

 Executive – 11 March 2015		Agenda Item No. 5
Title	Homelessness Strategy 2015 - 2017	
For further information about this report please contact	Ken Bruno ext 6335 Ken.bruno@warwickdc.gov.uk	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	None.	
Background Papers	Housing Strategy 2014-17 Homelessness Strategy 2010-2015	

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	Yes
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes (673)
Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken	No
The strategy recommended by this report is subsidiary to and complements the council's Housing Strategy for which a full impact assessment was undertaken.	

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Deputy Chief Executive	17/02/15	Bill Hunt
Head of Service	29/01/15	Andy Thompson
CMT	29/01/15	Chris Elliott
Section 151 Officer	10/02/15	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	30/01/15	Andy Jones
Finance	11/02/15	Mark Smith
Portfolio Holder(s)	09/02/15	Cllr Norman Vincett
Consultation & Community Engagement		
<p>Consultation was undertaken with a range of statutory and voluntary providers of services connected with homelessness through the Warwick District Housing Sounding Board. Service users were consulted by way of a questionnaire widely available through the organisations that participate in the Housing Sounding Board.</p> <p>Staff and councillors were invited to provide comments and suggestions on the homelessness review which was also made available on the internet.</p>		
Final Decision?		Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 The council is required by law to have a Homelessness Strategy for the district.
- 1.2 The current strategy was adopted in 2010 and expires on 31st March 2015. A new strategy is therefore required from 1st April 2015.
- 1.3 Previous homelessness strategies have been for a five-year period whereas housing strategies have covered different lengths of time. However it is intended that the next Housing Strategy, due in 2017, will also be for a five-year period. It is therefore proposed that a short two-year Homelessness Strategy be produced and that a combined Housing and Homelessness Strategy be developed from 2017 onwards.
- 1.4 The objectives for the new strategy are:
 - Ensuring accessible and effective homelessness and housing advice & support services;
 - Providing suitable accommodation for all homeless households; and
 - Preventing homelessness.

2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1 That Executive notes the actions taken in respect of homelessness and its prevention as set out on pages 4 and 9 of the strategy.
- 2.2 That Executive approves:
 - The proposal to produce a combined five-year Housing and Homelessness Strategy from 2017 onwards;
 - The Homelessness Strategy appended to this report for the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2017.

3. **Reasons for the Recommendation**

- 3.1 Under the Homelessness Act 2002 the council has duties to carry out a homelessness review for the district and to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review. The council must produce a new homelessness strategy no more than five years later than the adoption of the previous one.
- 3.2 The current strategy was approved in 2010 and runs for the period from 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2015. A new strategy is therefore required to take effect from 1st April 2015 in order to comply with statutory requirements.
- 3.3 The current Housing Strategy runs from 2014 to 2017 while the new Homelessness Strategy would run from 2015 to 2020 if the five-year cycle were to continue. However it is proposed that the next Housing Strategy should also be a five-year strategy and this would then mean that the two strategies would be running for the same length of time but covering different periods.
- 3.4 It is considered more efficient to bring the two together into a single Housing and Homelessness Strategy so that only a single strategic process will be needed and members will be able to take a considered view of the resources available to address all housing needs together rather than having to agree actions on homelessness separately.

- 3.5 It is therefore recommended that on this occasion a short two-year Homelessness Strategy be put in place with a first combined strategy being developed during 2016 to take effect from 1st April 2017.

4. Policy Framework

4.1 Policy Framework

- 4.1.1 The Housing Strategy 2014-2017 was approved by the council early in 2014 and includes an objective to enable and provide services that help people to sustain their homes.
- 4.1.2 The plan for this objective includes an action to review and update the Homelessness Strategy. This report takes that action forward.

4.2 Fit for the Future

- 4.2.1 The Housing Strategy was set within the context of the council's wider policy framework as elucidated in the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and action on homelessness will clearly contribute towards achieving other aims of the SCS.
- 4.2.2 In particular preventing homelessness or assisting those who are homeless into secure, long-term, good quality housing can have beneficial effects upon the prosperity and well-being of individuals and their families by providing a stable home environment from which to obtain and retain employment.
- 4.2.3 The action plan contained within the attached strategy is directed towards the service strand of Fit For The Future in that it seeks to improve services for those who approach the council in need of help and support with their housing problems.

4.3 Impact Assessments

- 4.3.1 The report does not propose new or significant policy changes in respect of equalities.

5. Budgetary Framework

- 5.1 The action plan for the strategy shows which actions can be undertaken within existing resources and which would require new resources. In the latter case bids for resources will be made through the budgetary framework in the usual way and the actions will only be taken forward if resources are approved or can be found by the re-allocation of existing resources or by accessing external resources.

6. Risks

- 6.1 There are no specific risks associated with adopting a Homelessness Strategy. However the strategy contains an action plan with a number of separate pieces of work to be done, each of which will be risk assessed in the normal way as they are taken forward.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

- 7.1 A "do nothing" option is not possible in this case as the council is under a statutory obligation to prepare a Homelessness Strategy.

- 7.2 Periods of other than two years for the strategy have been considered, up to a maximum five years. However this would not generate the efficiency savings of combining the housing and homelessness strategies from 2017.
- 7.3 As part of the consultation process for the strategy a wide range of options for addressing the priorities was considered and this was then condensed into a manageable action plan. The proposed action plan is therefore the result of wide consultation with a range of other organisations and is evidence-based in that it is founded on the homelessness review. It can therefore be seen to be the outcome of a rigorous option appraisal process.

8. Background

- 8.1 The council has for many years had a range of statutory duties towards various categories of homeless people. These are currently set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and are supplemented by a duty to have a Homelessness Strategy for preventing homelessness and securing accommodation, with appropriate support where necessary, for people who are or may become homeless.
- 8.2 To inform the strategy councils may carry out a Homelessness Review and this was done in 2014. The results of this form the bulk of the strategy set out in the appendix and inform the decisions and actions that flow from it.
- 8.3 The review shows a significant increase in the number of people applying as homeless and the numbers being accepted over the period of the last strategy (2010 – 2014). This inevitably translates into an increase in workload for the Housing Advice Team.
- 8.4 The Housing Advice function was reviewed and restructured as part of the wider Housing & Property Services redesign during 2013/14 and 2014/15.
- 8.5 The primary performance indicator for dealing with homeless people is the length of time it takes a council to reach a decision on a case and this is measured in terms of the percentage of decisions that took more than 33 working days. The figures since adoption of the last Homelessness Strategy are as follows:

Financial year	% of decision that took longer than 33 working days
2010/11	38%
2011/12	44%
2012/13	48%
2013/14	36%
2014/15 (to date)	28%

- 8.6 This shows that while performance deteriorated in the first three years it has since improved and is continuing to do so.

Warwick District Council

Homelessness Strategy

2015 - 2017

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Foreword

Warwick District Council (WDC) is committed to tackling and preventing homelessness in the district. Homelessness and insecure housing have devastating effects on hundreds of people across Warwick District each year: they affect people's health, employment opportunities and can have long lasting effects on children.

This is the third Warwick District Council Homelessness Strategy. The two year strategy (2015 – 2017) builds on the successes achieved since the first Homelessness Strategy in 2003. The 2010-2015 strategy improved the service to those experiencing homelessness. Some key achievements were:

- Prioritising individuals seeking to move on from supported accommodation to ensure limited resources in supported accommodation were made available;
- Increasing the provision of debt/money advice to assist with the prevention of homelessness;
- Implementing the Young People's Protocol to ensure those aged 16/17 are assisted with accommodation appropriately.

This strategy has been written to help achieve WDC's Housing Strategy 2014–2017 goal of *"Enabling and providing services that help people to sustain their homes"*. It aims to tackle homelessness via the action plan which is based on a detailed analysis of the district and national homelessness data which highlights a 133% increase in homeless applications since the last strategy and an increase in both private and social landlord evictions. The strategy is set in the context of the effects of the recession, welfare reforms and reduced public spending.

This strategy places a commitment on Warwick District Council to continue to improve housing advice and homeless services in the district. This will be achieved through:

- Ensuring accessible and effective homelessness and housing advice & support services.
- Providing suitable accommodation for all homeless households.
- Continued commitment to the prevention of Homelessness.

Councillor Norman Vincett
Housing & Property Portfolio Holder

Executive Summary

All district councils are under a legal obligation to have in place a Homelessness Strategy for their district. At Warwick our last strategy was for the five-year period from 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2015. We therefore carried out a review of the strategy and of homelessness in our area during 2014 in order to prepare a new strategy to take effect from 1st April 2015.

As with the previous strategy we sought the help and advice of other local organisations engaged in working with the homeless: we did this through the local Housing Sounding Board.

Key findings from the Homelessness Review are:

- There have been big increases locally in both the numbers of homelessness applications received and the numbers accepted by the council.
- We make more use of local authority/housing association accommodation for temporary accommodation than is the case across England.
- Official rough sleeper counts show a 17% increase locally, below the national increase but unofficial records suggest that the count figure may be an underestimate.
- The main reasons for homelessness are "termination of an assured shorthold tenancy" and "parents no longer willing or able to accommodate".
- There has been a substantial reduction in those becoming homeless as a result of "violent relationship breakdown involving partner".
- The main priority need is overwhelmingly the presence of either children or an expected child in the household.
- Physical disability cases increased between 2010 and 2014 while the number of cases involving people with a mental illness fell.
- The number of cases where homelessness was either prevented or relieved increased by 39% from 2010 to 2014, similar to the national increase.
- Ministry of Justice figures on repossession actions show that social landlord actions have increased the most over the past four years. Private landlords have also increased the number of claims made and possessions taken while mortgage actions have reduced.

Based on this analysis we have set three objectives for the new strategy:

- Ensuring accessible and effective homelessness and housing advice & support services.
- Providing suitable accommodation for all homeless households.
- Preventing homelessness.

A detailed action plan has been set out and will be monitored and reviewed by the Housing & Property Services Management Team and progress will also be reported to the Housing Sounding Board.

This strategy will run for two years until 31st March 2017 when we intend to include a new Homelessness Strategy within our next Housing Strategy.

How the strategy was developed

In April 2014 Warwick District Council began a review of its Homelessness Strategy. The strategy was developed in 2009 and adopted from 1st April 2010 to run for five years.

The 2010-15 strategy was developed using a consultative approach, for which a Homeless Strategy Steering Group was set up. This involved representatives from a range of statutory and voluntary sector agencies involved in working with the homeless. Following adoption of the strategy the group had continued to meet as a "Housing Sounding Board" (HSB) for the district and it was therefore logical for this body to lead on the review and development of a new strategy.

We began by reviewing the action plan from the 2010 strategy to identify those actions that had been completed, those which were no longer relevant and those that should be considered to be carried forward into the new strategy. A summary of this work is included in the next section.

A desktop review of homelessness was carried out, which appraised relevant local and national policies and statistics, including data from voluntary agencies. This was circulated to staff and councillors for comment and placed on the internet. The totality of this analysis and consultation work is the council's Homelessness Review 2014 and is included in full within this strategy.

Consultation with service users was considered to be important and a short, simple questionnaire was drawn up to be handed out by relevant organisations participating in the HSB. This exercise ran in tandem with the Homelessness Review.

The HSB then met to consider the findings of the homelessness review and the consultation responses from service users, staff and councillors and agreed new key objectives for the strategy.

A half-day event was held with the HSB to consider each objective and come up with ideas as to how they could be addressed. Ideas were then prioritised and reported back to managers at the council for consideration in relation to the resources likely to be available over the period of the strategy. An action plan was then drawn up.

The final draft strategy was circulated to the HSB for comment and then reported to the Executive of Warwick District Council for formal approval.

Review of the Homelessness Strategy 2010-15

The Homelessness Strategy 2010 – 2015 had five strategic objectives:

- Ensuring accessible and effective homelessness and housing advice services;
- Preventing homelessness;
- Provide suitable temporary accommodation for homeless households;
- Increasing the provision of affordable housing;
- Provide appropriate support for vulnerable people.

Detailed action plans for each objective were set out and there were a number of key achievements:

- Obtaining feedback from customers of the Housing Options Service to inform the future direction of the service;
- Ensuring customers have access to debt/finance advice via referrals to Citizen Advice Bureau;
- Continuing to provide an out-of-hours service for homelessness emergencies;
- Adopting standard housing options interview procedures and a checklist for Housing Advice Officers;
- Producing a procedure manual to cover housing advice, homelessness prevention and housing register services, ensuring quality assurance and monitoring;
- Establishing a Project Board to take forward the provision of an independent Housing Advice Service for young people;
- Developing written information for local landlords and publicising council services to landlords via the website;
- Ensuring access to local advocacy services for customers;
- Promoting and taking forward the Sanctuary Scheme for Domestic Abuse Victims;
- Implementing the Young People's Protocol;
- Maximising access to the Court Desk Service, Repossession Fund and Mortgage Rescue;
- Providing of a Leaving Care Flat to ensure a smooth transition to independent living;
- Prioritising move on from supported accommodation;
- Seeking 40% affordable housing on large new developments;
- Completing a Housing Needs Survey and a Viability Study for the district;
- Extending the Rent Deposit Bond Scheme;
- Improving the way we communicate with private landlords through the formation of a Landlords Forum and Accreditation Scheme;
- Ensuring that the Empty Homes Strategy increased opportunity for households to access accommodation in the private rented sector;
- Continuing of the Council's Incentive scheme to assist tenants who are under-occupying to downsize thereby releasing much needed family sized accommodation for those in housing need;
- Ensuring continued liaison with local Supported Accommodation Providers.

However while the above actions were completed a number were not. This led the Housing Sounding Board to agree that the new strategy needed to have fewer objectives and a more focussed action plan that did not duplicate work being undertaken through other strategies and plans.

Homelessness Review 2014

1 Introduction

Under the Homelessness Act 2002 district councils have a duty to prepare a Homelessness Strategy every five years and, in order to inform this, may undertake a Homelessness Review for their district.

Warwick District Council's previous Homelessness Strategy ran until 2015 and we therefore did a new Homelessness Review in 2014 to help with the preparation of a replacement strategy.

The review contained: a brief summary of national government policy on homelessness; the local policy context; and a range of statistics about homelessness in the Warwick district since the last strategy was introduced in 2010 compared with what has been happening nationally.

Alongside this largely statistical survey consultation was carried out with users of local homelessness services and the action plan from the current strategy was reviewed with local service providers to see how much had been done and whether there were any outstanding actions that should be carried forward into the next plan.

The outcome of this work fed into a session, again involving local service providers, to agree priorities and assess options for actions to include in this new strategy.

2 Government policy

Since the previous Homelessness Strategy was written in 2009/10 there has been a change of government with a new legislative programme. The new government in 2010 made it clear that its overarching objective was seeking economic recovery by tackling the deficit and reforming the public sector finances. The resulting programme included devolution of a range of powers and duties to local government through the policy of localism and significant changes to welfare legislation.

Welfare reform

There have been wide-ranging changes to welfare benefits:

- The amount of private sector rents that can be met by Local Housing Allowance has been reduced;
- The amount that other adults in the household are expected to contribute towards the rent when the tenant claims Housing Benefit has been increased;
- Single people younger than 35 renting in the private sector and claiming Housing Benefit are only awarded the equivalent to the rent for a shared room not for self-contained accommodation. Previously this only applied to people younger than 25;
- Working-age tenants in social housing with bedrooms defined as spare by the regulations have their Housing Benefit reduced by a fixed percentage depending upon how many spare bedrooms they have;
- A number of benefits, including Housing Benefit, are being replaced by the Universal Credit which will be paid direct to the tenant;
- The overall benefit cap restricts the maximum amount of benefit that a household can receive to £500 per week for a family and £350 per week for a single person.

As regards homelessness the **government's priority is preventing and tackling homelessness and rough sleeping**. It provided £400 million funding over the term of the Parliament and established a cross-government working group on homelessness, bringing together ministers from eight government departments.

Specific homelessness policy initiatives include:

- Gold Standard homelessness prevention service. This is a peer-led support scheme providing free training and support to help homelessness teams learn from each other.
- The “No Second Night Out” initiative aimed at rough sleepers in London.
- The Fair Chance Fund - a £15 million payment by results programme aimed at young, homeless people at risk of falling into long-term benefit dependency, health problems and increased crime.
- A capital programme for refurbishment of homeless hostels.
- Allowing local authorities to discharge their duty to homeless people by securing private sector accommodation for them.
- The national Affordable Homes Programme to grant-fund new affordable housing and a range of other initiatives to support the housing market, details of which were set out in “Laying The Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England”.

3 Local policy

The council’s Sustainable Community Strategy sets out its objectives for building sustainable, safer, stronger and healthier communities. The strategy has five themes, each with a separate strategic aim as set out in the following table.

Table 1 - The refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy

Theme	Strategic aim
Prosperity	To improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Warwick District by pursuing a balanced and sustainable growth agenda that delivers improvements in each of these areas whilst protecting those things that make the Warwick District special.
Health & well-being	To enable and encourage the people of Warwick District to have an equal access to a healthy life and sense of wellbeing, ensuring that our actions are aligned with the Warwickshire Health & Wellbeing Board’s Strategy.
Housing	To address the housing needs of those who wish to live and work in Warwick District.
Safer communities	To work in partnership to reduce violent crime, anti-social behaviour and re-offending.
Sustainability	To minimise our use of natural resources and CO2 emissions, improve the energy and water efficiency of our buildings and operations and source as much of our energy as possible from renewable sources. We will also act as a lead in the community on climate change and energy efficiency issues.

The council’s Housing Strategy takes the above framework and applies this more specifically to housing, with three key priorities:

- Enabling and providing services that help people to sustain their homes;
- Meeting the need for housing across the district;
- Raising standards of management, repair and improvement of existing housing and neighbourhoods.

The strategy noted that homelessness enquiries had more than doubled from 2009/10 to 2012/13 and that the numbers accepted as homeless had also increased significantly.

During consultation for the housing strategy the following homelessness-related comments were received:

- There appears to be a big increase in homelessness locally with many people sleeping rough – need research to find out why this is.
- Accommodation for homeless – need a “transit” scheme, also need a foyer for single homeless people.
- Set a Homelessness Action Plan based around: better partnership working; sustainable communities; preventing homelessness; making better use of existing stock; new build; and good practice.

The council took the view that the Homelessness Strategy was the appropriate vehicle for setting out detailed actions on homelessness so the Housing Strategy included a commitment to review and update the Homelessness Strategy by 1st April 2015.

The Publication Draft Local Plan aims to “provide a sustainable level of housing growth (and balance this with economic growth) to reduce the number of people who are currently homeless or living in unsatisfactory accommodation, to meet future housing needs, and to help deal with the issues of need for affordable housing.”

In September 2014 Warwickshire County Council began a consultation exercise over the future of the housing-related support services being funded under the Supporting People. The fixed aspect of the review was that the budget for these services would be reduced over the following four years from £8.6 million to £4.575 million. The consultation was over how this would be achieved: which services would be maintained; which would be done differently and which would cease to be funded. A number of these services are provided to homeless people with support needs.

4 National & local homelessness statistics

The following statistics help to build up a picture of homelessness in Warwick district since the last Homeless Strategy was written in 2010 and in comparison to what has been happening nationally.

a) Levels of homelessness

The council received 708 applications from people applying as homeless in 2013/14. This represented an increase of 133% on the number received in 2009/10 compared to a 26% increase nationally over the same time period. Around half of all applicants were assessed as not homeless, unchanged from 2009/10.

The number of applicants for which a “full” duty was accepted was 129 in 2013/14, almost double the number accepted in 2009/10 compared to a 31% increase nationally. The percentage of all applicants for which a full duty was accepted fell from 21% in 2009/10 to 18% in 2013/14 compared to a national rise from 45% to 47%.

b) Numbers accommodated

The number of homeless households accommodated in temporary accommodation at the year-end increased from 10 at 1st April 2010 to 14 at 1st April 2014. This represented an increase of 40% compared to national increase of 14%.

In terms of current numbers, 14 cases represent 0.23 per thousand households in WDC compared to 2.59 for England as a whole.

The proportion of households accommodated in local authority/housing association stock is considerably higher locally at 71% than nationally (17%).

c) Rough sleeping

The official Rough Sleeper counts over the last four years have been 12, 13, 11 and 14 from 2010 to 2013 respectively.

Table 2 – Rough Sleeper counts 2010 - 2013	
Year	Rough Sleeper count
2010	12
2011	13
2012	11
2013	14

This represents a 17% increase locally compared to a 37% increase nationally. However this should be treated with caution as the local figure is based on very small numbers of cases and is therefore highly susceptible to small errors in the count.

Monthly Night Shelter estimates from October 2013 to March 2014 were 20, 22, 21, 25, 20 and 19. (In total there were 49 different people across the six month period.)

d) Reasons for homelessness

The following table shows all the causes of homelessness that accounted for 10% of more of all cases in 2010/11 and 2013/14.

Table 3 – Main causes of homeless 2010/11 and 2013/14			
2010/11		2013/14	
Cause	%	Cause	%
Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate	28	Termination of assured shorthold tenancy	33
Termination of assured shorthold tenancy	25	Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate	24
Violent relationship breakdown involving partner	16	Loss of rented accommodation (excluding termination of assured shorthold)	11
Loss of rented accommodation (excluding termination of assured shorthold)	10	Relatives/friends (excluding parents) no longer willing/able to accommodate	10
Relatives/friends (excluding parents) no longer willing/able to accommodate	10		

Four of the major causes of homelessness in 2010/11 were also significant in 2013/14. The big change was that cases caused by violent relationship breakdown involving a partner fell from 16% in 2010/11 to just 3% in 2013/14. There was also an increase in the proportion made homeless due to termination of an assured shorthold tenancy and a fall in the proportion due to parents no longer being willing or able to accommodate.

e) Types of priority need

The main reason for priority need is the presence of children/an expected child in the household. Together these accounted for 85% of cases both in 2010/11 and 2013/14.

The proportion of cases where physical disability was the priority need has increased each year, from 2% up to 7% while mental illness fell from 9% to 1%. No other category accounted for more than 2% of cases in 2010/11 or 2013/14.

f) Preventions

The number of cases of prevention/relief increased massively in 2010/11 (from 98 to 269) but fell back in each of the following two years to 108 in 2012/13 before rising again to 136 in 2013/14, a 39% increase over 2009/10.

The overall percentage increase is close to the national situation, where the figure was 38%. However national there was a year-on-year increase throughout the period compared to the fluctuating local position.

g) Ethnicity of accepted homeless cases

The following table shows the ethnic profile of accepted homeless applicants compared with the profile of the Warwick District Council area.

Table 4 – Ethnicity of accepted homeless cases 2013/14		
Ethnic group	Profile of Warwick DC Census 2011	Profile of accepted homeless cases
White	89	84
Black/Black British	1	2
Asian/Asian British	7	5
Mixed	2	4
Other	1	6
Not stated	0	0

The two profiles are broadly similar except that there is a 5% lower proportion of white households accepted as homeless than might be expected and a corresponding 5% higher proportion of those classed as "other".

h) Ministry of Justice repossession action statistics

Table 5 shows repossession statistics from the courts in Warwick district from 2010 to 2013 (full-year figures were not available for 2014 at the time of writing).

Table 5 – Ministry of Justice Repossession statistics in WDC 2010 – 2013					
Repossessor type	Possession action	2010	2011	2012	2013
Social Landlord	Claims	160	160	170	283
Social Landlord	Suspended Orders	96	104	103	149
Social Landlord	Outright Orders	44	42	52	55
Social Landlord	Warrants	77	94	127	142
Social Landlord	Possessions	23	49	36	50
Private Landlord	Claims	33	31	27	28
Private Landlord	Outright Orders	14	24	23	20
Private Landlord	Warrants	0	3	10	9
Private Landlord	Possessions	0	6	3	7
Mortgage	Claims	108	96	80	91
Mortgage	Outright Orders	47	35	33	28
Mortgage	Suspended Orders	34	30	32	30
Mortgage	Warrants	79	85	72	69
Mortgage	Possessions	26	53	29	19
Accelerated Landlord	Claims	15	25	40	25
Accelerated Landlord	Outright Orders	11	18	31	28
Accelerated Landlord	Warrants	0	0	7	6
Accelerated Landlord	Possessions	0	0	4	0

This shows that the number of claims brought against mortgaged properties fell between 2010 and 2013 as did all of the various outcomes. Claims by private landlords fell but this was more than compensated for by an increase in landlords using an accelerated procedure which allows quicker hearings on payment of an additional fee. As regards social landlords there was a substantial increase in the number of claims while the number of possessions more than doubled.

5 Local Agency data

There are several local agencies that provide services for vulnerable people and the homeless in the Warwick district. Some of these have provided data about their work for inclusion in this review which is invaluable in supplementing the council's own statistics. Details are included in this section.

Leamington Night Shelter

Over the six months from October 2013 to March 2014 the Leamington Night Shelter had an average of 78 clients per month of which around 12 per month were new clients. The average number of clients staying each night was eight

Salvation Army Way Ahead project

This provides drop-in advice and activities for people who are homeless, vulnerably housed or struggling with alcohol, drug-use or mental health problems. During 2013/14 it saw an average of 107 users per month.

A snapshot taken in March 2014 showed that of those attending 43% had alcohol addiction; 48% drug addiction; 44% were homeless; 72% had mental health problems. The average number of needs per visitor was 4.27

Mediation Service:

During 2012/13 the Mediation Service worked with 44 parents and teenagers, 24 of whom were serious relationship breakdown and homeless prevention cases. Of these 4 reported improved relationships, 15 reached agreements, 14 accessed support to manage the difficulty while 11 people did not want to engage in mediation.

ROOF Homeless & Housing - advice & support for 16yrs - 19yrs

(The project will work with people up to age 25 years if the client has a disability.)

In the calendar year of 2014 a total of 30 individuals were supported, 19 of those were male and 11 female. Two of the females were pregnant, one had a child and two had a child in care.

The ethnicity breakdown was 23 White British, two White-European, two White Asian/British Indian and one White British/ Black Caribbean.

The individuals were supported in a variety of ways such as, over the phone advice, making a benefit claim, purchasing new clothing, 121 mentoring, filling out referral forms for supported accommodation, moving into supported accommodation, advocacy support with the Police, courts, adult safeguarding, Children's Services, assessment interviews, Priority Families referral and starting Common Assessment Framework (CAF), support around sexuality, food shopping and family mediation to allow the young person to return home.

2014 showed an increase of 155% on the previous year's total of young people supported.

Strategic objectives

In order to set objectives for the new strategy we considered the review of the action plan from the previous strategy, the findings of the homelessness review, the consultation responses from service users, staff and councillors and the views of the HSB.

It was felt that overall the direction of work on homelessness should be unchanged from the previous strategy but that the number of objectives could be reduced by combining some and removing duplication with other strategies and plans that were in place.

As a result of this the following three objectives were defined for 2015 to 2017.

- **Ensuring accessible and effective homelessness and housing advice & support services.**
- **Providing suitable accommodation for all homeless households.**
- **Preventing homelessness.**

Action Plan

A half-day event was held with the HSB to consider each objective and come up with ideas as to how they could be addressed. Ideas were then prioritised and reported back to managers at the council for consideration in relation to the resources likely to be available over the period of the strategy. An action plan was then drawn up. This is set out on the following pages.

The key to delivering on the objectives of this strategy is giving people the right advice at the right time in the right place to prevent homelessness and avoid dealing with people in crisis.

Because the three objectives are to a large extent interdependent and actions often cut across them we have developed a single action plan rather than breaking it down into separate plans for each objective.

Some of the actions will require additional resources to those in current budgets. Bids will have to be made through the council's budgetary framework or alternative resources identified in order to take these forward. This is highlighted in the action plan.

Monitoring and review

The actions from the Homelessness Strategy will be consolidated into the Housing & Property Services Priority Action Plan and managed, monitored and reviewed through the structure in place for the monitoring of that plan.

The Housing Sounding Board will also receive an annual report on progress with the action plan. This will also present an opportunity for new and emerging issues in homelessness to be considered for inclusion in the action plan as and when resources permit.

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2015 - 2017

Ref. No.	Action	Timeframe		Responsibility	Additional resources required?
		Start	End		
HS1	Reviewing and updating literature for Housing Advice Services and making it more widely available, including a Services Directory for the district to be distributed online and in paper form with clear information on people's housing options to prevent homelessness	April 2015	March 2016	Engagement Officer	No
HS2	Investigating whether housing staff can do drop-in surgeries in other agencies' buildings.	August 2015	December 2015	Housing Advice and Allocations Manager	No
HS3	Establishing links with the emerging migrant and black and minority ethnic communities to ensure access to services	August 2015	Ongoing	Housing Advice and Allocations Manager / Engagement Team	No
HS4	Setting up a seminar with voluntary sector organisations to agree housing options	April 2015	March 2016	Housing Advice and Allocations Manager / Engagement Team	No
HS5	Including visits to other agencies in staff training programmes	August 2015	September 2015	Housing Advice and Allocations Manager	No
HS6	Preventing homelessness as a result of eviction or abandonment from Council and Registered Social Landlord accommodation	January 2016	March 2016	Housing Advice and Allocations Manager	No

Ref. No.	Action	Timeframe		Responsibility	Additional resources required?
		Start	End		
HS7	Developing a Mental Health Protocol for homeless people	April 2016	October 2016	Housing Advice and Allocations Manager	No
HS8	Reviewing the approach to people leaving prison - building links with relevant persons in the criminal justice and prison systems	April 2016	March 2017	Housing Advice and Allocations Manager	No
HS9	Developing a clear Protocol for the Council's Housing Management team and Registered Social Landlords with stock in the District on how cases threatened with homelessness involving tenants who are victims of domestic abuse should be dealt with	January 2016	March 2016	Housing Advice and Allocations Manager	No
HS10	Setting up regular partnership meeting to discuss individual cases	October 2015	December 2015	Housing Advice and Allocations Manager	No
HS11	Explore opportunities and prepare bids for additional resources for actions HS12 to HS20	April 2015	October 2015	Housing Strategy & Development Manager	No
HS12	Increasing online housing options.	Year 2 subject to resources		To be confirmed	Yes
HS13	Looking at potential for outreach services and linking these to employment and training advice	Year 2 subject to resources		To be confirmed	Yes
HS14	Investigating the need for an independent Housing Advice Service for Young People	Year 2 subject to resources		To be confirmed	Yes
HS15	Investigating whether lockers could be provided for street homeless	Year 2 subject to resources		To be confirmed	Yes
HS16	Arranging joint training for council housing staff and voluntary sector workers run by an independent provider	Year 2 subject to resources		To be confirmed	Yes

Ref. No.	Action	Timeframe		Responsibility	Additional resources required?
		Start	End		
HS17	Reviewing the accommodation needs of homeless people and considering options for provision	Year 2 subject to resources		To be confirmed	Yes
HS18	Working in partnership with schools and prisons to raise awareness of homelessness – developing a training module for students	Year 2 subject to resources		To be confirmed	Yes
HS19	Exploring opportunities to extend mediation services	Year 2 subject to resources		To be confirmed	Yes
HS20	Setting up robust record-keeping systems for all contacts with rough sleepers	Year 2 subject to resources		To be confirmed	Yes