

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2019 - 2022

Councillor Winn

Cabinet Member for Communities

1 Purpose

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

2 Recommendations

Council is recommended to:

- 2.1 Adopt the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 2022 for inclusion in the Council’s Policy Framework.
- 2.3 Delegated authority to the Assistant Director for Customer Fulfilment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, to make any necessary minor amendments to the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 2022 as may be 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 current strategy is due to expire this year and the new 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 nationally, 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 1,546 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 1,674 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 was presented to Cabinet on 20 November 2018.

Comments from the meeting are attached as Appendix 3 of this report.

4 Important Updates

- 4.1 Since the draft Strategy was published for public consultation, Universal Credit was rolled out in the Vale and the Rough Sleeper Initiative was implemented across the country in conjunction with the governments targets to reduce Rough Sleeping. The draft Strategy has been updated, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, to reflect this.

5 Options considered

- 5.1 To recommend the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 2022 to Council – this option is recommended for the reasons outlined within this report and noting that the Strategy must be published early in 2019.
- 5.2 To not recommend the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 2022 to Council – this option is not recommended because the Strategy will not be able to be completed by the statutory deadline of early 2019.

6 Reasons for Recommendation

- 6.1 To ensure that the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 2022 is published by early 2019.

7 Resource implications

- 7.1 None.

Contact Officer

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Appendix 1

Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 2022

Appendix 2

Comments from the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee
25/09/2018

Appendix 3

Minutes from the Cabinet meeting 20/11/2018

Housing and Homelessness Strategy

Aylesbury Vale District Council



2019 - 2022



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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.





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.

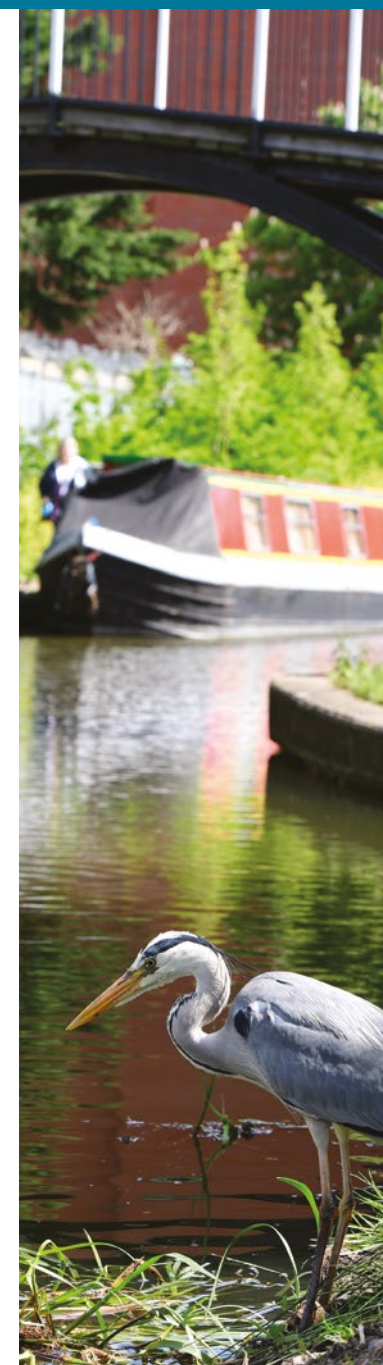
The review relied on a range of methods for collecting information of homelessness within the Vale

- 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 addition of over 1200 new affordable homes across the District (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

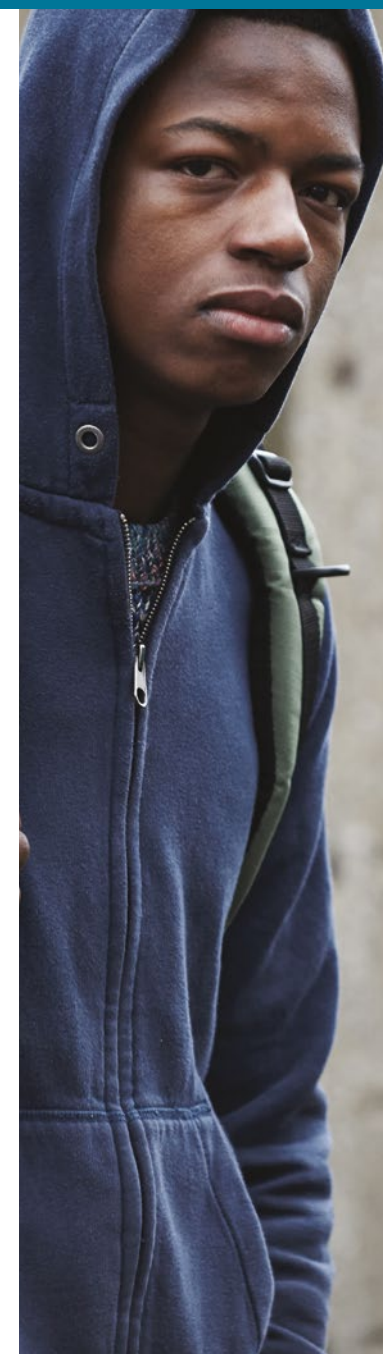
Policy/Scheme	Link	Last reviewed
Bucks Home Choice Policy	http://www.buckshomechoice.gov.uk/choice/uploads/BHCpolicyFinalVersionMay2014.pdf	Currently under review
AVDC Private Rent Scheme	https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/information-landlords-and-letting-agents	Currently under review
Adopted Aylesbury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

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.

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](#)).

Figure 1 – HOMELESS HEALTH CHECK



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 (UC) has been rolling out nationally since October 2013. On the 26 September 2018, Aylesbury Vale became a Universal Credit Full Service Area. This means that most new applicants and those affected by changes of circumstances will transition to Universal Credit, with a full migration of cases likely to take place after 2020. UC is the new benefit for working-age people who are on a low income or out of work and claim benefits. It's paid by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and replaces a number of benefits, including tax credits and housing benefit. Whilst UC is run by the DWP, AVDC will be providing support and advice to recipients and landlords in order to mitigate possible financial difficulties, prevent homelessness and to moderate potential adverse affects.

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 which was published on 24 July 2018, the first update since 2012.

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 invested £28 million in funding towards pilots in the West Midlands Combined Authority, Greater Manchester, and the Liverpool City Region.

4.2.10 Rough Sleeper Initiative In early 2018, the Housing Secretary announced £3,000,000 funding for local authorities that recorded having 20 or more rough sleepers in their area to halve rough sleeping by 2022. AVDC was awarded £223,789 for 2018/19 and £250,867 for 2019/20. AVDC has developed partnerships with Aylesbury Homeless Action Group, Oasis, the Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Connection Support's Rough Sleeper Outreach Service and other homelessness support agencies in the Vale to develop immediate and long-term solutions for those sleeping rough. We are working together to develop

accommodation solutions with other partners to provide a holistic needs based service to clients including accommodation, assessment and support as well as dedicated access to mental health and substance misuse professionals. To compliment this work a separate Rough Sleeping Policy will be drafted, which will compliment this strategy and action plan.

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

FIGURE 2 – HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN AYLESBURY VALE BY PROPERTY TYPE

**Housing Affordability in Aylesbury Vale by Property Type
(Dec 2013 vs. Dec 2017)**



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

(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.

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

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



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)

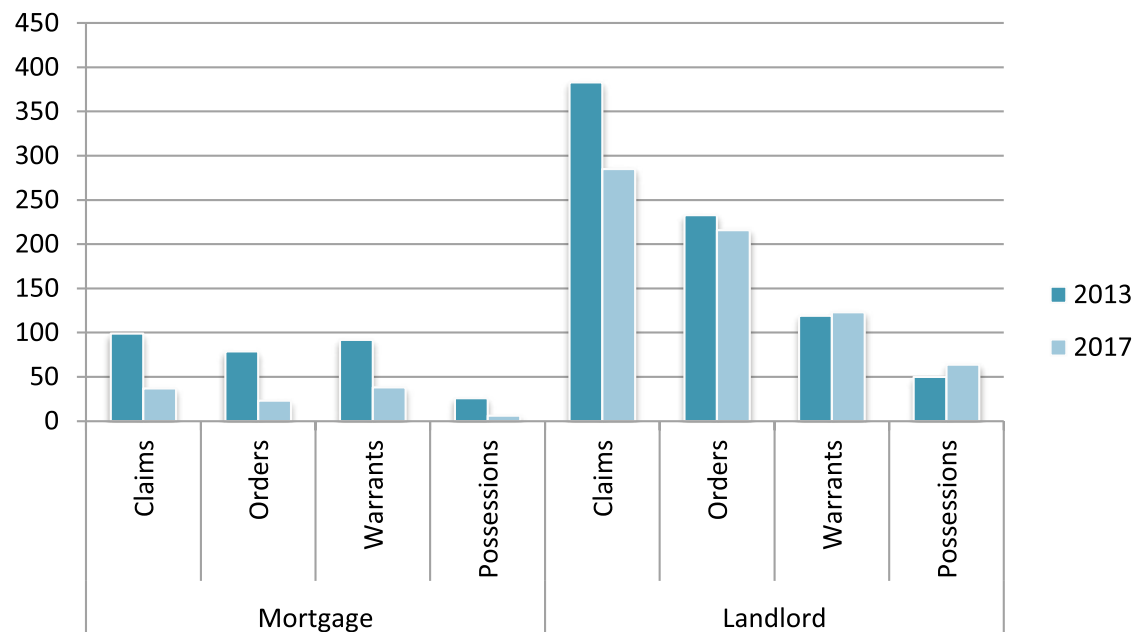
Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor. Whilst the national housing shortage remains, AVDC continues to work towards high delivery rates as detailed in the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Housing Plan. This includes the delivery of 1546 affordable homes between 2013 and 2018.

5.1.6 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-

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

FIGURE 4 - MORTGAGE & LANDLORD REPOSSESSIONS

Mortgage and Landlord Repossessions



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.

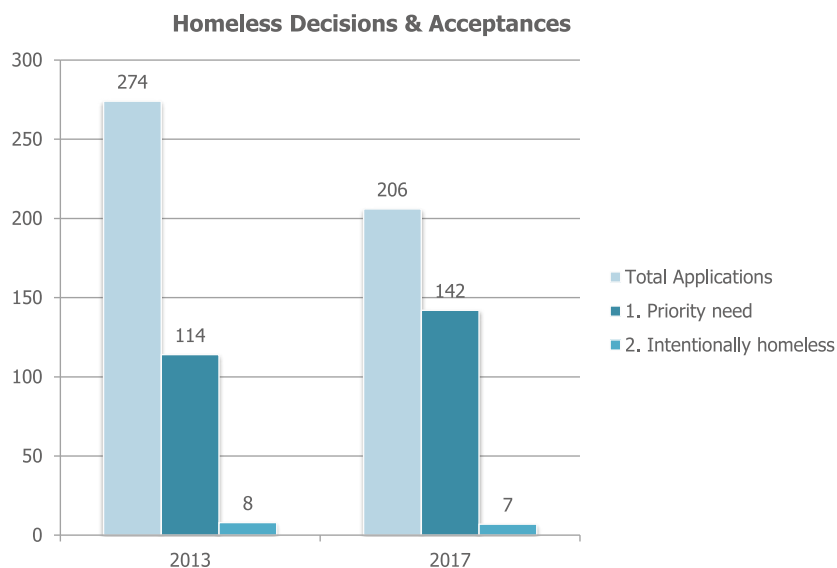
older people’s housing is available through Bucks Home Choice. A list of local hostels and supported accommodation can be found on the [AVDC Website](#).

5.1.8 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

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

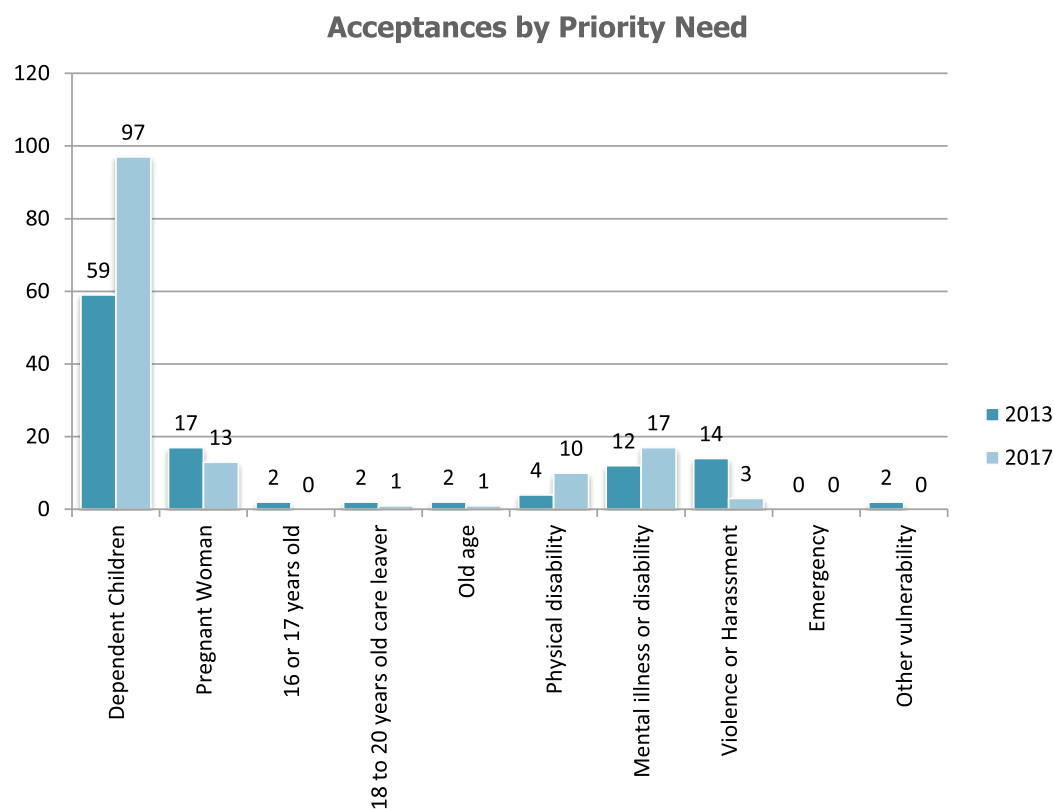


Figure 7 provides a comparison of the number of applicants in priority need based on household type, between the last and present reviews. The household type with the largest number of clients accepted and in priority need during both 2013 and 2017, was female lone parent households with dependent children,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

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

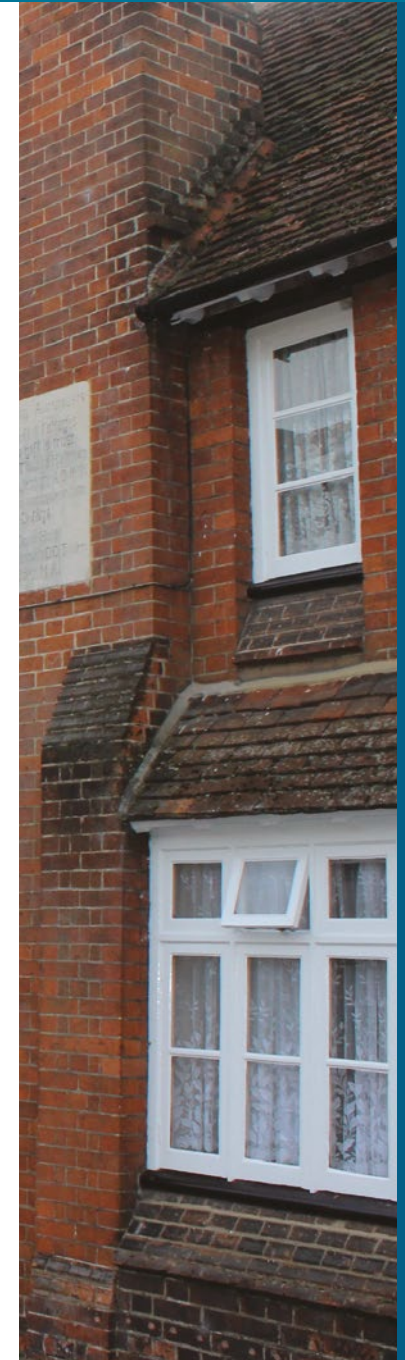
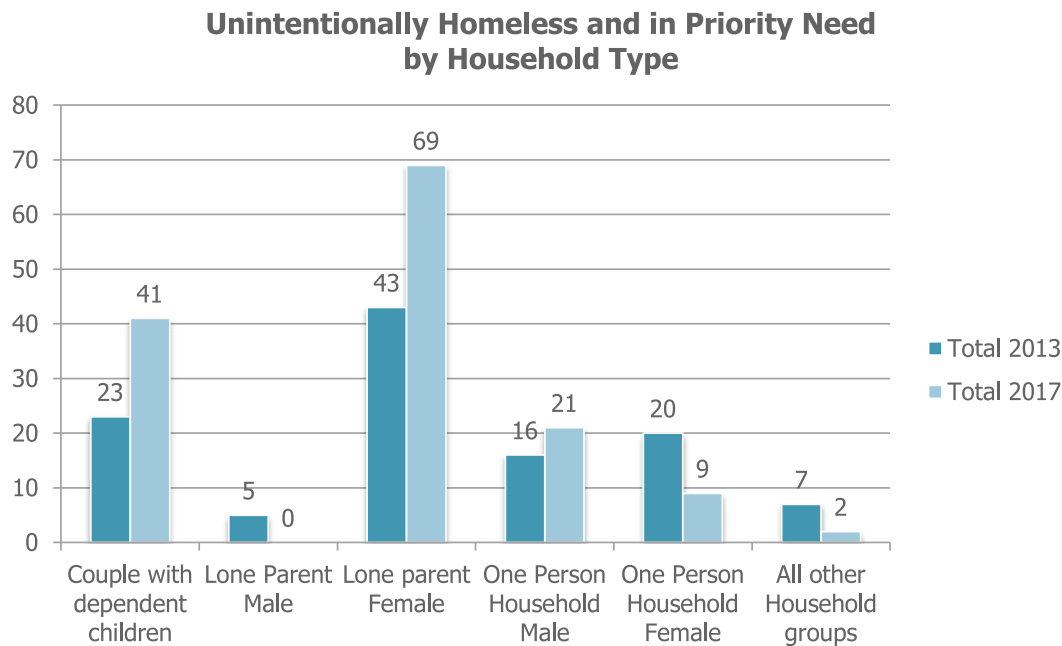




Figure 8 presents this information in terms of age groups. In 2017, the age band with the largest number of clients accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need was 25-44,

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

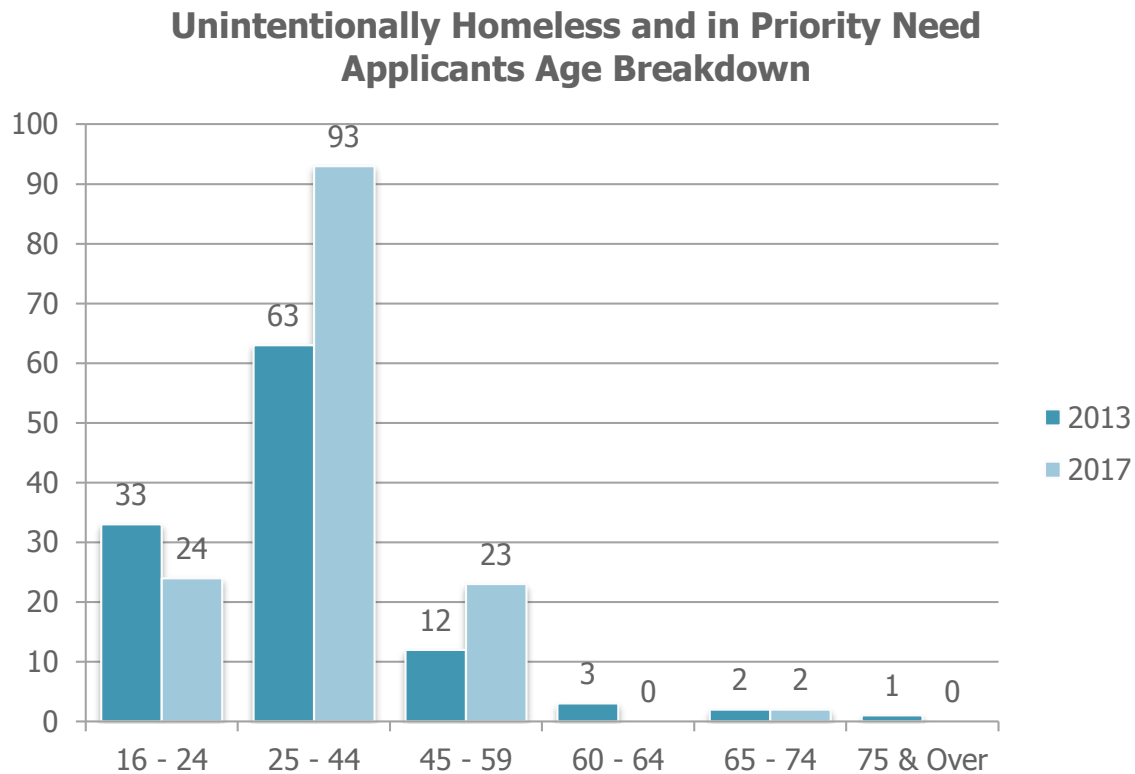


Figure 9 shows the reasons for the loss of settled accommodation for those households who have been accepted as being in priority need. A significant reason for loss of settled accommodation continues to be that parents are no longer willing to accommodate the applicant. The key reason, however, is consistently 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.

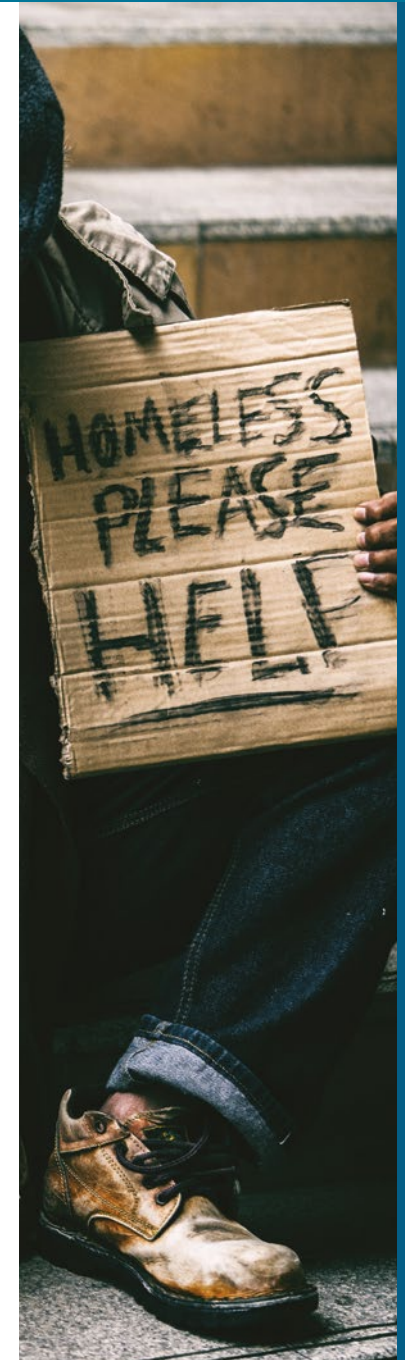
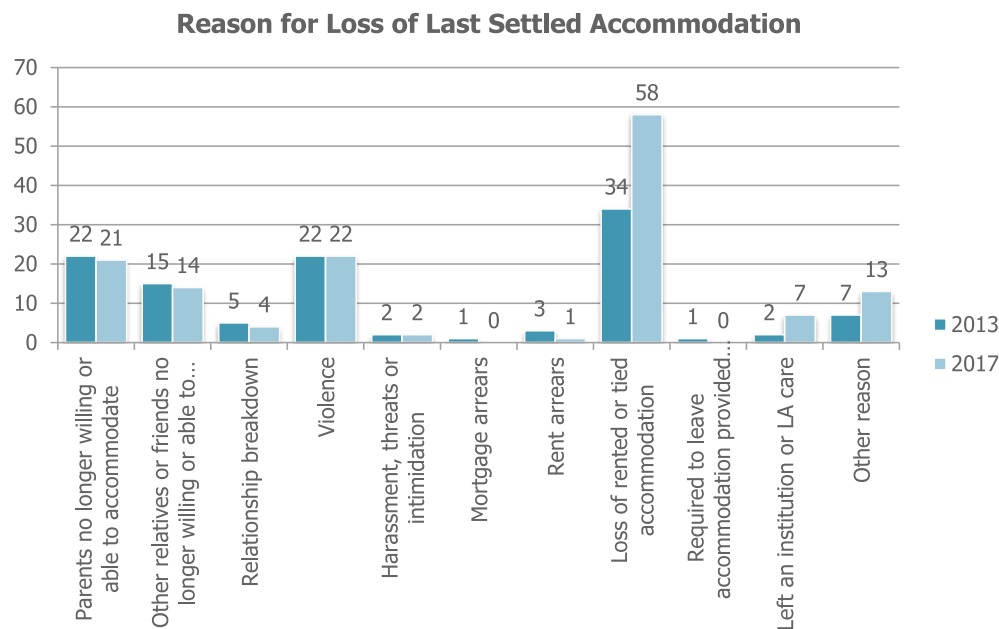


FIGURE 9 - REASONS FOR LOSS OF LAST SETTLED ACCOMMODATION 2013 V 2017





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”).

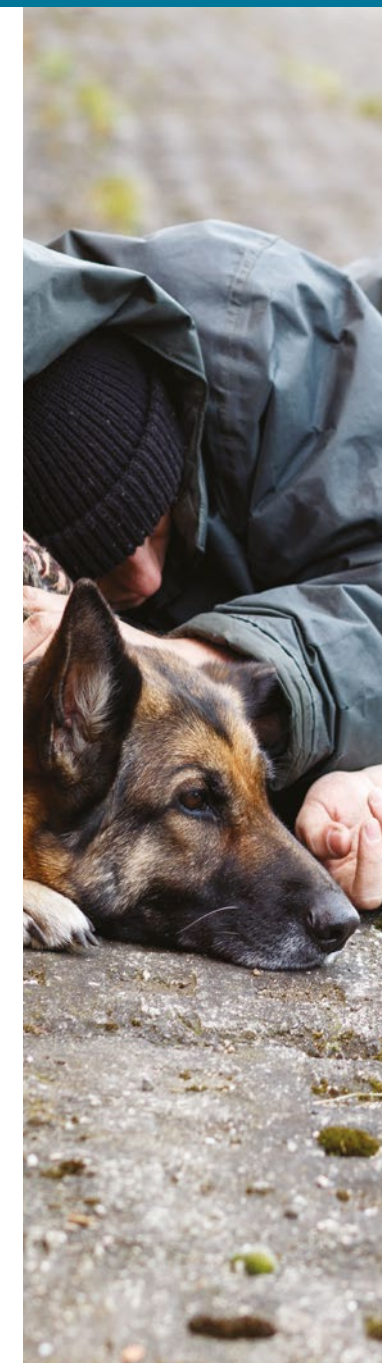


FIGURE 11 – ROUGH SLEEPER DATA

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.



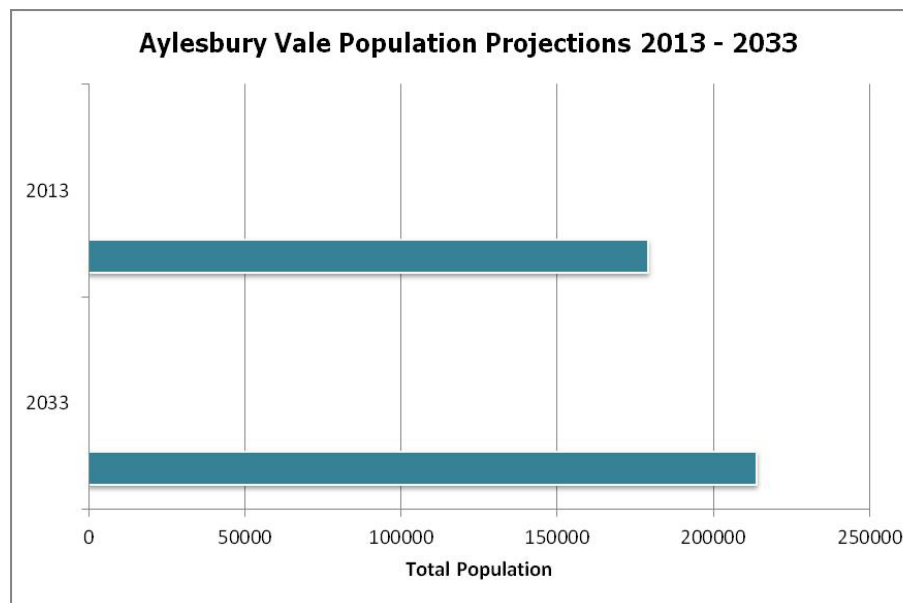
5.4 Projected Future Levels of Homelessness

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 population of Aylesbury Vale is estimated to grow rapidly with the district population projected to have increased by 34789 people by 2033 (FIGURE 12).

The break down of this population across the district in 5-year age cohorts as shown in Figure

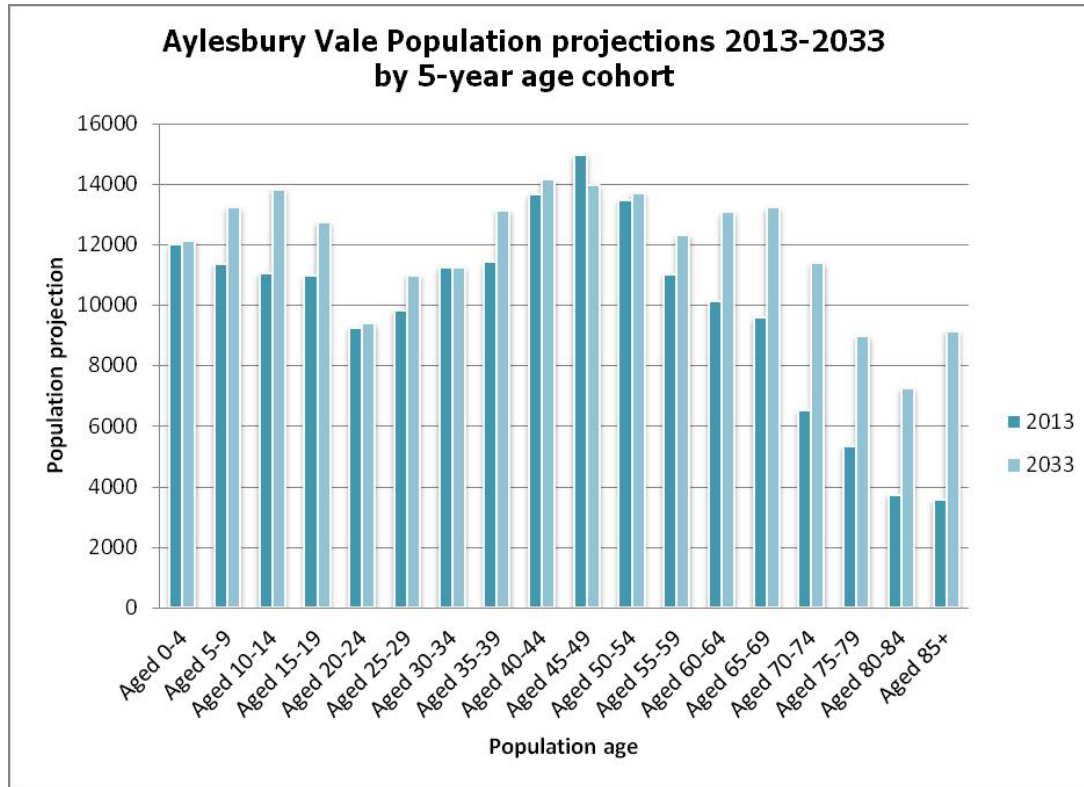
13 shows a dramatic increase in those living to an age beyond 69 years old, with a 74.5% increase for the cohort aged 70-74 and 67.9% increase for those aged 75-79. The most dramatic increases are for those aged 80-84 suggesting an increase of 93.9% and those aged 85+ whose population is projected to grow by 156.7%. For those over 70, this very significant rise is equivalent to an average of around 50 additional persons each year. It will be important to recognise these growth areas and take them into consideration when establishing overall housing requirements for the Vale.

FIGURE 12 POPULATION PROJECTIONS 2013-2033



Source: Buckinghamshire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment Update 2016 (HEDNA)

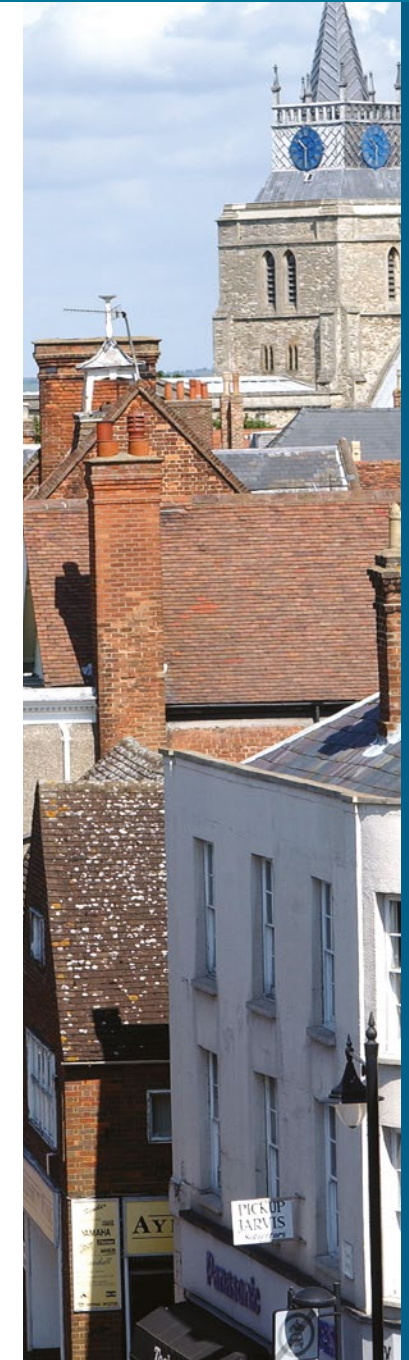
FIGURE 13 POPULATION PROJECTIONS 2013-33 BY 5-YEAR AGE COHORT



Source: Buckinghamshire Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment Update 2016 (HEDNA)

Demographic projections for housing need which supports the emerging Vale of Aylesbury Housing Plan (VALP) propose that Aylesbury Vale will have a housing need for 19,400 new dwellings to be built in the district by 2033. This is based on household projections, taking into account local circumstances

and then allowing additional requirements for economic growth. Because of heightened housing need in neighbouring districts that are unlikely to be met in those districts, the actual proposed number for new dwellings by 2033 in Aylesbury Vale is 28,830.





Whatever the final figures may be in the finally adopted VALP, growth on this scale combined with the unpredictable impact of the Welfare Reforms makes predicting the future in relation to homelessness challenging. 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.

It is also 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 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 also factored in the projected increases in population in Aylesbury Vale, according to the HEDNA projections 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. 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		
	19/20	20/21	21/22
Homelessness applications	219	232	205
Homelessness acceptances	64	84	84
Prevention duty caseload	98	104	92
Relief duty caseload	94	100	88
Requirement for private rented accommodation to meet caseloads (number of properties per year)	61	64	57

6: PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS IN AYLESBURY VALE

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 arrangements have 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 at AVDC 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 qualified Institute of Money 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.

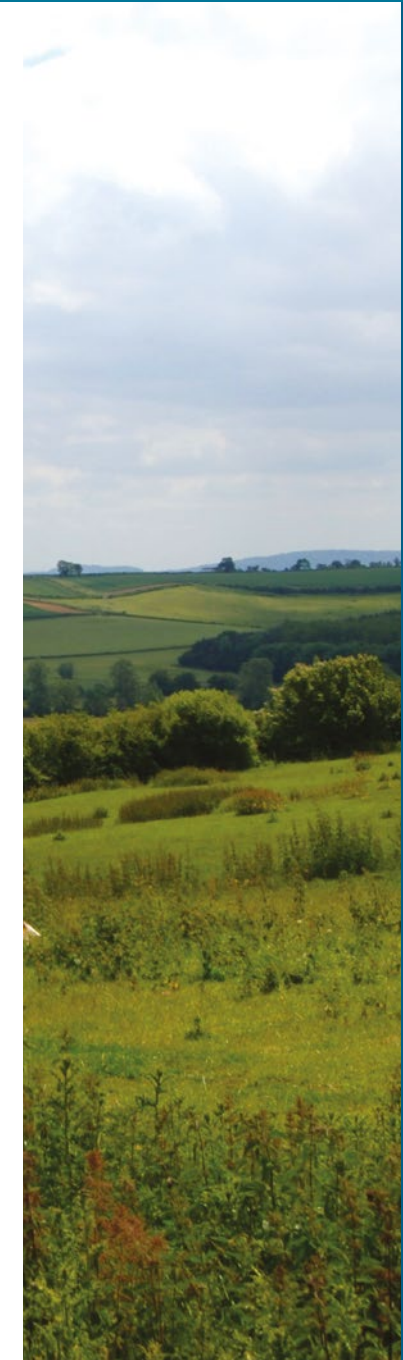
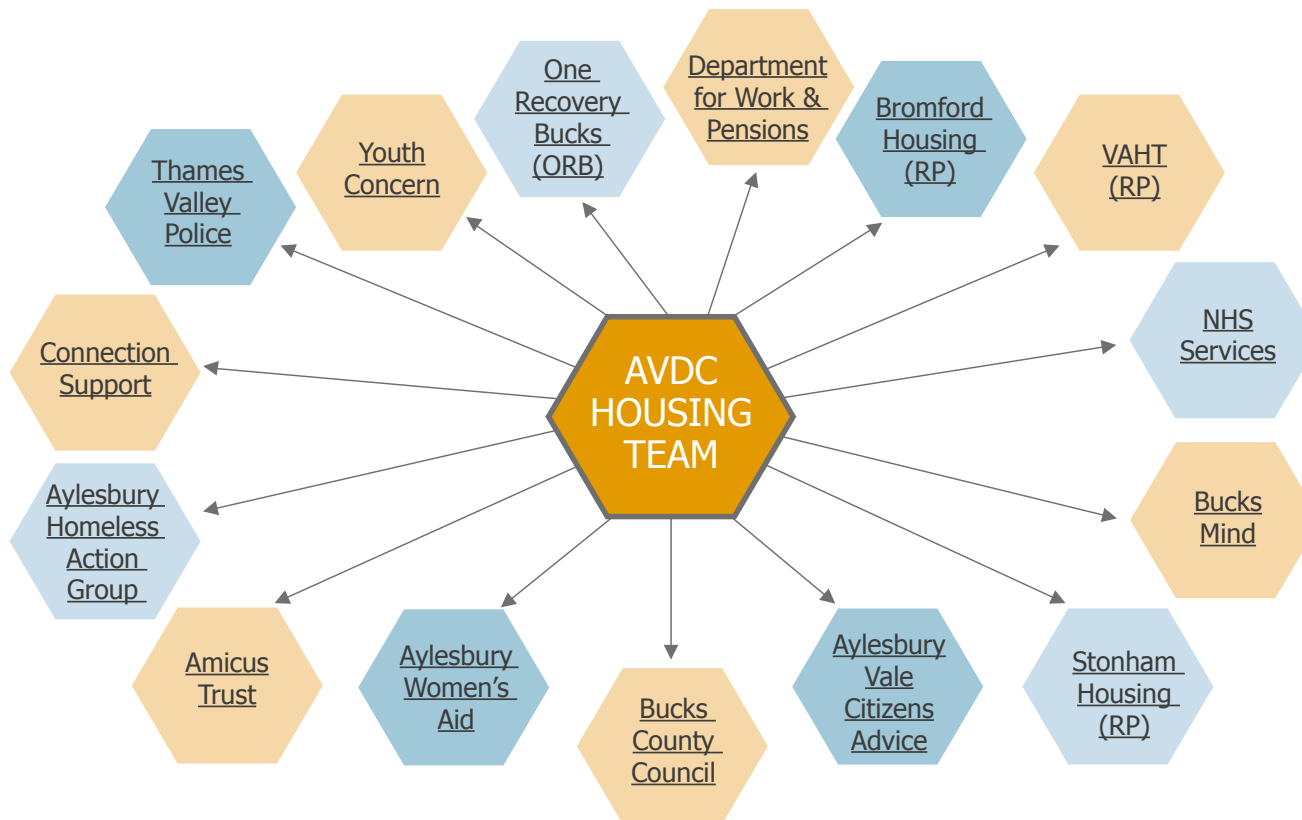
Many of these are essential direct delivery partners and receive funding directly from AVDC to deliver

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 the district's Winter Emergency Provision (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.

7. CONSULTATION DATA AND FEEDBACK

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 Housing Benefit
- 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"> homelessness casework records and other local sources of data; trends in homelessness approaches and in underlying causes; which cohorts may be more likely to become homeless or be threatened with homelessness; the profile of households who have experienced homelessness; equality monitoring data, including that relating to homelessness applications and outcomes; the range of factors that may affect future levels of homelessness; the personal and structural factors that may contribute to people becoming homeless; and, any planned legislation or local policy changes that are likely to impact on levels of homelessness for particular groups in the district. 	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.

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.

Appendix 3

Minutes from the Cabinet meeting held on 20 November 2018

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

Local authorities had 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 actions in place to tackle them. The strategy had to be revised every five years as a minimum requirement. The Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 2022, a copy of which had previously been circulated, had been produced following a review of the housing and homelessness needs of residents within the Vale, and outlined the Council's plans for addressing those needs for the next three years.

The Council had worked with local partners including the Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust, Aylesbury Homeless Action Group, Connection Support and Heart of Bucks. There had been a number of changes in Central Government legislation which had impacted upon the approach taken by local authorities to prevent and deal with homelessness. Official statistics continued to show an upward trend, with the number of homelessness acceptances and rough sleepers rising year on year since 2014.

As the population in Aylesbury Vale continued to rise, so did both house prices and private rents. However, the Vale had experienced the highest increase in housing stock throughout England over the last five years and had the highest ratio of housing delivery to existing housing stock of any authority in the Cambridge/MK/Oxford corridor. This stock increase had included the delivery of 1,546 affordable homes between 2013 and 2018.

There had been an increase of 25% in the number of applicants found as being unintentionally homeless and in priority housing need since 2013. The biggest rise had been in families with dependent children, with the loss of tenancy being the most common for the loss of accommodation. However, AVDC staff had prevented homelessness in respect of 1,674 cases between 2013 and 2017. Compared to the national picture, the homelessness figures in Aylesbury Vale were relatively low. However, the Aylesbury Vale rough sleeping rate in 2017 (per 1,000 households) at 0.26, was marginally higher than the national average of 0.20.

Research and customer insight to inform the Strategy had begun in February, 2018 and had included interviews with customers and a survey of providers offering services to homeless people. A consultation event had been held on 19 April, 2018 and had been attended by 41 delegates from local partnership organisations, both statutory and voluntary. A public consultation exercise had taken place in July/August, 2018. The strategy had been updated to reflect the consultation responses, as well as statutory policy changes.

The strategic vision was to ensure that those who wanted to make the Vale their home should be supported and empowered to do so. The following key strategic priorities had been identified:-

- Priority 1 – To prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Priority 2 – To continue to facilitate and maximise the supply of affordable housing.
- Priority 3 – To respond to the on-going challenges of welfare reform.
- Priority 4 – To contribute to the improvement of health and wellbeing services for people at risk of homelessness.

The Strategy Action Plan, which formed an evolving part of the Strategy, set out what the Council would do to achieve the priorities identified in the Strategy. It would act as a health check on the effective delivery of the Council's service and would be updated quarterly on

the AVDC web site. The Action Plan would be owned by the Homelessness Prevention Forum.

The Strategy had been considered by the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee on 25 September. That Committee had supported the approach taken to its development/review. The Strategy now reflected the views expressed by the Committee.

Since the Strategy had been subjected to consultation, a number of housing related projects had been implemented nationally and locally. These had included the provision of support to recipients of Universal Credit in order to prevent, as far as was possible, financial difficulties that could put their occupancies at risk. The Council had also successfully secured over £500,000 of Central Government funding to provide immediate support for rough sleepers in Aylesbury Vale. It would also increase the amount of assistance that could be given to those at risk and sleeping rough through the winter months. The Council was working with support agencies to develop innovative support solutions. It was necessary to take account of these initiatives as they were being developed and therefore some delegation to the relevant Director was necessary in order to include them within the Strategy.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee be thanked for its input to the formulation of the Strategy.
- (2) That Council be recommended to:-
 - (a) Adopt the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019 – 2022 as part of the Council's Policy Framework.
 - (b) Authorise the Assistant Director for Community Fulfilment, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, to make any minor amendments to the Strategy as might be required to take account of the emerging initiatives referred to above.