

The Prevention of Homelessness Strategy Draft



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Introduction

The prevention of homelessness is a key priority of Chorley Council, and the Housing Options team and other functions of the Strategic Housing service are heavily focused towards this goal. This Prevention of Homelessness Review and Strategy 2016-19 fulfils the Council's statutory requirements under the Homelessness Act 2002 to carry out a review of homelessness in the borough, and to publish a strategy. This document replaces the previous Prevention of Homelessness Review and Strategy 2012-16.

The purpose of the homelessness review is to:

- review the levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness in Chorley;
- review activities which are carried out for any purposes of homelessness prevention and securing accommodation or support for households who are homeless, threatened with, becoming homeless or returning to homelessness in Chorley; and
- review the resources available to Chorley and its partners, for the activities stated in the paragraph above.

The review will be published together with the strategy and be available online or in Chorley Council's Civic Office.

The purpose of the homelessness strategy is to manifest how the Council will implement:

- the prevention of homelessness in Chorley;
- the securing of accommodation for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in Chorley; and
- the securing of the satisfactory provision of support for homeless households or those who have been homeless and need support to prevent them returning to homelessness.

Chorley Council will have regard to this strategy when discharging its functions in relation to homelessness.

Scope of the Strategy

The scope of this strategy is to provide prevention measures and services primarily for those living in or with a local connection (or recognised link or need, such as domestic violence) to Chorley, and for those where there is a specific need, duty or request for a specific service and where this is appropriate. It is not the case that households will have to be homeless in order to access or benefit from any of the measures within this strategy. It is the aspiration of Government and all stakeholders delivering or engaged in these services that households are able to access appropriate, good quality housing advice long before there is a risk of homelessness or a crisis point is reached.

Homelessness can be defined in many ways and can mean different things depending on the person or household experiencing it.

The legal definition of 'homeless' is contained in three inter-related sections of the Housing Act 1996, part 7. Taken together these sections provide that a person is homeless if he or she:

1. Has no accommodation physically available for him or her to occupy in the UK or elsewhere;

2. Has no accommodation available which he or she is legally entitled occupy;
3. Has accommodation which is available and which he or she is legally entitled to occupy but cannot secure entry to that accommodation or;
4. Has accommodation available which he or she is entitled to occupy but that accommodation consists of a moveable structure and there is no place where the applicant is entitled or permitted both to place and reside in it or;
5. Has accommodation available, which he or she is entitled to occupy and entry can be secured to it, but that accommodation is not reasonable to continue to occupy.

Irrespective of this definition, not everyone qualifies for help from the Councils under the homelessness legislation. It can be said that within the framework of Housing Options services in each respective Council, there are those to whom the Council owes one or a number of legal duties, and there are those to whom no duty is owed, however these customers are still able to access a variety of housing services.

There are a number of legal duties and powers contained within the Housing Act 1996 part 7 ('Homelessness') ranging from the duty to notify of a decision to an obligation to provide accommodation. In order to determine if a duty is owed, the Councils are required to make enquiries in order to assess if an applicant is eligible, homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days, has a priority need, and is not intentionally homeless.

Pending these enquiries, in certain circumstances there are duties to provide interim accommodation and to provide assistance with the storage of belongings. Where all the required tests are satisfied and an acceptance is made, the full or main housing duty will be owed. This requires the Council to 'secure that accommodation is available for occupation by the applicant and his household'. The law does not state for how long this period of accommodation should be and the new provisions of the Localism Act will enable Councils to discharge this duty by providing a 12 month Assured Shorthold tenancy in the private rented sector (although the council has decided against discharging its duty into the private sector this far).

Homelessness services will to some extent be reactive and must provide for those cases in crisis, however the strategic aim is to provide measures which result in these cases being the exceptions rather than the rule.

Further, there are measures proposed which may mean that the customer accessing them is never in a position to be at risk of homelessness, for example by accessing the Select Move Choice Based Lettings scheme and therefore planning ahead.

National Context

The Government's main policy initiatives in relation to homelessness have not been changed or superseded since the previous strategy. The latest of the initiatives *Making Every Contact Count : A Joint Approach to Preventing Homelessness* (DCLG) 2012 , which followed the nationwide roll out of No Second Night Out NSNO) also in 2012. Chorley Council has embraced the principles of NSNO and has robust procedures for assisting people sighted or reported as rough sleeping, which are normally reported through the national rough sleeper website/phone line 'Streetlink'. In Spring 2015 three Supreme Court cases, Hotak, Kanu and Johnson, changed how Local Authorities deal with vulnerability and equality when making homelessness decisions, in particular replacing the 'Pereira Test' on vulnerability.

The housing benefit reduction for under-occupancy was introduced in April 2013 for social tenants of a working age, along with removal of full Council Tax support for working age claimants in the same month. The benefit cap of £500 per week for couples/single parents, and £350 per week for

single people was introduced in September 2013. Universal Credit (UC) was introduced by the Welfare Reform Act 2012, and replacing the system of benefits and tax credits with a single direct monthly payment, and UC was rolled out for new single/couple claimants in November 2014, and new family claimants in February 2015. Whilst the extension of the 'Shared Accommodation Rate' to 25 to 34 year olds began in January 2012, it was reasonably new at the introduction of the previous strategy, and like all the welfare changes above, provided new challenges over the period of the 2012-16 Strategy.

Following the General Election in May 2015, and the subsequent budget in July, legislation has emerged that impacts on housing and homelessness. The Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015, was introduced in the House of Commons on 9 July 2015, with a focus on reducing benefits and increasing employment. The main elements of the bill that concern homelessness are as follows:

- A reduction in benefit cap to £20,000 PA for couples/single parents, and £13,400 PA for single people;
- Freezing most working age benefits plus certain of Working Tax Credit and Child Benefit for 4 years from April 2016;
- Limiting the child element in tax credits/UC to 2 children for claims/births after April 2017;
- Abolishing the family element in tax credits/UC for new claims from 2017;
- Employment Support Allowance (ESA) claimants in the Work Related Activity group will have the rate reduced to Job Seekers Allowance levels from April 2017;
- The reduction in youngest child age for UC claimants to 2 (from 3) for work preparation requirements, and 3 (from 5) for full work related requirements (available for and looking for work).
- The reduction in rents for social landlords by 1% each year for 4 years from April 2016.

Also in the Summer Budget 2015, 18 to 21 year olds who receive UC will need to apply for an apprenticeship or traineeship, gain work-based skills, or go on a mandatory work placement by April 2017 or lose their entitlement. This 18 to 21 year old UC measure is expected to be implemented by future regulation.

The Housing and Planning Bill 2015 was introduced in the House of Commons on 13th October 2015, and contains legislation on the following which could have a particular impact on housing and homelessness:

- 'Starter Homes' will impact on the numbers of new social homes delivered via planning obligations, however enough detail is not yet known to estimate the extent;
- The extension of Right to Buy discounts to Housing Association tenants will also impact on the supply of social housing;
- Private Rented Sector measures giving Local Authorities greater powers to identify and tackle 'rogue landlords';
- Measures to assist Private Landlords to recover abandoned properties;
- Stricter tests for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licenses including management arrangements;

- Measures to allow rent recovery from Private Landlords if they have committed a specific offence;
- Mandatory rent for high income social tenants, which may therefore accelerate Right to Buy;
- Paves the way for future regulation to reduce social housing regulation.

The Housing and Planning Bill 2015 is underpinned by the nation’s aspiration for home ownership, however it may not be entirely conducive to meeting the needs of the majority of households who are threatened with homelessness, and looks likely to reduce the supply of social housing.

Local Context

Chorley is a borough with a prime strategic location central Lancashire. The borough has a population of 111,607 (mid-year population estimate 2007) and 49,157 households (Ctax Base 2015). Chorley is considered substantially rural, with 7 rural wards out of 20 and around a 1/5th of the population in the rural areas. Chorley is well served with the motorway network in particularly the M61, as well the M6 and M65 running through the borough. There are three train stations in the Chorley allowing quick access to Manchester, Preston, Liverpool and beyond.

Chorley Council has the vision of being: “***an ambitious council that achieves more listening to the whole community and exceeding their needs***” expressed in the Corporate Strategy 2014, and has the following strategic objectives:

- Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all;
- A strong local economy;
- Clean, safe and healthy communities;
- An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.

The Prevention of Homelessness Strategy shares the corporate vision and strives to meet all 4 of the Corporate Strategy’s objectives and this is demonstrated in the action plan (Appendix A).

Housing Supply and Demand in Chorley

Chorley has a reasonably balanced housing market when compared to the other Local Authorities in the North West. Homes are more affordable than the regional average when comparing incomes to lower quartile median entry level housing, as well empty dwelling percentages being lower than the regional average, which is unique in the Lancashire area. Chorley has over-performed compared to similar authorities consistently providing large volumes of affordable housing.

Table 1

Affordable Housing Delivered in Chorley by Year			
Year/Tenure	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
All New Affordable Housing	183	129	165
New Social Housing	104	106	136

Source: Chorley Council Data

The numbers of new affordable homes delivered in Chorley has seen year on year increases if the Government's equity loan products are taken out of the equation (Help to Buy introduced in 2013/14 could not be classed as affordable) as can be seen in table 1 above when just looking at new Social Housing (Social or Affordable Rent). The increase delivery of social housing is also reflected in the increased lets in the borough when looking at Select Move data in table 2 below with new homes making up around 1/5th of total lets

Table 2

Chorley Social Housing Let Via Select Move by Year					
Bedrooms/Year	1	2	3	4+	Total
2012/13	204	225	121	11	561
2013/14	189	269	151	7	616
2014/15	180	287	157	14	638

Source: Select Move Data

Looking at the Census data on households, Chorley is predominantly owner occupied, with an increasing amount of households owning their properties outright. The PRS has increased significantly over the ten year period, and whilst social housing looks to have fallen, possibly due to right to buy towards the start of the century, the figure currently expected to be around 6,500 increased by constant new developments. The census figures are likely to be unreported at the time due to empty properties, non-responses and the lack of understanding of tenure, which can be seen in table 3 as there has been no homes 'rented from the council' since the March 2007 stock transfer to Chorley Community Housing.

Whilst the percentage of social housing is relatively low in the borough, research such as the SHMA in 2009 and Rural Housing Needs Study in 2011 have identified high levels of aspiration for home ownership which are generally reflected in the tenure mix of the area.

Table 3

Tenure of Household in Chorley from Census	2011		2001	
All households	<u>44,919</u>	<u>100.0%</u>	<u>41022</u>	<u>100.0%</u>
Owned	33,783	75.2%	32131	78.3%
Owned outright	15,906	35.4%	13339	32.5%
Owned with a mortgage or loan	17,877	39.8%	18792	45.8%
Shared ownership (part owned and part rented)	283	0.6%	352	0.9%
Social rented	5,843	13.0%	5901	14.4%
Rented from council (Local Authority)	1,376	3.1%	3118	7.6%
Other	4,467	9.9%	2783	6.8%
Private rented	4,587	10.2%	1993	4.9%
Private landlord or letting agency	4,066	9.1%	1685	4.1%
Other	521	1.2%	308	0.8%
Living rent free	423	0.9%	645	1.6%

Source: Office for National Statistics

Since April 2011 Chorley Council the majority of social stock in the borough has let through the Select Move, which is the sub-regional Choice Based Lettings partnership for Central Lancashire, including Preston and South Ribble councils and most Registered Providers in the sub-region. Chorley Council meets its Part IV obligation under the Housing Act 1986 to provide an allocation scheme via Select Move.

Demand by bedroom size on the housing register can be seen in the table below as of the end of August 2015 in table 4. Band A to C are the reasonable preference bands with A being the highest priority. 25% of current Housing Register applicants are considered to be in reasonable preference categories. It can also be seen that the vast majority of need, 86%, is for smaller properties with one or two bedrooms.

Table 4

Chorley Select Move Households as of 31st August 2015						
Band/Bedroom Need	A	B	C	D	E	Total
1	12	53	77	127	217	487
2	6	17	48	115	134	322
3	1	5	7	49	32	97
4+	1	4	3	14	16	38
Total	20	79	135	305	399	938

Source: Select Move Data

The number of Chorley households on the Housing Register as seen a steady decrease over the past 3 years as shown in table 5. This is partly due to changes to the Allocations Policy following the Localism Act 2011, which were implemented in February 2014, and also assisted by the excellent delivery of new social housing within the borough.

Table 5

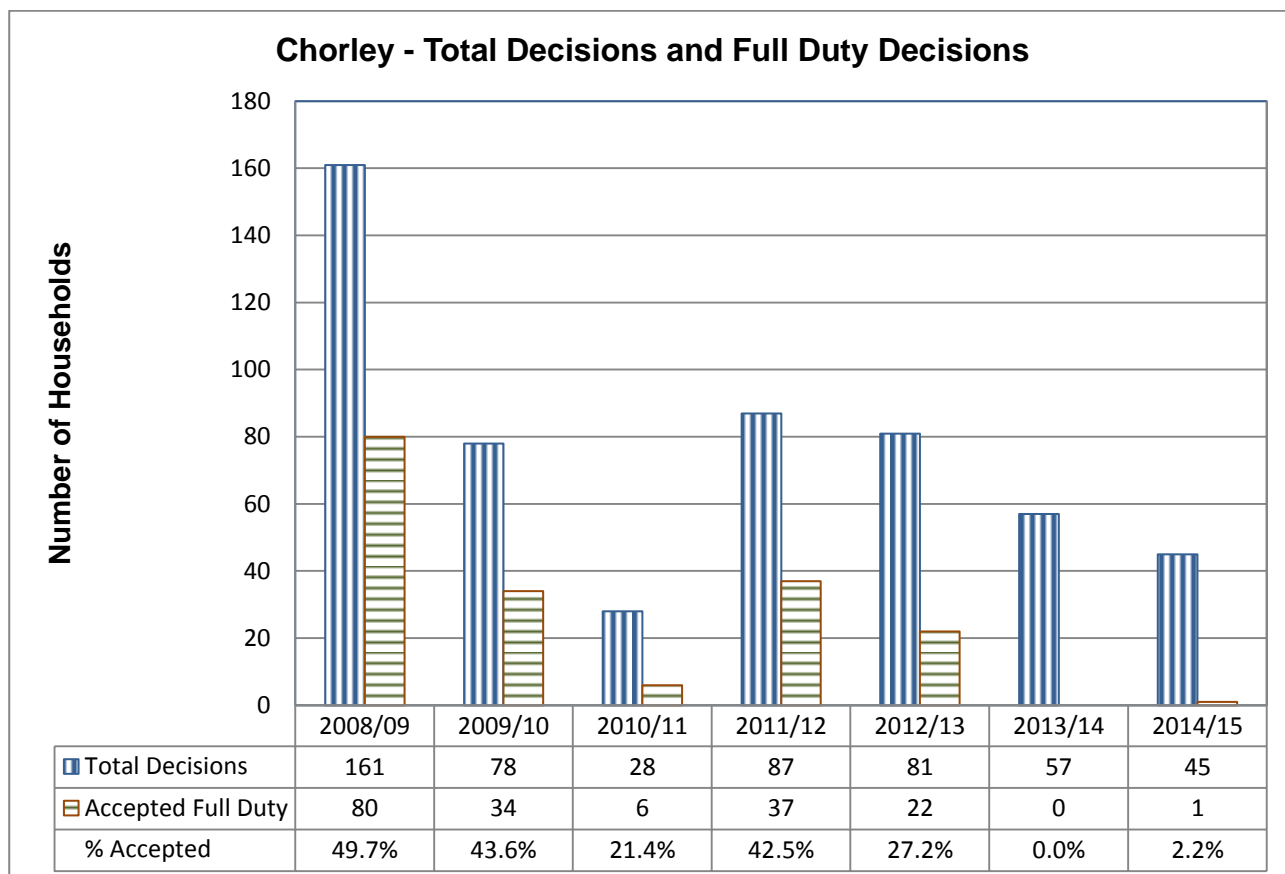
Chorley Select Move Households at Year End by Bedroom Need					
Bedroom Need/Year	1	2	3	4+	Total
2012/13	834	519	140	31	1524
2013/14	598	371	107	39	1115
2014/15	542	343	96	34	1015

Source: Select Move Data

Homelessness Presentations and Decisions

With a strong focus on preventing homelessness in the borough the number of homelessness decisions have seen significant reductions over the last four years reducing from 87 in 201/12 .to 45 in 2014/15, a drop of 48%. The drop over the last 4 years for decisions wasn't as drastic as can be seen between 2008/09 and 2010/11 (see figure 1 below), however the recent downward trend is encouraging and a reflection of the holistic prevention work carried out by the Housing Options team.

Figure 1

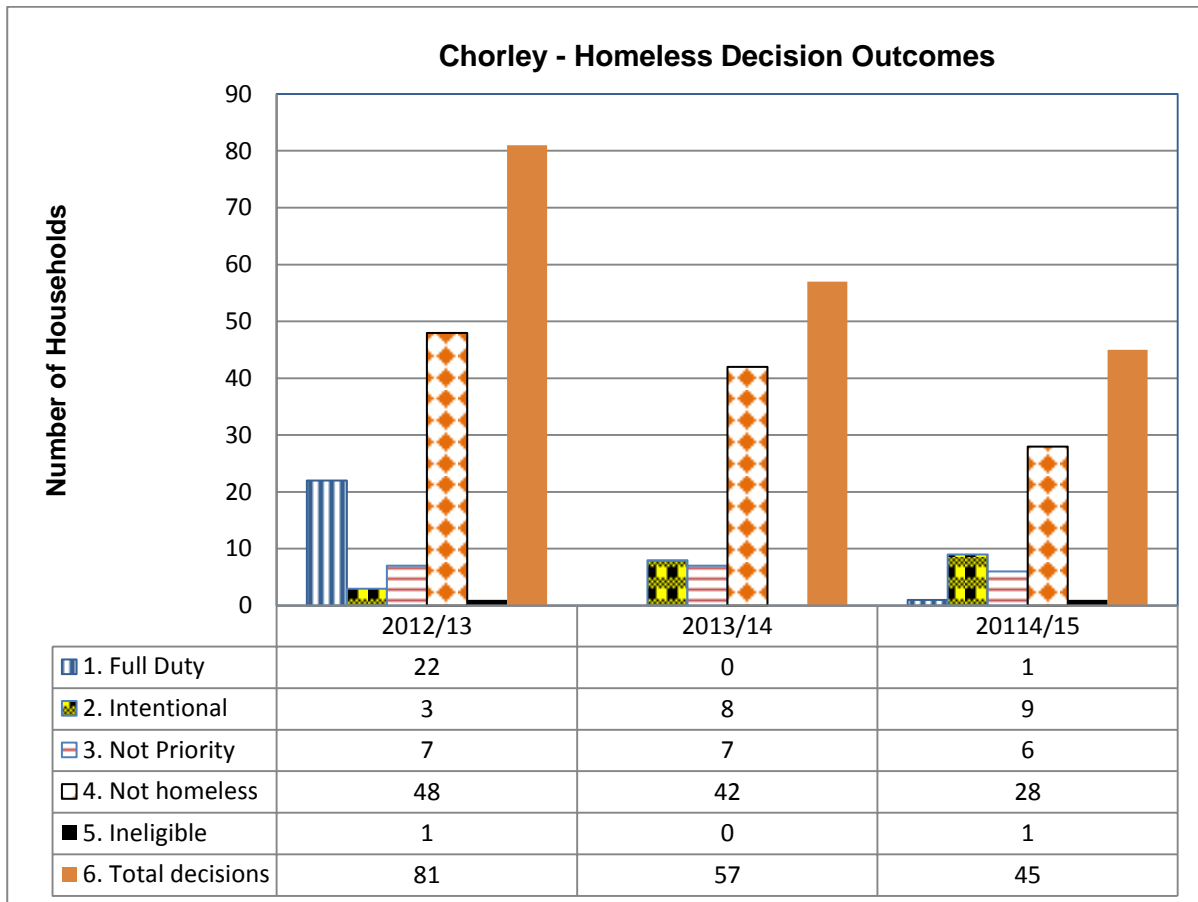


Source: Chorley Housing Options Data

The number of homeless applicants given a decision of ‘eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need’, has fallen drastically to residual levels, with only one such decision in the last two financial years, and these are shown as ‘accepted full duty’. The full duty refers to the council’s obligation to provide accommodation.

More detail on the homelessness decision outcomes can be seen in figure 2 below. The most common type of decision is that the presenting household is “eligible, but not homeless”, and this decision type has reduced every year in line with the total number of decisions declining, representing 59% of decisions in 2012/13 and 62% in 2014/15. The number of ‘eligible, homeless and in priority need, but intentionally so’ decisions has actually increased despite the fall in total decisions, with the total of intentional households rising from 3.7% in 2012/13 to 20.0% in 2014/15. The number of decisions that households were ‘eligible, homeless but not in priority need’ have remained stable but as a percentage have increased from 8.6% in 2012/13 to 13.3% in 2014/15. Ineligible decisions as illustrated are very rare, and the only type of decision to show a real decline ‘eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need’.

Figure 2

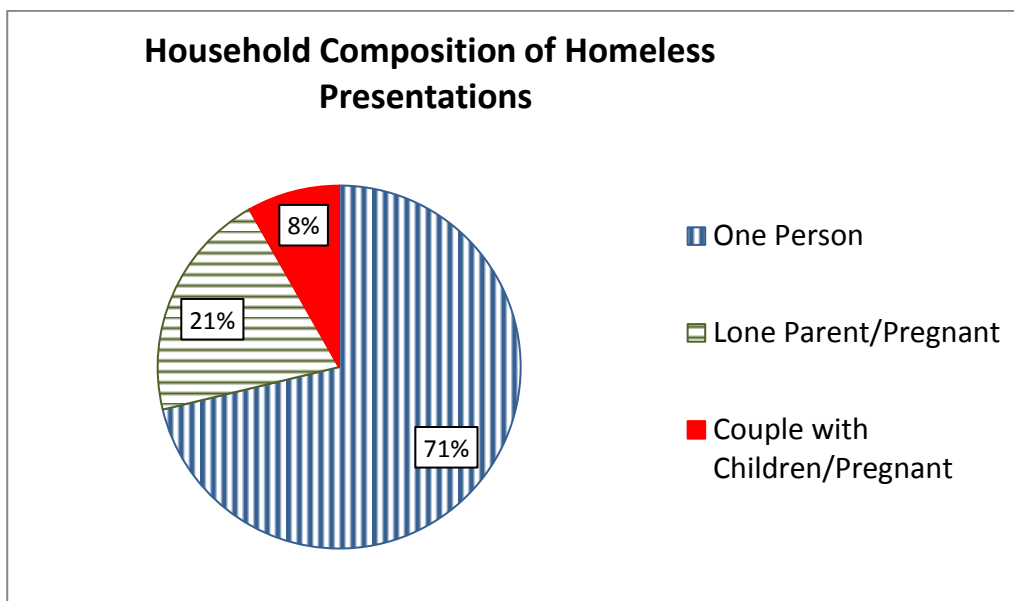


Source:

Chorley Housing Options Data

The majority of households, 71%, who presented as homeless were single people with no dependants and only 29% had dependent children or were pregnant. As illustrated in figure 3 couples with dependent children/pregnant make up the minority of families presenting with the majority only having one adult member.

Figure 3



Source: Chorley Housing Options Data

The following table 6 is a breakdown of figure 3 above and use 18 months data from October 2013 to March 2015 inclusive.

Table 6

Households with One Person			
Age of Applicant	Homelessness Presentations	% of Total	Per year of Age Group
16 to 17	22	42.3%	11.0
18 to 24	9	17.3%	1.3
25 to 34	5	9.6%	0.5
35 to 54	11	21.2%	0.6
55 to 64	1	1.9%	0.1
65 plus	4	7.7%	N/A
	<u>52</u>		
Households with Lone Parent and Dependent Children or Member Pregnant			
Age of Applicant	Homelessness Presentations	% of Total	Per year of Age Group
16 to 17	0	0.0%	0.0
18 to 24	7	46.7%	1.0
25 to 34	5	33.3%	0.5
35 to 54	3	20.0%	0.2
55 to 64	0	0.0%	0.0
65 plus	0	0.0%	N/A
	<u>15</u>		
Households with Couple and Dependent Children or Member Pregnant			
Age of Applicant	Homelessness Presentations	% of Total	Per year of Age Group
16 to 17	0	0.0%	0.0
18 to 24	2	33.3%	0.3
25 to 34	3	50.0%	0.3
35 to 54	1	16.7%	0.1
55 to 64	0	0.0%	0.0
65 plus	0	0.0%	N/A
	<u>6</u>		
All Household Types			
Age of Applicant	Homelessness Presentations	% of Total	Per year of Age Group
16 to 17	22	30.1%	11.0
18 to 24	18	24.7%	2.6
25 to 34	13	17.8%	1.3
35 to 54	15	20.5%	0.8
55 to 64	1	1.4%	0.1
65 plus	4	5.5%	N/A
	<u>73</u>		

Source: Chorley Housing Options Data

As the age brackets above are different sizes, the right hand column shows the number of presentations per year of age group for comparison purposes. Whilst the numbers of one person households presentations are spread across the age groups, they are skewed towards the younger end with a 16/17 year old far more likely to present as homeless than any other household type, followed by 18 to 24 year olds but to a much lesser degree. It is worth noting that almost half lone parent households are 18 to 24. Overall homeless applicants who are 16/17 are more than four times as likely to present as 18 to 24 years olds, and over 8 times more likely to present than 25 to 34 year olds, with the likelihood of a presentation decreasing with age. The figures demonstrate something an issue that the Council is acutely cognisant of, and that young people threatened with homelessness in the borough, in particular 16/17 year olds.

The main reasons for homelessness presentations can be seen in table 7 below, and the top two reasons, which are essentially family and friends 'no longer willing to accommodate' making up 41.1% of these, almost a third of all reason being due to parental evictions. The loss of rented properties or rent arrears make up 4 of the top 8 reasons 28.8%. Relationship breakdowns feature 3 times, making up 12.3% of the total, with 5.5% being related to violence. Leaving institutions such as prisons, hospitals and care also accounting for 12.3% of the total, with leaving prison/remand being the most frequent with 6.8%.

Table 7

Main Reason for Homelessness Presentation - Oct 2013 to March 2015	Number	Percentage
Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate	22	30.1%
Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	8	11.0%
Loss of rented or tied accommodation: Reasons other than termination of AST	8	11.0%
Loss of rented or tied accommodation: Termination of AST	5	6.8%
Non-violent breakdown of relationship with partner	5	6.8%
Left prison/on remand	5	6.8%
Rent arrears on: Registered Provider dwellings	4	5.5%
Rent arrears on: Private sector dwellings	4	5.5%
Violence: Violent breakdown of relationship involving partner	3	4.1%
Left hospital	3	4.1%
Other reason (e.g. homeless in emergency, sleeping rough or in hostel, returned from abroad)	3	4.1%
Violence: Violent breakdown of relationship involving associated persons	1	1.4%
Violence: Other forms of violence	1	1.4%
Left other institution or LA care	1	1.4%
Total	73	100.0%

Source: Chorley Housing Options Data

The main reasons for homelessness presentations can therefore be classed into four main themes making up 94.5% with the remainder being 'other' and 'other forms of violence with 4. 1% and 1.4% of all presentations respectively.

Table 8

Main Themes for Homelessness Presentation - Oct 2013 to March 2015	Percentage
Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	41.1%
Loss of rented accommodation or rent arrears	28.8%
Relationship breakdowns	12.3%
Leaving institutions	12.3%
Other reasons	5.5%
Total	100.0%

Source: Chorley Housing Options Data

Looking at the most prolific presenting age group, 16/17 year olds (all single), the main reason for presenting was ‘parents no longer willing to accommodate’ with 12 or 55%, and second was ‘other relatives of friends no longer willing to accommodate’ with 4 or 18%, with the third being loss of rented accommodation (non-AST). For the 18/24 year olds single people parental evictions and prison leavers were in equal numbers with 3 (or a third) each with the remaining reasons being 2 for loss of an AST and 1 for other relative/friend evicting. Therefore it is clear that the major factor in youth homelessness preventions is family related evictions, but cases can become more complicated towards the older end of the youth scale with prison leavers and loss of ASTs becoming more common. For the five 19 to 24 year old single cases, the theme was still family and friend evictions (2 parents and 1 other family/friends), and for the 16 single over 35 years olds the main theme was leaving institutions (3 hospital, 2 prison and 1 other), 5 due to loss of rented accommodation or rent arears (3 non AST and 2 RP rent arears) and 3 due to relationship breakdowns (2 non-violent and 1 violent).

Looking out households with a child/pregnant, for 18 to 24 year olds 5 out of 9 cases were due to parental evictions, with the rest being due to loss of rented accommodation/rent arears (2 x non-AST, 1 x AST and 1 x PRS arears). For households with a dependent child/pregnant 7 out of 12 were due to loss of rented accommodation/rent arears (3 arears PRS, 2 loss of AST, 1 RP arears, 1 loss of non-AST). The only other reoccurring theme for 25 year plus families was relationship breakdowns with 4 of the 12 (3 non-violent and 1 violent).

The themes for homelessness, particularly when cross tabulating with household types, whilst overlapping are revealing. Different household types at different ages are more likely to attribute a certain them as the main reason for their homelessness presentation based on age and household type, with younger households main reason being due to family/friends evicting, and older households due to rent arears and also leaving an intuition if single. Relationship breakdowns also feature more in older households to a lesser extent, whether or not there are dependent children. Overall levels of homelessness have been demonstrated as low and decreasing by this section, and whilst there will be additional challenges in the future, the work of the Housing Options team and its partners is anticipated keep levels of homelessness low in Chorley in the future.

Rough Sleeping

Chorley Council has carried out an extensive Rough Sleeper Count for each of the last 4 years in November from 2011 to 2014. Stakeholders were surveyed to determine likely locations, and more recently since No Second Night Out, occurrences of rough sleeping reported through the StreetLink website or helpline have also informed the search.

The count for rough sleepers has included Council Members, independent verifiers and two search teams in an extensive number of locations in addition to the town centre. In each of the 4 years there have been no rough sleepers found who were bedded down meeting the Government definition. The Rough Sleeper Count is a snap shot of a ‘typical night’ in the borough, and must be carried out between 1st October and 30th November, however an estimate rather than a physical count is an option depending on circumstances and past numbers. Whilst the count is a snap shot, it does not suggest there are never any instances of rough sleeping in Chorley, just than none were found on the night in question.

When people rough sleeping have been reported to StreetLink staff from the Strategic Housing service have endeavoured to find and assist the reported persons in the early hours of the following day. Anyone in the borough who spots a person rough sleeping in the borough they are encouraged to do this through StreetLink who then send a referral to Chorley Council, and these notifications began to be sent in early 2013.

Table 9

StreetLink Reports by Calendar Year							
Year	Reported	Person/s Found?	No Evidence Found	Evidence Found	Location too Unspecific to Look	Living in a Dwelling	Repeat Case
2013	10	1	8	0	1	0	0
2014	14	1	5	4	0	2	2
2015*	10	1	5	1	0	3	0
	34	3	18	5	1	5	2

*Up to and including September

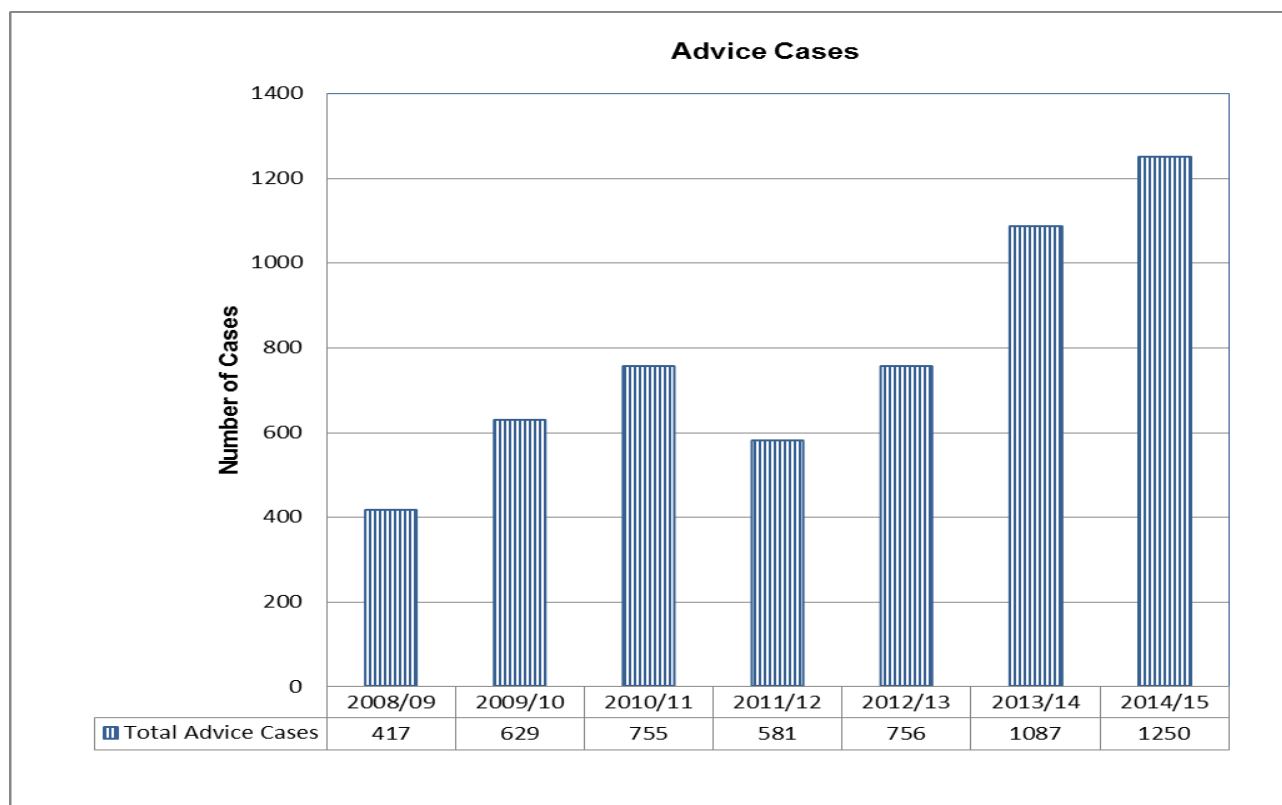
Source: Chorley Housing Options Data

4 of the 34 reported StreetLink referrals ended up with a person rough sleeping being found, however in 2014 the same person was reported 3 times in quick succession but refused help and the other two times are recorded as repeat cases. The other 2 people who were assisted into emergency accommodation. Where no person was found rough sleeping, in 5 cases evidence such as tents or clothes were found. Overall there is little evidence that rough sleeping is a significant issue in Chorley, but in genuine cases if the person rough sleeping has wanted help then the Council has been able to assist.

Advice Cases and Preventions

The number of advice cases generally reflects the number of households who have been given advice or assistance by Chorley Councils Housing Options team whether or not they consider themselves to be threatened with homelessness, and whilst presentations and advice cases are normally separate there can be some overlap. The number of advice cases has increased over time, in particularly in the last 3 years as seen in figure 4 below.

Figure 4



Source: Chorley Housing Options Data

Comparing advice cases from 2008/9 to 2014/15, it is an astounding rise of almost exactly 200%. It would be understandable that such a rise in case work could lead to extra stresses on the Housing Options team and an increase in homelessness presentations and acceptances, however looking at figure 2 earlier this seems to be the opposite.

Table 10

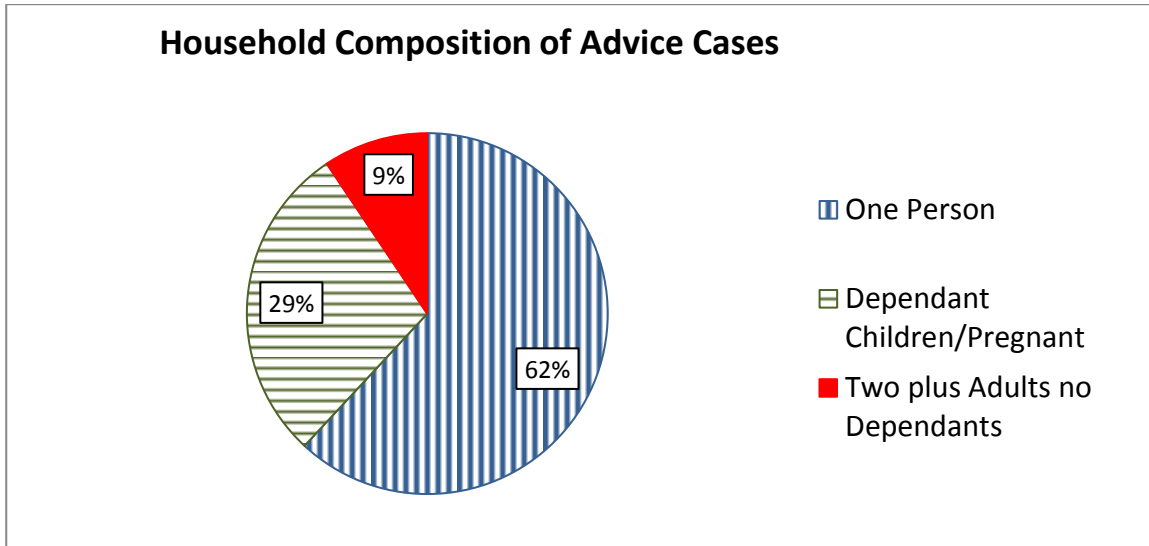
Advice Cases – Main Reason for Contact (1% +)	Number	Percentage
Asked to leave by family and friends	306	17.5%
Under – Occupying property	277	15.9%
Possession Action Threatened – Social Sector Housing	149	8.5%
Relationship Breakdown - Violent	145	8.3%
Relationship Breakdown – Non-Violent	119	6.8%
Possession Action Threatened – Private Sector Housing	89	5.1%
Evicted by Private Landlord – NTQ/Court Order	70	4.0%
Possession Action Threatened – Owner Occupation	59	3.4%
Affordability – Debt/Financial Difficulty	46	2.6%
Arrears – Social Sector Housing	43	2.5%
Arrears – Private Sector Housing	41	2.3%
Leaving Prison	41	2.3%
Evicted By Social Sector Landlord	30	1.7%
Miscellaneous – Overcrowding	30	1.7%
Advice – Finding Social Housing/Select Move	23	1.3%
Affordability – Universal Credit	23	1.3%
Evicted by Hostel/Supported Housing/Refuge Provider	20	1.1%
No Fixed Abode	20	1.1%
Harassment – Anti Social Behaviour/Violence including Racial	19	1.1%
Despair	18	1.0%

Source: Chorley Housing Options Data

The main reason for advice cases can be seen in table 10 above. Whilst family and friend related evictions/asking to leave, are the main reason for contact with 17.5%, this theme far lower than its equivalent total of 41.1% for homelessness presentations. The second highest reason of under-occupying property will be greatly, if not exclusively, driven by the changes to Housing Benefit entitlement in April 2013 for social properties, with households under-occupying possibly needing to cope with a 14 to 25% Housing Benefit reduction. Themes relating to renting/ rent arrears feature highly, as well as relationship breakdowns, however with leaving institutions being reduced in frequency when compared to homelessness presentations. The main causes for advice cases follow those of homelessness presentations; however the significant difference those households seeking advice due to under-occupation. What is significant is the low number of owner occupiers threatened with possession of 3.4% compared to the level of home ownership illustrated in table 3.

Looking at the household composition of advice cases as demonstrated in the pie chart below (figure 5), just over 6 out of 10 (62%) were single person households, with a sizeable minority of almost 3 out of 10 (29%) having the dependent children or a household member pregnant. A small minority of 9% of advice cases were couples or other household types made up of more than one adult with no dependants.

Figure 5



Source: Chorley Housing Options Data

When looking at ages of advice cases, table 5 demonstrates a fairly even spread of ages apart from the older end of the spectrum.

Table 11

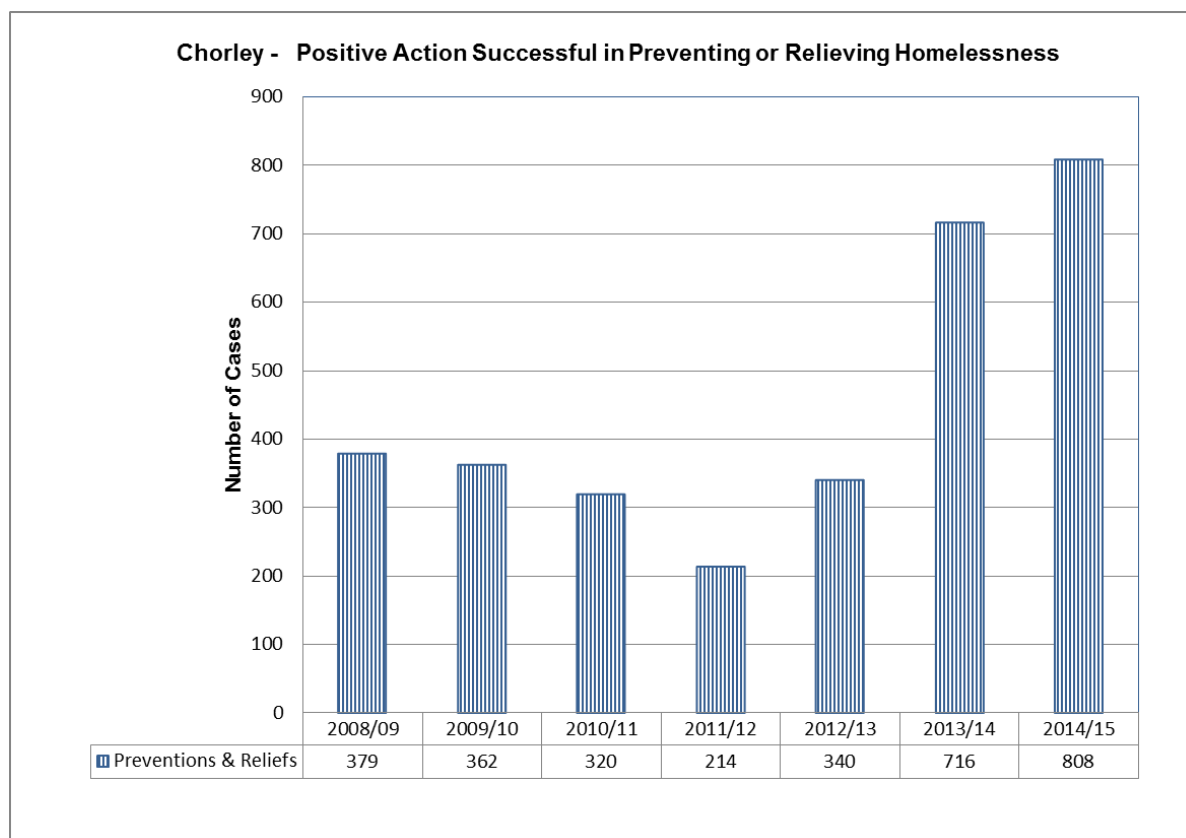
Households with One Person			
Age of Household Member	Advice Cases - Single	% of Total	Per year of Age Group
16 to 17	60	5.6%	30.0
18 to 24	234	21.6%	33.4
25 to 34	215	19.9%	21.5
35 to 54	443	41.0%	22.2
55 to 64	104	9.6%	10.4
65 plus	25	2.3%	N/A
	<u>1081</u>		
Household with Dependant Child or Pregnant Household Member			
Age Pricipal Household Member	Advice Cases	% of Total	Per year of Age Group
16 to 17	9	1.8%	4.5
18 to 24	135	26.9%	19.3
25 to 34	178	35.5%	17.8
35 to 54	170	33.9%	8.5
55 to 64	8	1.6%	0.8
65 plus	1	0.2%	N/A
	<u>501</u>		
Household Two or More Adults and no Dependant Children (includes couples possibly under 18)			
Age Pricipal Household Member	Advice Cases	% of Total	Per year of Age Group
16 to 17	3	1.8%	1.5
18 to 24	23	14.0%	3.3
25 to 34	15	9.1%	1.5
35 to 54	94	57.3%	4.7
55 to 64	20	12.2%	2.0
65 plus	9	5.5%	N/A
	<u>164</u>		
All Households			
Age Pricipal Household Member	Advice Cases	% of Total	Per year of Age Group
16 to 17	72	4.1%	36.0
18 to 24	392	22.5%	56.0
25 to 34	408	23.4%	40.8
35 to 54	707	40.5%	35.4
55 to 64	132	7.6%	13.2
65 plus	35	2.0%	N/A
	<u>1746</u>		

Source: Chorley Housing Options Data

For single person advice cases, even though 35 to 54 year olds were more frequent, all age groups below 55 had fairly similar numbers of cases per the year of age group with 18 to 24 year olds being the highest. For households with dependent children almost all cases were 19 to 54 years olds, with 18 to 34 year olds having the highest number of cases per age group. For households with 2 or more adults and no dependants the majority of these were in the 35 to 54 year old age group. The All Households section at the bottom of the table 11 doesn't suggest a clear cohort of age groups under 55 which would justify significantly more resources to concentrate on.

Chorley has had a strong focus on preventing homelessness, and the numbers of preventions have seen steep increases over the last 3 years as illustrated in figure 6 below, rising from 214 prevention and reliefs in 2011/12 by 278% to 808 in 2014/15.

Figure 6



Source:

Chorley Housing Options Data

The figures above are reported quarterly in the P1E return to the DCLG. Preventions and reliefs are carried out mainly by the Housing Options team, however other partners that the council funds can carry out preventions on its behalf. A Homelessness Prevention is when a household is provided with some other way to meet its housing needs and related needs then becoming homeless, through positive action by the Council. A Homelessness Relief is when a household has not been prevented from becoming homeless but housing has been assisted to secure accommodation even though the Council does not have a statutory duty to do so.

The increase in presentations, whilst driven by higher numbers of advice cases to make them possible, is due to the hard work of the Housing Options team and its work with partners. The large increase in advice cases and workload could have been a hindrance to prevention work, but it appears the Housing Options team has coped with this challenge very well.

Preventions and reliefs are split into two main categories, 'cases able to remain in existing home' and 'cases assisted to obtain alternative accommodation', and of the 808n in 2014/15 these saw a fairly even split with 424 (52.5%) able to remain and 384 (47.5%) assisted into new accommodation. Those assisted into new accommodation included 5 reliefs for 2014/15, and these are usually rare compared to the volume of preventions.

Broken down the reasons for preventions can be seen in table 12 below.

Table 12

Preventions and Reliefs 2014/15	Number	Percentage
Proving other assistance to remain in Private or Social rented	197	24.4%
Part 6 offer or nomination to Registered Provider	180	22.3%
Resolving rent arrears in Private or Social Rented	88	10.9%
Supported Accommodation	83	10.3%
Accessing PRS with no landlord incentive	51	6.3%
Accessing PRS with landlord incentive	47	5.8%
Resolving Housing Benefit problems	46	5.7%
Sanctuary scheme	34	4.2%
Mediation by trained family mediator	13	1.6%
Conciliation including home visits	13	1.6%
Mortgage advice or rescue	12	1.5%
Debt advice	12	1.5%
Accommodation arranged with friends/relatives	11	1.4%
Any hostel or HMO	10	1.2%
Negotiation/advocacy to remain in PRS	9	1.1%
Social Housing management move	2	0.2%
Total	808	100.0%

Source: Chorley Housing Options Data

The largest number of preventions consisted of 'other assistance' to remain in rented accommodation, whilst this reason is not explicit it does include a large number of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) awards, and cases which fit under no other category e.g. when a landlord is facing possession proceedings. DHPs are awarded by Chorley council to assist benefit claimants who have a shortfall in their housing payments for a variety of reasons, and more recently have increased due to the reduction in housing benefit payments for tenants in social housing from April 2013. The second highest prevention reason with just under a quarter is part 6 offers or nominations to RPs, which are nearly all letting through the Select Move Choice Based Lettings partnership. Resolving rent arrears, which represents over 10% of all preventions, is generally due to casework with some overlap with 'resolving housing benefit problems' representing almost 6% of preventions which also involve casework and internal liaison within the Council. Enabling people into Supported Housing, also above 10% would include referrals to Supporting People funded Accommodation Based Support such as Cotswold Supported Housing. Cotswold Supported Housing is a Chorley Council owned and managed supported accommodation service for families and single people with support needs who are threatened with homelessness.

Cotswold Supported Housing has 25 units and is the principal means of providing temporary accommodation in Chorley.

Accessing the PRS without an incentive scheme includes case work and an included an Accommodation Finding Service commissioned by Chorley Council using DCLG grant for South Lancashire (Chorley, Preston, South Ribble and West Lancashire), and with 51 prevention represented over 6% of the total. Just under 6% of preventions were due to landlord incentives to access the PRS, which is facilitated by Chorley Council's Rental Bond Scheme, which is a 'paper bond' administered by the Housing Options team. Rental Bonds have increased year on year over the lifetime of the previous strategy; 27 in 2012/13, 39 in 2013/14 and 53 in 2014/15, however due to the nature of certain cases they may not always be a prevention or relief 'type', or be able to be considered a prevention/relief. The Sanctuary Scheme, which makes up just over 4% of preventions, is a scheme funded by South Ribble and Chorley councils, that assist survivors of domestic violence, remain in their own homes by providing safety measures. Outside these top 8 prevention types no other accounted for more than 1.6% in the 2014/15.

Increases in numbers of preventions over the last 2 years are clearly demonstrated in figure 6, and the change in prevention types are also worth investigating. Looking at the top 8 prevention types from 2014/15 and comparing this to the previous 3 years, including the percentage of total, as well as 'rank'.

Table 13

Most Common Prevention and Relief Types 2014/15 Compared with Previous Years	2014/15			2013/14			2012/13			2011/12		
	Number	%	Rank	Number	%	Rank	Number	%	Rank	Number	%	Rank
Providing other assistance to remain in Private or Social rented	197	24.4%	1	150	20.9%	1	44	12.9%	2	26	12.1%	4
Part 6 offer or nomination to RP	180	22.3%	2	136	19.0%	2	101	29.7%	1	42	19.6%	1
Resolving rent arrears in Private or Social Rented	88	10.9%	3	46	6.4%	6	1	0.3%	15	13	6.1%	6
Supported Accommodation	83	10.3%	4	60	8.4%	4	41	12.1%	3	31	14.5%	2
Accessing PRS with no landlord incentive	51	6.3%	5	52	7.3%	5	22	6.5%	6	3	1.4%	13
Accessing PRS with landlord incentive	47	5.8%	6	34	4.7%	7	27	7.9%	4	11	5.1%	7
Resolving Housing Benefit problems	46	5.7%	7	76	10.6%	3	11	3.2%	10	4	1.9%	11
Sanctuary scheme	34	4.2%	8	24	3.4%	10	24	7.1%	5	11	5.1%	7

Source: Chorley Housing Options Data

The numbers and percentage of other assistance to remain in rented has increased dramatically in the last 2 years, mainly due to DHP awards, and the increased budget for DHPs to mitigate benefit changes. Part 6 offers having been consistently growing in numbers even though the percentage of the total has been variable, and resolving rent arrears in PRS or RP properties has shot up over the last two years after seeing a very low point in 2012/13. Supported Accommodation preventions have seen solid year on year growth even though the percentage of the total has wavered. Accessing PRS with no incentive has gone from a very low figure of 3 four years ago to consistently over 50 in the last 2 years, and accessing PRS with an incentive has grown in numbers every year but the percentage of the total hasn't. Resolving Housing Benefit problems has seen the biggest fall in the last year, however this could be due to overlapping categories with resolving rent arrears and providing other assistance increasing rapidly. The Sanctuary Scheme figures have consistently grown each year, but like a lot of other types of prevention the percentage hasn't due to large increases in other categories. In general work to help households access or remain in rented accommodation has been key to the increasing level of preventions.

Chorley's prevention performance compared with both in Lancashire and regionally in 2014/15 with 17.2 per 1000 households, which was the 6th highest out of the 39 North West authorities and 2nd highest in the Lancashire grouping. The figure of 17.2 was well above the North West mean average of 9.4 and median of 7.4, and even further above the Lancashire mean average 7.0 of and median of 6.6. Chorley's very strong performance delivering preventions compared to other Local Authorities in the Lancashire area can be seen in table 14 below.

Table 14

Preventions and Reliefs in the Lancashire Area by Local Authority 2014/15		
Local Authority	Total Preventions and Reliefs	Rate per 1,000 Households
Lancaster	1,035	17.62
Chorley	808	17.23
Blackburn with Darwen	477	8.23
Preston	469	8.05
Blackpool	494	7.67
Wyre	324	6.75
Rosendale	199	6.70
South Ribble	302	6.44
Pendle	225	5.92
Hyndburn	183	5.33
Burnley	197	5.23
Fylde	59	1.66
Ribble Valley	23	0.93
West Lancashire	30	0.65

Source: DCLG Data

The prevention types demonstrate the activities carried out for any purposes of homelessness prevention and securing accommodation, and the rising volumes would suggest these activities are on whole successful.

Resources and Support Available

The main resource to prevent homelessness and assist homeless people to be housed is the Housing Options team based at the Civic Offices, Union Street, Chorley, which consists of the following:

- 2.4 x Housing Options Officers
- 1 x Court and Welfare Officer
- 1 x Housing Options Team Leader
- 1 x Housing Options and Support Manager

The vast majority of the prevention work in Chorley, is instigated by the Housing Options team, and as demonstrated in the 'preventions' section around half of the households prevented from becoming homeless are assisted to remain in existing accommodation. Increasingly DHP payments and resolving rent or benefit issues are used to keep households in their current homes, and these types of prevention need to utilise the Single Front Office Service, in particular the Customer Appeals Officer.

Finding RP accommodation through Select Move is the most common prevention type when assisting households to find new accommodation and the largest RPs in Chorley are as follow in order of having the most stock:

- Chorley Community Housing (including all Adactus Housing Group stock managed)
- Places for People
- Accent
- Progress Housing Group
- Symphony
- Your Housing Group

The use of Temporary accommodation is also a key prevention measure, and Cotswold Supported Housing, owned and managed by the Council is the largest contributor to this. Cotswold is an accommodation based support service for single adults and families, it has 25 rooms for residents with the majority of facilities shared. Cotswold is commissioned by the Lancashire Supporting People Partnership from Lancashire County Council mainstream funding. Chorley and the 11 other Housing Authority districts, along with representatives from probation, have worked with the County Council to commission a number of accommodation based services that the Housing Options Team is able to refer to. These services provide support to enable residents to move on to more independent accommodation and successfully maintain their future tenancies, and can be seen by 'Client Group' below:

Client Group	Units
People with mental health problems	27
Families and single people who are homeless with support needs	25
People with and offending history	23
Young People at risk (18 to 25 years old)	18
Teenage Parents (16 to 25 years old)	6
Women at risk of domestic abuse	3

On top of the above there are 14 units of Supported Lodgings (provided by host households) for young people aged 16 to 25 across Chorley, Preston, South Ribble and West Lancashire districts, as well as a floating support contract covering the same area which helps clients remain in their existing tenancies, or supports them in new ones. It can be seen by the above housing related support services that there is a heavy focus on young adults to match which matches the need demonstrated earlier in the review.

Chorley Council commissions a twice weekly 16/17 year old drop in twice a week, which is operated by a 3rd sector organisation and also attended by a representative from the County Council's Children's Social Care service. A Sanctuary Scheme is joint commissioned with South Ribble to assist survivors of domestic violence remain in their own homes via safety measures. A charity, Help the Homeless, provides complimentary advice and assistance to households threatened with homelessness who the Council would not have a statutory duty to help. Chorley Council provides a small amount of funding to Help the Homeless, and there is a Service Level Agreement between the two organisations resulting in Help the Homeless contributing to the Council's preventions and reliefs.

Other organisations help people threatened with homelessness in the borough but don't count towards the Council's preventions, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau who provide independent housing and debt advice, and Christian organisations also provide food related assistance.

The Council commissioned an accommodation finding service on behalf of South Lancashire (Chorley, Preston, South Ribble and West Lancashire) which was very successful in assisting 'non-priority' homeless households find tenancies in the private rented sector, and in its first year (to end Nov 2014) 42 new tenancies were created with 42 in Chorley. The service ended in January 2015 for services outside the Council's control, however money has been secured to set up a Chorley only service and this is a priority for the Council.

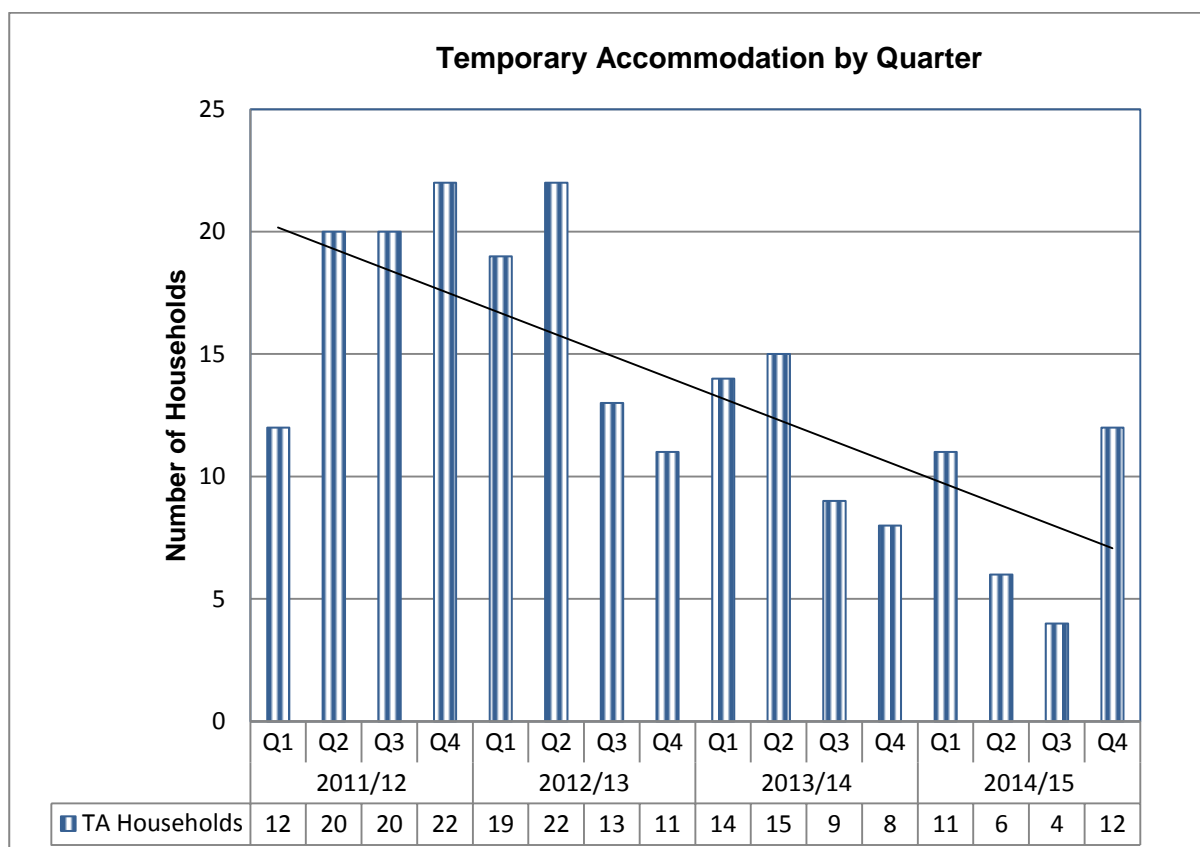
This section demonstrates the resources available to prevent people from becoming homeless, to assist with rehousing and the housing related support available to prevent homelessness in the borough. A robust offer is exhibited to assist households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and the strategy section will endeavour to sustain and improve the offer.

Temporary Accommodation

When a household makes a homeless application the Council must offer them temporary accommodation if they have nowhere else to stay. This accommodation may consist of a flat, house, bedsit, and hostel or, in some limited circumstances, a 'bed and breakfast' hotel. The use of 'bed and breakfast' as temporary accommodation has been all but eradicated with no usage at all since 2012/13. Chorley Council utilises Cotswold Supported Housing to provide temporary accommodation in almost all circumstances.

In 2005 the Government published a 5 Years strategy to tackle homelessness, in which it required Local Authorities to half the use of temporary accommodation by 31/12/2010 compared to their 31/12/2004 figure. Chorley Council's had a 2004 baseline temporary accommodation figure of 26 and therefore the target was 13 for the end of 2010, which the Council achieved returning a figure of 6. As can be seen below in figure 7, the figures for temporary accommodation have fluctuated over the last 4 years, however as can be seen by the trend line a general decline in the number of households in temporary accommodation is indicated. There is no prescribed target for temporary accommodation, however over the last 6 quarters up to the end of 2014/15, it can be seen that the temporary accommodation figure has stayed consistently below the 2010 target of 13.

Figure 7



Source: Chorley Housing Options Data

Review of the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy 2012-16

The success factors from the 2012-16 Strategy were stated as the following:

- 1) Improving our service for customers
- 2) Reducing the use of temporary accommodation
- 3) Increasing the prevention of homelessness

Improving the service for customers can be measured in many ways. In the last quarter of 2012 customer satisfaction with Housing Options was at 72%, whilst in the summer of 2015 this had increased to 81%. There has been a demonstrable increase in social housing lets, as well as the number of new social homes delivered through development as illustrated earlier in the document. An Accommodation Finding Service and a Youth Homelessness Drop-in have been commissioned to provide a more targeted year diverse offer, and whilst the number of households given advice and assistance had increased drastically, the numbers of housing requiring homelessness presentation and found to be statutory homeless has dropped.

Reducing the use of temporary accommodation is demonstrated in the section above with a demonstrable downward trend over the period of the strategy, and coupled with that, the eradication of 'bed and breakfast' use with no instances after 202/13.

Increasing the prevention of homelessness is clearly demonstrated by figure 6 due to a near four-fold increase in preventions from 214 in 2011/12 to 808 in 2014/15. As well as performance figures demonstrating significant improvements since the last strategy, the majority of actions were also delivered successfully. Table 15 demonstrates the actions that have already been delivered from the 2012-16 Strategy.

Table 15

Actions Successfully Delivered from the 2012-16 Strategy	
Actions	Outcome
Develop a web based Housing Directory including a self-service enhanced housing option tool.	An enhanced housing options module is now available via Selectmove.co.uk, including links to job sites
Utilise the enhanced options service to link into services providing job opportunities.	An Employability Officer proactively picks up these cases since appointment in Feb 2014.
Update and improve existing IT systems for Homelessness that link in with existing housing applications.	New homelessness software implemented and in use since October 2013.
Establishment of a specific young person's service including mediation and advice.	Drop-in now established 2 days a week with Key and Social Services, referral procedures, information sharing and SLA in place along with funding until 2016.
Review of the Sanctuary Scheme	The scheme was reviewed and relaunched in 2012 with buy in from RP partners.
Review of the sub regional Allocation Policy (Select Move) to accommodate Localism Act 2011 provisions and ensure best use of local stock	A new policy was written and passed through political processes in 2013, and came into force Feb 2014.

Actions Successfully Delivered from the 2012-16 Strategy	
Actions	Outcome
Explore the feasibility of remodelling an existing Accommodation Based Service for a bespoke service for 16/17.	The feasibility has been explored however this would need extra funding for the provider and would not be possible with Local Government spending cuts.
Participate and contribute to the Working Together With families Project.	Housing Options had an active involvement until the project ended.
Engage in the 'No Second Night Out' initiative lead by Foxton Centre following award of £197k homeless transition funding.	Chorley Council signed up to No Second Night Out, and actively follows up any reported sightings of people Rough Sleeping to offer assistance.
Develop a Tenancy Strategy, work with Lancashire project team and then provide strategy for each borough.	The Chorley Council Tenancy Strategy was adopted in Nov 2012 and is reviewed periodically.
Work with partners to explore Empty Homes Initiatives.	Two empty buildings in the town centre were converted into 16 x 1 bedroom flats by RPs with Chorley Council capital funding. The flats were let in 2015 to under 35 year olds. A further 3 bungalows replacing a derelict former Children's Home.
Review prevention measures and procedures including prevention pot and rental bond to ensure remain relevant and are maximising take up.	The Prevention Pot procedure has been reviewed and amended due to staffing changes and new job titles, and the procedure is fit for purpose. The Rental Bond Scheme has been reviewed, and procedures amended in regard to recording bond applications and the introduced a claim procedure. The bond applications have seen an increase.
Effectively manage existing contracts including making initial contact and arranging review meetings as necessary with : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help the Homeless • 16/17 year olds KEY • Out of Hours (NPHA) • Sanctuary 	Following engagement, monitoring and changes to contracts/SLAs, working relationships have improved and the number of preventions assisted with have drastically increased.
Ensure prevention agenda is supported through wider corporate partnership arrangements.	Protocols are in place for Hospital and Prison leavers, there is representation on the Children's Partnership Board and the Health and Wellbeing partnership at a senior management level.
To Deliver the Councils Corporate Project of local solutions for homelessness. These include marketing of a proactive service, exploring outreach services.	Outreach in Clayton Brook moderately successful after need highlighted.

Actions Successfully Delivered from the 2012-16 Strategy	
Actions	Outcome
Work with relevant agencies to ensure that appropriate gateways are developed to assist in the reduction of welfare dependency.	Welfare Reform Manager and Officer, and Employability Officer have been working with Benefits, Policy, RPs, DWP and third sector. Including budgeting, digital inclusion and employability work. Homelessness preventions increased significantly.
Explore provision of cross tenure older persons housing related support.	Cross tenure housing related supported was piloted in the east of the county with low demand from customers and little appetite from the RPs to provide such a service. Local Government cuts make further exploration unfeasible.
Develop a Peer Education Project for Homelessness.	Initial sessions successfully piloted in targeted schools with good feedback, and similar session are planned in t the future
Lead on the coordination and delivery of the Single Homelessness Funding Initiative for Lancashire To include; a Personalised Solutions Policy and pot, Pilot of House shares, Single Persons Accommodation Finding Service and Pre-Tenancy Training.	All services commissioned December 2013 to November 2015 along with Personalised Solutions Policy being implemented in 2013.
Develop effective working relationship with Revenues and Benefits Team	The Housing Options team has been working well with benefits, especially due to introduction of new Welfare Reform officer specialising in this area.
Develop and coordinate a strategic response to welfare reform.	The Welfare Reform Manager has led on creating effective working relationships.
Develop and oversee the introduction of a floating support drop in service at the Civic Offices on Union Street.	A drop in has been successfully piloted one day a week, as then continued following the re-contracting of floating support in 2015.
Review frontline delivery and explore ways to maximise resource and improve customer experience.	A Housing Options drop in on Wednesday has been implemented and is proving a success.
To review service for customers at risk of mortgage repossession and explore solutions for improving services.	Chorley Council's Welfare Reform Officer (appointed Feb 2014) is proactive in contacting and working with these customers, including a successful court desk.
Explore the current debt advice services to ensure they are sufficient to assist with homelessness prevention	Budgeting and debt advice is given by Calico (floating Support), CAB, Lancashire Wellbeing Service, and Chorley Council's now has a Welfare Reform Office who also assists in this area.

The following actions from the 2012-16 Strategy were not completed and table 16 below demonstrates why, and if the actions are to be carried over to the 2016-19 Strategy.

Table 16

Actions from the 2012-16 Strategy Not Delivered		
Actions	Outcome	Carry Forward? Yes/No
To explore the development a system for discharging legal duties in to the Private Rented Sector including support for landlords.	The Council has decided it more prudent to discharge to social sector only for the foreseeable future.	No.
Expand the Choice Based Lettings Scheme to include advertisement of all tenures.	This was explored however was not feasible due to a lack of demand from the Private Sector landlords.	No.
Undertake DCLG Self-Assessment Toolkit peer Review and apply for Gold Standard service.	Partner Councils were not found that were willing to take part in a peer review, and the benefits are striving for Gold Standard were outweighed by the resources necessary to achieve it.	No.

Strategic Priorities of the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy 2016-19

Following the review of homeliness and taking into account future and existing challenges, in particularly linked to welfare reform, the following strategic priorities have been devised. Actions to achieve these priorities are illustrated in the action plan in Appendix A.

Priority 1: Working with all partners to ensure the offer of support, advice and assistance in Chorley best meets the needs of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. This includes working with statutory and third sector organisation who provide the following:

- Accommodation Based Support providers and commissioner/s;
- Floating Support provider/s and commissioner/s;
- Drop in housing advice/intervention services;
- Accommodation finding service/s;
- Mediation services;
- Non-statutory housing advice services;
- Wellbeing services;
- Children’s Social Care (Lancashire County Council).

A key focus of this priority is youth homelessness as identified in the review 16/17 year olds and then other under 25 year far more likely to present as homeless than older age groups. Over half the instances of 16/17 year old homelessness presentations are due to parents no longer willing to accommodate, which reinforces the importance of the 16/17 year olds drop-in and mediation service as well as the 'Joint Working Protocol for Homeless 16/17'. The most prolific method of homelessness preventions identified by the review was 'other assistance' to remain in rented accommodation, and when looked at more closely this mainly due to DHP payments, and emphasises the importance of a close working relationship with the Council's Single Front Office service. With demanding budget cuts to Local Authorities at all levels, working with the County Council to ensure there is an adequate supply of housing related support services in the borough will become a bigger challenge.

Priority 2: Ensure that housing supply best meets housing need. This involves working with RPs regarding the allocation of existing stock, as well as the facilitation and the determination of new social housing which reflects the needs of the borough, including bespoke solutions where necessary.

As demonstrated in the review, the main prevention type for households 'assisted into new accommodation' was part 6 offers of social housing, and emphasises the importance of working with RPs to ensure lettings meet housing need and therefore prevent or relieve homelessness. The second most common reason for advice cases is 'under-occupying property' and this is almost entirely due to the Housing Benefit changes to social tenants in 2013, and this highlights the significance of building social housing that reflects the most acute demand for smaller properties on the Housing Register. The needs of Chorley's ageing population also need taking into account, as well as people with disabilities or more bespoke housing needs. When working with planning regarding developer contributions/s.106 agreements, supporting RP's HCA bids, or investigating new developments on Council sites, need identified by the Housing Register and partners needs to be taken into account.

Priority 3: Enhance the depth and range of Housing Options services to meet current and future challenges. This involves measures to mitigate current and future welfare changes, early identification of and assistance to affected households, as well as related challenges such as the move to public sector digitalisation and legal changes.

The Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015 will intensify the pressure on the Housing Options team, and in particular changes to the benefit cap and tax credits will increase the need for budgetary advice and assistance, and engaging with potential customers at the earliest possible stage working with associated agencies and services through the Welfare Reform Partnership is key. Digital Inclusion initiatives are needed to ensure certain households, and all Housing Options staff need to be able to adapt to meet the requirements of Supreme Court judgements earlier in the year. Working with private landlords will also be important using the Council's Rental Bond Scheme and promotion through the Private Landlord Forum, so the landlords are engaged and work with the Housing Options team and Accommodation Finding service in the process of being commissioned. Accessing the PRS whether without or with landlord incentives are the 5th and 6th most common prevention types, and with the Starter Homes and social sector rent reductions threatening the future supply of social housing, the PRS may become more necessary to engage and utilise than ever before.

Priority 4: Employment, training and education related to homelessness. The loss of employment can be both a casualty and cause of homelessness, and this priority involves helping people who are homeless, threatened with homelessness or in housing need into employment, training or education. Gaining employment considered the most robust way to protect a household from current and future welfare reform measures. Also this priority involves education regarding homelessness at an early age a prevention tool.

Changes to benefits in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015 have increased the importance of people in all household types gaining employment, or empowering themselves through training and education to gain improved prospects of employment. The Council's Employability Officer will become in increased demand to provide assistance to people looking for work including those who are located in homelessness related supported accommodation. Early intervention to assist people who haven't been referred but may need help will also be necessary to enhance the employability offer. The emphasis on employment, education and training will be of acute importance to 18 to 21 year olds claiming UC who will lose their entitlement after 6 months if they do not engage in work related training or placements. Educating people about homelessness at an early age is important, along with an emphasis on staying in education to improve their employment prospects, illustrating pitfalls of relying on benefits or leaving home at an early age. A School Education project will be a key initiative, targeting schools from which former students are most likely to present as homeless in future years as an early prevention tool.

Governance of the Strategy

All the directors at Chorley Council fully sign up and committed to this Prevention of Homelessness Strategy, and there is an organisation pledge to from the Council to work with all partners to ensure the priorities of the strategy are delivered.

The Strategic Housing Management Team will be responsible for ensuring that this strategy including its action plan is delivered over the next four years, and the action plan will be reviewed every year and revised if necessary.

The Prevention of Homelessness in Chorley

Chorley Council, as demonstrated in the review, are performing very well in its attempts to prevent households becoming homeless, with increasing numbers every year and the second highest number of preventions in the Lancashire area per 1000 households. The Council will continue to carry out current prevention activities and strengthen these by measures listed in the action plan. The preventions section in the review, and also the resources section looks in more detail at prevention activities and the work that the Housing Options team and its partners is involved in to ensure preventions take place, however the numbers of preventions are largely dependent on the number of households seeking advice or assistance, and therefore one of the success measures of this strategy will be to ensure that there are 150 preventions a quarter as a minimum target and therefore sustained at a high level.

Securing Accommodation

For those households that there is a duty for the Council to find interim accommodation awaiting more permanent accommodation or a homelessness decision, Cotswold Supported Housing will be utilised. As Cotswold is owned and managed by the Council, the accommodation based service is normally used if there is a homelessness applicant who is in need of accommodation, and often on an emergency basis. The use of 'Bed and Breakfast' hotels has been eliminated since 2012/13, and would only be considered in extreme cases in the future.

To find secure long term accommodation the Council works with the Select Move partnership, and for households who don't qualify for Select Move, assistance will be given to find PRS accommodation such as Rental Bonds, and Chorley's new Accommodation Finding Service which is the process of being commissioned. The Council's track record in finding new accommodation, demonstrated by the number of preventions and the volume of lets via Select Move rising each year, suggests no deficiencies in its approach to secure accommodation, and measures in the action plan identify how securing accommodation can be improved further.

Securing Support

As detailed in the review Chorley Council works with Lancashire County Council's Supporting People Partnership to commission housing related support services, mainly accommodation based, to meet the needs of a variety of 'client groups', in particular younger people. The Council will continue to work with the County Council where there is opportunity to do so, in order to maintain a high standard of housing related support services in the borough.

Chorley Council will review all agreements for services it commissions or funds to ensure they are high quality and value for money, and all will be looked at over the duration of the strategy as detailed in the action plan.

Success Factors

The success of this strategy, including the action plan, will be measured on the following factors:

1. Keeping the number of preventions consistently high – Target of 150 plus per quarter;
2. Ensuring the number of households in Temporary Accommodation remains low, and 'Bed and Breakfast' continues to be eliminated – Target a maximum of 13 at any one time in Temporary Accommodation and nil 'Bed and Breakfast' (subject to risk).
3. The numbers of statutory homeless households remain low – Target of no more than 10 per year.

The review highlighted Chorley's performance preventing homelessness has improved dramatically over the period of the last strategy, and the focus of the strategy will be to maintain the good performance and seek to improve wherever practicable.

Future Challenges

The main challenge as detailed earlier is likely to be poised by the effects of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015, and whilst the impact of the measures is not known, it is possible to make some degree of estimate in certain areas. For example the changes to the benefit cap will mean the number of households with reduced benefit payments is likely to be in the hundreds as opposed to low double figures currently affected. The Council must reinforce its approach to welfare reform, acting proactively to prevent households presenting as homeless, and this approach starts with an employment/training and budgeting focus, as well as ensuring people are empowered to access digital services.

The planned rent reduction to social tenancies, and the spectre of 'starter homes' in the housing an planning bill has led to uncertainty in the future of the supply of new social housing, and this is likely to be exacerbated by the extension of Right to Buy discounts to all social tenants. Therefore the supply of future social housing needs to be targeted as much as is practical to meet need, and there may be more of a reliance on the PRS so the Council will endeavour to maximise relationships with private landlords. The Council is mindful of Government spending cuts, not only at district but at County Council level, and there is a threat to services which provide housing and homeless related support. Coping with future changes whilst maintaining an adequate offer of support could be the biggest challenge the council will face in its mission to prevent homeless.

Appendix A – Action Plan

Priority 1:

Working with all partners to ensure the offer of support, advice and assistance in Chorley best meets the needs of homeless or threatened with homelessness

	Key Action	Key Milestones	By When	Resources	Action Lead	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
1.	Review the Joint Working Protocol for Homeless 16/17 year olds with CSC.	Meet with CSC. Agree a new protocol.	31/03/2017	Housing Options team.	Housing Options and Support Manager	Improved partnership working to allow 16/17 year olds threatened with homelessness less likely to need to make a Homeless Presentation or be a 'Child in Need'.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.
2.	Review and re-commission 16/17 year old drop in and mediation service and re-commission the service.	Review current service performance. Review expected outcomes. If appropriate re-commission with adherence to Procurement Policy.	31/12/2015 31/01/2016 31/03/2016	Housing Options team.	Housing Options and Support Manager.	Reduced homelessness presentations from 16/17 year olds.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.
3.	Liaise with Lancashire County Council regarding the commissioning of any future housing related support services and related future challenges.	Ongoing engagement with LCC. Review successfulness of action.	31/03/2019	Strategic Housing Service.	Strategic Housing Officer.	Ensure an adequate housing related support offer exists in Chorley.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.
4.	Steering the Welfare Reform Partnership to mitigate future benefit changes.	Work with partners to estimate the impact of cuts (e.g. lowering of benefit cap and changes to tax credits). Implement measures as a partnership to mitigate the impact of the cuts.	31/03/2016 31/03/2017	Housing Options team, DWP, RPs, Single Front office CC	Housing Options and Support Manager.	Affected households will be contacted at an early stage to allow prevention work.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.

	Key Action	Key Milestones	By When	Resources	Action Lead	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
5.	Review Early Intervention Protocol between the Council and RPs for Tenants at risk of eviction.	Review current protocol and outcomes. Draft and agree refreshed protocol	30/06/2016 31/12/2016	Housing Options team.	Court and Welfare Officer.	Household threatened with eviction are engaged earlier increasing the likelihood of preventions.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.
6.	Trial a Supported Housing Referral Panel	Book initial meetings. Review usefulness of panel.	31/03/2016 31/03/2017	Housing Options team and all housing related support providers.	Housing Options Team Leader.	Supported Accommodation placements are more beneficial leading to more successful move-ons.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.
7.	Review Lancashire Reducing Re-offending Housing and Resettlement Protocol due to new probation arrangements.	Ongoing engagement with panel. Review successfulness of action.	 31/03/2019	Resettlement Service, LCC, District Housing Officers, NPS & CRC.	Housing Options and Support Manager.	Engage with prison leavers at an early to prevent homelessness presentations.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.
8.	Review Sanctuary Scheme for survivors of domestic violence.	Review current service performance. Review expected outcomes. If appropriate re-commission with adherence to Procurement Policy.	31/12/2015 31/01/2016 31/03/2016	Housing Options team.	Housing Options and Support Manager.	Reduced homelessness presentations from domestic violence survivors.	Clean, safe and healthy communities.
9.	Review Help the Homeless' Service Level Agreement.	Review current service performance. Review expected outcomes. If appropriate re-commission with adherence to Procurement Policy.	31/12/2015 31/01/2016 31/03/2016	Housing Options team.	Housing Options and Support Manager.	Increase the number of preventions facilitated by Help the Homeless, and rough sleeping instances reduced.	Clean, safe and healthy communities.

	Key Action	Key Milestones	By When	Resources	Action Lead	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
10.	Liaise with the Single Front Office service when the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy is reviewed.	Fully input into policy when reviewed.	31/03/2017	Housing Options team	Court and Welfare Officer.	High numbers of DHP related preventions are sustained.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.
11.	Linking into the health and public sector reforms	Raise profile of Homelessness and benefits of preventing homelessness with health partners	31/03/2017	Strategic Housing Service	Head of Housing.	Health partners more aware of benefits of housing and prevention homelessness to health with the possibility of prevention funding considered.	Clean, safe and healthy communities.

Priority 2:

Ensure that housing supply best meets housing need

	Key Action	Key Milestones	By When	Resources	Action Lead	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
12.	Work with the Select Move partnership to ensure current stock best meets housing need.	Engage and input into the review of the Select Move policy. Monitor Select Move allocations following policy changes.	31/03/2016 31/03/2017	Strategic Housing Officer.	Housing Options and Support Manager.	Increased percentages of lets to reasonable preference categories to households with a Chorley connection.	Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all.
13.	Ensure new affordable housing delivered best meets housing need.	Monitor both need on the Housing Register and demand from bids on Housing Register, in order to inform requirements for social housing on s.106 and other developer contributions. Review on at least an annual basis.	31/03/2016 31/03/2017 31/03/2018 31/03/2019	Legal Team CC and Development Control CC.	Strategic Housing Officer.	New social housing through developer contributions is in increased demand as it is more conducive to meeting housing need.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.

	Key Action	Key Milestones	By When	Resources	Action Lead	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
14.	Use council assets and to meet housing need	Review council assets available. Liaise with RPs Site/s developed	31/12/2015 31/03/2016 31/06/2016	RPs, Head of Housing, Strategic Housing Officer, Legal Team CC, Property Services CC, Development Control CC, Planning Policy CC.	Director of Customer and Advice Services	High demand properties delivered that meet housing need.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.
15.	Have regards to older peoples housing needs when developing new affordable housing.	Ensure bungalows are delivered as part of any site of a site or nature that allows it to be viable.	31/03/2019	Legal Team CC and Development Control CC.	Strategic Housing Officer	The supply of new social bungalows is continuous over the life of the development.	Clean, safe and healthy communities.
16.	Develop a centrally located Extra Care Scheme in Chorley to meet identified housing, support & care needs for older people whilst assisting the to live independently.	Secure funding. Obtain planning permission and start on site. Complete scheme.	31/12/2015 31/03/2016 31/03/2018	HCA Lancashire CC Legal Team CC, Property Services CC, Development Control CC, Planning Policy CC. Finance CC	Head of Housing.	65 unit scheme reaching practical completion by the end of March 2018.	Clean, safe and healthy communities.
17.	Bespoke new build properties to meets the specific needs of customers with disabilities where adaptations are not reasonably practicable	Identify need. Identify suitable pipeline properties. Liaise with RPs. 1 st phase of properties complete.	31/03/2016 30/06/2016 30/09/2016 31/03/2018	Housing Options Team Leader. Strategic Housing Officer.	Team Leader (Private Sector)	Need and properties are adapted at an early stage to enable customers' needs to be met.	Clean, safe and healthy communities.
18.	Have regard to the housing needs of 'care' groups when delivering affordable housing particularly with the move towards self-contained accommodation.	Liaise with LCC commissioners for LD, MH, PDSI. Agree way forward and consider all options.	30/06/2016 31/12/2016	Strategic Housing Officer.	Director of Customer and Advice Services.	Options and need identified for care groups.	Clean, safe and healthy communities.

Priority 3:

Enhance the depth and range of Housing Options services to meet current and future challenges.

	Key Action	Key Milestones	By When	Resources	Action Lead	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
19.	Ensure staff are trained to face new challenges following all new legislation case law.	Arrange training and all staff to attend.	31/12/15	Head of Housing Housing Options Team Leader	Housing Options and Support Manager.	Housing Options staff adequately trained, in particular regarding assessing vulnerability for priority need,	Clean, safe and healthy communities.
20.	Commission a new Accommodation Finding Service for Chorley to maximise the use of the PRS for 'non-priority' households.	Identify funding, draft service specification and commission with regard to procurement policy. Evaluate performance with a view extending for 2 nd year.	31/12/2015 30/07/2016	Procurement Team CC Legal team CC	Strategic Housing Officer.	Increased numbers of 'non-priority' households accessing the PRS.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.
21.	Continued promotion of Private Landlords Forum to increase the number of landlords participating and making better use of the PRS.	Promotion of PLF. Evaluate success of promotion.	31/12/2016 31/03/2017	HIA Team Housing Options Team	Team Leader (Private Sector).	Increased participation in PLF	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.
22.	Target Households likely to be affected by future welfare reform measures for budgeting advice.	Identify Households. Provide advice or refer to other specialist debt advice if needed	31/03/2016 31/03/2017	Housing Options Team. CAB	Court and Welfare Officer.	Households affected by changes in benefits have the opportunity to receive budgeting advice before the lowering of the benefit cap.	A strong local economy.
23.	Offer budgeting advice at food banks in Chorley.	Liaise with food bank/s and offer a budgeting drop-in service as required.	31/12/2015	Housing Options team.	Court and Welfare Officer.	Possibly excluded customers receive budgeting advice.	A strong local economy.
24.	Provide Internet related training to ensure communities are digitally included.	Recruit Digital Inclusion Officer. Contact community centres targeting possibly excluded groups including rural parishes.	30/06/2016 31/03/2017	Court and Welfare Officer.	Housing Options and Support Manager.	Training completed in a wide range of urban and rural locations and well attended.	Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all.

	Key Action	Key Milestones	By When	Resources	Action Lead	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
25.	Adopt a policy relating to the procurement and allocation of Temporary Accommodation.	Draft policy. Obtain member approval to adopt.	31/03/2016 30/06/2016	Housing Options Team.	Strategic Housing Officer.	Fit for purpose policy adopted.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.
26.	Maintain a robust approach to dealing with sightings of people Rough Sleeping and providing assistance.	Review procedure with a view to making any improvements. Review performance.	31/03/2016 31/03/2017	Housing Options Team.	Housing Options Team Leader.	Repeat rough sleeping eliminated if clients are willing to engage.	Clean, safe and healthy communities.
27.	Establish resettlement procedure at Cotswold Supported Housing.	Ensure procedure in place and staff trained.	31/03/2016	Cotswold Supported Housing Manager.	Housing Options and Support Manager.	Customers who move into their own tenancies are provided with 4 to 6 weeks continued support in their new tenancies to help maintain them successfully.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.
28.	Appoint Youth Support Worker at Cotswold Supported Housing.	Recruit Youth Support Worker.	31/12/2015	Cotswold Supported Housing Manager.	Housing Options and Support Manager.	Increased numbers of 16/17 year olds successfully complete programmes of support.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.

Priority 4:

Employment, training and education related to homelessness.

	Key Action	Key Milestones	By When	Resources	Action Lead	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
29.	Target Homeless Households and those threatened with homelessness for Employment Education and Training	Establish Referral mechanisms from Housing option, DWP and other partners. Establish and Employability Drop in at Cotswold SH	31/12/2015 31/03/2016	Supported Housing Manager and Staff Housing Options Team	Employability Officer	Enhanced pathways to employment and training opportunities for Cotswold Supported Housing residents.	A strong local economy.
30.	Homelessness Awareness School Education project.	Identify and engage with Schools. Prepare and deliver training. Evaluate feedback with view to future delivery.	31/12/2015 30/09/2016 31/12/2016	Housing Options team.	Court and Welfare Officer.	Secondary School children are encouraged to stay at home longer, understanding the pitfalls of leaving home early, especially if claiming benefits.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.

	Key Action	Key Milestones	By When	Resources	Action Lead	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
31.	Employability drop in at food banks	Liaise with food bank/s and an employability drop-in service as required.	31/12/2015	Housing Options team.	Employability Officer.	Food bank users who wouldn't have been referred to the Council are able to benefit from employability advice and assistance.	A strong local economy.
32.	Establish Pre-Tenancy Training provided by Cotswold Supported Housing	Prepare materials and deliver first training sessions, review and repeat as necessary.	31/12/2015	Cotswold Supported Housing Staff. Housing Options team.	Cotswold Supported Housing Manager.	Pre-Tenancy Training is successfully delivered to all residents who require it on their support plans.	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.
32.	Investigate possibility of providing work/work related training as part of Council related projects to people threatened with homelessness.	Liaise with Economic Development over future employment or training opportunities related to Market Walk 2, the Extra Care scheme or any other Council projects. If feasible devise a plan to take this forward.	31/12/2016 31/03/2017	Economic Development Team. Housing Options Team.	Housing Options and Support Manager.	A viable plan to link Housing Options clients with emerging employment/training opportunities will be established if it is feasible.	A strong local economy.

Appendix B - Glossary

Affordable Housing	Housing for households whose needs are not met by the market included, social rented, affordable rented, intermediate home ownership and intermediate rented.
Allocations Policy	The set of rules which determine priority for applicants on a housing register or Choice Based Lettings system for the purpose of accessing social housing.
Choice Based Lettings	A proactive online bidding system which allows choice to households wishing to access social housing as opposed to waiting to be allocated a property.
Eligible Applicant	During a homeless investigation we will consider whether applicants are eligible for assistance. This is considered against set criteria.
Homelessness	Anyone who does not have a safe or permanent home may be Homeless.
Intermediate Home Ownership	Housing models to enable households to buy a property to meet their needs who can't afford to buy the open market. Models include Shared Ownership, Shared Equity/Equity Share (e.g. Firstbuy), Discounted for Sale, Rent to Buy.
Intentionally homeless	If a homelessness applicant has deliberately done something or not done something which has resulted in you becoming homeless. This includes Failure to act on advice that has been given to you.
Mediation	Facilitating dialogue between a client threatened with eviction and the property owner other tenants (often parents or partners) or landlord in order to assist the client to remain in their current home.
P1E	The quarterly homelessness statistical return made by the local housing authority to the Department of Communities and Local Government.
Prevention	Where a local authority takes positive action to provide housing assistance to someone who considers him or herself to be at risk of homelessness in the near future, and as a result the person is able to either remain in his or her existing accommodation or obtain alternative accommodation, providing a solution for at least the next six months.
Priority Need	Priority need is the second test in a homelessness application. People in priority need are considered to be more vulnerable than other people, and so more in need of help to find accommodation.

Private Landlord	An owner of a property who rents the property to tenants who is not a housing association, council or third sectors organisation.
Rental Bond Scheme	Assistance provided to people in housing need, but do not have a cash deposit to access private rented accommodation. Landlords are offered a bond in the form of a non-cash deposit guarantee by the Council.
Rough Sleeping	The situation if a is person sleeping, or bedded down, in the open air (such as on streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or "bashes").
Select Move	The sub-regional Choice Based Lettings system for Chorley, Preston and South Ribble local authorities accessed via www.selectmove.co.uk
Sanctuary Scheme	The Scheme provides professionally installed security measures to allow those experiencing domestic violence to remain in their own accommodation where it is safe to do so, where it is their choice and where the perpetrator no longer lives within the accommodation.
Supporting People	The grant administration programme which commissions housing related support services to allow vulnerable people to remain in their own homes. Lancashire County Council administers the budget on behalf of the 12 lower tier districts in the county.
Strategy	A strategy is a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal.
Temporary Accommodation	When an individual or household makes a homeless application the Council must offer them temporary accommodation if they have nowhere else to stay. This accommodation may consist of a flat, house, bedsit, and hostel or, in some limited circumstances, a bed and breakfast hotel.