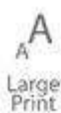


The Draft Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and Review 2018-21

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Executive Summary

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory duty on each local housing authority to carry out a review of homelessness, and using the review, develop a strategy to prevent homelessness. Both the strategy and review must be formulated at least every 5 years and then published. The Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and Review acts as both documents that are legally required. Following the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 on 3rd April 2018, it is also good practice to publish a new strategy at this time, having regard to additional powers and duties due to the new legislation, and new ways of working needed to deliver a legally compliant Housing Options service.

The review highlights increasing numbers of homelessness decisions as well as a rising trend in the number of households considered statutory homeless. Whilst the number of statutory duty decisions has continuously increased since 2013/14, the rate of homelessness was 1.4 households per 1,000 in 2017/18, still well below the national level of 2.4 households per 1,000. The main reason for homelessness, in consistently over 1/3rd of all cases is domestic abuse. The increasing number of complex cases involving people with mental health problems is highlighted as a significant factor contributing to rising numbers of homeless households, along with the borough becoming less affordable, as well as decreasing numbers of social housing lets. In 2017/18 the Council helped to prevent or relieve 217 households from being homeless, which is the highest figure for 5 years, and represented 7.2 households per 1,000. The rate of prevention and reliefs was 6th highest out of 12 Lancashire districts, but the highest of the Pennine districts. The main 3 prevention types were rehousing in social housing, assisting a household into supported accommodation and securing private rented sector accommodation through the 'rent bond' scheme.

The historic lack of supported housing in the borough is highlighted, in particular for use as temporary accommodation, and future challenges were also illustrated such as the roll out to Rossendale of "full service" Universal Credit in November 2018. The success of the 2007 Homelessness Strategy was also detailed, with 14 out of 19 actions completed.

The strategy will be measured by the following factors that were devised to measure its success at a high level:

1. keeping the number of prevention & reliefs consistently high with a target of 140 plus per year,
2. ensuring the number of households in Temporary Accommodation is maintained at 2.5 or below on average,
3. the numbers of statutory homeless households remain low with a target of no more than 36 per year.

The success factors above will be monitored on a quarterly basis.

Considering the evidence and taking into account policy changes and future challenges, 3 priorities were developed to enable the Council to robustly meet its duties and proactively prevent homelessness:

- priority 1: ensure the Council is well positioned to deliver a service that meets the demands and duties introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, as well as meet other current and future challenges,
- priority 2: working with all partners to ensure vulnerable people are supported in suitable accommodation,
- priority 3: ensure that housing supply best meets housing need.

The key actions contributing to achieving the priorities are manifested in the action plan which forms appendix A of the strategy. The action plan takes a holistic approach, and demonstrates how all of the wider Strategic Housing team, as well as teams such as Planning, the Public Protection Unit, Economic Development and the Service Assurance Team amongst others, as well as external partners, all contribute to the prevention of homelessness in Rossendale.

Introduction

The prevention of homelessness is a key priority of Rossendale Borough Council, with the Housing Options team and other functions of the wider Strategic Housing team, heavily focused towards this goal.

This Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and Review 2018-21 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 Rossendale Homelessness Strategy 2007.

The purpose of the homelessness review is to:

- review the levels, and likely future levels, of homelessness in Rossendale;
- 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 Rossendale; and
- review the resources available to Rossendale 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 Rossendale Borough Council's offices at the Business Centre, Futures Park, Bacup, OL13 0BB.

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

- the prevention of homelessness in Rossendale;
- the securing of accommodation for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in Rossendale; 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. Rossendale Borough 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 households in Rossendale and those who approach the Council for housing related advice and assistance. It is the aspiration of Government, particularly following the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 that all local housing authorities are able to give 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 VII. 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 to 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.

Under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Council will owe any household a duty to prevent homelessness if they are threatened with homelessness within 56 days and eligible (for public funds). To prevent homelessness the Council will take positive steps to help the household remain in their current accommodation or find new settled accommodation. If a household is actually homeless, or becomes homeless ending the prevention duty, the Council has 56 day duty to relieve homelessness, and this is done by assisting the household to find new accommodation.

During the 56 day relief period the Council may provide interim accommodation if the household is expected to be in priority need. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 amends and adds to the powers and duties of the Housing Act 1996 part VII; however the provisions relating to the final decision stage of a homeless application still largely apply.

The Council is still required to make inquiries in order to assess if an applicant is eligible, homeless, in priority need, and unintentionally so, before deciding if they are classed as 'statutory homeless', which means there is a 'full duty' to assist them to be rehoused.

The review focuses on the Council's short term and medium term performance looking at all areas and causes of households being made homeless, or put in a position where they are threatened with homelessness and need to approach the Council for advice and assistance. The review will also look at the success of prevention measures, and provide other evidence that can be used to devise the strategy to prevent and mitigate homelessness.

The strategy will devise priorities based on the evidence in the review, and the action plan will detail key actions to prevent and relieve homelessness, as well as reducing the number households who end up requiring a final homelessness decision.

National Context

This strategy is written during a period of extensive change in the homelessness sector, following the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 on 3rd April 2018. The HRA saw the biggest change in legislation affecting homelessness services since the Housing Act 1996.

Homelessness services are covered by the part VII of the Housing Act 1996, however there were major and wide sweeping amendments made by the HRA after minor amendments by both the Homelessness Act 2002 and Localism Act 2011. As well as legislation, case law has a major impact on how homelessness services are delivered in England. For example in 2015 the Johnson v Solihull case changed the threshold for priority need, ending the 'Pereira' test, and Nzolameso v Westminster also in 2015 made changes to the way local authorities should source and allocate Temporary Accommodation.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA) was implemented on 3rd April 2018, and the act puts duties on local housing authorities to take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness at an early stage regardless of whether the household is considered in priority need. As well as 'upstreaming' homelessness prevention, the HRA seeks to ensure all households are adequately assisted when they first contact services dealing with homelessness, as the assistance greatly varied between local authorities especially for non-priority households. The changes due to the HRA are summarised as follows:

- the threatened with homelessness period applies for 56 days, increased from 28 days, and includes valid s.21 notices with 56 days or less remaining,
- all households will receive written advice tailored to their circumstances,
- all households (if eligible) will have their case assessed and be given a Personalised Housing Plan,
- there is a prevention duty for 56 days to assist all households threatened with homelessness,
- there is a relief duty for 56 days for all households who are homeless,
- under prevention and relief duties the Council must 'help to secure' accommodation that is suitable,
- duties can be ended if the applicant refuses to cooperate,
- the applicant is able to ask for a review of decisions made relating to new duties under the HRA,
- from October 2018 other public authorities (e.g. health services, social care, offender related) have a duty to refer to the local housing authority,
- care leavers are awarded a local connection to the local housing authority in which they receive care as well as the social services authority that provides care.

From a practical point of view the HRA means providing homelessness related services is more resource intensive, and has increased the amount of time staff spend with each customer to fully assess needs, produce the Personalised Housing Plan (PHP), track progress of the PHP, and report quarterly to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Since the HRA has been implemented the number of households approaching the Council has also increased over 50% locally. New software systems were needed for all local housing authorities to record and report the increased amount of information on applicants required by the MHCLG

The HRA allows prevention and relief duties to be discharged by helping to secure a 6 month Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) in the Private Rented Sector (PRS). The accommodation secured must meet Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012, and this allows more scope for local housing authorities to utilise the PRS. If an applicant doesn't follow their PHP, and displays a deliberate and unreasonable refusal to cooperate it is possible to discharge prevention and/or relief duties.

Whilst the HRA aims to treat all households the same from the outset, regardless of priority need, there is only a duty to house applicants in temporary accommodation (TA) under the relief duty if there is reason to believe a household is vulnerable due to being in priority need. A household which is considered to be in priority need must be accommodated for the 56 day

relief period even if they are found to be intentionally homeless, unless the relief duty is discharged, and this duty is expected to increase TA use by the Council.

As well as specific homelessness legislation the **Deregulation Act 2015** changed the procedure for s.21 notices, and a prescribed form is now needed for a landlord to give notice to tenancies signed from 1st October 2015, and this will apply to all ASTs from 1st October 2018 no matter when they were created. The Deregulation Act also gave tenants protection from retaliatory evictions where the tenant has reported an issue to their local housing authority and an improvement notice/notice of emergency remedial action has been served. The Deregulation Act also protects the tenant from eviction if the landlord has not provided the tenant with an energy performance certificate, gas safety certificate and a copy of the up to date 'How to Rent' booklet.

The **Housing and Planning Act 2016** introduced Starter Homes, which had been a Conservative party manifesto promise; however further detail was left to future Starter Homes regulations. There was a threat that Starter Homes would replace, or mostly replace; rented affordable tenures (Social Rent and Affordable Rent) delivered through planning obligations / s.106 agreements. The Housing and Planning Act also paved the way for 'pay to stay', for high earners in social tenancies having to pay up to market rent levels, the sale of higher value local authority homes, the extension of Right to Buy to housing associations, and the mandatory use of fixed term tenancies for new local authority tenants.

The Government's affordable housing programme, Shared Ownership Affordable Homes Programme 2016 to 2021 (SOAHP), was limited to Shared Ownership and Rent to Buy tenures for general needs housing initially, with no grant available for rented affordable tenures bar a small proportion for supported housing. The rent reduction in the social sector, of 1% per year from 2016 to 2020, made it harder to deliver new rented affordable tenures as social landlords were losing around 12% of their projected rental income when compared to the expected CPI +1%. The rent reduction decreased the financial viability of new rented affordable homes through planning obligations as well as grant funded units, and there was no clarity for over 2 years regarding what would happen beyond 2020 creating uncertainty. Since the announcement of Starter Homes some developers waited for the new tenure as it would mean a much cheaper alternative than other affordable tenures, as the discounts for Starter Homes are less than half than what is needed for traditional affordable tenures.

The changes in the two paragraphs above led to a slow down nationally in new affordable home delivery, which was exacerbated by the Autumn Statement in 2015, in which the Chancellor announced an intention to restrict Housing Benefit levels, or the equivalent Universal Credit element, to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) in social housing. The restriction was known as the LHA Cap, and meant single under 35 year olds would only be entitled to the Shared Accommodation Rate and therefore not be able to afford a one bedroom social tenancy. The Autumn Statement of 2016 signalled a shift away from the Government supporting home ownership only affordable tenures, with the indication that Affordable Rent would be available again through SOAHP. Also the absence of a mention of Starter Home regulations in the Government's Housing white paper in February 2017, '**Fixing our Broken Housing Market**', affirmed a move back to rented affordable homes being supported. However the stalling of the supply of new rented affordable tenures from 2015-17 still impacts on current supply and the housing offer available for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Other non-housing legislation affects the way homelessness services operate, such as the Care Act in 2014. Also the primacy of the Care Act 1989 over the Housing Act 1996 was established by the case of G v Southwark in 2009, which recognised the need for close working relationship between Children's Services and local housing authorities. Since the Southwark ruling Lancashire County Council, along with the 12 districts responsible for housing, have developed joint protocols for dealing with homeless 16/17 year olds.

Welfare Reform legislation impacts greatly on the homelessness sector, as it affects a household's ability to pay for housing and associated costs. There were a number of changes to Housing Benefit announced in the June 2010 budget which from April 2011, capped the amount paid for each bedroom rate under the LHA, removed both the 5 bedroom higher rate and the £15 excess a claimant could keep per week if their rent was cheaper than the LHA. The capping of the rate for each room affected the most expensive housing markets in the country, and had no impact on Lancashire authorities, however in October 2011:

- The LHA changed to 30th percentile of the market rent from the 50th percentile.

The above change restricted the number of properties available to households claiming housing benefit further, and meant that only a minority would ever be affordable.

The Housing Benefit (Amendment) Regulations 2011 meant:

- single under 35 year olds would be restricted to the Shared Accommodation Rate from the anniversary of their claim after 1st January 2012.

The above change meant single under 35 year olds, with a few exceptions, were mainly restricted to shared housing in the PRS and social sector properties.

The **Welfare Reform Act 2012** introduced a number of measures that directly and indirectly impacted on a households ability to access new accommodation or remain in their own home:

- Universal Credit was introduced which replaced 6 of the main means tested benefits, incorporating them into one single monthly direct payment with a UK-wide roll out starting in 2013,
- Council Tax Support was localised in April 2013 and due to Government grant cuts Council Tax Benefit no longer covered the entire cost for working age claimants in most local authorities, requiring a small contribution by the claimant (up to 13%),
- the Benefit Cap, of £500 per week for families/couples and £350 per week for single people, fully implemented by September 2013,
- The introduction of Size Criteria for social housing reduced benefit payment for those households who were under-occupying according to the bedroom standard, 14% for one room and 25% for 2 or more rooms, applied from April 2013,
- Personal Independent Payment (PIP) was rolled out replacing Disability Living Allowance from 2013 with a full Great Britain roll out by October 2015, requiring periodic assessments to ensure ongoing eligibility.

Of the above changes, Universal Credit (UC) would mean direct payments to claimants, even tenants in social housing, and this is seen as a major risk by housing associations. The delays in payment after claiming UC, and uncertainty of claims also make it less attractive to landlords and mean it is more challenging to find rented accommodation for UC claimants. Rossendale becomes a 'full service' area for UC from November 2018, and all new claims from that date will be for UC rather than legacy benefits, for single people, couples, and all families with under 3 children. From 2019 the Department of Work and Pensions will begin to

move existing claimants from legacy benefits to UC, and this is expected to be complete by 2022.

The Size Criteria, often referred to as the 'bedroom tax', made it unaffordable for a significant number of households to remain in their homes, however local housing authorities were given extra money to pay for Discretionary Housing Payments to mitigate the impact on some of the affected claimants. The Benefit Cap affected areas with higher rent levels the most, and at its original cap levels only affected between 5 and 13 families at any one time in Rossendale from 2013 to 2016.

The Rent Officers (Housing Benefit and Universal Credit Functions) (Local Housing Allowance Amendments) Order 2015, meant that LHA rates were frozen for 4 years at 2015 rates from 2016 to 2020, at a time when private rented properties have seen significant increases.

The **Localism Act 2011** allowed local housing authorities to set their allocations policy appropriately to the needs of their local area, with the power to decide which groups of people 'qualify' and which don't. For example, introducing residency or local connection qualification criteria. The Localism Act also introduced Affordable Rent at up to 80% of market rent, as a new social tenure, as well as flexible/fixed term tenancies. Local housing authorities were required to set out their approach to new flexible/fixed term tenancies in the form of a Tenancy Strategy. The act also gave powers to the local housing authority to discharge their homelessness duty into the private rented sector, providing the tenancy was for at least 12 months.

No Second Night Out (NSNO) was launched nationwide in 2012, as a roll-out of the London project that started in 2011. NSNO is a Government initiative to ensure rough sleepers spend no more than one night out on the streets. To assist the Lancashire grouping (12 districts plus 2 unitary authorities) were awarded £504,000 Single Homelessness Initiative grant, which was mainly spent on accommodation finding services for non-priority households who were homeless or threatened with homelessness.

In August 2012 the Government published a report; **Making every contact count - A joint approach to preventing homelessness**, which resulted from a ministerial working group to tackle homelessness. The report came up with **10 local challenges** for the homelessness sector:

- adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services,
- actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs,
- offer a Housing Options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients,
- adopt a *No Second Night Out* model or an effective local alternative,
- have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support,
- develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both clients and landlord,

- actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme,
- have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs,
- not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation,
- not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks.

The 10 local challenges formed the basis of the Government's **Gold Standard** support and training scheme launched in 2013, which aimed to set the bar for local homelessness services.

The **Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016** was a follow up to the Summer and Autumn Statements in 2015, and had a focus on increasing employment whilst reducing the welfare budget. The following were the main provisions of the act:

- the Benefit Cap amounts were lowered to £20,000 per year (£384.62pw) for families/couples and £13,400 per year (£257.69pw) for single people from November 2016,
- Child Tax Credit claims for children born from April 2017 are limited to 2 children and the 'family element' is abolished for families who have their first child born from April 2017 also,
- the cutting of rents in social housing by 1% a year for 4 years from 2016,
- the freeze of certain social security benefits and tax credits for 4 years,
- Support for Mortgage Interest scheme changed to a repayable loan from April 2018.

Not surprisingly, since the lowering of the Benefit Cap at the end of 2016, far more households have been affected. According to the last published DWP, 38 households had benefits reduced by the cap in May 2018, and the highest this figure has been was 47 on May 2017 and the trend is generally downward. Of the 38 households capped, 22 were affected by less than £50 per week, and all were families with children.

The Universal Credit (Housing Costs Element for claimants aged 18 to 21) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 came into force in April 2017 and meant:

- there is no automatic entitlement for people aged 18 to 21 inclusive to receive housing costs as part of their UC claim.

The above change had many exemptions detailed in a circular, so people in need would still get support; however it is catch 22 for those under 22 as it is difficult to secure housing without the knowledge of entitlement, and the claim can't be submitted without housing being secured.

The LHA Cap to the amount of benefit paid to households in social housing had a significant impact on the delivery of new Supported Housing and 1 bedroom general needs social housing, and made it more difficult for under 35 year old single people to find accommodation. Whilst the cap was never implemented, and the idea was scrapped in October 2017, there was a detrimental impact since its announcement in 2015, and significant changes to supported housing rents were still planned for 2020.

The MHCLG and DWP carried out their latest consultation regarding the future of rents for supported housing at the end of 2017. The rents for 'short term' supported housing were proposed to be separated from the benefits system and given to the local authority (upper tier) as a 'ring-fenced' grant'. Short term supported accommodation services are the ones that help households becoming homeless or returning to homelessness. There were concerns that once the grant was awarded then it would not be possible to introduce new supported housing without decommissioning current schemes. Based on the Supporting People programme, there was also a serious concern that the 'ring-fence' could be removed at a future date, and the statutory duties for the upper tier authority holding the pot are different to the districts', so there was a perceived medium to long term threat to short term supported accommodation. There were no more details regarding proposals following the consultation, and the future of short-term supported accommodation remained a serious concern for the homelessness sector until these plans were dropped according to a Government statement in August 2018.

Local Context

Rossendale is located in the northwest of England, and is 1 of 12 districts that are the local housing authorities in the Lancashire County Council area. Rossendale forms part of a group of authorities collectively known as 'Pennine Lancashire' which also comprises of Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle, Ribble Valley and Blackburn with Darwen (unitary authority). Rossendale also located approximately 16 miles from Manchester City Centre, and towns to the west of the borough, such as Rawtenstall and Haslingden, have good links to Manchester via the M66 and to towns along the M65, both via A56 dual carriageway connections. Rossendale has no national rail station but has frequent buses connecting to other areas, in particular Manchester, Rochdale, Bury, Burnley and Accrington.

Rossendale has a population of 70,365 according to the latest mid-year population estimate for 2017 by the Office of National Statistics. Rossendale's population has risen by 5.6% over the last ten years, but remains the second smallest Local Authority in the Lancashire area. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) rank of average score, Rossendale is the 108th most deprived Local Authority out of 326 in England, however all east Lancashire neighbours except Ribble Valley are in the top 38 most deprived. According to the IMD 2010 Rossendale was ranked 98th, and therefore the statistics suggest the borough is becoming relatively less deprived.

The population of Rossendale is mainly made up of people in the 'White' ethnic group. Table 1 below shows that Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi and Pakistanis are the most significant non-white ethnic groups in terms of numbers, making up 2.4% and 1.7% of the population respectively. Rossendale has significantly lower percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) residents than compared to the national average, and slightly lower when compared to the regional data. Between the last two censuses, the BME population has grown by 2.4 percentage points, with 1 percentage point of the increase due to the growing Bangladeshi community.

The population of Rossendale is made up 18.1% of people who are over 65 years of age and 2.1% aged 85 or over, which is under the Lancashire averages of 20.4% and 2.6% respectively for 2017. The population of older people is expected to increase in Rossendale, which is typical of the whole country, however there is projected to be a 44.1% increase in the next 18 years in the borough of people over 65. Table 2 demonstrates that the projected older people's increase in Rossendale is much higher than the Lancashire average, and the 2nd highest of the 12 Lancashire districts.

Table 1

Census Tenure 2011				
Ethnic Group / Area	Rossendale		North West	England
	number	%	%	%
All usual residents	67,982	100.0	100.0	100.0
White	63,778	93.8	90.2	85.4
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	62,516	92.0	87.1	79.8
White: Irish	541	0.8	0.9	1.0
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	47	0.1	0.1	0.1
White: Other White	674	1.0	2.1	4.6
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	602	0.9	1.6	2.3
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	199	0.3	0.6	0.8
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	64	0.1	0.3	0.3
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	218	0.3	0.4	0.6
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed	121	0.2	0.3	0.5
Asian/Asian British	3,396	5.0	6.2	7.8
Asian/Asian British: Indian	186	0.3	1.5	2.6
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	1,139	1.7	2.7	2.1
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	1,638	2.4	0.7	0.8
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	233	0.3	0.7	0.7
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	200	0.3	0.7	1.5
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	123	0.2	1.4	3.5
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	49	0.1	0.8	1.8
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	63	0.1	0.3	1.1
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black	11	0.0	0.2	0.5
Other ethnic group	83	0.1	0.6	1.0
Other ethnic group: Arab	37	0.1	0.3	0.4
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	46	0.1	0.3	0.6

Source: ONS Census data.

Table 2

Projected % increase in over 65 Population 2017 - 2035	
Chorley	49.1%
Rossendale	44.1%
Fylde	41.2%
Ribble Valley	38.8%
South Ribble	36.5%
Lancashire (all 12 districts)	36.0%
Preston	35.2%
Pendle	33.7%
Lancaster	33.3%
West Lancashire	31.8%
Hyndburn	31.3%
Wyre	31.0%
Burnley	28.4%

Source: ONS subnational population projections

There are around 31,500 homes in Rossendale according to the Council Tax base in October 2017, and almost 70% of these dwellings are owner occupied. Table 3 below demonstrates that levels of owner-occupation are higher than regional and national levels; and the percentage of properties in the social and private rented sectors are lower for Rossendale. The low level of social rented properties, in particular, makes it challenging to rehouse households in housing need.

Table 3

Census Tenure 2011						
Tenure / Area	Rossendale		North West		England	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
All households	29,058	100.0	3,009,549	100.0	22,063,368	100.0
Owned	20,250	69.7	1,941,564	64.5	13,975,024	63.3
Owned: Owned outright	9,160	31.5	934,101	31.0	6,745,584	30.6
Owned: Owned with a mortgage or loan	11,090	38.2	1,007,463	33.5	7,229,440	32.8
Shared ownership (part owned and part rented)	87	0.3	15,787	0.5	173,760	0.8
Social rented	4,244	14.6	550,481	18.3	3,903,550	17.7
Private rented	4,106	14.1	462,899	15.4	3,715,924	16.8
Living rent free	371	1.3	38,818	1.3	295,110	1.3

Source: ONS Census data.

Since 2001, the amount of owner-occupation has fallen by 1.8 percentage points in Rossendale, and level of social rented properties has dropped by 3.8 percentage points whilst the proportion of private rented homes has risen by around 6 percentage points. The rise in the private rented sector follows national and regional trends, with the social sector declining largely due to Right to Buy. The numbers of owner-occupied properties slightly increased between both censuses in Rossendale, but overall the percentage slightly dropped due to the significant rise in the private rented sector.

Local Strategies, Policies and Initiatives

Rossendale Borough Council's Corporate Strategy 2017-21 had a light refresh of its objectives in 2018. The Corporate Strategy has the following 3 priorities:

- a clean and green Rossendale,
- a connected, growing and successful Rossendale that welcomes sustainable growth,
- a proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.

The Prevention of Homelessness Strategy contributes mainly towards the third priority, 'a proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale', by aiming to meet the following corporate objectives:

- protect our more vulnerable residents by working to prevent and relieve homelessness, and providing adaptations to assist people to live independently in their own homes,
- meet the housing needs of the borough by increasing the delivery of affordable homes and reducing the number of empty dwellings across the Borough.

Lancashire Young People's Homelessness & Housing Strategy 2011-2014 published by Children's Trust Lancashire, is the first county wide strategy formulated to address the housing and support needs of young people. The strategy aimed to meet its objectives through early intervention and prevention, and joint working including; LCC Children's Social Care, the 12 districts and other related youth agencies.

The **Lancashire Joint Protocol - Joint Working Arrangements - Meeting the Needs of Homeless 16/17 year olds** was refreshed in May 2018 and relaunched locally in the Council Chamber in Bacup in June 2018. The protocol affirms the commitment of Lancashire County Council and the 12 district Local Housing Authority partners to work together and with young people and their families in situations where they are not able to return home, and ensuring that appropriate accommodation and support can be arranged quickly. The protocol and related flowcharts can be found:

http://www.proceduresonline.com/lancashirecsc/p_homeless.html

The **Pennine Lancashire Housing Strategy 2009-2029 (PLHS)** sets out to address the issues of market failure in the 6 Local Authorities in the east of Lancashire, and set the following three crosscutting objectives:

1. to ensure a sufficient quantity, high quality, and appropriate type of housing supply to meet the economic aspirations and social needs of Pennine Lancashire,
2. to develop sustainable neighbourhoods that can retain successful households and offer opportunities to inward movers and investors, reducing the disparities between neighbourhoods within Pennine Lancashire, providing linkages to economic growth and employment opportunities and improving overall economic performance in relation to the region,
3. to meet the housing, health and support needs of our residents and vulnerable people, promoting better services, more choice, accessible and integrated fully into local communities.

Some of the ambitions of the PLHS were fettered when the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder 'Elevate' was ended by the Government 4 years early in 2011.

Rossendale joined an existing partnership of 2 other local districts to form the expanded **Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Homelessness Forum** in 2017. As well as the named local authorities, the forum includes other statutory agencies and third sector organisations including providers of housing and support as well as advice services. The forum meets 3 times a year to discuss homelessness and housing related issues, including progress regarding district homelessness strategies and action plans.

Lancashire joined the worldwide humanitarian cause to address the refugee crisis in the Middle East by participating in the **Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme**. The Council pledged to provide a home for 10 families in 2018 and 2019 to assist people fleeing the Syria. Whilst the families have accommodation secured before they settle in the area, and therefore are not threatened with homelessness, the housing and support is sourced by the Council, as well as assistance to aid successful integration into the community by working with partners.

Allocation of Social Housing

Despite Rossendale Borough Council transferring all its housing stock to Green Vale Homes in March 2006, the Council retains a duty under Part VI the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) to facilitate a system for allocating social housing to meet need in the area e.g. a Housing Register or Waiting List. To fulfil its Part VI duty the Council participates in a sub-regional Choice Based Lettings partnership known as B-with-us, where properties are advertised for a

week by providers of social housing, and applicants express an interest by 'bidding' on properties. The applicant in the highest band for the longest time period to bid on a property is then shortlisted first providing their bedroom need matches the property.

Choice Based Lettings was a major feature of the quality and choice agenda in the first decade of this century, and aimed to build sustainable communities by allowing people to proactively bid rather than wait to be allocated a property, and therefore decrease turnover due to being given an element of choice. In the B-with-us partnership there are 5 local housing authorities; Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendle and Rossendale, plus 10 Private Registered Providers of social housing. Private Registered Providers (PRPs) are non-local authority organisations registered with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) which is part of the Homes and Communities Agency.

In Rossendale the vast majority of social housing stock has been owned and managed by Together Housing Association Ltd since April 2016. Green Vale joined the Together Housing Group in 2011 with 6 other housing associations which eventually formed Together Housing Association. Table 4 shows Together manage 5/6^{ths} of all social housing stock in Rossendale with every other PRP managing fewer than 4%, and only 3 with others with over 100 units of housing stock. Therefore the Council's dependence on Together can't be overstated.

Table 4

General Needs Social Housing Stock by Private Registered Provider		
Together Housing Association Limited	3615	84.4%
Manchester and District Housing Association Limited	165	3.9%
Calico Homes Limited	153	3.6%
Regenda Limited	130	3.0%
Places for People Homes Limited	97	2.3%
Great Places Housing Association	46	1.1%
The Guinness Partnership Limited	46	1.1%
St Vincent's Housing Association Limited	28	0.7%
Irwell Valley Housing Association Limited	5	0.1%
Total	4285	100.0%

Source: Government data - SDR Return 2016-17

At the end of 2017/18, there were 1,426 Rossendale households who were active (able to bid) on B-with-us. The breakdown by bedroom need and banding can be seen below in table 5, with Band 1 being the highest priority band.

Table 5

Rossendale B-with-us Households as of 1st April 2018							
Band/Bedroom Need	1 bed/bedsit	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4 bedroom	5 bedroom	Total	Total %
Band 1	22	10	8	3	0	43	3.0%
Band 2	143	56	31	9	2	241	16.9%
Band 3	374	215	99	18	1	707	49.6%
Band 4	261	121	50	3	0	435	30.5%
Total	800	402	188	33	3	1426	100.0%
Total %	56.1%	28.2%	13.2%	2.3%	0.2%	100.0%	

Source: B-with-us data

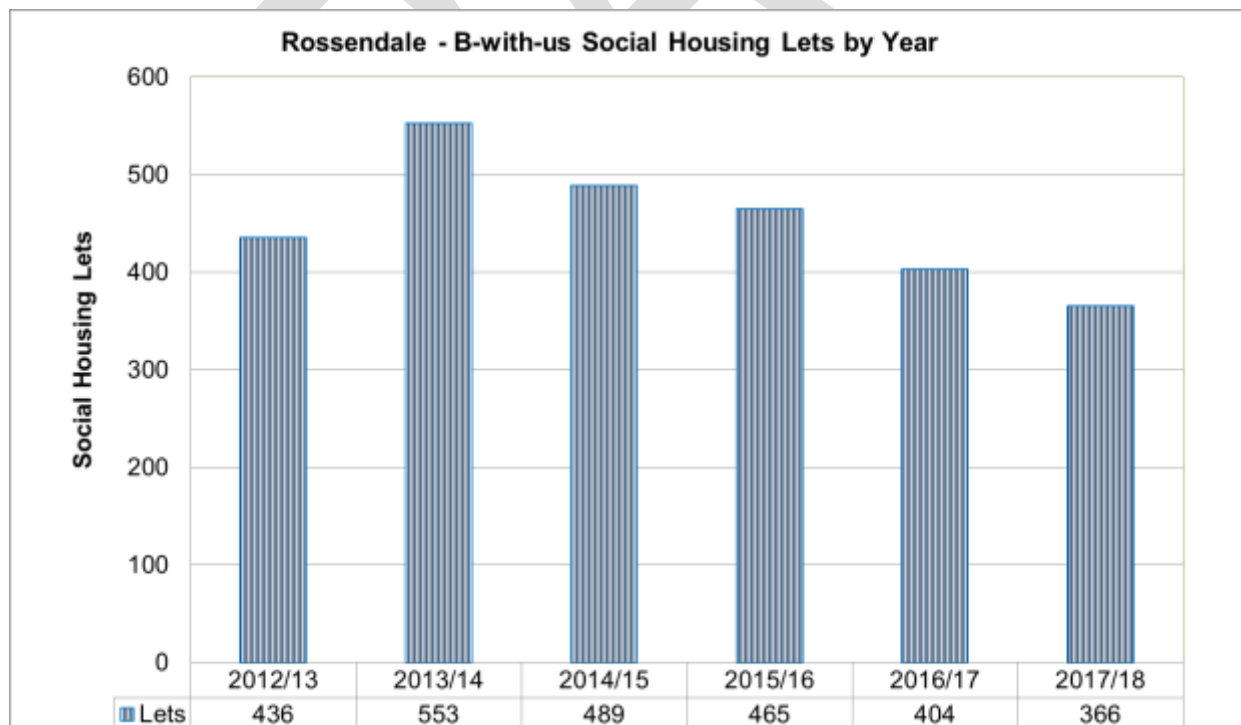
Whilst the highest need is for one bedroom properties demonstrated by over half the households having a one bedroom need, 1 bedroom properties have the lowest numbers of bids with 11 on average in the last two years and less than 3 bids for bedsits. Whilst 4 bedroom properties have the highest number of bids with 23 per listing, this is based on only a very small number of lets. 2 bedrooms properties with 18 bids get slightly more bids than 3 bedroom properties with 17; however in the west of Rossendale (BB4) bid levels are much higher and slightly higher for 3 bedroom properties than 2 bedroom homes. A high incidence of Right to Buy acquisitions from 3 bedroom tenants has led to very few relets in Rawtenstall and Haslingden areas, with the majority of relets of 3 bedroom properties let in the Bacup area. The total number of social housing lets can be seen in table 6 and figure 1 below, and there has been a demonstrable decline in the total over the last five years.

Table 6

Rossendale B-with-us Social Housing Lets by Year									
Year/Bedrooms	1 bed/bedsit	%	2 bedroom	%	3 bedroom	%	4 bedroom	%	Total
2017/18	175	47.8%	139	38.0%	49	13.4%	3	0.8%	366
2016/17	214	53.0%	147	36.4%	43	10.6%	0	0.0%	404
2015/16	211	45.4%	180	38.7%	67	14.4%	7	1.5%	465
2014/15	254	51.9%	170	34.8%	56	11.5%	9	1.8%	489
2013/14	198	35.8%	210	38.0%	141	25.5%	4	0.7%	553
2012/13	217	49.8%	169	38.8%	49	11.2%	1	0.2%	436

Source: B-with-us data

Figure 1



Source: B-with-us data

The delivery of new affordable housing affects the total number of lets, along with Right to Buy as already mentioned, but also the turnover. As properties become more unaffordable in the private rented sector households are more likely to stay in their current social tenancy.

Affordability

The median house price in Rossendale is £130,000 according to ONS data for the rolling year until September 2017. The median house price for the borough has risen 21% from £110,750 in September 2012, whilst median wages of residents have dropped by 6% over the same time period. Table 7 below demonstrates how properties have become more unaffordable over the five year period with the median house price to earnings ratio rising from 4.38 to 5.62 in just five years, which show the typical property becoming 28% less affordable for the typical household.

Table 7

Rossendale Median House Price, Earnings and Affordability Ratio						
Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Median House Price	£107,500	£110,500	£118,000	£125,000	£123,000	£130,000
Median Household Income	£ 24,550	£ 22,624	£ 23,028	£ 24,293	£ 24,041	£ 23,119
Median Affordability Ratio	4.38	4.88	5.12	5.15	5.12	5.62

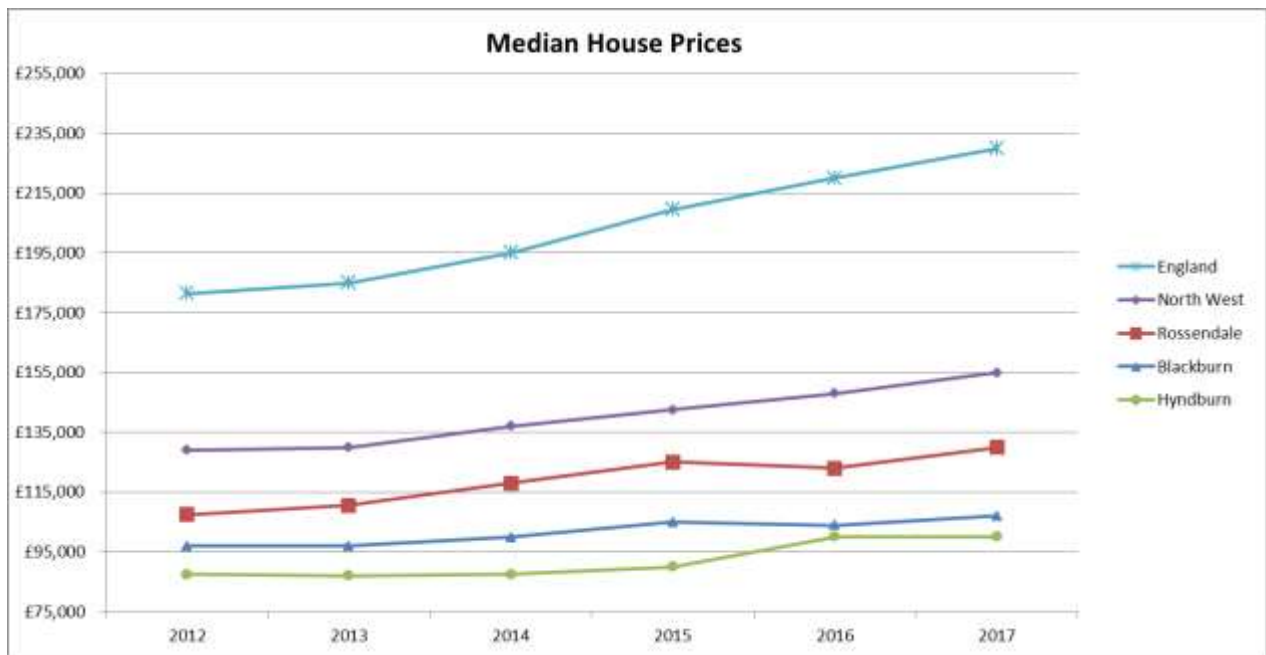
Source: ONS Data, Land Registry

The rising house prices have been more acute in the west of the borough, with pressure from greater demand due to its location acting as a gateway to the Manchester city region. As demand has increased so have rents, however the amount a household can claim via Housing Benefit/Universal Credit to help with housing costs has remained static since 2012. The rents for benefits are set at 30th percentile of the market rent and called the Local Housing Allowance (LHA). Therefore the rents are set below the average rent, but also the rents are set at an area called the Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA).

The BRMA that covers the majority of Rossendale is 'East Lancashire' which also covers most of Blackburn with Darwen and Hyndburn council areas. The other two council areas that largely make up the BRMA have lower house prices, and have seen smaller increases over the medium term. Rossendale being grouped with 2 lower demand areas for housing puts the borough at a disadvantage of having LHA rates that are disproportionately lower than average when compared to its neighbours. The chart below (figure 2) demonstrates that the house prices are higher and increasing at a faster rate than its BRMA neighbours, but the house price rises follow the North West trend. The median house price in the borough is £25,000 below the regional average of £155,000 and well below the national average of £230,000 which is also rising at a more aggressive pace.

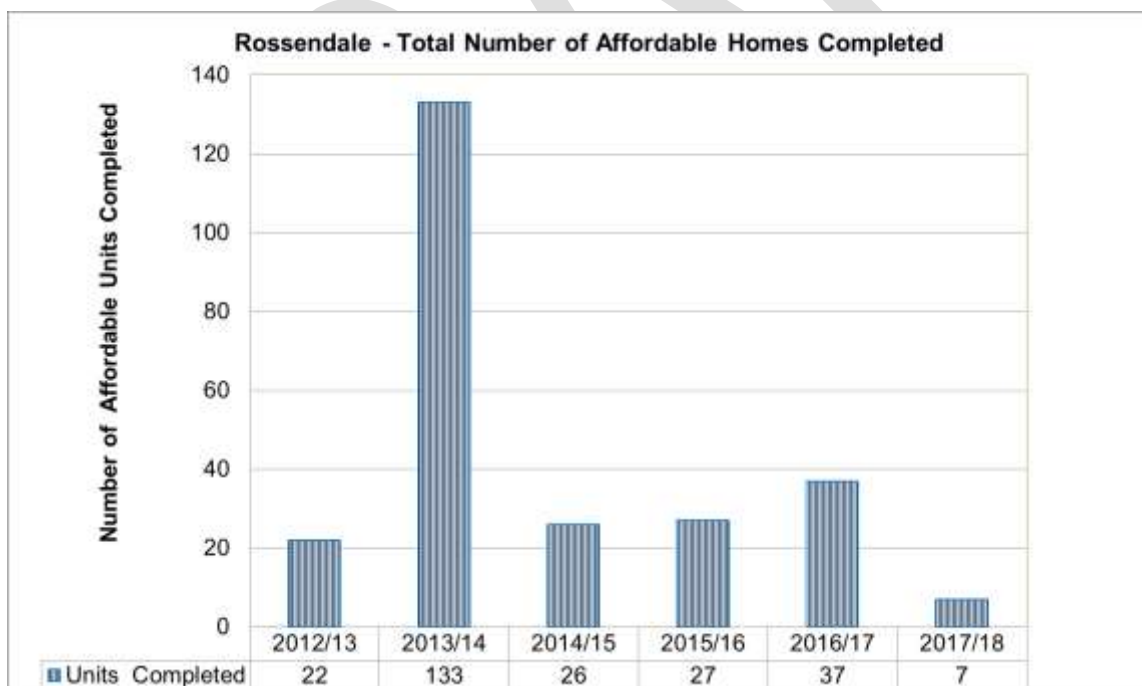
The number of new affordable homes delivered every year can be seen below in figure 3. Whilst the figures include rented and some affordable home ownership units, the chart helps to partially explain the drop in social housing lets in figure 1 above. Whilst 2017/18 was unusually low in terms of new affordable housing delivery, there are strong indications that the numbers will pick up quickly from 2019.

Figure 2



Source: ONS Data, Land Registry

Figure 3



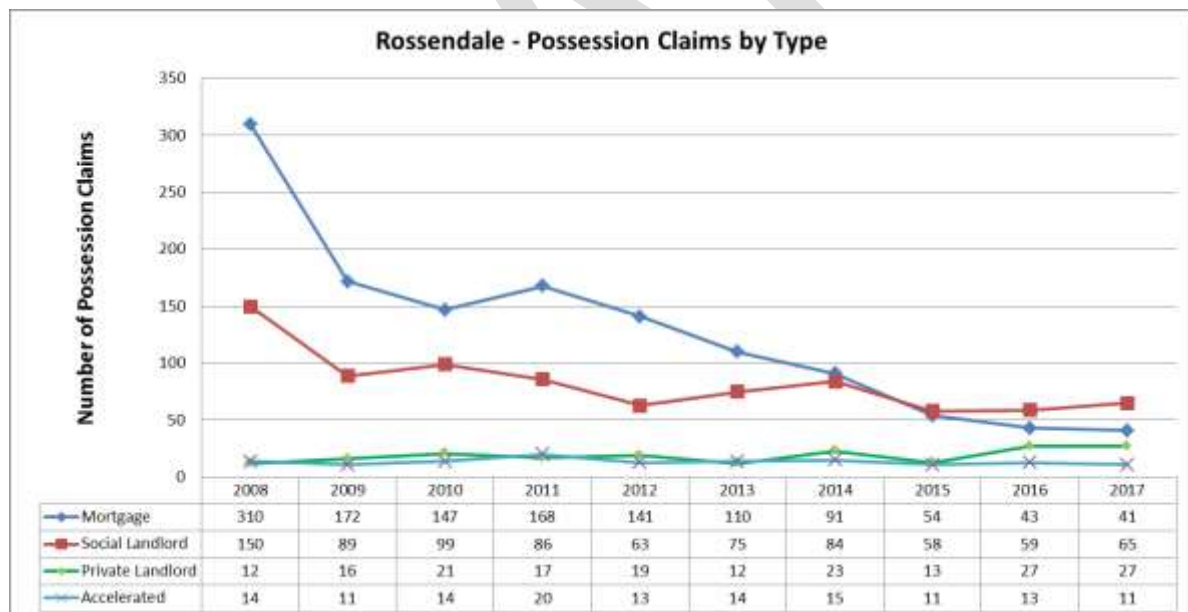
Source: Rossendale Borough Council Planning

Court Action

If a landlord or mortgagee seeks possession of a property due to rent or mortgage arrears through County Court, this would first start with a possession claim. The number of claims can be seen in figure 4 below by type over the last ten years, starting with the 'credit crunch' in 2008. The number of mortgage possession claims has dropped drastically since 2008 and has continued to drop slowly in more recent years, with an 86.8% drop demonstrated over the period covered by the chart which was very similar to the 86.1% seen in England and Wales as a whole. Stricter lending and lower interest rates are likely to have greatly contributed to the continuing fall in mortgage possession claims along with the Mortgage Pre-action Protocol.

The number of possession claims by Social Landlords in the last 7 years has fluctuated with a small decline; however the drop since 2008 is much steeper than the decline nationally. There has been no real change in the pattern over accelerated possession claims, however due to the small number involved a rise can look like a spike. Accelerated possession claims are used when a landlord has served a s.21 notice to end an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) or Statutory Periodic Tenancy (which is the continuation an AST after the fixed term), and the landlord is not seeking repayment of rent arrears. Accelerated possession claims have seen a rise of around 1/3rd nationally since 2008. Other private landlord possession claims have increased in the last two years, which is slightly at odds with a static national trend. In total there were 103 landlord possession claims in 2017, and whilst this is higher than the 82 and 99 in 2015 and 2016 respectively, it is lower than 5 of the 7 years before that, so it is not determinable whether this is the start of a rising trend or more fluctuation.

Figure 4



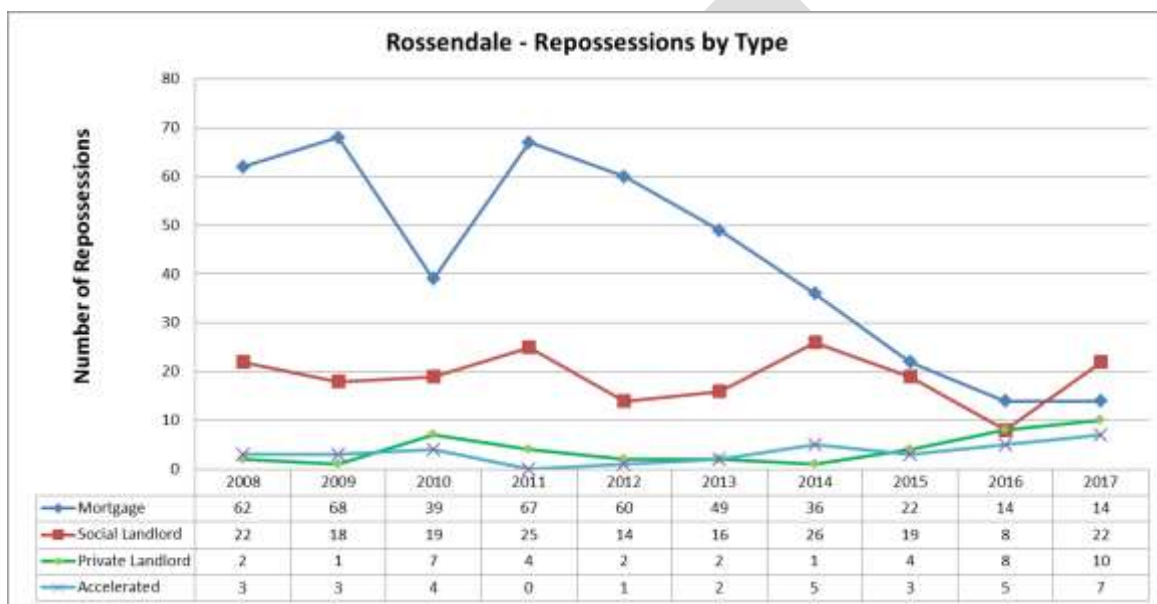
Source: Ministry of Justice data

Possession claims can ultimately lead to repossession. The repossession statistics are shown in figure 5 below, and it demonstrates the number of households with an initial possession claim has led to a formal repossession. Figure 5 does not account for any properties being surrendered throughout the process, a property being sold by a home owner to avoid repossession, or other similar activity where the home is in effect given up. As shown below, mortgage repossessions are at a low point with only 14 a year for the past 2 years, and a 79% drop since 2011 repossessions representing around a third of possession claims. Nationally the number of mortgage repossessions dropped 83% since 2011, and repossessions were equivalent to around 22% of claims.

The total number of landlord repossessions in Rossendale of 39 for 2017, saw a large increase from 21 in 2016, mainly due to social landlord repossessions, however all types have seen increases. Landlord repossessions are where a landlord is attempting to repossess their property from a tenant. Nationally private landlord possessions have been static for 2 years with the other two types dropping. Total landlord repossessions in Rossendale were equivalent to 38% of the number of claims, whilst nationally the percentage was a not dissimilar 35%.

The recent slight rise in landlord possessions and more significant rise in social landlord repossessions will be monitored closely to see if this is the start of an increasing trend or a fluctuation. Whilst it is not possible to drill down into reasons for repossessions, there is likely to be some link to welfare reform, and the rise in demand for rented properties is decreasing earlier move-on opportunities.

Figure 5



Source: Ministry of Justice data

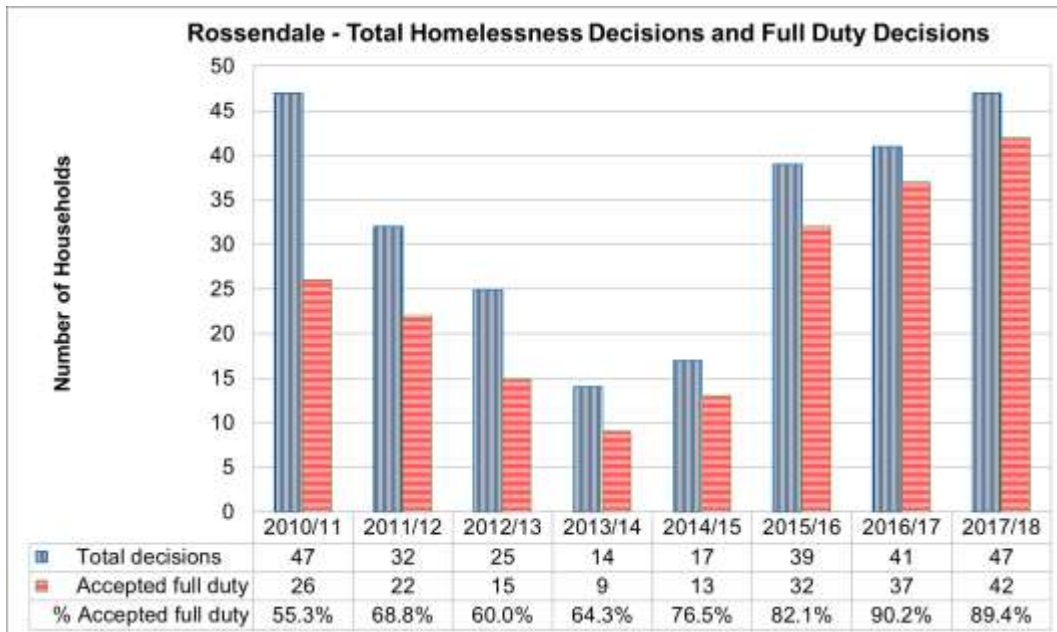
Homelessness Decisions

In the past 4 to 5 years there have been significant increases in the number of households approaching the Council presenting as homeless, having an assessment and receiving a homelessness decision. The number of statutory homeless/full duty decisions as demonstrated in figure 6 below, has also increased considerably. The total number of decisions rose by over 300% since 2013/14 to 2017/18 and the number with full duty decisions more than quadrupled in the same time period. The rises however followed a significant decline in the same figures from the start of the decade. The percentage of total decisions that are fully duty decisions has also increased, however this trend can be seen to be increasing for over the last 8 years in figure 6.

The full breakdown over decision types can be seen below in figure 7. There are very few 'negative' decisions where a household is found to be non-priority or intentionally homeless. Only 1 intentional decision in 3 years is low given the total number of decisions, as this decision type made up 8% of decisions in England in 2017/18 but less than 1% for Rossendale. The percentage of non-priority decisions is also much lower than the national

average of 17%, with Rossendale making 4% in the last 3 years, and even lower 2% in the past 2 years.

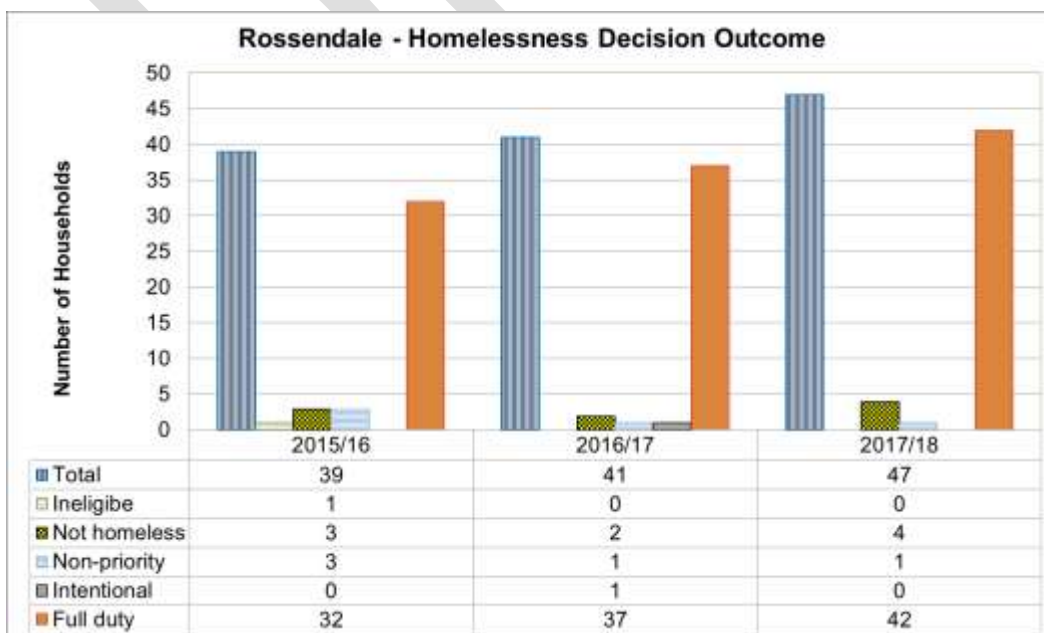
Figure 6



Source: Rossendale Borough Council Housing Options data

The decline in negative decisions, which in turn increased the percentage of full duty decisions, has mainly been due to the attitude of the staff. Rather than make negative decisions the staff have increasingly tried to prevent homelessness for households likely to be found non-priority or intentional, even though there would be unlikely to be a duty to help to find settled accommodation under the Housing Act 1996. It is therefore hoped that the approach that staff have been taking to assist households regardless of priority need or intentionality, will be conducive to performing the new prevention and relief duties of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Figure 7



Source: Rossendale Borough Council Housing Options data

The rise in total numbers can be better understood once reasons for a household presenting as homeless are looked into. Table 8 below indicates the main reason given by a homelessness applicant for all cases opened in 2017/18, and compares it to the data for the three previous years. In table 8 the column for 2017/18 shows the figures for the whole year; however the data for the other 4 years only shows the reasons relevant to 2017/18 for comparison. Therefore reasons with small numbers may not be displayed from 2013/14 to 2016/17 but are still used to work out the percentage.

The most common reason for presenting as homeless is due to domestic abuse, 'violent breakdown of relationship', and this reason accounts for around a third of cases, and has done for the last 4 years. Both the number and percentage of domestic abuse related cases show very large increases since 2013/14 when there were 2 cases (10%) compared to 19 cases (36.5%) in 2017/18. Termination of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) accounted for 11.5% of cases, and this reason has accounted for around 1 in 10 cases for the last 5 years, Advice cases involving an AST termination are far more common than presentations, but the timescales involved mean that the majority of households in this situation don't need to make homelessness applications. Non-violent relationship breakdowns, as well as parents, friends or relatives unable or unwilling to accommodate made up 23.1% of all cases, and these relationship based reasons show similar incidences over the 5 years except for 2014/15 which has no obvious explanation. No other reason for presenting has any significant change over the five years due to the low figures involved, apart from Leaving Local Authority Care, which had 3 recorded for 2017/18 and zero in 3 of the other 4 years, with all other reasons fluctuating between 0 and 2.

Table 8

Main Reason Stated For Presenting as Homeless	13/14	%	14/15	%	15/16	%	16/17	%	17/18	%
Domestic abuse	2	10.0%	9	34.6%	17	37.8%	18	40.0%	19	36.5%
Termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancy	2	10.0%	2	7.7%	5	11.1%	3	6.7%	6	11.5%
Non-violent breakdown of relationship	1	5.0%	3	11.5%	2	4.4%	2	4.4%	5	9.6%
Parent no longer willing or able to accommodate	2	10.0%	0	0.0%	3	6.7%	6	13.3%	4	7.7%
Friend/relative no longer willing or able to accommodate	6	30.0%	0	0.0%	4	8.9%	4	8.9%	3	5.8%
Leaving Local Authority Care	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	4.4%	0	0.0%	3	5.8%
Rent arrears private sector	0	0.0%	2	7.7%	0	0.0%	2	4.4%	2	3.8%
Leaving hospital	1	5.0%	1	3.8%	1	2.2%	1	2.2%	2	3.8%
Emergency	1	5.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.2%	1	2.2%	2	3.8%
Sleeping rough	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.2%	0	0.0%	2	3.8%
Asylum Seekers granted refugee status	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	3.8%
Other forms of harassment	0	0.0%	1	3.8%	2	4.4%	0	0.0%	1	1.9%
Mortgage arrears (repossession or other loss of home)	0	0.0%	2	7.7%	2	4.4%	1	2.2%	1	1.9%

Source: Rossendale Borough Council Housing Options data

Therefore table 8 above suggests the main reason for the increase in homelessness preventions is domestic abuse, and with a general and fairly proportionate rise in all other reasons. As well as the main reason stated by a household who is homeless, or threatened with homelessness, the priority need reasons provide more information to illustrate the types of cases. Table 9 below demonstrates that having dependent children is still by far the most common reason for priority need, but as a percentage there is a general downward trend, with single person households presenting on the increase. In table 9 the column for 2017/18 shows the figures for the whole year; however the data for the other 4 years only shows the reasons relevant to 2017/18 for comparison. Therefore reasons with small numbers may not be displayed from 2013/14 to 2016/17 but are still used to work out the percentage.

There has been a rise of the number of people with mental health problems, which are usually complex and cause difficulties to prevent homelessness and or rehouse. In general the people who present with mental health problems have had difficulties maintaining tenancies in the past, and there is a lack of suitable supported accommodation that meets their needs leading to a cycle of presentations from some of the most vulnerable clients.

Table 9

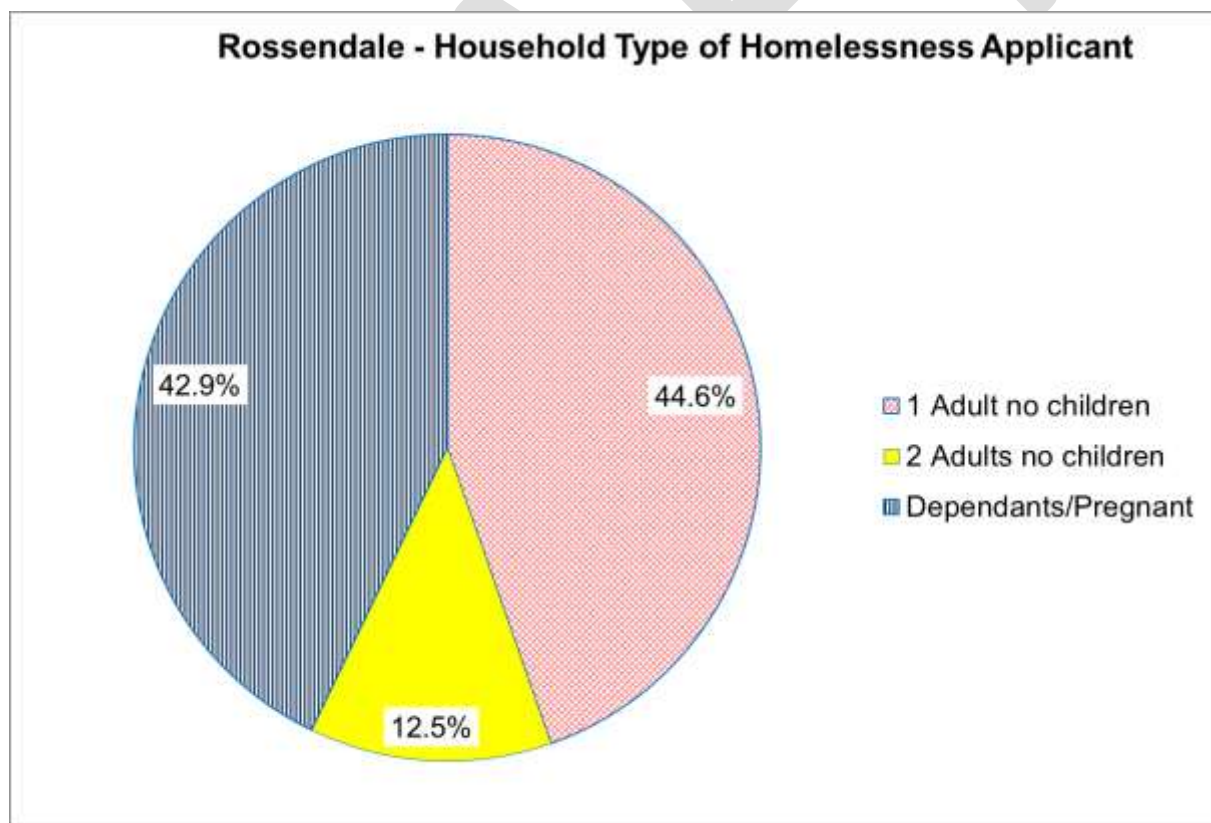
Priority Need Categories of Homeless Applicants	13/14	%	14/15	%	15/16	%	16/17	%	17/18	%
Dependent children	8	61.5%	13	72.2%	14	35.9%	26	61.9%	24	48.0%
Mental illness	2	15.4%	1	5.6%	7	17.9%	7	16.7%	10	20.0%
Having fled domestic abuse	0	0.0%	3	16.7%	9	23.1%	3	7.1%	6	12.0%
Physical disability	1	7.7%	0	0.0%	2	5.1%	0	0.0%	4	8.0%
Old age	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	5.1%	2	4.8%	3	6.0%
Having been in care	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%	0	0.0%	2	4.0%
Expectant mothers	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	5.1%	1	2.4%	1	2.0%

Source: Rossendale Borough Council Housing Options data

A single household can be vulnerable for several reasons, but usually only one reason is recorded, however if a household has dependent children (under 18) then it normal to record dependent children as the priority need category, which helps to explain the high numbers. Most of the typically single homeless client groups demonstrate significant rises over the last 5 years with a generally upward trend, and cases have become more complex and increasingly challenging to both prevent from being homeless and also to find suitable settled accommodation that is sustainable.

The household types of homeless applicants are illustrated below; it there is a fairly even split between households with a dependent child/pregnant member and single person households, with a small minority of households with 2 or more adults and no dependants.

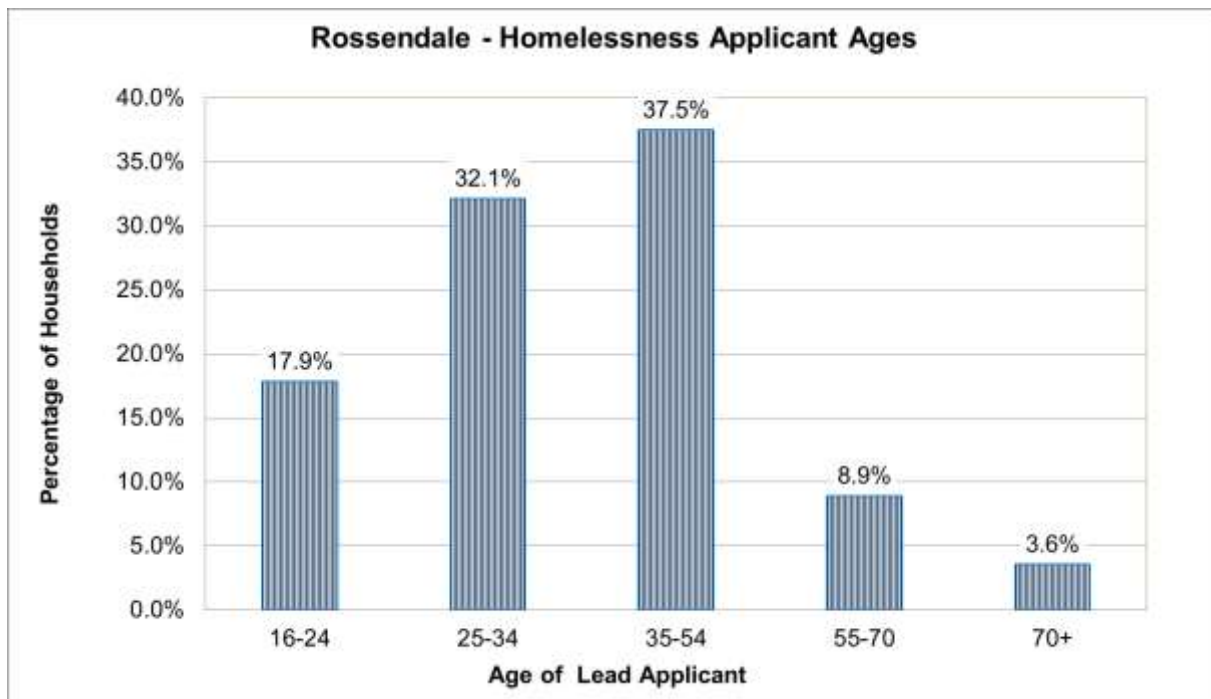
Figure 8



Source: Rossendale Borough Council Housing Options data

The age profile of households making homelessness applications is shown in figure 9 below, with half having a lead applicant under 35, which is expected as in general, older people are more likely to be settled in their accommodation although there are far less under 35 adults in the population. Under 35 year olds if single are more likely to struggle to find new accommodation if they are not working than those over 35 due to Local Housing Allowance rules.

Figure 9

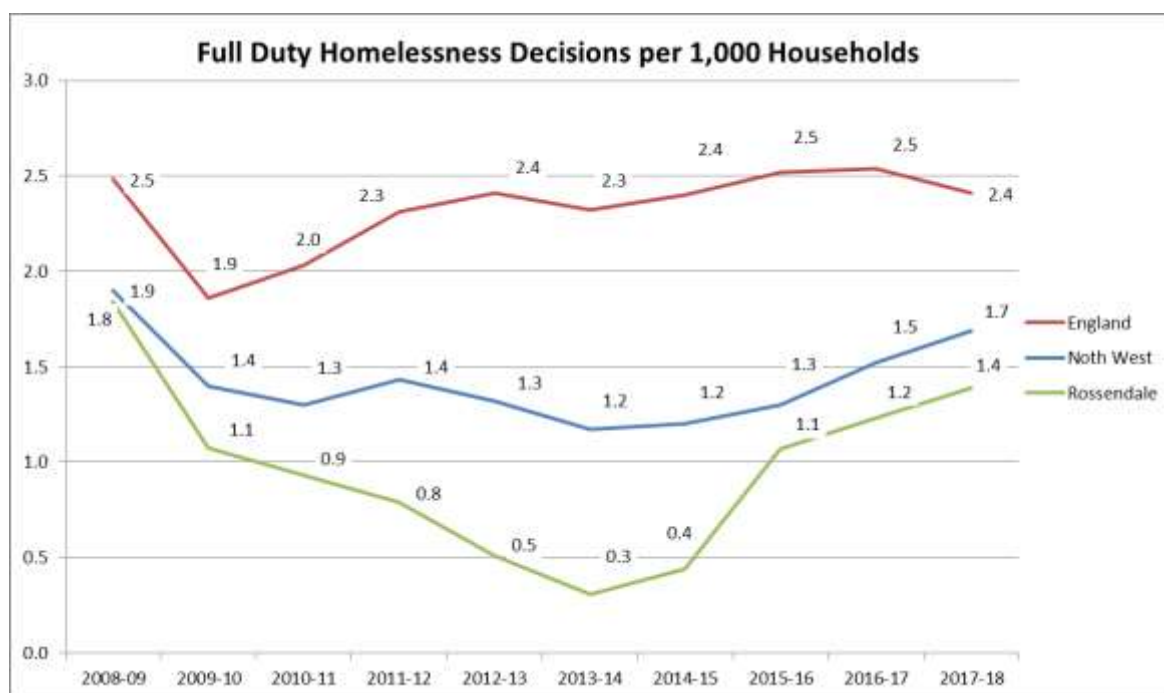


Source: Rossendale Borough Council Housing Options data

When comparing the homelessness full duty decisions to national and regional averages, whilst they have been rising in Rossendale they are consistently lower. The trend of full duty decisions can be seen below in figure 10, rising for 4 years after declining for the first five. The trend for Rossendale follows that of the North West; however it is more exaggerated for the borough than for the region, dropping much lower and rising quicker. Homelessness nationally doesn't follow the North West or Rossendale trend, seeing mostly small increases for 7 years from 2009 with some fluctuation. Homelessness rated per 1,000 households is the best indicator to compare different areas for levels of statutory homelessness, and over the last 10 years Rossendale has been at least below half the national level for 8 of them.

An upward trend, whether following the regional increase or not is a concern. Apart from the number and complexity of cases contributing to the increase, there are also constraints caused by the increasing lack of affordable private sector properties. Rising house prices, and the Local Housing Allowance rates remaining static, the reducing number of social housing lets in the borough, as well as a number of welfare reform measures since 2012 that have affected affordability across tenures have all affected the increased number of full duty acceptances. The increase in workload, however, can't be overlooked especially demonstrated by the number of preventions later in this document, as even with increased prevention work the number of full duty decisions has increased.

Figure 10



Source: MHCLG Homelessness data

Advice Cases and Prevention

The majority of contacts from households needing advice and assistance will not require a homelessness application and these are treated as advice cases. In the majority of advice cases there is no immediate threat of homelessness; however if there is a threat of homelessness the Council endeavours to take positive action to prevent the household becoming homeless. The number of advice cases has recently been consistently above 700 a year (see figure 11), and these cases range from households whose issues/queries can be resolved on the same day, to households who require several months of casework. As there was a difference in recording advice cases prior to 2015 the data prior to that date has not been included in figure 11 as it would be misleading.

To understand more about advice cases the reasons for the household contacting the Council are broken down. In table 10 every reason for advice cases that made up 1% or more for of the total for 2017/18 are shown with the previous four years for comparison purposes. The main type of advice cases are when a household is seeking accommodation, these cases don't have a specific homelessness threat and are normally seeking social housing, but in some cases any rented housing, and they are normally assisted by being given an appropriate banding on B-with-us. The percentage of advice cases seeking new rented has multiplied four-fold over the 5 years, which may be caused by an increasing lack of affordability in the private rented sector. Households losing rented accommodation, 'notice to quit', is the second most common reason, and has been at a similar level over the last 5 years. Relationship breakdowns were the third most common reason of advice cases, and have remained at a fairly consistent level over the five years.

Parents/relatives and friends being unwilling to accommodate for under and over 25 year olds are the 4th and 5th most common advice case types and have been consistently high for the 5 years, and combined would be the most common reason if there was no age criteria. The age

criteria is included to give some indication of parental evictions, as young people under 25 are the most likely cohort at risk of that happening. Rent arrears, as the 6th most common reason has seen no significant change over 5 years, and neither has Domestic Abuse. Domestic Abuse is only the 7th highest reason for advice cases, but the most common reason for Homelessness Applications, as the nature of these cases means they are more likely to need a homelessness application rather than just advice and assistance.

Figure 11



Source: Rossendale Borough Council Housing Options data

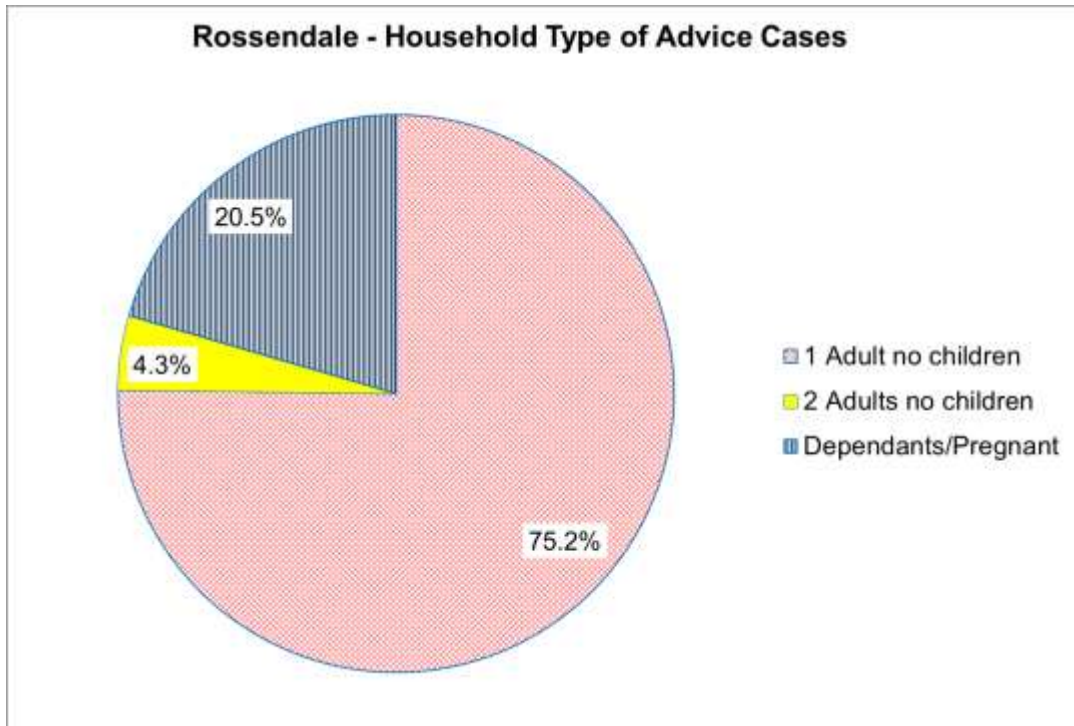
Table 10

Main Reason for Advice Case	13/14	%	14/15	%	15/16	%	16/17	%	17/18	%
Seeking accommodation	45	4.0%	32	3.6%	65	8.7%	119	14.1%	148	15.9%
Notice to Quit	111	10.0%	118	13.1%	81	10.8%	122	14.4%	104	11.2%
Relationship breakdown	97	8.7%	98	10.9%	90	12.0%	77	9.1%	94	10.1%
18 - 24 Friends parents and relatives unwilling to accommodate	151	13.5%	91	10.1%	97	13.0%	85	10.0%	93	10.0%
Over 25 friends parents and relatives unwilling to accommodate	62	5.6%	73	8.1%	62	8.3%	69	8.2%	83	8.9%
Rent arrears	98	8.8%	92	10.2%	51	6.8%	78	9.2%	75	8.1%
Relationship breakdown with Domestic Violence	57	5.1%	58	6.4%	62	8.3%	57	6.7%	61	6.6%
Unsuitable/disrepair	60	5.4%	51	5.7%	46	6.1%	46	5.4%	38	4.1%
Suffering harassment	20	1.8%	11	1.2%	17	2.3%	19	2.2%	19	2.0%
Child protection Issues	56	5.0%	10	1.1%	13	1.7%	14	1.7%	19	2.0%
16/17 parental eviction	17	1.5%	17	1.9%	27	3.6%	8	0.9%	18	1.9%
Affordability but not in debt	30	2.7%	16	2.7%	9	1.2%	6	0.7%	18	1.9%
Health	19	1.7%	10	1.7%	8	1.1%	17	2.0%	15	1.6%
Leaving prison	19	1.7%	16	1.7%	14	1.9%	29	3.4%	15	1.6%
Mortgage Arrears	115	10.3%	64	10.3%	19	2.5%	9	1.1%	14	1.5%
Leaving hospital	17	1.5%	7	1.5%	9	1.2%	14	1.7%	12	1.3%
Overcrowding	12	1.1%	25	1.1%	12	1.6%	11	1.3%	11	1.2%
Leaving care	7	0.6%	3	0.6%	2	0.3%	5	0.6%	10	1.1%

Source: Rossendale Borough Council Housing Options data

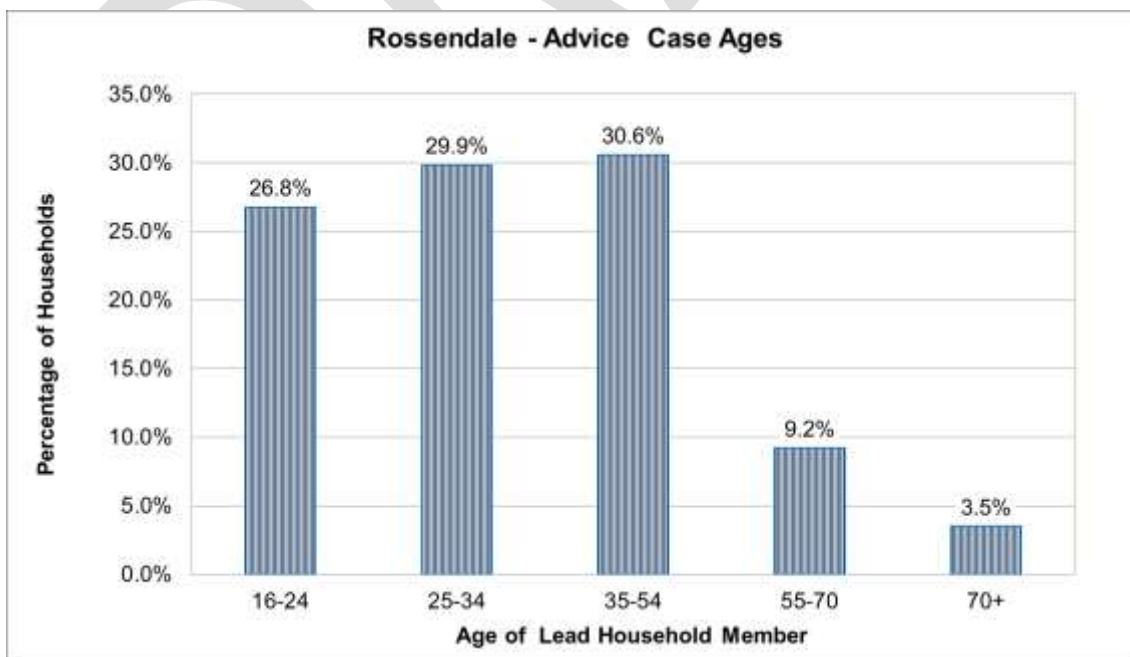
In table 10 above, looking at the 8th most common reason and below, and given the low percentages involved, there has been no significant changes over the 5 years in the reasons for advice cases apart from a substantial drop in mortgage arrears related enquires. The drop in mortgage arrears enquiries is fairly consistent with the drop in mortgage repossession seen in the court action section.

Figure 12



Source: Rossendale Borough Council Housing Options data

Figure 13



Source: Rossendale Borough Council Housing Options data

Demonstrated in figure 12 the majority of advice cases involve single person households, which is in contrast to homelessness presentations where the cases are made of slightly more families. The age profile of the principle household member involved in advice cases is similar to that for homelessness applications, except that there is a higher proportion of under 25 year olds.

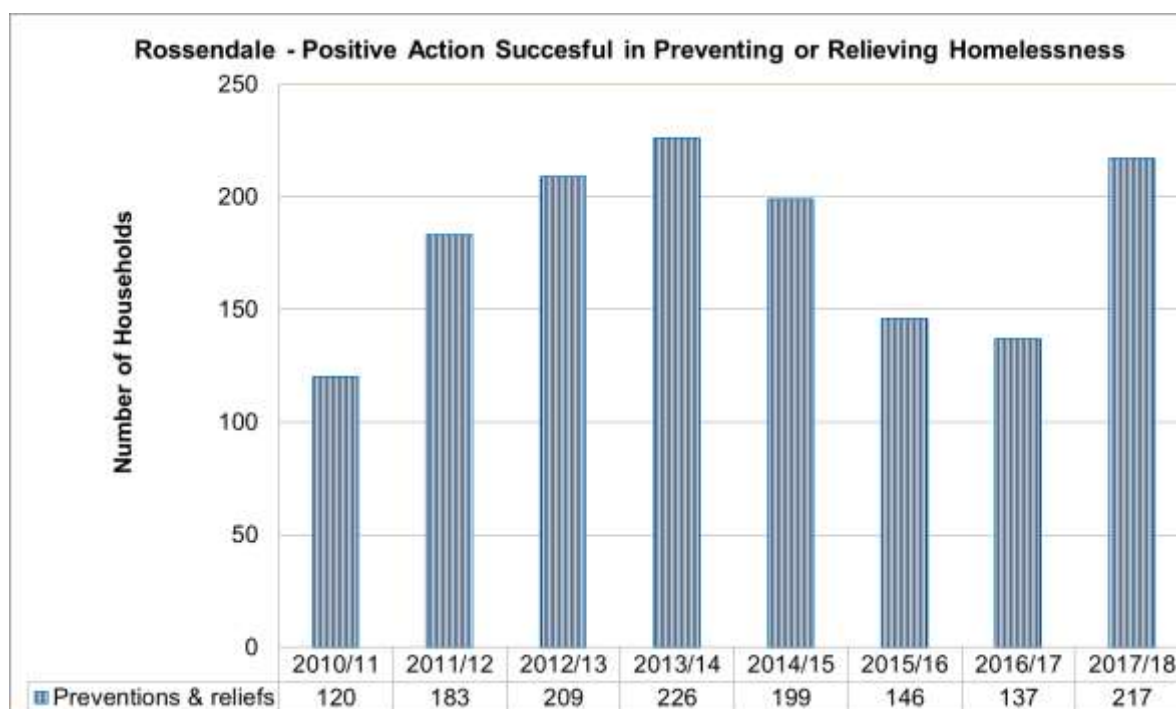
If a household approaches the Council with a threat of homelessness, or perceived threat of homelessness, and the Council takes positive action which ends the threat of homelessness for an expected period of at least 6 months, then this is officially classed as a 'prevention'. A prevention can be either help to keep a household in their existing home, or assistance to move a household into new accommodation. If a household has had a negative homelessness decision, i.e. non-priority or priority but intentional, and they are assisted into new accommodation, then this is classed as homelessness being 'relieved'. The number of preventions and reliefs are a major indicator of the performance of a team dealing with housing options, and the data from the last 8 years can be seen in figure 14 below. As reliefs require a negative homelessness decision, and these decisions have been rare in Rossendale in recent years, almost all the data in figure 14 relates to preventions.

The year 2017/18 saw the highest number of preventions and reliefs in the last five years with 217, and was the second highest number achieved in previous 8 years (see figure 14). There was a 58% increase in the number of preventions from 2016/17 to 2017/18. A prevention can be recorded whether or not a household is classed as vulnerable due to being considered in 'priority need'. To investigate how households were prevented from becoming homeless, and the reasons for the recent increase in preventions, they are broken down by type below in table 11.

The most common type of prevention is finding a household a property in the social sector through the B-with-us choice based lettings partnership, and over a third of preventions are due to this reason, and this has been similar for the previous 3 years. Helping a household into supported accommodation was the second most common prevention type in 2017/18 with just under 3/10^{ths} of all preventions, showing proportional growth compared to the total number of preventions from the year before, and a reasonable increase compared to the 2014 to 2016 period. Rehousing in the private rented sector with a landlord incentive is the third most common prevention type with around 1/7th of preventions in 2017/18, but there is a decline in the overall percentage of this type of prevention, possibly due to the private rented sector becoming less affordable.

'Other assistance' to remain in a rented property, normally refers to Discretionary Housing Payments, and there is evidence of this method seeing a slight decline, along with 'resolving Housing Benefit problems', however the increase in 'resolving rent/service charge arrears' may have accounted for some of the decline of the two other types as they are similar in nature. Overall the rise in preventions isn't down to particular types increasing, and appears to be caused by all types rising proportionately. As well as comparing with past data, preventions can be benchmarked against other Local Authorities. When looking at the number of preventions per 1,000 households Rossendale had 7.2 in 2017/18 Table 12 demonstrates that although Rossendale is just in the top half when comparing preventions across the 12 Lancashire district councils, the borough had a significantly high incidence of preventions when compared to all the other districts in the east of the county.

Figure 14



Source: Rossendale Borough Council Housing Options data

Table 11

Preventions and Reliefs by Type	14/15	%	15/16	%	16/17	%	17/18	%
Rehoused in Social Housing/B-with-us	61	30.7%	58	39.7%	48	35.0%	82	37.2%
Rehoused in supported accommodation	43	21.6%	34	23.3%	46	33.6%	60	28.9%
Rehoused in PRS with landlord incentive scheme	41	20.6%	22	15.1%	19	13.9%	32	14.2%
Resolving Housing Benefit problems	12	6.0%	11	7.5%	6	4.4%	9	4.1%
Other assistance to keep PRS or social tenancy	14	7.0%	7	4.8%	3	2.2%	8	3.7%
Rehoused in PRS without landlord incentive scheme	8	4.0%	9	6.2%	7	5.1%	7	3.2%
Mediation to stay in current home	5	2.5%	1	0.7%	0	0.0%	5	2.3%
Resolving rent/service charge arrears to remain	1	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	1.8%

Source: Rossendale Borough Council Housing Options data

Table 12

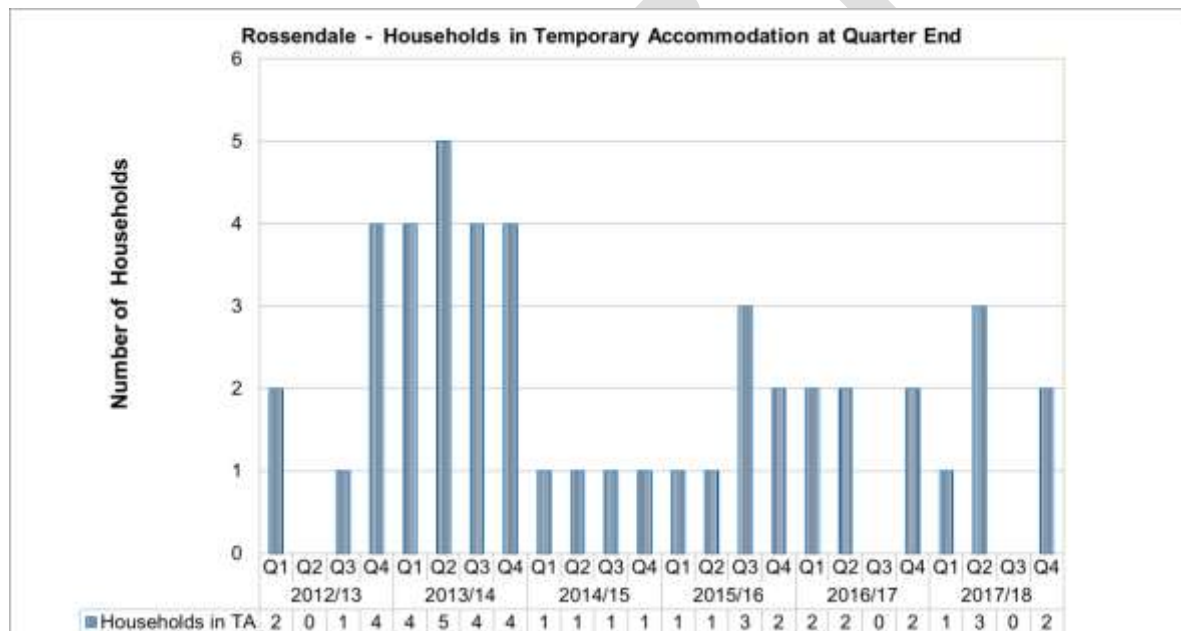
Prevention and Reliefs in Lancashire by District 2017/18		
Local Authority	Total Preventions and Reliefs	Rate per 1,000 Households
Chorley	681	13.9
Lancaster	820	13.5
Preston	519	8.8
South Ribble	387	8.2
Wyre	387	7.9
Rossendale	217	7.2
Pendle	181	4.7
Hyndburn	133	3.9
Burnley	131	3.5
Fylde	76	2.1
West Lancashire	45	1.0
Ribble Valley	22	0.9

Source: MHCLG Homelessness data

Temporary Accommodation

When a household makes a homeless application the Council must offer them temporary accommodation if they have nowhere else to stay and there is reason to believe they are in priority need. This accommodation may consist of a flat, house, bedsit, and hostel or, in some circumstances a 'bed and breakfast' hotel. A snapshot of the number of households placed in temporary accommodation (TA) has been reported to the Government every quarter, and the figures for the last six years can be seen demonstrated in the figure 15 below. The average TA quarter end snap shot was 1.5 households for the 2017/18, and just under 2 for the last 6 years. After a peak in 2013/14, in the last 4 years the number of households in TA has ranged from 0-3 at quarter end. Due to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 it is anticipated that TA will increase due to the duty to accommodate households for at least the 56 day relief duty period even if they are considered intentionally homeless. Ending the relief duty by securing new accommodation, and preventing homelessness before there is a need to accommodate, are both key to reducing TA usage.

Figure 15

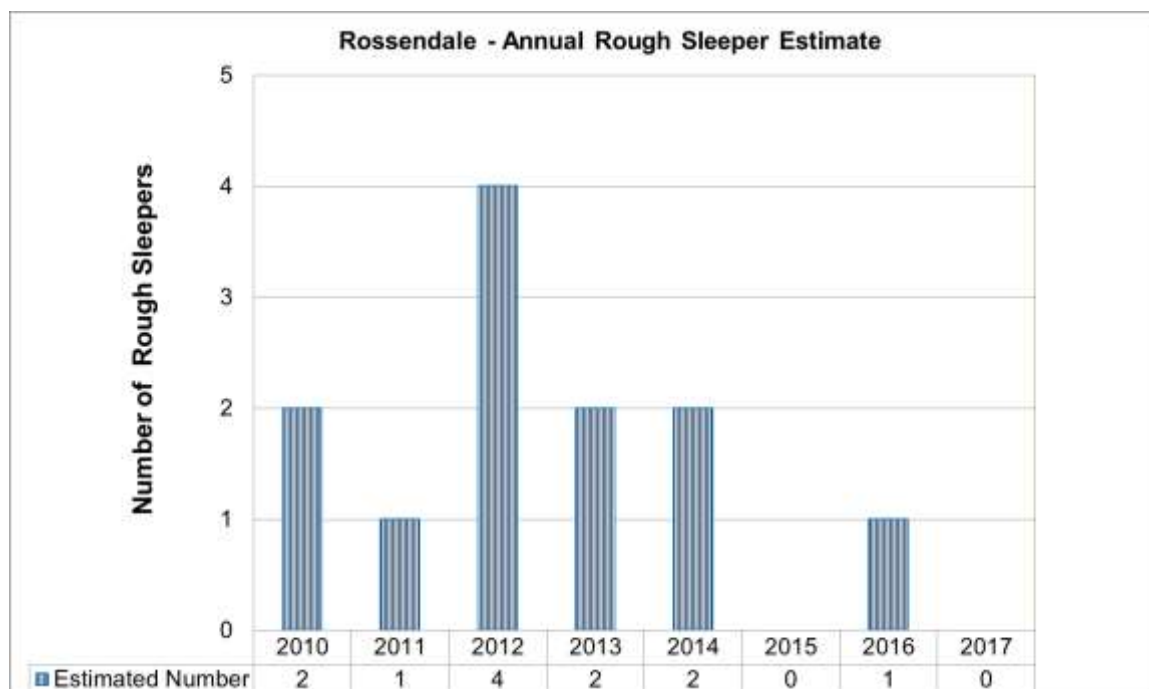


Source: Rossendale Borough Council Housing Options data

Rough Sleeping

The Government defines rough sleeping as 'people sleeping, or bedded down, in the open air (such as on the 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')'. Every local housing authority is required to carry out a rough sleeper count or estimate on a typical night between October and November. Of the 326 local authorities in England only 54 carried out a physical street count in 2017 with the rest using intelligence based estimates, including Rossendale. These estimates are carried out by consulting local agencies such as 3rd sector organisations, faith groups and the police, who may come into contact with rough sleepers and can share evidence. Below in figure 16 the number of rough sleepers in Rossendale are shown as a yearly snap-shot. Reports of rough sleeping are rare in the borough, and it has not posed a significant issue in recent years.

Figure 16



Source: Rossendale Borough Council Housing Options data

Review of the Rossendale Homelessness Strategy 2007

Looking back at the last strategy and reviewing the outcome of the actions, table 13 lists actions that were successfully delivered. Table 14 list actions not successfully delivered, explains why, and also if they are to be carried over to this strategy. Looking at both tables 13 and 14 it is demonstrable that the majority of actions from the 2007 document were successful.

Table 13

Actions Successfully Delivered from the 2007 Strategy	
Actions	Outcome
Update housing advice and homelessness sections on Rossendale BC Website.	Updated every 6 months on an ongoing basis.
Provide emergency accommodation for families in Rossendale.	A dispersed house with support is in operation.
Provide emergency accommodation for young people in Rossendale.	There are currently 5 emergency rooms available.
Provide accommodation for domestic violence victims in Rossendale.	Two Domestic Abuse Safe Houses were provided.
Support the development of robust multi-agency protocols.	16/17 year olds/care leavers and Prison Leavers developed on a Lancashire wide basis.

Repeat rough sleeper count on a 3 yearly basis.	A yearly requirement for a count or estimate has been required since 2010, and an intelligence based estimate is carried out each year.
Update housing advice and homelessness sections on Rossendale BC Website.	This was done initially but no longer relevant.
Update the service directory.	The Rossendale BC and Rossendale REAL websites are used.
Identify funding sources to allow bond scheme to remain after 2011.	The bond scheme is part of the overall Housing Options Team budget.
Identify sources of funding for Sanctuary Scheme.	Target hardening funding sourced annually from Police Crime Commissioner and Sanctuary funding secured MHCLG VAWG grant.
Develop protocol to reduce residential accommodation for people with mental health problems.	The Pennine Lancashire Mental Health and Housing Project met this action until 2017.
Develop move-on mechanisms from supported housing.	B-with-us awards band 2 to allow timely move-ons.
Deliver and evaluate training programmes to partner agencies as needed in homelessness issues.	Delivered through protocol launch and Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Homelessness Forum.
Monitor and advice cases and homelessness presentations due to mortgage arrears.	These have been monitored and numbers have dropped drastically this decade.

Table 14

Actions from the 2007 Strategy Not Delivered		
Actions	Outcome	Carry Forward? Yes/No
Update Rossendale Homelessness Strategy Action Plan quarterly.	Not done – quarterly is too frequent, on an annual basis is more appropriate.	No.
Update Rossendale Homelessness Strategy annually.	Not done – annually is too frequent given resources, every 3 years is more appropriate.	No.
Deliver homelessness prevention sessions at educational establishments 3 times a year.	This was done once but not on a continuous 3 yearly basis due to resources.	No.

Agree funding for family mediation service.	Not done initially but now covered by the Trailblazer project for east Lancashire.	No.
Agree protocol for family mediation service.	Not done initially but now covered by the Trailblazer project for east Lancashire.	No.

Resources and Support Available

The main resource to prevent homelessness and assist homeless people to be housed is the Housing Options team based at Futures Park, Bacup, which consists of the following:

- 1 x Housing Options Officer,
- 1 x Housing Options Officer (Domestic Abuse) – Fixed Term until March 2019,
- 1 x Housing Options Team Leader.

The vast majority of the prevention work in Rossendale is instigated by the Housing Options team, which is part of the Strategic Housing team; however external partners and other teams are relied on to assist. For example the Council's Service Assurance Team work with the Housing Options team by awarding Discretionary Housing Payments to assist households who have issues paying their rent (normally short term) remain in their tenancy

Finding PRP accommodation through B-with-us is the most common prevention type when assisting households to find new accommodation. The PRPs are listed in table 4 earlier in the document, which shows the Council's dependence on Together Housing Association who manage over 84% of the borough's 4,285 social housing stock.

The use of supported accommodation is the second most common successful prevention method. Rossendale has historically low numbers of supported housing, going back to pre-Supporting People in 2003 when support was eligible for Housing Benefit. LCC continued to allocate a budget for Supporting People Accommodation Based Support and Floating Support well beyond the original grant becoming mainstreamed and non-ring fenced, with the Floating Support service ending in March 2017. Despite the Supporting People ending, LCC continues to include the 12 districts in the commissioning of supported housing for young people as well as people and families with complex needs. LCC currently commissions the following in Rossendale:

Self-contained supported housing for Young People (16-21)	14 units
Supported Lodgings (host households) for Young People (16-21)	7 units
Teenage Parent dispersed housing for Young People (16-21)	3 units
Dispersed accommodation for Young People (16-21)	4 units

The above are provided by 3rd sector organisations/charities; Positive Action in the Community (PAC), M3 Project and Stepping Stone. Referrals for the young people's accommodation are

more frequently received from LCC Children's Social Care, or other agencies such as education, rather than through the Housing Options team. There is a lack of supported accommodation for families and single people of other ages, with other funding sources currently providing the following in the Borough.

Dispersed accommodation for families with support needs 1 unit

Dispersed accommodation single people with support needs 6 units

There were 19 units unavoidably lost for single people with support needs in 2017 which has had a significant impact on the Housing Options team's prevention options, however the Council are working with Petrus to look at alternative options. Rossendale has access to Complex Needs (CN) supported accommodation in the east of Lancashire commissioned by LCC comprising of the following:

Self-contained supported housing for single people CN 30 units

Self-contained abstinence based supported housing for single people CN 13 units

The above are based in the neighbouring Local Authorities of Burnley and Hyndburn respectively. There is other longer term supported housing in the borough that the Council has access to refer customers to, but being long term it can't be utilised frequently.

Enhancing the range of supported accommodation in the area is a clear priority for the Council, however this must be done through partnership working as it not something the Council has the ability to do on its own.

The east Lancashire districts, along with LCC and Blackburn with Darwen, were successful in bidding for the initial sum of £735,000 from the MHCLG **Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer** programme, designed to develop new innovative approaches to prevent homelessness. The trailblazer in east Lancashire aims to highlight young people (14-25) who are most at risk of homelessness by carrying out interventions. PAC are leading on the initiative in the Rossendale area, in collaboration with other 3rd sector partners, and the project includes the following:

- mediation to reduce the incidence of parental eviction,
- upstream community education e.g. homelessness prevention roadshows,
- the provision of a 'trainer house' so young experience the reality of leaving home without leaving home,
- an emergency respite bed,
- the development of a bespoke website.

Outside the Trailblazer here is also the Listening Project delivered by M3. The project aims to help 16 and 17 year olds who may be at risk of homelessness through mediation, as well as advice and prevention work with Schools.

The third sector organisation, Victim Support, provide a service for domestic abuse survivors who are at high risk on behalf of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire, and a specialist Outreach Support Worker is currently commissioned by the Council using MHCLG grant following a Pan-Lancashire bid, for clients who are medium or low risk.

The Prevention of Homelessness in Rossendale

The Council had an upturn in its attempts to prevent homelessness in 2017/18, as demonstrated in the review. The definitions of preventions and reliefs changed due the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and a more robust method of reporting outcomes to the MHCLG is now required.

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 are involved with to ensure preventions take place. The numbers of preventions are, to a large extent, 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 140 preventions & reliefs per year 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, supported housing will be used if there is any availability to be utilised. As there is very limited supported accommodation in the borough, the use of 'Bed and Breakfast' hotels can't always be avoided on an emergency basis. To find secure long term accommodation the Council works with the B-with-us partnership, and for households who don't qualify for B-with-us, assistance will be given to find PRS accommodation such as Rental Bonds and the facilitation of rent in advance. Finding new accommodation through B-with-us continues to be the main method of prevention, and finding accommodation in all sectors increased in 2017/18. The action plan identifies how securing accommodation can be improved further.

Securing Support

As detailed earlier in the document Rossendale Borough Council works with Lancashire County Council to commission housing related support services, in particular the Housing Reference Group for younger people and Adult Social Care commissioning partners. Historically the level of supported accommodation in the borough is low, and the majority of such accommodation is currently aimed at 16-21 year olds, and therefore there is a high reliance on accommodation outside the borough. The Council will continue to work with the County Council where there is opportunity to do so, in order to broaden the range of housing related support services in the borough. The Council also will work with PRPs and 3rd sector organisations to increase the provision of housing related support services as detailed in the action plan, and will seek to provide its own supported accommodation if feasible. Due to the changes to Housing Benefit for short-term supported accommodation that were expected in 2020, it is imperative that all opportunities for increasing supported accommodation in the near future are explored. Although in August 2018 it was announced that the changes planned for 2020 would not go ahead, future changes cannot be ruled out, and it is important that an adequate supported housing offer is achieved in the borough before this happens.

Success Factors

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

1. keeping the number of prevention & reliefs consistently high with a target of 140 plus per year,
2. ensuring the number of households in Temporary Accommodation is kept at 2.5 on average,
3. the numbers of statutory homeless households remain low with a target of no more than 36 per year.

The review highlighted Rossendale's performance in preventing homelessness in recent years. The strategy aims to keep preventions consistently higher than the 2016/17 level, as was achieved in 2017/18, whilst simultaneously reducing the number of households who are found Statutory Homeless below 2016/17 levels.

Future Challenges

The main challenge as detailed earlier is likely to be poised by adapting to the increase demand of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, future related case law and the duty to refer which is introduced in October 2018. The trend in the reduction of social housing lets and increasing rents in the private sector are making it more challenging to find accommodation for households to prevent homelessness, and this challenge is expected to be more acute as Rossendale becomes less affordable. Affordability checks for social housing are becoming stricter which increases the need to have effective links with debt and budgeting advice service. The roll out to Rossendale of "full service" Universal Credit in November 2018 will make finding rented accommodation more challenging, and the likelihood that more customers will face debt problems due to direct payments and monthly budgeting.

The changes to local authority funding affect both the Council and County Council, especially the withdrawal of the majority of central Government funding in 2020 which in turn impacts on the provisions of homelessness and related support services. Coping with future financial changes whilst trying to maintain and build on the support offer could be the biggest challenge the council will face in its mission to prevent homeless.

Strategic Priorities of the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy 2018-21

Following the review of homelessness and taking into account future and existing challenges, particularly linked to changes in homelessness legislation and 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: Ensure the Council is well positioned to deliver a service that meets the demands and duties introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, as well as meet other current and future challenges.

Changing the service to comply with the new act is an evolving process, and the impact of the increased workload is acutely tangible. Local Authorities will learn from each other, and case law will determine the application of the new Code of Guidance. The duty on other public authorities to refer to the local housing authority applies from 1st October 2018, and Rossendale becomes a 'full service' area for Universal Credit in November 2018 which increases the challenge of rehousing customers. Whilst the new act allows the Council more scope to discharge duties in the private rented sector; work needs to be done to increase the supply of properties. There is also the challenge of Rossendale becoming less affordable as highlighted in the review.

Priority 2: Working with all partners to ensure vulnerable people are supported in suitable accommodation.

This priority includes internal and external partners, and seeks to improve the offer of support and supported accommodation as well as ensuring that accommodation available is suitable and affordable.

As identified in the review, the main reason for homelessness presentations is domestic abuse, and this is a key area for which additional support has been highlighted. The utilisation of supported accommodation is the second most common prevention type as highlighted in the review, emphasises the importance of improving the supported accommodation offer. At this stage it is crucial that there is work with partners to ensure the future of supported housing in the borough is safeguarded from any changes which could be tabled in subsequent years. With welfare reform changes, in particular most recent primary legislation, the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, the best way a customer can avoid the impact is by finding work if they are able. Therefore working with partners on employability and promoting social value is key to mitigating welfare reform measures which impact on homelessness.

The types of partners the Housing Options team and wider Strategic Housing team at the Council will work with to deliver this priority are listed below:

- accommodation based support providers in the area,
- accommodation based and floating support commissioners,
- potential support providers,
- the Public Protection Unit (Rossendale BC),
- the Service Assurance Team (Rossendale BC),
- the Planning team (Rossendale BC),
- the Economic Development team (Rossendale BC),
- the Private Sector Housing Renewal team (Rossendale BC),
- mediation services,
- debt advice services,
- non-statutory housing advice services,

- health and wellbeing services,
- Children’s Services (Lancashire County Council),
- Adult Social Care (Lancashire County Council),
- the Home Improvement Agency,
- domestic abuse support services, Sanctuary Schemes and MARAC,
- crime and anti-social behaviour related groups and partnerships,
- employability services,
- Pan-Lancashire local authorities,
- Homes England.

Priority 3: *Ensure that housing supply best meets housing need.*

This involves working with PRPs 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 most frequent prevention type is ‘rehoused through social housing/B-with-us’, and emphasises the importance of working with PRPs to ensure lettings meet housing need and therefore prevent or relieve homelessness. The second most common reason for homelessness presentations is ‘termination of AST’, the highest number of advice cases being due to households seeking social housing, with both reasons growing, the latter rapidly. Also ‘Notice to quit’ was the second most common reason for advice cases. The growth in households seeking social housing is expected to be driven by the PRS becoming less affordable, and social housing is the most secure form of renting, protecting tenants from no fault evictions at the end of ASTs. Increasing social housing will demonstrably improve the housing offer, but it is important that the types delivered are determined by need and demand, and that the allocation of all social housing is focused on meeting need. The requirements of Rossendale’s ageing population also needs 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 PRP’s HCA bids, or investigating new developments on Council sites, need identified by the Housing Register and partners must be taken into account.

Consultation

Consultation on for the strategy was carried out in there stages. Initially there was stakeholder consultation prior to writing the strategy and review, aimed at informing the Council regarding current provision, gaps inviting partners to put forward ideas and initiatives. For the stakeholder consultation all members of Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Homelessness Forum were targeted, along with members of the Rossendale Health and Wellbeing Partnership and related staff in the Council and partner local authorities. Service user consultation was carried out throughout June via an online questionnaire. The Draft Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and Review 2018-21 was consulted on via the Council website from Thursday 23rd August 2018 and ran for just over 7 weeks until 12th October 2018. The consultation of the draft document was open to anyone, but was targeted at stakeholders via email.

Governance of the Strategy

The Corporate Management Team, including all the directors, at Rossendale Borough Council fully sign-up and committed to this Prevention of Homelessness Strategy, and there is an organisational pledge from the Council to work with all partners to ensure the priorities of the strategy are delivered. The Strategic Housing team will be responsible for ensuring that this strategy including its action plan is delivered over the next three years, and the action plan will be reviewed every year and revised if necessary.

Appendix A – Action Plan

Priority 1:

Ensure the Council is well positioned to deliver a service that meets the demands and duties of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, as well as meet other current and future challenges.

	Key Actions	Key Milestones	By When	Action Lead	Resources	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
1.	Formulate and publish a new Prevention of Homelessness Strategy and Review	Consultation. Overview and Scrutiny. Cabinet. Publication.	26/09/2018 15/10/2018 28/11/2018 14/12/2018	Strategic Housing Manager.	Strategic Housing team.	Prevention of Homelessness Strategy 2018-21 published.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
2.	Update Housing Options database to comply with HRA 2017 recording requirements, as well as provide a digital solution for initial customer contact.	Procure new software. Migration to new software. Make ongoing changes to software to meet local requirements.	28/02/2018 30/03/2018 29/03/2019	Housing Options Team Leader	Housing Options team. Strategic Housing Manager.	New software procured and fit for purpose.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
3.	Ensure H-Clic returns to MHCLG work efficiently within 1 st year	Q1 Return Q2 Return Q3 Return Q4 Return	17/08/2018 31/10/2018 31/01/2018 30/04/2018	Housing Options Team Leader	Housing Options team. Strategic Housing Manager.	H-Clic return can be uploaded with little or no intervention needed.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
4.	Ensure staff are appropriately trained to meet requirement of HRA 2017 and subsequent case law	Initial training. Review training needs year 1 Review training needs year 2 Review training needs year 3	30/03/2018 31/12/2018 31/12/2019 31/12/2020	Housing Options Team Leader	Housing Options team. Strategic Housing Manager.	Staff appropriately trained.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
5.	Ensure Members have appropriate training on HRA 2017	Initial training. Refresher training.	30/03/2018 31/12/2019	Strategic Housing Manager.	Housing Options Team Leader. Democratic Services	Members appropriately trained.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
6.	Ensure advice letters, plans and literature suitable for HRA 2017 requirements and tailored to cohorts as required.	Ready for Initial implementation. Review 1. Review 2	30/03/2018 28/09/2018 30/03/2019	Housing Options Team Leader.	Housing Options team. Strategic Housing Manager.	Letter plans and literature are fit for purpose and legally compliant.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.

	Key Actions	Key Milestones	By When	Action Lead	Resources	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
7.	Review interview process and ensure compliance with HRA 2017	Initial review. 6 month review. 1 year review.	30/03/2018 28/09/2018 30/03/2019	Housing Options Team Leader.	Housing Options team. Strategic Housing Manager.	Interview process remains fit for purpose.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
8.	Review suitability of existing protocols and work with partners to revise as necessary.	Review protocols and input into changes as appropriate.	21/12/2018	Housing Options Team Leader.	Lancashire wide and Local Homelessness groups. Strategic Housing Manager.	Protocols remain effective.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
9.	Review 'prevention' and 'relief' work to ensure all reasonable steps are taken to provide a high quality service compliant with HRA 2017	Initial review. Year 1 review. Year 2 review. Year 3 review.	30/03/2018 31/12/2018 31/12/2019 31/12/2020	Housing Options Team Leader.	Housing Options team. Strategic Housing Manager.	Prevention and relief measures are suitable and effective.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
10.	Ensure review process, related homelessness application process, and preventions & relief duties are fit for purpose under HRA 2017.	Year 1 review. Year 2 review. Year 3 review.	31/12/2018 31/12/2019 31/12/2020	Strategic Housing Manager.	Housing Options team. Housing Options Team Leader.	Review procedures are fit for purpose.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
11.	Increase staffing in the Housing Options team to cope with additional burdens under HRA 2017.	Identify funding/reserves for fixed term post. Appoint to post.	01/08/2019 03/12/2019	Strategic Housing Manager.	Housing Options Team Leader.	Staffing is at a reasonable level to cope with demand for the service.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
10.	Promotion to PRS of the assistance the Council can give prospective tenants due to the introduction of UC.	Develop literature and update website. Promote to landlords through media and word of mouth.	31/12/2018 30/03/2019	Housing Options Team Leader	Housing Options team Housing & Regen Project Officer. Coms Team.	The PRS are more willing to work with Housing Options' customers.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
11.	Assess demand for a Private Landlords forum.	Contact landlords. Review responses for an informed decision.	31/12/2018 30/03/2019	Strategic Housing Manager.	Housing Options team Housing & Regen Project Officer.	Demand for Private Landlord Forum known,	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
14.	Review the success of the Rental Bond Scheme and make changes if needed.	Complete review of current scheme. Implement new scheme.	30/03/2019 28/06/2019	Housing Options Team Leader.	Housing Options team. Strategic Housing Manager.	The Rental Bond Scheme remains effective.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.

	Key Actions	Key Milestones	By When	Action Lead	Resources	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
15.	Work with Service Assurance Team to establish a new system for 'rent in advance' for UC claimants to secure PRS properties.	Devise system. Review system.	16/11/2018 16/05/2019	Housing Options Team Leader.	Service Assurance Team. Strategic Housing Team.	The Council is able to continue using 'rent in advance' to help tenants access new rented homes.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
16.	Link with the One Stop Shop to ensure clients are assisted with their digital accessibility needs with regard to UC claims.	Ready for 'full service' launch 6 month review.	01/11/2018 01/05/2019	Housing Options Team Leader.	One Stop Shop Manager. Housing Options team. Strategic Housing Manager.	Clients are digitally enabled with regard to their UC claims.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
17.	Contribute to the review of the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy by the Service Assurance Team	Refreshed policy drafted.	31/12/2019	Housing Options Team Leader.	Service Assurance Team. Strategic Housing Team.	More homelessness preventions are achieved by awarding DHPs.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
18.	Increase the supply of private sector properties by establishing the policies, processes and practices to deliver empty property work.	Publish Enforced Sale Policy. Formulate Enforcement Policy. Formulate Empty Properties Strategy.	01/10/2018 30/03/2019 30/03/2019	Housing & Regen Project Officer	Strategic Housing Manager.	The number of long term empty homes is reduced year on year.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.

Priority 2:

Working with all partners to ensure vulnerable people are supported in suitable accommodation.

	Key Actions	Key Milestones	By When	Action Lead	Resources	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
19.	Work with LCC on securing the provision of supported accommodation for families with complex needs in Rossendale.	Tender/contracts service. Service commences.	31/12/2018 01/04/2019	Strategic Housing Manager.	LCC.	Supported dispersed housing properties for families are commissioned in Rossendale.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
20.	Increased dispersed supported accommodation for all household types to use as temporary accommodation.	Scope feasibility. Secure additional property/s if feasible and appropriate.	31/12/2018 31/12/2019	Strategic Housing Manager.	Housing Options Team Leader. Financial Services. Property Services.	There are one or more additional dispersed supported properties for any household type if feasible.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
21.	Work with third sector organisations/PRPs to encourage and enable the provision of new supported accommodation in Rossendale.	Engage with interested organisations. Set out next steps where there is a viable proposition.	31/12/2018 30/03/2019	Strategic Housing Manager.	Housing Options Team Leader.	New supported housing services are established in the Rossendale where viable.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
22.	Work with Pan-Lancashire group to secure funding for Domestic Abuse services in Rossendale.	Apply for funding. If successful ensure services in place.	17/08/2018 31/03/2019	Strategic Housing Manager.	LCC Pan-Lancashire Group	Bid submitted for 2018-20, and services commenced if successful.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
23.	Publish a Temporary Accommodation Policy for Rossendale BC.	Draft policy. Obtain Member level sign-off and publish.	30/03/2019 28/06/2019	Strategic Housing Manager.	Housing Options Team Leader.	Temporary Accommodation Policy published.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
24.	Review Early intervention activities between the Council and PRPs for Tenants at risk of eviction.	Review current activities. Draft new protocol if needed.	21/12/2018 30/03/2019	Strategic Housing Manager.	Housing Options Team Leader.	Protocols are fit for purpose.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
25.	Ensure clients with debt or budgeting problems are referred to appropriate services.	Review pathways to services. Follow up review after a year.	21/12/2018 20/12/2019	Housing Options Team Leader.	Housing Options team. Strategic Housing Manager.	Preventions increase through debt and budgeting advice.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.

	Key Actions	Key Milestones	By When	Action Lead	Resources	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
25.	Encourage the use of Sanctuary and Target Hardening measures	Promote to partners. Review spend.	10/10/2018 30/04/2019	Strategic Housing Manager.	Housing Options Team Leader.	Preventions increase by helping households remain.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
26.	Work with the Council's Public Protection Unit to ensure PRS properties are 'Suitable'.	Discuss Suitability of Accommodation Order. Review suitability standards.	03/04/2018 29/03/2019	Housing Options Team Leader.	Public Protection Unit.	Property inspections assure properties are suitable or made suitable before PRS lets.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
27.	Work with the Council's Public Protection Unit and Communities & Partnerships team to assist sufferers of unneighbourly behaviour remain in their homes due to interventions.	Establish referral pathway. Review effectiveness.	03/04/2018 01/04/2019	Housing Options Team Leader.	Public Protection Unit. Communities & Partnerships team. Housing Options team.	Households are assisted to remain rather than approaching Housing Options for assistance rehousing.	
28.	Work with DWP/ Job Centre Plus and other agencies to support households during 'full service' roll out of UC who may be at risk of homelessness.	Liaise with JCP regarding arrangements Review arrangements.	15/11/2018 01/04/2019	Housing Options Team Leader.	JCP Manager Housing Options team. Service Assurance team.	Minimize the number of households approaching the Council due to finding the transition to UC problematic e.g. rent arrears.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
29.	Publish a policy for Disabled Facilities Grants with flexible measures to help people with disabilities remain safe in their own homes.	Publish Policy. Review Policy.	01/10/2018 01/10/2019	Strategic Housing Manager.	Private Sector Housing Market Renewal Manager. Private Sector Housing Market Renewal team.	Increase in the number of Disabled Facilities Grants completed.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
30.	Make effective links with the homelessness Trailblazer in Rossendale to assist young people up to 25.	Establish referral pathway. Review outcomes.	03/04/2018 01/04/2019	Housing Options Team Leader.	LCC, PAC, M3, Stepping Stone. Housing Options team.	Increase in youth homelessness preventions.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.

	Key Actions	Key Milestones	By When	Action Lead	Resources	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
31.	Establish referral mechanism for people potentially threatened with homelessness to access employability initiatives.	Make connections with Rossendale Works and similar projects. Review outcomes	21/12/2018 20/12/2019	Housing Options Team Leader.	Economic Development team. Active Lancashire Housing Options team.	Housing Options clients helped back to work.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
32.	Investigate the possibility of providing work/work related training as part of Council related projects to help people threatened with homelessness.	Liaise with Economic Development Director and Manager. If feasible devise a plan to take forward.	01/04/2019 01/10/2019	Strategic Housing Manager.	Economic Development team. Housing Options team.	A viable plan to link Housing Options customers with employment/training opportunities will be established if feasible.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
33.	Report Prevention of Homelessness Strategy Action Plan progress to Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Homelessness Forum.	Introduce action plan to forum. Update every 4 months as appropriate.	10/10/2018 31/12/2021	Strategic Housing Manager.	Housing Options Team Leader.	The Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Homelessness Forum is updated and engages with the strategy action plan.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
34.	Carry out pledge to house 10 families under the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme	Procure support. Secure accommodation for first 5 families. Secure accommodation for second 5 families.	01/04/2018 30/06/2018 30/06/2019	Housing & Regeneration Project Officer.	LCC Strategic Housing Manager.	10 families housed and support to settle and integrate successfully.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
35.	Support and be fully engaged in the Joint 16/17 year old homelessness protocol.	Facilitate relaunch of refreshed protocol locally. Adhere to protocol and review its success with partners as appropriate.	30/06/2018 31/12/2021	Housing Options Team Leader.	LCC and Lancashire Districts. Housing Options team.	Joint working between Council and LCC is conducive to meeting the housing needs of 16/17 year olds in a robust way.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.

Priority 3:

Ensure that housing supply best meets housing need.

	Key Actions	Key Milestones	By When	Action Lead	Resources	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
36.	Work with B-with-us partnership to ensure current stock best meets housing need.	Engage and input in pilot of new banding for HRA 2017. Work with steering group in publishing a new allocations policy as appropriate.	01/10/2018 01/10/2019	Housing Options Team Leader.	B-with-us partnership.	Increased percentage of lets to Rossendale households in Reasonable Preference categories.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
37.	Maximise delivery of new Affordable Housing.	Ongoing work required regarding liaison with PRPs, work with Planning on s.106 agreements and other developer contributions, Review annually.	31/12/2018 31/12/2019 31/12/2020 31/12/2021	Strategic Housing Manager.	Planning team. Housing Options team.	Affordable Housing delivered is in excess of Local Plan target of 25.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
38.	Ensure new affordable housing best meets housing need.	Ongoing work required regarding liaison with PRPs, work with Planning on s.106 agreements and other developer contributions, and using need and demand on the Housing Register to inform delivery. Review annually.	31/12/2018 31/12/2019 31/12/2020 31/12/2021	Strategic Housing Manager.	Planning team. Housing Options team.	New Affordable housing built reflects need and demand in areas where it is built.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
39.	Contribute to the development of an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.	Draft policy. Adopt policy.	31/12/2019 31/03/2020	Strategic Housing Manager.	Forward Planning. Planning Manager.	Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document Adopted	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
40.	Have regard to older people's housing needs when developing new affordable housing.	Ensure bungalows are delivered as part of s.106s where suitable and viable.	31/03/2021	Strategic Housing Manager.	Planning team.	Increased supply of bungalows of affordable tenures.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.

	Key Actions	Key Milestones	By When	Action Lead	Resources	Outcomes	Link to Corporate Strategy
41.	Use Council assets to meet housing need.	Identify sites. Progress sites with PRPs/developers if suitable.	31/12/2018 31/03/2020	Strategic Housing Manager.	Economic Development Director Forward Planning.	Sites progressed to deliver Affordable and Market housing.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.
42.	Have regard to housing needs of 'care' groups when delivering new affordable housing.	Liaise with LCC and Health commissioners for LD, MH, PDSI customers. Ongoing.	31/03/2021	Strategic Housing Manager.	Housing Option Team Leader. Planning team.	Needs met where identified in a timescale that allows it, and it is viable to do so.	A proud, healthy and vibrant Rossendale.

Appendix B - Glossary

Affordable Housing	Housing for sale or rent for those households whose needs are not met by the market.
Affordable Rent	Social housing where the rent is set at a maximum of the market rent.
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.
Assured Shorthold Tenancy/AST	The most common form of residential tenancy for a fixed term of at least 6 month, and can be ended by 2 months' notice by the landlord, 1 months' by the tenant for a date outside the fixed period and therefore is not secure.
Choice Based Lettings/CBL	A proactive online bidding system which allows choice to households wishing to access social housing as opposed to waiting to be allocated a property.
Consumer Price Index/CPI	A measure of inflation.
Eligible	To be eligible for assistance relating to the Housing Act 1996 and applicant must be eligible for public funds and therefore people from outside the British Isles (common travel area) may not be eligible depending on their status along with those not habitually resident.
General Needs Housing	Social housing for rent that isn't supported housing.
Homes England	The national housing delivery agency.
Housing Association	An organisation that is not for profit and set up to provide affordable homes to help those in need.
Housing Benefit	A means tested benefit to help households who have difficulty meeting their housing costs.
Local Authority	A council e.g. district, borough, county, metropolitan, unitary or London borough
Local Housing Allowance	A Private Rented Sector mechanism by geographical area which determines the maximum Housing Benefit or the Housing Cost Element of Universal Credit based on household composition.
Local Housing Authority	Any council in a one tier system, or a lower tier district in a two tier system, that has responsibility that has the responsibility for housing, which includes homelessness and allocations

H-Clic	A quarterly return regarding homelessness that local housing authorities are required to report to the Government since the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
Homelessness	The state of not having a home that is reasonable to occupy by a household.
Household	This can be one person or multiple people who live together as a related unit such as a family.
Intentionally homeless	If a homelessness applicant has deliberately done something or not done something which has resulted in becoming homeless. This includes the failure to act on advice that has been given.
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.
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	Covers groups such as families, pregnant women, 16/17 year olds, care leavers up to 21, and other people who would be significantly more vulnerable than the average person if made homeless.
Private Landlord	An owner of a property who rents the property to tenants who is not a housing association, council or third sector organisation.
Private Rented Sector/PRS	The collective name for rented properties that are not owned or managed by a local authority or housing association or third sector organisation.
Private Registered Provider/PRP	A Registered Provider that is not a local authority and will normally be a housing association
Registered Provider/RP	A provider of social housing registered with the Regulator of Social Housing such as a local authority, housing association or other third sector provider.
Regulator of Social Housing	An independent body which regulates social housing.
Rough Sleeping	The situation if a person is 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").

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.
Social Housing	Housing at sub-market rent levels to meet housing need owned and or managed by a Registered Provider.
Supporting People	A former grant administration programme which commissioned housing related support services to allow vulnerable people to remain in their own homes. Lancashire County Council administered the budget on behalf of the 12 lower tier districts in the county.
Universal Credit	A single, means-tested working-age benefit which is replacing or has replaced 6 of the main means tested benefits.
Temporary Accommodation	When an individual or household makes a homeless application the Council may offer them temporary accommodation depending on circumstances. This accommodation may consist of a flat, house, bedsit, hostel other supported accommodation or a bed and breakfast hotel.

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