



**South
Derbyshire**
District Council

Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2013-2018



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

South Derbyshire
Changing for the better

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires housing authorities to take a long-term strategic approach to managing homelessness. We are required to carry out regular reviews, taking account of the activities and services available to tackle homelessness. The Council must draw-up a strategy for combating and managing homelessness, based on the review.
- 1.2 This is South Derbyshire District Council's third Homelessness Prevention Strategy which seeks to outline how the Council is working with our partners to reduce and prevent homelessness.
- 1.3 It is important to acknowledge that this strategy is being launched at a time of significant economic difficulty. Cuts to public funds and the introduction of the Localism Act and Welfare Reform Act will have implications as to how the Council and partners can assist homeless households.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The aim of this strategy is *"To prevent homelessness by ensuring that South Derbyshire residents have access to affordable accommodation and support to sustain a home"*.
- 2.2 Our objectives for this strategy focus on four key areas for improvement which we have identified through working with our partners to:
 - Reduce homelessness for single people, aged 16 to 35.
 - Reduce under occupation in the social housing sector.
 - Ensure appropriate accommodation and support is available to those who experience domestic abuse.
 - Develop and improve access to the private rented sector.

3. Methodology

- 3.1 In preparing this strategy information has been gathered from a wide variety of sources including Census data and other national and local statistics. A Stakeholder Workshop was held in December 2012 where 10 organisations were able to review the evidence and to consider the most appropriate approach to preventing homelessness.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 This strategy has been informed by a review of the previous strategy and the views of key stakeholders. This includes Registered Providers, residents via the Council's website, support service providers including Citizens' Advice, the Council of Voluntary Services and Derbyshire Housing Aid.

5. National Context

5.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities to:

- Provide free advice and information about homelessness and preventing homelessness in their district
- Assist eligible individuals and families who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and in priority need.

5.2 Within the 2002 Homelessness Act, the Government made homelessness prevention a priority through providing increased funding to tackle it, setting challenging targets for prevention and placing requirements on local authorities to produce Homelessness Strategies.

5.3 National strategies and guidance that have helped shape this Homelessness Strategy include:

- “Sustainable Communities: Homes for All” (2005): Choice Based Lettings schemes in all local authorities in England by 2010
- “Tackling Homelessness” (2006): recognises the role of Registered Providers in preventing homelessness through partnership working, engendering sustainable communities, allocation and management policies and better use of existing stock
- “No-one Left Out; Communities Ending Rough Sleeping” (2008): aimed to end rough sleeping in the UK for more than one night by 2012
- “Vision to end rough sleeping: No second Night Out Nationwide” (2011)
- “Localism Act” (2011): Enables Local Authorities to discharge the main homelessness duty into the Private Rented Sector
- “Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order” 2012 – Consultation (May 2012)
- “Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England” (June 2012)
- “Making every contact count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness” (2012). Sets local challenges for housing authorities to ensure that every contact local agencies make with vulnerable people and families really counts to ensure that we prevent households, regardless of household make-up, from reaching a crisis point where they are faced with homelessness.

5.4 Welfare Reforms - Changes to Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance are likely to impact on homelessness as they significantly affect those people who are partially or totally dependent on benefits for their household income. Young people are particularly affected as payments for those under 35 are now restricted to shared room rate (previously under 25). This is likely to make it harder to place young single people in private rented accommodation. Limiting Housing Benefit entitlement to those of working age in the social housing sector will impact on those who under occupy and may find that their benefit no longer fully covers the rent. Whereas those in the private sector may see a reduction in housing benefit due to changes as to how charges are calculated for non-dependents, including children studying away from home at university and other adults living at home depending on how much income they receive.

6. The Housing Market in South Derbyshire

6.1 Overview of South Derbyshire

6.1.1 South Derbyshire covers an area of about 340 square kilometres and has an estimated population of 95,000 (2011 Census). The district is bordered by the City of Derby to the north, Burton upon Trent to the west and Ashby de la Zouch to the east. For over two decades, South Derbyshire has been the fastest growing district in Derbyshire.

6.1.2 Swadlincote is the main administrative and commercial centre of the District. The town is located on the former South Derbyshire coalfield. Coal and clay working have all but disappeared and to some extent have been replaced by more modern commercial and light industrial activity. A number of large companies now have substantial undertakings in the District: most notably Toyota, Nestle, JCB, etc. The rest of the District is mostly rural in character, marked by open countryside, the valleys of the Trent, Derwent and Dove and a patchwork of villages and small settlements. A large part of South Derbyshire is included in The National Forest. This major initiative continues to create a new landscape for work, recreation and wildlife.

6.2 South Derbyshire's Population

6.2.1 South Derbyshire's population comprises 49.6% males and 50.4% females; 64.3% of the population is aged 16-64, 20.1% are under 16 and 15.6% are of retirement age. By 2035, the population of South Derbyshire is projected to increase to almost 123,000, with the greatest projected percentage increase in population in the 65+ age group. The proportion of the population identifying themselves as non-white in South Derbyshire is estimated at 6.1%.¹

¹ Office for National Statistics, mid-2010 population estimates, April 2012 update

6.2.2 The claimant unemployment rate for South Derbyshire is 2.2%² which is lower than that for Derbyshire at 3.2% and England at 3.8%. However the profile of unemployment across the District is such that it tends to be higher in the urban areas (e.g. Newhall and Stanton 3.8%) and lower in the rural areas (e.g. Aston 1.1%). Whilst overall unemployment is lower than nationally, unemployment in the under 25 years is higher at 30.7% compared to that for Derbyshire (30.2%) and England (26.6%). It is this age group which is particularly impacted by changes to the Local Housing Allowance. Therefore, housing options for this group are likely to be limited as a result of low income levels and a limited supply of affordable one bedroom property in the District.

6.3 The Existing Housing Stock in South Derbyshire

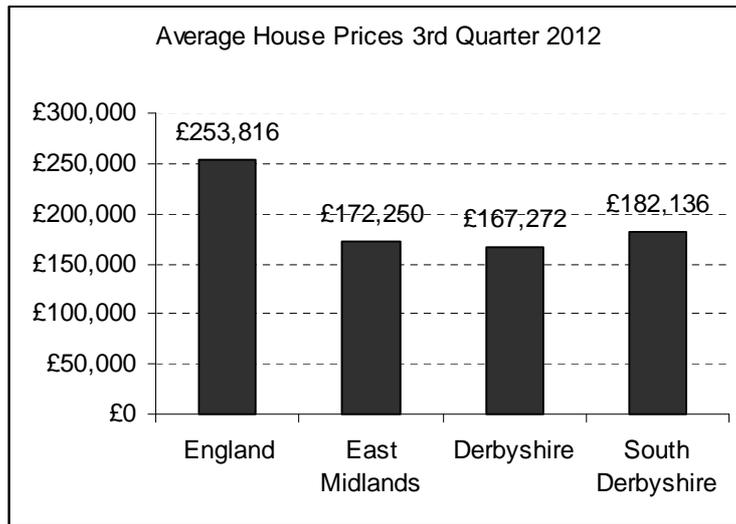
6.3.1 South Derbyshire is a largely rural district which has three main overlapping influences on its housing markets:-

- The central Swadlincote urban area which has stronger links to Burton upon Trent for commuting and migrations
- Derby on the northern edge, including suburbs on the edge of the principal urban area and villages strongly linked to Derby City
- Rural areas which are to a considerable extent 'free standing', with residents travelling to work in many diverse locations.

² Unemployment rates for February 2013 http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/munbull_tcm44-14833.pdf

6.3.2 South Derbyshire has been one of the fastest growing districts in the country for over two decades. In the last 10 years housing supply has increased by almost 5,500 homes with average house prices continuing to be slightly above that for the East Midlands.

Figure 1: Average House Prices for 3rd Quarter 2012³



³ Source: CLG Housing Live Table 581: Housing market.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49809/581.xls

6.3.3 Figure 2 below shows the profile of the housing stock in the District.

Location/Tenure	South Derbyshire	East Midlands	England
Social Housing Stock	3,860 (9.9%)	313,980 (16.0%)	4,045,416 (17.7%)
Other public sector dwelling stock	0 (0%)	4,052 (0.2%)	63,237 (0.3%)
Owner occupied & private rented dwelling stock	35,330 (90.1%)	1,643,300 (83.8%)	18,705,000 (82.0%)
Total dwelling stock	39,190	1,961,300	22,814,000

Source: DCLG Live Table 100

NB disaggregation of private sector dwelling stock, between owner occupied and private rented, was not available at the time of writing.

6.3.4 Traditionally social housing has been subsidised housing for rent available to those on low incomes. South Derbyshire has around 38% less social housing stock when compared to that for the East Midlands. Reductions in benefits through the Welfare Reforms are likely to put increased pressure on the limited supply of social housing in the District.

6.3.5 Almost 10% of the District's housing stock is social housing, with most of this being owned and managed by the Local Authority. The average weekly rent for a local authority owned home in South Derbyshire in 2012/13 was £70.47, compared with £55.95 in 2007/08. For a home owned by a Housing Association/Registered Provider the average rents were £67.58 in 2007 and £77.22 in 2011/12. Currently there are just over 2,600 housing benefit claimants living in the social rented sector in South Derbyshire.

6.3.6 Private rented housing is a vital and growing part of the housing market, comprising of almost 12 per cent of all households, or nearly three million homes, in England. The private rented sector offers a flexible form of tenure and meets a wide range of housing needs. It contributes to greater labour market mobility and is increasingly the tenure for young people⁴ as this group tends to be considered a lower priority for social housing.

6.3.7 In South Derbyshire around 5,000⁵ (13%) households live in privately rented property with average rental prices in the twelve months ending September 2012 ranging from £95 per week for a one bedroom flat to £145 for a three bedroom house.⁶ There were approximately 1,900 housing benefit claimants living in the

⁴ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/privaterentedhousing/> page accessed 18/09/12

⁵ 2011 Census

⁶ http://www.voa.gov.uk/corporate/statisticalReleases/121213_PrivateResidentialRentalMarketStatistics.html page accessed 19/12/2012

private rented sector in 2011/12. Reductions in benefits may put increased pressure on the social housing stock as households may struggle to meet the cost of renting in the private sector.

7. Review of Homelessness

7.1 Definitions of Homelessness and Threatened with Homelessness

7.1.1 Homelessness: Under section 175 of the Housing Act 1996 a person is homeless if s/he has no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere available for his or her occupation and for which they have a legal right to occupy. A person will also be homeless where s/he has accommodation but cannot secure entry to it, or where it is a moveable structure such as a caravan or houseboat and there is no site for it to be placed. Where a person has accommodation they will be treated as homeless if it is not reasonable for them to continue to occupy it, for example, due to living with an abusive partner.

7.1.2 Threatened with Homelessness: Under section 175 of the Housing Act 1996 a person is threatened with homelessness if s/he is likely to become homeless within 28 days. Most applicants who approach the service are threatened with homelessness rather than are actually homeless at that point. The Housing Authority (or its agent) must not wait until homelessness is imminent before providing assistance. Under section 183(1) of the Housing Act 1996 housing authorities must decide if there is reason to believe that an applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness and if so the authority must make inquiries (s184) into:

- a) whether s/he is eligible for assistance; and
- b) if so, whether the Authority owes any duty and to what level this may be.

7.1.3 Duty to Homeless Applicants: The level of duty is dependent on the outcome of the inquiries made:

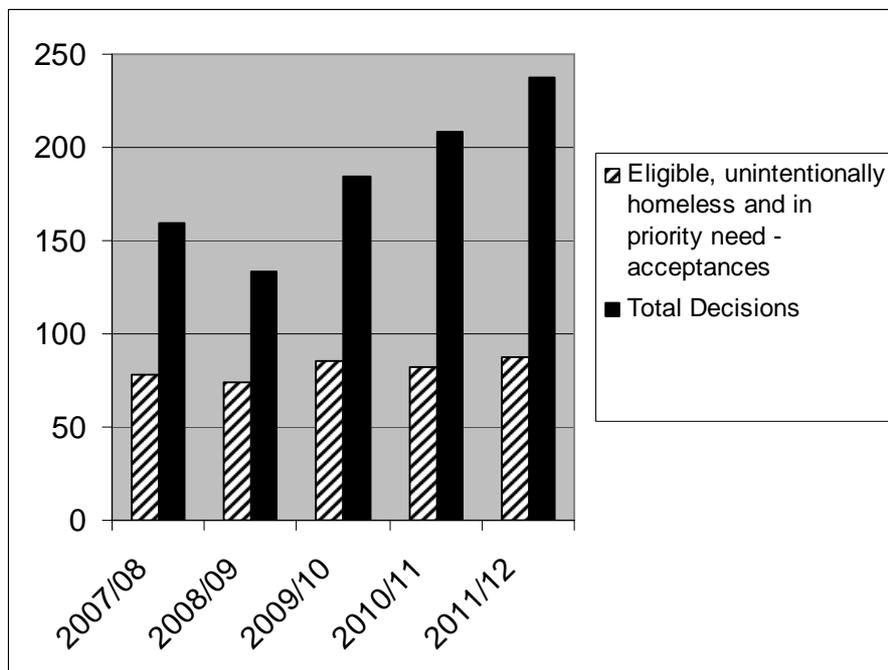
- i) Applicant is homeless and in a priority need group: The Council has to offer interim (temporary) accommodation to the applicant until secure accommodation is found (in most cases this requires a local connection to the District or if there is no local connection a referral will be made to the appropriate local area).
- ii) Applicant is intentionally homeless and in priority need: The Council has to offer time limited interim accommodation (usually for 28 days) and the applicant has to find their own accommodation, although assistance can still be given to help the applicant secure accommodation e.g. Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme.

- iii) Applicant is homeless but not in a priority need group: The Council must provide advice and assistance to the applicant but there is no duty to provide accommodation. The 2002 Homelessness Act transformed the advice and assistance that should be given. Each applicant should have their individual needs assessed leading to person-specific advice and assistance, tailor-made to the individual applicant.
- iv) Applicant is assessed as not homeless: The Council owes no duty but must inform the applicant of their decision.
- v) Applicant is ineligible: Does not have recourse to public funds, being subject to immigration control.

7.2 Levels of Homelessness in South Derbyshire 2007/08-2011/12

7.2.1 Homelessness acceptances in South Derbyshire have remained reasonably consistent between the periods of 2007/8 to 2011/12, (lowest 74 households: highest 87 households).

Figure 3: South Derbyshire District Council's Presentations and Acceptances 2007 to 2012



7.2.2 Although acceptances have remained stable the number of those presenting themselves to the Council has increased year-on-year since 2008. This can be attributed to the change in service provision, whereby there has been an increased focus on providing support to those at risk of becoming homeless. As a result more households have turned to the Council for support. This is considered to be a positive step change in service provision as more households are accessing services at an earlier stage preventing a substantial increase in homelessness acceptances.

Figure 4: Comparison of Homelessness Acceptances 2007/08-2011/12⁷

	England		East Midlands		Derbyshire		South Derbyshire	
	Number	Rate*	Number	Rate*	Number	Rate*	Number	Rate*
2007/08	63,170	2.9	4780	2.6	679	2.14	78	2.2
2008/09	53,430	2.5	3670	2.0	374	1.15	74	2.0
2009/10	40,020	1.8	3060	1.6	371	1.14	85	2.3
2010/11	44,160	2.0	3380	1.8	411	1.26	82	2.2
2011/12	50,290	2.3	3790	2.0	410	1.26	87	2.4

*The rate is per 1,000 households

7.2.3 Figure 4 shows that homelessness acceptances in South Derbyshire have not substantially increased in recent years. However, over the period 2007 to 2012, the rate of households experiencing homelessness and being in priority need per thousand households has ranged from 2.0 to 2.35. Over the last four years this level has been the highest in Derbyshire and has exceeded the regional rate three times and the national rate two times. The continuous growth in the District is a contributing factor as well as a relatively low percentage of affordable housing (9.85% of total housing stock) when compared to the national rate of 17.73%.

⁷ DCLG Live Tables 772 and 784

7.3 Reasons for Homelessness

7.3.1 Figure 5: Main Reason for Loss of Last Settled Home for Households Found to be Eligible, Unintentionally Homeless and in Priority Need.

Reason for loss of home	2009/10		2011/12	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Parental/relative/friends not able to accommodate	15	17.6%	18	20.7%
Non-violent breakdown of a relationship	5	5.9%	8	9.2%
Violent breakdown of a relationship	26	30.6%	23	26.4%
Mortgage/rent arrears	9	10.6%	6	6.9%
Loss of rented/tied accommodation	15	17.6%	20	23.0%
Harassment	3	3.5%	3	3.4%
Other	12	14.1%	9	10.3%
Totals	85	100%	87	100%

Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

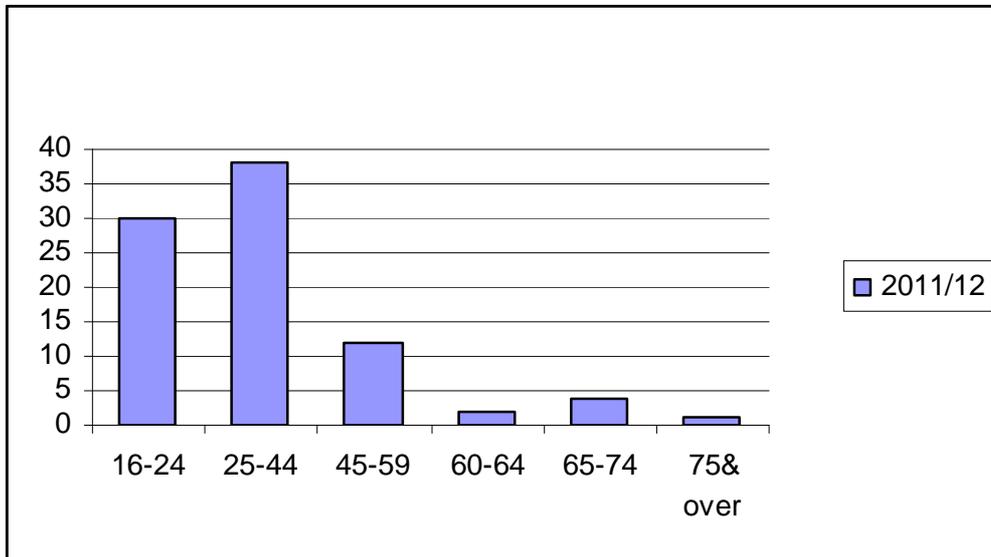
Source: P1E Returns

7.3.2 In 2011/12 the three main reasons for homelessness were parental/relative/friends not able to accommodate, violent breakdown of a relationship and loss of rented/tied accommodation.

7.3.3 Young people tend to fall within the category of parental/relative/friends not being able to accommodate them. In the current economic climate, first-time buyers are finding it increasingly difficult to access market housing resulting in more people living at home for longer. There is also a growing trend of young couples moving back to live with parents whilst saving for a deposit for a home. This can put increased pressure and tension on relationships, particularly when some couples may also be starting families whilst still at living at home. The Government's recently launched New Build Mortgage Guarantee Scheme along with Derbyshire's 'Helping Hand' scheme for first-time buyers should both contribute towards improving access to market housing.

7.4 Priority Needs Categories

7.4.1 Figure 6 below shows a breakdown by age group of all accepted cases for which the Council owes a homeless duty.



7.4.2 Figure 6 above shows that during 2011/12 under 44s accounted for 78% (68 people) of homelessness acceptances of which 44% (30 people) were 16-24 years.

7.4.3 This probably reflects the greater availability of alternative accommodation for older people threatened with homelessness, rather than a lack of demand. Given the changes due to the welfare reform and changes to the Local Housing Allowance, we would expect the proportion of younger people presenting as homeless to increase.

7.4.3 56% (49) of all accepted cases in 2011/12 were households with dependent children.

7.5 Rough Sleeping

7.5.1 Nationally the numbers of people sleeping rough is estimated to have increased by just over 23%, between Autumn 2010 and Autumn 2011, but in the East Midlands the figures rose from 121 to 188 – an increase of 55%. In South Derbyshire, there was only one person estimated to be sleeping rough on any one night in 2011.⁸ Whilst this suggests that rough sleeping is not a significant issue in South Derbyshire, it is important that the situation continues to be monitored.

⁸ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/roughsleepingautumn2010>

8. Homelessness Prevention

8.1 With the publication of “Sustainable Communities: Homes for All” the prevention of homelessness became one of the Government’s and the Council’s key priorities. Homelessness prevention is based on the Housing Options model by providing advice, support or advocacy before homelessness actually arises.

8.2 In response to the prevention agenda, the Council, along with a range of partners, has established a range of tools that assist people to prevent or resolve their homelessness at the earliest opportunity. The Council is committed to preventing homelessness and wherever possible will:

- negotiate with friends and family to remain in current accommodation until something more suitable can be found;
- support links to debt counselling services with independent financial advisors;
- negotiate with landlords regarding arrears;
- assess eligibility for the mortgage rescue scheme;
- help find a rented property in the private sector, and, in some cases, help with a rent deposit guarantee;
- help with an application for social housing;
- help single people to access hostel accommodation;
- referral to specialised agencies;
- provide practical help and support in cases of violence or abuse;
- provide Housing Options Advice Services; and
- provide tenancy support (including sign posting to other services) to existing Council tenants at risk of homeless (from April 2013).

9. Homelessness Support Services

9.1 There are a number of services that operate within South Derbyshire offering help, advice and assistance for a number of issues related to homelessness and other housing related problems. These include:

- Framework Housing Association – “SAFE” Consortium provide housing support and accommodation for young people ages 16 to 25 who are homeless or at risk of losing their home.
- IDecide Derbyshire provides a dedicated older persons’ housing option service providing support and signposting to help individuals access appropriate services.
- P3Charity manages Midland Lodge Hostel in Swadlincote, which provides a 24hour support service for homeless men and women aged 18 -65.
- Trident Reach Domestic Support project provides a refuge for women who have experienced domestic abuse and deliver an outreach support service

to those who either remain in their own home or are resettling back into the community.

- South Derbyshire Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) - provides advice and support to those at risk of losing their home including debt advice.
- YMCA Happy Homes Furniture Project – supply low cost “recycled” furniture.
- Derbyshire Housing Aid provides independent support including advocacy and legal representation to people at risk of losing their home.

9.2 South Derbyshire District Council also offers a number of schemes to help prevent homelessness. Since 2009, South Derbyshire District Council has been working with East Midlands Housing (EMH), which is part of the national Mortgage Rescue Scheme (MRS). Up to May 2012, East Midlands Housing and Local Authorities had helped 285 families threatened with repossession to stay in their own homes across Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire.

9.3 For those wanting to access properties in the private rented sector, but who are unable to afford the deposit, the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme allows South Derbyshire District Council to act as the guarantor. The scheme is open to those who:

- have a local connection to South Derbyshire;
- are single and aged over 25, or are in a childless couple, or a family who have been or would be found to be intentionally homeless from their last settled accommodation;
- are homeless or threatened with homelessness that cannot be prevented;
- are capable of independent living; and
- are unable to afford a deposit.

10. Progress against the 2007-2012 Homelessness Action Plan

10.1 The 2007-2012 Action Plan grouped the proposed actions under the following five themes:

- Increasing the Supply of Affordable Homes
- Making Better Use of the Existing Housing Stock
- Preventing Homelessness
- Temporary/Supported Accommodation
- Reviews

10.2 Significant progress has been made under each of the themes, although in a number of cases the changed funding environment has meant that it has not been possible to fully implement all of the proposed actions.

10.3 Particular successes include the development of an effective information sharing protocol; the routine offer of benefit checks and, where appropriate, referral to Derbyshire Housing Aid for debt advice, to all who present themselves as at risk of homelessness; and the development of the Out of Hours procedure which South Derbyshire District Council now delivers on behalf of all of the Derbyshire District and Borough councils and Derbyshire County Council.

10.4 Other actions could not be delivered in the way anticipated at the time of creating the Action Plan. Attempts were made, for example, at establishing a matching scheme for potential lodgers and those with spare rooms they wished to let, but there was no take-up from either potential hosts or potential lodgers.

10.5 As of October 2012, South Derbyshire District Council has entered into a Service Level Agreement with P3Charity to provide temporary accommodation, with the result that Bed and Breakfast is only used as a last resort in emergency situations, or where it would be inappropriate to offer accommodation provided by P3Charity; e.g. only shared accommodation is available and there is an assessed risk to one or more parties.

11. Strategic Priorities for 2013 to 2018

11.1 Priority Areas for Action

11.1.1 This part of the Review and Strategy identifies the Council's priority areas for action, along with the rationale for their inclusion as priorities. It also sets out a new Action Plan which aims to address these priorities.

11.1.2 The priorities for action on homelessness were developed following consideration of existing priorities, the influence of a range of local and national factors, and discussion with partner organisations. A workshop was held with key partners in early December 2012 which helped to inform the identification of the priorities and the development of the Action Plan.

The following priorities have been identified:

11.2 To reduce homelessness for single people, aged 16-35 years

11.2.1 Single people are a priority due to a shortage of suitable accommodation and the changes to the Local Housing allowance restricting those aged under 35 to the Shared Accommodation Rate from January 2012. As at 1 April 2012, there were 1,557 households on the housing waiting list, almost 59% (918) of which require one bedroom properties, while South Derbyshire District Council only owns 679 one bedroom properties of which only 136 are general purpose, the remainder being sheltered accommodation for the elderly. Recent reforms to the Housing Revenue Account means that the Council will have financial freedom to build new affordable homes to meet local housing needs.

11.2.2 There are specific concerns for young people aged 16-18 who are facing homelessness, and particularly for young care leavers, for whom there is only very limited provision available. It is also important to ensure there continues to be effective communication in these cases between Children's Services and Housing Services regarding the decision as to whether or not the young person is in need of care, and/or is statutorily homeless, so that the appropriate action can be taken.

11.3 To reduce under occupancy in the social rented sector

11.3.1 The limited availability of smaller properties in the social rented sector and the benefit reductions for under occupancy makes the management of under occupancy both critical and challenging, as it will place those who need to downsize in direct competition with those who are on the housing waiting list. Failure to adequately address the needs of those who are under occupying their properties could lead to tenants finding themselves in financial difficulty and perhaps consequently homeless due to unaffordable rent levels.

11.3.2 With an overall reduction in funding to build new affordable housing across the sector (i.e. government grant for new build reduced by over 60%), it is important that every opportunity is taken to ensure the best use is made of the existing social housing stock. The Council's Tenancy Strategy recommends that fixed term tenancies are not automatically renewed when a property is under occupied by more than 2-bedrooms thereby encouraging better use of the social housing stock.

11.4 To ensure that accommodation and support is available to those who experience domestic abuse

11.4.1 Domestic abuse continues to be a predominant reason for loss of a home. For several years the Trident Reach Domestic Support project in partnership with Next Steps has provided a range of services and support to those made or at risk of homelessness through domestic abuse. Trident Reach provide 10 self-contained fully furnished flats including on-site support for women and families who have lost their home due to domestic abuse as well as an outreach support service to those who either remain or resettle within new communities.

11.4.2 Feedback from partner organisations indicates that the current arrangements are working well. However, services have recently undergone a competitive tendering process to secure funding provided by Derbyshire County Council. Whilst Trident Reach have been successful in continuing to receive funding to provide accommodation support and outreach support there is now an requirement to provide the service across Erewash as well as South Derbyshire. The impact the new funding agreement will have on service delivery will need to be closely monitored to ensure that it is appropriate and effective.

11.5 Developing the role of the Private Rented Sector

11.5.1 Evidence from the 2011 Census shows that 8.6% (2,836) of households privately rent in South Derbyshire. This compares to 12% in England. Nationally the private rented sector has been growing and is predicted to continue to grow as first-time buyers unable to secure a mortgage increasingly turn to this sector to meet their housing needs.

11.5.2 The private rented sector has traditionally been the sector for those households on low incomes not owed a homelessness statutory duty by the Council. In the main these are single and childless couples. Therefore this low income group are likely to see increased difficulty in finding suitable affordable accommodation as housing benefits are reduced and demand from middle income groups keep rent levels relatively high potentially outside the reach of those on benefits.

11.5.3 In the current economic climate there are opportunities for the Council to work with partners to develop the private rented sector. Good private landlords want settled tenants who will pay the rent consistently. Although landlords will want to charge a market rent some may be prepared to take a commercial decision to

accept a lower rent or enter into an agreement with the Council if they can avoid defaults in rents and reduce their void periods. Changes to Council Tax on empty homes (increase from 100% to 150% after 6 months empty in South Derbyshire from 1st April 2013) may encourage some owners who are struggling to sell to privately rent.

12. Action Plan 2013 - 2017

- 12.1 The Action Plan 2013 -2017 is at Appendix One and aims to address the issues which contribute to homelessness as identified above.

Annexe One - Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2013-2018

Key Action	Outcome	By When	Resources	Lead Officer	
Priority One: To reduce homelessness for single people, Age 16 – 35					
1.1	Meet with Assessment Team at Children's Services to discuss and agree the best ways of getting information to high risk young people.	To understand and agree the most appropriate format and best way to contact young people.	August 2013	Within existing resources	Strategic Housing Manager
1.2	Explore the opportunities to work with teachers to raise awareness of young people in schools of the realities of homelessness.	To reduce youth homelessness	September 2014	Within existing resources	Strategic Housing Manager
1.3	Use appropriate "young person friendly" media to get information to young people as to the reality of leaving home.	To reduce homelessness presentations from single young people.	December 2013	Within existing resources	Strategic Housing Manager/ SAFE Consortium
1.4	Provide advice and information for young people about to be offered a tenancy about rights and responsibilities.	To reduce loss of a home by providing a 'reality check' of the cost of living away from home.	February 2014	Within existing resources	Housing Operations Manager/SAFE Consortium
1.5	Develop an easy to read information pack for parents on how the homelessness system	To reduce the number of parental evictions.	December 2013	Within existing resources	Housing Operations Manager

	works.				
1.6	Explore the options for shared housing in the social housing sector for under 35s.	To increase housing options for young people providing an affordable alternative to living alone in the private sector.	March 2014	Within existing resources	Housing Operations Manager
Key Action		Outcome	By When	Resources	Lead Officer
Priority Two: Reduce under-occupation in the Social Housing Sector					
2.1	Establish the extent of under-occupation in the social housing sector in the District.	To understand if there is potential to make “better use” of the existing stock.	March 2014	Within existing resources	Strategic Housing Manager
2.2	Find out what existing incentives to transfer or exchange to smaller homes are currently operating across the region.	Review which scheme may be most suitable for the District.	June 2014	Within existing resources	Strategic Housing Manager
2.3	Develop and implement an under-occupation scheme for the Council housing stock.	To maximise the use of the existing accommodation and to support those impacted by the social size criteria reduction who may wish to downsize.	September 2014	Within existing resources	Housing Operations Manager
2.4	Review the Housing Allocations Policy.	To ensure that the best use is made of the social housing stock to meet those in housing need.	June 2013	Within existing resources	Housing Operations Manager
2.5	Review the use of discretionary housing payments.	To alleviate homelessness to households at risk/ improve access to the private rented sector.	December 2013	Within existing resources	Housing Operations Manager/ Welfare Reform Group

Key Action	Outcome	By When	Resources	Lead Officer	
Priority Three: Accommodation and support is available for those who experience domestic abuse					
3.1	Carry out a review of domestic abuse services.	To ensure that existing service provision meets needs and to identify any gaps in service provision.	September 2015	Within existing resources	Strategic Housing Manager
Key Action	Outcome	By When	Resources	Lead Officer	
Priority Four: Develop the role of the private rented sector					
4.1	Promote the Landlord Accreditation Scheme.	Promote the private rented sector to homeless households as a real alternative option to social housing and to improve the housing conditions of private rented accommodation.	September 2014	Within existing resources	Strategic Housing Manager
4.2	Develop a landlord Private Leasing Scheme.	To increase access to 'affordable' privately rented accommodation.	September 2013	Operating a scheme may need additional funding.	Strategic Housing Manager/Housing Operations Manager
4.3	Work with private landlords and letting agencies to seek their help in supporting tenants at risk of homelessness.	To reduce homelessness in the private rented sector	March 2015	Within existing resources	Strategic Housing Manager
4.4	Develop and publish a 'Homelessness Discharge Protocol' for the private rented sector.	To improve confidence of homeless households that the private rented accommodation can be a sustainable alternative to social housing.	October 2013	Within existing resources	Strategic Housing Manager

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