodation through My Blackpool Home
- Revise and improve access to social housing through the My Home Choice system
- Develop appropriate accommodation and support options for those with multiple and complex needs, working with a range of partners to provide holistic solutions
- Enable staff to respond more fully to chaotic service users when they are open to change (“windows of opportunity”)
- Review the supported housing needs within the town and work to ensure an adequate supply of quality accommodation when the new funding framework is introduced in April 2020
- Continue to work closely with the Benefits team to ensure the best use of Discretionary Housing Payments
- Further develop partnership working to address rough sleeping and begging, maintaining a coherent mix of enforcement, pressure and appropriate support
- Continue to apply a robust re-connection policy embedded throughout housing, homelessness and associated services

Examples of actions associated with this Focus Area

- Analyse outcomes of multi-agency targeted approach to Rough Sleeping and put systems in place to retain effectiveness
- Develop Housing First Model for entrenched Rough Sleepers
- New processes in place on the use of DHP to reflect new duties of the Homelessness Reduction Act
- Utilise the powers in the Homelessness Reduction Act to re-connect homeless people effectively to their home area under the “duty to relieve”

Focus Area 3 – RECOVER

Help more people avoid repeat homelessness, getting them back on their feet by providing long term solutions

Homelessness should be transitional, not a way of life, but for too many people homelessness becomes almost an institution in itself, whereby people move in and out of supported accommodation provision or receive short interventions and keep falling through the gaps and back into services.

There is a general tendency in Blackpool for tenancies to break down because of the prevalence of poor quality of accommodation in the private rented sector, and some tenants’ unacceptable behaviour.

Homelessness services can provide vital support to enable people to meet their basic human need of shelter at times of crisis, but people need to be better equipped to deal with deep-rooted issues and the problems life throws at them.

Objectives under the focus area:

- Establish new tenancy support that is assertive and encourages responsibility and independence
- Ensure that supported housing services commissioned through the new funding framework, or taking Council referrals, focus on sustained change and pathways to work.
- Ensure that financial barriers to work are minimised in supported housing schemes
- Continue to embed Tenancy Training programmes that are tailored to a range of audiences.
- Apply the Headstart Resilience Framework when working with families, and explore applying the principles with chaotic single people
- Help ensure that staff across the homelessness system in Blackpool are trained in consistent therapeutic approaches that can address underlying trauma
- Develop a more joined up offer of support with partners in substance misuse, mental health, social services, probation, and multiple and complex needs services
- Challenge poor quality accommodation in the private rented sector, working closely with the Housing Enforcement team and helping tenants to understand and exercise their rights.

Examples of actions associated with this Focus Area :

- Develop in-house tenancy support service to work with more complex needs clients with step down arrangements to More Positive Together
- Develop and deliver young person centred Tenancy Training programme in co-ordination with Blackpool Young People’s Service
- Work with frontline services and providers within the homelessness/housing sector to develop a PIE model throughout the town

Governance:

The delivery and development of services under this strategy will be monitored through Blackpool Council.

An action plan will be developed following agreement of the strategy and will be owned by the Council and partners in the Blackpool and Fylde Coast Homelessness Partnerships. The Homelessness Partnerships are made up of statutory and 3rd sector partners and will monitor activity and progress against the action plan and review and develop the plan to reflect changing circumstances over the lifetime of this strategy. The action plan is intended to be a plan for all agencies in the town that are committed to tackling homelessness and not just a work plan for the Council’s Housing Options service.

Performance Indicators:

From April 2018, as a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act implementation, central government will radically reform the way they collect performance data from Local Authorities.

The new data collection will receive household level rather than aggregated local authority level data. It will cover a broader range of households, including all those who receive homelessness assistance from their local authority rather than, as now, focusing primarily on those households that authorities are currently legally obliged to help under the statutory homeless definition.

In addition to adhering to the national data collection requirements, Blackpool Council has set a number of local performance indicators to directly assess the impact and delivery of objectives within the new Homelessness Prevention Strategy:

	Indicator	Baseline 2016/17	Target
Focus Area 1 – Prevent	Of all successful prevention cases, what proportion remain in their own home vs. those who are supported to find alternative accommodation	N/A	Target to be developed – an increasing percentage to remain in their own home
	Of cases owed a prevention duty under the new legislation (homeless within 56 days), what proportion are successfully resolved under the prevention duty vs. those who go on to trigger the relief duty	N/A	Target to be developed – an increasing percentage to be addressed under the prevention duty

	Of households who become homeless and present to the Housing Options service, what proportion present again within a 12 month period	11%	9%
	Of those who are homeless and aged 16-17, how many statutory homelessness applications are taken within each year.	25	0
Focus Area 2 – Resolve	Of households placed in temporary accommodation, what is the average length of time spent in temporary accommodation	56.5 days	45 days
	Of those who trigger the relief duty, what proportion are successfully accommodated within 56 days and do not go on to make a formal homelessness application.	N/A	Target to be developed - an increasing percentage to be accommodated within 56 days
Focus Area 3 - Recover	Of identified rough sleepers, what proportion have more than one period of rough sleeping within a 6 month period	21 %	17 %
	Of households who receive directive Tenancy Support, what proportion successfully maintain their tenancy throughout a 12 month period	67 %	80%

Baseline figures are included based on 2016 – 2017 data were available, but not where indicators relate to the new duties of the Homelessness Reduction Act.