



Coventry City Council

Housing & Homelessness

Strategy

"To ensure decent homes, housing choice and support for Coventry citizens"

Draft for Consultation

(Consultation will run for 12 weeks from 24th October 2012 to 15th January 2013)

Coventry Housing & Homelessness Strategy

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'Home Sweet Home'
What a way to express your feelings
about the shelter that covers you at night,
To keep you out of the rain
whether it be heavy or light,
The bricks to keep the wind and the cold
from freezing up your toes,
A roof to cover up the house,
a perfect landing for the crows.

I love the place I live in,
a place that understands,
Just when I need happy things
and when I'm feeling sad.
I like to lie down on my bed
and dream my world away,
But I hate it when I leave this place
to start another day.

This place is more than just a box
to shelter me from harm,
This place is something that is me,
happy quiet and calm.

By Kiah Cox
The Westwood School
Winner of the Housing Fair 2009 Poetry Competition

Foreword

Foreword by Councillor Ed Ruane, Cabinet Member (Neighbourhood Action,
Housing, Leisure and Culture) to be inserted.

Setting the Scene

Introduction

This Strategy replaces the Housing Strategy Update 2005 and Coventry in Context 2006. It sets out our vision, priorities and actions for meeting the housing needs of residents in Coventry now and over the next five years. Since the last strategy was produced, a Coalition Government was formed in 2010. This has been followed by the most radical shake-up of housing policy and investment for a generation. The Coalition has introduced different ideas about the way central and local government relate to each other, about giving greater control to local communities and has brought in a number of changes to housing and homelessness. In addition we have also recently undertaken a fundamental service review of the Housing Service. Therefore it is now timely to consider the impact of these changes and incorporate them into the Council's next Housing Strategy.

A new approach....

Until now the Council has approached homelessness through a separate strategy and plan. This Housing Strategy is different because we have combined our housing and homelessness strategies into a single document. This approach means that the Homelessness Strategy can be read as 'part of the bigger picture' within Coventry's wider Housing Strategy and is not seen in isolation from the range of other housing factors that influence homelessness.

It also makes it easier for our customers and partner organisations to understand what we intend to do to address housing issues and tackle homelessness.

In tandem with the Housing Strategy the Council has also developed a Tenancy Strategy as required by the Localism Act 2011 (this is being publicly consulted on separately to the Housing Strategy). Local authorities are required to set out in their Tenancy Strategy the matters to which Registered Providers (RPs) are to have regard when developing their Tenancy Policy, including:

- The kinds of tenancies they grant.
- The circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind.

- The lengths of the terms, if Fixed Term Tenancies (FTTs) are granted.
- The circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy when the existing tenancy comes to an end.

Keeping you informed of progress

We want to ensure that partners and local communities can keep in touch with what we are doing and have the ongoing opportunity to comment and highlight issues as they arise. We will do this through regular bulletins which will be available on our website. This will allow partners to help us deliver our objectives and ensure our targets and priorities continue to reflect local priorities.

It is our intention to keep the Housing Strategy and Action Plan under review throughout the five year period to reflect progress achieved and to enable us to respond to further changes to legislation or policy.

Our Housing Ambition, Themes & Priorities at a Glance

Our **ambition** for Coventry is:

'To ensure decent homes, housing choice and support for Coventry citizens'

The Housing Strategy is centred around four **key themes**. We will be focusing our activities and resources around the **priorities** identified within these themes over the next five years. Our key themes and priorities are set out below:

Theme 1: Increase the supply, choice and quality of new housing.

Our Priorities:

- Optimise opportunities for increasing new affordable housing supply to ensure that the delivery of new affordable housing is at a level that supports the economic growth ambitions of the city.

- Promote balanced and sustainable communities by diversifying the size, type and tenure of new housing, particularly family sized housing.
- Develop new affordable housing to a high quality without compromising the deliverability and viability of new housing schemes.
- Regenerate neighbourhoods where poor quality, low demand housing exists.
- Improve existing site provision to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

Theme 2: Prevent & tackle homelessness – Our Homelessness Strategy

Our Priorities:

- To deliver upon the challenges set out in the Government report 'Making Every Contact Count: A Joint Approach to Preventing Homelessness' (2012).
- Establish a revised process for the assessment, allocation and procurement of temporary accommodation.
- Re-commission external homelessness services which better align with homelessness priorities.
- Review the local social housing allocation system – Coventry Homefinder.

Theme 3: Strive for a healthier and more sustainable City by improving the quality and use of stock

Our Priorities:

- Improve energy efficiency and affordable warmth in the private sector.
- Improve property condition and management standards in the private rented sector.
- Make best use of existing housing by reducing the number of empty properties and addressing issues such as under-occupation.

Theme 4: Encourage balanced, stable and sustainable communities.

Our Priorities:

- Support independent living for vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- Improve housing choice for an ageing population.
- Improve the quality of our neighbourhoods to support safe, inclusive and cohesive communities.

How we have developed the strategy

The themes and priorities have been developed with the participation of residents and our housing partners and therefore embody a real consensus about the challenges and direction for housing in the city (Appendix 4 sets this out in more detail & summarises what our stakeholders have told us). Our themes and priorities have also been aligned with and are built around a comprehensive evidence base.

We consulted through a variety of means, in stages, over the last couple of years. This has enabled us to engage with a variety of residents, organisations and groups. Our consultation and engagement was designed to be as innovative and creative as possible. We used traditional methods such as focus groups and round table discussions and we engaged with local people in the city centre using competitions, suggestion boxes, pin boards and video booths. We found that local people are proud of Coventry and the communities they live in and they want to give their opinion on future housing in the City.

The Coventry Housing Fair - engaging creatively with our citizens

Three very successful Housing Fairs attracted hundreds of people. Residents were able to access a wide range of housing related information and advice including crime prevention, low cost home ownership and energy saving initiatives. As well as this, the Fair enabled us to keep abreast of the housing priorities that were important to local people - this helped us to shape the new Strategy.



Partner stallholders have included Cassidy Group, Orbit Care & Repair, CAB, Housing Law Centre, various Registered Providers, West Midlands Fire Service, West Midlands Police and the Consortium of Social Landlords. Alongside the information and advice, the event featured a school poetry competition – the winning entry is featured in this Strategy.

Innovative partnership working remains integral to the delivery of our Housing Strategy and has become increasingly important with the reduction in resources we have to deliver our priorities.

Why Housing Matters

Housing is important. It is the foundation upon which we build our lives and is interrelated to a variety of other agendas that cut across the themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy (as set out in the Local Policy Drivers section). Improving housing options, conditions and neighbourhoods within the City via delivery of this strategy is essential for economic growth, educational attainment, public health and wellbeing, and community cohesion.

Economic growth, in particular, is a key priority for the City. The delivery of the Housing Strategy will help to attract private investment, which in turn can deliver

sustainable growth and establish an environment where viable businesses can grow and invest. The Strategy is also about taking advantage of investment opportunities as they become available by aligning our housing priorities with economic priorities.

Building on our successes

Since the publication of the last strategy, we've been working with our partners and have made much progress in improving housing in the City – some of the key achievements are summarised below:

- ✓ Our average delivery rate for new affordable housing exceeded our target – over the last 5 years 1,674 new affordable homes have been developed, including 1,222 general needs housing and 452 supported or special needs housing units.
- ✓ The City attracted £43.6m investment from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) during the 2008-11 funding round.
- ✓ Over the last 5 years 705 long-term empty properties have been brought back into use following direct action by the Council.
- ✓ By the end of 2012, 2700 housing association properties and between 200 and 300 privately owned properties will have received energy efficiency improvements through the Community Energy Saving Programme.
- ✓ Between October 2011 and October 2012, over 1,000 free insulation measures were installed at private properties using Carbon Emission Reduction Target funding.
- ✓ 295 private households benefited from Warm Front heating and insulation measures in 2011/12.
- ✓ Over the last 5 years 1,840 properties have been adapted for disabled occupiers and £14m has been spent on Disabled Facilities Grants.
- ✓ Since Coventry Homefinder was launched in September 2007, over 10,850 properties have been let through the system.
- ✓ £340 million has been spent by Whitefriars Housing since 2000 to repair and improve its housing stock in the City.

- ✔ Orbit Care and Repair supported and gave practical help to 1,576 older and vulnerable people during 2011/12 to enable them to live more independently.

Our Challenges

Although we are proud of our achievements the Council faces new challenges and opportunities in order to fulfil its strategic housing role. Since 2008, Britain has been experiencing a severe **economic downturn** which has had an impact on the housing market. Limited lending by banks has affected funding for new housing and the ability of householders to access mortgages and **finance to buy or improve homes**.

The economic downturn, together with **government spending plans and welfare reform** is likely to put further pressures on household incomes which will have a greater impact on vulnerable people. The cuts to public sector spending mean that our collective capacity to respond is also reducing. For example, there is no specific Government funding to support improvements in private sector housing conditions whereas in previous years funding has been available. The Council therefore has limited options in what it can spend and inevitably, our priorities will be targeted to those in greatest need.

Possibly linked to the state of the economy and housing market and the introduction of Homefinder in September 2007, the aspiration to secure suitable social housing is growing. The number of households on the social housing register increased from just under 6,500 in April 2006 (before the introduction of Homefinder), to a peak of over 25,700 in 2009. As at April 2012, the register stood at just over 22,700 and of these, 2,359 were in urgent or extremely urgent housing need (Bands 1 and 2). As there is **limited social affordable housing** available in the City it is clear that the private rented sector will need to play a greater role in meeting housing needs.

Over the coming years, government funding for public services in Coventry will be cut, year on year. The Council will have to find considerable savings while at the same time trying to protect a range of frontline services. The Council Budget

Report 2012/13 forecast revenue budget gaps of £14m and £27m in 2013/14 and 2014/15 respectively. However further changes to local government funding may result in additional funding shortfalls. **Update position to be inserted Dec/Jan.**

The challenging economic climate and cuts in public sector funding will require us to be innovative and creative if we are to turn our challenges into opportunities.

The Fundamental Service Review (FSR)

In light of the financial pressures described above, a review was undertaken of the Housing Service during 2010-12 and implemented in April 2012. This saw a reduction in overall staffing numbers and a rationalisation and refocusing of resources towards the customer. A key strand of the FSR was to promote greater use of self – service and reduce avoidable contact levels through better information, guidance and support. In addition to these changes, the need to achieve value for money and maintain service improvement remains a constant aim throughout this strategy.

Policy Drivers

The National Context

National Housing Strategy

The national housing strategy is set out in Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England, published in November 2011. The national policy drivers for housing are to:

- Increase the number of houses available to buy and rent, including affordable housing.
- Improve the flexibility of social housing (increasing mobility and choice) and promote home ownership.
- Protect the vulnerable and disadvantaged by tackling homelessness and supporting people to live independently.
- Make sure that homes are of high quality and sustainable.

Localism

The Localism Act 2011 sets out the Government's plans to shift power from central government back into the hands of communities and councils. In terms of housing, this includes greater flexibility around how social housing is allocated, changes that allow homeless families to be housed in the Private Rented Sector and the introduction of fixed term tenancies.

Welfare Reform

The Government have introduced a series of reforms to welfare and benefits, including the Welfare Reform Act which received Royal Assent on 8th March 2012. The Act legislates for the biggest change to the welfare system for over 60 years and introduces a wide range of reforms designed to make the benefits and tax credits system fairer and simpler, improving financial incentives to work. The main challenges for landlords, tenants and the Council to consider include:

- Household caps on benefits and the introduction of Universal Credit, which will include a housing element and direct payments to tenants rather than landlords. Figures from the Department of Work and Pensions show approximately 470 households will be affected by the benefit cap in Coventry, all of them large families.
- Housing Benefit property size criteria for working age claimants deemed to be under-occupying in the social housing sector. Initial work done by Whitefriars Housing Group has identified 2,400 tenants that may be affected.
- Changes to Local Housing Allowance, including an increased age threshold from 25 to 35 years under which single claimants are entitled only to the shared room rate. The Department for Work and Pensions impact assessment of the LHA changes estimated that approximately 9,000 claimants could be affected in Coventry.

Affordable Rent

Registered Providers can now use a new type of tenancy where the rent is up to 80% of the market rent, known as 'Affordable Rent.' The additional money is

used to help fund the development of new affordable homes. This is described further in Theme 1. The main issues for the Council to address in relation to Affordable Rents include:

- Ensuring the revenue raised is used to fund the delivery of new affordable housing in the City.
- Assessing the impact of potentially higher rents on affordability for local residents in housing need.

Green Deal

The Green Deal, being introduced by the Government in 2012, intends to reduce carbon emissions by improving the energy efficiency of properties. It provides a means for home owners and landlords to secure capital upfront for energy efficiency measures, which will be paid back by future savings through energy bills. This will mean:

- All households will be able to install energy saving measures without having to find upfront capital.
- An 'Energy Company Obligation' will offer further financial support for vulnerable households and hard to treat homes.

The Green Deal is described further in Theme 3.

Equality Act

In April 2011, a new public sector Equality Duty was introduced under the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires public bodies to give 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in all areas of work including developing policy, delivering services and employing staff. To meet the duty, we will monitor whether the needs of people with protected characteristics are being met and that they have full access to our services. This assessment will be done using tools such as Equalities Impact Assessments, data collection and monitoring the use of and satisfaction with services.

The Housing Strategy will be tested through an Equality Impact Assessment as part of the adoption process. We acknowledge that the Housing Strategy is a high level strategic document, which sets out the overall focus of our work. Therefore, individual policy changes and practices will need to be tested for their impact on different sections of the community.

The Sub-Regional Context

Coventry is part of the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region's **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)**. The LEP brings together private and public sectors along with academic representatives, to expand the economy, create jobs and grow wealth in the region. Housing has a crucial role to play in developing the City's economy and to contributing to sub-regional investment. The LEP's five year strategy sets out its future plans and is driven by the following vision for the Coventry and Warwickshire economy:

"By 2016, through strong private-public sector collaboration, Coventry and Warwickshire will be regarded as one of the best and easiest places in the country to establish, run and grow strong and successful businesses; generating significant new employment and skills opportunities in the area."

The LEP has been awarded £12.8m from the Government's Growing Places fund – designed to kick-start developments and other infrastructure projects. This will help to facilitate the delivery of jobs and economic growth as quickly as possible.

Coventry City, Solihull Metropolitan Borough and Warwickshire County Councils have also signed a **Memorandum of Collaboration**. This statement of intention sets out the principles by which the participating authorities will work together to deliver or commission services. The aim of this is to better deliver efficiency savings and reduce costs whilst building resilience across the participating authorities.

The Local Context

The **Sustainable Community Strategy** (Coventry: the next 20 years) was produced by the Coventry Partnership in 2011. It sets out a vision for Coventry to be 'a growing, accessible City where people choose to live, work and be

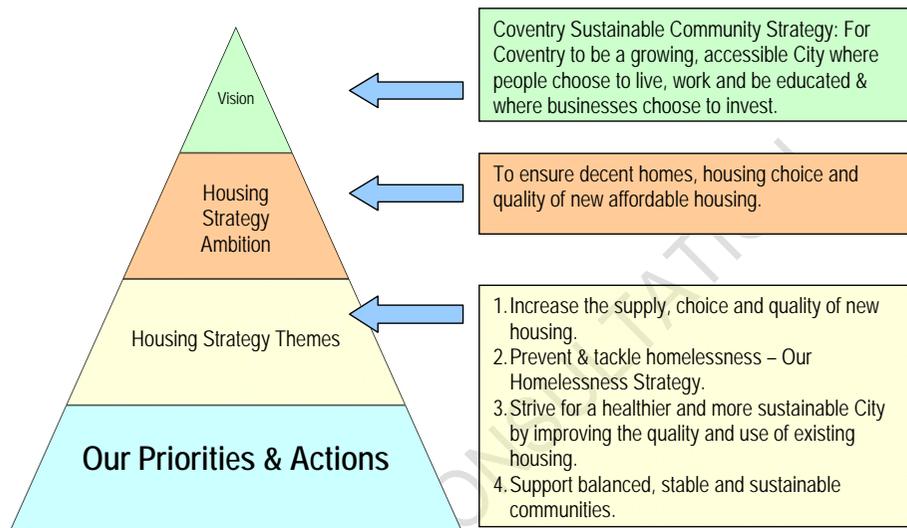
educated and where businesses choose to invest.' The Strategy sets out nine key themes to achieve this vision – 'housing' is included as one of the themes, with the aim of creating:

- A good choice of housing to meet the needs and the aspirations of the people of Coventry.

Through the Action Plan our Housing Strategy sets out how the housing sector contributes to the cross-cutting themes of the Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy.

It is vital when thinking about the Housing Strategy for 2013-2018, that we also consider the impact and influence of housing on other plans and strategies. Key relationships include the **Corporate Plan, Local Development Framework, Coventry Jobs Strategy, Coventry Economic Development Strategy, Coventry Local Investment Plan, Coventry Climate Change Strategy, Health Inequalities Strategy for Coventry, Coventry Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Community Cohesion Strategy and Community Safety Strategic Assessment**. Rather than duplicate what is in these plans and strategies, this Housing Strategy will refer to them as appropriate throughout this document.

How the Housing Strategy contributes to the Vision for Coventry



Format of the Housing Strategy

Themes 1, 3 and 4 of the Housing Strategy are set out under the headings detailed below. Theme 2 (the Homelessness Strategy) follows a different approach and structure in order to comply with Homelessness legislation.

Our Priorities

This section summarises the main focus of our work and the key items to be delivered over the period of the strategy.

What do we Know?

This section presents the key information, drawn from various national and local data, to build a picture of local needs and help explain why this objective has been agreed as a priority for housing in Coventry.

The Issues

This section provides further background information, including the challenges and issues faced in order to address our priorities.

What do we need to do next?

This section states what we will do in order to address our priorities. It highlights the available resources and any particular financial issues or opportunities that may affect how the priorities are addressed.

The Housing Strategy also incorporates three core values that set out the principles of how we will work to deliver our priorities, they are:

- Putting the customer at the centre of everything we do.
- Providing value for money - to make sure that we make the best use of limited resources.
- Innovative partnership working – to strengthen our ability to deliver our priorities and provide the best possible outcomes for residents.

Where appropriate these have been described in more detail under each theme.

Action Plan

The Housing Strategy is supported by an action plan which explains in more detail how we will deliver the Housing Strategy and contribute towards the themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy (this will be developed later based on the results of the draft strategy consultation and will be attached as Appendix 1)



The strategy contains a number of terms which may be unfamiliar to the reader. These terms are explained in the glossary in Appendix 5

What we will do – summary

- Monitor customer satisfaction and equality to ensure that we continually improve our services, eliminate discrimination and promote equality.
- Maintain a robust evidence and research base to inform policy and decisions.
- Work with our partners to evaluate and mitigate the impact of welfare reforms in the City.

Theme 1 – Increase the supply, choice and quality of new housing.

Our priorities:

- Optimise opportunities for increasing new affordable housing supply.
- Promote balanced and sustainable communities by diversifying the size, type and tenure of new affordable housing, particularly family sized housing.
- Develop new affordable housing to a high quality.
- Regenerate neighbourhoods where poor quality, low demand housing exists.
- Improve existing site provision to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers.

What do we know?

- There is a substantial shortage of affordable housing – Coventry requires 1,949 extra affordable homes between 2011 and 2016 (in addition to 1,296 in the development pipeline).
- The amount of capital investment available nationally for new affordable housing has been reduced significantly, from £8.4bn to £4.5bn.
- Over the last 12 years, the list of those seeking social housing has increased by around 300% whilst the social housing stock has declined by around 8% (over 1,400 affordable homes) as a result of the demolition of obsolete stock and tenants exercising their Right to Buy.
- There is a need for all types and sizes of housing in Coventry, however the most acute need is for larger family housing – an estimated 61% of overall housing need and demand is for three and four bedroom properties.
- The average property price in Coventry is £137,792 and the average entry level property costs £97,500 (housing associated with First Time Buyers).

- The average (median) income in the City during 2011 was estimated at £25,984 – this means around 45% of households have insufficient income to afford entry level market housing.
- The difficulty in accessing mortgage finance coupled with the requirement for larger deposits has led to an inability for many potential First Time Buyers to purchase properties.
- There is an identified need to refurbish or remodel the Council owned Gypsy and Traveller site.
- Despite the recession an average of 335 new affordable homes per year have been delivered over the last five years, although there is uncertainty over the future rate of affordable housing delivery.
- The population of Coventry has grown by approx 5.2% since 2001 to 318,600 and is projected to grow to 334,500 by 2028 (based on a level of economic growth that is expected for Coventry).

The Issues

Background

The Council is committed to delivering jobs-led economic growth. As housing growth contributes to delivering this vision it is essential that economic priorities and housing investment are aligned. Various factors have an impact on the supply of housing: the availability of land and finance to develop it, the buoyancy of the market, the amount buyers are prepared to pay, density levels, and planning policies. Against the background of continuing housing market uncertainty and constrained grant funding for new affordable housing, the Council will need to take a more proactive and innovative approach to deliver homes of different sizes and types, for a range of incomes. This means working within the context of current market conditions to ensure the continuing supply of affordable housing.

Affordability

The tightening of lending criteria by many banks and building societies has had a significant impact on the affordability of market housing. First Time Buyers (FTB)

are particularly affected as they are more reliant on flexible lending criteria and often have insufficient savings for a deposit. There are several Government schemes designed to give FTB a route into home ownership. The Council through its affordable housing policy has been able to assist aspiring home owners, who cannot afford to buy market housing, to gain access to various intermediate housing options. A growing number of authorities are also now using their financial assistance powers to support mortgage provision, either individually or in collaboration with banks and building societies.

Demand for Affordable Housing

The 2012 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) indicates that an additional 649 affordable housing units are required annually. This includes 1,296 units (259 annually) that have received planning permission but have not yet been built. An extra 1,949 affordable homes are required from 2011 to 2016 (390 annually) to ensure we meet current and future need. The level of affordable housing need represents an increase of approximately 30% on the level of need identified in the 2008 SHMA study and highlights the growing pressure on affordable housing in Coventry. This is supported by evidence from the Homefinder Register. In April 2012, there were 22,718 households on the housing register, of which 2,359 were in urgent or extremely urgent need, but only 2,299 properties became available for letting in 2011/12. This demonstrates that the demand for affordable housing vastly outweighs the supply.

Although there is a need for all types and sizes of affordable housing in the City, there is an acute need for more larger family homes. This is because there is an under-supply of larger family homes within the existing stock and these do not often become available for re-let. In terms of the type of social housing properties that became available through Homefinder during 2011/12, 68% were flats or maisonettes. In terms of the size of social housing properties that became available during the same period, 48% were studio or one-bedroom properties suitable for one or two occupants only and only 16% of properties had three or more bedrooms. This imbalance of flats and smaller properties means that in

general larger families have to wait longer for a suitable home to become available.

The SHMA estimates that 61% of overall housing need and demand in the City is for family housing (3 bedrooms and larger). This is further evidenced by the Homefinder Register, which shows that in April 2012, 3,549 households were registered as requiring family housing of 3 or more bedrooms whereas only 372 family homes of 3 bedrooms or larger were advertised in 2011/12. Of the 3,549 households, 730 (21%) were registered as being in urgent housing need. The SHMA estimates that it would currently take around seven years to meet the urgent need for housing of four or more bedrooms based on the turnover of social housing stock.

Applicants needing large family homes also have difficulty in being able to afford suitably sized larger properties in the private rented sector. This is likely to be exacerbated by the reductions in Local Housing Allowance rates under the Government's programme of welfare reforms.

Affordable Housing Funding

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) grant (for 2011- 2015) which has been allocated for affordable housing on identified sites in the City is £5.8m, compared to £44m during the previous four year period. Funding has also been allocated to bring 47 empty properties back into use (see Theme 3); to partly refurbish the site for Gypsies and Travellers (covered later in this section); and to develop a new homelessness centre of around 65 units to replace 'The Chace' homeless hostel (through Homelessness Change funding). At this stage, it is unclear what the Government's funding plans for the post-2015 period will be.

The Affordable Homes Programme 2011-2015 will enable Registered Providers to deliver 251 new affordable homes across the City over the lifetime of the programme compared to 1,114 units funded by the 2008-11 programme.

The Government has introduced a new tenure called 'Affordable Rent,' with the aim of sustaining development despite the sharp reduction in capital grant funding. Registered Providers are now able to charge up to 80% of market rents on new developments and a proportion of their re-let housing. The additional income can then be used to enable affordable housing development. The HCA's new approach to investment means there is a presumption against grant funding from central government for social rented housing (apart from exceptional cases) – the HCA programme will now mostly only fund 'Affordable Rent' properties and intermediate housing.

The Council prepared a Local Investment Plan (LIP) for Coventry in 2010 in conjunction with the HCA. This sets out the agreed spatial and thematic priorities for regeneration and housing investment priorities for 2011-2015. The priorities have been determined to ensure that Coventry can take advantage of its economic potential and enable the City to accommodate economic growth.

Local Planning

The Council is currently preparing the Local Development Framework (LDF) for the City and the Core Strategy is the primary strategic document in the LDF. The emerging Core strategy, scheduled for adoption mid 2013, considers the number and location of additional homes (market and affordable), in addition to the development of infrastructure and economic growth, within the City up to 2028. Taking into account the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the recommendations of the SHMA, the responses to public consultation and the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal, the Council consider the requirement of 11,373 new homes (both market and affordable housing) between 2011 and 2028 to be achievable and in keeping with the overarching principles of this Core Strategy.

As economic growth is an important issue within the Core Strategy, we need to give careful consideration to any housing that comes forward as part of future developments in terms of the location, design, type and tenure mix. We also

need to consider the demographic changes and identified local need, in particular the **housing needs of vulnerable or marginalised groups covered in Theme Four**.

Until the Core Strategy is adopted, the Coventry Development Plan (2001) will continue to set out the current planning policy for the City. On private development sites above a certain threshold size, the developer is expected to provide affordable housing through a Section 106 agreement. The current planning requirement is for 20% or 25% of the development to be affordable housing on developments of 25 or more dwellings (depending on the area of the City). The draft Core Strategy proposes alternative options through planning gain, which may result in changes to the percentages and thresholds to 25% in the mid-value areas of the City and 35% in the higher value areas.

Development Land

The Council's updated Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2012 (SHLAA) establishes the most up to date position in terms of land available for housing development. This identifies a supply of 15,063 dwellings, of which 85% are on brownfield land. Of the total land identified within the SHLAA, 6,589 are considered deliverable within the next five years (2012-2017), this is more than twice the level required by the draft Core Strategy and represents a flexible land supply position.

Since the credit crunch land and sales values have inhibited speculative development in the City, although contrary to trends elsewhere a number of stalled major residential development sites have re-started within the last two years or so. This has seen growth in net completions year on year since 2009 with the number of net completions in 2011/12 being the 3rd highest annual completion rate in the last 20 years. This suggests that development viability is improving and that the volatile market experienced since 2008 may be stabilising. The challenge for this Housing Strategy and the Council's wider planning policy is to provide sufficient flexibility to allow developments to progress and deliver appropriate types and tenures of affordable housing that respond to changing housing needs, housing market conditions and site constraints. This is important

to avoid undermining site viability that may otherwise prevent sites coming forward and stifling new development.

Design of New Housing

New housing is increasingly being built to higher standards especially as a result of changes in Building Regulations and targets for implementing renewable energy source and Green Deal objectives. It is also important that new housing is suitably designed to cater for the everyday living needs of the occupants and provide flexibility for future changes in family size and circumstances, without the need for them to move unnecessarily, thus contributing to long term sustainability.

Standards that are important include Lifetime Homes, Building for Life, Secured by Design and the Code for Sustainable Homes. It is generally accepted that we need to 'future proof' housing built in Coventry. However, it is also recognised that in a climate of reduced public sector funding, we need to carefully consider our role in promoting higher standards particularly where the cost of higher standards may compromise the deliverability of new affordable housing.

Pioneering new homes at Sampson Close - Passivhaus development



Orbit has invested £3m to build 23 new affordable homes at Sampson Close, which also received funding from the HCA. This was the UK's largest Passivhaus development and was the first social housing scheme in the Midlands to be Passivhaus certified. Orbit is working with Coventry University to monitor the effectiveness of the pioneering new homes. The environmentally friendly homes built using innovative energy efficient technologies will reduce residents' energy consumption and therefore their fuel bills.

New Homes Bonus

Introduced in April 2011, funding from the New Homes Bonus provides an incentive for councils to provide new homes. For each new home delivered or empty property brought back into use, councils receive the national average of Council Tax for that property per annum over a period of six years. In addition, there is a flat rate of £350 per annum payable over six years for each additional affordable home delivered.

Regeneration

In areas of the City such as Wood End, Henley Green, Manor Farm, Hillfields, Stoke Aldermoor, Canley and Willenhall weaker housing markets are evident and characterised by high levels of deprivation, tenure imbalances and obsolete stock. New housing is an essential part of wider regeneration programmes aimed at meeting the needs and aspirations of differing households and is vital to creating mixed, stable and sustainable communities. This requires a move away from mono-tenure housing provision towards a more diverse housing offer in

terms of the type and tenure of housing. Ongoing programmes have already been successful in providing greater tenure diversification, re-balancing housing markets and reducing vacancy rates within the social sector. Demolition programmes of obsolete and low demand properties have supported this and together with regeneration work to date, have assisted in driving a 45% reduction in long-term vacant dwellings between 2004 and 2011.

Gypsy and Traveller Provision

The Housing Act 2004 included a statutory requirement to undertake an assessment of the needs of Gypsies and Travellers known as a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). The National Planning Policy for Traveller sites (March 2012), which supplements the NPPF provides guidance on planning for Gypsy and Traveller sites.

The Council owns and manages one site in the City which did provide 22 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers. A GTAA was completed in 2008 and recommended that as the site is in a poor state of repair there is a need to remodel and refurbish the site. The study acknowledges that many Gypsy and Travellers in the City meet their accommodation needs in permanent (bricks and mortar) housing and that there is no additional requirement for pitches between 2007 and 2017 as long as the improvements are undertaken on the existing site.

What we will do next?

Affordable Housing Supply

The Housing Strategy fully supports the LDF and we will continue to work closely with planning colleagues to deliver affordable housing. There are planning permissions in place for 1,296 additional affordable homes in the City which could be developed over the next 5 years by both developers and Registered Providers. Several sites are either now being developed or are expected to commence within the next two years where RPs have HCA grant available. In addition developers are building on major brownfield sites (including Bannerbrook Park, the Brown's Lane former Jaguar site, New Century Park, New Stoke Village

and the WEHM regeneration area). The delivery of affordable homes will largely be reliant on when the developers concerned are able to commence building work taking into account market conditions.

We have set an **annual housing target of 649 additional affordable homes** based on the findings of the SHMA and what can be realistically achieved without constraining the overall delivery of housing in the City. This target includes the 1,296 in the development pipeline. The private rented sector will also play a much greater role in the provision of affordable housing to meet our target – this is described in more detail in Theme 2.

Once the new Core Strategy has been adopted we will be working with planning colleagues to develop further guidance around the policies and rationale for affordable housing in the City in an updated *Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document*.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Council is currently examining the potential of introducing a CIL, which will secure funding for key infrastructure requirements across the City. Over the coming years this is expected to largely replace traditional Section 106 (S106) contributions for infrastructure, although S106 agreements will remain in place to secure affordable housing. If introduced in Coventry, the impact on development viability will need to be closely monitored to ensure it does not compromise affordable housing provision. Under planning regulations new affordable housing will not be required to pay CIL.

Maximising Funding Sources & Other Resources

We remain committed to delivering new affordable housing in the City to meet our housing needs and will be exploring innovative and creative methods to supplement provision through the current Affordable Rent programme and Section 106 agreements. This is vital if we are to rise to the challenge of developing ways to increase the affordable housing supply at a difficult time of

reduced public sector funding. We will, therefore, explore a range of funding sources and methods including:

- Planning Policy – affordable housing secured through planning conditions and Section 106 agreements.
- Recycling grant funds held by Registered Providers, including grants recycled through the sale of shared ownership properties.
- Local authority funding, e.g. cash receipts collected on an exceptional basis in lieu of affordable housing being provided on site.
- Funds raised by Registered Providers under the new Affordable Rent programme.
- Make best use of council land and assets.
- Assisting groups interested in self-build and custom-build in line with national housing policy, where people purchase land to build or commission their own homes.
- Maximising the number of empty properties brought back into use as affordable housing.

Diversifying the size and tenure

Tenure mix

In terms of the tenure mix, the SHMA recommends a 50:50 tenure split between social or Affordable Rented housing and intermediate housing. We will set out guidance on the preferred tenure mix of affordable housing through the new Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document mentioned earlier.

Size mix

For affordable housing to be built on major new residential development sites (whether through grant funding or Section 106 agreements), we will set out guidance on preferred unit sizes of affordable housing through the new Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

Based on the SHMA recommendations for a mix of affordable housing required to meet need and address imbalances in the overall stock, we will propose that

development schemes will include the following affordable housing target mixes (expressed as a percentage of the total number of affordable dwellings in a scheme):

- 1 bedroom - 15%
- 2 bedroom - 30%
- 3 bedroom - 35%
- 4 bedroom - 20%

Due to the imbalance of apartments in the social sector described earlier, further apartment provision in that sector in areas of existing over supply will be discouraged. The exception will be where a small number of purpose designed apartments are required to meet identified strategic priorities for supported housing or disability needs.

Working in Partnership

We will examine new ways of working with our partners including neighbouring Councils, Registered Providers, the HCA, voluntary groups, private developers and lenders. This is important to demonstrate the investment potential of Coventry. It will also strengthen our understanding of the needs of private developers and their development finance providers, as well as the barriers they experience when developing new housing. In turn this will help to identify new solutions to increase the housing supply.

Design quality

We will strive to improve standards of design in new affordable housing especially in relation to space and ergonomic use of dwellings as well as to provide for long term sustainability and flexibility in use. In the climate of reduced public sector funding we will need to take a balanced approach to the cost and quality of new homes where this affects the viability and deliverability of new housing schemes.

We will, however, require all new homes to achieve the equivalent of Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and Level 5 from April 2016 to comply with the emerging Core Strategy Policy EM1.

We will also expect all new rented homes in the social sector to be designed to Lifetime Homes Standards. This is essential to long-term sustainability so that a home can be adapted to suit the changing needs of a household over time. Housing designed to Lifetime Homes Standards can cater for both shorter term mobility difficulties and permanent disabilities without the household necessarily having to move.

To supplement Building Regulation requirements for all new homes to be wheelchair accessible, we will also promote the development of purpose designed wheelchair homes – this is discussed further in Theme 4.

Improved standards are expected to form part of new Supplementary Planning Documents issued under the Core Strategy when it is adopted.

Gypsies and Travellers

Our 2008 GTAA concluded that there was no requirement for additional pitches in Coventry. We will refurbish or remodel the only Council owned site to provide fewer but larger pitches, better meeting modern design standards.

Development Land

The Core Strategy will form the basis for leading new residential developments over the course of the plan period. It will also be supported by a Site Allocations Development Plan Document and City Centre Area Action Plan. Together these documents will add certainty for the development industry and help provide a solid base for future development in the City. To help support continued residential development the Council is committed to regularly updating the SHLAA and will maintain a robust and credible housing land supply.

Regenerating Priority Areas

In line with the priorities identified in the LIP, we will continue to prioritise the provision of new housing in identified regeneration areas in the City Centre, WEHM, Canley, Stoke Aldermoor and Foleshill. This will provide a projected 9,530 properties including an estimated 2,300 affordable homes. The continuation of these regeneration programmes is essential to deliver Core Strategy objectives. This is to re-vitalise these areas by strengthening housing markets, providing an improved housing base to support jobs led growth, addressing deprivation and broadening housing choice through a greater mix of dwelling types and tenure diversification.

What we will do – summary

- To support economic growth we will aim to meet our affordable housing target and keep the target under review.
- Explore alternative funding sources and methods to enable affordable housing developments.
- Contribute to diversify the housing stock and meet housing needs by achieving the right tenure, size and proportion of affordable housing on new developments.
- Negotiate to improve the percentage of larger family homes delivered as part of the Affordable Housing Requirement.
- Explore a new partnership model for investment in housing development.
- Continue to support regeneration programmes in the City.
- Take a balanced approach to improving the design of new housing.
- Identify opportunities to assist First Time Buyers.
- Refurbish or remodel the Siskin Drive Gypsy & Traveller site.
- Work with Planning to develop a new Supplementary Planning Document setting out guidance on affordable housing in the City.

Theme 2: Prevent & Tackle Homelessness – *Our Homelessness*

Strategy

Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all authorities to periodically develop a strategy to prevent and reduce homelessness, based on a review of the homelessness situation in the area.

This is Coventry's third Homelessness Strategy. This Strategy will allow us to meet our duty under the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Code of Guidance on Homelessness 2006, which is to review homelessness in the area and produce a strategy for addressing homelessness. The review is attached as Appendix 3.

For the first time our Homelessness Strategy has been included as a specific theme within the broader Housing Strategy instead of being developed as a separate document. This approach means that the Homelessness Strategy can be read as 'part of the bigger picture' within Coventry's wider Housing Strategy and is not seen in isolation from the range of other housing factors that influence homelessness. It also allows the aims and priorities to be aligned with other key plans and strategies that influence both the Housing Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy (as described earlier in 'Setting the Scene').

We recognise the detrimental effects that homelessness can have on someone's life; it can affect their health, employment, learning and overall well being. Given the detrimental effects of homelessness, it is preferable that services are provided to prevent homelessness wherever this is possible. There is also a significant monetary cost for households and for the Council via its statutory duties.

Therefore, it is of key importance that Coventry has a robust strategy that works to develop services to prevent homelessness and assist those who are in housing need. The Council has legal duties towards certain groups of homeless

households, but the scope of this strategy is to cover all forms of homelessness, and importantly to prevent homelessness wherever possible.

Policy Context

The Government has embarked on a programme of reforms to housing policy and welfare that will have an impact on homelessness and housing need. This national context in relation to homelessness is summarised below, and is covered in more detail in the Homelessness Review (Appendix 3).

One of the biggest challenges which must be addressed in this Homelessness Strategy is how we deal with the effects of these reforms and the expected increase in the risk of and level of homelessness that may result. This is in the context of reduced public spending and the wider impacts of the recession.

National Context

Welfare Reform

The impact of welfare reform is on a household's income and therefore their ability to meet housing costs. The housing related reforms that may have a direct impact on homelessness include:

- Changes to Local Housing Allowance.
- Introduction of size criteria for working age social tenants who require Housing Benefit to meet the costs of their rent.
- Overall benefit cap of £500pw for families and £350pw for single adults.
- The introduction of Universal Credit.

Localism Act 2011

Key measures with regards to homelessness and housing include:

- The option for local authorities to discharge the main homelessness duties with the offer of private rented sector housing, without the agreement of the homeless household. In doing so local authorities must be satisfied with the suitability of the accommodation in terms of affordability, property condition and household circumstances, alongside the requirement for a minimum 12-month tenancy.

- The introduction of new Fixed Term Tenancies enabling social housing landlords to offer shorter tenancies (minimum of five years fixed term, or two years in exceptional circumstances. For Registered Providers, this has been implemented through changes to the Regulatory Standards).
- A duty for local authorities to publish a Tenancy Strategy to provide a framework for Registered Providers to develop their own Tenancy Policies (described previously in 'Setting the Scene'). A key issue for homelessness is the manner in which Fixed Term Tenancies are brought to an end. The Tenancy Strategy is being developed in tandem with our Housing Strategy and will be available on our website early next year.
- Greater flexibilities to set social housing allocations policies that are appropriate to the local area.

Local Context

Housing Fundamental Service Review

As detailed in the section 'Setting the Scene', a Fundamental Service Review (FSR) of the Housing Service was undertaken during 2010-12 and implemented in April 2012. With particular relevance to homelessness, this involved restructuring the Housing Options Team to enable resources to be refocused towards the customer together with a greater emphasis on the customer being self-sufficient. Roles were redefined to provide: initial expert advice and assistance (First Response); homelessness prevention & assessment; and assistance to households in need to enable them to access the Private Rented Sector.

Access to Private Rented Properties (APRP)

As part of the FSR a new team of three officers has been set up to enable people in housing need, including those that are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to access the private rented sector. The team will administer the Access to Private Rented Properties (APRP) scheme which provides a non-cash rent deposit guarantee on behalf of the tenant to replace the usual deposit required by private landlords. The team will also provide advice and support to both tenant and

landlord, a property inspection service, mediation where necessary, and liaise with the Housing Benefit Team.

Homelessness Commissioning

As well as providing direct provision of homelessness services through its Public Safety & Housing Department, the Council commissions a significant homelessness services programme from external third sector organisations.

This programme includes a rough sleeper outreach service, direct access hostels, support for homeless households in temporary accommodation, a bond scheme, support for homeless individuals (both male & females) and move-on support. These services include both accommodation based and floating support services. Seven third sector providers have been commissioned through thirteen separate contracts to provide the external homelessness commissioned services programme.

The external homelessness commissioned services programme is funded from former Supporting People funding. Although this funding is no longer 'ring-fenced', the Council has currently committed to continuing to fund the external programme and maintain the priority given to this area of work. The programme is currently being reviewed and will be re-commissioned during 2013.

How we have developed the Homelessness Strategy

In developing this Homelessness Strategy, we have looked at local and national data on homelessness, good practice from around the country and worked in collaboration with regional partners and homelessness service providers.

This draft Strategy will be widely consulted upon with stakeholders including Registered Providers, third sector organisations working with people in housing need, internal council departments and service users.

What do we know – Homeless Review summary

The Homelessness Review provides up to date information about:

- The current and potential future levels of homelessness.
- The needs of homeless and potentially homeless households.
- The services that are provided and activities that are carried out to tackle and prevent homelessness, including gaps in provision.
- The resources available to the Council and its partners to deliver these services.

This information has informed the production of the Homelessness Strategy. Key issues arising from the Homelessness Review include:

Needs Mapping

- During 2011/12, 1146 households approached the Council for assistance and completed a homelessness application. Following assessment, 576 were found to be homeless, eligible, in priority need and not intentionally homeless (known as 'Statutorily Homeless' and owed the main homelessness duty).
- The majority (67%) of these were households containing dependent children.
- There has been an increase in the number of households made homeless when a private tenancy (assured shorthold tenancy) comes to an end.
- 523 households required temporary accommodation.
- During 2011/12, 1603 clients accessed homelessness services commissioned by the Council and provided by external organisations.

Service & Resource Mapping

- The Council provides advice and assistance, carries out homelessness assessments, provides temporary accommodation when necessary, assists in accessing the private rented sector and operates the Coventry Homefinder choice based lettings system.
- The external homelessness commissioned services programme is funded from former Supporting People funding. The programme currently provides 230 units of accommodation and 263 units of floating support.

Internal & External Consultation

Consultation with service users and providers of homelessness services identified that:

- There is a need for a single point of access to homelessness services.
- There is a need for homelessness services to be delivered in a more co-ordinated, joined-up way.
- A one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate for all client groups.

Identification of Service Improvements & New Service Provision

Several gaps in services were identified, particularly:

- Services for women.
- Services for clients with high/complex needs.
- Support for households placed in temporary accommodation.

In addition, the range of homelessness prevention measures available could be improved in line with the particular emphasis on prevention in *Making every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness* (Aug 2012).

Our priorities

On the basis of the findings of our review of homelessness in the City and taking into account national policy guidelines, the Homelessness Strategy focuses on four priorities.

Our Homelessness Priorities:

Overarching Priority

To deliver upon the challenges set out in the Government report 'Making Every Contact Count: A Joint Approach to Preventing Homelessness' (2012).

Local Priorities

- To establish a revised process for the assessment, allocation and procurement of temporary accommodation.
- To re-commission external homelessness services which better align with homelessness priorities.
- To review the local social housing allocation system – Coventry Homefinder

Developing and implementing a Coventry Homelessness Action Plan in response to the Government's preventing homelessness challenges will be the key priority for the City for the next 5 years. However, in addition to the ten key national Homelessness challenges, a further three local priorities have emerged as a result of the Homelessness Review and through consultation with our stakeholders and customers.

The provision of proactive services to help households avoid homelessness altogether, or minimise the detrimental affects should homelessness be unavoidable, remain at the heart of what the Council aims to achieve. These priorities are very relevant in the current climate. Our actions for addressing these priorities will be incorporated into the Action Plan at Appendix 1.

Priority Issues & What We Will Do

Priority 1

To deliver upon the challenges set out in the Government report 'Making Every Contact Count: A Joint Approach to Preventing Homelessness' (2012).

In August 2012 the Department for Communities and Local Government, following a Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness, produced a report entitled – '*Making every contact count : A Joint approach to preventing homelessness*'. The vision for the report is simple but bold – there is no place for homelessness in the 21st Century. The key to delivering that vision is prevention – agencies working together to support those at risk of homelessness.

The report provides a framework of ten key challenges for local homelessness teams working with their partners to deliver a gold standard service.

The ten challenges are to:

- adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services.
- actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs.
- offer a Housing Options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients.
- adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative.
- have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support.
- develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both clients and landlords.
- actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme.
- have a Homelessness Strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is renewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs.

- not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed & Breakfast accommodation.
- not place any families in Bed & Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than six weeks.

What are the issues/challenges

The key issues identified by the Homelessness Review and consultation with partners, stakeholders and customers will be addressed by meeting the homelessness service standards set out in the 'Make Every Contact Count' Government report.

The Homelessness Review (Appendix 3) and the local context information gathered in Appendix 2 both highlight the potential increases in homelessness as a result of: welfare reform changes; the continuing slow down in the economy; the inability of potential house purchasers to raise a sufficient deposit or obtain housing finance; the slow down in the development of new affordable housing; and difficulties in gaining access to the private rented sector.

The Homelessness Review describes the nature and scale of homelessness issues in the City. This requires a comprehensive, coherent and joined up approach to tackle the issues raised. The Review highlights that there should be a particular emphasis on the prevention of homelessness.

What we will do

The Council will lead on developing a new Coventry Homelessness Action Plan that will include responses to the ten preventing homelessness challenges set out by Government. A strategic working group involving both internal and external partners will be formed to develop the Action Plan which will be reviewed annually to monitor progress and ensure our actions continue to reflect local Homeless priorities.

Priority 2

To establish a revised process for the assessment, allocation and procurement of temporary accommodation

It has been well documented that the use of temporary accommodation, particularly Bed & Breakfast accommodation, has a detrimental effect on family life and the well-being of households. Specifically, the use of temporary accommodation can have a negative impact on children's schooling, mental health, employment/training opportunities, social wellbeing and the ability of households to get on with their lives.

The aim of this priority is to provide the most efficient and rapid assessment of those that may require temporary accommodation. This is to ensure that:

- The temporary accommodation is suitable to the household's needs.
- Households are supported whilst in temporary accommodation.
- Households are housed in suitable permanent accommodation as quickly as possible.

What are the issues/challenges

The Homelessness Review has highlighted the significant numbers of households that the Council has housed in temporary accommodation, including Bed & Breakfast provision.

The procurement and use of temporary accommodation is currently administered separately by the Council's Housing Options Team, as well as the Adult Social Care Team and the Children Learning and Young People's Directorate. Each section use temporary accommodation to fulfil their own particular statutory duties and responsibilities.

A review of temporary accommodation provision has identified:

- A duplication of assessments for temporary accommodation by different sections of the Council.

- A duplication of procurement processes in the acquisition of temporary accommodation from private sector providers.
- Different charging rates.
- Inconsistency in the quality of accommodation/services for temporary accommodation.

As well as the detrimental effects to households in temporary accommodation, there is a significant financial cost to the Council in continuing to use this provision in this way.

What we will do

We will work with partners to establish a revised process for the assessment, allocation and procurement of temporary accommodation across different Council Directorates and Teams and provide support to households requiring this service.

We will reduce the need for temporary accommodation through an improved approach to preventing homelessness.

Homeless Families Project – Providing temporary accommodation with Whitefriars Housing Group

The homeless families project set up with Whitefriars Housing Group provides 10 properties for temporary accommodation, as an alternative to Bed & Breakfast. These offer a more suitable and affordable solution by providing temporary accommodation in Whitefriars properties with the added benefits to families of support and home provisions such as their own cooking facilities.

Support provided includes working with families to overcome their difficulties which affect their housing situation and may result in future homelessness, working with other agencies to ensure that families continue to be supported after leaving the service, assisting in the development of skills to enable families to maintain future tenancies and applying for funding to help tenants clear former arrears and over-come barriers to finding move-on accommodation.

Priority 3

To re-commission external homelessness services which better align with homelessness priorities

The Council commissions external organisations to provide additional homelessness support services. These commissioned homelessness services are paid for by former Supporting People funding which is no longer ring-fenced. These services are an essential addition to the services provided by the Council's Housing Options Team.

What are the issues/challenges

Currently, seven commissioned homelessness organisations provide these additional services through thirteen separate contracts. Each contract is administered separately with its own assessment system, client record keeping and monitoring processes. Consultation with homelessness providers and their clients has identified a duplication of processes, assessment and administration between the various contracts. In particular, the providers have differing assessment criteria and client records are unable to be shared between services. Homeless clients have talked of a 'revolving door' process between services, where they have experienced moving between commissioned services and ended up back at the original starting point. As each customer is presently only able to be supported under one contract, this can often mean that not all individual needs can be fully met.

The Homelessness Review identified key gaps in services particularly around support for those in temporary accommodation, people with complex needs and insufficient provision for women.

The current homelessness commissioned contracts are due to end in September 2013.

What we will do

Through consultation with current homeless providers, stakeholders and clients, we will re-commission external homelessness services in 2013. This will be informed by the findings of the Homelessness Review and further consultation with current providers, stakeholders and clients.

Priority 4

To review the local social housing allocation system – Coventry Homefinder

Coventry Homefinder is the choice based social housing allocation system established in 2007 by the Council and its social housing partners. The system is used to fulfil the Council's duties under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002. It is also the system by which the Council discharges its duties under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (this is explained further in the Homelessness Review).

The Coventry Homefinder Nominations and Lettings Policy aims to ensure that customers in housing need are provided with a level of reasonable preference to access appropriate housing. As a Choice Based Lettings system, it provides customers with the opportunity to 'bid on' (express an interest in) social housing properties that are advertised and generates a short list based on priority need and registration date.

What are the issues/challenges

Demand for social housing through Coventry Homefinder is high. In April 2012, there were 22,718 applicants registered. Of these, 2,359 had an urgent or very urgent housing need (priority bands 1A to 2C). During the year 2011/12 only 2,299 properties were advertised and let through Homefinder. More information on Homefinder can be found in Appendix 2.

The Government has introduced a wide ranging package of social housing reforms, set out in 'Local Decisions: a fairer future for social housing'. This

includes the introduction of Fixed Term Tenancies, changes to allocations and homelessness processes and the promotion of increased mobility for social tenants. In addition, the Government published "Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for local housing authorities in England" in June 2012, which is new statutory guidance on allocations that replaces all previous national guidance.

As a result of the new statutory guidance, the Council will be able to set its own qualifying criteria to determine who will and will not be allowed to register with Coventry Homefinder. The Council will also have greater freedoms over the priority given to households, which can include criteria such as their current or past behaviour, their contribution to the community and local connection. However, households with a housing need that meets the 'reasonable preference' criteria will still be given a level of priority.

Welfare reform changes (including the introduction of Universal Credit, benefit caps and particularly the reduction of Housing Benefit paid to working age tenants who under-occupy social housing) could all have an impact on the Coventry Homefinder system.

Social housing provider partners are also considering their allocations policies in light of the greater flexibilities provided by Government. The current Coventry Homefinder Policy requires social housing provider partners to advertise 100% of their general needs vacancies on Coventry Homefinder (with certain specific exceptions). Based on their own need to make best use of their stock and to assist tenants affected by welfare reforms and other policies, partner social housing providers are considering their future involvement in Coventry Homefinder. Midland Heart has recently developed its own choice based lettings system open to all its customers across the region and now only advertises 50% of its general needs vacancies through Coventry Homefinder.

What we will do

We will work together with current social housing providers and wider stakeholders to carry out a comprehensive review of Coventry Homefinder and

the supporting Nominations and Lettings Policy. This will ensure that the policy is best able to deliver upon the priorities stated in this Strategy and takes into account the statutory guidance issued by Government.

Resourcing the Homeless Strategy

To be added.

Implementing the Strategy

The implementation and monitoring of the Homelessness Strategy will be overseen by a new strategy implementation group, which will be a sub-group of the Coventry Partnership Housing Theme Group. The group will comprise representatives from Council departments, Probation, Police Service, third sector providers, and Registered Providers. Working groups will be set up to take forward specific projects that require a multi-agency approach. The co-ordination of the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy will be the responsibility of the Council's Housing Service.

This Homelessness Strategy contains an overview of our priorities for the next year and an action plan. The action plan will be reviewed annually by the strategy implementation group and an annual report on the implementation of the strategy will be submitted to the Coventry Partnership Housing Theme Group.

What we will do – summary

- We will lead on developing a new Coventry Homelessness Action Plan to respond to the ten preventing homelessness challenges set out by Government in 'Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness' (2012).
- We will work with partners and other Council Directorates to establish a revised process for the assessment, allocation and procurement of temporary accommodation.
- We will re-commission external homelessness services in 2013.
- We will work with current social housing providers and wider stakeholders to carry out a comprehensive review of Coventry Homefinder and the supporting Nominations and Lettings Policy.

Theme 3: Strive for a healthier and more sustainable City by improving the quality and use of existing housing

Our Proposed Priorities:

- Improve energy efficiency and affordable warmth in the private sector.
- Improve property condition and management standards in the private rented sector.
- Make best use of existing housing by reducing the number of empty properties and addressing under-occupation.

What do we know?

Stock Condition

- Ongoing reductions in public spending have significantly impacted on our ability to fund housing improvements in the private sector – in previous years funding has been available.
- The cost to remedy all non-decent private properties in the City is estimated at £130m and £24m to remedy only Category 1 hazards.
- An estimated 38,350 (35%) private sector homes are non-decent in the City.
- An estimated 1.6% of the City's social rented stock was non-decent as at March 2010.
- An estimated 22,100 (20%) private sector homes have a Category 1 hazard.
- Most non-decent homes are occupied by the elderly, people on low incomes or those that are economically vulnerable.
- There are an estimated 3,180 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in the City, with an estimated 300 that are licensable HMOs.

Use of Housing Stock

- Nationally there are around 430,000 households in the social rented sector who under-occupy their home by two or more bedrooms (against the bedroom standard).

- The 2001 Census indicated that in Coventry 8.1% households were overcrowded compared to 7.1% nationally and 5.6% across the West Midlands.
- Whitefriars Housing estimate that 2,400 of their tenants are currently under-occupying their property.
- In October 2012 there were 686 households in a priority band on the Homefinder register who were recognised as being overcrowded.
- At the same time, there were 218 households in priority bands on the Homefinder register who were recognised as under-occupying their social home.
- In April 2012 there were 2,587 empty homes in the private sector, of which 1,434 had been vacant for more than six months.
- New benefit rules mean that from April 2013 working age social housing tenants considered as under-occupying their homes will face a reduction in their Housing Benefit.

Energy Efficiency & Fuel Poverty

- In 2010, 21% of households in Coventry were in fuel poverty compared to the national average of 19%.
- At the LSOA (Lower Super Output Area) neighbourhood level, 68 out of the 197 LSOAs have fuel poverty levels at over 25% and of these, eight have levels of over 30%.
- The Climate Change Strategy for Coventry indicates that approximately 36% of the City's carbon dioxide emissions are from the housing stock.
- 22,070 dwellings in the City have a Category 1 hazard present and of these, 59% had an excess cold hazard.
- 79% of the private sector stock in the City has loft insulation below the current Building Regulations standard and 22% contain un-insulated cavity walls.

The Issues

Background

There are clear links between housing conditions and the health and well-being of our communities. The condition of homes in the social rented sector is good, with most meeting the Decent Homes standard by the Government's deadline of 2010. However, this is not the case with privately owned and rented homes. The private rented sector has grown over the years and now accounts for around 21% of residential accommodation in the City. At the same time the private rented sector must rise to the challenge of increasing demand albeit with no government funding available (for grants or loans) to support housing improvements. The challenging economic climate together with rising fuel costs also mean that many people cannot afford to maintain or adequately heat their home.

Alongside the issues around poor private sector stock condition it is recognised that social housing, particularly larger family housing, is in short supply in the City (as described in Theme 1) - it is, therefore, important that we make the best use of the City's existing housing stock.

Poor Stock Condition

A Private Sector Stock Condition Survey and Health Impact Assessment of the private sector stock were undertaken in 2012. This included an assessment of the financial cost of poor quality private sector housing on the health service. The intention is to use the evidence to inform a focused approach to tackling private sector housing in the worst condition and where possible, to work with partners to improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable residents. It is anticipated that the transfer of Public Health into the Local Authority will greatly assist this work.

The Stock Condition Survey highlighted a number of issues within the private housing stock in Coventry and in particular that 35% of homes fail the Decent Homes standard. The highest number of failures was attributable to the presence of Category 1 hazards and the second highest to a poor degree of thermal

comfort. There is little difference between the proportion of non-decency found in owner occupied and private rented dwellings. However, there is a strong correlation with household incomes - 49% of homes where the household income is below £10,000 per annum are non-decent. Around 20% of the private sector stock has a Category 1 hazard, with this type of hazard being more common in owner occupied dwellings (21%) compared with private rented homes (17%).

Some of the worst housing conditions can occur in shared accommodation or Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). HMOs include bedsits, shared houses and self contained flats. It is recognised that HMOs provide a valuable component of the housing market. With two universities and two colleges of further education in the City there is a significant student population. Approximately 31,600 full time students attend either Coventry or Warwick University, many of whom live in shared accommodation in Coventry and Leamington. Due to changes in Local Housing Allowance from April 2012 there is likely to be an increased demand for HMOs from single claimants under 35 years old. Under these changes single claimants under 35 are now only entitled to claim the rate of a single room in a shared property, rather than the rate for a one bedroom property.

Orbit Care & Repair

Many older homeowners have equity that is tied up in the value of their home but have little or no savings. The Home Improvement Agency (HIA), Orbit Care and Repair, in partnership with Just Retirement and Houseproud, have supported many people who want to use this equity to fund repairs, improvements or adaptations to their homes. The future challenge for the agency is addressing the funding shortage for home improvements in the private sector, particularly as the Kick Start programme for equity release loans has now ended.

Addressing fuel poverty and energy efficiency

Significant amounts of funding have been invested over the last five years to improve the energy efficiency of homes and tackle fuel poverty, through initiatives such as the Carbon Emission Reduction Target (CERT), the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) and Warm Front. However, there

are still many thousands of households that find it difficult to afford to heat their homes to a healthy level due to inadequate thermal insulation, inefficient and uneconomic heating systems, low household incomes and high fuel prices. Increasing energy prices have far outweighed rising incomes and improvements in energy efficiency and the problem is unfortunately getting worse.

A household is considered to be in fuel poverty when more than 10% of their income has to be spent to achieve an adequate level of warmth in their home (the Government is currently consulting on the definition of fuel poverty & so an update will be inserted after 30/11/12). Fuel poverty is associated with low income and vulnerable households – in the private sector stock this is highlighted by the following statistics:

- 72% of all households in fuel poverty have incomes of less than £10,000 per annum.
- 48% of households with a person aged 75 or over are in fuel poverty.
- 36% of households with a resident with a disability are in fuel poverty.
- 25% of households comprising a lone parent and dependent child are also in fuel poverty.

The effects of fuel poverty can be far reaching, impacting on health and wellbeing, limiting educational attainment and exacerbating child poverty. The Marmot Review Team produced a national report in 2011 that reviewed the evidence relating to the health impacts suffered by those living in fuel poverty and in cold housing. It confirmed the linkage between excess winter deaths, the low thermal efficiency of housing and low indoor temperatures and identified both physical and mental health consequences for children, young people, adults and older persons.

The problems of fuel poverty and its impacts on health and wellbeing will continue to demand a co-ordinated approach to tackling the causes. A key challenge will be to get help to those communities and individuals that are most vulnerable. As the Marmot Report concluded, the households in the most urgent need are those who are least likely to access support.

In 2012, the Council approved a Climate Change Strategy for Coventry. The Strategy recognises the connections between carbon reduction, energy efficiency, fuel poverty and the adverse health impacts of cold homes. A key aim of the Climate Change Strategy is to protect the most vulnerable people in Coventry by ensuring that they can afford to heat their homes.

Empty Homes

Empty homes have a significant impact on the overall condition and supply of the private sector housing stock as well as the neighbourhoods in which they are located. They can detract from the quality of the local environment and can cause significant problems for local residents. With over 2,359 households in urgent or extremely urgent need on the Homefinder Register, long term empty properties are also a wasted resource. Many of the empty properties on the Council's list are in the inner city wards, particularly Foleshill, Stoke and Hillfields. The overwhelming majority of empty properties are family houses of which there is a particular need in the City.

In April 2012, 2,587 dwellings were empty, including 1,434 that had been empty for more than six months. These figures have decreased over recent years. Bringing empty properties back into use can benefit the owner, potential occupiers, businesses and the wider community. In addition, the New Homes Bonus provides another incentive to bring empty properties back into use.

Under-occupation & Overcrowding

Large numbers of households living in social housing have more space than they need – often because their children have left home. Under-occupying a property not only affects the supply of larger sized affordable housing but also places a degree of pressure on households affected. For example, older householders who under-occupy are often unable to manage a larger property and this may be compounded by anxieties in relation to moving home or leaving long established community roots.

Encouraging under-occupiers in social housing to downsize releases properties for larger households who may be living in overcrowded conditions. In October 2012 there were over 680 households in a priority band on the Homefinder register who were recognised as being overcrowded. In April 2012, there were also 3,549 households registered as requiring family housing of three or more bedrooms. However, the number of larger social rented homes is limited - only 372 family homes of three bedrooms or larger were available through Homefinder in 2011/12.

The Council has been working with Whitefriars Housing Group to provide support and financial incentives to social housing tenants who are under-occupying their property to downsize from larger family homes. The scheme was piloted in 2011 and extended to other Registered Providers in 2012.

New benefit rules mean that from April 2013, working age social housing tenants who claim housing benefit will face a reduction in their benefit if they are considered to be under-occupying their homes. Whitefriars Housing Group has contacted approximately 2,400 of their tenants who may be affected to give them advance notice of the changes and inform them of their options either to budget for the shortfall in the rent they will have to pay or to consider moving to a smaller home. The Council Benefits Service and other Registered Providers are also identifying and contacting under occupying social housing tenants of working age who may be affected by changes to Housing Benefit in 2013.

Working in partnership to make best use of the City's housing stock

An initiative was piloted by Coventry City Council and Whitefriars Housing to free-up much-needed larger properties in the City by helping tenants to downsize to a smaller home.



Jim and Mary Elvidge had lived in their family home for 25 years where they raised four children, but as they got older they found that the house and garden was too much for them. Now they have moved to a one-bedroom bungalow in Coundon.

"Whitefriars helped us move by arranging the removals and we could leave the furniture we didn't need and they got rid of it. Moving home can be a difficult thing to do but we're really happy where we are now."

What we will do next

Energy Efficiency/Affordable Warmth

We will continue to work with our partners and continue to play a leading role in the development and implementation of projects to improve home insulation and heating efficiency, provide help to reduce fuel costs, maximise incomes and support householders with fuel debt arrears. Projects include the following:

Green Deal & the Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

The Green Deal is a major new energy efficiency initiative being introduced by the Government in 2012 – it is based on a 'pay-as-you-save' model that allows energy efficiency measures to be installed without any up-front costs. This will be complemented by the ECO where energy companies will be set targets requiring them to invest in measures such as insulation and heating improvements. The Green Deal and ECO present a new opportunity to tackle fuel poverty in Coventry and will replace the CERT, CESP and Warm Front schemes. We will work with our sub-regional partners and other organisations under the direction

of the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP to implement schemes that conform to the strategic aspirations proposed by the LEP.

In conjunction with this, we will pursue other complementary funding for energy efficiency and affordable warmth projects. We will also implement a range of initiatives to provide information and advice that will connect home owners and tenants with available assistance and encourage behavioural change.

Our energy efficiency and affordable warmth work will be across all tenures, but will need to take account of the scale of the problems affecting the owner occupied and private rented sectors. The private rented sector has expanded rapidly over recent years to a point now where it is larger than the social rented sector. In light of the Government's proposals to make it illegal from 2018 to rent out a property that has an F or G rated Energy Performance Certificate, steps will be taken to encourage private landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their properties in readiness for this change.

We are required by the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 to submit a report to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change by 31st March 2013 detailing the measures that will lead to significant domestic energy efficiency improvements. The Housing Strategy and Climate Change Strategy will inform the content of the report.

Improving Property Condition

The Council is committed to ensuring that those living in the private rented sector are living in decent, good quality homes which are well managed. We will do this through:

- Supporting and improving our relationship with private landlords through the Landlords' Forum and newsletter.
- Developing the new APRP Scheme (Access to Private Rented Properties), aimed at helping those in priority need access private rented housing in the City (described further in Theme 2).

- Membership of the Homestamp Consortium. This involves working with partners to improve the standard of private rented homes and to provide information and training for private landlords.
- Providing relevant information, advice and support on our website.

Where landlords do not offer a reasonable standard of accommodation and who do not engage with the Council, we will use enforcement powers to ensure that they improve the quality and management of privately rented housing. This includes addressing issues around disrepair, harassment and illegal eviction.

The Council is responsible for enforcing standards within HMOs to make sure they are free from hazards and are managed properly. The Housing Act 2004 also requires the Council to license certain types of HMOs. We will routinely check licensed HMOs and continue to assess conditions in the property using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. Enforcement powers will be used where necessary to ensure HMOs in the City are safe and free from Category 1 hazards. We will proactively survey HMOs in the City to ensure that where relevant, they are licensed.

Tackling Empty Properties

Our aim is to bring 211 empty private properties back into use in 2012/13 of which 53 will be long term empty properties. The target will be increased by 5% year on year.

We will use sophisticated software to help identify and prioritise empty properties in the City so that resources can be deployed to tackling those properties that could potentially cause the greatest nuisance or risk to health. Alongside this we will work with internal partners such as Planning, Environmental Health, Legal and Finance departments to identify opportunities for bringing long-term empty properties back into use. Our approach will include offering advice to the owners of empty properties and where necessary we will make full use of a wide range of enforcement powers, including enforced sales to recover any debt to the Council.

Using funding from the Homes and Communities Agency, we will bring 47 empty properties back into use at Affordable Rents. This will be achieved by working in partnership with WM Housing Group, Moathouse Community Trust and Emmaus (a charity working with homeless people).

Tackling empty properties – a wasted resource

This property on Lower Ford Street had been a derelict shell for over 25 years. The owner was non-contactable for many years but was eventually found. Through encouragement and assistance from the Council the 2 bedroom property was brought back into use and merged with the 3 bedroom property next door, increasing the City's much needed supply of family sized housing.

In partnership with the Council's Planning team a Section 215 Notice and an Improvement Notice was also served, instructing the owner to refurbish the property externally and internally.



Before

After

Making Best use of stock

We are keen to ensure the best use of the social housing stock by securing a better match between the size of tenant households and the homes they occupy. Our Allocations Scheme can contribute to this but other means are needed as well. Our aim is to address under occupancy whilst at the same time being sensitive to the needs of households who currently under occupy their homes. Our approach will include:

- Considering how we provide future support and information to people wanting to move to smaller accommodation.
- Working with Registered Providers to consider how to integrate the Whitefriars down-sizing scheme into future social housing allocation practices.
- Increasing the choice of accommodation available for people wanting to downsize.

What we will do – summary

- Bring long-term empty private properties back into use and increase our target year on year.
- Work with the Council's Benefits Service and Registered Providers to increase the supply of larger family homes by addressing the issue of under occupation.
- Improve the condition of the existing stock by prioritising properties in the worst condition and assisting the most vulnerable people.
- Work with landlords and tenants to support the increasing role of the private rented sector to provide high quality professionally managed accommodation.
- Aim to reduce energy bills and make homes warmer by identifying opportunities for installing energy efficiency and renewable energy measures and maximising funding from external sources.

Theme 4: Encourage balanced, stable and sustainable communities

Our Proposed Priorities:

- Support independent living for vulnerable and marginalised groups.
- Improve housing choice for an ageing population.
- Improve the quality of our neighbourhoods to support safe, inclusive and cohesive communities.

What do we know?

- The number of people in Coventry aged over 55 is expected to increase by 30% between 2010 and 2030, with 64% growth predicted in the population aged over 85.
- For 2012/13 the budget for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) is £2,140,000, funding around 378 grants - however the Council's capital budget is insufficient to meet future demand.
- Since its inception in April 2003, the former Supporting People budget has reduced from £16.9m in 2003 to £12.9m for 2012/13.
- 7,458 people benefitted from housing related support services in Coventry in 2011/12.
- The Council is funding 3,757 units of housing related support, which includes 2,586 units of supported housing and 1,171 units of floating support (2012/13).
- In 2011/12 the Home Improvement Agency, Orbit Care and Repair were able to access funding to the value of £1,328,132 to help customers to improve, repair or adapt their properties.
- 64% of working age people in Coventry are in employment, down from 71% in 2007 before the recession. 7% are unemployed and 29% are economically inactive (eg long term sick, full time student, looking after family/home etc).

- Indicators (2012) based on the Marmot Review report suggest that 19% of people in Coventry live in households in receipt of means-tested benefits compared to 15% nationally.
- 32% (101,349) of the City's residents live in neighbourhoods which are in the 20% of the most deprived neighbourhoods nationally.
- During 2011/12 the number of reported crimes in the City was 25,734.

The Issues

Background

The Council is committed to encouraging the development of balanced, stable and sustainable communities in the City. Strong communities require effective approaches to promote inclusiveness, assist the vulnerable, increase safety and to ensure the built environment and public space meet people's needs and aspirations.

There are also some vulnerable and marginalised groups with specific needs that require particular types of accommodation or support to sustain housing. This requires provision of a range of specialised housing and support to enable them to live safely and independently.

City Deprivation

Coventry is ranked 52 out of 326 Local Authority Districts under the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 (with 1 being the most deprived), but there is a wide variation within the city. 35 LSOA (Lower Super Output Area) neighbourhoods are within the 10% most deprived areas in the country, but there are also 5 areas in the 10% least deprived areas in the country. The north-east of the City, particularly St Michael's and Foleshill, have a high number of deprived neighbourhoods, but there are also pockets of significant deprivation in other parts of the City including Henley, Binley and Willenhall.

Demographic Change

The population aged over 55 is expected to increase by 30% between 2010 and 2030, with 64% growth predicted in the population aged over 85. Given the expected increase in older people, key illnesses or disabilities affecting older people (aged 65+) are also expected to increase significantly between 2012 and 2030. In particular there is expected to be a 44% rise in the number of people with dementia and a 30% increase in people with activities affected by previous strokes, falls, hearing impairments and mobility problems.

There is no single statistic that captures the extent of disability in the population. There are 55,848 people in Coventry with a limiting long term illness, which is around the national and regional average. The proportion of people aged 16-64 with either learning disabilities, moderate or serious physical disabilities or mental health problems is expected to increase by an estimated 21-22% between 2012 and 2030.

The fact that people are living longer and the future expected increases in people with disabilities, is likely to have an impact on the number of people with care and support needs and/or requiring specialist accommodation. It is also recognised that many older people wish to live as independently as possible in their own homes. As such there is a need to identify alternative support models, in order to improve the housing options available.

Development of new affordable specialist housing

There is a shortage of purpose-designed or suitably adapted accommodation for people with disabilities in priority housing need. The Homefinder register has over 140 applicants for disability housing suitable for independent living but only 29 suitable properties became available through vacancies during 2011/12.

There continues to be a substantial need and demand for bungalows (mainly 2 bedroom) across both the affordable and private sectors amongst older people and those with disabilities. However, the development of supported housing, including bungalows, can be problematic in terms of both funding and site

location. Disproportionately larger plot sizes are required for bungalows compared with apartments and houses. This discourages developers from building new bungalows despite the demand for them and as such only limited numbers are built.

The reduction in grant rates for new affordable housing combined with the need for Registered Providers to contain development costs is likely to have an impact on new (affordable) supported and specialist housing provision. The extra costs associated with particular design requirements to cater for more complex or acute mobility or disability needs puts additional pressure on grant funding availability for new schemes. As a consequence, it will be necessary to seek alternative ways of financing schemes in order to maintain the delivery of future supported and specialist housing.

Housing for an Ageing Population

Although there is a growing ageing population in Coventry, there is a low demand for traditional 'sheltered housing' and limited alternative choices of housing for older people. The results of our consultation with housing/support providers for older people indicate that the housing available for older people in the City needs to change as the current provision is out of step with modern aspirations and needs. Much of the former Council owned sheltered accommodation is outdated or is in less desirable locations and is therefore characterised by low demand.

Nationally there has been a strategic shift from providing residential care to providing housing with care and support – known as extra care housing. The focus is on enabling residents to have more choice over their lifestyles and to maximise independence. As residential care will increasingly be restricted to older people with more complex care needs there is a need to look at the gap that is developing between sheltered housing and residential care.

Health and Social Care

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 contains various changes to the National Health Service, including the transfer of the majority of public health functions from Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to local authorities. The Council has

established a Health and Wellbeing Board (in shadow form until April 2013) to coordinate and provide a strategic lead for local commissioning decisions across health, public health and social care. The Board includes local commissioners across the NHS, public health and social care, elected members and service user representatives. Public health is about helping people to stay healthy and avoiding ill health which improved housing can alleviate.

Transformation of Adult Social Care

To meet the housing and support needs of vulnerable people we need to address the personalisation agenda within social care to enable people requiring support to remain in independent accommodation. Direct payments are part of the Government's Personalisation agenda, which puts the client at the centre of the support required, giving them more choice and control. Direct payments were given to over 600 people in Coventry at the start of 2012/13 to enable them to purchase their own care and support instead of the Council arranging it. Whilst improving choice and control is positive, it also presents a challenge. People will need information about what services are available and how their health and care needs are affected by their housing circumstances. This will require integrated working between housing, health and social care commissioners.

The Government has also published the 'Caring for our Future: Reforming Care and Support' White Paper (July 2012) and the Draft Care and Support Bill (July 2012). The White Paper sets out the principles on which care and support are to be established, including a greater focus on prevention of, or delaying the need for, more intensive care interventions (for example, through adaptations and provision of supported accommodation). The Bill states that authorities must 'make arrangement for ensuring co-operation' between various groups, including housing staff, adult social care teams and directors of children's services.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

We provide financial assistance to eligible homeowners or private tenants to enable a disabled person to gain access to essential areas within their homes

including access to a kitchen, bedroom and bathing facilities. The assistance is in the form of a grant to meet the costs of undertaking the works required.

However, as the number of elderly people living in the City is increasing, the Council is seeing a higher demand for disabled adaptations from elderly home owners and private tenants. The number of DFG applications relating to younger disabled people is also on the rise. In 2008/09 less than 25% of grants completed were for people aged under 60 but this has gradually increased year-by-year and in 2011/12 it was up to 34%. This presents particular challenges, as the nature of the disabilities presented by younger adults and children tend to require larger and more expensive adaptations.

Despite this the current capital budget made available for DFGs from Government grants is insufficient to meet this growing demand. The Council has consistently added resources to the capital programme to ensure that we can meet the demand for aids and adaptations. We are investing £2.1m towards DFGs in 2012/2013, which should finance a programme of 378 grants. However, future funding is uncertain and alternative approaches to funding and managing aids and adaptations will need to be considered if we are to continue to meet the demand.

Many housing authorities around the country continue to work with long waiting lists for adaptations. In Coventry our approach to managing the DFG programme has meant that for the last five years, we have avoided a waiting list for DFG adaptations. We have also seen the average cost of a DFG reduce from around £12,000 to £5,200. This has enabled us to provide more grants with the resources available.

We also work in partnership with Orbit Care & Repair to provide a Home Improvement Agency service in Coventry. The service supports older or disabled people who need a repair or adaptation to their home, thereby helping people maintain their independence, safety and dignity. The service helps by:

- Organising repairs and adaptations.

- Making sure people are receiving the right benefits.
- A handyman service to do small jobs around the home.
- Finding organisations that can help with other problems.

A challenge for Orbit Care and Repair is the lack of available funding for home improvements in the private sector – this is described further in Theme 3.

Working in Partnership to Assist the Vulnerable

Mr N, who has multiple sclerosis, sight and balance difficulties, contacted Orbit Care and Repair for assistance. The case worker forwarded Mr N's details to the Department for Work and Pensions to arrange a home visit to maximise his income, as he was not receiving his full benefit entitlement. In addition, the flooring throughout Mr N's home was in a desperate state. Orbit Care and Repair applied for charitable funding from the Coventry Jubilee Rotary Charitable Trust and the Royal British Legion - this raised £1,200 for replacement flooring enabling Mr N to live more comfortably in his home.



Welfare Benefit Changes

The changes introduced as part of the Welfare Reform Act and the introduction of Universal Credit from 2013 is likely to have an impact on people requiring housing support, many of whom receive welfare benefits. In terms of the impact on services, the changes could potentially increase demand for specialist advice services around finance, debt and benefits as well as having an impact on Adults, Children's and Health services.

Key welfare reform changes that are particularly likely to have an impact on carers and disabled people include:

- The reassessment of Disability Living Allowance and the move to Personal Independence Payment. This could result in a loss of benefit entitlement.
- The extension of the Housing Benefit shared accommodation rate from people aged under 25 to people under 35. This could affect vulnerable people trying to move-on from short term supported housing to a suitable private rented tenancy.
- The social sector Housing Benefit size criteria (for working age tenants) could have an impact on the different types of care provision. This could include those families with disabled children and disabled people living in adapted accommodation, who will not be exempt from reductions in Housing Benefit if they are assessed as under-occupying their home.
- The one-year time limit on claiming the contributory element of Employment & Support Allowance (ESA) for those disabled people expected to move gradually towards employment. This could result in a loss of benefit entitlement, putting pressure on people, especially those with fluctuating conditions, to return to work within a year.

Housing Related Support

We commission a diverse range of services for vulnerable people to enable them to live independently in the community. Client groups assisted include older people, people with physical and sensory impairments, people with mental health issues, people with learning disabilities, as well as those with substance misuse issues, homeless people, ex-offenders, young people at risk, domestic violence victims and teenage parents. However, national Government funding which was guaranteed for housing related support is now being reduced and is no longer ring-fenced. This means that it can be used more flexibly to address local issues. In light of this the Council has carried out a review of the way in which services are commissioned for vulnerable groups.

The day to day management of the housing related support contracts is now within the Adult Social Care Commissioning team, after transferring from the Council's Housing team in 2011. The Council remains committed to providing support services for vulnerable people, but is faced with the challenge of how to protect and improve the quality of services to vulnerable people, as well as address gaps in provision, in the context of reduced funding.

Safer Communities

Coventry's crime rate is not exceptional in the context of the West Midlands or nationally. Nevertheless, anti-social behaviour, crime and the fear of crime can cause distress to individuals and undermines community well-being.

The Council, through the work of the Coventry Community Safety Partnership identifies and implements effective initiatives to improve the safety of communities and to promote cohesive communities. The partnership brings together agencies, including the Police and Registered Providers. The Coventry Community Safety Strategic Assessment identifies the priorities for the partnership for reducing the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour in the City.

It is widely recognised that access to appropriate accommodation and support plays a key role in providing a stable home life, particularly for at risk groups including victims of domestic violence, ex-offenders and people with substance misuse issues. The benefits of tackling the issues, and helping people to feel safe and secure in their homes include:

- Improved health and well-being.
- Improved mental health.
- Reduced costs of crime, anti-social behaviour and nuisance.
- Reduced hospital admissions and impact on health services.
- Stable communities where people want to live and stay.

Employment & Housing

The welfare reforms and effects of the recession could have a disproportionate impact not only on certain vulnerable groups of people but also in the more deprived areas of the City. It is widely recognised that Housing services and providers have a major role to play in supporting employment and in particular the aims of the Coventry Jobs Strategy 2011-14, to help people improve their skills and enter employment.

Our partners, including Registered Providers, the voluntary sector and employers, have been at the forefront of innovative ways of working with residents to reduce worklessness, improve their life chances and to mitigate the impact of welfare reforms. This includes offering training and employment opportunities to local people and bringing construction led employment and training opportunities into the City.

Initiatives have included a boot camp for young people who are not in education, employment or training to gain work or an education placement. The success of the Coventry boot camp has gained national recognition and as a result similar schemes are being considered across the country.

Coventry Boot Camp – helping young people into jobs and education

Organisations including the Council, Whitefriars Housing, Midland Heart, Orbit Heart of England, West Midlands Fire Service and the West Midlands Police are working together to help youngsters forge more positive futures for themselves.

"My dream is to get into landscape gardening and boot camp has shown me how to do it. And the help doesn't stop here. The guys at boot camp will continue to support me if I need it. If it wasn't for boot camp I'd still be doing nothing and looking for a job. This will help me for the rest of my life." (Eighteen-year-old Ryan).



Financial Inclusion

Debt may be either a cause or a consequence of homelessness or unstable accommodation. Problems with debt can contribute to people being financially excluded, which in turn can make it difficult to open a bank account, get or sustain a tenancy, or access credit. This is recognised as an important issue and the Housing Options Team is working closely with Coventry CAB to develop debt advice skills within the Housing Options team by seconding a CAB officer. In 2011, 184 households were referred to the CAB officer by the Housing Options Team as they were at risk of homelessness due to debt issues. Registered Providers, in partnership with other agencies such as Coventry CAB and the Coventry Law Centre, also already carry out a number of activities which assist and advise customers on financial inclusion.

A Strategic Tenancy Strategy for the City

As discussed in the 'Setting the Scene' section we are required to produce a strategic Tenancy Strategy which is currently being developed in tandem with the Housing Strategy. At the heart of the Tenancy Strategy, we will aim to minimise the impact on vulnerable households in the City who may be adversely affected by the measures introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and the changes to the social housing regulatory standards.

What we will do next?

Housing Related Support

Despite Government cuts in former Supporting People funding, the Council is currently committed to funding housing related support services for vulnerable people. However, significant reductions in public sector funding for the longer term will mean that we will have to carry out further reviews on how the available funding is spent and to ensure the support services reflect changing local needs.

Following the initial review on the way in which services were being commissioned for vulnerable groups, the Council has introduced strategic panels which will, as part of their role, scrutinise the housing related support contracts, to ensure value for money and the best possible outcomes for the City's most vulnerable people.

Current housing related support across social care services costs the Council £3.041m annually with some service contracts due to expire in March 2013. In light of the Council's challenging funding position we will use the opportunity this presents to explore future funding options for commissioned services. This will include investigating opportunities for a more integrated approach to the design, commissioning and contracting of supported accommodation and floating support services across directorates, with other authorities and Health services.

Specialised Housing Provision

We will work with Registered Providers in the City to ensure a co-ordinated strategic approach to delivering improved services and specialised housing provision for vulnerable and older people city-wide. This includes housing for older people across a broad range of provision such as purpose built bungalows and where possible larger complexes catering for a variety of care needs and offering on-site facilities. Our approach to specialised housing provision will include an appropriate mix of tenures as described in Theme 1. As well as meeting the needs of older and vulnerable people, our aim is to make best use of the available housing stock by addressing the issue of under-occupation (described in Theme 3). This will reduce reliance on expensive residential care or out of city placements and will promote independent living.

Theme 1 of the Housing Strategy describes the imbalance of apartments in the social housing sector in the City. We will, however, continue to develop apartments but on a smaller scale, particularly where it can be shown that they will help to meet the needs of older and disabled people or those needing supported housing.

To facilitate the development of specialised housing we will continue to work closely with the colleagues in Adult Social Care Teams and Children and Young People Services to identify what further supported housing and specialist provision is required. This will be in the context of available sites, funding and identified priorities. The re-use of redundant sites or development on land occupied by existing outdated or unpopular sheltered / supported housing in the social sector, will be encouraged. This will help to secure the land needed for new purpose designed housing for vulnerable groups or older people.

Alongside developing specialist housing we will increase the supply of new homes that can cater for the needs of people as they age and those with physical disabilities, through appropriate design standards (described in Theme 1). We will expect all new rented homes in the social sector to be designed to Lifetime Homes Standards and for all new homes to be wheelchair accessible.

Future proposals for increasing specialist/supported housing in the City include:

- A specialist scheme of 12 units for adults with autism on a redundant Council owned brownfield site.
- A replacement for the Chace homeless hostel, comprising up to 65 units.
- 10 self contained flats in Willenhall for people with Learning Disabilities.

Public Health and Social Care

We will continue to work closely with Public Health colleagues as the responsibilities for public health are transferred to the Council to identify opportunities for joint working where housing improvement/initiatives can improve health outcomes for communities. We have recently jointly commissioned the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey and Health Impact Assessment (described in Theme 3) to identify any specific issues in the City relating to housing and health.

Adapting Properties

We will carry out a review of the relocation options available for disabled people to ensure a more integrated approach between the Adaptations and Homefinder teams. The aim is to ensure that disabled people can be assisted more efficiently to either have their property adapted or to move to suitable alternative accommodation. This will help to ensure that best use is made of the City's adapted social housing stock.

We will consider more economic and alternative ways of providing adaptations. This includes:

- Looking at the options for sharing services and best practice with our sub-regional partners.
- Exploring the potential for the Adaptations team to act as an agency to install adaptations, for those customers not entitled to a grant who can meet the cost of the work themselves.
- Working with Registered Providers to develop alternative funding options for adaptations to their own properties.

Supporting Customers to Financial Security, Training & Employment.

We recognise that the impact of Housing Benefit changes, the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the difficult economic climate represent one of the biggest challenges to be faced by the Council and its partners over the lifetime of this Housing Strategy. We will support our partners including Registered Providers and the voluntary sector to integrate opportunities which will: improve the skills base; maximise employment opportunities; and provide tenancy support to reduce arrears and financial problems at the earliest stage.

Future initiatives include:

- Working in partnership with other agencies including Groundwork, Coventry CAB, Whitefriars Housing and Midland Heart to implement the 3-year lottery funded 'Sorted' scheme. This is aimed at helping social housing tenants improve their financial confidence and to successfully sustain their tenancies.
- Continuing the activities of the Coventry Partnership Financial Inclusion Forum.
- Working with partners to implement and develop Crisis Skylight in the City in 2013. This is an award winning and accredited training and employment centre aimed at enhancing the skills and confidence of single homeless people through practical workshops and formal learning.

Community Engagement & Empowerment

We recognise that the sustainability of a community involves the degree to which people of all generations and backgrounds are able to live, interact and have a meaningful say in the way their neighbourhood is run. We will aim to achieve sustainable communities by continuing to support and work with partners across a wide range of social, economic and environmental areas. Our approach will be to:

- Develop local solutions to local problems.
- Encourage public, private and voluntary sectors to work together to improve the local quality of life.

- Encourage local people to become involved in determining local priorities, influencing services and having a say in Council decisions that have an impact on their neighbourhood.

Safer Communities

Partners in housing and the community safety sector will continue to work together to address the issues that affect the quality of life for residents. Key priorities for the Coventry Community Safety Partnership include reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, tackling domestic violence, substance misuse, re-offending and promoting community cohesion. Our approach will be to ensure that where possible the Housing Strategy contributes to initiatives identified in the Coventry Community Safety Strategic Assessment, to create safe and secure homes and neighbourhoods. This includes considering housing solutions for domestic violence victims, ex-offenders and people affected by substance misuse.

We will take a balanced approach to the design of new affordable housing to ensure that where it is viable new developments will incorporate Secure by Design principles. This involves designing out crime to enhance security for all those living on the development.

We will also tackle the issue of empty homes (covered in Theme 3) which can attract vandalism, anti-social behaviour and crime to an area.

What we will do – summary

- Explore ways of increasing funding for DFGs and managing aids and adaptations to ensure resources are used effectively and maximised.
- Develop specialist accommodation and commission housing related support services to meet the needs of the City's most vulnerable and at risk client groups.
- Work with our partners to improve access to and take-up of money and debt advice and ensure customers receive their full entitlement to benefits.
- Empower residents to take more control in shaping our housing services.
- Promote and deliver activities to address worklessness, improve the skills base and maximise employment opportunities.
- Consider ways in which housing solutions can contribute to the priorities identified in the Coventry Community Safety Strategic Assessment.

Appendix 1 – Action Plan

A detailed Action Plan will be developed, taking into account the results of the consultation.

Appendix 2 – The Coventry Context

This appendix presents statistics about Coventry's housing stock and housing market, the demand for housing, the supply of new housing and the affordability of different tenure types. It is intended to provide evidence to support the Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2013-18, in conjunction with the Homelessness Review (Appendix 3), which gives more detailed information about homelessness in Coventry.

In doing so it draws upon various sources of information, including:

- The Coventry Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2012.
- The Draft Coventry Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2012 (PSSCS). This is currently in draft form and potentially subject to change. This appendix will be updated with the findings of the final document if necessary.
- The *Facts About Coventry* website, which brings together a wide range of statistical sources (www.facts-about-coventry.com).
- Data sets managed by Coventry City Council such as the Coventry Homefinder register, Council Tax records and the empty homes database.

Coventry – The City's Population

Coventry is a city in the West Midlands with a population of approximately 316,900 people. 14.5% of the people of Coventry are over 65, and 18.4% are under 15 (2011 census). 74.1% of the population of the city are of White-British ethnicity (2009 population estimate).

More detailed information about the City's population can be found on the *Facts About Coventry* website, www.facts-about-coventry.com

Housing - Stock Profile

Tenure

The table below shows the tenure distribution of properties in Coventry, as identified by the draft Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2012. The private rented sector has increased by around 6% year on year since 2001 and now comprises approximately 21% of the total housing stock in the city.

Table 1: Draft PSSCS Estimate of Tenure of Properties in Coventry 2012

Tenure	Dwellings	Per cent
Owner Occupied	82,100	60.6%
Privately Rented	27,900	20.6%
Total - Private Sector Stock	110,000	81.2%
Registered Provider (social housing)	25,400	18.8%
Total – All tenures	135,400	100%

(Draft Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2012)

The table below shows the change in tenure of Coventry's housing in the ten years between 2001 and 2011. The public sector (social housing) reduced by 5.6% and the private sector stock increased by 6.9%, with an overall increase of 4.3%. The reduction in public sector housing was slower than in the West Midlands (-9.6%) or England (-6.7%). The growth of the private sector (and overall) was also slower in Coventry than the West Midlands or England.

Table 2: Change in tenure in the ten years between 2001 and 2011

		Coventry	West Midlands	England
Public Sector	2001 total	25,840	507,100	4,402,000
	2011 total	24,400	458,400	4,109,000
	Ten year change	-1,440	-48,700	-293,000
	% Change	-5.6%	-9.6%	-6.7%
Private Sector	2001 total	101,250	1,727,600	16,959,000
	2011 total	108,190	1,899,900	18,705,000
	Ten year change	6,940	172,300	1,746,000
	% Change	6.9%	10.0%	10.3%

		Coventry	West Midlands	England
Total	2001 total	127,090	2,234,700	21,361,000
	2011 total	132,590	2,358,300	22,814,000
	Ten year change	5,500	123,600	1,453,000
	% Change	4.3%	5.5%	6.8%

(SHMA 2012)

Council Tax Bands

Coventry has a high proportion (71.1%) of properties in Council Tax Bands A and B, which represent properties with lower values, and very few properties in the higher bands, which represent high value properties. This compares with 56.3% of properties in the West Midlands and 44.4% of properties in England that are classed as Bands A and B.

Table 3: Properties in each Council Tax Band as at 31st March 2012.

Council Tax Band	Coventry - Number of Properties	Coventry %	WEST MIDLANDS %	ENGLAND %
A	55,570	41.3%	31.1%	24.8%
B	40,130	29.8%	25.2%	19.6%
C	22,220	16.5%	19.3%	21.8%
D	8,690	6.5%	11.1%	15.3%
E	4,260	3.2%	7.0%	9.4%
F	2,220	1.6%	3.8%	5.0%
G	1,370	1.0%	2.3%	3.5%
H	170	0.1%	0.2%	0.6%
Total	134,620	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(source: Valuation Office Agency)

Figure 1: Properties in each Council Tax Band as at 31st March 2012.

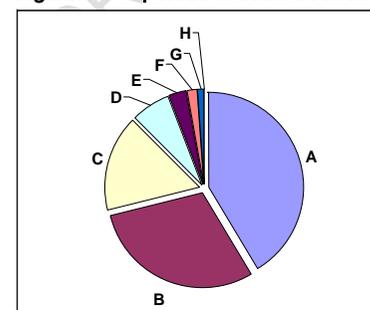
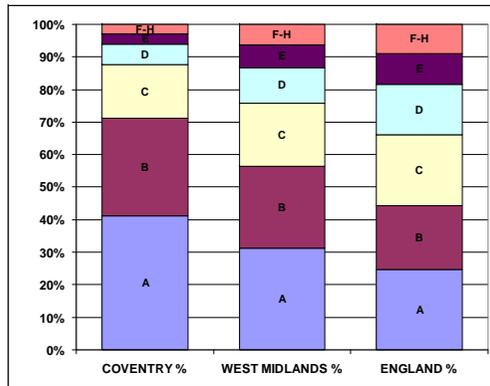


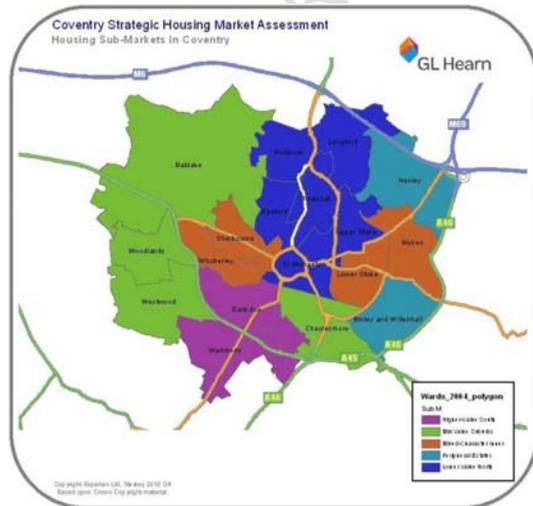
Figure 2: Council Tax Band Comparison – Coventry, West Midlands and England (31st March 2012)



Housing Sub-Markets within the City

Bringing together the elements of the stock profile in Coventry, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2012) identified five key housing sub-markets within the City:

Figure 3: Housing Market Sub-Areas (SHMA 2012)



1. Higher-Value South: (coloured purple in Fig 3)

The south of the City, comprising the wards of Earlsdon and Wainbody, was consistently identified by estate agents as the most desirable. These two wards demonstrated the highest house prices across all housing types. They have the highest proportions of detached and semi-detached homes (62% in Earlsdon and 73% in Wainbody) with more than 60% of properties in Band E-H. Over 55% of sales are of detached and semi-detached properties. These wards have a low proportion of social housing (with less than 10% of the housing stock owned by social landlords).

The socio-economic profile of the wards is generally more affluent, with more than 60% of the population in 2001 employed in higher-level occupations. Unemployment is low at less than 2.5%. The age structure of the population varies slightly between the wards.

2. Mid-Value Outer West / South West Suburbs: (coloured green in Fig 3)

The mid-value suburbs describe a group of wards around the fringes of the City which contain a mix of property types, but are generally focused on 'mid market' semi-detached and terraced properties. This group of areas comprises Westwood, Woodlands, Cheylesmore and Bablake focused in the west and south of the City. Over 40% of properties in these wards are in property bands C or above. House prices are lower than in the higher-value south, but above those in other parts of the City. These areas contain some 'peripheral' estates which were developed as social housing at Tile Hill and Canley (in the west of the City). These areas still contain concentrations of social housing, deprivation and unemployment. Outside of these areas, unemployment is below the Coventry average and more than 50% of working residents are in higher-level occupations.

3. Mixed Character Inner East / West: (coloured orange in Fig 3)

The third group comprises a series of neighbourhoods which are more urban and mixed in character, with more than 55% of sales/ stock comprising terraced housing in most wards. It includes the wards of Whoberley, Sherbourne, Lower Stoke and Wyken. Housing in these areas is at medium-level prices, ranging from £120,000 - £130,000 for a terraced property and £135,000 - £150,000 for a

semi-detached property. In these areas, an above average proportion of the population is aged 25-49. Between 10-20% of the population in 2001 was from a BME group. Unemployment levels are average.

4. Large Peripheral Estates: (coloured light blue in Fig 3)

The fourth sub-market includes the wards of Henley and Binley & Willenhall which contain large estates built as social housing – but overall are more moderately priced than Westwood/Woodlands. They contain high concentrations of social housing (24-26% of stock) and nearing 70% of properties fall within Bands A or B. Despite their outer-urban location, they contain a relatively high proportion of flats. Levels of unemployment are above average.

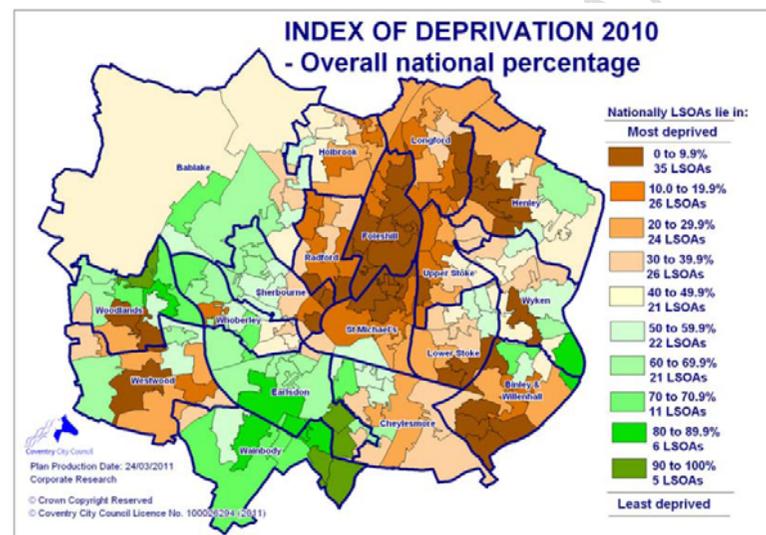
5. Lower Value North: (coloured dark blue in Fig 3)

The north of the City is recognised by estate agents as the lowest value area. It comprises the wards of St Michael’s, Foleshill, Longford, Radford, Holbrook, and Upper Stoke. This area demonstrates the lowest house prices in the City, with terraced properties selling for under £100,000 in Foleshill, Longford, St Michaels and Holbrook wards. Average house prices in all wards in this area are below £110,000. A high proportion of properties are in Council Tax Bands A and B (over 60% in all wards), with terraced properties making up more than 55% of all sales by ward. The area demonstrates the highest levels of private sector housing stock which is non-decent or with Category 1 hazards, and contains the highest levels of vulnerable households in non-decent properties. There are a high proportion of people aged 25-49 resident in this sub-market. In all wards, more than 20% of the population is from a BME group. Unemployment is above the Coventry average, and the proportion of people employed in higher-level occupations is below average. The area demonstrates the greatest spatial concentrations of deprivation.

Deprivation

Coventry is ranked 52 out of 326 Local Authority Districts under the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 (with 1 being the most deprived), but there is a wide variation within the city. 35 LSOA (Lower Super Output Area) neighbourhoods are within the 10% most deprived areas in the country, but there are also 5 areas in the 10% least deprived areas in the country. The north-east of the City, particularly St Michael’s and Foleshill, have a high number of deprived neighbourhoods, but there are also pockets of significant deprivation in other parts of the City including Henley and Binley & Willenhall.

Figure 4: Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010



More information on Deprivation is available:

https://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/135/english_indices_of_deprivation_reports

Housing Stock Conditions

Stock Condition in the Private Sector

In 2012 a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey (PSSCS) was carried out by consultants on behalf of Coventry City Council to determine the condition of private sector housing stock.

The survey found that overall, 34.9% of properties in the private sector were non-decent. This is the equivalent of 38,400 non-decent homes in Coventry. There was a slightly higher occurrence of non-decency in owner-occupied properties (34.9%) than in privately rented properties (34.6%). This is in contrast to the figures for England (from the English Housing Survey 2009) which show 29.3% non-decency in owner-occupied homes but 40.8% non-decency in the private rented sector.

Table XX shows that the main reason for failure of dwellings as a decent home was the presence of Category 1 hazards (under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System – HHSRS) followed by a poor degree of thermal comfort and the need for repairs. Lack of modern facilities represented a smaller proportion of failures.

Table 4: Reasons for failure of dwellings as a decent home

Reason	Dwellings	% of non-decent	% of stock
Category 1 Hazard	22,100	58.6%	20.1%
In need of repair	10,800	28.6%	9.8%
Lacking modern facilities	4,200	11.3%	3.9%
Poor degree of thermal comfort	11,300	29.9%	10.3%
Non Decent	38,400	100%	34.9%

(Draft PSSCS 2012 – note: the failure reasons total more than the figure for non-decent dwellings as some will fail on more than one criterion)

The Stock Condition Survey also assessed the estimated cost to remedy these failures, showing that private housing in Coventry requires £130.4m of

investment to meet decent homes standards, or an average of £3,400 per non-decent property.

Table 5: Repair costs by non-decency reason

Reason	Total Cost (£m)	Cost per dwelling (£)
Category 1 Hazard	23.9	1,080
In need of repair	24.5	1,350
Lacking modern facilities	43.7	10,300
Poor degree of thermal comfort	38.3	3,410
Total (and average per dwelling)	130.4	3,400

(Draft PSSCS 2012)

Fuel Poverty

A household is considered to be in fuel poverty when more than 10% of their income has to be spent to achieve an adequate level of warmth in their home.

In 2010, 21% of households in Coventry were in fuel poverty compared to the national average of 19%. At the LSOA (Lower Super Output Area) neighbourhood level, 68 out of the 197 LSOAs have fuel poverty levels at over 25% and of these; eight have levels of over 30%. The Climate Change Strategy for Coventry indicates that approximately 36% of the City's carbon dioxide emissions are from the housing stock.

Empty Homes

As at 1st April 2012, 2587 properties were empty and of these, 1434 had been empty for over 6 months. The Council works towards bringing empty properties back into use, particularly concentrating on those properties that have been empty for over two years, or are causing a nuisance in the local community through disrepair, vandalism etc. Over the past five years, 705 properties have been brought back into use through the direct action of the Council and currently (Oct 2012), there are 449 empty homes cases being investigated.

Table 6: Empty homes brought back into use through the direct action of the Council

Year	Number of properties brought back into use
2007/08	111
2008/09	123 (45 of which were empty for 2 years or causing nuisance)
2009/10	128 (52 of which were empty for 2 years or causing nuisance)
2010/11	142 (52 of which were empty for 2 years or causing nuisance)
2011/12	201 (73 of which were empty for 2 years or causing nuisance)

Table 7: Locations of empty homes cases currently being investigated

Ward	Number	Percentage	Ward	Number	Percentage
Foleshill	69	15.4%	Whoberley	20	4.5%
St Michael's	46	10.2%	Westwood	18	4.0%
Radford	36	8.0%	Binley&Willenhall	16	3.6%
Lower Stoke	35	7.8%	Cheylesmore	16	3.6%
Longford	34	7.6%	Wainbody	12	2.7%
Holbrook	30	6.7%	Woodlands	11	2.4%
Henley	29	6.5%	Wyken	11	2.4%
Upper Stoke	28	6.2%	Sherbourne	9	2.0%
Earlsdon	21	4.7%	Bablake	8	1.8%
			Total	449	100.0%

Housing Demand

Coventry Homefinder

Coventry Homefinder is the choice based lettings system by which the majority of social housing in Coventry is allocated. Applicants register on the system and are placed in a band (from Band 1A to Band 3B), giving relative priority depending on their housing needs. Band 1A and 1B are those with very urgent housing needs, Bands 2A, 2B and 2C are those with urgent housing needs, and Bands 3A and 3B are other applicants.

Once registered, applicants can 'bid on' (express an interest in) available social housing properties that are advertised each week by the 12 partner Registered Providers.

Numbers on the Register

The total number of applicants on the Coventry Homefinder register has fluctuated since it was introduced in September 2007. From a base of 6,493 in April 2007, the number of applicants rapidly rose to a peak of over 25,000 in 2009/10. A review of the register was carried out in early 2010 and this resulted in a considerable fall in numbers on the register.

Since that review, the number of households registering had increased the register again to similar levels, but an upgrade of the IT system carried out in November 2011 now allows an automatic review of each household's application on the anniversary of their registration date.

The proportion of households in priority bands 1 and 2 has stayed relatively consistent throughout, at approx 10% of the total register.

Figure 5 – Trends in the number of applicants on the Coventry Homefinder Register since 2008/09

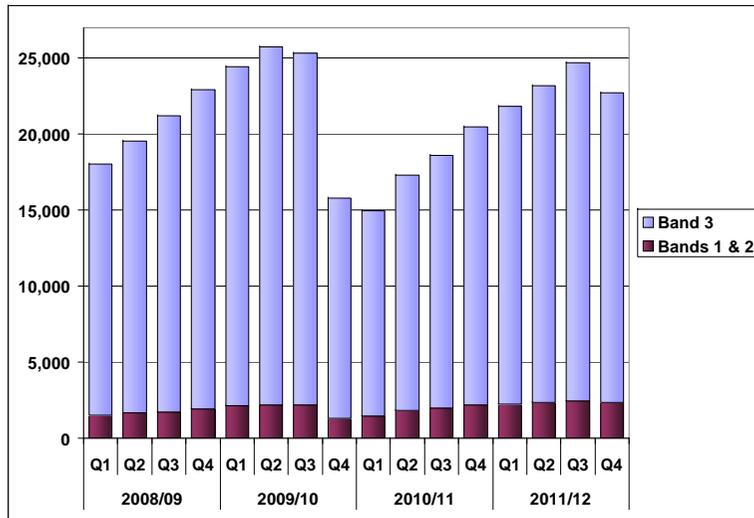


Table 8 – The Coventry Homefinder Register as at 1st April 2012

Band 1A	70
Band 1B	78
Band 2A	1,148
Band 2B	433
Band 2C	630
Band 3A	19,005
Band 3B	1,354
Total	22,718

Priority need bands 1A-2C	2,359	10.4%
Non-priority need bands 3A-3B	20,359	89.6%
Total	22,718	

Active Participation

The Choice Based Lettings system requires applicants to take an active part and exercise choice, by placing a 'bid' on the system to register their interest in particular properties that become available for letting.

Overall, 36% of applicants have never placed a bid on the system, and only 43.5% of applicants (9,885 applicants) placed a bid within the year 2011/12.

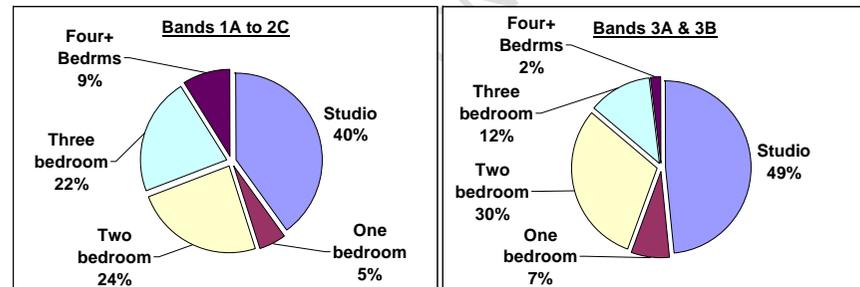
Minimum Bedroom Requirements

When an applicant registers with Coventry Homefinder, their household composition is assessed to determine the minimum number of bedrooms they require. Generally, a higher proportion of applicants in Bands 1 & 2 (priority need bands) require larger, family sized properties.

Table 9 – Minimum Bedroom Requirements of Applicants (2012)

	Numbers			Percentages		
	Bands 1&2	Band 3	Total	Bands 1&2	Band 3	Total
Studio	944	9,835	10,779	40%	48%	47%
One bedroom	115	1,501	1,616	5%	7%	7%
Two bedroom	570	6,204	6,774	24%	30%	30%
Three bedroom	519	2,423	2,942	22%	12%	13%
Four+ Bedrooms	211	396	607	9%	2%	3%
Total	2,359	20,359	22,718	100%	100%	100%

Figure 6 – Minimum Bedroom Requirements of Applicants in Priority Bands 1A – 2C and Non-Priority Bands 3A – 3B (2012)



Mobility and Adapted Properties

Applicants may identify a need for a property with particular design features or adaptations due to a physical disability or mobility need. The number of applicants that have these requirements is relatively small (182 applicants - less than 1% of the overall register) but the group is significant as over 60% of those with mobility needs are in very urgent or urgent housing need (Bands 1&2).

Ethnic Origin of Main Applicant

Of the households in Bands 1&2, the majority (59.4%) are White-British. This is below the estimated percentage of the whole City's population that is White-British (74.1%)

The Black/Black British-African group makes up 11.4% of bands 1&2 but only 1.6% of the city's population. Conversely, Asian/Asian British-Indian households make up 7.7% of the city's population, but only 2.2% of Bands 1+2 and only 1.9% of Band 3.

Table 10: Percentage of each band made up by households of each ethnic origin, compared to the percentage of the overall population in Coventry

	Band 1&2	% of Bands 1&2	Band 3	% of Band 3	Total	% of total	% pop'n of Cov
Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi	18	0.8%	92	0.5%	110	0.5%	0.8%
Asian/Asian British - Indian	51	2.2%	382	1.9%	433	1.9%	7.7%
Asian/Asian British - Other	52	2.2%	356	1.7%	408	1.8%	0.9%
Asian/Asian British - Pakistani	54	2.3%	243	1.2%	297	1.3%	2.9%
Black/Black British - African	269	11.4%	1,791	8.8%	2,060	9.1%	1.6%
Black/Black British - Caribbean	55	2.3%	459	2.3%	514	2.3%	1.2%
Black/Black British - Other	25	1.1%	168	0.8%	193	0.8%	0.2%
Chinese	4	0.2%	25	0.1%	29	0.1%	1.5%
Mixed - Other	9	0.4%	117	0.6%	126	0.6%	0.4%
Mixed - White and Asian	21	0.9%	125	0.6%	146	0.6%	0.7%
Mixed - White and Black African	12	0.5%	145	0.7%	157	0.7%	0.2%
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	30	1.3%	426	2.1%	456	2.0%	1.0%
Not Stated	138	5.8%	776	3.8%	914	4.0%	0.0%
Other	94	4.0%	637	3.1%	731	3.2%	1.5%
White - British	1,401	59.4%	12,906	63.4%	14,307	63.0%	74.1%
White - Irish	36	1.5%	243	1.2%	279	1.2%	2.3%
White - Other	90	3.8%	1,468	7.2%	1,558	6.9%	2.8%
Total	2,359	100%	20,359	100%	22,718	100%	100%

(Ethnicity from Population Estimates 2009 – Office for National Statistics)

Homelessness in Coventry

During the year 2011/12, 1146 households approached the Council for assistance and completed a homelessness application. After assessment, 576 were found to be homeless, eligible, in priority need and not intentionally homeless (known as 'statutorily homeless' or 'acceptances', and owed the main homelessness duty).

Table 11 - Homelessness Applications - Decisions Made

Year	Applications/ Decisions Made	Accepted as Statutorily Homeless
2007/08	1159	528
2008/09	1859	550
2009/10	1533	538
2010/11	1751	703
2011/12	1146	576

A more detailed analysis of homelessness in Coventry is available in the Homelessness Review (Appendix 3).

Housing Supply

New Housing Development

The emerging Core Strategy has identified the requirement for an additional 11,373 dwellings from 2011 to 2028. This is based on the expected jobs-led growth in the City's population.

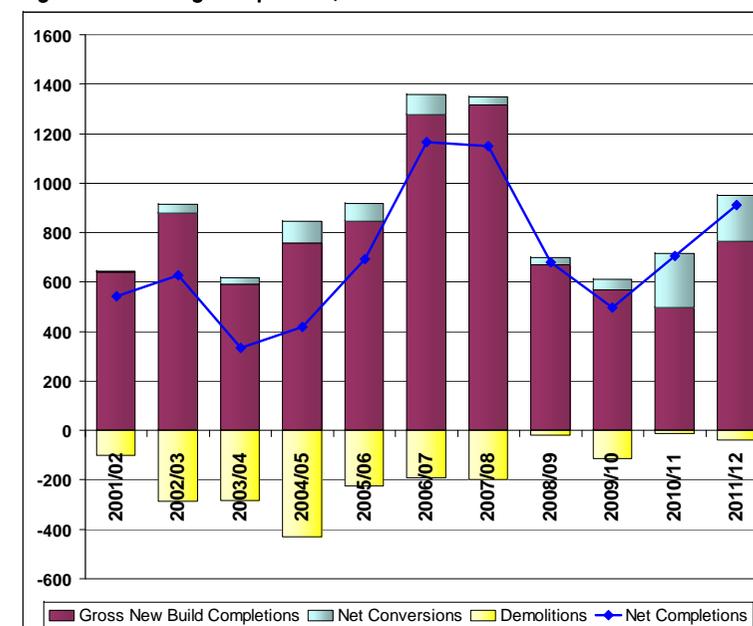
Housing development in Coventry was affected by the credit crunch and recession, and the fall in housing construction that followed. Gross new build completions fell from a peak of 1,315 in 2007/08 to a low of 497 in 2010/11.

Table 12 – Housing Completions, Conversions and Demolitions

Year	Gross New Build Completions	Net Conversions	Total Completions	Demolitions	Net Completions
2001/02	639	4	643	-101	542
2002/03	879	34	913	-287	626
2003/04	591	27	618	-284	334
2004/05	757	90	847	-429	418
2005/06	847	70	917	-226	691
2006/07	1278	80	1358	-193	1165
2007/08	1315	33	1348	-199	1149
2008/09	671	29	700	-20	680
2009/10	567	44	611	-115	496
2010/11	497	220	717	-12	705
2011/12	765	186	951	-39	912

(2011 Annual Monitoring Report)

Figure 7 – Housing Completions, Conversions and Demolitions



(2011 Annual Monitoring Report)

New Affordable Housing Development

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) carried out in 2008 identified the need for an additional 304 affordable homes to be provided in the city each year. This was the target for affordable housing development for the period 2008/09 to 2011/12. Over the past five years, there has been an average of 335 additional affordable dwellings per year.

An updated SHMA has been completed during 2012, which has identified that the annual need for additional affordable homes has increased to 649 per year. This includes 1295 dwellings that have already gained planning permission (259 annually over the 5 year period) and an additional 1949 homes required (390 annually) in addition to this.

Table 13 – Affordable Housing Completions since 2005/06

Year	Social Rented	Intermediate	Total
2005/06	144	10	154
2006/07	109	145	254
2007/08	275	97	372
2008/09	254	114	368
2009/10	220	92	312
2010/11	117	154	271
2011/12	204	147	351

Figure 8 – Affordable Housing Completions since 2005/06

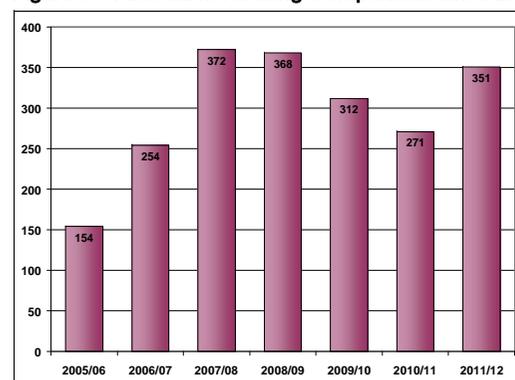
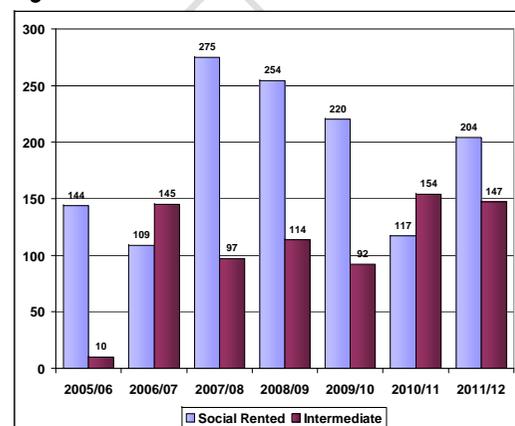


Figure 9 – Social Rent and Intermediate Tenure Completions since 2005/06

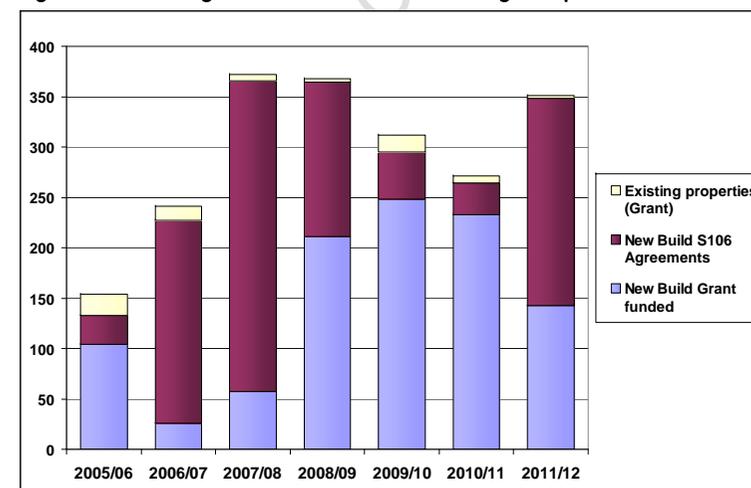


There are two main sources of affordable housing – grant funded housing developed by Registered Providers, and affordable housing provided by private developers through the planning system, usually through Section 106 agreements.

For the period 2008-2011, Coventry was very successful in gaining funding from the Homes and Communities Agency. When the credit crunch and recession caused a significant drop in house building, the Government at the time increased the funding available for affordable housing. As a result, for these years the proportion of affordable housing provided by Section 106 through the planning system is low, with a much greater proportion provided by grant funding through the HCA.

From 2011 onward, the Coalition Government has reduced the amount of grant funding for new affordable homes. A higher proportion of the affordable homes developed in 2011/12 were through Section 106 agreements.

Figure 10 – Funding source for Affordable Housing Completions



Supply of Social Housing – Properties available through Homefinder

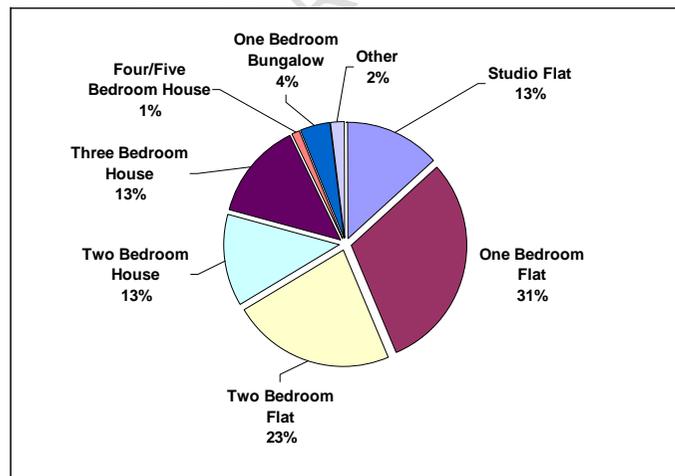
2,299 properties were advertised on Homefinder during 2011/12 and successfully let. Only 16% of the properties advertised had three or more bedrooms. 48% were studio or one bedroom properties suitable for one or two occupants only. 68% of the properties advertised were flats or maisonettes.

There were a total of 225 adverts with the outcome 'not let'. These were for 70 different properties (some properties were advertised multiple times). Sheltered bedsits/flats accounted for 187 out of the 225 'not let' adverts.

Table 14 – Types of properties advertised on Homefinder 2011/12

Property Type	Number	Percentage
Studio Flat	309	13.4%
One Bedroom Flat	695	30.2%
Two Bedroom Flat	520	22.6%
Two Bedroom House	299	13.0%
Three Bedroom House	308	13.4%
Four/Five Bedroom House	30	1.3%
One Bedroom Bungalow	91	4.0%
Other	47	2.0%

Figure 11 – Types of properties advertised on Homefinder 2011/12

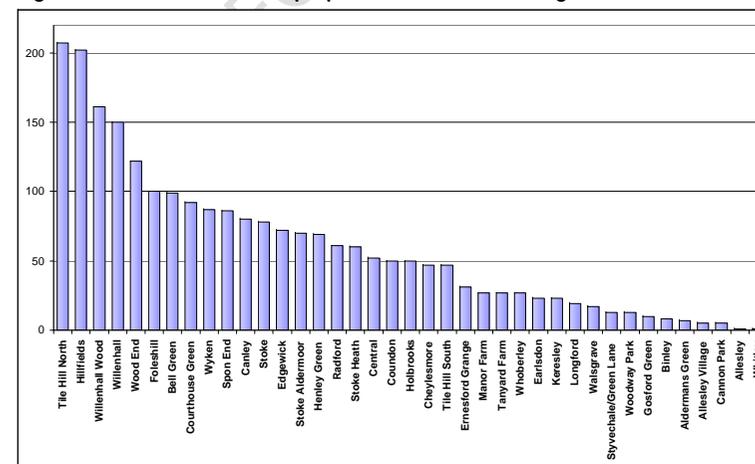


Of the properties advertised and let during 2011/12, 57% were in just ten areas of the city. Much of the city's social housing stock is concentrated in these areas of former Council housing estates.

Table 15 – Area/Location of properties advertised during 2011/12

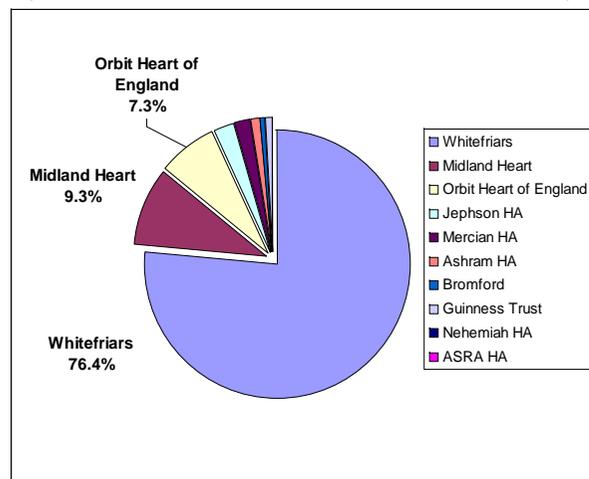
	Area	Total	%		Area	Total	%
1	Tile Hill North	207	9.00%	21	Cheylesmore	47	2.04%
2	Hillfields	202	8.79%	22	Tile Hill South	47	2.04%
3	Willenhall Wood	161	7.00%	23	Ernesford Grange	41	1.35%
4	Willenhall	150	6.52%	24	Manor Farm	27	1.17%
5	Wood End	122	5.31%	25	Tanyard Farm	27	1.17%
6	Foleshill	100	4.35%	26	Whoberley	27	1.17%
7	Bell Green	99	4.31%	27	Earlsdon	23	1.00%
8	Courthouse Green	92	4.00%	28	Keresley	23	1.00%
9	Wyken	87	3.78%	29	Longford	19	0.83%
10	Spon End	86	3.74%	30	Walsgrave	17	0.74%
11	Canley	80	3.48%	31	Styvechale/Green Lane	13	0.57%
12	Stoke	78	3.39%	32	Woodway Park	13	0.57%
13	Edgewick	72	3.13%	33	Gosford Green	10	0.43%
14	Stoke Aldermoor	70	3.04%	34	Binley	8	0.35%
15	Henley Green	69	3.00%	35	Aldermans Green	7	0.30%
16	Radford	61	2.65%	36	Allesley Village	5	0.22%
17	Stoke Heath	60	2.61%	37	Cannon Park	5	0.22%
18	Central	52	2.26%	38	Allesley	1	0.04%
19	Coundon	50	2.17%	39	Whitley	1	0.04%
20	Holbrooks	50	2.17%				

Figure 12 - Area/Location of properties advertised during 2011/12



The majority of social housing properties in Coventry are owned and managed by Whitefriars Housing Group, and this is reflected in the properties that became available for letting during 2011/12. 76.4% were Whitefriars properties, 9.3% were Midland Heart properties, 7.3% were Orbit properties.

Figure 13: Landlords of Properties Advertised on Coventry Homefinder 2011/12



Comparison – Demand and Supply of Social Housing through Coventry Homefinder 2011/12

A total of 272,573 bids were placed on the Homefinder system during 2011/12, which gives an overall average of 117 bids per property. The highest number of bids for a single property during 2011/12 was 752, for a three bedroom house in Radford.

Table 16 shows the minimum bedroom need of the applicants on the Homefinder register on 1st April 2012, and the bedroom numbers of the properties that were actually advertised during 2011/12.

This shows the shortage of large, four bedroom properties for households with reasonable preference (30 properties available during the year, compared to 211 households with priority banding and 396 without). It also shows that the number of smaller studio/one bedroom properties that were advertised is similar to the number with reasonable preference, but the number of households in Band 3 with this bedroom need is very high.

There were only 17 properties advertised that had a maximum occupation of over 6 people, whereas there are 140 households with priority banding and 260 households in Band 3 that require more than 6 bed spaces. There were no properties available with maximum occupation of nine or more, whereas there are 48 households on the register needing this size of accommodation, of which 20 are in a priority band.

Table 16: Coventry Homefinder comparison of bedrooms required by applicants and properties available 2011/12

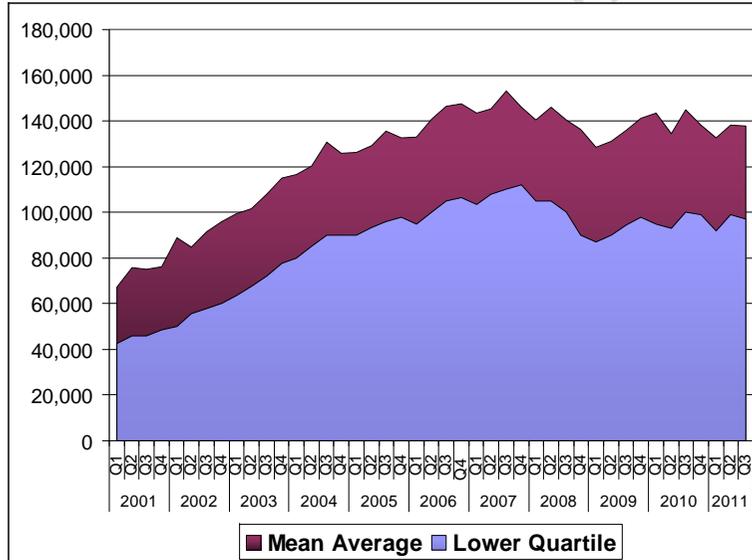
Properties by Bedroom - Advertised during 2011/12		Requirement by minimum bedroom need - Register on 1st April 2012	
Property Size	Number of properties	Bands 1&2 (very urgent/urgent housing need)	Band 3
Studio/1 bedroom	1,103	1,059	11,336
2 bedrooms	824	570	6,204
3 bedrooms	342	519	2,423
Four+ bedrooms	30	211	396
Total	2,299	2,359	20,359

Housing Affordability

Property Prices in Coventry

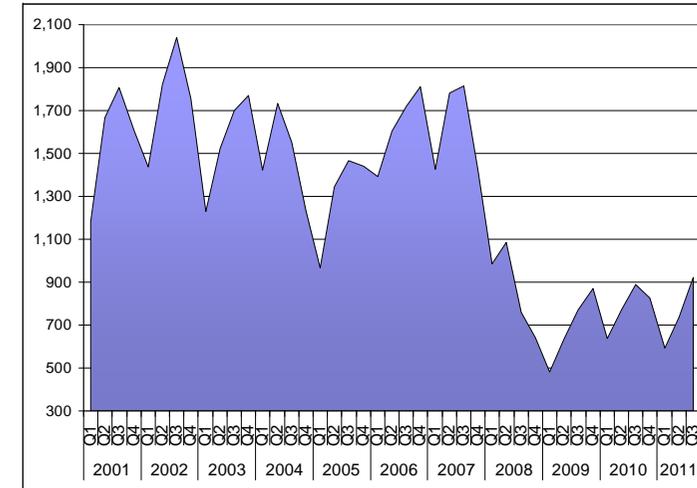
Due to the credit crunch in 2008 and the recession which followed, property prices in Coventry fell, as they did across the country. Average prices have since been unstable and have stayed below the peak average price of £153,149 in quarter 3 of 2007. In addition to lower property values, mortgage lenders have tightened up their lending criteria and buyers require a higher deposit. Together with a general loss of confidence in the market, this has meant that the number of transactions has also dropped.

Figure 14: Average (mean) and Lower Quartile property prices in Coventry.



(CLG Live Tables 581 and 583)

Figure 15: number of property transactions in Coventry.



(CLG Live Table 584)

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identified five housing sub-markets in Coventry – these are described in more detail above. The SHMA analysed Land Registry data to show the average and entry-level (lower quartile) property prices for these five housing market sub-areas.

Table 17: Average house prices by Sub-Market in Coventry (Q3 2011)

Area	Mean Average	Lower Quartile
Lower Value North	£104,014	£82,000
Peripheral Estates	£115,312	£89,250
Mixed Character Inner	£131,104	£107,500
Mixed-Value Suburbs	£155,201	£109,625
Higher-Value South	£216,648	£155,237
Coventry	£137,792	£97,500

(SHMA 2012)

Social Housing Rents in Coventry

Social rents are regulated by the Government and calculated using a formula which takes into account the location, type and size of the property, and average local earnings.

Table 18: Monthly average social rent levels

Property Size	Higher Value South	Mid Value Suburbs	Mixed Character Inner	Peripheral Estates	Lower Value North	City Wide
1 bedroom	£353	£316	£316	£318	£319	£318
2 bedrooms	£394	£377	£365	£354	£347	£356
3 bedrooms	£410	£400	£392	£359	£373	£375
4 bedrooms	-	£422	£448	£423	£412	£423

(SHMA 2012)

'Affordable Rents' in Coventry

As part of the Homes and Communities Agency funding programme for 2011-15, a new tenure called 'Affordable Rent' has been developed, allowing Housing Associations to charge rents of up to 80% of market rents on new build properties and a proportion of re-let social housing properties.

As 'Affordable Rent' is based on a % of market rental value, they are subject to greater variation across the city and 'Affordable Rent' properties in high value areas will cost more to rent than those in low value areas. The SHMA contains details of the potential level of 'affordable rents' in the housing market sub-areas of the city.

Table 19: Potential maximum cost of 'affordable rented' housing by size and sub-area (per month)

Property Size	Higher Value South	Mid Value Suburbs	Mixed Character Inner	Peripheral Estates	Lower Value North	City Wide
1 bedroom	£320	£302	£312	£300	£280	£296
2 bedrooms	£420	£404	£406	£355	£396	£400
3 bedrooms	£540	£473	£476	£476	£440	£464
4 bedrooms	£800	£720	£777	£520	£640	£716

(SHMA 2012)

Market (Private Sector) Rents

The SHMA also analysed the cost of renting in the private sector in each of the housing market sub-areas of Coventry.

Table 20: Market (private sector) rents by size and housing sub-area

	Higher Value South	Mid Value Suburbs	Mixed Character Inner	Peripheral Estates	Lower Value North	City Wide
1 bedroom	£400	£378	£390	£375	£350	£370
2 bedrooms	£525	£505	£508	£444	£495	£500
3 bedrooms	£675	£591	£595	£595	£550	£580
4 bedrooms	£1,000	£900	£971	£650	£800	£895

(SHMA 2012)

Affordability analysis

A household is considered able to afford to buy a home if it costs 3.5 times the gross household income (or less); and a household is considered able to afford rented housing in cases where the rent payable would constitute no more than 25% of gross income.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) used entry-level (lower quartile) housing costs to analyse the affordability of different types of housing tenure in Coventry.

Table 21: City-wide prices and rents used for affordability analysis

Size	LQ purchase price	LQ private rent (pcm)	'Affordable rent' (pcm)	Social rent (pcm)
1 bedroom	£64,400	£369	£296	£318
2 bedrooms	£85,500	£499	£400	£356
3 bedrooms	£117,600	£578	£464	£375
4 bedrooms	£193,400	£896	£716	£423

(SHMA 2012)

Table 22: Indicative annual income required to purchase/rent a 2 bedroom property without additional subsidy.

Sub Area	Income required for purchase/rent			
	Entry level purchase price	Entry level private rent	Affordable rent (80% market)	Average social rent
Higher Value South	£36,600	£25,200	£20,200	£18,900
Mid Value Suburbs	£22,600	£24,200	£19,400	£18,100
Mixed Character Inner	£25,400	£24,400	£19,500	£17,500
Peripheral Estates	£23,400	£21,300	£17,000	£17,000
Lower Value North	£22,900	£23,800	£19,000	£16,600
City Wide	£24,400	£24,000	£19,200	£17,100

(SHMA 2012)

Table 23: Lower quartile income ratios by sub-area (prices based on 2 bedroom home)

Sub Area	Entry level purchase price	Lower quartile income per annum	LQ price:Income ratio
Higher Value South	£128,000	£22,029	5.81
Mid Value Suburbs	£79,000	£16,521	4.78
Mixed Character Inner	£89,000	£17,501	5.09
Peripheral Estates	£82,000	£12,875	6.37
Lower Value North	£80,000	£14,399	5.56
City Wide	£85,500	£15,644	5.47

(SHMA 2012)

Registered Providers in Coventry 2012

RSL Code	Organisation Name	Landlord Type	Total Stock in Coventry
LH3903	Accord Housing Association Limited	Letting/Hostel	299
LH4095	Anchor Trust	Letting/Hostel	225
LH4034	Ashram Housing Association Limited	Letting/Hostel	109
L3534	ASRA Midlands Housing Association Limited	Letting	97
L0020	Bromford Carinthia Housing Association Limited	Letting	13
H1528	Central and Cecil Housing Trust	Hostels	11
H4434	Coventry & Warwickshire YMCA	YMCA/YWCA	47
A0581	Coventry Church (Municipal) Charities	Almshouses	75
LH2270	Dimensions UK Limited	Letting/Hostel	13
L4496	Fry Housing Trust	Letting	15
LH0459	Habinteg Housing Association Limited	Letting/Hostel	2
L4527	Heart Of England Housing Association Limited	Letting	1,515
L3076	Home Group Limited	Letting/Hostel	25
L0055	Housing 21	Letting	19
L0174	Jephson Homes Housing Association Limited	Letting	510
L0289	Jephson Housing Association Limited	Letting	123
H4250	Langley House Trust	Hostels	1
L0942	Mercian Housing Association Limited	Letting	433
L4467	Midland Heart Limited	Letting	3,362
L3833	Nehemiah United Churches Housing Association Ltd	Letting	21
C2731	Starley Housing Co-operative Limited	Co-operatives	125
H1046	The Abbeyfield Society	Abbeyfield	22
LH0037	The Guinness Trust	Letting/Hostel	307
LH4472	Whitefriars Housing Group Limited	Letting/Hostel	16,375

Further Information

There are many data sets and sources of information for background evidence of other issues identified in the Housing and Homelessness Strategy, such as unemployment, community cohesion, deprivation, crime and community safety, vulnerable people etc.

A valuable resource for investigating these issues further is the Facts About Coventry website, set up by the Coventry Partnership and developed by Coventry City Council's Corporate Research Team. On the website it is possible to find the most up to date available information on a range of issues:

- Housing
- Children and Young People
- Community safety
- Health and well-being
- Economy, learning, skills and employment
- People and place
- Climate change and the environment
- Equality and community cohesion
- Culture, sport and physical activity
- Transport.

The website is available from this link: www.facts-about-coventry.com

This appendix will be developed further during the consultation period and will be updated with the most current information at the time that the final Strategy document is published.

Appendix 3 – Homelessness Review

Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on Local Housing Authorities to carry out and publish a Homelessness Review for their district. Following this the Authority is then required to produce a Homelessness Strategy based on and informed by the review.

Aims of the Review

In accordance with the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002, the Review must consider:

- The levels and likely future levels of homelessness in the city.
- The activities and services provided, which help to prevent homelessness, help to find accommodation for homeless and potentially homeless people or provide support for them, including support to prevent them from becoming homeless again.
- The resources available to Housing Services and Social Services, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other agencies for providing those services.

The National Context

National Strategies

National Strategies that have helped shaped the Homelessness Strategy include:

- *"Laying the Foundations, A Housing Strategy for England"* (2011), the Government's National Housing Strategy identified tackling homelessness as a key priority. The Strategy outlines the Government's commitment to homelessness prevention, meeting the needs of the vulnerable, managing the consequences of those made homeless and addressing rough sleeping.
- *Homelessness (Suitability of accommodation) Order 2003*; states that bed and breakfast accommodation should only be used for households with

dependent children or pregnancy in an emergency and then for no longer than six weeks.

- *"Sustainable communities; settled homes; changing lives"* (2005): included an emphasis on homeless prevention, a target for a 50% reduction in the use of temporary accommodation by 2010 and stated that from 2010, B&B would no longer be considered suitable for 16/17 year olds
- *"Tackling Homelessness"* (2006): recognises the role of Registered Providers in preventing homelessness through partnership working, sustainable communities, allocation and management policies and better use of existing stock.
- *"No One Left Out: Communities Ending Rough Sleeping"* (Nov 2008): aimed to end rough sleeping in UK for more than one night by 2012.
- *"Vision to End Rough Sleeping: No second Night Out"* (July 2011): The focus of this plan is on single homeless people who are not in 'priority need', including those who are living on the streets and those who are at the greatest risk of rough sleeping because they have lived on the streets or are living in insecure accommodation, such as hostels or shelters. Anyone who finds themselves sleeping rough should be quickly helped off the streets so they do not have to spend a second night without a roof and to keep people off the streets, services must address the problems that led to homelessness in the first place.
- *"Localism Act 2011"* (November 2011): enables local authorities to discharge the main homelessness duty into the Private Rented Sector.
- *Allocation of Accommodation: Guidance for Local Housing Authorities in England* (June 2012): this new statutory guidance on allocations replaces all previous guidance. Local authorities have more flexibility when deciding who will qualify to apply for the housing register and how applicants are prioritised.
- *Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 –* (Oct 2012): This document sets out the expected standards for a private sector property/tenancy to be 'suitable' when discharging the main homelessness duty.

- *Making every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness* (Aug 2012): focuses on how services can be managed and work together in a way that prevents households from reaching a crisis point where they are faced with homelessness.

Welfare Reforms

Welfare reform is a major part of the Government's policy agenda. There is an unprecedented amount of change underway that is likely to impact on homelessness over the coming years, both in terms of the demand placed on services and the resources available to tackle it. A summary of the key welfare reforms that will potentially impact on homelessness and homeless prevention is shown below.

Measures already implemented

- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is now based on the 30th percentile of local rents in the Broad Market Rental Area (previously it was 50th percentile).
- Local Housing Allowance has been capped at £250 for a one bedroom property, £290 for a two bedroom property, £340 for a three bedroom property and £400 for a four bedroom property (per week).
- The maximum LHA rate has been set at the four-bedroom rate.
- Single adults aged under 35 who claim LHA will now only be eligible for the shared accommodation rate, rather than the one-bedroom self contained accommodation rate (this has increased from under 25).
- Up-rating and increasing the non-dependant deduction rate.

Measures still to be implemented (April 2013 onwards)

- LHA rates have been frozen at April 2012 levels, and from April 2013 will be increased in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rather than based directly on current available market rents.
- From April 2013, total household benefits will be capped at £500pw (£26,000pa) for couples and families and £350pw (£18,200pa) for single adults. If a household's benefits exceed the cap, the first element to be reduced is the housing element.

- From April 2013, working age social housing tenants who claim Housing Benefit (HB) will be subject to size criteria. If they underoccupy their home by one bedroom, their HB will be reduced by 14% of the rent amount. If they underoccupy by two or more bedrooms, the reduction will be 25% of the rent amount.
- From October 2013, new benefits claimants will come under the Universal Credit scheme, with existing claimants being moved over to the scheme in stages over the period until the end of 2017. Universal Credit aims to simplify and streamline the benefits system for claimants by bringing together a range of benefits and credits into a single system.
- Universal Credit will be paid monthly to the claimant; the housing element will no longer be paid directly to the landlord.

Potential Implications of Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance Changes in Coventry

- The Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) Impact Assessment identified that as a result of the changes to LHA, approximately 33% of private sector tenancies in Coventry would be available within LHA rates (down from 56% previously).
- This Impact Assessment also estimated that the 2011 LHA changes would result in approximately 9,000 households in Coventry losing an average of £11 per week from their benefit.
- Tenants who had existing claims and tenancies may find that the reductions mean that LHA no longer covers their rent payments. They will have to negotiate a lower rent, make up the difference from other income, or move to a cheaper property. There may be an increase in the number of tenants with arrears, and this may lead to an increase in evictions.
- There will be an increase in demand for shared housing from single LHA claimants under 35.

- Depending on the level of CPI and changes in the local rental market, it is possible that actual rents may rise at a faster rate than the LHA, meaning that fewer properties are available to LHA recipients.
- The overall caps on LHA are unlikely to have a significant impact in Coventry, as LHA rates are currently well below these caps.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that private landlords are more reluctant to let their properties to LHA claimants following the changes. Nationally, a survey by the National Landlords Association found that 90% of landlords letting to LHA tenants could not or would not reduce their rent to the new LHA levels, and 58% were planning to reduce the number of properties they let to LHA claimants.
- There may be implications for discharging homelessness duties into the private rented sector if the effective supply of properties available to households in receipt of LHA is reduced – particularly for households who require larger properties.
- Increases in non-dependent deductions may present an increased risk of youth homelessness.
- Tenants affected by the overall cap on benefits may struggle to meet housing payments as housing benefit is the element which is reduced.
- Households affected by the size criteria and HB reductions for under-occupiers in the social housing sector will need to make up the difference from other income or move to a smaller property, putting additional pressure on the housing supply. There may be an increase in the number of tenants with arrears, and this may lead to an increase in evictions.
- The DWP impact assessment estimates that in the West Midlands, 33% of tenants who receive HB and are of working age and will be affected by the size criteria for social housing, losing an average of £14 per week. Initial analysis of the impact in Coventry carried out by Whitefriars suggests that approximately 2400 of their tenants could be affected.

The Localism Act 2011 and changes to the Social Housing Regulatory Standards

The Localism Act is one of the Coalition Government's flagship acts designed to devolve power from all levels of government towards the citizen. The act includes unprecedented changes to local government and covers a wide range of services and policy areas including: finance, planning, governance and housing. It also includes key social housing and homelessness legislation reforms. The proposals with direct relevance to homelessness are:

- *Changes to the homelessness duty* – local authorities will be able to fully discharge their duty to secure accommodation by arranging an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, without requiring the applicant's agreement. Where applicants become homeless again within two years, the duty will be retained by the original authority.
- *Changes to housing allocations* – local authorities will have more freedom to determine who can qualify to apply for their housing register (however, the rules on eligibility continue to be governed by legislation). Tenants of social housing providers who wish to transfer to a new social home but who have no housing need under the 'reasonable preference' categories will no longer be subject to Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996.
- *New forms of tenure* – the Localism Act adds a new Fixed Term Tenancy for local authority landlords. In addition, changes to the social housing regulations mean that Registered Providers can also use Fixed Term Tenancies of a minimum 5 years duration (2 years in exceptional circumstances), rather than 'lifetime' tenancies.
- *Affordable Rents* – Registered Providers can charge 'Affordable Rents' (of up to 80% of the open market value) on new build housing and convert a proportion of relets to Affordable Rent, if they have a funding contract with the Homes and Communities Agency to develop new housing.

Tenancy Strategy

In response to the Localism Act the Council will also be publishing a Tenancy Strategy that provides a framework for social landlords when formulating policies relating to:

- The types of tenancy granted

- The circumstances in which a particular type of tenancy is granted
- The length and terms of tenancies
- The circumstances for granting a further tenancy when an existing tenancy ends.

The key issue for homelessness is the manner in which Fixed Term Tenancies are brought to an end. It is expected that where tenancies are not being renewed, landlords will need to provide households with early and robust housing options advice to avoid homeless presentations.

The Local Context

The Homelessness Strategy contributes to the delivery of the City's Sustainable Community Strategy and is also integral to the delivery of the Housing Strategy 2013-2018.

Fundamental Service Review

A fundamental service review of the Housing Service was undertaken during 2010-12 and implemented in April 2012. This involved restructuring the Housing Options Team to enable resources to be refocused towards the customer together with a greater emphasis on the customer being self-sufficient. The review identified the following specific roles:

- **First Response** – This is the first point of contact for enquiries and involves experienced and knowledgeable officers who are able to assess cases and provide proactive advice.
- **Homeless Prevention & Assessment** - The aim is to change from reactive, crisis management approaches to homelessness to delivering effective homeless prevention services that focus on early intervention. If prevention is not feasible to provide an efficient homelessness assessment service.
- **Access to Private Rented Properties** – This team facilitates access to the private rented sector for households in need, to prevent homelessness and discharge the main homelessness duty.

- Coventry Homefinder - The aim is to deliver a Choice Based Lettings service with increased customer self service and to assist people in housing need.

Homelessness - Commissioned Services

Currently, seven commissioned homelessness organisations provide additional services through thirteen separate contracts. Each contract is administered separately with their own assessment system, client record keeping and monitoring processes. Through consultation with the providers and their clients it has been established that there is duplication of processes, assessment and administration between the various contracts. Providers have differing assessment criteria and client records are unable to be shared between services. Homeless clients of the commissioned services have talked of 'revolving door' process between services, where clients have experienced moving between commissioned services and ended up back at the original starting point. As each customer is presently only able to be supported under one contract, this can often mean that not all individual needs can be entirely met.

Achievements of the Previous Homelessness Strategy

The main achievements of the previous Homelessness Strategy include:

- *Development of the new Salvation Army Lifehouse on Harnall Lane*
The Lifehouse provides direct access accommodation mainly for single homeless men but also some accommodation for women. There are 80 rooms in 'clusters' of five sharing a kitchen/lounge area but with each room having a small ensuite shower room. The communal facilities include:
 - A community café with links to the City College and their catering training courses.
 - A community meeting room.
 - Areas for advice agencies, health agencies etc to hold sessions with residents.
 - An IT suite used for training, helping to find employment and permanent housing etc.

The £9m scheme received significant funding from the HCA and some funding from the Council.

- *Provision of a new homelessness centre*
Whitefriars Housing Group has been successful in obtaining £2.1m of funding from the Homes and Communities Agency's Homelessness Change Programme 2011-15 for the development of a new homelessness centre for the single and street homeless to supersede the existing Chace Hostel.
- *The introduction of Coventry Homefinder*
In September 2007, Coventry Homefinder was launched as the new choice based lettings scheme for allocating social housing in the City. Applicants now only have to make one application to access social housing from 12 housing association partners. Applicants are placed in bands based on their relative housing needs. Available properties are advertised each week, and applicants have the opportunity to 'bid' on (express and interest in) the properties they would consider. At the end of the week's bidding period, the 'bids' are prioritised based on the band of the applicant or registration date.
- *Closer working with Private Sector Landlords*
HPPR (Homeless People into Private Rented) provided a bond guarantee to landlords in place of a cash deposit, enabling people in housing need and homeless households to access the private rented sector. As part of the Fundamental Service Review a new team of three officers has been set up to expand and provide an improved service called 'Access to Private Rented Properties' (APRP).
- *Improved temporary accommodation through partnership with Whitefriars*
In order to provide more suitable temporary accommodation for homeless families, the Council has developed a scheme in partnership with Whitefriars Housing Group to provide ten self contained properties

in the City, owned and managed by Whitefriars, to be used as temporary accommodation by families with dependent children.

- *Additional Affordable Housing development*
Through the Homes and Communities Agency and developers' planning obligations, development has averaged at 335 additional affordable units each year over the past five years.

Homelessness in Coventry – Services Provided by the City Council

Statutory Services

Coventry City Council no longer owns or manages any social housing following the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) of the housing stock to Whitefriars Housing Group in 2000. The Council still has a range of statutory duties as the Local Housing Authority. These are summarised below:

Housing Allocations Function:

- Under Part 6 of The Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), all housing authorities must have an allocation scheme.
- In discharging Part 6 obligations, housing authorities must have regard to the Allocation of Accommodation Code of Guidance for Local Housing Authorities (ODPM 2002).

Advice about Applying for an Allocation:

Housing authorities have a duty to people in their district to ensure that:

- Advice and information about the right to make an application is available free of charge;
- Assistance is given free of charge to those who are likely to have difficulty in making an application for housing without such assistance.

Homelessness Function:

- The homelessness legislation (Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) provides a safety net for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days.
- Authorities must ensure that accommodation is available for applicants who have become homeless through no fault of their own and who have a priority need for accommodation (the main homeless duty).
- Under homeless legislation, authorities are required to provide advice to individual applicants who are owed certain homeless duties.
- In discharging its Part 7 obligations, a housing authority must have regard to the Homeless Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (CLG 2006).

Housing Advice:

- Housing authorities also have a general duty to ensure that advice about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness is available to everyone free of charge.

Homelessness Reviews and Strategies:

- All housing authorities are required to carry out a periodic review of homelessness in their district and to adopt and publish a homelessness prevention strategy.

Homelessness Applications made to Coventry City Council

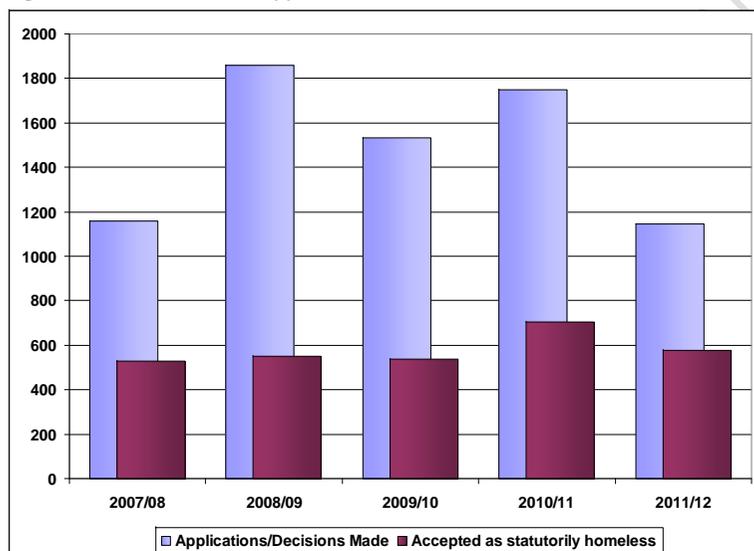
During the year 2011/12, 1146 households approached the Council for assistance and completed a homelessness application. After assessment, 576 were found to be homeless, eligible, in priority need and not intentionally homeless (known as 'statutorily homeless' or 'acceptances', and owed the main homelessness duty).

This represented a fall in acceptances from the previous year (2010/11 – 703 acceptances), but came very close to the five-year average of 579 acceptances per year. The general trend over the last five years has been an increase in applicants accepted as statutorily homeless.

Table 1 - Homelessness Applications - Decisions Made

Year	Applications/ Decisions Made	Accepted as Statutorily Homeless	% of Applications Accepted as Statutorily Homeless
2007/08	1159	528	46%
2008/09	1859	550	30%
2009/10	1533	538	35%
2010/11	1751	703	40%
2011/12	1146	576	50%

Figure 1 – Homelessness Applications - Decisions Made



The table below shows in more detail the outcomes of the homeless decisions made in Coventry over the past three years. The proportion of applications where the applicant is found to be eligible, homeless, in priority need but intentionally homeless has increased from 4% to 8% over the past three years. The number of decisions where the applicant was assessed as eligible, homeless but not in priority need has fallen.

Table 2: Outcomes of Homelessness Decisions made by Coventry City Council 2009/10 to 2011/12

Decision	Number			Percentage		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Eligible, unintentionally homeless, and in priority need	538	703	576	35%	40%	50%
Eligible, homeless and in priority need, but intentionally so	68	117	86	4%	7%	8%
Eligible, homeless but not in priority need	513	552	265	33%	32%	23%
Eligible but not homeless	361	346	181	24%	20%	16%
Not eligible	53	33	38	3%	2%	3%
Total decisions	1533	1751	1146	100%	100%	100%

Comparison with Other Local Authorities

In comparison to other West Midlands authorities and England as a whole, Coventry has a relatively high rate (per 1000 households) of both homelessness applications and applications accepted as statutorily homeless.

Figure 2 – Homelessness Rates per 1000 Households 2011/12

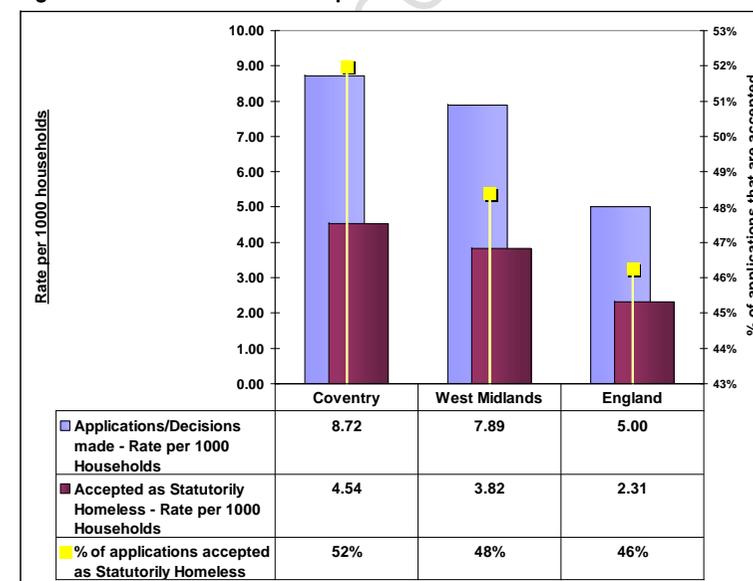


Table 3 – Homelessness Rates per 1000 Households: Comparison with other West Midlands Local Authorities 2011/12.

	Total Applications/ Decisions	Decisions - Rate per 1000 Households	Accepted as Statutorily Homeless	Statutorily Homeless - Rate per 1000 Households
Birmingham	6,878	16.94	3,929	9.68
Coventry	1,108	8.72	576	4.54
Dudley	1,944	15.31	158	1.24
Sandwell	866	7.34	514	4.36
Solihull	491	5.85	330	3.93
Stoke-on-Trent	405	3.89	260	2.50
Walsall	194	1.88	127	1.23
Wolverhampton	754	7.62	363	3.67

Statutory Homelessness in Coventry

As shown above, 576 households were accepted as being homeless, eligible, in priority need and not intentionally homeless during 2011/12. The most significant reason for these households becoming homeless was the loss of rented/tied accommodation following the termination of an assured shorthold tenancy (27%). The proportion of households accepted as statutorily homeless and who are homeless for this reason has risen over the last 3 years, from 20% in 2009/10.

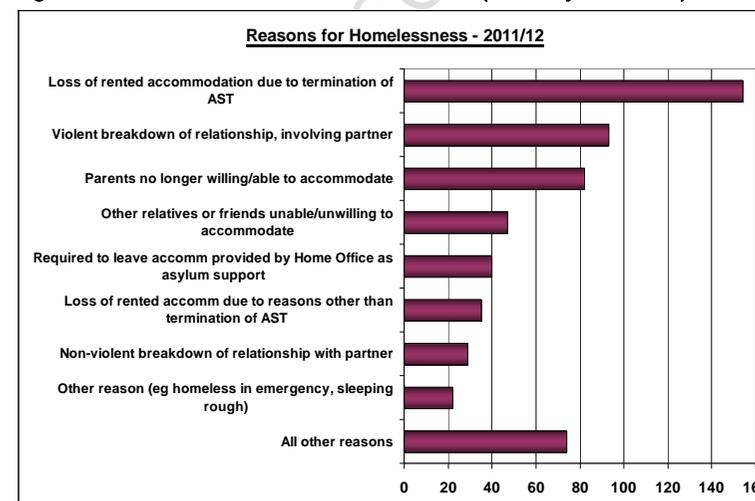
Other significant reasons for homelessness included: the violent breakdown of a relationship with a partner (16%); parents no longer willing or able to accommodate (14%); and friends/other relatives no longer willing or able to accommodate (8%).

Table 4 – Reasons for Homelessness (Statutory Homeless)

Reason for Homelessness	Number			Percentage		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Parents unable/unwilling to accommodate	84	97	82	16%	14%	14%
Others unable/unwilling to accommodate	67	98	47	12%	14%	8%
Non-violent relationship breakdown - partner	29	32	29	5%	5%	5%
Violent relationship breakdown - partner	101	112	93	19%	16%	16%
Violent relationship breakdown - other	13	4	9	2%	1%	2%
Racially motivated violence	0	0	1	0%	0%	0%
Other forms of violence	6	13	7	1%	2%	1%
Racially motivated harassment	0	3	2	0%	0%	0%

Reason for Homelessness	Number			Percentage		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Other forms of harassment	7	11	5	1%	2%	1%
Mortgage arrears (repossession/loss)	9	13	13	2%	2%	2%
Rent arrears - LA	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Rent arrears - RSL	3	2	1	1%	0%	0%
Rent arrears - Private rented sector	4	11	15	1%	2%	3%
Termination of assured shorthold tenancy	105	139	154	20%	20%	27%
Reasons other than termination of AST	24	46	35	4%	7%	6%
Required to leave NASS accommodation	55	66	40	10%	9%	7%
Left prison/on remand	0	0	1	0%	0%	0%
Left hospital	0	4	4	0%	1%	1%
Left other institution or LA care	8	10	13	1%	1%	2%
Other - Left HM forces	0	5	3	0%	1%	1%
Other reason (eg emergency, sleeping rough or in hostel, returning from abroad)	23	37	22	4%	5%	4%
Total	538	703	576	100%	100%	100%

Figure 3 – Reasons for Homelessness 2011/12 (Statutory Homeless)



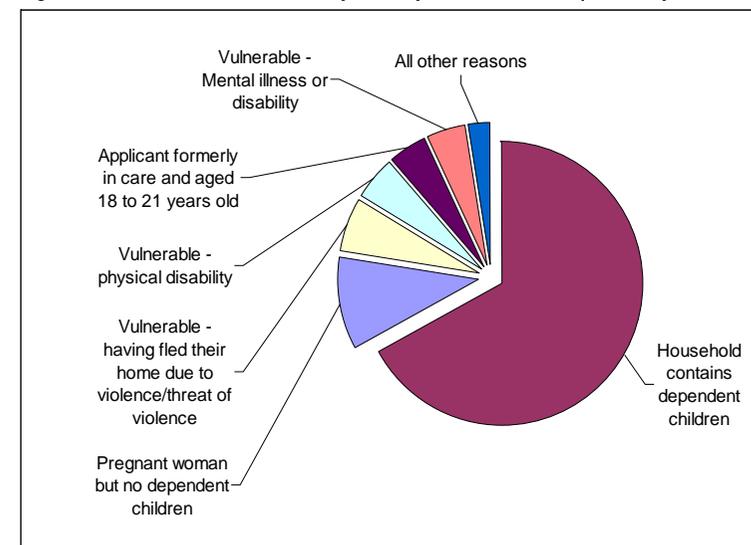
To be assessed as statutorily homeless, the applicant must be in a priority need group. For 2011/12, the highest (primary) reason for applicants being in priority

need was dependent children in the household. This accounted for 67% of all households accepted in 2011/12. Other significant reasons include: pregnancy (10.4%); fleeing due to violence/threat of violence (6.1%); physical disability (5.2%); mental illness (4.3%) and former care-leavers (4.3%).

Table 5 – Reason for Vulnerability/Priority Need (Statutory Homeless)

Reason for Priority Need	Number			Percentage		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Homeless because of emergency	5	6	1	0.9%	0.9%	0.2%
Household contains dependent children	332	475	386	61.7%	67.6%	67.0%
Pregnant woman but no dependent children	56	59	60	10.4%	8.4%	10.4%
Aged 16 or 17 years old	11	8	1	2.0%	1.1%	0.2%
Applicant formerly in care and aged 18 to 21 years old	18	18	25	3.3%	2.6%	4.3%
Vulnerable - Old age	2	8	2	0.4%	1.1%	0.3%
Vulnerable - physical disability	33	30	30	6.1%	4.3%	5.2%
Vulnerable - Mental illness or disability	15	30	25	2.8%	4.3%	4.3%
Other - drug dependency	0	0	1	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
Other - alcohol dependency	0	1	0	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Other - former asylum seeker	4	2	5	0.7%	0.3%	0.9%
Other - Other	7	12	2	1.3%	1.7%	0.3%
Vulnerable as a result of having been 'in care'	1	7	3	0.2%	1.0%	0.5%
Vulnerable - Having served in Armed Forces	0	2	0	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%
Vulnerable - having been in custody/on remand	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Vulnerable - having fled their home due to violence/threat of violence	54	45	35	10.0%	6.4%	6.1%
(Of which - domestic violence)	(25)	(15)	(17)	(4.6%)	(2.1%)	(3.0%)
Total	538	703	576	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 4 - Reason for Vulnerability/Priority Need 2011/12 (Statutory Homeless)

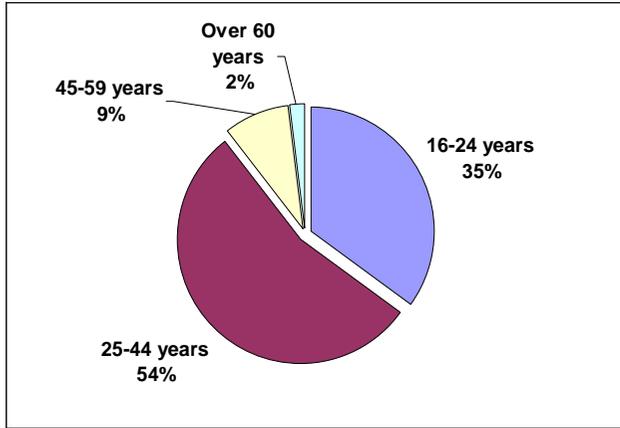


The age profile of households that are homeless and in priority need has remained consistent over the past three years. The majority of statutorily homeless households are in the age range 25-44 years (54%) and 16-24 years (35% - together making up 89% of all acceptances).

Table 6 – Age Profile (Statutory Homeless)

Age of Applicant	Number			Percentage		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
16-24 years	192	249	202	36%	35%	35%
25-44 years	286	374	313	53%	53%	54%
45-59 years	50	62	50	9%	9%	9%
Over 60 years	10	18	11	2%	3%	2%
Total	538	703	576	100%	100%	100%

Figure 5 – Age Profile 2011/12 (Statutory Homeless)

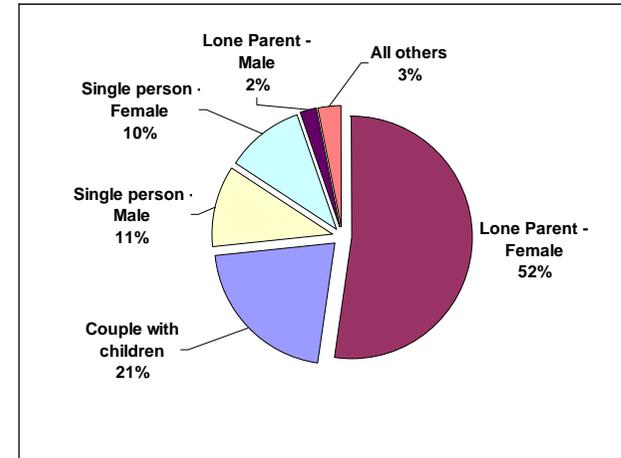


In 2011/12, over half of homeless households accepted as statutorily homeless were lone parent households (54% - 52% lone mothers and 2% lone fathers). 21% were couples with dependent children, and a further 21% were single people (11% single males and 10% single females). The profile of household composition has remained relatively consistent over the past three years, although there has been a decrease in the proportion of acceptances that are single females and an increase in the proportion of lone parent (female) households.

Table 7 – Household Types (Statutory Homeless)

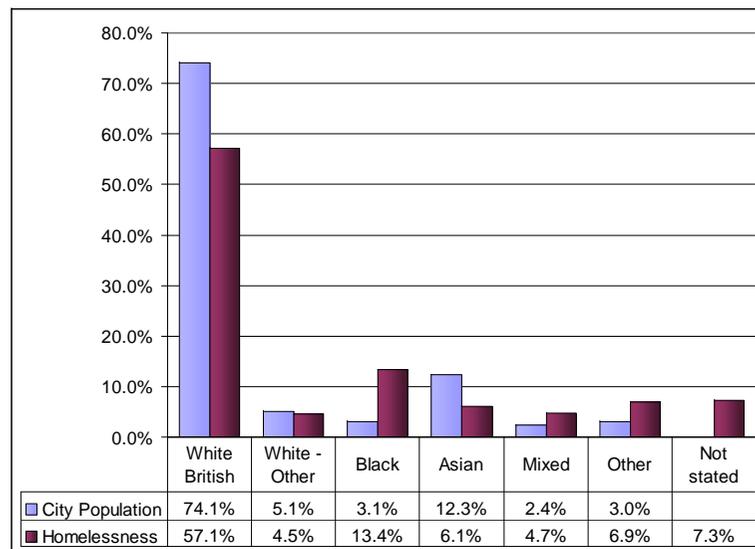
Household composition	Number			Percentage		
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Couple with children	113	145	122	21%	21%	21%
Lone Parent - Female	243	358	301	45%	51%	52%
Lone Parent - Male	19	30	14	4%	4%	2%
Single person - Male	58	80	62	11%	11%	11%
Single person - Female	76	69	60	14%	10%	10%
All others	29	21	17	5%	3%	3%
Total	538	703	576	100%	100%	100%

Figure 6 – Household Types 2011/12 (Statutory Homeless)



The ethnicity profile of households accepted as statutorily homeless during 2011/12 shows that although White British is the majority group (at 57.1% of acceptances), Black and Minority Ethnic groups show disproportionately high levels of homelessness. Overall, 35.6% of statutorily homeless households in 2011/12 were not White British, compared to an estimated 25.9% of the overall population of the city in these ethnicity groups. Of particular note is the high proportion of Black/Black British homeless households – 13.4% of statutory homeless households, but only 3.1% of the population of the city (ONS 2009). Conversely, Asian households make up 12.3% of the city population, but only 6.1% of statutorily homeless households in 2011/12.

Figure 7 – Ethnicity Profile (Statutory Homeless) 2011/12 – comparison with City Population



Rough Sleeping

The Department for Communities and Local Government issued new guidance in September 2010 regarding the methodology for carrying out a rough sleeper count, which changed the definition of what constitutes 'bedding down'. In addition to this, all local authorities are now required to report either a count or an estimate of rough sleepers in their district.

Coventry reported an estimate of 5 rough sleepers in the City in Autumn 2010, and an estimate of 8 rough sleepers in Autumn 2011.

Temporary and Emergency Accommodation

523 households were accommodated by the Council in 2011/12 in Bed and Breakfast or self-contained accommodation, whilst their homelessness

applications were assessed and following the decision until permanent accommodation was found. The average length of stay was 29.5 days.

45% of households accommodated in 2011/12 were single adults or couples. 53% were families with children and 2% were single adults/couples with a pregnancy.

Table 8 –Types of Households Accommodated in 2011/12

Household Type	Number	Percentage
Adult only	234	45%
Adult - Pregnancy	8	2%
Family one child	147	28%
Family two children	71	14%
Family three children	39	7%
Family four or more children	23	4%
Other	1	0%
Total	523	100%

In addition to this, a project in partnership with Whitefriars Housing Group has meant that from October 2011, ten properties have been made available for families as temporary accommodation – these are two-bedroom self contained units and more suitable than B&B accommodation for those households with children that may require a longer stay. From the start of the project to the end of the 2011/12 year, 21 families were temporarily housed in these properties.

Homelessness Prevention

The Council was successful in preventing homelessness for 1055 households in 2010/11 and for 914 households in 2011/12. This was as a result of services provided by the Housing Options Team including advice and advocacy, mediation, enabling access to the private rented sector and enabling moves in the social housing sector.

The Council also funds debt advice for households at risk of homelessness in partnership with the CAB. This is recognised as an important issue and the Housing Options Team is working closely with Coventry CAB to develop debt advice skills within the Housing Options team by seconding a CAB officer. In

2011, 184 households were referred to the CAB officer by the Housing Options Team as they were at risk of homelessness due to debt issues. 154 of these clients attended appointments and their debts were successfully managed whilst the CAB were involved. 80 households were able to stay in their homes, and the others were successful in obtaining alternative accommodation.

Homelessness in Coventry – Commissioned Services

The former Supporting People programme funds a range of projects providing housing related support to vulnerable people, aiming to prevent difficulties that can lead to hospitalisation, institutional care or homelessness. This support may include the provision of home visits, on site or visiting wardens and/or delivery of a range of eligible tasks. Amongst other things, the former Supporting People programme funds non-statutory homeless services in Coventry.

Non-statutory homeless is where people do not fit into the criteria for statutory homelessness, for example, if they are not eligible, not in 'priority need', said to be 'intentionally' homeless, or simply haven't approached the local authority for housing.

The Commissioned Services

Coventry City Council supports provision for these groups by commissioning accommodation and/or floating support through a range of third sector organisations.

The former Supporting People funding which is granted to the local authority by the Government is no longer ring-fenced, so the Council can prioritise how it spends this funding. The Council is currently maintaining the level of funding for homelessness commissioned services, which is just under £1.4m per year.

This provides 230 units of accommodation and 263 units of floating support with seven different providers. Table 9 below shows the services provided in more detail.

Table 9 – Current Commissioned Services for Homelessness

Provider	Name of service	Type	Number of units
Central & Cecil	Tullamore House, Stratford Street	Accommodation	5
Coventry Cyrenians	Single Homeless Accommodation - Female	Accommodation	16
Coventry Cyrenians	Single Homeless Accommodation - Male	Accommodation	25
The Salvation Army	Lincoln Street	Accommodation	80
Whitefriars Housing Group	The Chace - Short Stay	Accommodation	94
Whitefriars Housing Group	Homes Emergency B&B	Accommodation	10
Central & Cecil	Homeless Floating Support	Floating Support	5
Coventry Cyrenians	Mental Health Floating Support	Floating Support	30
Coventry Cyrenians	Floating Support for Rough Sleepers	Floating Support	20
Coventry Cyrenians	Floating Support for Single Homeless	Floating Support	20
Coventry Cyrenians	Mediation Scheme for Young People	Floating Support	7
Coventry Jesus Centre	Bond Scheme for Single Homeless	Floating Support	30
Coventry Jesus Centre	Storage for recycled Furniture & Equip	Floating Support	52
Stonham Housing Association	Move On	Floating Support	30
Valley House	Floating Support for Homeless Families	Floating Support	13
Whitefriars Housing Group	Floating Support	Floating Support	56

Who uses the Commissioned Services?

Throughout the 2011/12 financial year, 1,603 clients used the commissioned services with the number of visits at 1,796.

This is the total number of clients for the services but given the transient nature of the client group, individual service providers may have dealt with the same individual a number of times.

For 2011/12, the client data shows that service users range in age from 16 to 89 (age was calculated at time of admission). The age profile of the people using the commissioned homelessness services is dominated by the 18-44 age group – in fact over three quarters (76%) are between the ages of 18 to 44. Of these, 388 clients were aged under 24, whilst 1,402 clients were aged 25 and above. There were 4 client records where the age was unknown.

In terms of ethnicity, the 2011/12 records show that the majority of users were from a White background (74.2%), whilst the second highest ethnic group to feature in this cohort is Black (13.8%).

Table 10 – Ethnic Origin of Non-Statutorily Homeless Clients using Commissioned Services in 2011/12

Ethnic Origin of Client	%
Asian	7.5%
Black	13.8%
Chinese/Other	0.2%
Mixed	2.8%
White	74.2%
Unknown	1.5%

321 people (17.9%) using the services during the 2011/12 financial year indicated that they had a disability. This compares to 18.6% of people in Coventry who declared that they had a limiting long term illness. Of those who declared they had a disability, 154 (48%) stated that their disability was a mental

health issue. For those that declared they had a disability' the majority were in the 35-44 age group.

In 2011/12 there were 1,248 clients who had 'completed' a stay with their average length increasing to 84 days.

As part of the data review, the duration of stay for those clients who were still accessing a service was analysed. For 2011/12, there were 548 clients still receiving a service at the end of March 2012 and at that point, their average length of stay was 265 days.

What Service Users and Providers have told us about the Services

A review of the commissioned services for homelessness has been carried out and as part of this process, the views of service users and providers have been sought through a range of methods.

Users

A number of user focus groups were held to understand their experiences of the services they had used. The key points of feedback were as follows:

- Most clients didn't know where to go/who to approach upon becoming homeless.
- There was a lack of transparency/awareness of criteria for being accepted into hostels.
- Issues with rent arrears.
- Clients felt as if they were stuck – the current system doesn't encourage clients to get out.
- There are no post-tenancy support services. Some floating support services do provide support to users to help them maintain their tenancies, but more is needed.
- Clients found it difficult to find private sector accommodation.
- Clients do not receive a holistic support service - there are not always clear links between support services/agencies.

Providers

We also undertook interviews with providers and held a provider event to identify what currently works well with the service and what are the issues and gaps. The key points raised by providers were:

- Clients are risk assessed a number of times by more than one organisation before they can access services and each organisation has its own risk assessment form.
- Access to support services, eg. mental health is not always easy for clients.
- Services are expected to help clients to make significant progress very quickly as part of Supporting People funding criteria. This isn't easy with clients who have complex needs and imposing an arbitrary maximum amount of time clients are permitted to remain in a service is unhelpful. A one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate for all client groups.

Providers also proposed a number of solutions which would address the issues raised. These suggestions include:

- Developing a multi-agency single point of access for services.
- Having a robust referral process between the council and all agencies involved.
- Put in place a single risk assessment process and share data.
- Have a consistent set of service standards in place.
- Update the homeless directory with all the agency information so that clients and providers know who is doing what.
- Create a recycle hub to help homeless clients with furnishing their homes.

Gaps identified in the provision of commissioned services

Using the analysis of the available data and in collaboration with homelessness service providers, we have identified three major gaps in services:

- **Temporary Accommodation** – a significant proportion of households who are placed in temporary accommodation receive no specialist support,

even though they can be some of the most vulnerable households. This is a clear gap in service provision.

- **Services for Women** – In reviewing the gender mix of the provision of commissioned services, there is a clear imbalance and few services for women. The majority of direct access places are for males. There is also anecdotal evidence from service providers that the current level of accommodation and support available to women is insufficient.
- **High/Complex needs** – there is acknowledgement that the current service provision does not meet the needs of homeless people with high or complex needs, which can lead to a 'revolving door' situation.

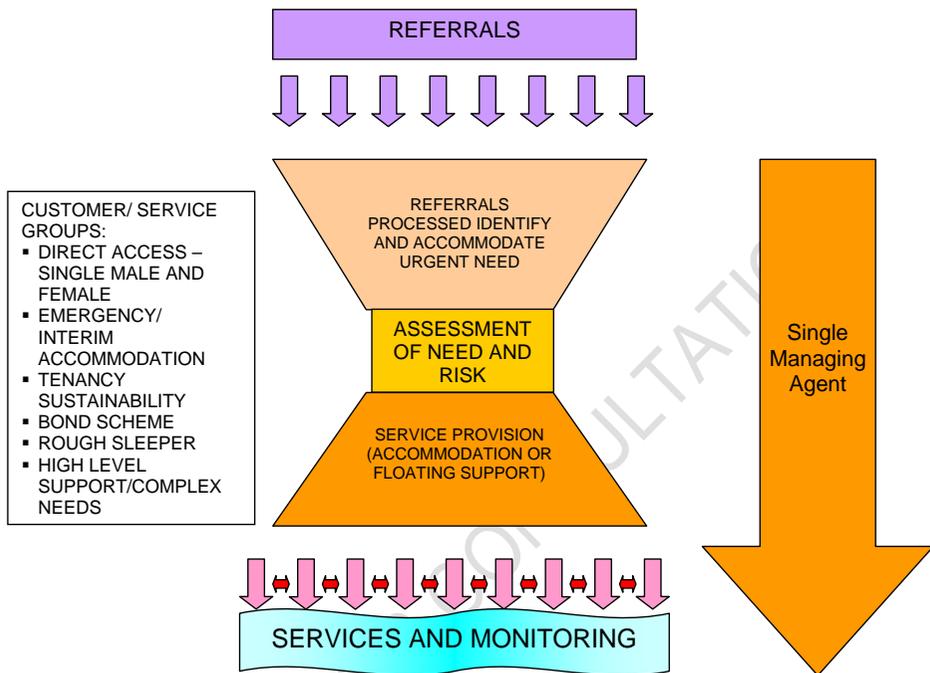
In addition, the range of homelessness prevention measures employed by the Housing Options Team could be widened and improved in line with the particular emphasis on prevention measures in *Making every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness* (Aug 2012).

Future Service Requirements

This Review has identified key gaps in services particularly around support for those in temporary accommodation, complex needs and sufficient provision for women. Future service provision must address these gaps.

The current homelessness commissioned contracts are due to end in September 2013. A redesign of homelessness support services should enable Coventry City Council to reduce duplication, provide efficiencies and better meet the needs of homeless people. This should include ensuring that there is a single point of access for service users, with more robust monitoring of services. One potential high-level design of this new structure is described in figure 8 below.

Figure 8 – Process graph of single point of access design



Appendix 4 – Results of Consultation

This Appendix will be developed following the consultation, giving detail on the consultation results and how these have influenced the final Housing & Homelessness Strategy.

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Appendix 5 – Glossary



Glossary of Terms

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document	Part of the Coventry Local Plan. Its objectives are to facilitate the delivery of Affordable Housing to meet housing needs, and to assist the creation of sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.
Affordable Housing	Affordable housing includes Social Rent, Affordable Rent and Intermediate housing (including Low Cost Home Ownership options), provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.
Affordable Rent	Rented housing let by Registered Providers to eligible households at a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent.
Brownfield land	Development sites where there has previously been some development (also known as previously developed land).
Category 1 Hazards	Through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (system for assessing housing conditions and enforcing housing standards), hazards are rated according to how serious they are. Category 1 Hazards are deemed to be the most serious hazards.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	CIL allows local authorities to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects in their area. The money can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure that is needed as a result of development.
Decent Homes Standard	A Government housing standard which required all councils and housing associations to bring their properties up to 'decent homes' condition by 2010.
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	A grant to enable disabled people to have adaptations carried out to their homes.
Equality Impact Assessment	A tool to assess the consequence of a service, strategy or policy has on certain groups to ensure that, as far as possible, negative consequences are eliminated, no individual or group is discriminated against and opportunities for promoting equality are maximised.

Extra Care Housing	Housing set up to provide care and housing support to elderly people who are finding it increasingly difficult to cope due to physical frailty.
Fixed Term Tenancies (FTT)	A tenancy which runs for a fixed period of time and is reviewed, and either renewed or terminated, at the end of the fixed term. From April 2012, councils and Registered Providers are able to offer FTTs instead of having to offer long-term security of tenure as previously required.
Floating Support	A service that provides housing related support to vulnerable adults (over 16) in the short term to enable them to maintain their independence in their own home.
Homefinder	The name of the Housing Register for the allocation of affordable housing to rent in Coventry.
Home Improvement Agency (HIA)	An organisation that provides advice services to vulnerable people who are private homeowners or tenants of private landlords in order to help them stay in their own homes.
Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)	The national housing and regeneration delivery agency for England, with the role to contribute to economic growth by enabling and helping communities to deliver high-quality housing that people can afford.
House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	A House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) is a dwelling that is occupied by more than one household who share basic amenities such as WC, washing, cooking and food preparation facilities.
Housing Benefit & Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	Financial assistance offered by the Government to eligible people on low incomes, whether they are working or not, to help to pay all or part of their rent.
Housing Need	Defined as the number of households who lack their own housing or live in unsuitable housing and who cannot afford to meet their needs in the market.
Intermediate Housing	Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent but below market price or rents.
Local Investment Plan (LIP)	Part of a process introduced by the Homes and Communities Agency aimed at better aligning their policies and resources with the aims and objectives of growth areas and local authorities.

Long term empty properties	Residential properties that have remained unoccupied for at least six months (and are not categorised as exempt).
Low Cost Home Ownership	Housing schemes that allow households with modest incomes to purchase a share of a home, e.g. through Shared Ownership (part-rent, part-buy).
Market housing	Housing available for purchase on the open market and at full price.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The national framework introduced from March 2012 to replace all previous Planning Policy Statements and guidance. It sets out the Government's policies around new developments, including the development of Affordable Housing.
Registered Provider (RP)	All providers of social housing who are registered with the HCA. A Registered Provider can be either a non profit organisation or a profit-making organisation.
Right to Buy	Scheme introduced by the Housing Act 1980 which enables secure Local Authority tenants (and some assured Housing Association tenants) to buy their rented home at a discount. The Right to Buy now extends to tenants with Fixed Term Tenancies.
Section 106 agreements	Through negotiation, a planning condition can be imposed whereby a proportion of new homes must be made available for affordable housing (e.g. for rent or low cost home ownership).
Sheltered Housing	Sheltered housing is age restricted accommodation designed for people who wish to maintain and improve their independent lifestyle.
Social rented housing	Rented housing owned and managed by Registered Providers for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime.
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)	An assessment of land in an area to identify sites available for housing development.
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	An assessment of housing need and demand within a defined housing market area. This provides a good understanding of how housing markets operate.
Supported or Specialist Housing	The term describing housing for a particular client group e.g. elderly, people with a disability or suffering from mental illness.

Supporting People (SP)	A Government funded programme that aims to make sure people get the housing related support they need to live more independently.
Sustainable Communities/development	Based on the idea that the quality of people's lives, and our communities, are affected by a combination of economic, social and environmental factors. Sustainability is achieved by understanding the links between these factors.
Sustainable Community Strategy	Sets out the targets to be achieved for the City through effective partnership working between public and private sector organisations, voluntary and community sector groups, local businesses and residents.
Unsuitable housing	All circumstances where households are living in housing which is in some way unsuitable, for reasons such as its size, type, design, location, condition or cost.
Vulnerable groups	A vulnerable person can be someone who is in receipt of care or support services and who is less able to take care of or protect themselves.
Worklessness	A broader concept than traditional 'unemployment' (which is usually based on claimant counts). Worklessness describes all those who are out of work but would like a job.