



## AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL Democratic Services

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8 November 2018

### CABINET

A meeting of the **Cabinet** will be held at **6.30 pm** on **Tuesday 20 November 2018** in **The Olympic Room - Aylesbury Vale District Council**, when your attendance is requested.

**NOTE:** There will be an informal session starting at 6.15 pm to give Members the opportunity to comment on issues on the Agenda. The press and public may attend as observers.

**Membership:** Councillors: A Macpherson (Leader), S Bowles (Deputy Leader), P Irwin, H Mordue, C Paternoster, Sir Beville Stanier Bt, P Strachan, J Ward and M Winn

Contact Officer for meeting arrangements: Bill Ashton; [bashton@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk](mailto:bashton@aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk);

### AGENDA

#### 1. APOLOGIES

#### 2. MINUTES (Pages 3 - 8)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 October, 2018, copy attached as an appendix.

#### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members to declare any interests.

#### 4. HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY (Pages 9 - 60) Councillor Winn Cabinet Member for Communities

To consider the attached report.

Contact Officer: Natalie Donhou-Morley (01296) 585233

**5. PROPOSAL FOR A SINGLE CCTV CONTROL ROOM SERVICE FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES AND UPGRADE OF CURRENT AVDC CCTV EQUIPMENT (Pages 61 - 76)**  
**Councillor Mrs J Ward**  
**Cabinet Member for Civic Amenities**

To consider the attached report.

Contact Officer: Will Rysdale (01296) 585561 / Helen White (01296) 585151

**6. BUDGET PLANNING 2019/20 (Pages 77 - 92)**  
**Councillor Mordue**  
**Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources**

To consider the attached report.

Contact Officer: Nuala Donnelly (01296) 585164

## CABINET

16 OCTOBER 2018

**PRESENT:** Councillor A Macpherson (Leader) (for part of the meeting); Councillors S Bowles (Deputy Leader), P Irwin, H Mordue, C Paternoster, Sir Beville Stanier Bt, P Strachan, J Ward and M Winn.

**Councillor Bowles (Deputy Leader) in the Chair**

### 1. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of 12 September, 2018, be approved as a correct record.

### 2. NEW HOMES BONUS REPORT

Cabinet received a report on the recommendations of the New Homes Bonus Panel of 12 September, 2018, as set out in full on the Council's website. By way of reminder, the Council had in December, 2012, approved the allocation of a share of New Homes Bonus to Town/Parish Councils for projects designed to alleviate the impacts of growth on local communities. A budget of £2,045,679 was available for allocation in the latest application round.

A total of 13 expressions of interest had been received resulting in 12 formal applications as set out on the Appendix to the Cabinet report. The total project costs were £6,428,084 and the total of the grants sought was £2,485,675. The Panel had recommended grant funding totalling £2,045,009, leaving a balance of £607 to be carried over into any future grants round. It was however noted that as no decision had yet been reached by Government in relation to the future of local government in Bucks, new applications were not currently being invited.

RESOLVED –

That the recommendations of the New Homes Bonus Panel, as set out in detail in the Cabinet report, be approved and adopted.

NOTE: Councillors Strachan, Mrs Paternoster, Bowles and Sir Beville Stanier each declared a personal interest in the above item as District Council Ward Members in whose area some of the Parish projects were situated.

### 3. EMPTY HOMES POLICY

In Aylesbury Vale there were 239 private homes which were unoccupied from a total housing stock of 78,850 (as at April, 2017). This represented 0.3% of the housing stock. There were broadly two types of empty residential properties – transactional empty properties which were generally empty for six months, usually due to tenancy or ownership changes, and long term empty properties. The vast majority of all empty properties were empty for less than six months.

Empty properties could have a negative impact on the lives of people in the vicinity as they could be a magnet for anti-social behaviour. Tackling empty properties not only helped provide additional much needed homes, but also contributed to the improvement of the local environment. An empty homes policy which suggested a proactive

approach to helping and supporting owners to bring empty properties back into use. A copy of the proposed policy was appended to the Cabinet report which could be viewed on the Council's web site.

The policy allowed a flexible and graduated approach to bringing empty homes back into use and included offering incentives to landlords to help them do this before considering more formal measures. The policy would also ensure that the best possible use could be made of the funding available to return empty homes back into full use.

RESOLVED –

That the Empty Homes Policy appended to the Cabinet report, be approved and adopted.

#### **4. CONCESSIONARY TRANSPORT REVIEW**

In 2011, Bucks County Council replaced AVDC as the Travel Concession Authority (TCA). That same year AVDC and the County Council entered into an agreement which allowed AVDC to operate a discretionary travel token scheme on the County's behalf. Research showed that AVDC was one of only a few local authorities that operated a concessionary travel arrangement.

The discretionary concessionary taxi token scheme was an alternative option for people who qualified for a free bus pass but could not make use of bus services. There were currently 116 people registered onto the scheme for 2018. The scheme was fully funded by AVDC with a budget of £33,400 per annum. The tokens were sourced from an external specialist company. Qualifying individuals were able to apply for up to £90 worth of tokens per annum which they could spend with a participating taxi firm for essential journeys. The tokens could be used to fully or partly fund a journey up to the cost of £15. The taxi firm then had to exchange the tokens for payment through the specialist company that had provided the tokens.

There had been a steep decline in the number of participating taxi operators involved in the scheme (from 21 in 2011 to 5 in 2017). The primary reason was that the scheme had become financially unviable for them as the minimum value of the tokens they could exchange was £100 and the number of journeys being made was not high enough to make the scheme worthwhile from a business perspective. This was an optional arrangement and taxi operators could choose not to participate.

For these reasons the operation of scheme had been reviewed as follows:-

- Community transport schemes within the Vale had been mapped.
- A survey of current users.
- Consultation with the Transport Hub (run by Community Impact Bucks).
- National research on older people and transport needs.
- Conversations with community and statutory partners.
- A general review of the scheme as currently operated.
- Research of other options in other parts of the County.

- Commissioning Community Impact Bucks to signpost existing users to alternative provision.

The results of this research were appended to the Cabinet report and could be viewed on the Council's website.

Two options had been identified. The first was to cease the current scheme altogether. Discretionary transport provision was not a statutory District Council function. To work with other partners to ascertain whether some form of alternative provision could be made, perhaps utilising pump priming funding using the current budgetary provision. It might well be possible that the Local Area Forums might wish to become involved on a match funding basis.

The matter had been considered by the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee which had expressed a preference for the second option, although the Committee had indicated that if this was not feasible then the current scheme should be ceased.

RESOLVED –

That some of the current funding, to be determined as part of the budget setting process, be retained for a time limited period for the purpose of providing pump priming funding (not revenue costs) for new or existing community transport schemes, with the process and criteria being decided upon the outcome of discussions with other partners.

NOTE: Councillor Irwin, who is involved with an existing community transport scheme declared a personal interest in the above item.

## **5. CAR PARKING STRATEGY**

Cabinet considered a report also submitted to the Economy and Business Development Scrutiny Committee, and summarised in the Minutes of that Committee of 11 September and available to view on the Council's website concerning a car parking strategy for Aylesbury Town Centre. The draft Strategy was appended to the Cabinet report and could also be viewed on the Council's website. The Scrutiny Committee had made a number of comments, primarily in relation to phasing of some of the recommendations. Cabinet accepted the Committee's suggestions.

The strategy would be used not only to inform the Council's investment decisions relating to car parking, but also to provide information for the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. The brief for the study resulting in the production of the strategy had been developed in consultation with Bucks County Council to ensure that all parking issues related to the town centre. The strategy set out how AVDC could work with key stakeholders to deliver integrated, innovative, sustainable and financially affordable service provision that met the needs of residents, visitors, local communities and businesses, whilst also encouraging sustainable modes of travel. The study leading to the production of the strategy had been produced by ARUPS.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the phasing of those items referred to in the Cabinet report, recommended by the Economy and Business Development Scrutiny Committee be approved.
- (2) That the proposed metrics set out on page 50 of Appendix 2 to the Cabinet report, taking account of the feedback from the Scrutiny Committee that the metric to measure customer satisfaction should not be introduced until after the improvements had been carried out, be agreed.

- (3) That Council be recommended to approve and adopt:-
- (a) The Car Parking Strategy set out in Appendix 2 to the Cabinet report.
  - (b) The phase one and two recommendations set out in Appendix 3 of the Cabinet report, and in particular:-
    - The recommendation (SM1) to set up a joint delivery board with Bucks County Council to oversee the delivery of the Strategy.
    - The proposed capital investment of approximately £400K (estimate by ARUPS), to upgrade the payment options (OM6).
- (4) That Council be asked to note that there might be a further request for capital expenditure to upgrade payment equipment in AVDC car parks in other towns, once the draft strategies for parking in Buckingham, Wendover and Winslow had been received.

**NOTE: Councillor Mrs Macpherson in the Chair from this point onwards.**

## **6. TO REVISE THE CHILTERNES CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE CONSTITUTION**

Consideration was given to a report suggesting revisions to the Chilternes Crematorium Joint Committee Constitution to take account of new crematorium being constructed in Bierton and which was due to open in Spring, 2019. The opportunity had also been taken to incorporate provisions in relation to the disposal of assets and sharing of surpluses on dissolution, which were not covered in the current Constitution. A copy of the Constitution showing the proposed changes was appended to the Cabinet report.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the revised Constitution of Chilternes Crematorium Joint Committee be approved and adopted, subject to the agreement of the other constituent authorities.
- (2) That the Lead Legal and Monitoring Officer, after consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, be given delegated authority to make any minor amendments that might be necessary.

NOTE: Councillors Mrs Ward and Mordue each declared a prejudicial interest in the above item as the Council's representatives on the Joint Committee and left the meeting whilst this matter was discussed.

## **7. CONSULTATION ON CLOSURE OF HOUSEHOLD RECYCLING CENTRES**

Cabinet considered a report on proposals developed by Buckinghamshire County Council in relation to household waste recycling centres. The report could be viewed on the Council's website, but in summary were as follows:-

### **A: Proposals already approved by BCC**

- Reduce the number of opening days at the Aylesbury (Rabans Lane), Burnham and Chesham sites, from 7 days a week down to 5
- Introduce charges at all sites for some types of waste
- Close down completely one site, perhaps two sites

- Consider charging residents from outside Bucks for disposing of all waste types at County sites, or preventing them using the sites altogether.

## **B: Areas of proposals open to consultation**

- Whether to close one site or two
- The preferred option for one site to close would be Bledlow
- The preferred option for two sites to close would be Bledlow and Burnham
- Which two weekdays it would be better to close Aylesbury (Rabans Lane), Burnham and Chesham sites
- Whether to charge residents from outside Buckinghamshire for using County Sites, stop them using the sites altogether or continue to allow the same access as Bucks residents.

Cabinet felt that as a joint financing partner of the Bucks Waste Partnership it was most unfortunate that this forum had not been used early on to help shape BCC's options and proposals, share the learning of the research and have an opportunity to discuss the impact of the proposals on AVDC as a Waste Collection Authority in Buckinghamshire.

Officers had had to approach the proposals not fully understanding the potential or unforeseen implications to AVDC's waste collection services. Furthermore the approach to consultation taken by BCC in this matter undermined the potential to work collaboratively through already established partnership routes, which had led to AVDC not having the opportunity to help shape or influence BCC decisions, which would ultimately impact on the Vale's local communities, which all parties had a shared interest in.

**Savings Potential:** It was clear that opportunities to achieve efficiencies and savings for all councils was paramount. Although it was unclear what consideration and assessment had been made of the full quantum of costs versus savings, when considering the entirety of the waste services (from collection to disposal). For example if there was an increase in fly tipping as a result of day closures, this would add to AVDC's requirement to collect the waste at an increase in cost to AVDC. AVDC needed to understand what assessment BCC had made of the total cost to the tax payer as a result of closing sites and levying charges.

**Charging Customers for specific waste types such as rubble, plasterboard, soil etc:** BCC had presented introducing charges to customers at HRC's as a fait accompli. However AVDC had not been provided any analysis or assurance around the impact on household waste collections. Cabinet felt that it was reasonable to expect that small amounts of waste such as soil or rubble that previously would have been taken to HRC's would now be diverted to household waste bins. This waste would then enter the general waste stream and result in potential collection issues (overloaded bins/H&S issues etc). Ultimately this waste was then sent to EfW.

**Growth and Improvements:** From the evidence presented it was not clear what consideration BCC had given to the major growth in the district in the coming years particularly in and around Aylesbury when looking at the closure of Rabans Lane on specific days. The saving related to this particular aspect of the proposal had not been modelled against growth. Buckingham HRC was well used and had previously been identified as a site that required improvements. Again the analysis undertaken had not looked at opportunities to reinvest in other sites.

RESOLVED –

That officers be instructed to prepare a formal response after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Waste and Licensing to be sent to Buckinghamshire County Council along the lines of the dialogue included in the Cabinet report and in particular:-

- Expressing concern that the constituent authorities making up the Bucks Waste Partnership have not had an opportunity to view the analyses of the research leading up to the County Council's proposals.
- Expressing concern that the proposals appear to have no regard for the significant growth of the District which would require the retention of adequate facilities for the disposal of both general and recycling waste.
- Expressing concern that the strong possibility of the proposals leading to an increase in the incidence of fly tipping which would result in additional removal and disposal costs to waste collection authorities within the County have not been properly factored into the proposals.

**Cabinet**  
**20 November 2018**

## **HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2019 - 2022**

**Councillor Winn**

**Cabinet Member for Communities**

### **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 To seek approval for the draft Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 2022, attached as Appendix 1 of this report.

### **2 Recommendations**

That the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes the comments from the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25 September 2018, attached as Appendix 2 of this report.
- 2.2 Recommends Council to adopt the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 2022 for inclusion in the Council's Policy Framework.
- 2.3 Recommends that Council give delegated authority to the Assistant Director for Customer Fulfilment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, to make minor amendments to the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 2022 as required.

### **3 Supporting information**

- 3.1 Local authorities have a statutory requirement under the Homelessness Act 2002 to produce a Homelessness Review and Strategy outlining the main causes of homelessness in their area and the strategic plans and actions in place to tackle them. The strategy should be revised and rewritten every five years as a minimum requirement.
- 3.2 The Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019-2022 (the Strategy) has been produced following a review of the housing and homelessness needs of residents within the Vale and outlines the council's plan on addressing these needs for the next three years.
- 3.3 The Strategy was created by a working group made up of internal officers and representatives from local partners – the Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust, Aylesbury Homeless Action Group, Connection Support and Heart of Bucks.
- 3.4 Since the last Homelessness Review, changes in both local and central government legislation and policy have had a significant impact on the approach taken by local authorities to preventing and dealing with homelessness. Official statistics continue to show a worrying upward trend, with the number of homelessness acceptances and rough sleepers rising year on year since 2014.
- 3.5 As the population in Aylesbury Vale continues to rise, so do both house prices and private rents. However, the Vale has also had the third highest increase in its housing stock throughout England over the last five years (source ONS 2017) and has the highest ratio of housing delivery to existing housing stock of any authority in the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor. This stock increase includes the delivery of 1546 affordable homes between 2013 and 2018.
- 3.6 We have seen an increase of 25% in the number of applicants found as unintentionally homeless and in priority need since 2013. The biggest rise was seen in families with dependant children, with the loss of tenancy being the most common

reason for someone losing their home. However, AVDC's housing staff have been extremely effective over the last few years in preventing homelessness. Between 2013 and 2017, AVDC prevented 1674 households from becoming homeless.

- 3.7 Compared to the national picture and in general, our homelessness figures are relatively low, however, the Aylesbury Vale 2017 rough sleeping rate (per 1,000 households) at 0.26, is marginally higher than national average of 0.20.
- 3.8 Research and customer insight to inform the Strategy began in February 2018, including interviews with customers and a survey of providers offering services to homeless people. A consultation event was held on 19 April 2018 and was attended by 41 delegates from local partnership organisations, statutory and voluntary organisations, Registered Providers of social housing and local members. Following this, a public consultation was undertaken in July/Aug 2018. Updates have been made to the draft Strategy to reflect the consultation responses and policy changes that have come into place since the initial draft was published.
- 3.9 Our strategic vision is: 'To ensure those who want to make the Vale their home are supported and empowered to do so.' In order to achieve this, the following four Strategic Priorities have been agreed:  
Strategic Priority 1 - Prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping  
Strategic Priority 2 - Continue to facilitate and maximise the supply of affordable housing  
Strategic Priority 3 - Respond to the ongoing challenges of welfare reform  
Strategic Priority 4 - Contribute to the improvement of health and wellbeing services for people at risk of homelessness.
- 3.10 The Strategy Action Plan, which forms an evolving part of the strategy, sets out what we will do to achieve the priorities identified in the Strategy. It will act as a health check on the effective delivery of our service and will be updated quarterly on the AVDC website once live.
- 3.8 Following an analysis of the consultation responses by the working group, the final draft of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 2022 was produced (attached as Appendix 1 of this report). However, it is recognised that the Strategy and the action plan within it are working documents which will be updated and reviewed to reflect current policies and procedures. The action plan will be owned by the Homelessness Prevention Forum – some ownership has already established in some key areas whilst others will be updated in early 2019.
- 3.10 The draft Strategy was considered by the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee meeting on 25 September 2018.

The following recommendations were resolved:

- (1) That Members were happy with the approach being taken to developing the new Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 2022 and supported the document moving forward to Cabinet
- (2) That the relevant Director and Cabinet Member for Communities be asked to consider the comments made by Members at this meeting in finalising the draft Strategy to be reported to Cabinet in November 2018.

Comments from the meeting are attached as Appendix 2 of this report.

- 3.11 The Strategy is due to be presented to Council on 12 December 2018.



## Appendix 2

### **Comments from the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee Members at the meeting held on 25 September 2018**

Members sought more information from officers and were advised that:-

- i. Quarterly reports would also be provided to the Assistant Director and the Cabinet Member.
- ii. The monitoring of Universal Credit's impact on residents and landlords would be ongoing throughout the Strategy. Claimants would be helped to access UC applications online and advice on AVDC's website would be correct and current with signposting to relevant services as necessary. A communications plan within AVDC was established and debt advice leaflets would be available for registered providers to distribute with their clients. Further actions would be added as necessary.
- iii. Following the gradual national roll-out, AVDC would become a Full UC Service from Autumn 2018
- iv. The Government's P1E data collection system used under previous strategies did not go into as much detail as the new HCLIC system. This allowed the new Strategy to go into further depth to identify those at risk of homelessness earlier. This outcome would be reported to Government.
- v. Residents who had difficulty with rental shortfalls as a result of LHA caps could approach AVDC for housing advice. Managing expectations early was important in this instance. Depending on the shortfall and officer investigation into affordability, discretionary housing payments could be offered.
- vi. Although the Strategy would begin in 2019, actions were still ongoing to address rough sleeping. Funding had recently been received to help with rough sleepers which had already achieved housing outcomes for 11 people and additional funding for support services, including a Band 6 Community Psychiatric Nurse. These were quick ways to ensure that rough sleeping did not become entrenched which was an underlying issue for the service. In addition, a rough sleeper count would be carried out later in the week during the early hours of the morning which would be combined with intelligence based information to agree a figure.
- vii. It was acknowledged that there was a difference between rough sleepers, individuals who had sought and been granted homelessness assistance by the local authority and those who were begging but had somewhere to stay.
- viii. Despite affordable housing numbers being in VALP, it was appreciated that some affordable rented properties might not be affordable because of welfare reforms. This would be fed back to the Strategic Team.
- ix. The impact of VALP on the delivery of new affordable housing may take years to accurately measure.

Members felt that the Strategy was comprehensive and balanced overall, however concern was expressed over the impact that UC would have on residents which would influence the effectiveness of the Strategy. The Strategy needed to be agile enough to manage this change but assurance was felt with the flexibility of the action plan and that AVDC was a Full UC Service. Although the Strategy acknowledged that responding to Welfare Reform was a priority, on balance, Members felt that their concerns about UC should be made clear to the Cabinet

Member. The Committee saw merit in an update being brought back to Committee in March 2019 which would allow for the impact of the winter and UC to be understood.

Further clarity was also sought from Members regarding the outcome of the targets and actions from the previous Strategy 2014-2017; it was agreed that this should be circulated to Members in due course. A report would only come to Committee on this if deemed necessary by Members.

RESOLVED –

That:-

1. The approach to the development of the Strategy 2019-2022 be endorsed and that Cabinet and the Cabinet Member take consideration to the discussion and concerns raised by the Committee in relation to UC and the Strategy.
2. A note be distributed to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman regarding the outcome of the 2014-2017 Strategy.
3. An update be scheduled to come back to the Committee on the Strategy in March 2019.

# Housing and Homelessness Strategy

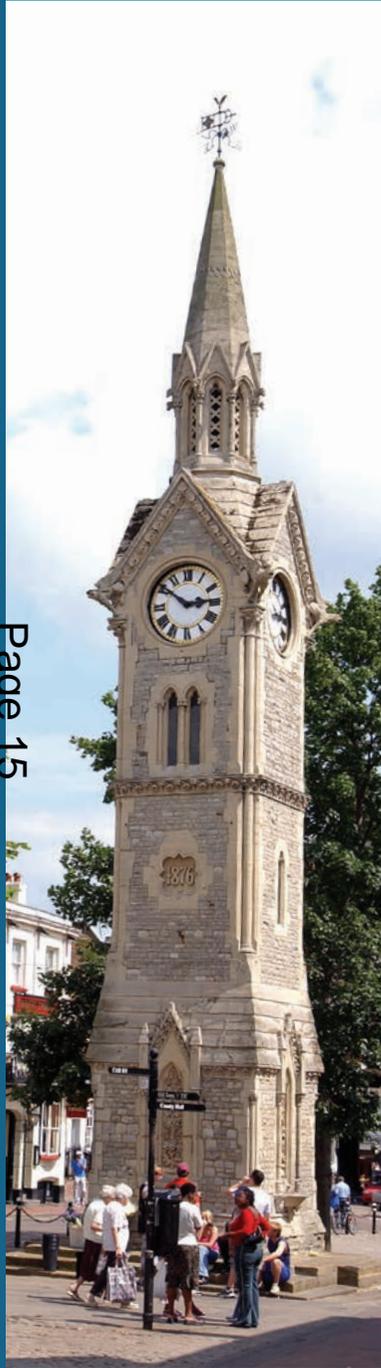
## Aylesbury Vale District Council



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## 1 Foreword from Councillor Mark Winn, Cabinet Member for Communities - AVDC

The concern over the rising number of homeless people has been in the news on a fairly regular basis over the last few years and there are tangible reminders of this within most of our towns and cities.

To have a secure and safe home is the bedrock of any modern society and the basis on which we can live and operate as individuals.

In order for the Vale to become a great place to live and work, we must address our own homeless population and over the period of the last strategy, we sought to bring about change and develop our own understanding and response.

With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, we are able to offer support to anyone regardless of whether they meet a priority criteria.

Support can come in many forms, from debt advice to family liaison. It is our aspiration that being placed in temporary accommodation is the very last resort on offer. With the help and commitment of all our partners, we want to enable and equip individuals to weather the storms of personal adversity so they become more resourceful and adaptable to navigate through the inevitable challenges of life.

With an emphasis on moving away from a reliance on finite statutory provision towards personal empowerment, it will not come as a surprise that the main focus of this strategy is weighted around prevention and securing affordable long term housing.

I would like to thank the customers and partners who took part in the preparation and consultation for this strategy and shared their experience and knowledge of how, through a partnership approach, we can make a difference in the Vale.



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**2.1** Local authorities have a statutory requirement contained within the Homelessness Act 2002 to produce a Homelessness Review and Strategy outlining the main causes of homelessness in their area and the strategic plans and actions the council has in place to tackle them. The strategy should be revised and rewritten every five years as a minimum requirement. This document and the attached Action Plan form the council's current Housing and Homelessness Strategy and replaces the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2014-2017, with the review process and public consultation having taken place in 2018.

**2.2** The Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019-2022 has been produced following a robust review of the housing and homelessness needs within the Vale and brings together the council's response to these needs for the next three years.

**2.3** The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (the Department) is responsible for setting national policy on homelessness and leads on implementing it across government.

**2.4** Homelessness, as defined by Crisis is:

- "the problem faced by people who lack a place to live that is supportive, affordable, decent and secure. Whilst rough sleepers are the most visible, the vast majority of people live in hostels, squats, bed and breakfast or in temporary and insecure conditions with family and friends."
- "...more than rooflessness. A home is not just a physical space: it provides roots, identity, security, a sense of belonging and a place of emotional well-being."

### 3.1 The Review Methodology

The Housing and Homelessness Review and Strategy 2019-2022 was written by AVDC, in conjunction with a working group made up of internal officers and representatives from local partners Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust, Aylesbury Homeless Action Group, Connection Support & Heart of Bucks.

The review relied on a range of methods for collecting information of homelessness within the Vale

Internal monitoring data including Homelessness Statistical Returns (P1E data) and externally available data as referenced

- A survey of clients who have used the homelessness services in the district
- A survey of providers who work with us in the district
- A consultation event to inform the strategic direction of the action plan and inform our areas of focus for the next three years. Representatives attended from the statutory and public sector, as well as local members and other stakeholders and potential partners

### 3.2 Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2014-2017: Achievements

AVDC continuously seeks to improve its service to those who present to the council for relief and prevention of homelessness and to be innovative in its approach. Some key achievements during that time are:

- An increase of over 1200 affordable homes (April 2014 -March 2018).
- Regular update sessions for councillors on homelessness issues to support them in their role.
- Revised nomination agreements to improve nomination processes for single vulnerable homeless.
- The establishment of a Building Resilience Project to seek out those at risk of homelessness at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Funding awards to local homeless partners to encourage innovation and support the work of annual Winter Emergency Provision as well as a Severe Weather Emergency provision.
- Hosting a series of workshops by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance to promote a national accreditation scheme for housing providers.





- Working with partners to set up a hoarder support group.
- Increased engagement with partners and mapping of services to identify gaps and reduce duplication.
- The setting up of a quarterly Homelessness Prevention Forum to engage with partners and provide accountability for the Housing and Homelessness Strategy working towards the set up of a Homelessness Charter.

### 3.3 Public policies and schemes related to the Housing and Homelessness Review & Strategy

Policy/Scheme	Link	Last reviewed
<b>Bucks Home Choice Policy</b>	<a href="http://www.buckshomechoice.gov.uk/choice/uploads/BHCpolicyFinalVersionMay2014.pdf">http://www.buckshomechoice.gov.uk/choice/uploads/BHCpolicyFinalVersionMay2014.pdf</a>	Currently under review
<b>AVDC Private Rent Scheme</b>	<a href="https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/information-landlords-and-letting-agents">https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/information-landlords-and-letting-agents</a>	Currently under review
<b>Adopted Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan 2004 and the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Housing Plan</b>	<a href="https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/SECTION/ADOPTED-AYLESBURY-VALE-DISTRICT-LOCAL-PLAN-AVDLP">https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/SECTION/ADOPTED-AYLESBURY-VALE-DISTRICT-LOCAL-PLAN-AVDLP</a> <a href="https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/section/vale-aylesbury-local-plan-valp-2013-2033">https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/section/vale-aylesbury-local-plan-valp-2013-2033</a>	Currently under review
<b>Buckinghamshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2021 (2017 revision)</b>	<a href="https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/documents/s95935/Appendix%201%20for%20Joint%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy.pdf">https://democracy.buckscc.gov.uk/documents/s95935/Appendix%201%20for%20Joint%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Strategy.pdf</a>	2017
<b>Bucks Tenancy Strategy</b>	<a href="http://www.buckshomechoice.gov.uk/choice/content.aspx?wkid=42">http://www.buckshomechoice.gov.uk/choice/content.aspx?wkid=42</a>	2014
<b>Aylesbury Garden Town</b>	<a href="https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/section/about-aylesbury-garden-town">https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/section/about-aylesbury-garden-town</a>	-

Since AVDC's last Homelessness Review was completed, changes in both local and central government legislation and policy have had a significant impact on the approach taken by local authorities to preventing and dealing with homelessness.

Official statistics on statutory homelessness are published quarterly by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG formally the DCLG) in March, June, September and December. These quarterly bulletins are now published with statistics on local authority prevention and relief work. The financial year 2010/11 saw a 10% increase in homelessness acceptances by local authorities, representing the first financial year increase since 2003/4. Homelessness acceptances continued to rise over the next three years but fell by 3% between 2012/13 and 2013/14. The 2014/15 financial year recorded a further increase, with acceptances 36% higher than in 2009/10 (but 60% below the peak in 2003/4). The 2015/16 financial year saw acceptances increase by a further 6% on 2014/15. The 2016/17 financial year saw a further rise of 1%, with the most recent statistics showing that the number of households accepted as homeless in the third quarter of 2017 has increased to 15,290; a 2.3% increase on the same quarter in 2016 ([Statutory Homelessness in England – Briefing Paper 2018](#)).

There has been a 169% rise in recorded rough sleepers across England between 2010 and 2017, but many organisations suggest that these figures are in fact higher. In December 2015, the UK Statistics Authority published an assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics in relation to DCLG's homelessness and rough sleeping statistics. The assessment found that the Homelessness Prevention and Relief statistics "do not currently meet the standard to be National Statistics." Organisations such as Shelter and Crisis also contend that official statistics do not give a full picture of homelessness in England.

Homelessness arising from parents/friends/relatives being no longer willing or able to provide accommodation remains significant, as does homelessness arising from the breakdown of a violent relationship. However, the most frequently cited reason for loss of the last settled home is now the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy in the private rented sector. The continual increase in statutory homelessness since 2013/14 is attributed to a number of factors, of which the most important is identified as the continuing shortfall in levels of new housebuilding relative to levels of household formation. Larger cities are also citing higher than average levels of unemployment and increasing use of zero hour contracts as having a negative impact on households attempting to maintain a tenancy.

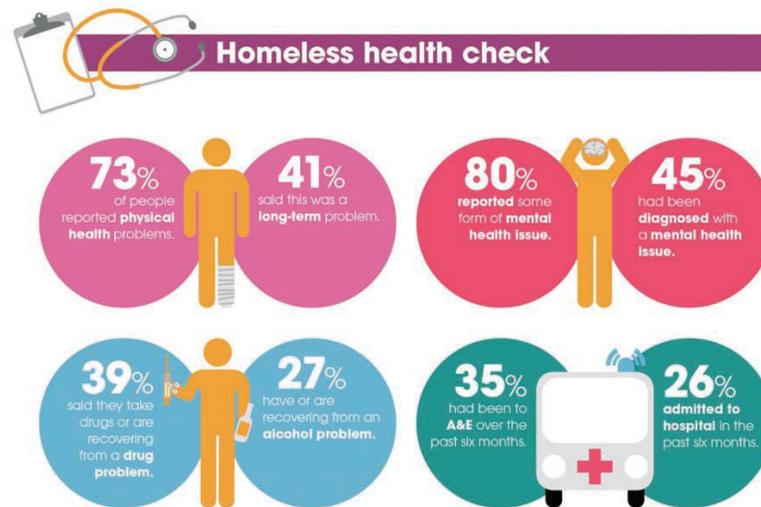




Housing Benefit reforms are also viewed as a significant contributory factor. In addition to contributing to levels of homelessness, local authorities in areas of high housing demand argue that benefit reforms are also making it more difficult for them to secure housing for eligible applicants. Use of temporary accommodation also continues to rise, with 78,930 households in temporary accommodation nationally at the end of December 2017 – an increase of 4% on a year earlier (MHCLG Statutory homelessness live table 775)

There is also increasing information and data around homelessness and ill health; whether this is physical or mental illness or a combination of both. Figure 1, which was produced in 2010, demonstrates that 41% of homeless people reported a long term physical health problem and 45% had a diagnosed mental health problem, compared with 28% and 25% respectively in the general population. Co-morbidity amongst the longer-term homeless population is not unusual, with many rough sleepers and homeless people also suffering from mental health problems.

Figure 1 – HOMELESS HEALTH CHECK



[www.homeless.org.uk/health](http://www.homeless.org.uk/health)

Drug and alcohol abuse accounts for just over a third of all deaths amongst the homeless population. The average age of death of a homeless person is 47, compared to 77 years amongst the general population. Collaboration between local professionals is central to integrated services as a means to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities for those facing homelessness, ideally via interventions which can prevent, protect and promote health for people at risk of becoming homeless.

Crisis estimate that there were 2.27 million households containing concealed or hidden homeless single persons in England in early 2016, in addition to 288,000 concealed couples and lone parents. The number of adults in these concealed household units is estimated at 3.34 million. These numbers represent a rise of one-third since 2008. This rise in concealed single individuals living with others, when they would really prefer to live independently, has been associated with a fall in new household formation' (Crisis, Homelessness Monitor: England 2017, March 2017).

## 4.2 Changes in legislation and policy

### 4.2.1 Jobseeker's Allowance Claimant

**Commitment Oct 2013** outlines what job seeking actions a claimant must carry out while receiving Jobseeker's Allowance. The Claimant Commitment brings Jobseeker's Allowance into line with claimants' responsibilities under Universal Credit.

**4.2.2 Universal Credit** was rolled out nationally from October 2013. The transition from the current system of benefits and tax credits to Universal Credit will be gradual and it is expected to be in place in the Vale of Aylesbury by the end of 2018. Anyone claiming Employment Support Allowance will have a Work Capability Assessment to assess their capability for work.

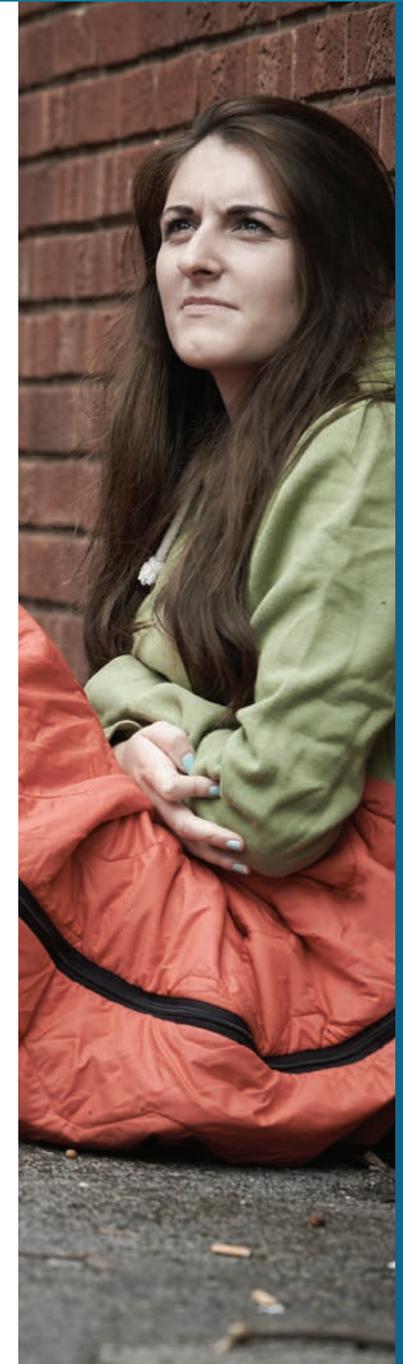
**4.2.3 Local Housing Allowance** remains frozen from 2015 until 2020. This means that LHA entitlement is unlikely to cover the full cost of private sector rent, especially as these continue to rise. This may leave low income families in a difficult position where they are unable to afford the cost of living – resulting in increased risk of homelessness.

### 4.2.4 Homelessness prevention trailblazers programme 2016

£20m was allocated to 28 bids covering 86 local authority areas to trial innovative ways of preventing homelessness. In December 2016 – AVDC was granted £626,000. MHCLG and analytical partners ICF, will complete an evaluation of the programme based on data from participating authorities, plus 16 volunteer comparator authorities, who will complete a household level return.

### 4.2.5 Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016 – 2021

A total of £1.28 billion has been shared between 1,920 RP schemes nationally to support provision of 46,534 new affordable homes before 2021.





**4.2.6 Leaving the European Union** In the national referendum on 23 June 2016 the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. The process for leaving takes a minimum of two years and there may be ramifications in a number of key housing-related areas, such as the housing market, the labour market, forecast and actual population growth, the economy, financing programmes and procurement rules.

#### **4.2.7 Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

The Homelessness Reduction Act makes changes to the current homelessness legislation contained in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, with a renewed focus on preventing homelessness. It places duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It requires local authorities to provide new homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who are protected under existing legislation. There is also a new duty on public services including NHS Trusts, prisons and Jobcentres to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone that they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This came into force in April 2018.

#### **4.2.8 Assessing Housing need Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The government's 'Planning for the right homes in the right places' consultation in late 2017 was

aimed at finding a new standardised methodology for assessing housing need on a council-by-council basis, replacing inconsistent methods used across different authorities at present. The consultation also announced the government's intention to produce a revised National Planning Policy Framework in early 2018. Outcomes from the consultation have yet to be announced.

**4.2.9 Housing First** Housing First is an approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping that emerged in the UK in 2017. Housing First offers secure permanent housing to homeless people with high needs and/or histories of entrenched or repeated homelessness, alongside intensive support to help maintain the tenancy. There are no conditions around housing readiness and flexible support is provided for as long as is needed. It has proved successful in other countries, especially so in those with high levels of sustained financial support and has been adopted by some charities and housing providers in the UK. The Government has also invested 28 million in funding towards pilots in the West Midlands Combined Authority, Greater Manchester, and the Liverpool City Region.

### 5.1 Housing Market – Demand, Supply and Possession

**5.1.1 Population** The latest data shows there were 78,847 households in the Vale as of 31 March 2017 and the Office for National Statistics 2016 mid-year estimates show an estimated population of 193,113. This shows an increase of approximately 9,000 households and 19,000 people since the 2011 Census. While the Vale is largely rural, it covers both urban and rural areas, and as a result has to deal with housing issues specific to both.

**5.1.2 Social Housing Providers** AVDC does not retain any housing stock so housing provision in the Vale is split between the private sector and registered providers. The largest registered provider of social housing in the Vale is the Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust, but there are also many others that operate in the district. The social housing sector in the Vale is made up of 11,913 affordable homes, consisting of 10,913 rented properties and 1000 shared ownership properties (at 31 March 2017 [Source: Homes England Statistical Data Return]). Bids for rented properties across the Vale are taken via Bucks Home Choice. There is undeniably a large demand on this sector. As at 31 December 2017, there were 3,723 households on the housing register who were interested in living in Aylesbury Vale. This total is comprised of 2,590

people who are not currently in social housing and 1,133 transfer applicants who are currently in social housing but want to change property.

**5.1.3 House Prices** In the private sector, the average house price in the Vale is £393,300, compared to a regional average of £411,200 (based on sales and valuations October – December 2017 [Source: Hometrack]), and a national average of £243,582 (based on sales during December 2017 [Source: HM Land Registry – UK House Price Index England]). Aylesbury Vale is an area with high rents and property prices; it is therefore an area in which it is expensive to live, and where homelessness is a real concern.

#### 5.1.4 House Purchase Income Requirements

Data from Hometrack (December 2017) shows that a household income of £37,694 is required to purchase a flat/maisonette in the lower quartile of the housing market and an equivalent terraced house would require an income of £54,623. Households aspiring to a very modest semi detached or detached house need incomes of £64,103 and £93,671 respectively. These assumptions are based on a 3.5 times income multiplier. In addition to having a good income, households would also need to provide an average deposit of 21% and be able to afford the associated legal and moving costs.

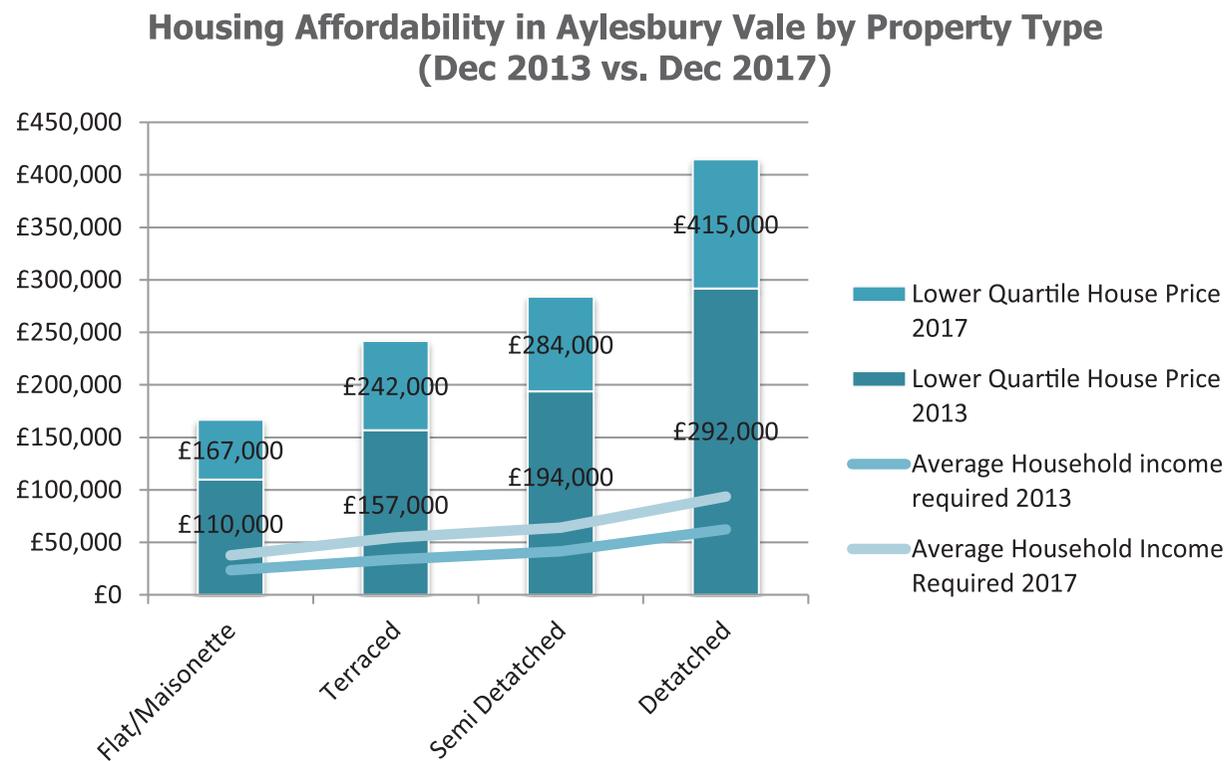




Home ownership is the most popular form of tenure in the district - but Aylesbury Vale continues to be an expensive area in which to buy a home. Figure 2 below shows how local buyers continue to struggle to purchase a home in the private sector based on average earnings. In order to alleviate the financial hardship faced by those trying to buy a home in the district, AVDC has explored initiatives such as the Local Authority Mortgage

Scheme (LAMS). However, given the introduction of the Help to Buy scheme (where the government loans homebuyers up to 20% of the cost of a new-build home, so only a 5% deposit and a 75% mortgage is needed) AVDC has decided to monitor the success of this nationwide initiative, before deciding whether there is still a need for LAMS.

FIGURE 2 – HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN AYLESBURY VALE BY PROPERTY TYPE



Sources: House Price data - Hometrack; Income data - CACI

**5.1.5 Rental Income Requirements** A gross income of £38,272 is required to afford the median private rent on a one-bed property, of £184 per week. This assumes that 25% of household income is spent on housing costs. Overall, the mean cost of renting in Aylesbury Vale is £216.67 per week (Hometrack

December 2017). In over 50% of the districts in the UK, rent costs more than a third of full time local pay, when the least expensive quarter of private rents is compared to the earnings of the lowest paid quarter of employees (JRF Report February 2018)

**FIGURE 3 – PRIVATE RENTS AND LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE BY PROPERTY SIZE IN AYLESBURY VALE DECEMBER 2013 V DECEMBER 2017**



Sources: Private Rent data – Hometrack; LHA data – AVDC website

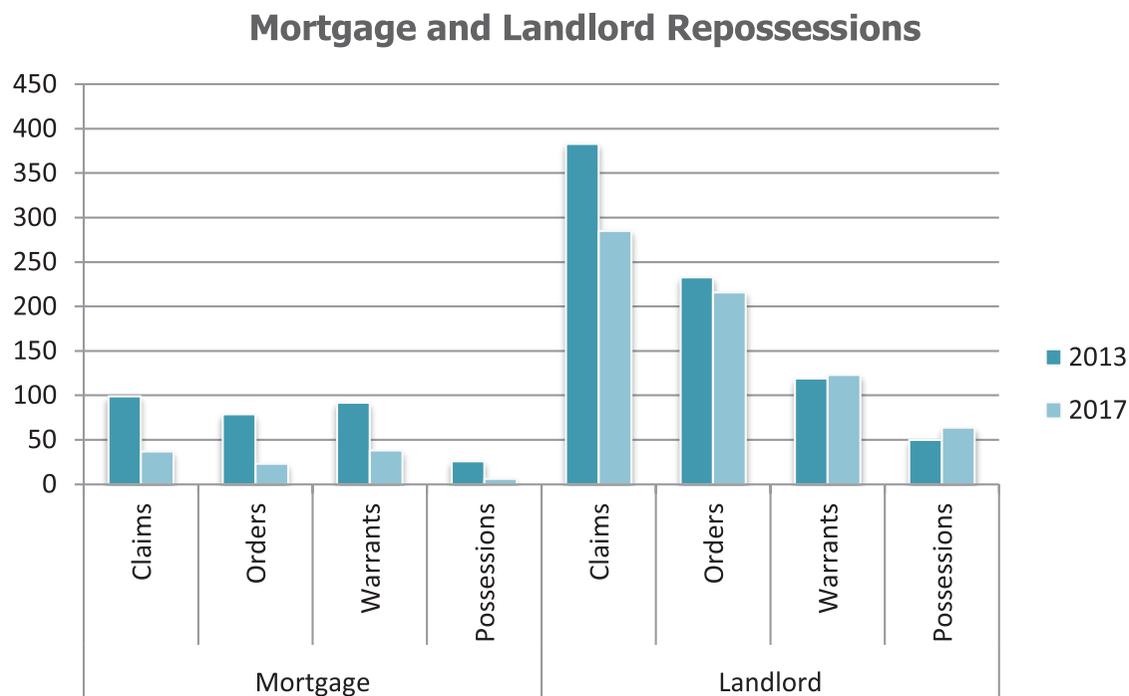




**5.1.6 Housing Delivery Rates** Aylesbury Vale has seen the third highest housing stock increase in England over the last five years (source ONS 2017) and has the highest ratio of housing delivery to existing housing stock of any authority in the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor. Whilst the national housing shortage remains, AVDC continues to work towards high delivery rates as detailed in the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Housing Plan. This includes the delivery of 1546 affordable homes between 2013 and 2018.

**5.1.7 Mortgage and Landlord Possessions** Figure 4 shows a breakdown of the numbers of mortgage and landlord possession actions during the dates shown, based on the defendant's resident local authority. The data shows that mortgage possessions fell by 77% year on year, whereas the number of landlord possessions increased by 28%, with the largest increase seen in private landlord possessions.

FIGURE 4 - MORTGAGE & LANDLORD REPOSSESSIONS



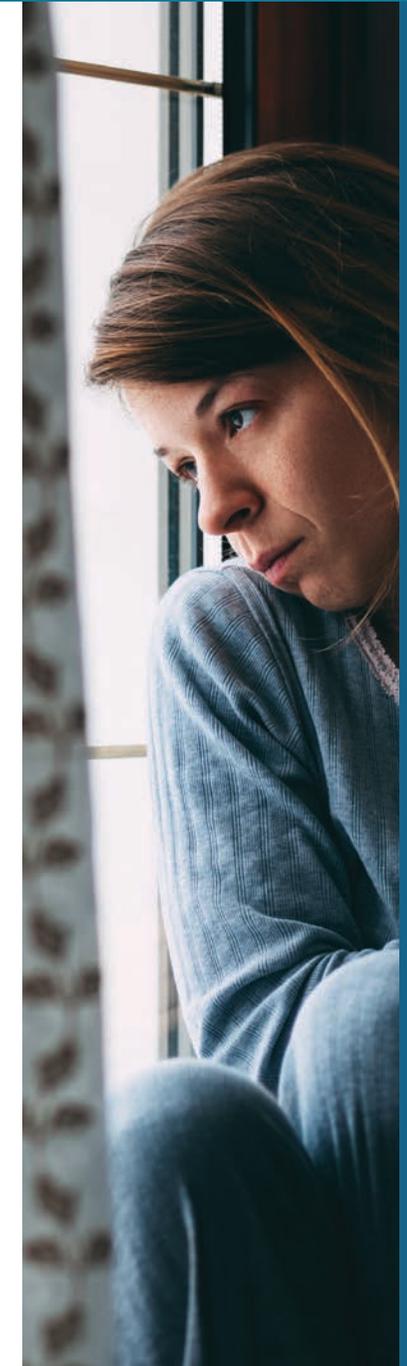
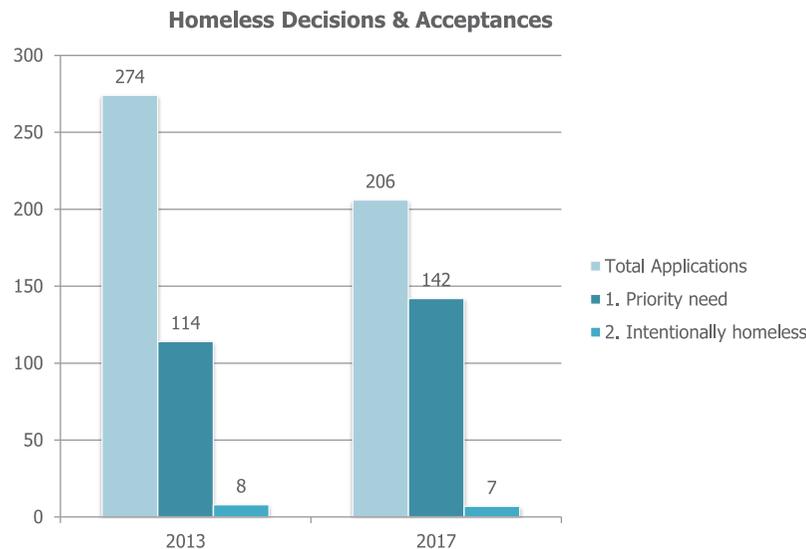
**5.1.8 Supported & Specialist Housing** AVDC work with local registered providers (RP's) to ensure that needs of all homeless applicants presenting with support needs have appropriate accommodation to be referred to. AVDC contributed to the Buckinghamshire 12 Year Housing Plan for people with Support needs (June 2009). Disabled Facilities Grants are available for the adaption of properties for people with health and mobility needs and older people's housing is available through Bucks Home Choice.

A list of local hostels and supported accommodation can be found on the [AVDC Website](#).

## 5.2 Key Homelessness Statistics

The number of homeless applications made by local people to AVDC has reduced when comparing calendar year 2013 with 2017. However, the number of applicants AVDC has accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need, thus being owed a homeless duty, has risen 25% from 114 to 142 in the same period as shown in Figure 5.

FIGURE 5 – HOMELESS DECISIONS AND ACCEPTANCES 2013 V 2017





The main reason for households being accepted as in priority need is due to having dependent children; 68% of priority need acceptances in 2017 were due to this reason. Figure 6 shows a decrease in the respective share of every category of priority need other than dependent children and those with a physical disability or a mental illness or disability.

FIGURE 6 – CATEGORIES OF HOUSEHOLDS ACCEPTED AS BEING IN PRIORITY NEED

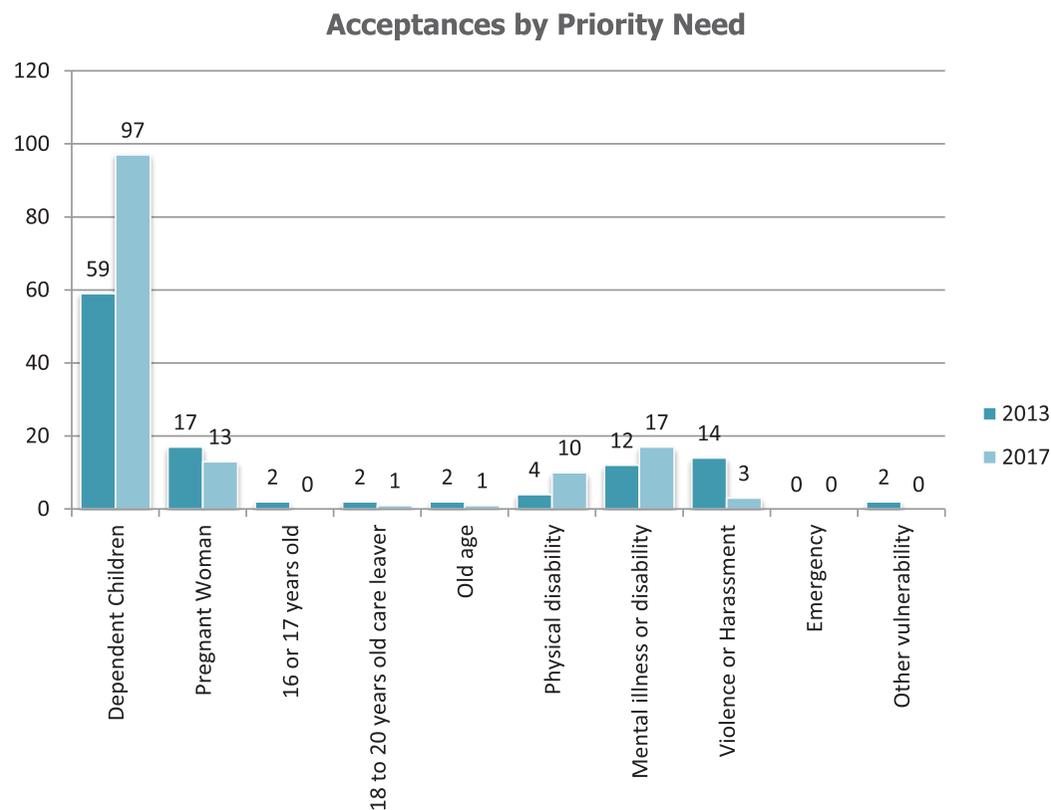


Figure 7 provides a comparison of the number of applicants in priority need based on household type, between the last and present reviews. The household type with the largest number of clients accepted and in priority need during both 2013 and 2017, was female lone parent households with dependent children, followed by couples with dependant children.

FIGURE 7 – HOUSEHOLDS UNINTENTIONALLY HOMELESS AND IN PRIORITY NEED BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE 2013 V 2017

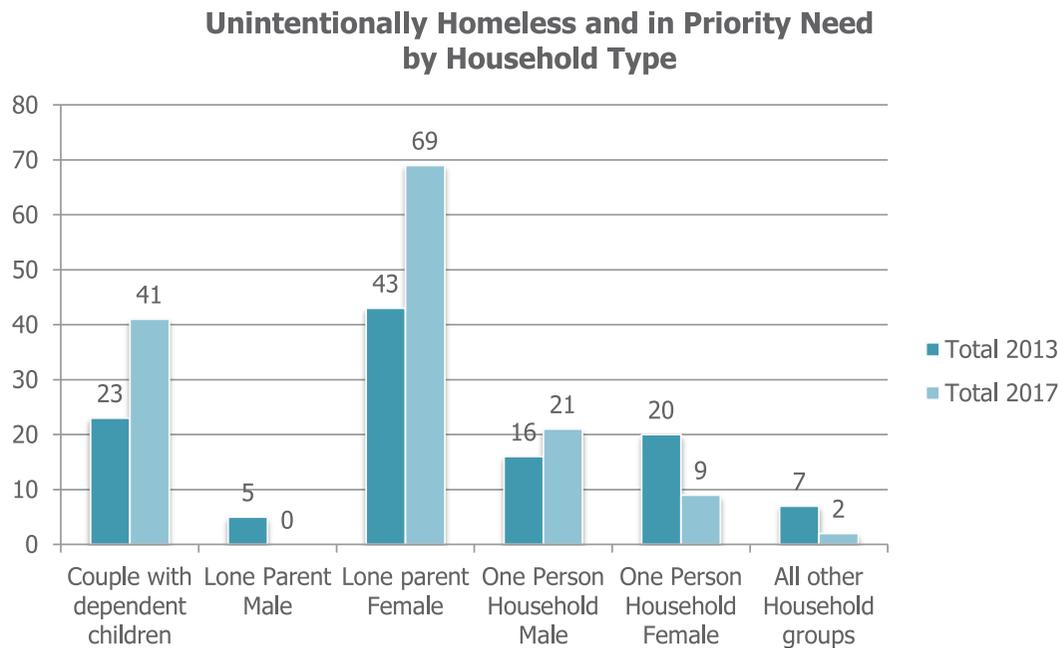




Figure 8 presents this information in terms of age groups. In 2017, the age band with the largest number of clients accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need was 25-44,

accounting for 65% of all acceptances during the year. There are a number of factors influencing this including the average age people seek independence from the family home.

FIGURE 8 – HOUSEHOLDS UNINTENTIONALLY HOMELESS AND IN PRIORITY NEED BY AGE 2013 V 2017

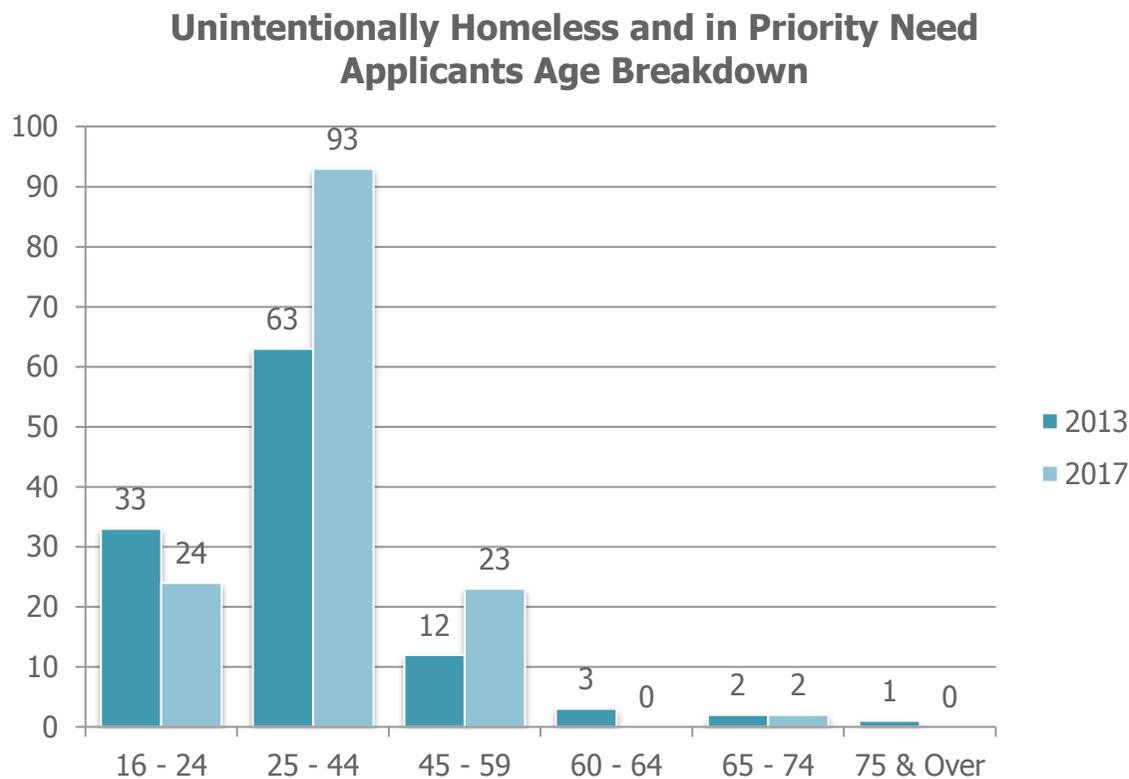


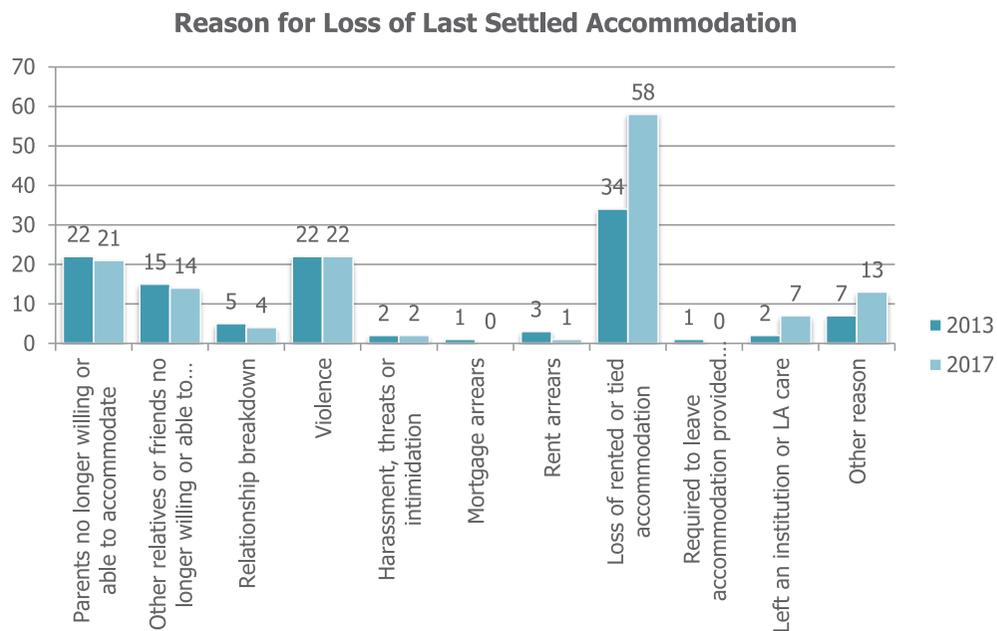
Figure 9 shows the reasons for the loss of settled accommodation for those households who have been accepted as being in priority need. A significant reason for loss of settled accommodation continues to be that parents are no longer willing to accommodate the applicant. The key reason, however, is consistently due to the loss of rented or tied accommodation. The substantial increase between the last review and the current in this category may be because of a national trend of increased homelessness due to the loss of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy. The MHCLG statutory homelessness statistics show that from October

to December 2017 3,680 households became homeless due to their private tenancy coming to an end. This is an increase of 15% on the same period in 2013.

It should be noted that violence as a reason for loss of settled accommodation relates predominately to domestic violence victims who are accepted from outside of the district as part of reciprocal arrangements. AVDC’s Housing Advisors have close links with local domestic violence supported accommodation projects.



FIGURE 9 - REASONS FOR LOSS OF LAST SETTLED ACCOMMODATION 2013 V 2017





When comparing homelessness decisions and acceptances by ethnicity, the majority of all decisions and acceptances identified themselves as being of white ethnicity. It can be seen, however in Figure 10 that the proportion of decisions accounted for by this group decreased slightly between 2013 and 2017, whereas the corresponding acceptances increased very slightly.

The proportion of acceptances where the lead applicant is of Asian ethnicity has doubled between the two years. It is clearly apparent that the proportion of decisions and acceptances accounted for by the Not stated group has increased between 2013 and 2017. The ethnicity, levels of disabilities and age of homeless applicants are monitored through the Housing Equalities Monitoring Report.

**FIGURE 10 - HOMELESSNESS DECISIONS& ACCEPTANCES BASED ON ETHNICITY**

Ethnicity	Decisions				Acceptances			
	2013	%	2017	%	2013	%	2017	%
White	197	72%	142	69%	62	70%	101	71%
Black	20	7%	13	6%	9	10%	10	7%
Asian	20	7%	17	8%	4	5%	14	10%
Mixed	15	5%	8	4%	9	10%	5	4%
Other	6	2%	2	1%	1	1%	2	1%
Not stated	16	6%	24	12%	3	3%	10	7%
Totals	274	100%	206	100%	88	100%	142	100%

### 5.3 Rough Sleepers

Rough sleeper figures continue to rise nationally and continue to be measured through rough sleeper counts and estimates between 1 October and 30 November each year. AVDC chose to run an estimate due to the rural nature of the district – this is a snapshot assessment, based on intelligence from the local authority and a range of external agencies, about the number of people sleeping rough in that local authority area on a particular night.

For the purpose of the estimate, rough sleepers are defined by Homeless Link as: People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or “bashes”).

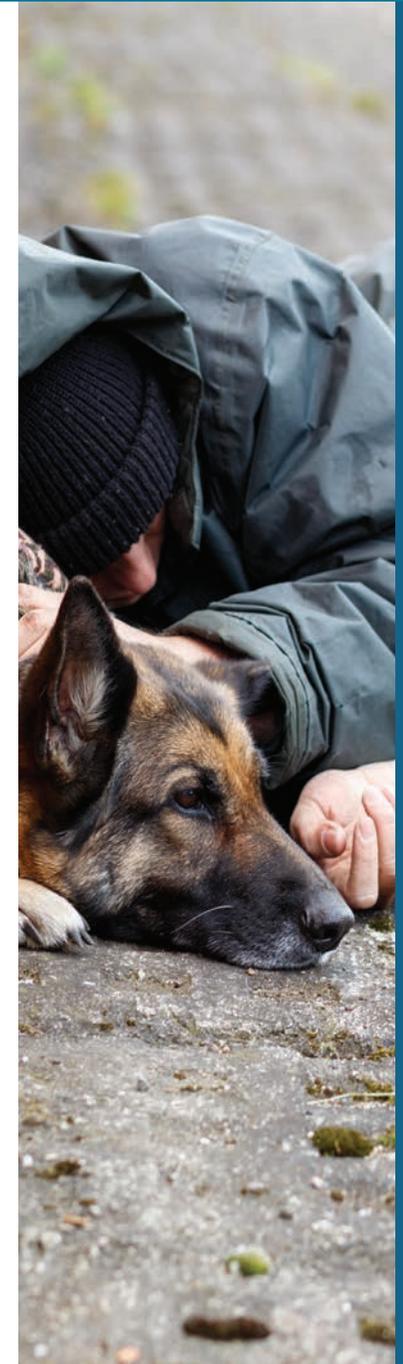


FIGURE 11 – ROUGH SLEEPER DATA

Rough Sleeper Count/Estimate	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
England National Total	2,181	2,309	2,414	2,744	3,569	4,134	4,751
% change from previous year	23	6	5	14	30	16	15
Aylesbury Vale Total	10	4	14	17	15	26	20
% change from previous year	0	-60	250	21	-12	73	-23

Source GOV.UK Official Statistics – Rough Sleeping in England: [Autumn 2017](#)

At a local level, numbers are low and rough sleeping is not seen as a large problem within the Vale. However, Aylesbury Vale 2017 rough sleeping rate (per 1,000 households) at 0.26 is marginally higher than the national average of 0.20.

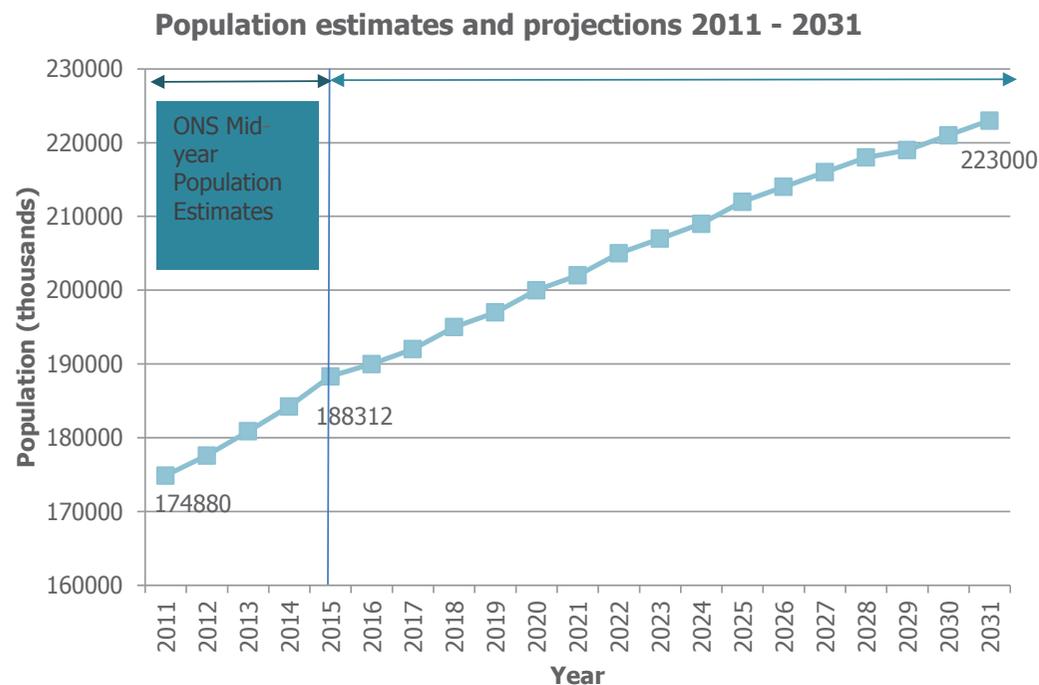


### 5.4 Projected Future Levels of Homelessness

The population of Aylesbury Vale is estimated to grow by 10,000 between 2018 and 2022, which represent a significant increase in the numbers of people living in the district. Aylesbury Vale is viewed as a popular place to live, being within easy commuting distance to London and having good transport links to Heathrow and other major airports. The Vale of Aylesbury Plan was

proposing that 13,580 new houses be built in the district by 2031 but this was rejected by the Planning Inspectorate. Whatever the final figures may be growth on this scale combined with the unpredictable impact of the Welfare Reforms makes the future in relation to homelessness uncertain. AVDC’s housing staff will work with housing benefits staff to monitor the effect of the welfare reforms locally and the potential impact on homelessness.

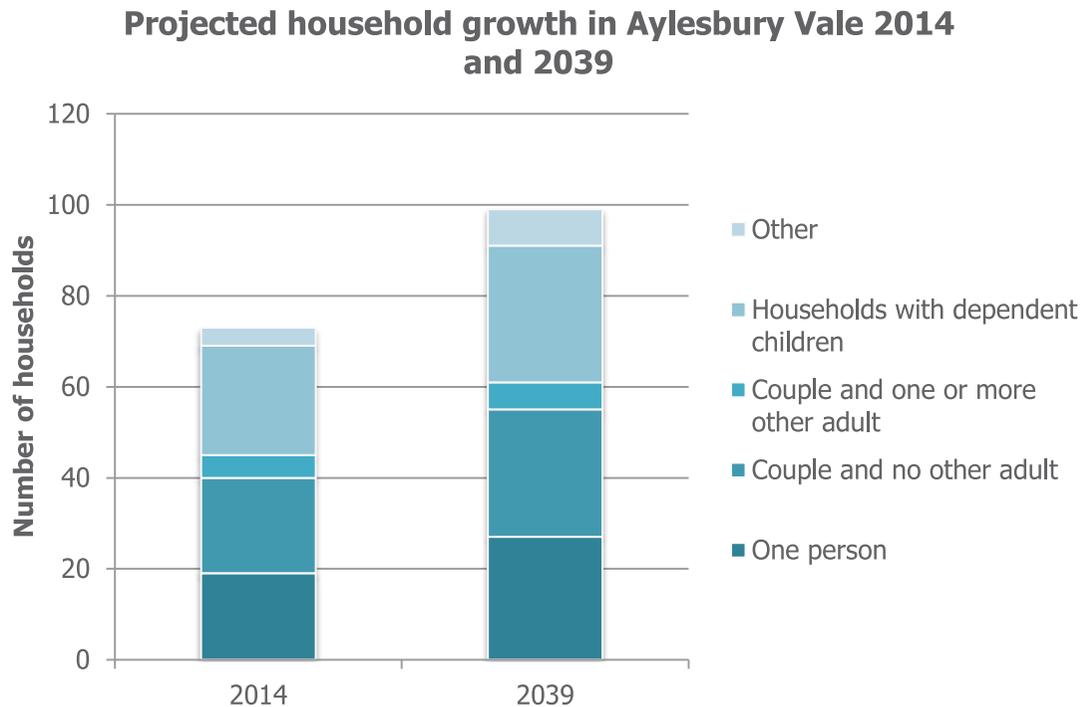
FIGURE 12 – POPULATION ESTIMATES AND PROJECTIONS 2011-2031



Source: Office for National Statistics 2014-based Subnational population projections

Figure 13 shows there is a projected upwards trend in the total number of households within Aylesbury Vale between 2014 and 2039

FIGURE 13 – PROJECTED HOUSEHOLD GROWTH IN AYLESBURY VALE 2014 and 2039



Source: MHCLG 2014-based Household projections for England and local authority districts

It is extremely difficult to predict with any accuracy the likely future levels of homelessness, given the link between it and factors such as economic prosperity and the currently unknown effect of the

welfare changes. The Housing Strategy will have to reflect the need for ongoing monitoring of the situation and close working with relevant partners.





Figure 14 provides predictions on the estimated numbers of homelessness applications and acceptances, as well as the estimated changes to the numbers of prevention and relief cases, which will require alternative accommodation to be identified. The methodology is based on a combination of trends in homelessness in Aylesbury Vale between 2015/16 and 2017/18 as well as evidence from Welsh local authorities, who have been operating under new legislation since 2015 (similar to the Homelessness Reduction Act in England which came into force on 3 April 2018). The estimates of applications and acceptances have factored in the projected increases in population in Aylesbury Vale, according to the ONS estimates in Figure 12.

It has been assumed that the ethnicity and age breakdown of applications and acceptances will remain broadly similar going forward. In terms of the types of households requiring homelessness support in the future, it is estimated that there will be a greater proportion of single person households. This is in line with the MHCLG households projections in Figure 13. Currently many single person households are identified as 'homeless, but not in priority need'. Under the new legislation, priority is assessed later in the process, so numbers may well be higher. It has also been assumed that the principal reasons for the 'loss of last settled home' will remain broadly similar i.e. parental or other relative eviction and the termination of an assured shorthold tenancy.

**FIGURE 14 – ESTIMATED FUTURE HOMELESSNESS CASELOADS**

	Estimated caseloads		
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Homelessness applications	193	170	181
Homelessness acceptances	70	70	75
Prevention duty caseload	87	76	81
Relief duty caseload	83	73	78
Requirement for private rented accommodation to meet prevention and relief caseload (number of properties per year)	53	47	50

AVDC's housing staff have been extremely effective over the last few years in preventing homelessness. Between 2013 and 2017, AVDC prevented 1674 households from becoming homeless.

2017 saw a total of 190 household preventions:

- 158 households were able to remain in their existing homes. 98 of these resolutions were a result of help with arrears, resolution of benefit issues and debt advice. A further 58 households were able to remain following negotiation or legal advocacy with landlords .  
32 further households were assisted by us to obtain alternative accommodation. This was equally split between private rented sector and social housing.

In addition to these figures, our countywide early intervention Trailblazer scheme, the contract of which was awarded to Connection Support, received 350 referrals during its first 9 months (up to March 2018). Of these, 130 were eligible and accepted onto the programme and to date 68 clients countywide have completed the support packages available. Those who were ineligible were signposted to relevant service providers. Six resilience officers work across Buckinghamshire, engage with and refer to a wide range of support organisations. These include voluntary and community sector, the public sector such as NHS (mental health and hospital discharge), probation,

family resilience and One Recovery Bucks. The service continues to expand, with working relationships being developed with social care, schools, social landlords, letting agents and private landlords.

34.5% of referrals received by the Resilience Team were for Aylesbury Vale area (10.7% CDC, 6.3% SBDC, 48.5% WDC). The project is due to run until end of May 2019, with a target of 240 clients supported to improve their resilience to future homelessness

### 6.1 The Housing Team

All local authorities are required to ensure that advice on homelessness and the prevention of homelessness is available to everyone in their district free of charge and there is an immediate duty to provide interim housing where certain criteria are met.

The housing team has changed drastically since 2013. AVDC completed a full staff restructure in 2017 and the Housing Team undertook an additional restructure in April 2018 in preparation for HRA implementation.

The Housing Pathways & Prevention Team is made up of an assistant manager, a housing supervisor, two specialist housing advisors, two





housing pathway officers and six Bucks Home Choice support officers. Staff are the first point of contact for many clients, via the phone, webchat and customer service. They manage homelessness referrals to and from other agencies and public bodies as well as administering Bucks Home Choice.

The Housing Relief and Homelessness Team is made up of a housing manager, a principal housing officer, two housing advisors, a senior caseworker, an accommodation officer and two IMA qualified housing debt advisors. This team deal with complex homelessness casework, mediation, policy, strategy and the private rent scheme.

## 6.2 Prevention Agencies and Partners in Aylesbury Vale

The Housing Team works closely with local registered providers and statutory and voluntary agencies. This partnership working is invaluable and there are a range of organisations in Aylesbury Vale that provide specialist support to individuals with issues that can be related to, or associated with, homelessness.

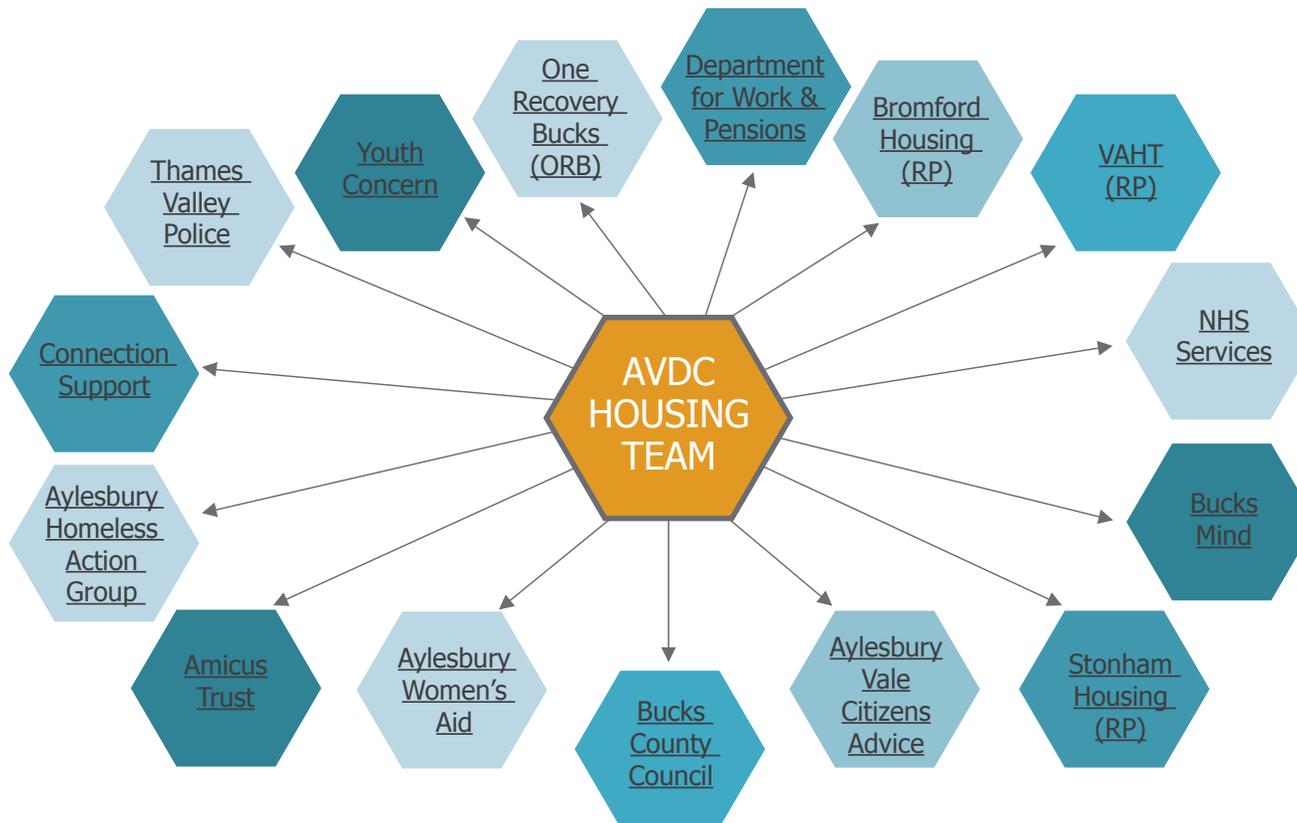
Many of these are essential direct delivery partners and receive funding directly from AVDC to deliver their services as well as working with AVDC as

part of various dedicated groups and forums. Our primary partners are shown in Figure 15. We have directly funded the following partners to deliver their services:

- Aylesbury Homeless Action Group (AHAG)**  
 - A registered charity which provides housing support and advice to any person over the age of 18 years who is homeless, facing homelessness or vulnerably housed. Focused on the challenges faced by single people, their services include three weekly drop-ins which are held in different locations within the town centre. Further one to one appointments are offered at their main office, where caseworkers will provide support on housing, benefits, budgeting, employment and managing a tenancy. AHAG have worked in partnership with AVDC to facilitate and develop WEP, which provides emergency accommodation during the winter months.
- Youth Concern** - A registered charity offering help and support to vulnerable young people aged 13-25 years. Their services include a drop-in centre and Nightstop; an emergency host-accommodation project. They were funded by AVDC to deliver WEP for clients aged 18-25.

- Connection Support** – Along with the 3 other district councils in Buckinghamshire, we fund a rough sleeper outreach service that is delivered by Connection Support. The aim of this service is to provide support for rough sleepers and where possible engage and empower them to break the cycle of homelessness. The outreach service currently employees one part time worker across the Vale.

FIGURE 15 - AVDC DIRECT DELIVERY PARTNERS IN HOUSING DELIVERY AND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION





### 6.3 Homeless Prevention Forum & the AVDC Homelessness Partnership Charter

Homeless Prevention Forum - The key aim of the Homeless Prevention Forum is to provide a multi-agency forum for statutory and voluntary agencies to work together to prevent and reduce homelessness in Aylesbury Vale. The Forum meets on a quarterly basis and members contribute to the development, monitoring and implementation of the Aylesbury Vale Housing and Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan. The forum also informs changes to the way we operate – with opportunities to share best practice, discuss and deliver training and identify improvements in our service.

AVDC Homelessness Partnership Charter – The Charter aims to build upon the existing joint working of the Forum and sets out six specific aims underpinned by a number of objectives. Progress towards these aims will be periodically reviewed as part of the overall Strategy Action Plan. The Charter will also act as a mechanism for channelling funds to support joint homelessness projects. The aims are to:

- Develop a “one team” accountable approach to prevent homelessness at the earliest possible stage.
- Provide accurate, meaningful and consistent advice, which is client centred and attainable.
- Identify and address gaps and duplication in service provision.
- Improve publicity and signposting of locally available services to individuals and communities.
- Support clients, where appropriate, to maintain their tenancies.
- Identify funding opportunities and targeting of resources.

To ensure that our Strategic Aims and Action Plan meets the needs of our community we must consult with the people who use our services as well as our partners. We commenced our consultation in January 2018 with the setting up of partnership working group to own the review. This was followed by interviews with service users and a providers survey in February and March 2018.

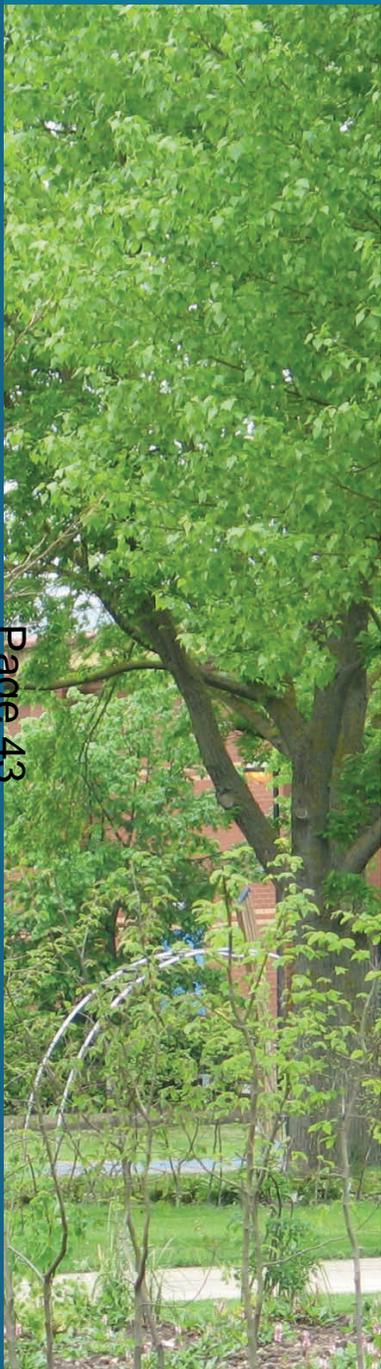
A Housing and Homelessness Strategy Consultation event was held on 19 April 2018 and was attended by 41 delegates from local partnership organisations, statutory and voluntary organisations, registered providers and local members. Delegates took part in two of the following four discussions: preventing homelessness and rough sleeping, homelessness and health, welfare reform and affordable housing.

From July to August 2018, there was a full 6 week public consultation of the draft Housing and Homelessness Review & Strategy, which was displayed on the AVDC website and also shared directly with partners.

From the various consultation methods, the following themes/needs were identified:

- Partnership working, along with regular meetings and ability to case share and identify best practice. This will also help to reduce duplication.
- Centralised training for staff across multi agencies including AVDC, around subjects such as domestic abuse, to ensure a consistent clear message and approach.
- Increased flexibility & more information for people to help them engage with services and seek help sooner
- • The need for a centralised communication plan to look at different ways of engaging with clients for their feedback and raise awareness of homelessness with health services, schools, employers, LAFs, private landlords and the public.
- Quicker access to mental health services
- Quicker access to cash funding for rough sleepers and those needing deposits to get safe and secure housing
- Earlier engagement to prevent homelessness
- Access to GPs and health services for those without a fixed address and fast track access to prescriptions where needed





- Additional support with paperwork for those with additional needs or English as a second language
- Transitional support – especially young people, those leaving prison, service leavers
- Better referral services
- Anticipate universal credit and how this may change the circumstances of current claimant of HB
- Supply of affordable housing and how is affordable classified
- Supported housing
- Information and data sharing in line with GDPR
- Family resilience
- Preventing, and in the longer term, eliminating rough sleeping
- A commitment to trial new ways of working and pilot ideas

- Make personal plans tailored, flexible and agile
- Build upon landlord forum and put together a new AVDC private landlord offer to ensure additional affordable housing
- Accountability for project delivery

Feedback from all forms of consultation have been used to shape our Housing and Homelessness Strategic Priorities and the subsequent Action Plan.

**Our Housing & Homelessness Strategic Vision is:**

'To ensure those who want to make the Vale their home are supported and empowered to do so'.

**8.1 Strategic Priority 1 - Prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping**

With the number of people at risk of homelessness within the Vale continuing to rise, the onus on AVDC and our partners to learn from current figures to anticipate future trends is of high priority. By regularly reviewing our available data sources we can better understand the local causes for homelessness and how best to tackle these. Part of this will also include monitoring of the HRA Implementation Plan and ensuring that the new service is successful and that housing pathways plans developed with our partners are agile and tailored to our clients. The review has highlighted the need to continue to improve on our current temporary accommodation provision whilst we continue to seek best practice and best value for all of our clients.

AVDC continue to work closely with partners to prevent and eliminate rough sleeping by engaging with those at risk of homelessness as soon as possible, seeking funding for pilot and project work, and continuing to consolidate and develop

partnership working. AVDC consider the needs of all groups of people in our district that are homeless or likely to become homeless. Our Homelessness Charter will enable more joined-up work, reducing duplication and enabling us to better measure continuous improvement.

**8.2 Strategic Priority 2 - Continue to facilitate and maximise the supply of affordable housing**

Affordable housing, as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework document, includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. AVDC has established an excellent track record for enabling affordable housing development across the district and strong working relationships with our registered provider partners and Homes England has contributed to this success. However, the demand for affordable homes is still growing and delivery remains challenging. Our capital programme is limited and Homes England grants have been weighted to home ownership





programmes. Scheme viability is often challenged on S106 sites, which in our district supply the majority of new homes. This has resulted in reduced numbers of affordable housing on some sites.

The future of affordable housing development will be shaped by the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, the Aylesbury Garden Town Project and National Planning Policy. We must also look to provide the correct choice and tenure for our changing population demographics and appropriate housing for vulnerable adults and young people. In addition, we also strive to ensure that there is high quality housing debt and mortgage advice available to help as many people as possible remain in their current properties as well as exploring various options to tackle tenancy fraud. Bucks Home Choice will continue to be reviewed to ensure that it is fit for purpose. We will continue to review the support available in temporary accommodation and move on protocols from these properties.

Private rent is a buoyant part of the housing market within the district and the government is encouraging a wider range of investors to build homes for private rent. We have been working with landlords, letting agents and tenants on the AVDC Private Rent Scheme since 2008. The scheme is becoming increasingly difficult to make attractive

to landlords due to the area demographics and thriving rental market so we are currently reviewing the scheme to determine the way forward. AVDC has an active landlords forum that is run in partnership with the National Landlords Association and host regular meetings to give landlords and letting agents the opportunity to network and share information. The forum also enables us to provide updates on changes in legislation and reinforce landlords' responsibilities. We strive to continuously improve the attendance of the forum through publicity and building relationships with local landlords and letting agents. We also host training for landlords on the National Landlords Associations Accreditation Scheme, which helps landlords to provide a more professional service to their tenants.

### 8.3 Strategic Priority 3 - Respond to the ongoing challenges of welfare reform

Significant changes to the nature of the welfare system have been introduced by the government with the stated aim of making people better off in employment, and reducing the dependency of households on state assistance. The reforms to the welfare system have created new challenges in providing housing and preventing homelessness. The planned introduction of Universal Credit across the district from September 2018 will produce more

challenges and we will need to be prepared to mitigate the impact this may have.

We will explore how AVDC can assist in the implementation of Universal Credit in partnership with relevant agencies. As the reforms become established we need to keep updated and informed about any increased demand on our service. We will monitor these changes as well as monitoring any additional new reforms and take action where appropriate to assist residents with these changes.

#### **8.4 Strategic Priority 4 - Contribute to the improvement of health and wellbeing services for people at risk of homelessness**

By including the strategic aim to contribute towards health and wellbeing, AVDC is looking to promote profound change for people at risk of homelessness. By looking to integrate and create new services, we will be better able to assist clients who require additional support to maintain their tenancies. By developing partnerships with organisations specialising in primary care, substance dependency, mental health, employment and training we will be able to provide personalised housing plans which involve health and wellbeing support services that positively affect the whole person, not just the housing issue, which will reduce the possibility of reoccurring homelessness.

AVDC would like to work with partners to develop drop-in clinics including mental health services for those who are homeless or at high risk of homelessness as well as equipping GPs and other front line health services to signpost to appropriate early intervention providers. We will also engage with hospital discharge teams to better our current procedures and better publicise the disabled facilities grant to enable more people to remain comfortably in their current accommodation. We will also work with partners to identify and support households affected by fuel poverty, which in turn can result in ill health, tenancy issues and homelessness.



The Action Plan sets out what we will do to achieve the priorities identified in the Housing and Homelessness Strategy and acts as a health check on the effective delivery of our service. The column 'Lead agency and partners' denotes the primary contributors and does not list all the agencies who may be involved at any one time.

See Glossary for acronyms and definitions of lead agencies.

## 9.1 Prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping

Outcome: Those at risk of homelessness are able to access intervention at the right time in the right way and secure stable accommodation.

Recommendations	What needs to be done	Lead agency and partners	By when
Identify current and future trends of homelessness in the Vale.	<p>Regularly review the following data sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>homelessness casework records and other local sources of data;</li> <li>trends in homelessness approaches and in underlying causes;</li> <li>which cohorts may be more likely to become homeless or be threatened with homelessness;</li> <li>the profile of households who have experienced homelessness;</li> <li>equality monitoring data, including that relating to homelessness applications and outcomes;</li> <li>the range of factors that may affect future levels of homelessness;</li> <li>the personal and structural factors that may contribute to people becoming homeless; and,</li> <li>any planned legislation or local policy changes that are likely to impact on levels of homelessness for particular groups in the district.</li> </ul>	HT, HPF, S&PT	Monthly
	Report on Performance Indicator targets and highlight any slippages and report key updates to stakeholders.	HT	Monthly
	Capture approaches across all homelessness partners and provide key updates to stakeholders.	HT, HPF,	Ongoing

## 9.1 Prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping

Recommendations	What needs to be done	Lead agency and partners	By when
Review and monitor the Homelessness Reduction Act implementation plan	Engage with relevant internal teams and external partners to bring about the successful delivery of the new service.	HT, HPF,	
	Support agencies who may be willing to work with us help administer personal housing plans.	HT	
Continue to work towards eliminating rough sleeping	Continue to respond to rough sleepers by providing short term emergency accommodation and look into more effective ways to provide emergency funds	HT, HPF, S&PT	
	Continue to work with partners to develop a No Second Night Out model for first time rough sleepers.	HT, HPF, S&PT	
	Work with partners to review support for those who are entrenched, with complex needs, and hard to reach groups	AVDC Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, Thames Valley Police,	
	Work with lead agencies to deliver Winter Emergency Provision.	HT, HPF	
	Continue to investigate and evaluate Housing First or other emerging accommodation models.	HT, S&PT	
	Continue to develop the effectiveness and publicity of the Building Resilience Service.	HT, HPF, S&PT Connections Support	
Continue to reach all groups of people who are at risk of homelessness at the earliest possible opportunity.	Continue to identify causes of homelessness locally and work with partners to address these	HT, HPF, S&PT	
	Identify and develop local protocols or referral arrangements with "duty to refer" agencies.	HT, S&PT	
	Consider the provision and adequacy of pre-crisis interventions	HT, HPF, S&PT	
	Work towards preventing recurring homelessness.	HT, HPF, S&PT	
	Investigate instances of hidden homelessness including sofa surfers and work with those caught in this cycle		

## 9.1 Prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping

Recommendations	What needs to be done	Lead agency and partners	By when
Continue to seek and implement instances of best practice	Continue to build upon the findings of the National Practitioner Support Service Gold Standard review	HT, S&PT	
	Continue to search for new revenue streams and funding opportunities to improve and increase the services we can offer		
	Sustain the non-placement of families in B&B accommodation unless in emergency (and then for no longer than 6 weeks) and explore opportunities to extend and improve our temporary accommodation offer.		
Consolidate and develop partnership working	Continue to develop the Homelessness Prevention Forum and engage members in fulfilling the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act		
	Launch the Partnership Charter and encourage members of the Forum to pledge their support and work towards the aims and objectives specified within it.		
	Work with partners from within the Charter to develop shared communications and training plans		
	Continue to identify agencies whose services are not currently mapped.		

## 9.2 Continue to facilitate and maximise the supply of affordable housing

Outcome: To work towards a sufficient supply of accommodation across a variety of tenures to meet need

Recommendations	What needs to be done	Lead agency and partners	By when
Increase the supply of new affordable homes	Develop affordable homes in accordance with relevant planning policy and in light of outcomes from the NPPF consultation.	HT, RP, Housing Developers	
	Enable additional affordable rural housing where this need is identified.	AVDC Planning Team	
	Consider the effectiveness and utilisation of government house building incentives such as the New Homes Bonus.	AVDC Planning Team, AVDC Economic & Development Delivery Team, Housing Developers and RP	
	Provide quarterly reports on completed developments.	AVDC Economic & Development Delivery Team	
	Encourage registered providers to work with us and use the Capital Funding Pot to increase the provision of affordable housing.	S&PT, RPs	
	Explore affordable shared equity and homeownership opportunities.	S&PT, RPs	
	Continue to explore and implement landlord initiatives to bring empty private rental properties back into use.	HT, S&PT, RPs	
Provide sufficient choice and tenure of housing options to meet the requirements of an ageing population.	Engage with strategic older people services to respond to the housing requirements of an ageing population that includes accommodation to meet health and wellbeing needs for home ownership and rental.	AVDC Planning Team, Bucks County Council, Developers, RPs and Landlords	

## 9.2 Continue to facilitate and maximise the supply of affordable housing

Recommendations	What needs to be done	Lead agency and partners	By when
	Work with the Private Rented Sector to meet the needs of existing older tenants and engage the growing market of older homeowners choosing to rent.	PRS	
	Support and facilitate older residents to make move on choices to more suitable accommodation	HT, HPF, RPs	
	Offer a variety of schemes to enable older homeowners to afford to move on i.e. Shared Ownership, Shared Equity and Help to Buy	RPs	
Work with partners to enable provision of settled and appropriate housing for vulnerable adults, young people and those with additional needs	A proportion of new affordable homes to be mobility levels 1-3 for those with a disability.	AVDC Economic & Development Delivery Team, HT, HPF	
	Support the provision of flats for single vulnerable homeless	HT, HPF	
	Adapt service to meet the needs and accessibility of vulnerable groups i.e. those with mental health or complex needs, resettlement of offenders.		
	Continue to provide a responsive and integrated Disabled Facilities Grant service to enable residents to remain living independently at home	HT, HPF	
	Work with partners to adopt a No Wrong Door integrated policy for young people aged 12 to 25.	HT, HPF,	
	Review protocols and placements of young people aged 16 -17 into settled affordable accommodation.		
Continue to develop and improve the response to victims of domestic abuse in social and private housing.	Ensure information on lead agencies is available and accessible at the point of need.	HT, HPF, RPs	
	Increase understanding and identification of domestic abuse and apply appropriate signposting.	HT, RPs HPF	

## 9.2 Continue to facilitate and maximise the supply of affordable housing

Recommendations	What needs to be done	Lead agency and partners	By when
Review access and effectiveness of Bucks Home Choice and allocations policy	Review and monitor lettings policies		
	Work with the other district councils across Buckinghamshire to monitor, review and set appropriate qualification criteria to address local priorities and needs whilst considering the impact of policies and procedures on applicants who may be at risk of homelessness		
Engage with the Aylesbury Garden Town project	Ensure that the project takes into consideration the various challenges around affordable housing met by Aylesbury residents	AVDC, BCC	<u>On-going</u>
Work with the planning team, RPs and developers to ensure that our strategic aims are embedded within planning for the district	Engage and consult with future plans and planning team	AVDC, RPs, developers	<u>On-going</u>
Continue to develop the integrity and quality of the private rented sector	Continue to strengthen housing advice to effectively tackle issues such as illegal evictions, harassment, disrepair etc.		
	Enable homelessness partners to access the private rented sector		
	Review the current Private Rent Scheme to enable more tenancies within the sector		
Provide support for homeowners at risk of homelessness due to mortgage difficulties	Work with lenders to ensure homeowners threatened with repossession are referred to AVDC at the earliest known opportunity	AVDC	
	Continue to integrate our service with the Department for Work and Pensions on mortgage referrals.		
Reduce instances of social tenancy fraud	Continue to work with registered providers to identify and expose social tenancy fraud.	HT, HPF	
	Continue subscription to the National Anti-Fraud Network.	HT, HPF	

## 9.2 Continue to facilitate and maximise the supply of affordable housing

Recommendations	What needs to be done	Lead agency and partners	By when
Work with providers to increase provision of housing solutions	Explore options to increase affordable housing in the Private Rented Sector.	HT, HPF	
	Work with social and private landlords to explore joint tenancies and shared ownership.		
Support registered housing providers to provide tenancy sustainment services for tenants	Continue to support registered providers to provide information and assistance to tenants to enable tenancy sustainment and referring clients threatened with homelessness to AVDC.		
	Continue to host the Landlords Forum and provide an opportunity for landlords to gain expertise and understanding of the key issues affecting their sector.		
Review supported housing needs and move on protocols	Work with partners to assess supply and demand		
	Update existing move on protocols and establish new ones where mutually beneficial.		
Improve housing standards in the Private Rented Sector	Monitor outcomes from government consultations on Electrical Safety Standards and the creation of a Housing Ombudsman for privately rented homes and new homes		
	Explore incentives to raise the standard of the PRS		
	Continue to monitor and improve the standards of houses in multiple occupation.		
Support those in temporary accommodation to continue to enjoy a reasonable quality of life and access the range of services they need.	Review how temporary accommodation is accessed and used to most effect		
	Explore options to improve quality and suitability of temporary accommodation		
	Ensure those in temporary accommodation are adequately supported and empowered to seek settled accommodation		
	Enable households to access necessary support services whilst in temporary accommodation.		
	Review how families can best be supported holistically with early interventions whilst in temporary accommodation		

### 9.3 Respond to the ongoing challenges of welfare reform

Outcome: To ensure that AVDC residents receive the help and support they need to access housing related benefits.

Recommendations	What needs to be done	Lead agency and partners	By when
Recommendations Monitor the impact of Universal Credit roll out on claimants and landlords	Help claimants to access UC applications online & mitigate the impact where possible		
Prepare residents for universal credit	Create a communications plan within AVDC to ensure that UC information is available to the public and services for help are well signposted	AVDC	<u>August 2018</u>
	Ensure that the AVDC website is correct and current and also signposts to the relevant services where necessary	AVDC	<u>On-going</u>
	Create debt advice leaflets for RPs to use for their clients	AVDC	<u>August 2018</u>
Monitoring the impact of welfare reforms on tenants, housing associations and landlords	Support those who are affected by the shared accommodation rate for under 35s for private housing		
	Advise and assist those who are affected by the benefit cap	AVDC	
	Monitor the effectiveness of the Landlord Portal to access housing benefit at source and the Trusted Partner status		

## 9.4 Contribute to the improvement of health and wellbeing services for people at risk of homelessness

Outcome: To reduce the number of approaches of people with multiple needs and increased effectiveness of No Second Night Out.

Recommendations	What needs to be done	Lead agency and partners	By when
Develop partnerships with organisations specialising in primary care, substance dependency, mental health, employment and training	Invite organisations from these services to join the Partnership Charter and attend the Homelessness Prevention Forum		
Develop new health services for those who are homeless or have no fixed address	Investigate opportunities to provide GP services and fast track prescription services for those who are homeless or have no fixed address		
	Look to develop a fast track mental health service with critical partners for those who are homeless or have no fixed address		
Work with partners to identify and support households affected by fuel poverty.	Identify potential funding initiatives to support those most at risk particularly within private rented and homeowners in rural communities.	Environmental Health, Bucks County Council	
Engage with hospital discharge teams	Ensure discharge teams and housing support services harmonise to avoid unnecessary delays.		
Equip GPs to signpost to appropriate early intervention services	Ensure GPs have the necessary resources to signpost patients potentially at risk of homelessness at the earliest opportunity.		

## 9.5 Monitoring arrangements

At a local level, the Action Plan will be updated and reviewed quarterly by AVDC and the external partner Working Group to ensure that the priorities are being met and that it remains relevant to address emerging needs. It will also be monitored and fed into by the Homeless Prevention Forum.

Where there are significant variances from proposed outputs new actions will be put in place.

We will also continue to monitor key homelessness indicators to assess if there are emerging trends, benchmark our performance against other local authorities and provide an annual report on our progress. An equalities impact assessment will be undertaken prior to the publication of the strategy and equalities monitoring will be completed on an annual basis.

## 10: GLOSSARY

This glossary acts to add context and definition to some of the terms mentioned within this strategy. Some terms have alternative regional definitions so the definitions given below relate primarily to this authority.

Name	Definition
Affordable housing	Housing which must be provided at a level at which the property mortgage payments should be more than that of a social housing rent but below market levels (no more than 80% of the average local market rent)
Approaches	When a case of homelessness is made to the local authority
Cohort	A group of people with a shared characteristic
Complex Needs	The longer someone experiences rough sleeping, the more likely they will develop additional mental and physical health needs, substance misuse issues and have contact with the criminal justice system (collectively known as complex needs). The more complex needs someone has, the more help they will need to move on from homelessness and rebuild their lives.
Connections Support (Building Resilience Service)	The Building Resilience Service is provided countywide by a charity on behalf of all the district and county councils with the intention to provide early intervention for those at risk of becoming homeless.
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	A Disabled Facilities Grant is available from local authorities to pay for essential housing adaptations to help disabled people stay in their own homes.
Duty to refer	Organisations have a duty to help those at risk of becoming homeless and refer them to a housing authority.
Early intervention	A range of targeted services intended to identify and address a problem or condition at an early stage to prevent homelessness.
Entrenched rough sleeper	A person who is vulnerable as a result of having become entrenched in a pattern of street living through a sustained period of rough sleeping.
Environmental Health (EH)	A statutory and regulatory service that includes food safety, housing standards, health and safety, air quality, noise and environment issues generally, environmental health makes a fundamental contribution to the maintenance and improvement of public health.
Fuel Poverty	A fuel poor household is defined as one which needs to spend more than 10% of its income on all fuel use and to heat its home to an adequate standard of warmth. The current definition includes three key factors: energy efficiency of the home, energy costs and household income.
Hard to reach groups	Groups of individuals who may be minorities, those slipping through the net and the service resistant.

Name	Definition
Help to Buy	A variety of schemes which enable those wanting to buy a home to get on the property ladder through financial packages to make deposits and repayments affordable.
Hidden homelessness	This includes people who become homeless but find a temporary solution by staying with family members or friends, living in squats or other insecure accommodation.
Housing Team (HT)	AVDC team, which provides all the statutory requirements within the Homelessness Reduction Act
Houses in multiple occupation(HMO)	An HMO is a property let to 3 or more people forming 2 or more households. All HMOs in Aylesbury must be licenced and pass regular inspection.
Housing Associations	Independent organisations established for the purpose providing low-cost social housing for people in need on a non-profit making basis. They are regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency.
Homeless Prevention Forum (HPF)	A forum of homelessness support agencies in the Vale that includes the public and voluntary sector and meets quarterly to review progress of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.
Landlord Portal	An online database for landlords who are in receipt of housing benefit on behalf of their tenants to view client details and manage payments.
Lettings Plan	Local plans for the allocation and letting of homes within an agreed community/location or across a type of property.
Mortgage Rescue Service	A variety of schemes designed to help vulnerable households who may be at risk of having their homes repossessed due to arrears.
Move on protocols	Agreements between relevant parties for moving clients out of supported housing into independent living.
National Anti-Fraud Network	A national network open to all public sector organisations providing public protection
New Homes Bonus	A grant paid by central government to local councils to reflect and incentivise housing growth in their areas. It is based on the amount of extra Council Tax revenue raised for new-build homes, conversions and long-term empty homes brought back into use.

Name	Definition
No Second Night Out	A campaign by the charity Homeless Link to provide assistance to those sleeping rough for the first time, so they don't spend a second night out.
No Wrong Door Policy	Where agencies commit to information sharing and common approaches and standards to ensure clients can access a whole system of support through one referral.
Pathway Housing Plans (PHP)	A housing related support plan agreed between the individual and the relevant support agencies
Partnership Charter	A protocol of agreed outcomes and standards between agencies involved in homelessness in the Vale.
Private Rented Sector (PRS)	A housing tenure of private rental
Property Developers	Individuals or companies that make money by building houses or renovating existing properties for sale.
Registered Providers (RPs)	Housing associations which provide low cost housing and work with the council to build homes of different tenures for rent, shared ownership or purchase.
Rough Sleepers	People who are sleeping, about to bed down or bedded down, in the open air, or in bus shelters, cars, barns and other places not designed for habitation.
Rural housing	There are specific challenges in rural communities for housing supply and affordability.
Shared Accommodation Rate	A housing benefit cap which applies to most single people under 35 renting a single room from a private landlord. It does not apply to social housing tenants.
Shared Equity	Scheme provided by some house builders or local authorities, which combine a small deposit with a lower than average mortgage, providing an "equity loan" covering a percentage of the property's value.
Social housing	Lower rents than that of affordable housing and provided to eligible households on low incomes. Legislation restricts the amount of rent increases to enable affordability. Normally offered by councils and not-for profit housing associations.

Name	Definition
Sofa Surfers	Someone who does not have a settled place of their own and stays with a series of different friends or relatives, sleeping, for example, on their sofa.
Strategy and Partnerships Team (S&PT)	AVDC team, which covers work involving strategies, policies or procedures relating to the implementation of the action plan including collation of data, identifying new initiatives and overseeing the work of the Building Resilience Service.
Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)	Additional further detail to policies within the Local Plan and to provide further guidance for development on specific sites or on particular issues.
Temporary accommodation	Short-term accommodation provided in a variety of situations depending on individual circumstances and whilst someone is waiting to be resettled or requires additional support.
Tenure	The legal period of time someone has the right to occupy a property. Types of tenure include leasehold, freehold, shorthold, and rental.
Universal Credit (UC)	This is a monthly payment to help with living costs and eligible for those on a low income or unemployed and under the State Credit qualifying age.
Winter Emergency Provision (WEP)	A project which provides temporary, emergency accommodation during the winter months.

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Cabinet  
20 November 2018

## PROPOSAL OF A SINGLE CCTV CONTROL ROOM SERVICE FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES & UPGRADE OF CURRENT AVDC CCTV EQUIPMENT

Councillor Mrs J Ward

Cabinet Member for Civic Amenities

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report sets out the proposals and recommendations for a single CCTV control room service for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes and costs to upgrade our current CCTV cameras (note that not all cameras may need upgrading).

### 2. Recommendations

That Cabinet note the contents of the report and to approve in principle:

- 2.1. the merging of the council's CCTV control room monitoring services at the location set out in paragraph 3.2.
- 2.2. the entering into a partnership agreement with Thames Valley Police for the delivery of CCTV monitoring services and subject to further details of the estimated costs in 5.1 being provided and subject to them being satisfied with the costings and business case, to delegate to the Assistant Director for Community Fulfilment, after consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, the power to negotiate and confirm final terms of the agreement.
- 2.3. the upgrading of AVDC CCTV cameras in Aylesbury town centre and AVDC car parks (where required) subject to agreed costings.

Cabinet is asked to note:

- 2.4. the possibility that additional capital expenditure in connection with new cameras and costs associated with the relocation and provision of CCTV may be necessary .

### 3. Supporting information

- 3.1. The council has had a long-term aspiration to deliver cost effective and efficient CCTV monitoring services by joining up its CCTV suite with others across Buckinghamshire. This project brings together three control suites into one to deliver an improved service for less cost. Early indications show that this could save the council approximately £121,000. This is subject to more information on final costs for the hub as the partnership progresses.
- 3.2. There has been the intention for many years to consolidate CCTV control rooms to maintain service standards while generating efficiencies, either across Thames Valley, within Buckinghamshire or a number of variations. The latest project has been running for about five years and has made significant progress since being handed to Thames Valley Police (TVP) policy staff to implement early last year. A consultant was appointed by the Project's Partnership Board, comprising: Aylesbury Vale District Council, Chiltern District Council, Wycombe District Council, Milton Keynes Council and Thames Valley Police to refresh the business case for a Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes combined control room. The service would be based at the existing control room suite at Milton Keynes Police Station, which has ample

space to expand, and would replace both the TVP control room at Aylesbury Police Station, which is co-funded by AVDC, and Wycombe's control room, which has also provided a service to Chiltern DC and Beaconsfield Town Council.

- 3.3. A business case has been prepared for the project by TVP in collaboration with partners. In summary, AVDC has the following reasons to agree to merge and relocate:
- Financially, AVDC will save money by entering into the merger as outlined in the summary table in section 5.1
  - There will be a return to 24/7 monitoring, which has not been able to happen in Aylesbury due to staffing levels.
  - The resilience and long term prospects of the service will be better, as outlined in para 4.2 than that provided at present and savings can be made while improving the service.
  - Seamless linking with incident reporting and incident management.

The system is nearing the end of its useful life and with our maintenance contract expiring in February 2019, it is likely to cost the council a significant amount of money if parts in the monitoring facility need replacing. CCTV technology has advanced considerably in recent years and therefore, it is recommended that we upgrade all of our current cameras to be compatible with High Definition (HD) technology.

- 3.4. Scrutiny Committee considered the report and were supportive of the merger in principle and that the possibility of capital expenditure as part of the project had been noted.

#### **4. Implications**

- 4.1. Legislative powers and regulatory provisions for the police service and local authorities are in place to operate CCTV, collaborate in its provision and process data for authorised purposes. Any partnership agreement will need to make appropriate provisions to secure compliance with legislative provisions, including GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 and legal advice upon the agreement will need to be sought and provided in due course.
- 4.2. The savings set out in the report are consistent with the need to make efficiencies across all sectors. The potential costs for upgrading the CCTV cameras and all relating monitoring and infrastructure needs could be met by introducing a rolling programme to replace equipment from the CCTV reserves. Any additional one-off capital funding required for the implementation will need to be submitted as capital bids in the 2019/20 budget setting exercise or funded from other sources such as S106 or New Homes Bonus funds
- 4.3. The provision of CCTV monitoring services enables people to be protected from crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in public spaces covered by cameras. There is evidence to demonstrate that CCTV has enabled prosecutions. A return to 24/7 monitoring aims to improve crime and ASB prevention and detection. 24/7 proactive CCTV monitoring enables the police dispatchers to send out the appropriate immediate response to 999 and 101

calls and proactive CCTV monitoring plays a large part in finding missing people and wanted suspects.

- 4.4. Safe town centres are more welcoming to residents and visitors. TVP will be able to take a call and direct officers or most appropriate service to the scene of an incident without delay. Moving the monitoring of CCTV to a Milton Keynes hub will not impact upon local police response time to incidents.
- 4.5. Potential drawbacks and possible mitigation:
- Loss of local knowledge when the hub is set up. It will take staff time to get to know Aylesbury town centre. Existing staff will have the opportunity to move to the new hub and this will enable retention of local knowledge. New staff members will be given the opportunity to visit the towns that they are monitoring to support their familiarity with the locations. Trained staff are very quick to pick up local knowledge.

## 5 Resource implications

- 5.1 The costs detailed in the business case cover central costs of the hub. It is understood that the current control room will remain in place if local access is required.

Current CCTV costs for the council for the town centre public realm are as follows:

Current Direct Costs	Full Year Budget	
Salaries	£111,056.53	
Repairs & Maintenance	£13,222.44	
Electricity	£597.42	
BT Line Rental	£19,516.56	
Business Insurance	£193.35	
Monitoring	£2,529.60	
Telephones	£127.02	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£147,242.92</b>	

From the Business Case, one off and revenue costs will be as follows:

One off Capital costs	£35,200
Estimated revenue costs for data transmission to the hub	£2,400
Ongoing costs	£25,864.50

*Summary table*

New Model	Net/Cost Saving
<b>Data line for transmission to the hub</b>	<b>£2,400</b>
<b>Ongoing Hub Costs</b>	<b>£25,864.50</b>
Old Model	
<b>Saving on current costs</b>	<b>£121,378.42</b>

Costs of upgrading the current cameras are as follows:

To replace all of our current CCTV cameras (within the town centre public realm) with more up to date versions will cost approx. £3,000 - 4,000 per camera. For the 28 cameras moving to the hub this would be a total cost of £84,000 - £112,000.

AVDC holds a CCTV reserve fund that for capital which would be used for this project.

#### Options

The council could opt for the status quo; this would involve foregoing the financial savings and service improvements detailed above, and therefore this option is not recommended.

The council could opt to approve the merger and upgrade to the equipment included in the public realm only, not upgrading the remainder of the CCTV equipment. This option is recommended.

The council could opt to approve the merger and upgrade to the equipment required and also to upgrade the remainder of equipment on a rolling basis to spread costs.

Contact Officer

Will Rysdale, on 01296 585561 or Helen White on 01296 585151

# Appendix 1

## 5. CCTV Hub for Buckinghamshire

### Contents:

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### Background

Following a review of the current state of public space CCTV in Thames Valley, it was found that current systems are not fit-for-purpose and do not effectively support criminal prosecutions.

As a result, the Chief Constable commissioned a report that was published in 2016 and secured engagement to progress a county-wide CCTV system.

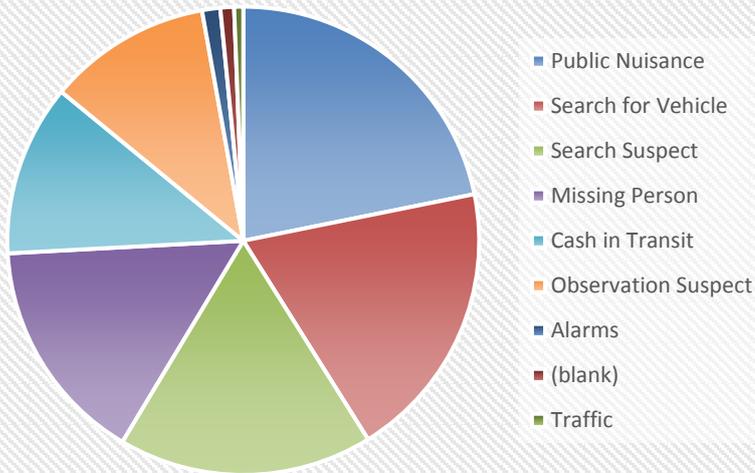
Buckinghamshire is well placed to move forward with this to develop the first county hub with an impressive CCTV control room in Milton Keynes and opportunities to capitalise on the benefits. Currently the Buckinghamshire cameras are monitored in three locations: Milton Keynes, Aylesbury, and Wycombe. A single control room with modern equipment and greater resilience could provide 24/7 monitoring and a more effective service.

### Drivers for change

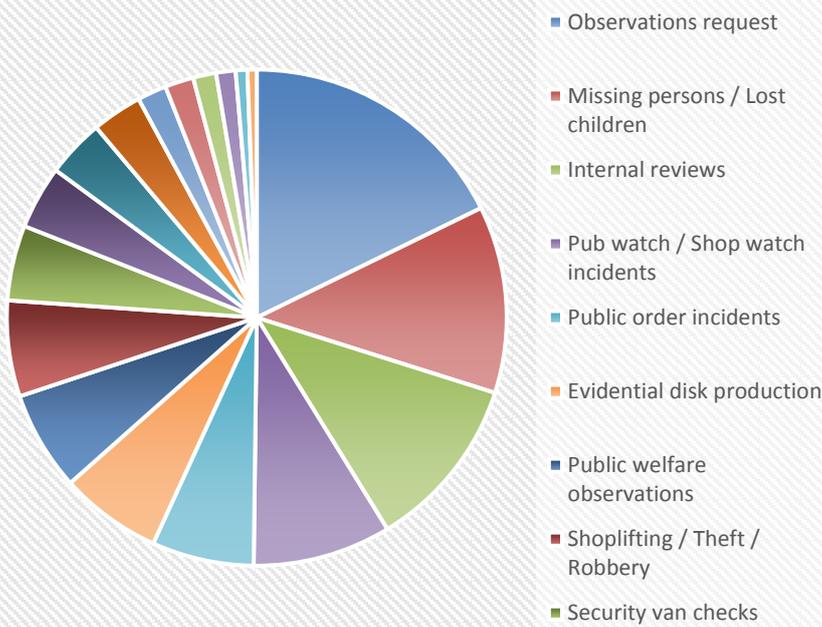
- Current CCTV systems not fit for purpose and do not effectively impact on public protection through supporting criminal prosecutions or a command and control strategy - need for investment.
- Report commissioned by the Chief Constable and published 2016 secured engagement with local authorities to progress a Thames Valley-wide CCTV system.
- Proposal to move to a CCTV hub model to increase efficiencies and develop a common IT infrastructure
- The need to establish a police-local authority partnership to rationalise CCTV by centralising CCTV governance and establishing a Thames Valley-wide strategy
- The need for a migration path to deal with the ultimate obsolescence of analogue PSS CCTV cameras and maximise use and benefit of more technologically advanced systems.

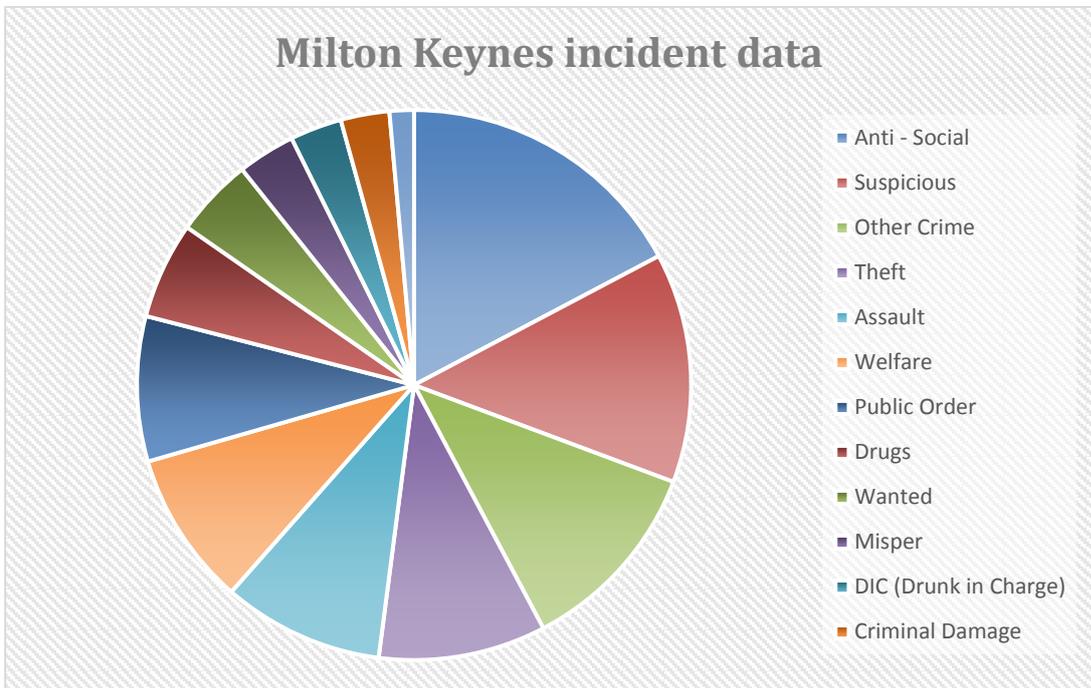
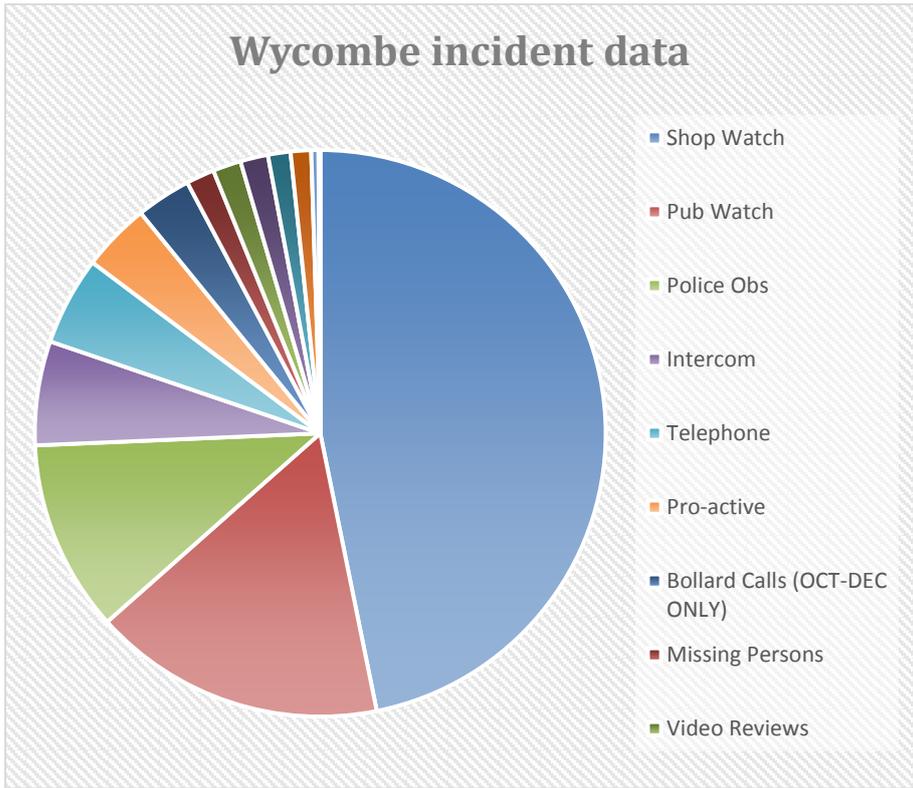
### Current outputs as logged by the CCTV control rooms

### Chiltern incident data



### Aylesbury activity data





**Current objectives:**

- Assist in the prevention and detection of crime
- Deter anti-social behaviour
- Reduce the fear of crime.

## **Proposed objectives encompassing Community Safety Plans and Police and Crime Plan Priorities**

- Community safety
- Protecting the vulnerable
- Cutting crime
- Emergency response
- Maintaining order
- Bringing offenders to justice

## **Improvements and future outputs**

- A targeted approach to the use of CCTV as a crime prevention tool, focusing on crime/ incident hotspots;
- Better protect the public through proactive monitoring of CCTV in line with incident heat maps;
- Better protect the public through proactive monitoring as part of a command and control strategy to improve use of public resources across partner agencies through sending the appropriate response to reported incidents;
- Better protect the public through proactive monitoring in line with crime heat maps to reduce crime, particularly violent crime, theft, robbery;
- Support the investigative process through effective and efficient evidence management, bringing offenders to justice;
- Secure digital transfer of images replacing use of removable DVDs, memory sticks etc (depending upon the option chosen for improvement);
- Provide 24/7 cover with increased monitoring at times of peak demand;
- Improved resilient CCTV monitoring for private business schemes giving a better service to our private partners, eg., pubwatch, shopwatch;
- Provide more resilience and a better working environment for staff reducing sickness levels;
- Ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, eg., the Surveillance Camera Commissioner's Code of Practice, secure transfer of confidential data, secure access to data managed by permissions, privacy impact assessment (data protection) and other legislative requirements and best practice;
- Demonstrate an ethical approach to data management
- Provide ongoing evidence regarding the value and use of CCTV cameras to manage crime, anti-social behavior, vulnerable people, missing persons and public protection to inform camera placement and use;
- Link cameras by mapping, ensuring that local access to footage is available

## **Risks of not investing:**

### **Community Safety**

- Security and safety of the local community adversely impacted
- Violent offences are on the increase – difficult to combat violence without CCTV – need to embed CCTV in plans to combat violence
- Difficulty in tracking missing persons
- Less effective response to anti-social behaviour

- Failure to protect vulnerable people
- Exploitation through child sexual abuse, modern slavery and gangs more difficult to detect
- Response to emergency calls more difficult to allocate to the most appropriate service
- Difficult to manage public order situations and critical incidents
- Difficulty in meeting data protection requirements to transfer, access and store data securely

### Crime and disorder

- Increase in crime
- Community safety adversely impacted
- Difficulty in identifying suspects in all crimes
- Serious impact on identifying suspects in murder and sexual offences cases
- Difficulty in securing evidence of offences
  - Labour intensive investigation process with many offences going undetected
  - Not meeting public expectations that the police will have CCTV evidence of offences
  - Loss of successful court outcomes through lack of CCTV evidence

Current system	Proposed system
Diverse IT infrastructure, most systems end of life	Common IT infrastructure providing a reliable and sustainable service which is economical to maintain for a minimum of 7 years
3 CCTV control rooms	1 CCTV control room + local viewing
Cameras viewed at multiple locations	176 cameras viewed in one place (+ private partner cameras, eg., shopwatch and pubwatch)
Process and practice differs across control rooms	Consistent process and practice
Several maintenance contracts for equipment and cameras	One maintenance contract for all CCTV equipment and cameras
Limited proactive monitoring of CCTV	24/7 control room coverage
Lack of resilience in staffing and high sickness levels	Resilient staffing model including one week in six for each operator building evidence packs and statements leading to improved health and

	wellbeing and more productive monitoring of CCTV
Shifts not aligned to public protection through incident or crime data	Shifts aligned to incident heat maps
Proactive monitoring in isolation from any coherent strategy	Proactive monitoring strategy providing better outcomes for the public such as protecting vulnerable people, swifter justice and intervention through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professionally trained operators working within the police command and control structure</li> <li>• Intelligence led and targeted use of CCTV, including covert operations</li> </ul>
Cameras failing and not well maintained with multiple service and maintenance contracts	Single maintenance and service contract – more efficient and effective
Camera location rarely evidence based at present	Camera locations targeted in line with crime hotspots, incidents and evidential usage <sup>1</sup>
Complex financial arrangements causing difficult partner relations and expensive to manage	Simple financial formula
No consistent message to the public about the uses of CCTV	Use of an evidence-based model combined with appropriate communication will enhance public perceptions of police legitimacy
No performance monitoring at the present time	Performance monitoring framework enabling transparent measurement of policing outcomes such as arrests and interventions attributable to each camera – a real understanding of the value of CCTV
All systems currently operate in isolation by location	Plug in plug out system to enable compatibility with the rest of the force and other partner agencies, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highways,</li> <li>• shopping centres/markets</li> <li>• counter terrorism systems</li> <li>• public service buildings such as hospitals</li> <li>• police mobile CCTV units</li> <li>• temporary covert targeted situations</li> </ul>

Would require upgrade for digital first compatibility

Match fit for Digital First Programme/ DEMS/ DETS digital evidence management

## 6. COSTS ANALYSIS

### CAPITAL COSTS

Capital investment for moving to a hub model with upgraded equipment but excluding new CCTV cameras: TVP match funding local authority contributions attributed on size of camera estate:

Aylesbury: 22; Beaconsfield: 12; Chiltern: 16; MK: 52; Wycombe: 64.

The Model 1 costs are the estimated capital costs of moving to a Bucks CCTV hub using fibre optic cabling transmission. The assessment of costs was made by expert CCTV consultancy from Derek Maltby originally contained within the 2016 report "TVP CCTV Final Report v1.1" and updated for a partnership meeting in May 2018. The costing does not cover the cost of new cameras.

The Model 2 costs are based on the recent tender process conducted by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to replace and upgrade their CCTV equipment, the detailed breakdown of costs is not publicly available at this time but this figure covers the central infrastructure which is a wireless digital system. It does not cover new cameras.

	Model 1 £ – cheaper option but will incur ongoing transmission costs - based on quotation from Global MSC (May 2018)	Model 2 £ based on RBWM recent agreed solution – wireless system saving on ongoing transmission costs (August 2018)
<b>Police capital cost (50%)</b>		
<b>Thames Valley Police</b>	<b>265,750.00</b>	<b>314,000.00</b>
<b>Local authority capital cost (50%), attributed on size of camera estate</b>		
<b>Aylesbury</b>	<b>35,200.00</b>	<b>41,610.00</b>
<b>Chiltern and South Bucks incl Beaconsfield</b>	<b>44,800.00</b>	<b>52,960.00</b>
<b>Milton Keynes</b>	<b>83,200.00</b>	<b>98,350.00</b>
<b>Wycombe</b>	<b>102,000.00</b>	<b>121,000.00</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>531,500.00</b>	<b>598,500.00</b>

### Breakdown of costs, model 1:

COST ITEM	AMOUNT
-----------	--------

CCTV System	£225k
DVR Recorders	£ 99.5k
IP Encoders	£14k
Telemetry Control	£9k
Installation & Training	£ 81.4k
Switches	£15k
Network	£87.6k
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£531.5k</b>

**Model 2 breakdown of costs unavailable at this time – breakdown of RBWM costs from recent tender process not publicly available.**

#### Potential redundancy costs

	Potential redundancy costs £	Potential travel transfer costs £
Wycombe (local authority)	67,153.41 (LA)	8,212.00 pp, pa.
Thames Valley Police (for Aylesbury)	36,217.66 (TVP)	Awaiting costs
Thames Valley Police (for Milton Keynes)	12,744.90 + pension (TVP)	N/A

#### REVENUE COSTS

Costs for staffing and maintenance for the new model it is proposed to be split 50/50 between TVP and local authorities. The figures below compare current revenue costs with revenue costs of the new model. The new model is based on 7 operators plus one supervisor, working shifts, for the number of cameras being viewed. The proposed costs assume a local authority split based on a revised RAF formula at 31 August 2018 (in brackets are the figures for local authorities if the split were made on the basis of camera estate instead).

Maintenance costs in the new model would include the central infrastructure and only cameras if the cameras were replaced as part of the Model 2 deal. Maintenance of cameras not replaced would fall to individual local authorities.

Current revenue costs		Future revenue costs		
	Staff £	Maintenance £	Staff £	Maintenance £
Police revenue costs (50%)				
TVP	174,496.00 (Bucks RAF formula payments for staffing costs)	00:00	140,225.10	£5,000.00 (year 1)  (doubling in years 2 and 3)
Local Authority costs (50%)				
Milton Keynes	£59,692.00	60,000.00	54,082.00 (43,680.00)	1,093.15  (doubling in years 2 and 3)
Aylesbury	£102,517.00	18,000.00 – 20,000.00	30,114.00 (18,480.00)	1,075.50  (doubling in years 2 and 3)
Wycombe	£245,700.00	£30,000.00	29,106.00 (53,760.00)	1,039.50  (doubling in years 2 and 3)
Chiltern and South Bucks incl Beaconsfield	00:00	£60,000.00 (less transmission costs)	26,690.00 (23,520.00)	953.50  (doubling in years 2 and 3)

Additional costs for **sickness and overtime** may be incurred and may add up to an additional £30,000 but note these costs are not included in the current costs and therefore not represented in the future costs. It is also anticipated that with improved resilience and an improved shift pattern staff wellbeing would improve.

Where funding is available for **shop watch and pub watch type schemes** for monitoring the relevant cameras that funding shall be used to pay for CCTV control room staff and in accordance with the terms of the specific requirements.

#### **DATA TRANSMISSION REVENUE COST ESTIMATES – applicable to model 1 only**

**Model 1:** These are the estimated revenue costs for data transmission to the Bucks CCTV hub. The assessment of costs was made by expert consultancy from Derek Maltby and contained within the 2016 report “*TVP CCTV Final Report v1.1*” and updated for a partnership meeting in May 2018.

AUTHORITY	COSTS
MK	£4.8k
Aylesbury	£2.4k
Wycombe	£6.1k
Chiltern	£4k
Beaconsfield	£1.2k
Bucks CC	£0.1k
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£18.6k</b>

**Model 2:** No data transmission costs as the system would be wireless and fully digital

#### **PUBLIC PROTECTION STRATEGY**

The new model will incorporate CCTV into a strategy to protect the public. Looking at incident data helps us to understand when to ensure that the CCTV control room is staffed and the cameras monitored, here is an example from Milton Keynes:

Where CCTV operators may be required at the time of the event, urgent and immediate responses are the most useful to look at as the operators help the control room to manage the event and protect the public. The average numbers of urgent and immediate incidents, per hour, for the 12 month period December 2016 to December 2017, are shown below.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
00:00 - 00:59	2.5	2.8	2.8	2.4	3.1	4.3	4.3
01:00 - 01:59	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.9	3.6	4.3
02:00 - 02:59	1.4	1	1.2	1.6	1.4	3	3.6
03:00 - 03:59	1.1	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.3	2.7	3
04:00 - 04:59	0.6	0.5	1	1.1	1.1	2	2.1
05:00 - 05:59	1	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.8	1.1	1.3
06:00 - 06:59	1.1	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.3
07:00 - 07:59	2.3	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.8	1.6	1.5
08:00 - 08:59	4.1	4.2	4.6	4.4	4.2	2.8	2
09:00 - 09:59	4.8	5.5	5.6	6.5	5.8	4.1	3.4
10:00 - 10:59	5.3	5.5	5.6	5.7	5.9	4.2	4.3
11:00 - 11:59	6.8	6.4	6.7	6.4	6.8	5	4.5
12:00 - 12:59	7	7	7.2	6.7	6.6	5.4	5.1
13:00 - 13:59	7.3	6.4	6.5	6.9	7	6	5.5
14:00 - 14:59	6.8	7.1	6.8	7.4	7.6	6.4	5.6
15:00 - 15:59	7.9	7.6	7.5	7.7	7.9	6.6	6
16:00 - 16:59	8	8.3	8.4	7.1	8.2	6.2	6.1
17:00 - 17:59	8	7.5	8.3	7.9	7.1	7.3	5.6
18:00 - 18:59	7.5	7.3	7.3	7	7.2	6.3	6

19:00 - 19:59	7.4	6.4	6.4	7	6.8	5.3	6
20:00 - 20:59	6.3	5.6	6.1	6.8	5.6	5.3	5.7
21:00 - 21:59	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.6	6	5.7	5.3
22:00 - 22:59	5.1	5	4.5	4.8	5.2	5.7	4.4
23:00 - 23:59	3.4	3.9	3.5	4.1	4.7	5.8	3.7

The typical busy periods are 9am-9pm, which peaks 12-6pm. The weekends have fewer incidents, particularly on a Sunday. However, the weekends have the night time economy, with incidents continuing until 3am. The partnership board under the proposed new collaborated system would review this kind of information on a regular basis to ensure that CCTV supports a public protection strategy.

7. **Offences typically supported by CCTV monitoring: cost TO SERVICES in Buckinghamshire 2016–17**

Violence without injury		
Location	No. of Offences	Total Cost
Aylesbury Vale	1,326	£7,863,180
Chiltern and South Bucks	951	£5,639,430
Milton Keynes	2,672	£15,844,960
Wycombe	1,187	£7,038,910
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,136</b>	<b>£36,386,480</b>

Violence with injury		
Location	No. of Offences	Total Cost
Aylesbury Vale	1,111	£15,609,550
Chiltern and South Bucks	704	£9,891,200
Milton Keynes	2,141	£30,081,050
Wycombe	831	£11,675,550
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,787</b>	<b>£67,257,350</b>

Theft from a person		
Location	No. of Offences	Total Cost
Aylesbury Vale	162	£223,560
Chiltern and South Bucks	140	£193,200
Milton Keynes	386	£532,680
Wycombe	198	£273,240
<b>Total</b>	<b>886</b>	<b>£1,222,680</b>

Theft from a vehicle		
Location	No. of Offences	Total Cost
Aylesbury Vale	878	£763,860
Chiltern and South Bucks	800	£696,000
Milton Keynes	1,865	£1,622,550
Wycombe	599	£521,130
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,142</b>	<b>£3,603,540</b>

Child sexual exploitation		
Location	No. of Offences	Total Cost
Aylesbury Vale	9	£796,203
Chiltern and South Bucks	2	£176,934
Milton Keynes	2	£176,934
Wycombe	4	£353,868
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>£1,503,939</b>

Rape		
Location	No. of Offences	Total Cost
Aylesbury Vale	121	£4,762,560
Chiltern and South Bucks	81	£3,188,160
Milton Keynes	243	£9,564,480
Wycombe	124	£4,880,640
<b>Total</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>£22,395,840</b>

**Improved CCTV resource could help reduce the impact and cost of these offences in Buckinghamshire**

Criminal damage/ other		
Location	No. of Offences	Total Cost
Aylesbury Vale	1,347	£1,818,450
Chiltern and South Bucks	1,208	£1,630,800
Milton Keynes	2,496	£3,369,600
Wycombe	1,160	£1,566,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,211</b>	<b>£8,384,850</b>

**Cabinet**  
**20 November 2018**

**BUDGET PLANNING 2019-20**  
**Councillor Mordue**  
**Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources**

**1 Purpose**

- 1.1 This report sets out the high level issues facing the Council when developing budget proposals for 2019/20 and in terms of updating its Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- 1.2 The largest and most significant issue being the announcement of a single Unitary District Council for Buckinghamshire. With the Secretary of State having only just made the announcement, this creates far more questions than answers. The most immediate question being, over what planning timeframe should the budget now be considered?
- 1.3 The report sets out a proposed timetable in order to agree the budget and set the Council Tax prior to the end of February 2019, but the approach may need to be revised in response to the emerging position on unitary.

**2 Recommendations/for decision**

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2.1 Cabinet is requested to consider the report and agree the approach proposed for developing the 2019/20 budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan.</li><li>2.2 Cabinet are also recommended to agree to repurpose the Business Rates Equalisation Reserve and the Interest Equalisation Reserve in order to provide the Council with initial financial capacity to respond to the costs of reorganisation.</li></ul> |
|---|

**3 Supporting information**

- 3.1 The current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2019/20 was agreed by Council in February 2018. This predicted the need to deliver £1.1million of savings (which had been identified) in order to balance the budget for 2019/20. This was based upon the information available at that time and a set of assumptions around key variables within the budget.
- 3.2 These key assumptions will be revisited and reviewed as part of the budget planning and preparation process for 2019/20 and for the 4 years thereafter, which make up the Medium Term Planning period (although the Medium Term aspect might quickly become irrelevant other than for the purposes of benchmarking the financial performance of the new organisation beyond its creation in 2020).
- 3.3 Largely ignoring the implications of unitary at this stage, this report sets out the context for 2019/20 budget planning and outlines a series of high level issues facing the Council when developing budget proposals and updating its Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). In addition to unitary, there remain a number of other key uncertainties in relation to e.g. Brexit, financial impact from retained business rates, funding levels in relation to Government Grant and level of New Homes Bonus. These issues are explored further as part of this budget report.
- 3.4 The Chancellor delivered the 2018 Budget on 29 October 2018. There were a number of tax and spending announcements of relevance to local

government, and the Chancellor outlined the trajectory of overall public spending for the 2019 Spending Review.

- 3.5 The Chancellor indicated that “austerity“ was coming to an end and the UK economy was entering into a period of economic growth. Predications are that public spending will increase by 1.2% year on year in real terms, and this will be a fiscal stimulus to the economy generally. There are potentially a number of underlying risks to delivery of the revised forecast including the impact of Brexit and any changes to the economy.
- 3.6 The Chancellor’s Autumn Budget promised more funding overall for public spending. However, the majority of the additional funding will be targeted to meet NHS service demands, with other Departments likely to bear the brunt of continuing financial pressures and funding reductions. It is therefore reasonable to assume that Local Government will continue to see ongoing reductions in funding over coming years and this should remain the central planning assumption.
- 3.7 The Budget also set out a number of initiatives which will impact on local government funding. These include:
  - 3.7.1 The Budget builds on previous reductions in business rates. Small retail businesses will see their business rates bills cut by a third for two years from April 2019.
  - 3.7.2 From April 2019 the National Living Wage will increase from £7.83 an hour to £8.21.
  - 3.7.3 Increases to work allowances for people claiming Universal Credit
  - 3.7.4 People will also receive extra help as they move from their existing benefits to Universal Credit and there will be targeted support for people repaying debts.
- 3.8 As part of the budget setting process for 2019-20, the financial impact of the announcements will be considered and reflected in the proposals to Cabinet in December 2018.
- 3.9 A report of the National Audit Office (NAO) in March 2018 has reported that local councils have seen their central government funding halved in the era of austerity and these changes in funding arrangements and new pressures on demand have created both new opportunities and further pressures for the sector. The current pattern of growing overspends on services and dwindling reserves exhibited by an increasing number of authorities is not sustainable over the medium term.
- 3.10 Local Government, and most of the public sector, has been managing the consequences of the Government balancing the public sector funding equation over the last 7 years, whilst at the same time managing the expectations of residents.
- 3.11 Local authority spending power comes from three distinct cash-flows: a central government grant, locally retained rates, and council taxes. The first is being reduced. Plans to allow councils to keep all the money raised from local business taxes are under review and meanwhile, there is a cap on rises in council tax.

- 3.12 AVDC have managed substantial funding reductions since 2010-11, but financial pressures continue with reduced funding at a time when the authority faces a range of new demand and cost pressures.
- 3.13 The significant work undertaken by the Council under the wider transformation agenda to deliver the efficiencies, savings and new income generation required in the Medium Term Financial Plan should again mean that the budget process can be condensed. This should be achievable, as any strategic choices relating to the level or means of service delivery have already been debated and scrutinised throughout the year and therefore are not required to be agreed as part of the budget development process.
- 3.14 The extensive and innovative reorganisation, income generation and efficiency work carried out by the council over the past 6 years has enabled the council to approach budget setting avoiding the need to present members with multiple, equally unpalatable choices around service cuts. This has minimised the amount of decision making required as part of this annual refresh and update to the Medium Term Plan.
- 3.15 This ‘head-on’ approach adopted by Aylesbury Vale District Council has placed the council in a strong and financially sustainable position facing the future. Whether this benefits the residents of Aylesbury Vale, or the residents of a wider new successor authority, the work has been a valuable and bold response to public sector austerity.
- 3.16 This report identifies some of the key issues and areas which will need to be considered as part of the review and update process this year and sets out the timetable for scrutinising and agreeing the budget and Medium Term Financial Plan for the next 4 years.

#### 4 Timetable

- 4.1 The proposed process broadly follows the same format as in previous years and is set out below.

Meeting Date	Meeting	Possible Reports
20 November	Cabinet	Scene Setting Report
27 November	Budget Seminar	Consideration of Scene Setting / Grant Changes
18 December	Finance Scrutiny	Initial Budget Plan / Strategy
18 December	Cabinet	Initial Budget Plan / Strategy
14 January	Finance Scrutiny	Consideration of Cabinet Report
16 January	Cabinet	Budget Recommendation to Council
24 January	Budget Seminar	
6 February	Council	Budget Setting
27 February	Council	Council Tax setting

- 4.2 The government has announced that it is aiming to publish the Provisional Finance Settlement on 6 December 2018.
- 4.3 The Government have also indicated that they are to end the frustrations of the past and inform Local Authorities of settlements on a set date. The change is intended to help local authority’s better deal with future challenges on the changing financial landscape. The Government will now aim for future provisional settlements to be on or around 5 December and the final settlement to be no later than 31 January.

## 5 Government Funding and the Wider Landscape

5.1 The 2015 Spending Review outlined a multi year settlement offer for local Government, which 97% of all councils accepted. The Settlement for 2019/20 represents the final year of this settlement.

5.2 The figures contained within the settlement are set out below;

	2016-17 £M	2017-18 £M	2018-19 £M	2019-20 £M
Settlement Funding Assessment	5.22	4.30	3.83	3.26
of which:				
Revenue Support Grant	1.57	0.58	0.00	0.00
Baseline Funding Level	3.65	3.72	3.83	3.95
Tariff/Top-Up	-16.16	-16.47	-16.96	-17.50
Tariff/Top-Up adjustment				-0.69

5.3 Local authority funding in England has undergone considerable upheaval in recent years. Central government grant funding has been substantially reduced; after falling in real terms to 2015, council tax has begun to rise; and new grants have been introduced in response to claims of a 'crisis' in social care funding.

5.4 For AVDC, reductions to grant funding have been the most significant factor underlying historic planning assumptions and the Council's strategy for balancing its budget was predicated on this continuing. In this respect, the Strategy around commercialism and efficiency has been proven to be the right strategy to deal with the financial challenges that it has faced, and will continue to face the Council, or its successor.

5.5 Back in November 2017, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced a formal consultation on a review of relative needs and resources (A Fair Funding Review). The current formula of budget allocations has been in place for a number of years, but the Government believes a revised distribution methodology is required to allow authorities to meet the challenges of the future.

5.6 A new system, based on its findings, will be introduced in 2020/21 alongside a Government wide Comprehensive Spending Review.

5.7 The Fair Funding Review will affect how funding is allocated and redistributed between local authorities from 2020 onwards. It is expected to use three main 'cost drivers': population, deprivation and sparsity, together with additional cost drivers related to specific local authority services.

5.8 How this will be done has still to be confirmed and will be the subject of further consultation between now and mid-2019; and it will also be influenced by discussions within a number of joint working groups between the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Local Government Association (LGA). 'Indicative numbers' for funding allocations to individual councils are to be available by spring-summer 2019, and the review is to be implemented in April 2020.

5.9 Alongside the new methodology, in 2020/21, a new phase for business rates retention programme will also be introduced. The aim is for local authorities to retain 75% of business rates growth from 2020/21, and this is intended to be a lever and incentive for local authorities to grow their local economies.

- 5.10 The government has announced that it is aiming to publish the Provisional Settlement on 6 December 2018. It has also indicated that it has plans to issue consultations on;
- The further progression of the Fair Funding Review in advance of Provisional Settlement 2019/20; and
  - The redesign of business rates retention by the end of the year.

#### Negative RSG in 2019-20

- 5.11 In 2016/17, the Government introduced the concept of Negative Revenue Support Grant and this remains an issue for some Councils. As more councils are impacted by this change the Government has come under pressure to review this aspect of the Grant system. The Secretary of State announced that he will review this element during the forthcoming year, but warned that any solution will need to be found from within the existing Local Government funding system.
- 5.12 Negative Revenue Support Grant is the name given to a downward adjustment of a local authority's business rates top-up or tariff. This occurs as a consequence of changes to the distribution methodology adopted at the 2016-17 settlement, which formed the basis of the multi-year settlement.
- 5.13 For many authorities, the required reduction of Core Funding exceeded their available Revenue Support Grant. To deal with this, business rates tariffs and top-ups were adjusted so that an increased amount of business rates were redistributed away from the authority and towards other authorities. This adjustment has since become colloquially known as 'Negative RSG'.
- 5.14 In 2019-20 Negative RSG totals £152.9m and affects 168 authorities.
- 5.15 MHCLG has explored a number of possible options for addressing the issue of Negative RSG, and has formed an initial preference to eliminate the issue via forgone business rate receipts as alternative options are assessed as being unaffordable or fail to resolve the issue.
- 5.16 The Government considers direct elimination of Negative RSG via forgone business rates receipts the preferred approach to resolve Negative RSG, meeting the key criteria of being both fair and affordable. This option also benefits from being both simple and direct.
- 5.17 This option would remove Negative RSG for all the authorities affected at a cost to the Government of £152.9m in forgone business rates receipts. This funding would be met from the Government's share of business rates.
- 5.18 The outcome and financial impact will not be known until 6th December.
- 5.19 For AVDC, this goes some way to addressing concerns about the ending of core central government funding next year and having to pay vital business rates income to the government as a result of negative revenue support grant in 2019-20.

## **6 Business Rates Pooling and 100% Retention**

- 6.1 From 2020-21 the business rates baseline will be redistributed according to the outcome of the new needs assessment, subject to suitable transitional measures.
- 6.2 Since 2013, business rate retention has also rewarded councils with a share of growth in business rate revenues. In February 2016, the Government complemented these changes with the announcement of a 'fair funding review', followed by consultations in July 2016 and December 2017.
- 6.3 The fair funding review will be used to change business rates baselines. These provide each council's starting point for the business rate retention system. New baselines will be applied in 2020 – but not reviewed annually. This will mean that in the years after 2020, individual councils' incomes will diverge from the baseline, as their business rate revenues grow by different amounts. This is a deliberate outcome of rate retention: it is intended to encourage councils to try to increase their rate revenues instead of being dependent on the Government for funds.
- 6.4 The effects of the review on councils' financial health are not clear cut. The outcomes will depend critically within rate retention: for instance, how to set the baseline, how long before the next review and how to divide rate revenue between counties and districts ('tier splits'). These are all still subject to the consultation process.
- 6.5 In practice, tier splits will become irrelevant within Buckinghamshire if the new unitary council comes into existence on the 1 April 2020. The Government Grants currently received by each of the existing Bucks authorities will be collapsed together and this will become the new entitlement.
- 6.6 In 2016/17, Aylesbury Vale entered into a Business Rates Pooling arrangement with Bucks County Council, Bucks Fire and Rescue, Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council. This arrangement allows the Pool to retain a proportion of Business Rates Growth which would normally go to the Government and allows councils to benefit (or lose) from changes in the amount of business rates collected in their area and thus each council will be incentivised to promote economic expansion.
- 6.7 AVDC have benefited from the existing 50% retention scheme and pooling arrangements. In its first year of operation, the gains from the Pool across the whole Pooling area amount to approximately £1.25 million, of which circa £357,000 related to Aylesbury Vale. The Pool created will continue to operate until any of the organisations that are party to it notify the Government that they wish to exit the arrangement.
- 6.8 For 2019/20 planning purposes, a view will be taken on any anticipated gain in the budget proposal. This presents a prudent position given risks in terms of e.g. valuation appeals. Any gain achieved will therefore be placed in the Business Rates Equalisation Reserve and decisions on how to apply it will be brought forward once the actual gain is known.
- 6.9 The Government remains committed to the concept of business pooling and it is piloting ways to achieve the broad ambitions of its policy intention without the need for primary or secondary legislation.

- 6.10 A third phase of business rate retention pilots will go ahead from April 2019 with a 75% retention scheme and the 'no detriment' clause scrapped, the government has announced. Pilot areas in the previous two rounds have been trialling 100% retention of business rates and will continue to do so for the relevant year.
- 6.11 Working together with the other councils in Buckinghamshire, AVDC has made an application to test the 75% retention pilot in the next financial year. New 75% retention pilots in 2019/20 will increase the level of retained rates to the council but also provide the opportunity to test and gather information on the design of the new business rates retention system in preparation for 2020/21. The pilots will test authorities' administration, technical planning for implementation, and look at system maintenance; how the accounting, data collection and IT systems will work.
- 6.12 Projected savings from the pilot are estimated to be up to £7.7million, of which £5.2m is from higher growth share and £2.5m from no growth levy.
- 6.13 MHCLG said it expects successful applications to be announced alongside the publication of the provisional local government finance settlement.
- 6.14 It should be restated that there is an ongoing legal challenge to a significant group of rateable properties within the Vale. If successful, and if backdated, the local repayment might amount to many millions and could wipe out any gain from Business Rates in the current year.
- 6.15 The impact of the Chancellors statement of October 2018 to cut business rates by a third for small retailers with a rateable value of £51,000 or less will also have to be a budgetary consideration, but the Government has undertaken to compensate councils fully for the cost of this relief.

## **7 Brexit**

- 7.1 With a planned date in March 2019 for the UK to leave the EU, Brexit is also likely to feature as a budget planning issue within the life of this MTFP but the impacts, positive or negative, are likely to be far reaching and much harder to predict at this stage. No direct financial implications of the change have been incorporated into the current MTFP, other than to be mindful in terms of setting appropriate contingencies.
- 7.2 The implications for the Council will be wide ranging with likely impacts on value of the pound and spending power, possible impact on local business and business rates and impacts on the availability of workforce.
- 7.3 With less than 6 months until the UK will have officially left the EU and uncertainties about the future, the Council has created an officer working group which is considering and reviewing the issues it will potentially face.

## **8 Council Tax**

- 8.1 On Council Tax, the Government has signalled its intention to hold the broad referendum principles from the last two years. Specifically, for districts, this means a maximum of 3% or £5, whichever is the greater.

- 8.2 Aylesbury Vale chose to increase Tax by £5 last year, the maximum permissible, representing a 3.48% increase.
- 8.3 The Medium Term Financial Plan assumed a further increase of £5 in 2019/209, representing an increase of 3.34% in that year.
- 8.4 Against a backdrop of increasing inflation, a 3% increase is increasingly looking low and the Government will come under pressure from the sector to set a threshold which at least keeps pace with the real growth in costs.
- 8.5 Inflation is current 2.9% using the CPI measure and just above 3% using RPI, with concern that currency weakness may push this up still further.
- 8.6 The assumptions around the proposed increase in Council Tax will be re-tested as part of the Budget development process, together with a consideration of the implications around Council Tax harmonisation and whether this has any bearing on Tax setting for 2019/20.
- 8.7 In relation to Parish and Town Councils the consultation states that it expects to see clear evidence that these bodies are exercising restraint. Recognising that the uncertainty around capping was driving local councils to increase Council Tax, the Government has announced that it will not impose capping for councils for at least two further years.
- 8.8 The Government intends to provide an update on its proposals for council tax referendum principles including the Adult Social Care precept, alongside the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement later in the year.

## **9 New Homes Bonus**

- 9.1 The New Homes Bonus was introduced in 2011 to provide an incentive for local authorities to encourage housing growth in their areas. Over £7 billion has been allocated to local authorities through the scheme to reward additional housing supply.
- 9.2 Although the Bonus was successful in encouraging authorities to welcome housing growth, in the Government's opinion it did not reward those authorities who are the most open to growth. In December 2016, following consultation, the government announced reforms to the Bonus as follows:
- reduction of the number of years New Homes Bonus payments are made from 6 to 5 years in 2017-18 and to 4 years from 2018-19;
  - introduction of a national baseline for housing growth of 0.4% of council tax base (weighted by band) from 2017-18, below which the Bonus will not be paid
- 9.3 The Government has retained the option of making adjustments to the baseline in future years to reflect significant additional housing growth and to remain within spending limits set at Spending Review 2015. In 2018-19 the baseline remained at 0.4%. Due to the continued upward trend for house building, the Government has indicated that expects to increase the baseline in 2019- 20. This will be outlined when the provisional finance settlement is published later in the year. If increased, this will reduce the amount of Bonus the Council receives.
- 9.4 Below the baseline of 0.4% growth councils do not receive any financial reward for the new homes built in their areas.

- 9.5 2019-20 represents the final year of funding agreed through the Spending Review 2015. In the light of this, it is the Government's intention to explore how to incentivise housing growth most effectively, for example by using the Housing Delivery Test results to reward delivery or incentivising plans that meet or exceed local housing need. Government will consult widely on any changes prior to implementation.

## **10 Inflation and Pay**

- 10.1 The MTFP agreed in February made assumptions around Inflation and Pay based upon trends in the economy. In practice, the looming Brexit deadline is having unpredictable effects on the economy as markets react to the uncertainty the issue is causing. Much of this will be determined and resolved by the Government's approach to the exit from the European Union.
- 10.2 At the point of writing it is still not clear as to what kind of agreement the UK Government can achieve or how global markets will react to this.
- 10.3 For now, it appears that continued uncertainty might weaken the Pound and push inflation higher in the short term. Seemingly, this will now hasten higher interest rates. However, the situation is volatile and provides an uncertain environment in which to plan. This will need to be kept under review, but it seems unlikely that any great clarity will emerge during the budget planning period. It is therefore probable that this will become one of those issues that will necessitate continual review and a higher level contingency.
- 10.4 Two years ago the Staff Side and Unions agreed a two year pay settlement arrangement with 1% in 2017/18 and a further 2% in 2018/19. This agreement was built into Medium Term Planning assumptions. A new agreement will need to be reached with staff for 2019/20 and discussions have commenced.

## **11 Reserves and Balances**

- 11.1 Earmarked reserves represent the prudent saving of sums against the recognition of future financial events which, if not prepared for, would be difficult to deal with at the point they occur. In short, earmarked reserves are an essential part of sound financial planning.
- 11.2 The reserves are held for legitimate reasons and the balances are reasonable given a fair assessment of the budgetary pressures that they are held against.
- 11.3 It is expected that the total balance held in reserves will dip significantly over the next few years as the pressures against which they are held materialise and the infrastructure schemes, for which the New Homes Bonus is held, are delivered.
- 11.4 The council holds balances for a number of purposes, one of which is smoothing out the receipt of income into the Council's budget, where the generation of income is volatile. The Council holds two such reserves with tangible balances that were available to it in order to manage volatility over the medium term planning cycle.
- 11.5 With the need to resource an implementation plan for the new council and the need to manage staffing costs across this transition period, it is proposed that these equalisation funds be repurposed and made available to offset the transition costs associated with local government reorganisation, subject to any demands being placed upon them in 2019/20. This will provide initial

flexibility, but there is no clear sense at this stage whether this is sufficient (when pooled with the other councils) to see through the reorganisation. As a consequence, this will need to be revisited.

- 11.6 The two reserves in question are the Interest Equalisation Reserve and the Business Rates Equalisation Reserve. The combined value of these two reserves is estimated to be circa £5 million as at the end of 2018/19.
- 11.7 A review of reserves will be undertaken as part of the budget setting process.

## **12 The Council Tax Base**

- 12.1 The Tax Base is a measure of the number of households which are liable to pay Council Tax in an area, in a given year. The Tax Base also takes into account the banding (size) of the property and the entitlement to discounts of the occupiers.
- 12.2 With the growth in the Vale over recent years the Tax Base has increased significantly above its historic growth trends, resulting in more Council Tax being payable. Whilst useful, in terms of the additional Council Tax generated, the reality is that the housing growth which has resulted in the Tax Base growth often contributes more cost, by way of demands for infrastructure and services, than the increased Council Tax income new residents will pay.
- 12.3 It is estimated that the combination of these factors will result in actual Tax Base growth of 1.3% in 2019/20 compared to the existing 1% assumed in the Medium Term Financial Plan. This is a reduction from the 1.97% achieved in 2018/19 attributed to an overestimate of completions in that year.

## **13 Other Potential Developments**

- 13.1 At the time of writing the report, the Secretary of State has confirmed his decision to create a single Unitary District Council for Buckinghamshire which will come into existence in May 2020.
- 13.2 This fundamentally changes what will happen during the period of the proposed MTFP. This clearly removes the need for medium term planning for Aylesbury Vale as a single entity organisation, but the Council remains obligated to hand over its affairs to the new organisation in the best state it can. This means continuing to tackle known budgetary issues, generating new income streams and balancing its finances, in much the same way as has been its priority over the past 7 years.
- 13.3 Recognising this, the approach proposed is largely similar to that adopted for previous years, with allowances made for transitions costs, reconsideration of Council tax strategy and in the knowledge that some medium term projects, yet to commence, may need to be reconsidered.
- 13.4 At this early stage, the financial implications of the announcement are yet to be fully understood. As thinking and understanding are progressed, the significant financial impacts will be reported to Members.

## **14 Financial Resilience**

- 14.1 CIPFA is consulting on its proposed publication of an index of resilience of English councils. The decision to develop an index is driven by CIPFA's desire to support the local government sector as it faces a continued financial challenge.
- 14.2 The index, based on publically available information, will provide an assessment of the relative financial health of each English council. As with all of CIPFA's analytical products, the index will not be a predictive model but a diagnostic tool – designed to identify those councils displaying consistent and comparable features that will highlight good practice, but crucially, also point to areas which are associated with financial failure.
- 14.3 The information for each council will show their relative position to other councils of the same type. Use of the index will support councils in identifying areas of weakness and enable them to take action to reduce the risk of financial failure.
- 14.4 The index will also provide a transparent and independent analysis based on a sound evidence base which should be more useful than unattributed speculation informed by little more than anecdote. CIPFA propose to develop and publish the index for every county, district, metropolitan borough, unitary authority and London borough in England although there will be a slightly different and simplified methodology for those councils that do not have a social care responsibility.
- 14.5 Given the Council's single minded and strong focus on dealing with the financial issues facing local government over the past 7 years, it is expected that Aylesbury Vale will perform well under any measure adopted.

## **15 Commercial AVDC**

- 15.1 Commercialism and efficiency has been at the heart of the Council's strategy for dealing with the financial challenges faced by the sector over the past few years. In terms of preserving and improving core service delivery against enormous financial challenges, this has been immensely successful. Some governance issues have arisen as a result of this strategy but the Council has accepted the comments and used these to develop better risk profiles and to strengthen future governance arrangements.
- 15.2 The Council's approach to balancing its finances over the Medium Term Financial Plan has largely been focused on the Commercial AVDC Programme.
- 15.3 The Programme is much wider than simply selling new products and services. The project name actually alludes to the main focus, which is commercially minded thinking. Using this philosophy, the programme has comprised a many-pronged approach of achieving savings by consolidation of services, the use of Digital and reducing or eliminating duplication while at the same time generating income through commercial activities and sales of consultancy services.
- 15.4 As the financial pressure on all councils only intensifies it is absolutely imperative that the sector recognises that remaining solvent (and thereby the protection of services) can only be achieved by fully embracing and adopting the ethos of this strategy in all areas. Traditional, inflexible and stayed approaches to service delivery will only continue to fail the customer and, as

importantly, fail to provide the financial sustainability that the each council owes to its residents in order to continue to serve the interests of their communities.

- 15.5 It is believed that Aylesbury Vale's sector leading experience and the attitude, innovation and enthusiasm of its staff will be invaluable to the new organisation in helping it to deliver modern, responsive services which are fit for the future.

## **16 Future Strategy and Planning**

- 16.1 As highlighted at the beginning of this report, on the 1 Nov 2018 the Secretary of State, James Brokenshire, announced that he was persuaded by the argument for a single Unitary District Council for the entirety of Buckinghamshire. This means that the future strategic planning for the council is somewhat unusual. Day to day running of the Council will need to continue until May 2020, when the start of the new unitary council takes place, and it is expected that members will also have views as to the legacy of the council for the residents of the Vale, which they will wish to see passed on to the new council.
- 16.2 Therefore, it is suggested to Cabinet that as part of the budget setting process Council adopts a corporate strategy for 2019/20 which is focused on :
- Ensuring that we are Financially fit, including ensuring our commercial approaches of the past continue and we continue to grow and diversify our income streams
  - Leading and the shaping of place, ensuring we adopt VALP, and continue to cherish our towns, villages and areas whilst managing growth and regenerating our towns
  - Focusing on our Customers and our ongoing innovation in customer delivery and digitisation, and
  - Ensuring our Partners and Communities help us deliver our goals and we ensure they are included in our decision making.
- 16.3 Assuming Cabinet is in agreement to this, officers will work up such a strategy to be adopted through the budget setting process early next year, forming the back bone to both the priorities and financial plan for 2019/20 and legacy for the future.

## **17 Connected Knowledge**

- 17.1 The Organisation continues to progress its digital agenda, promoting innovation in the way services and IT solutions are delivered for Customers and staff.
- 17.2 Connected Knowledge is designed to be the catalyst for technological innovation and change, thereby propelling this organisation into the future. The programme is intended to support the Council with the necessary tools, policies, people and an environment that further enhances the commercial mind-set and company culture. The Council is already widely acknowledged as championing this agenda within the public sector.

- 17.3 The connected knowledge programme continues to underpin many of the components of future service delivery set out within Commercial AVDC strategy and is therefore crucial to the Council in meeting the financial agenda over the coming years.
- 17.4 The Programme has delivered on a number of projects. This includes:
- The creation of the Connected Knowledge platform, a platform of integrated data and intelligent systems enabling properly integrated and automated transactions for all our customers.
  - The introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) and AI powered voice control, which over time will serve increasingly complex customer demands
  - Being 100% cloud software based. Meaning a simplified, lower maintenance Information Communication and Technology (ICT) landscape
  - A more strategic approach - to what we do, the services we provide, who we work with and what we buy. Move of more customer fulfilment functions on to the Salesforce platform helping our staff to provide our customers with better, more efficient and faster service, and reducing our complex IT legacy systems
- 17.5 As part of the Budget process in previous years, allocations of funding have been awarded to progress this work. As this programme of works is fundamentally about delivering a modern, sustainable, Council which responds to the needs of its growing customer base, it is believed that the continuation of programme will be absolutely vital to the new Council and so the budget will propose a further tranche of funding for this work.
- 17.6 As this is about creating a Council which can respond to the needs of an expanding community, it is proposed that the funding for the scheme should be met from unallocated balances of New Homes Bonus.
- 17.7 In the Medium Term Financial Plan the Connected Knowledge programme will represent a major area of investment but also the driver of a significant element of the planned efficiency savings across the next 4 years (for this Council or its successor). It is intended that a detailed update on the programme will be provided to Cabinet in December, alongside the initial Budget Proposal.

## **18 Capital Planning and the Impact of Spending Decisions**

- 18.1 The revenue financing implications arising from the decisions taken by Council over the past few meetings (such as the investment strategy and schemes around Silverstone) have been factored into the budget for 2019/20 and beyond.
- 18.2 The Capital Programme is to be considered in a broadly parallel process to that of revenue budget development and the revenue impacts of any funding decisions taken will need to be considered and built into revenue planning as part of the approval process.
- 18.3 The review will need to consider the implications of reorganisation and schemes which has a delivery timeframe of a greater than one year will need

to be reconsidered in context of the priorities determined by the new organisation.

- 18.4 Where the Council has had spare cash balances available, it has used these in lieu of borrowing. This reduces the need to take long term borrowing and also the Council gets the lender's return, thus it is financially advantageous to do so.
- 18.5 Utilising spare cash in this way is especially advantageous during periods of low interest rates. It is generally predicted that the Bank of England will begin to increase base rates during 2018-19 but this is still heavily dependent on external and global factors and any increase, when it comes, is likely to be small and gradual.
- 18.6 The impact on investment income, the costs of borrowing and the returns or savings from investment decision must therefore all be considered together in order to understand the actual impacts of these decisions.
- 18.7 The final impact of completed and planned investment decisions are still being modelled and will be set out in more detail in subsequent reports.
- 18.8 The CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code) underpins the system of capital finance. The code has been updated in December 2017. Local authorities are required by regulation to have regard to the Prudential Code.
- 18.9 Since the Prudential Code was last updated in 2011, the landscape for public service delivery has changed significantly following the sustained period of reduced public spending and the developing localism agenda.
- 18.10 Key developments proposed within the Code include the introduction of more contextual reporting through the requirement to produce a capital strategy along with streamlined indicators.
- 18.11 The introduction of a capital strategy allows individual local authorities to give greater weight to local circumstances and explain their approach to borrowing and investment.
- 18.12 The requirements of the Prudential Code will be reflected in budget setting for capital in 2019/20 and for future years.
- 18.13 The Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes was also updated by CIPFA, 2017. This sets out good practice in treasury management and is complementary to the Prudential Code.
- 18.14 Members will be also be considering the Council Treasury Management Strategy 2019-20 n due course.

## **19 Process for Resolving the Budget for 2019/20**

- 19.1 As highlighted in previous years the Council's strategy for balancing the budget is an ongoing process and not an annual exercise purely undertaken at this time of the year. This is driven by a desire to balance the budget through internal reorganisation, efficiency and income generating strategies already set in train and without the need for a crude or simplistic cuts exercise.

- 19.2 The re-organisation recently completed (Commercial AVDC) and Connected Knowledge are central tenets of this approach.
- 19.3 From the work undertaken over the past 12 months (and prior to this) it is believed that this should be possible to balance 2019/20 (and would have been possible to balance the budget beyond) but, as highlighted, there are some key uncertainties which will need to be better understood through the development process.
- 19.4 It is therefore proposed to continue to work on refining the budget, making assumptions about the range of outcomes and aiming for the worst case scenario where appropriate.
- 19.5 The focus will now be primarily on 2019/20, but consideration will still be given to 2020 and beyond because of the obligation to hand Aylesbury Vale's affairs to its successor in a fit state.
- 19.6 The Council has Working Balances broadly in line with its stated minimum. These allow the Council to push forward and invest in new savings initiatives with the confidence of a cushion behind it. Balances (adding to, or a use of) are therefore likely to form part of the strategy for concluding the balancing of the budget for 2019/20.
- 19.7 As identified, the focus remains on restructuring and new income generation and not upon lists of potential cuts for consideration. If a specific proposal requires a Cabinet decision or scrutiny consideration it will have already been taken through the democratic process at the appropriate time, or be separately identified for debate as part of the budget development process.
- 19.8 This will again make the budget process lighter touch and should avoid the need to take lists of potential service reductions through scrutiny committees.
- 19.9 An initial budget position will be presented to Cabinet in December and will be the subject of Scrutiny by Finance and Services Scrutiny Committee.

## **20 Options considered**

- 20.1 This report sets out the current position in relation to budget planning and highlights the issues that will need to be resolved prior to agreeing a budget recommendation in January. As such there are no options to consider at this time.

## **21 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 21.1 The report asks members to note the current position and asks them to agree the process to be adopted for concluding Budget Planning for 2019/20 and for revising the MTFP within the context of the uncertainty that now exists in the planning timeframe.

## **22 Resource Implications**

- 22.1 These are included within the report

## **23 Response to Key Aims and Objectives**

- 23.1 The Budget is the key lever in terms of delivering the Council's objectives, where they require additional investment or resources. The budget also articulates the costs of providing existing services and a balance has to be

struck between the competing demands for resources. These issues will be explored further in subsequent reports on budget development.

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Background Documents