



Public Document Pack

Rory Ringer – Democratic Services Team Leader
General Enquiries: Telephone No. 01362 656870
Member Services Fax No. 01362 690821
DX743950 Dereham 2

To The Chairman and Members of the Overview
& Scrutiny Commission

Our Ref: HM/L.3.1

Contact: Helen McAleer

All other Members of the Council – for
information

Direct Dial: 01362 656381

E-mail: helen.mcaleer@breckland.gov.uk

Date 18 April 2012

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT

Dear Sir/Madam,

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION - THURSDAY 26 APRIL 2012

I refer to the agenda for the above-mentioned meeting and enclose the updated version of the Homelessness Strategic Business Plan (the incorrect version was attached to the agenda in error):

Item No	Report Title	Page Nos
8.	<u>Homelessness Strategic Business Plan</u> Report of the Director of Commissioning.	1 - 24

Yours faithfully

Helen McAleer

Senior Committee Officer

Homelessness

Strategic Business Plan

2012



DRAFT

Breckland Council

Elizabeth House Walpole Loke Dereham Norfolk NR19 1EE

Tel: 01362 656870

Email: contactus@breckland.gov.uk

www.breckland.gov.uk

Contents

Section	Page
Introduction/foreword	3
The homelessness picture	4
Our vision	5
Savings so far	6
New model of service for a changing Breckland	7

DRAFT



Introduction/foreword

The 2011 Homelessness Strategic Development Plan forms a framework for improvement, clearly outlining our plans for a more economic, efficient and effective service delivery. In addition, the document identifies gaps in service provision and presents solutions to address these needs. Working with our partners will prove to be pivotal in addressing these gaps and maximising resources.

The reduction in supporting people funding has already begun to have an impact on hostel spaces available, whilst the axing of the Connexion service for young people has meant that the Homelessness team is now at the forefront of meeting this new form of demand.

A reduction in building and supply of new affordable housing by Registered Providers means demand will continue to outstrip supply therefore innovative ways of providing alternative accommodation will need to be considered if we are to continue to meet the needs of our community.

Homelessness remains a prominent issue in modern society, causing many of our customers great physiological, emotional and physical distress. Our aim through an innovative, streamlined, solution focused approach is to ensure we minimise the impact of homelessness on our residents.



The Homelessness Picture

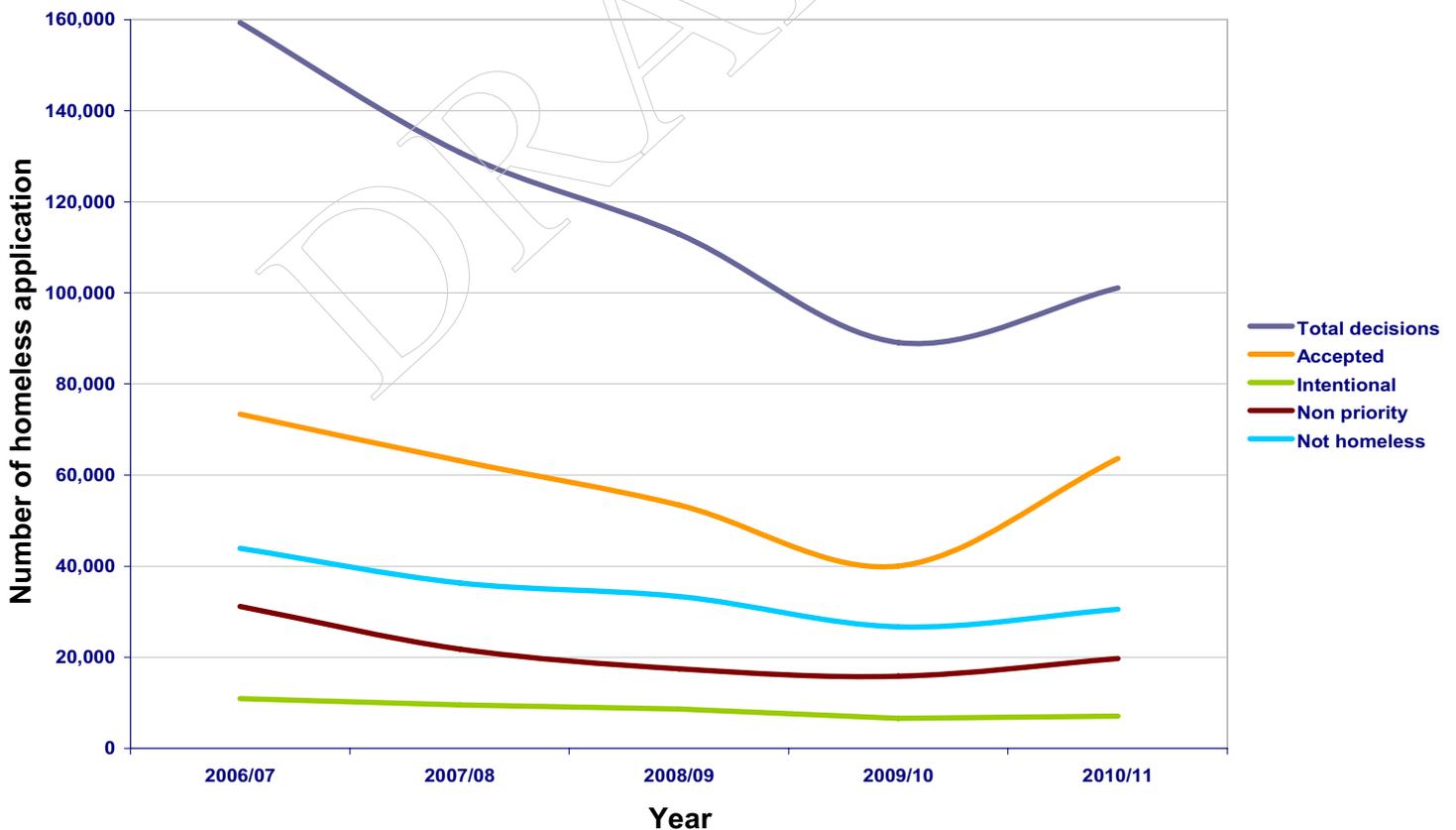
Struggling families, financial hardship and redundancies. These as a result of today's economic climate are just some of issues currently presenting at Breckland Council on a daily basis.

The graph below represents a common trend when looking at homeless and repossession statistics. The use of prevention tools by local authorities has reduced the numbers of homeless applications year on year. However, pressure on housing departments to meet increasing demand has never been higher.

In 2010/11 this trend of reducing homeless applications changed. Homeless acceptances increased. More

residents are in a situation where the Council has a duty to re-house them. There are many factors to consider when analysing the reasons behind this shift. Contributing factors include rising unemployment (especially amongst the young), more residents becoming financially excluded due to increasing financial pressures, and a large increase in the number of residents who are expectant mothers or have dependant children. Future changes, such as the new benefit reforms, are likely to further increase those in need of homelessness and advice services.

To continue to meet this need, we need to continue to employ prevention methods, use innovative solutions and work closely with our partners.



Our Vision

Our vision is to ensure that all applicants receive the appropriate level of advice and assistance within our limited resources, which will maximise and empower them to take responsibility for their accommodation needs and life choices.

We Aim to achieve this by;

- ⊙ Minimising the effects of the Local Housing Allowance changes and maximise the benefits of the Localism Act.
- ⊙ Securing temporary accommodation from our partners and ensure Bed and Breakfast is suitable, affordable and used for the shortest period possible.
- ⊙ A complete integration of all Housing systems creating a one stop experience for our customers.
- ⊙ Ensuring that Rough sleepers are exercising their treaty rights and not sleeping rough within the district.
- ⊙ Reversing the trend in increasing homelessness application for 18-24 year olds.
- ⊙ Increasing the number of preventions for mortgage arrears.
- ⊙ Streamlining processes to increase the availability of staff.
- ⊙ Investigating and implementing innovative schemes to maximise our use of the homelessness prevention fund.
- ⊙ Developing more cost effective services for assisting single, non priority customers in seeking housing.
- ⊙ Building knowledge and capacity with our partners to address the housing issues of those suffering domestic abuse.
- ⊙ Ensuring equality and diversity information and customer satisfaction data is collected.

Savings so far

There are many opportunities to maximise our services and we have already achieved savings. These savings can only continue where prevention is at the forefront of our service to our customers.

Nightstop Accommodation

Nightstop, run by the YMCA Norfolk, is a means of securing temporary accommodation (usually up to 3 nights) for young people and provides a successful way of preventing homelessness.

Previously the Council paid £25,000 annually for 5 bed spaces in Breckland. Through a review of our use of Nightstop and building a partnership with the Greater Norwich Partnership, we have reduced that cost to £8,000 annually allowing us access to 20 shared bed spaces. Using this type of accommodation has saved the Council an estimated £13,230 over other forms of temporary accommodation and provides applicants with more accommodation choice.

Rent and Deposit Loan Scheme

This scheme aims to empower individuals to secure accommodation in the private rented sector, relieving their homelessness. Customers are able to choose the location of their accommodation, maintaining links with employment and education. This saves the authority the cost of taking a homeless application and providing temporary accommodation. Last year the scheme saved the Council an estimated £98,000.

The scheme has now been outsourced to Norfolk Credit Union who are a specialist financial organisation. This move will reduce the amount of money the Council writes off in bad debt and the associated staff time chasing late payments.

Homelessness Prevention Budget

Small grants are provided to customers facing homelessness, these grants allow payments to be made to Landlords to prevent an eviction. In 2010/2011 we spent £4,500. Had these customers been provided with Temporary accommodation while waiting for permanent rehousing, it would have cost an estimated £35,750. This

demonstrates that preventive methods work and saved the council in excess of £30,000 in this instance, whilst allowing customers to remain in settled accommodation

Systems

We recognised our data recording systems were outdated and cumbersome. By upgrading our systems we have increased the productivity of our housing advice and homelessness team, improving our data collection accuracy and better informing our strategic plans. This has freed staff time to carry out more preventive work which will generate sustainable savings over time.

New model of service for a changing Breckland

We plan to address several key areas aimed at improving service delivery, meeting the changing demands of our residents and making best use of our resources. The main areas we will be focusing on are detailed below.

Area requiring focus:	Housing benefit changes and the Localism Act will put additional financial pressure on individuals & families.
------------------------------	--

The housing benefit changes that came into effect on the 1st April 2011 and additional changes that come into effect on the 1st January 2012 will see many more of our residents struggling financially.

The major changes are as follows:

Change	Comes into effect
Change in housing benefit calculations	1 st April 2011
End to the maximum additional £15 weekly Housing Benefit payment	1 st April 2011
Removal of the 5 bedroom rate	1 st April 2011
Increase in the shared room rate maximum age to 35	1 st January 2012

In order to mitigate against some of these changes the government has increased the amount of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) that is allocated to local authorities. DHP is an extra Payment that can be awarded at the Council's discretion to top up housing or council tax benefit. To be granted DHP customers have to show why their circumstances are exceptional. Payments are designed to be temporary and are reviewed on an individual basis.

When the age limit for single room rate rises from 25 to 35, those single people under 35 who are currently getting the 1 bedroom rate will see a reduction in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) of up to £120 a month (based on data from the those claiming LHA in 2010/11.) This is likely to result in a

much greater demand for DHP, and more under 35s will be moving to shared accommodation or back home due to unaffordability. Another challenge is the increase in non-dependant rates, for those people having to move in with a friend or relative who is on benefit. If the person they are moving in with is over 65 then the non-dependant charge will be deferred for 26 weeks only.

These changes are likely to present the following challenges:

- ⊙ There may not be enough shared properties available to meet the increased demand in certain areas.
- ⊙ Residents who cannot/will not move and who may not be awarded DHP may present to the Council with a housing issue. They may need to be processed through the homeless system, increasing the authority's temporary accommodation costs.

The proposed change through the Localism Act that councils will be able to discharge their homelessness duty to the private rented sector where a property is suitable could impact greatly on our work.

Presently, customers are able to refuse accommodation offered in the private rented sector and we must place them in temporary accommodation until an offer on an assured tenancy can be made, putting additional financial pressure on the authority.

Maximising the opportunity this part of the Localism Act presents could not only lower our usage of temporary accommodation but make more social rented properties available to those who have a housing need.

In addition to this, the Localism Act will enable the Council to review its allocations policies and require the introduction of a tenancy strategy. Both documents will enable a better use of Breckland's affordable housing stock by introducing more flexible tenancies, tackling under occupancy, reducing access to the housing register and working with partners on different housing

Aim	Minimalise the effects of the LHA changes and maximise the benefits of the Localism Act
Outcome	Bring 10 additional private rented properties that suit single, LHA claimants into the market

Action no.

Action	Partners	Funding & resources	To be completed by
Increase the number of privately rented properties available in Breckland to LHA recipients through partnership working with the Norfolk Credit Union.	Norfolk Credit Union	Existing resources	March 2013
Develop Protocol which extend use of Discretionary Housing payment to pay for single people deposits	ARPT	Existing resources	March 2013
Organise a specialist Landlord Forum aimed at attracting new landlords (securing 10 private rented properties)	Landlords	Existing resources	March 2013
Co-ordinate our work with the private sector team to ensure empty home are brought back into use as accommodation to discharge the Council's homelessness duty	Private sector and housing team	Existing resources	March 2013
Maintain a supply of new affordable housing units	Registered Providers, Developers, HCA	Land Supply	Ongoing



Area requiring focus:

Reduction of Bed and Breakfast use.

Each time we assess a homeless application, if the customers have an urgent housing need, the authority has a duty to house the household, until a decision on their homeless case is made.

From 2008/09 our total use of temporary accommodation reduced by more than half but proportionally our use of B&B accommodation has increased.

B&B is our last resort when looking at temporary accommodation due to the lack of support, privacy and cooking facilities for individuals and families.

There is also a high cost to the authority when placing individuals in B&B compared to alternatives.

By analysing this increased use of B&B we can see that there has been a rise in the number of households presenting as homeless leading to an increased demand on temporary accommodation. This puts pressure on the service and results in longer decision processing times and subsequently longer periods in temporary accommodation.

Analysing those customers who stayed in B&B over a longer period reveals that they presented high risk factors which could only be catered for in specialist B&Bs. When the council accepts a duty to a household with high risk factors, rehousing them can be much slower than less complex, lower needs cases.

John Room House and Michael Monument Court are Council Hostels that are managed by St John's Housing Trust and Flagship Housing and provide accommodation for low to high need customers. John Room House is also funded by Supporting People to ensure that all residents receive support relevant to their needs.

John Room House has had a positive impact on the number of customers in B&B accommodation as it provides suitable accommodation for single individuals with support needs. Michael Monument

Court Hostel has also played a significant role in the reduction of B&B use.

We have also addressed the length of time it takes us to assess applications by improving our processes. We aim to process and complete all investigation within 20 days for individuals in Bed and Breakfast. We are also pursuing new ways to provide temporary accommodation with assistance from our partners.

Aim	Secure Temporary accommodation from our partners and ensure Bed and Breakfast is suitable,affordable and used for the shortest period possible.
Outcome	Secure 10 Temporary accommodation units by and reduced Bed and Breakfast spend by 40% over 2 years

Action no.

Action	Partners	Funding & resources	To be completed by
Through a collaborative approach, work in partnership with other local authorities to lower the mean cost of B&B accommodation	Norfolk district Councils	Existing resources	March 2013
Develop our relationship with registered providers to provide and convert Temporary Accommodation into permanent accommodation for applicants (Target 10)	Flagship Housing Association and other registered providers	Existing resources	March 2014
Applicants in Bed and Breakfast to be provided with a decision on their homelessness application within 20 working days	Flagship Housing Association and other registered providers	Existing resources	Ongoing
Develop accommodation forums across the district to ensure that supported Hostels are able to move residents to accommodation with the appropriate level of support	Supported Housing Providers	Existing resources	Ongoing
Work in partnership with other local authorities to share temporary accommodation within their district to prevent under use and vice versa	Norfolk district Councils	Existing resources	Ongoing

Area requiring focus:

Systems are inadequate for proper recording, monitoring and informing strategic plans.

Some of our previous systems and processes were not efficient and make it difficult for us to understand the complexities of our service.

Changes have already been made which will greatly improve our data collection, increasing the quality of our analysis and subsequently the strategic decisions. These changes include:

New system for the housing advice team - APP

We have introduced a new system for the housing advice team called APP. This system replaces two older systems. For the first time, we can record customer enquiries all the way through to homelessness decisions on the same system – a leap in efficiency.

The system has been tailored to record an increased breakdown of types of enquiries, reducing the use of the 'other category' which previously was our most used field.

Choice based lettings

Recently we have launched our CBL system, which will see major beneficial changes to the way our housing register operates, creating a number of efficiencies to the service. Choice Based Lettings will offer transparency and a level of functionality and choice to customers that could not be achieved through our previous ways of working.

CBL will streamline our systems, providing a way for housing register applications to be entered and managed online. It will negate the need for manual inputting, assessment and allocations. Registered Providers will instead have the ability to upload properties and ensure the information is correct before confirming the allocation to the customer. Registered Providers will be able to verify all the information from the system and sign up applicants.

There are more areas of our day to day work, including our processes and procedures, that can be reviewed to optimise our efficiency as a service.

Aim	Complete intergration of all Housing systems
Outcome	A one visit experience for customers and effective working for staff

Action no.

Action	Partners	Funding & resources	To be completed by
Introduce a holistic system for recording both housing advice enquiries, homeless applications and housing register applications including single referral forms to most external services	<i>All agencies</i>	<i>Existing resources</i>	<i>July 2012</i>
Develop and implement a private sector letting module into the CBL system to include links between housing system and the CBL system within current resources.	<i>Civica</i>	<i>Existing resources</i>	<i>July 2012</i>
Investigate the integration of the Housing advice team and Housing Register to deliver a more streamlined service for our customers	<i>Breckland Council & IT department</i>	<i>Existing resources</i>	<i>March 2013</i>
Deliver a webcam service that will allow customers to be interviewed from web cam hubs, resulting in reduced mileage cost to staff and more choice and speed of service for customers.	<i>Breckland Council & IT department</i>	<i>Invest to save budget</i>	<i>July 2012</i>

**Area
requiring
focus:**

Rough Sleepers who are not exercising their treaty rights and are ineligible for housing and social benefits

All Councils are under a duty to ensure that rough sleepers are not allowed to sleep rough during cold weather periods. The Government support this by the provision of a one off grant to ensure that suitable accommodation is secured.

Breckland currently works with all rough sleepers and includes visits to ensure that their wellbeing is not compromised. This comes at a cost of in terms of our diminishing resource (Staff and time).

Rough sleeping can and generally results in vulnerability, which can then result in a series of deteriorating health issues including alcohol and drug abuse and low levels of persistent crime.

To address this we aim to work with the United Kingdom Border Agency to remove Rough Sleepers who are not exercising their treaty rights to their Country of origin or to a safe location where they can exercise their treaty rights.

We will also work with homeless link by supporting local organisations gain their fair share of the £20 million which will be distributed over the next 3 years to ensure that rough sleepers do not spend a second night out.

DRY
RA
FT

Aim	Ensure that rough sleepers are exercising their treaty right and not rough sleeping
Outcome	Reduction in the number of Rough sleepers in the district by at least 30% in the next year

Action no.

Action	Partners	Funding & resources	To be completed by
Co-ordinate our efforts with the United Kingdom border agency to ensure Rough Sleepers are removed to their Country of Origin if they are not exercising their treaty rights in the United Kingdom	United Kingdom border agency	Existing resources	Ongoing
Ensure that suitable accommodation is provided for all other Rough Sleepers over the cold weather period	St John housing Trust	Existing resources	October 2011
Ensure that arrangements are in place for support services to be provided during and after a severe weather period	Social Services, Community mental health & drug teams	Existing resources	Ongoing
Record and communicate details of rough sleeping to ward members and to include action to be taken to assist any rough sleeper in securing suitable accommodation.	Breckland Council	Existing resources	Ongoing



Area requiring focus:

There has been a large rise in homelessness applications from 18-24 year olds.

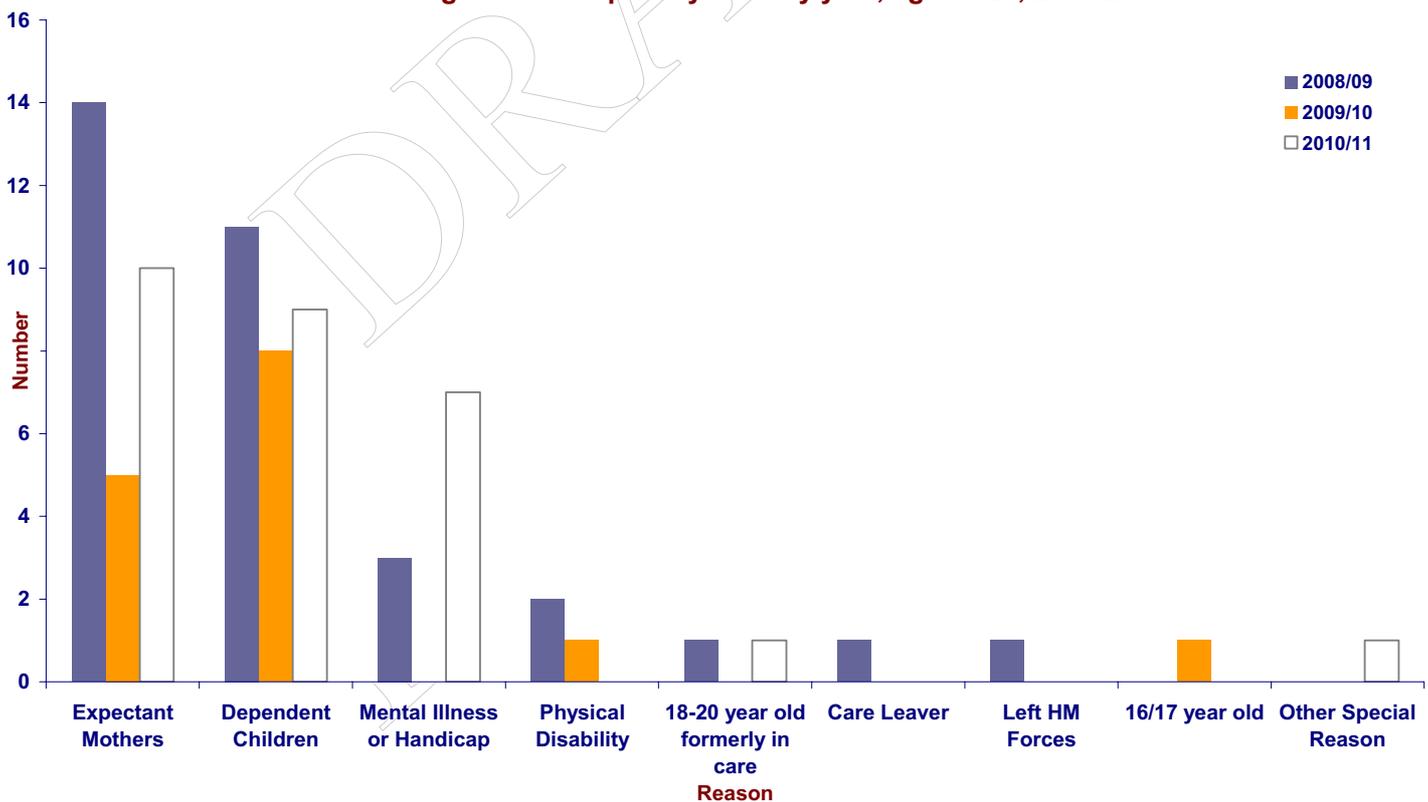
The Council has focused on young people aged under 25 for the past three years. This was due to the large number of enquiries and homelessness applications from this age group. We recognised that young people were over represented among our clients and required a specialist approach to prevent homelessness. To do this we employed a Young Persons Housing Advisor and created a Young Persons Housing Action Plan.

Since this date, we have seen a steady decline in the number of enquiries that resulted in a homelessness application from under 18s, with particular success for 16 year olds. In fact, in

2010/11 we took no homelessness applications from 16 year olds and only 3 from 17 year olds.

We have not seen the same success with 18-24 year olds. In 2010/11 we experienced a sharp rise in both enquiries and homelessness applications for this age group. A closer look at the statistics reveals that the number of expectant mothers and those with dependant children in this age group has risen sharply. With the loss of many youth services, including Connexions, this puts additional pressure on our service.

Chart showing reason for priority need by year, age 18-24, 2008-2011



Aim	Reverse the trend in increasing homeless applications for 18-24 year olds
Outcome	Reduce and maintain the ratio of homeless applications vs enquiries to 15% for 18-24 year olds

Action no.

Action	Partners	Funding & resources	To be completed by
Extend the rent deposit scheme for young people where the Council has no duty to rehouse to ensure they do not become destitute	Housing Advice Team, St John Housing Trust.	Existing resources	March 2013
Ensure that home visits are completed for all young people who are facing eviction	Housing Advice Team	Existing resources	Ongoing
Hold training sessions with mental health workers to recognise and proactively tackle the issues that lead to housing issues and homelessness	Housing Advice Team, MIND & support sector.	Existing resources	Ongoing
Opening of the Young Persons Hostel with a pathway service provision.	Flagship Housing Group & Supporting people	None	September 2012
Explore whether schools would be willing for their teachers to deliver existing educational tools aimed at educating young people about housing and homelessness within their PSHE lessons through our 3rd sector partners.	St John Housing Trust	None	March 2013
Continue to work with the YMCA in developing alternative accommodation for 18-24 year olds alongside other Norfolk Councils.	YMCA & Other Councils in Norfolk	Existing resources	April 2012
Work with Register Providers to develop outreach services that cover tenancy management and life skills thereby preventing potential loss of accommodation.	Registered Provider	Existing resources	March 2013

Area requiring focus:

We are experiencing an increase in the number of customers contacting the authority for assistance with mortgage or rent arrears.

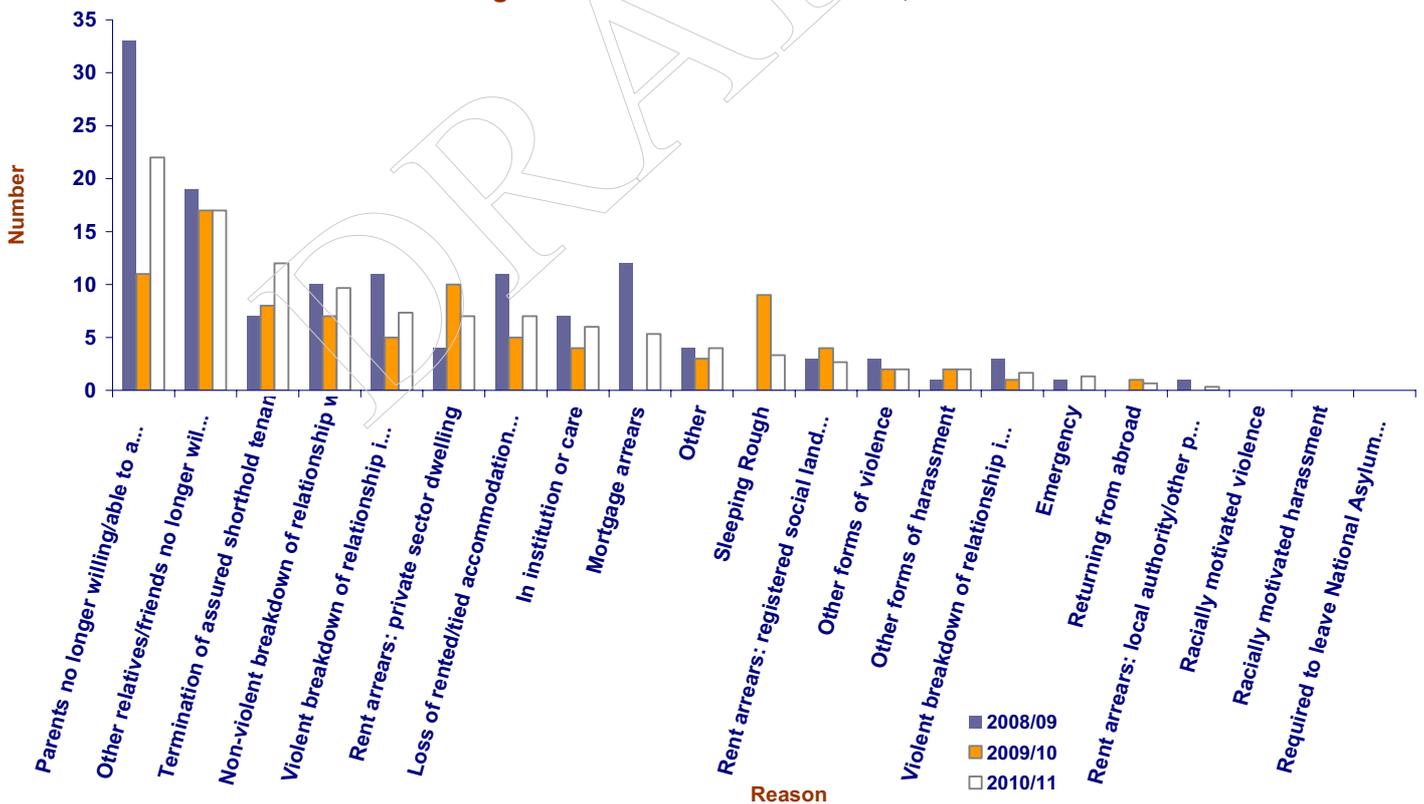
Our financial inclusion strategy highlighted services available from Breckland Council and its partners to improve financial awareness for residents. This included increasing the presence of credit unions in the district and expanding access to affordable financial services to those previously excluded.

In 2010/11, the numbers of customers visiting our service with rent and mortgage arrears has

been increasing. To counter this, we have increased funding to our Intensive Money Advice Service, whose work with customers has proven successful in preventing homelessness.

Our work with the credit union and other key partners will continue to address the wider issues associated with rent, mortgage arrears and preventing homelessness.

Chart showing main reason for loss of home, 2008/9-2010/11



Aim	Increase the number preventions for rent and mortgage arrears
Outcome	Reduce and maintain the ratio of homeless applications vs enquiries to 15% for mortgage arrears/repossession/affordability and 5% for private rented sector arrears/possessions/affordability

Action no.

Action	Partners	Funding & resources	To be completed by
Increase the number of customers attending court desks through additional contact with lenders and customers	Housing advisers, mortgage lenders & Courts	Existing resources	Ongoing
Reduce the number of 'at risk' debt cases by holding sessions with key agencies, increasing their knowledge of how to spot debt problems early	3rd sectors	Existing resources	Ongoing
Promote to residents ways of increasing their income, such as renting out a spare room	Media, Private Sector	Existing resources	March 2012

DRAFT

Area requiring focus:	Up-skilling of staff to deliver new ways of working within limited resources.
------------------------------	---

Maximising staff resources

The aim is to make efficiencies leading to a more effective service while maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction. There is a careful balance to be struck, simply increasing productivity does not deliver a more effective service and in many cases can lead to less effective delivery and reduced outcomes.

Aim	Streamline processes to increase the availability of staff
Outcome	Reduce number of hours spent on 'non business critical' tasks.

Action no.

Action	Partners	Funding & resources	To be completed by
Up-Skill customer contact centre staff to handle initial enquiries without need to hand off to housing advisor thereby reducing number of initial enquiry calls received by 50%	Customer Contact Centre	Existing resources	Pending completion of service review
Invest in a 'plug-in' that will automatically integrate customer information forms into APP, our main recording system saving 500 officer hours per year	Civica , Private sector housing	Existing resources	Pending completion of service review
Up skill Housing advisor to become responsible for generating lead in securing private rented accommodation.	Letting agent , Landlords	Existing resources	Pending completion of service review

Area requiring focus: Resourceful use of the Homeless prevention fund.

Innovative use of funds to prevent homelessness

There are occasions where homeless prevention funds are used on an ad-hoc basis. There are a variety of ways these funds can be used, such as helping an individual or family to return home or paying off arrears to ensure someone can remain in their home. The cost of this prevention method is often much less than alternatives and the flexibility to use these funds in this way plays a pivotal role in preventing homelessness.

Aim	Investigate and implement innovative schemes to maximise our use of the homelessness prevention fund
Outcome	An innovative scheme implemented that reduce homeless applications from singles.

Action no.

Action	Partners	Funding & resources	To be completed by
Develop a suitable scheme where homelessness is prevented for single non priority customers who will be affected by the Housing Benefit changes.	Housing advice team, ARP and 3rd sector partners	Existing resources	October 2012
Develop alternative Housing Options through the promotion of shared Housing.	Registered providers, Landlord & CBL	Existing resources	October 2012

Area requiring focus:

Services for single customers are lacking within the district.

Enquiries from single customers constitute over 60% of all enquiries each year, with the reducing financial support, support services and an instant access hostel. The only option left is to contact the Council. Whilst the Council might not owe them a rehousing duty, we recognise that this is a group that still needs to be assisted.

Recent unrest in 2011 with single young people playing a major part goes to show that without the required support things can go wrong. It is important that we ensure that some form of housing is provided in order to meet their basic needs. The few available services are expensive as this can be a very difficult group to engage with until it is too late.

We will continue to consult and develop new ways of engaging with this group and also proactively work to ensure that they develop to a stage where they can take responsibility for their own housing, education and employment.

Aim	Develop more cost effective services for assisting single, non-priority customers in seeking housing
Outcome	Reduce the costs for delivering a support service for single customers in seeking housing in 2012/2013 where the Council does not owe them a housing duty

Action no.

Action	Partners	Funding & resources	To be completed by
Explore existing platforms, such as CBL, Breckland Voice and third party websites, to match tenants and landlords within Breckland	Civica & third party partners	Existing resources	January 2013
Develop protocol with our 3rd sector partner & registered providers to manage properties taken on as Private rented accommodation.	3rd partner agencies	Existing resources	March 2013

Area requiring focus:

The number of residents fleeing domestic abuse has increased.

We are seeing the number of residents visiting our service who are affected by domestic abuse, physical and/or emotional, on the rise.

In 2010/11 the numbers visiting our service for this reason doubled. Part of the reason for this steep increase is the way we pro-actively work with MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference). We can account for a rise in the number of enquiries, as we now record all cases that are presented to MARAC. However, the number of acceptances where domestic abuse is the main reason for loss of accommodation has increased this year – back to the levels of 2008/09.

At the MARAC meeting a number of key organisations including the police, housing providers, domestic abuse charities, housing organisations and many others come together to discuss cases that have been referred. The aim is to help protect the victim from further abuse and where appropriate, to find short or long term housing solution for the customer.

This increase may be seen positively as a result of the successful work of the IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Adviser) team. The team provides specialist support to victims of domestic abuse.

DRAFT

Funding for this service and the other key services for domestic abuse victims across the county is under threat and new ways of working are required to maintain these services at their current levels.

We have trained one of our housing advisors to be able to deal specifically with domestic abuse cases and this level of support is valuable to those victims who visit our service. We have completed a mapping exercise of domestic abuse reported cases in Breckland. This has enabled us to gain a clear understanding of where the domestic abuse instances are happening across the district and we are developing a plan for targeted support for these areas.

Aim	Build knowledge and capacity with our partners to address the housing issues of those suffering domestic abuse
Outcome	Drop in Police Call outs. Reduced acceptance from Domestic violence applicants. Reduce and maintain the ratio of homeless applications vs enquiries to 5% for those presenting because of domestic abuse

Action no.

Action	Partners	Funding & resources	To be completed by
Extend the safety first scheme to prevent long term homelessness with a cost sharing arrangement with Registered providers.	Registered providers	Existing resources	March 2013
Secure the services of a Domestic Violence Outreach worker to provide assistance for low and medium need customers suffering domestic violence.	Kings Lynn Council & Leeway	Existing resources & Grant funding.	July 2012
Co-ordinate training to front line staff and Housing association partners on methods for identifying domestic violence.	Registered providers	Existing resources	July 2012
Secure a safe house within the district.	Registered providers	Existing resources	March 2013

Area requiring focus:

We are not able to demonstrate our service adheres to E&D legislation as our data collection is lacking, inconsistent and not fully explained.

We must ensure Breckland Council adheres to our corporate and legal responsibility to offer a service that is 'fair to all'.

To know if we are achieving our aims, our data collection must be improved. An in-depth analysis of our current data recording showed that we cannot demonstrate we are offering such a service presently.

The analysis showed that there are categories we currently do not record and that recording is not consistent across different systems. To address this we have expanded the number of categories we now record and introduced a new recording system. We have also ensured the data we collect

is aligned with all systems and teams.

In quarter four last year we created a new customer service feedback system. The new system gathers data from how customers heard about our service to how they found the experience. This information will be a qualitative guide to how we are performing as a service.

To make this data meaningful, we must capture information from as many customers as possible who are presenting to us for a variety of reasons. We need to obtain more feedback from customers before we can make strategic decisions and qualify our service.

Aim	Ensure Equality and Diversity information and customer satisfaction is collected
Outcome	Quarterly reports that will have an impact on future housing development & achieve at least 80% excellent to good service with a report to members every 6 months.

Action no.

Action	Partners	Funding & resources	To be completed by
Ensure consistency of approach regarding customer services within the team and implement improvement based on data and create a web customer satisfaction survey to gather a wide range of response.	Strategic housing, 3rd party partners and IT department	Existing resources	November 2011

Review of the Strategic Plan

This document is a working document that may change as we react to internal and external influences. We have been careful to choose overall measures (as outlined in 'our vision') that will be a guide to our success even in a changing environment.