

**Appendix**  
***Waverley's Homelessness Review***  
**2018 – 2023**  
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# Waverley's Homelessness Review

## 1. Introduction

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, the Council is required to produce a Homelessness Strategy for its area at least every 5 years. The previous Strategy was published in July 2013. The Strategy must be based on the results of a Homelessness Review.

The purpose of the Homelessness Review is to:

1. Set the scene as to the current and likely future levels of homelessness and housing need
2. Identify what is currently being done and by whom to prevent and tackle homelessness
3. Identify the resources available to the Council and its statutory and voluntary partners to prevent homeless and to provide accommodation and support to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The following document updates some of the information gathered as part of the previous homelessness review and provides additional information where necessary and relevant.

The gaps and areas to improve are then highlighted and these form the key areas to address in Waverley's Homelessness Strategy.

The first section of the review contains the Housing Need and Affordability Analysis from the Council's Housing Strategy 2018.

## 2. Housing Need and Affordability Analysis

### Headline Information



A family seeking to buy an average home in Waverley would now require an income of over £113,000 to afford the mortgage, making home ownership unavailable for many.



Work is no guarantee that local people will be able to pay all their housing costs.

28% of Waverley's housing benefit claimants are in work.

The cost of renting privately is becoming less affordable with average monthly rents now standing at £1,050 in Waverley.

This means local people spend 42% of their income on rent.



#### a) Overview of the borough

Waverley is an affluent borough in the South West corner of Surrey, with high demand for housing, high house prices and above average incomes.

The borough covers 133 square miles and is predominantly rural, with most residents living in four main urban settlements, surrounded by villages set amongst the countryside and attractive natural landscape. Nearly three quarters of Waverley's population lives within one of the four largest settlements: Farnham 39,000, Godalming 22,000, Haslemere 17,000 and Cranleigh 11,000.



61% of the land in Waverley is designated as Green Belt. In addition to this 92% of the land in Waverley borough is rural. Much of the borough's countryside is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), nature reserve and/or Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV).

Waverley is a prosperous area with low unemployment at 2.9%<sup>1</sup> when compared to the national average of 5.1%. The population is highly qualified and 43% of those in employment commute outside the area to work, many to access higher paying jobs in London. A significant number of workers from outside the borough also commute into Waverley.

Ranked as one of the least deprived areas in Britain<sup>2</sup>, Waverley's residents enjoy an above average life expectancy and there are low levels of crime. However, both urban and rural areas of the borough are deprived in terms of barriers to housing due to lack of affordability. There are pockets of relative deprivation which remain a challenge in Waverley<sup>3</sup>. Some of the borough's rural villages lack services including public transport, supermarkets, schools and healthcare.

## **b) Demographics**

The population in Waverley is over 123,300. Current estimates suggest this will increase by around 5% during the lifetime of this strategy<sup>4</sup>.

There is less ethnic diversity in Waverley than across Surrey as a whole. 95% of Waverley residents described themselves as white in the 2011 Census. This compares to the Surrey average of 90% and England average of 85%<sup>5</sup>.

A key driver of change in the housing market over the next 20-25 years is expected to be the growth in the population of older people. 19.5% of Waverley's population is over 65 and this is set to increase<sup>6</sup>, having implications for residents' independence, housing, care services and community safety. In particular, the demand for extra care and specialist dementia care accommodation is expected to significantly increase in the coming decades<sup>7</sup>. The proportion of very elderly (85yrs+) residents in Waverley is the highest in Surrey<sup>8</sup>. Planning for the right type of housing and care for this age group is a significant challenge for the housing and planning authorities, social care and health partners working together to address this need.

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<sup>1</sup> ONS, NOMIS model based estimates

<sup>2</sup> Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015

<sup>3</sup> Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015

<sup>4</sup> [ONS Population estimates 2015](#)

<sup>5</sup> 2011 Census data

<sup>6</sup> [2011 Census data: table PP01UK](#)

<sup>7</sup> See also section 7c.

<sup>8</sup> 2011 Census data

21.3% of households in Waverley contain someone with a long term health problem or disability<sup>9</sup>, a higher proportion than for the other Surrey authorities. We know that there are over 900 people with learning disabilities or autism living in residential homes in Surrey, however, the Adult Social Care Commissioning team has identified the need for more independent or individualised accommodation for some of these households. It will be necessary to plan to meet some of this need in Waverley. In addition, many young adults with learning disabilities who live with their parents will require suitable alternative accommodation when their ageing parents are no longer able to care for them.<sup>10</sup>

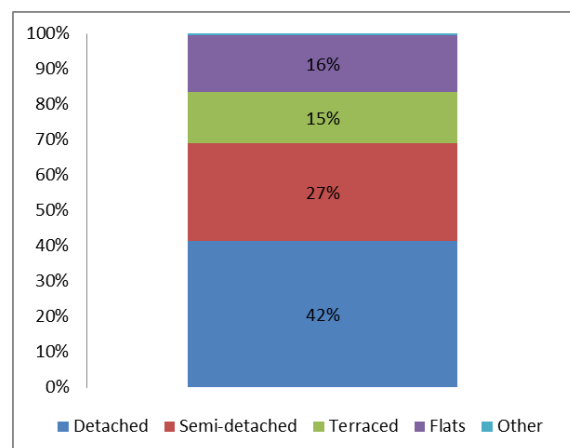
### c) Local housing stock

There are currently 52,734 homes in Waverley<sup>11</sup>. The majority of residents own their homes and a significant number live in rented homes<sup>12</sup>.

The housing stock is largely made up of detached and semi-detached housing with fewer smaller terraced homes or flats.

Waverley has the highest proportion of detached housing in the housing market area<sup>13</sup> at over 41%. Nearly 31% of homes in Waverley have 4 or more bedrooms. The majority of homes in Waverley are currently under-occupied (76.7%), having more than one extra bedroom than required. Many older households will remain in their current homes but some may wish to downsize or will require specialist housing or support, for example because of dementia or mobility problems. 2.5% of Waverley households are overcrowded. Older households downsizing releases homes for families with children.

Figure 1. Profile of stock by type



<sup>9</sup> 2011 Census data

<sup>10</sup> [Surrey JSNA 2017](#)

<sup>11</sup> Information supplied by WBC council tax department

<sup>12</sup> Tenure information from 2011 census data

<sup>13</sup> The HMA covers Waverley, Guildford and Woking local authority areas.

Figure 2. Profile of stock by number of bedrooms

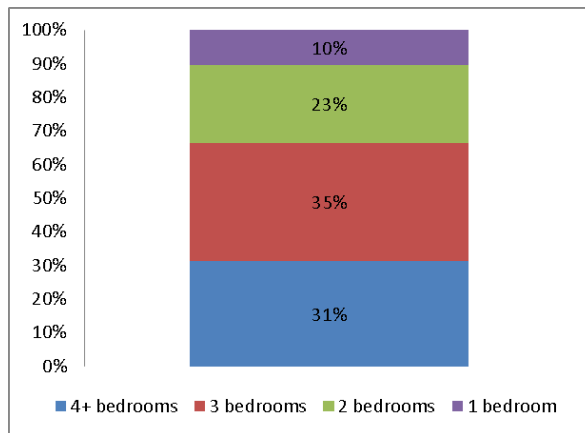
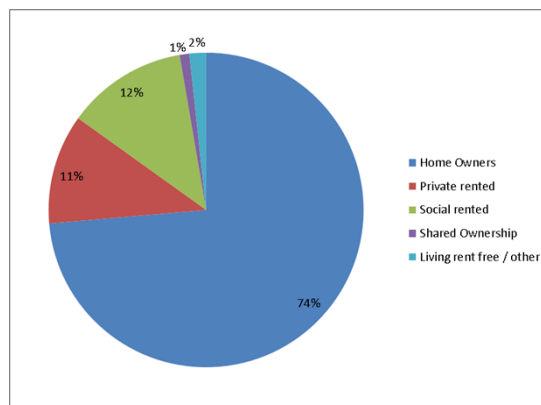


Figure 3. Tenure in Waverley (census, 2011)



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#### d) The national housing affordability crisis

A significant number of households in England cannot afford market housing without support.

The average annual full-time earnings of people working in the lowest-paid occupations range from £17,665 to £18,462 in care, leisure and other service occupations. This is about £10,000 less than the national full-time median of £28,213.

People in lower-paid occupations are particularly affected by the affordability crisis, having seen housing costs moving further out of reach of their earnings than for any other occupational group. As access to home ownership in the South East of England becomes increasingly dependent on access to family or inherited wealth, so the gap between those able and those unable to draw on such resources widens.

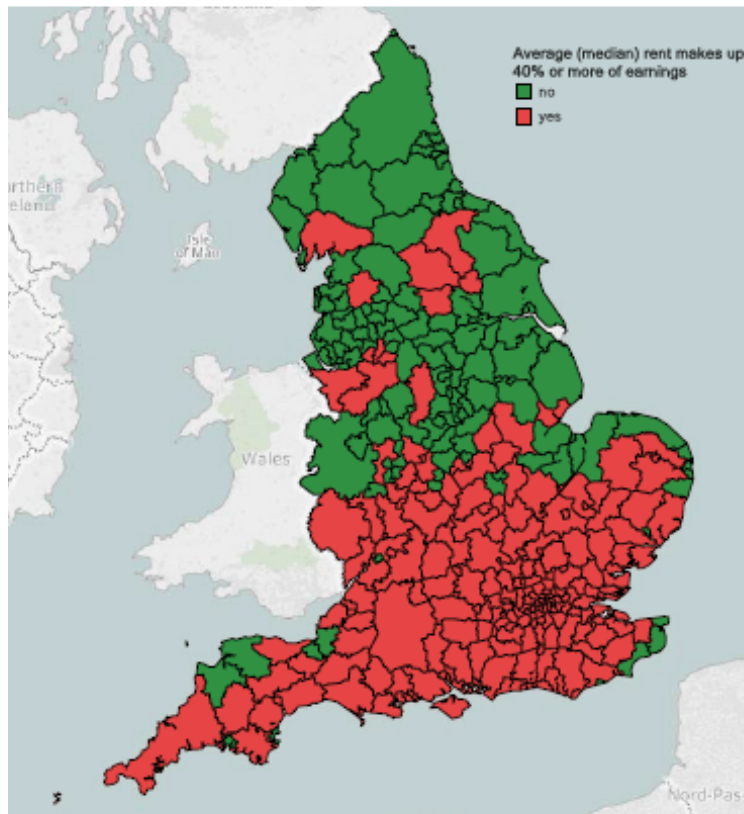
The pressure is particularly keenly felt in areas of high housing costs like Waverley, presenting a barrier both to private renting and to home ownership for low income households.

The three occupational groups with the lowest median earnings (caring and leisure; sales and service; elementary occupations) are required to spend high proportions of their earnings on rent payments across all nine English regions. The typical (median) rent of a worker in all three occupational groups takes up 40% or more of their earnings in the majority of local authorities in London and the South East.

Occupation	Earnings to house price ratio in South East England
Managers, directors and senior officials	6.6
Professional Occupations	7.4
Associate professional and technical occupations	8.7
Skilled trades occupations	10.4
Process, plant and machine operatives	11.3
Administrative and secretarial occupations	12.8
Elementary occupations	14.8
Sales and customer services	15.6
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	16.1

Figure 4.  
Earnings to house price ratios in the South East

**Figure 5. Local Authorities where the median rent takes 40% or more of the earnings of workers in the care, leisure and other service occupations**



Privately renting is often the only option available to those with median or below median incomes, however, certain parts of the private rented sector are badly managed and poor quality. Few private landlords offer long term security for families<sup>14</sup>.

In recognition of the severity of the national affordability crisis, the government announced a £125 million increase in the targeted affordability funding available to assist in high rent pressure areas in the November 2017 Budget.

#### e) **What is affordable housing?**

The government defines affordable housing as “social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not

<sup>14</sup> [Resolution foundation home truths](#)



met by the market".<sup>15</sup> When the housing is built, it is safeguarded as affordable housing in perpetuity by a legal agreement to ensure that upon re-let or re-sale, it is again made available to eligible households in housing need.<sup>16</sup>

In Waverley, the main affordable tenures are social rent (around 55-60% of market rent), affordable rent (around 80% of market rent) and shared ownership, also known as part-rent, part-buy.

There are currently 6424 affordable homes in Waverley<sup>17</sup>. These include social rented, affordable rented and shared ownership homes owned by the council and housing associations.

The different affordable tenures meet a range of housing needs across the broad spectrum of households who cannot access market housing. However, as discussed below, for many households in Waverley, social rented housing remains the only genuinely affordable tenure.

#### **f) Affordability in Waverley**

The borough has high levels of economic activity and is one of the least deprived areas in England. The attractiveness of the borough is reflected in its house prices which are among the highest in Surrey.

It is vital to Waverley's prosperity that it continues to deliver high quality health, educational, care and security services, yet high property prices in Waverley are pricing out essential workers such as teachers and care workers. As a result, some employers are finding it difficult to recruit and retain staff<sup>18</sup>. In particular, attracting enough care workers to care for Waverley's ageing population is becoming a pressing issue.

Making affordable housing options available to low and middle income workers benefits the local economy by ensuring the continued provision of key services and reducing staff turnover in these services. Workers are then able to put down roots in the area, becoming an integrated part of the community they serve and at the same time reducing pressure on local transport infrastructure.

#### **i) Incomes in Waverley**

The average median annual earnings of those living in Waverley in 2016 was £29,770<sup>19</sup>, compared to £22,797 for those working in Waverley but commuting in from outside the borough<sup>20</sup>.

Those living in the borough and working elsewhere are often London commuters with higher salaries.

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<sup>15</sup> National Planning Policy Framework

<sup>16</sup> Exceptions such as the Right to Buy and shared ownership staircasing apply.

<sup>17</sup> 2017 RP stock data and 2017 WBC stock data.

<sup>18</sup> [Impact of housing costs and affordability on local businesses](#)

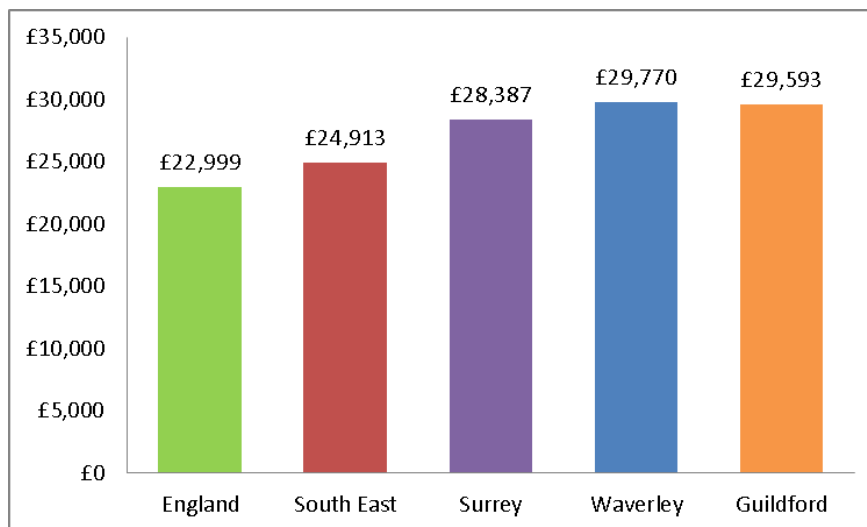
<sup>19</sup> Median earnings taken from [ONS data 2016 table 8.1a](#)

<sup>20</sup> Median earnings for those working in Waverley taken from [ONS data 2016 table 7.1a](#)

**Figure 6. Comparison of incomes in Waverley (2016)**

	Waverley Workplace	Waverley Resident
Median income	£22,797	£29,770
Lower quartile income	£11,991	£17,368

**Figure 7. Median salaries by area (2016)**



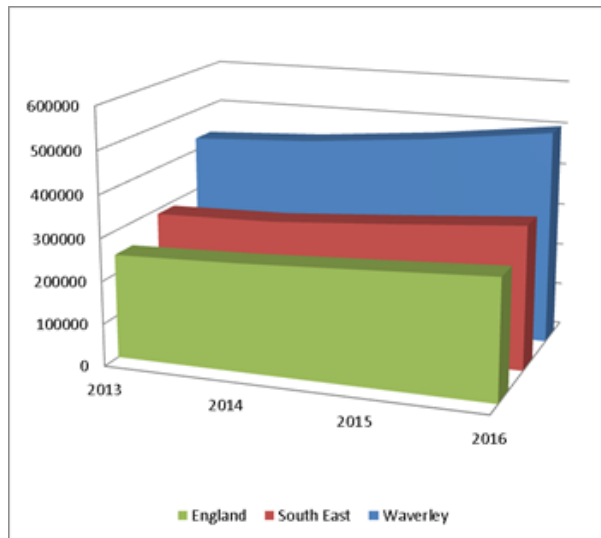
Household formation rates for 25-34 year olds have reduced significantly since 2001<sup>21</sup>. Younger families in Waverley are often unable to move out of their parents' homes or shared accommodation.

<sup>21</sup>[RTPI 2014 Planning for Housing in England](#)

## ii) *Affordability of home ownership in Waverley*

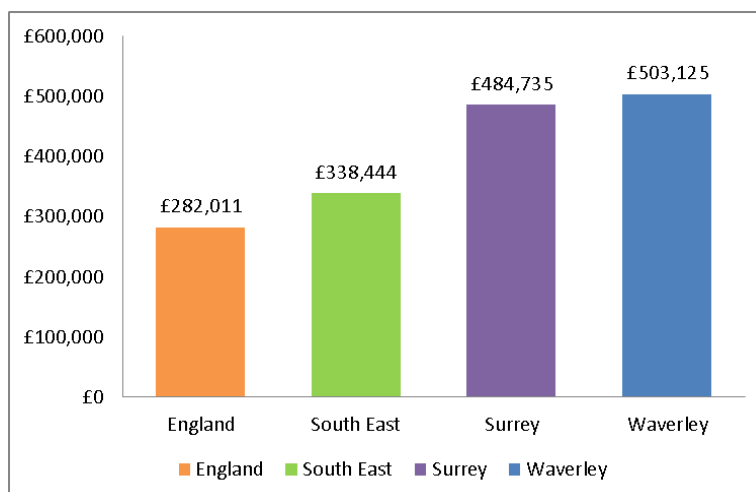
Waverley is one of the most expensive places in Surrey to buy a home. In 2016, house prices in Waverley were 78% above the average for England and well above the average for the South East.

Figure 8. Average house prices in Waverley



An average home in Waverley costs £503,125<sup>22</sup>.

Figure 9. Average (mean) house prices 2016.



<sup>22</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS), small area statistics

Homes in Waverley's rural villages are particularly expensive. Typically, rural house prices are 26% higher than urban areas, whilst annual earnings in rural areas are on average £7,200 lower.

Newly forming households require substantial deposits and salaries to purchase on the open market in Waverley. Using the above figures, an income of £113,203 is required for a 90% mortgage on an average property.

Figure 10. Average housing costs in Waverley

Total cost	£503,125
Deposit required	£50,312
Mortgage per month	£2148
Income required	£113,203
Based on a 90% mortgage, 3% interest rate and lending at 4 x income.	

Lower quartile prices give an indication of what it would cost a family in Waverley to buy their first home.

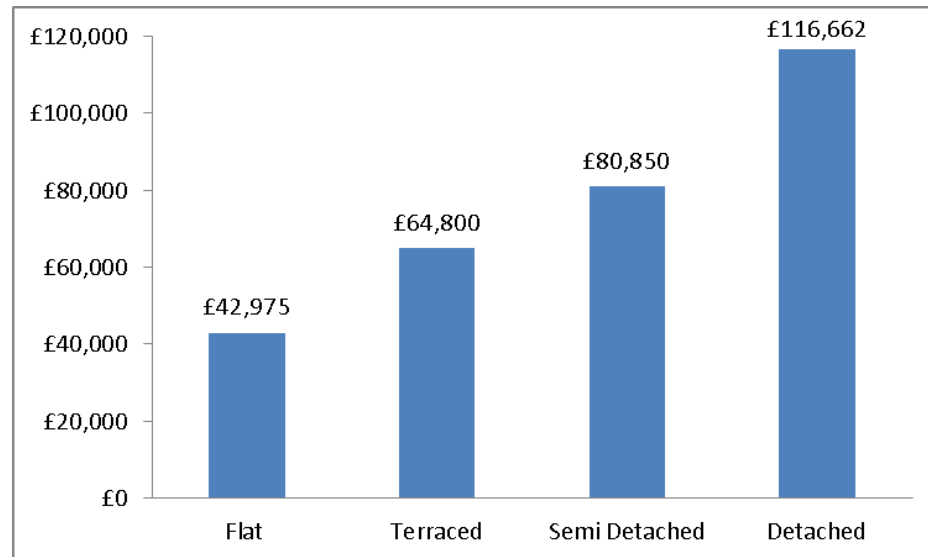
Figure 11. Cost of purchasing a home in Waverley

Lower Quartile house Purchase <sup>23</sup>	Total	Deposit	Mortgage per month <sup>24</sup>
Lower Quartile Flat	£191,000	£19,100	£815
Lower Quartile terrace	£288,000	£28,800	£1,230
Lower Quartile semi -detached	£360,000	£36,600	£1,534
Lower quartile detached	£518,500	£51,850	£2,213

<sup>23</sup> [ONS dataset](#)

<sup>24</sup> Using mortgage calculator available on the Money Advice Service ([www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk](http://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk)).

**Figure 12: Income required to purchase a lower quartile home in Waverley (based on 90% mortgage)**



Even those households with above-average incomes in Waverley find their access to homeownership severely restricted, with a household income of over £80,000 and deposit of over £36,000 required to purchase a lower quartile semi-detached home.

Even those households with above-average incomes in Waverley find their access to homeownership severely restricted, with a household income of over £80,000 and deposit of over £36,000 required to purchase a lower quartile semi-detached home.

### ***iii) Affordability of shared ownership in Waverley***

Shared ownership provides an opportunity for people who cannot afford open market housing to access the housing ladder.

Shared ownership purchasers buy a share of the equity in the property, increasing their share over time if they can afford to do so (known as 'staircasing'). Rent is payable on the equity retained by the council or housing association.

The equity share for sale varies from 25%-75%. However, even a 25% share plus rent can be too expensive for people on medium and low incomes.

A household is considered able to afford to buy a home if it costs 3.5 times the gross household income for a single earner household, or three times the household income for dual income households<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research 2009

The calculations below are based on shared ownership properties currently for sale in Surrey.

Figure 13. One bed shared ownership affordability

<b>Typical shared ownership property example: 1 bedroom flat 25% share<sup>26</sup></b>	
Total	£205,000
Mortgage	£48,688
Deposit	£2,563
Monthly mortgage cost (at 3% interest)	£231
Rent & service charge	£429
Total monthly cost	£660
Minimum income	£26,000

Figure 14. two bed shared ownership affordability

<b>Typical shared ownership property example: 2 bedroom flat 25% share<sup>27</sup>.</b>	
Total	£285,000
Mortgage	£67,688
Deposit	£3,563
Monthly mortgage cost (at 3% interest)	£338
Rent & service charge	£580
Total monthly cost	£918
Minimum income	£35,000

Based on these examples and the median salary in Waverley of £29,770, shared ownership offers a viable option for some residents, subject to them being able to secure a mortgage and having the necessary deposit. However, larger shared ownership houses suitable for families command significantly higher values and may be beyond the reach of local families in housing need.

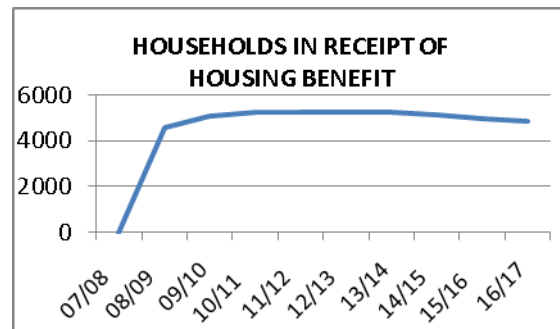
#### ***iv) Affordability of private renting in Waverley***

<sup>26</sup> Based on a [1 bedroom shared ownership flat in Surrey](#).

<sup>27</sup> Based on a [2 bedroom shared ownership flat in Surrey](#).

Work is no guarantee that people can afford the cost of renting. 21% of Waverley's housing benefit claimants are in employment<sup>28</sup>. A comparison of income and rents shows that 42% of gross income goes on rent in Waverley<sup>29</sup>.

**Figure 15: Households in receipt of housing benefit**



The median monthly private sector rent in Waverley 2015/16 was £1,050<sup>30</sup>.

**Figure 16: Private sector renting compared to maximum housing benefit (LHA)**

	Private rent £pcm	LHA <sup>31 32p</sup> cm	SHORTFALL pcm
1 BED	£790	£739.57	£50.43
2 BED	£1,050	966.16	£83.84
3 BED	£1350	£1,161.46	£188.54
4 BED	£2250	£1,495.41	£754.59

The shortfall is the amount of money a family would have to find per calendar month (on average) from their personal income after any assistance from housing benefit has been paid.

#### v) **Affordable rent and social rent**

Historically the guide to what is affordable rent has been 35% of a household's net income<sup>33</sup>. The government introduced the 'affordable rent' tenure (80% of market rent) in 2011, meaning that new development requires less grant. Whilst the new tenure falls within the government definition of affordable housing, it means some households could spend over £14,000pa on an affordable rented property in Waverley. The average social rent is around £8,000 per annum. For households on very low incomes in Waverley, the only genuinely affordable tenure is social rent.

<sup>28</sup> 1038 households contain 1 or more adults in employment out of 4830 households in receipt of housing benefit, 2017

<sup>29</sup> £29,614,522 HB expenditure 2016-17

<sup>30</sup> Valuation Office Agency: Private rental market summary statistics – October 2015-September 2016

<sup>31</sup> Valuation Office Agency: Private rental market summary statistics – October 2015-September 2016

<sup>32</sup> There are 3 different LHA rates in Waverley. I have used the one that covers the majority of Waverley Borough in this table.

<sup>33</sup> <http://blog.shelter.org.uk/2015/08/what-is-affordable-housing/>

Affordable rented homes and social rented homes are allocated to eligible households on Waverley Borough Council's Housing Register. Households with a gross annual income of over £60,000 or savings/ assets in excess of £30,000 are not eligible to join the Housing Register. However, a larger family with an income of £60,000 may struggle to buy or to privately rent a property to meet their needs in Waverley. These families may look to shared ownership, for which households with an income of up to £80,000 are eligible.

## **g) Housing Need in Waverley**

### **i) The Housing Register and Help to Buy Register**

There were 1500 households on Waverley's housing waiting list (the Housing Register) as at 1 April 2017. In total, 278 households were rehoused into Council accommodation in 2016/17 through the Housing Register.

The households who secured affordable rented accommodation in 2016/17 waited around 3 years on average before being offered affordable accommodation. Those requiring a 3 bedroom property waited the longest – nearly 4 years<sup>34</sup>.

255 households living or working in Waverley are currently waiting for a shared ownership home in the Help to Buy Register.

### **ii) Homelessness prevention**

Waverley's Housing Options team received contact from over 879 households regarding homelessness last year. On average, 574 households are prevented from becoming homeless by Waverley's Housing Options team each year<sup>35</sup> and 530 new applications to the Housing Register are processed.

### **iii) The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2015**

The SHMA<sup>36</sup> is an assessment of current and future housing need in the borough based on current statistics and projections. The latest SHMA was produced in 2015, covering the West Surrey housing market area shared by Waverley, Woking and Guildford councils. The SHMA informs the calculation of the number of new houses needed for the lifetime of the Waverley Local Plan.

## **Hidden households**

The SHMA estimates that there are 374 'concealed households' in Waverley. These are households within a household and are often young families living with parents and unable to form a household of their own due to high housing costs. 73% of these concealed households cited unaffordability of housing as the reason for their housing situation.

## **Projected growth and future housing need**

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<sup>34</sup> [Waiting Days by Band and Beds 2013 to 2017.pdf](#)

<sup>35</sup> Housing Options data

<sup>36</sup> [Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015](#)



The SHMA models the relationship between jobs and homes. It predicts increasing employment rates, linked to an expectation that people will retire later and more women will work. An annual growth of 99-120 jobs per annum is expected. The SHMA concludes that Waverley has a need for 519 additional dwellings each year. This takes account of the level of housing provision which is expected to be needed to support economic growth and improve affordability.

### Housing for older people in Waverley

Within Waverley it is expected that a growing older population will result in an increase in the number of people with dementia by around 1,800 from 2013-31, and growth in the number of persons with mobility problems of over 3,500.<sup>37</sup>

Some older households will require specialist housing. The SHMA identifies a need for over 3,950 additional specialist units of housing for older people across the housing market area from 2013-2033, including sheltered and extra care homes, with 1,700 of those required in Waverley.

### Figure 17: Need for specialist housing for older people

2013-33	Market	Affordable	Total
Guildford	1,136	198	1,334
Waverley	1,442	260	1,703
Woking	962	-44	918
HMA	3,540	414	3995

In addition, the SHMA indicates a need for 1,031 bed spaces in care homes (396 in Waverley). This does not form part of the household population; it is therefore additional to the need identified for housing above.

### Suggested future housing mix for Waverley

The SHMA recommends the best mix of housing to meet future need across the West Surrey Housing Market Area:

Figure 18: Need for different sizes of homes across West Surrey housing market area

	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4+ bedrooms
Market	10%	30%	40%	20%
Affordable	40%	30%	25%	5%

<sup>37</sup> West Surrey SHMA 2015

Figure 19: Mix of affordable housing tenures needed

	Intermediate	Social / Affordable Rent
Guildford	29%	71%
Waverley	32%	68%
Woking	26%	74%
West Surrey HMA	29%	71%

The SHMA data is used alongside local evidence, including the Housing Register, Help to Buy Register and rural housing needs surveys, when planning the mix of affordable housing required on new developments at planning application stage.

### 3. Homelessness - National Context

#### a) Emerging trends nationally

<b>Households accepted as homeless by local authorities</b>	<i>Increase since 2010</i>	<b>43%</b>
<b>Homeless households in temporary accommodation</b>	<i>Increase since 2010</i>	<b>58%</b>
	<i>Households in 2017</i>	<b>78,180</b>
<b>Main reasons for homelessness in 2016-17</b>	<i>End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy</i>	<b>34%</b>
	<i>Having to leave Family, relatives, friends</i>	
	<i>Relationship breakdown</i>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Rough Sleeping</b>	<i>Increase since 2010</i>	<b>169% (4,751 people)</b>
<b>Rough Sleeping</b>	<i>In London and the South</i>	<b>60% of total</b>

According to DCLG data 46% of Councils report an increase in demand for housing advice services. However, 92% of Councils responding to this year's 'Homelessness Monitor', report either an increase or significant increase in footfall for homelessness services. The disparity in data is likely to be due to the fact that DCLG data only captures formal homelessness applications rather approaches for detailed housing advice to help retain existing accommodation or secure alternative accommodation.

The new DCLG enhanced data collection system (known as (HCLIC) being introduced from April 2018 will help in producing detailed consistent data regarding homelessness.

There is a long term under supply of social housing. Only 16% of the total funding earmarked for housing up to 2021 will directly support the building of new affordable homes. Analysis by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) shows that nationally we will have 250,000 less of the cheapest homes to rent by 2020 compared to 2012.

The overall supply of 'affordable' homes fell to a 24 year low and the Country is building the lowest number of homes at social rent since records began.

The number of private renters living in poverty has doubled in a decade because they are handing over a higher proportion of their income to cover housing costs.

The private rented sector is not a viable housing solution in many areas of the UK due to high rent levels. The loss of private rented tenancies is also the main cause of homelessness. With the under supply of social housing Councils have no other choice but to prevent homelessness by assisting households into private rented tenancies. However, it raises the question as to the merits of helping homeless households into a tenure that the subsequent loss of is the highest cause of homelessness.

### **b) Policy Context – Welfare**

There is a growing gap between Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, payable by housing benefit for lower income households to rent privately, and market rents. This means recipients of housing benefit are limited to a decreasing proportion of available private rented properties – the bottom 5-10% in some areas.

The reduction in the benefit cap is expected to affect 116,000 families - resulting in a shortfall of £115 a week in benefit in the worst cases.

The Universal Credit waiting period is the biggest cause of arrears for Universal Credit claiming tenants. Benefit restrictions on younger single claimants 18-21 and 21-35 means there will be a greater need for shared houses.

Changes as to how supported housing will be funded nationally has caused widespread uncertainty and concern in the sector. Supported housing accounts for 10% of homelessness preventions so any reduction in funding is likely to mean reduced number of bed-spaces for homeless clients.

The 1% rent reduction in social housing is likely to lead to local authorities and housing associations increasing private market activities to cross subsidise their social rented arm. This will further limit the development of new social housing.

### **c) Policy Context – Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA 2017)**

The HRA 2017 is considered to be the most radical amendment to the homelessness legislation for 40 years. The legislation will come into effect on 3 April 2018. The primary change is bringing the homelessness prevention and relief work carried out by Councils into the statutory framework.

Very similar legislation was introduced in Wales a couple of years ago. As the legislation formalises the prevention and relief duties and extends duties to single homeless people, Welsh Councils report an increase in case load (of up to 30-40% in some cases) and an increased workload per housing advice case of 30%.

Research commissioned by Shelter and undertaken by Salford University into the Welsh model highlighted that whilst the legislation had got off to a good start, staff

turnover and training issues had hampered the Council. Helping households with mental health and complex childhood/psychological backgrounds remained a challenge. There was a need for close working with statutory partners and this is much more challenging for two tier authorities.

#### **d) Funding**

**£315 million Homelessness Prevention Grant** to Councils will be maintained to 2019/20. This is collected through retention of business rates.

Waverley's allocation £49,000

**New flexible homelessness support grant** replaces temporary accommodation management fee (£402 million over 2 years).

Waverley's allocation:

2017-18 - £131,383.19

2018-19 - £151,169.13

Total: £282,552.32

**£72 million new burdens funding** to cover additional administrative costs of implementing the new prevention and relief framework in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA 2017).

Waverley's allocation:

2017-18 - £22,396

2018-19 - £20,514

2019-20 - £21,685

Total: £64,595

**IT new burdens funding** - £9,202 per local authority.

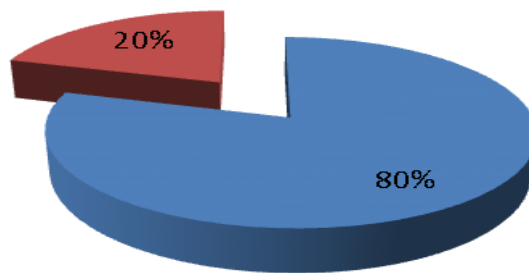
## 4. Housing Register, Stock and Lettings information for Waverley

### a) Housing Register applicants as at 1 April 2017

The Housing Register shows the number of households in housing need and eligible to be considered for social housing in Waverley.

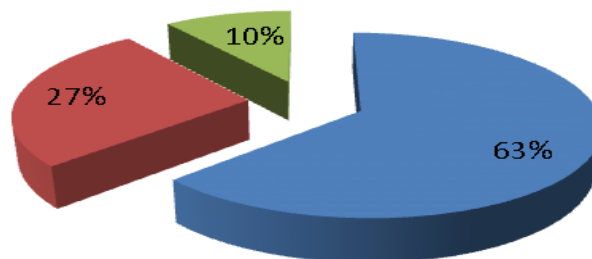
#### Housing Register by applicant type

- Applicants not currently living in Social Housing - 1193 households
- Applicants living in Social Housing - Transfers - 307 households

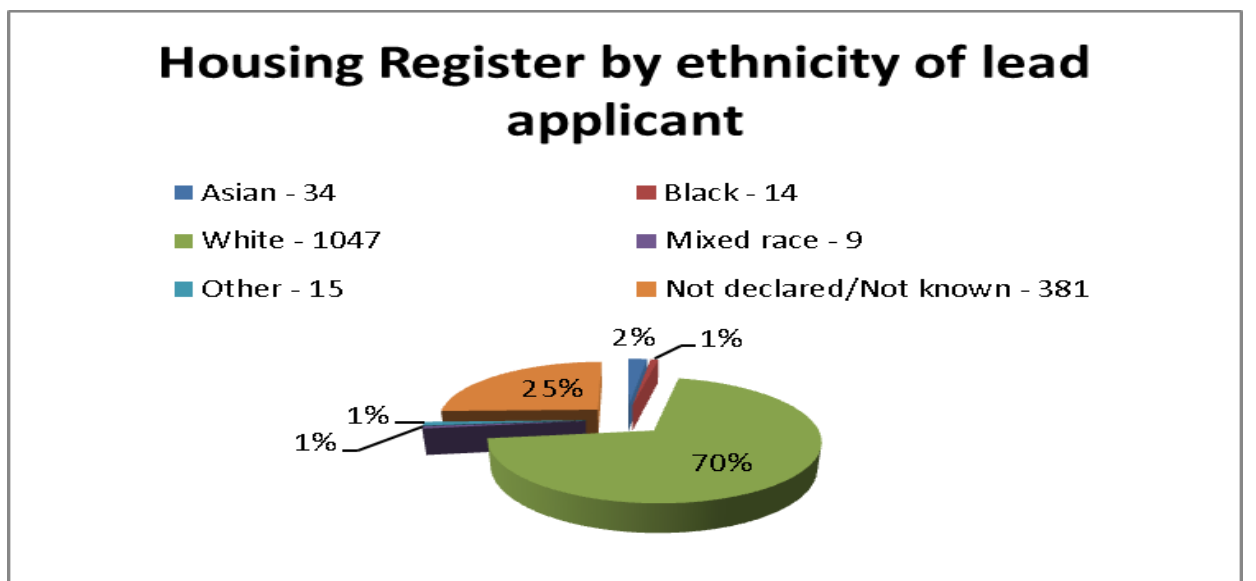
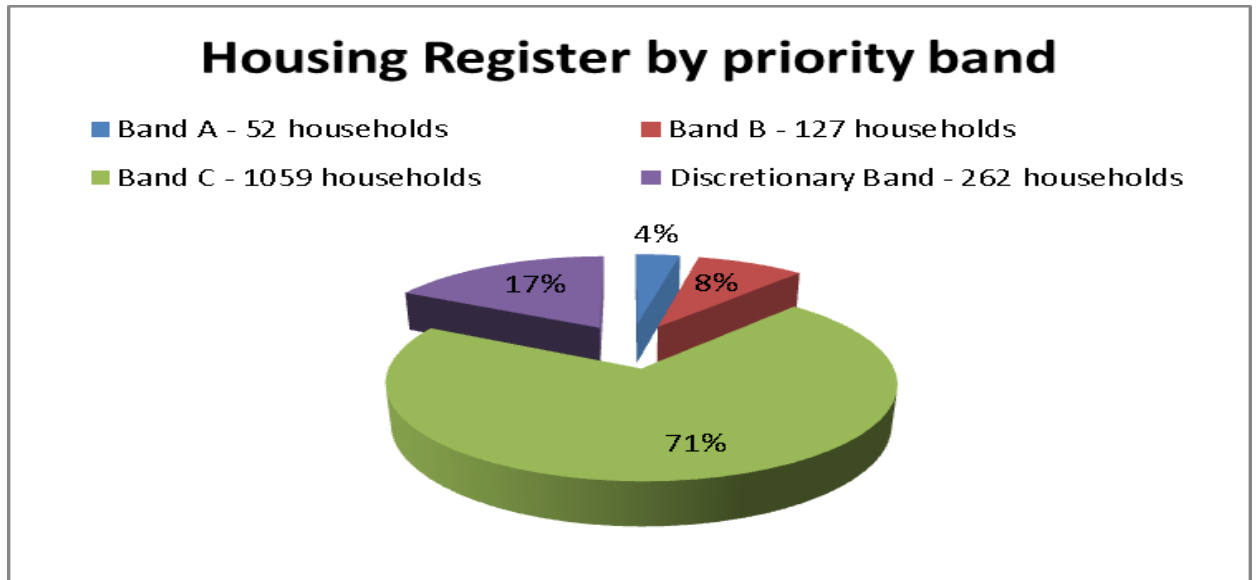


#### Housing Register by bedroom need

- 1 bed - 946 households
- 2 bed - 398 households
- 3 bed or larger - 156 households



a) Housing Register applicants as at 1 April 2017 Cont.



Over 50% of households on the Housing Register are either living in private rented accommodation or living with friends or relatives. This means that they are potentially at risk of being made homeless between 28 and 56 days.

## b) Waverley Housing Stock information

### Social rented housing stock in Waverley as at 1 April 2017 – Council

	Sheltered 1 Bed	Sheltered 2 Bed	General Needs 1 Bed	General Needs 2 Bed	General Needs 3 Bed	TOTAL
Alfold	0	0	8	6	14	28
Badshot Lea	0	0	28	3	15	46
Beacon Hill	0	0	27	0	19	46
Bourne	0	0	11	3	20	34
Bramley	25	3	73	35	57	193
Brook	0	0	0	0	2	2
Chiddingfold	0	0	46	40	44	130
Churt	0	0	46	7	21	74
Cranleigh	26	5	178	84	111	404
Dockenfield	0	0	0	1	12	13
Dunsfold	0	0	32	2	11	45
Ellens Green	0	0	5	0	0	5
Elstead	0	0	74	27	49	150
Ewhurst	0	0	40	18	13	71
Farncombe	34	1	213	204	208	660
Farnham Town	57	3	143	153	163	519
Folly Hill	0	0	3	25	38	66
Frensham	0	0	24	5	15	44
Godalming	0	0	93	173	115	381
Grayswood	0	0	0	6	2	8
Hambledon	0	0	13	5	4	22
Hascombe	0	0	6	4	4	14
Haslemere	0	0	79	129	95	303
Heath End	0	0	18	22	33	73
Hindhead	0	0	16	12	10	38
Milford	21	9	73	73	52	228
Rowley	0	0	0	0	4	4
Shamley Green	0	0	33	33	19	85
Shottermill	39	3	81	50	81	254
Thursley	0	0	4	3	3	10
Tilford	0	0	1	3	1	5
Upper Hale	0	0	23	0	12	35
Weybourne	0	0	25	0	16	41
Witley	0	0	53	47	61	161
Wonersh	0	0	14	16	8	38
Woolmer Hill	0	0	22	13	38	73



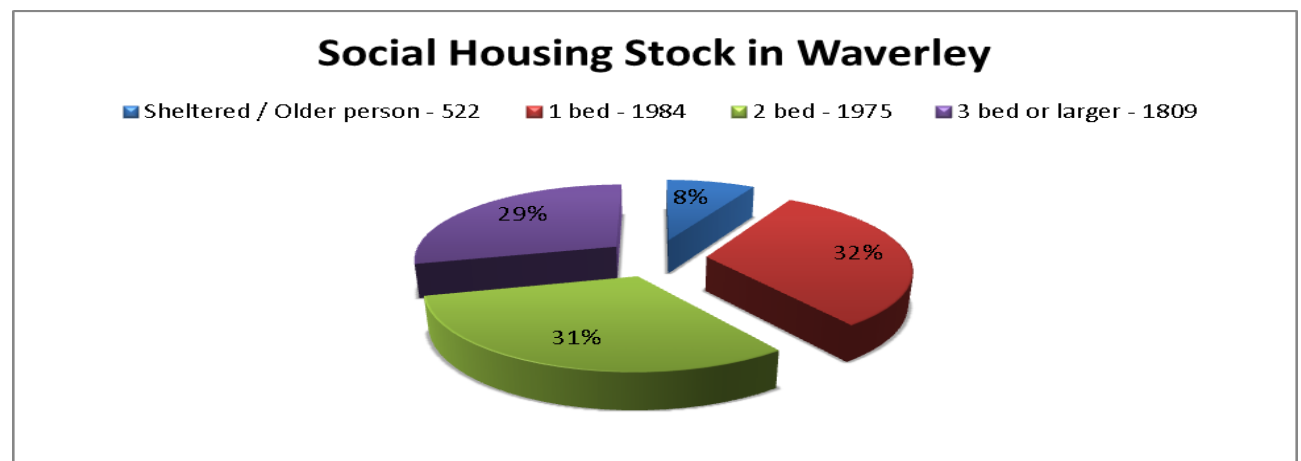
Wrecclesham	32	3	79	180	170	464
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1584</b>	<b>1382</b>	<b>1540</b>	<b>4767</b>

### b) Waverley Housing Stock information cont.

#### Social rented housing stock in Waverley - Housing Association

	Sheltered housing / Older persons housing	1bed	2bed	3+bed	Total
Housing Association	261	400	593	269	1,523

#### Total Social Rented Housing Stock in Waverley – Council and Housing Association - by number of bedrooms



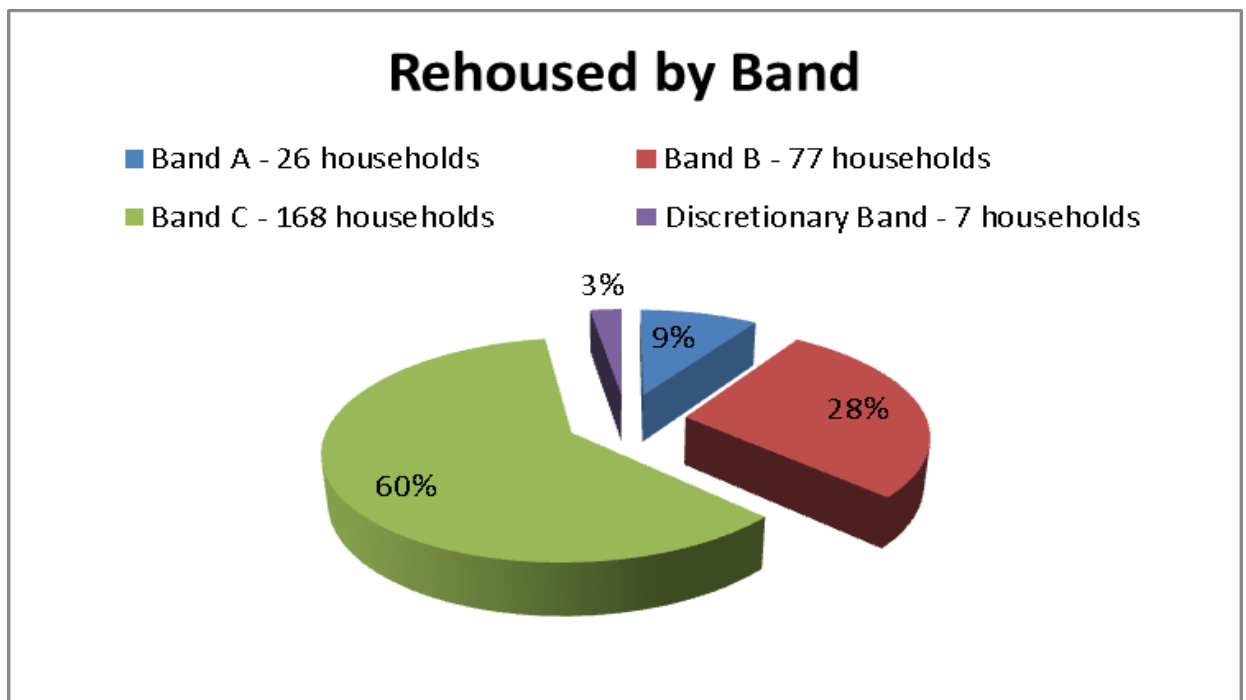
#### New Social rented housing supply and loss through Right to Buy (RTB)

	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18 (24/1/18)	Total
New Build (HA)	2	19	44	14	4	83
New Build (Council)	NA	NA	13	35	2	50
Loss through RTB	-13	-9	-15	-23	-11	-71
<b>Total</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>62</b>

### c) Lettings - Who was rehoused 2016-2017?

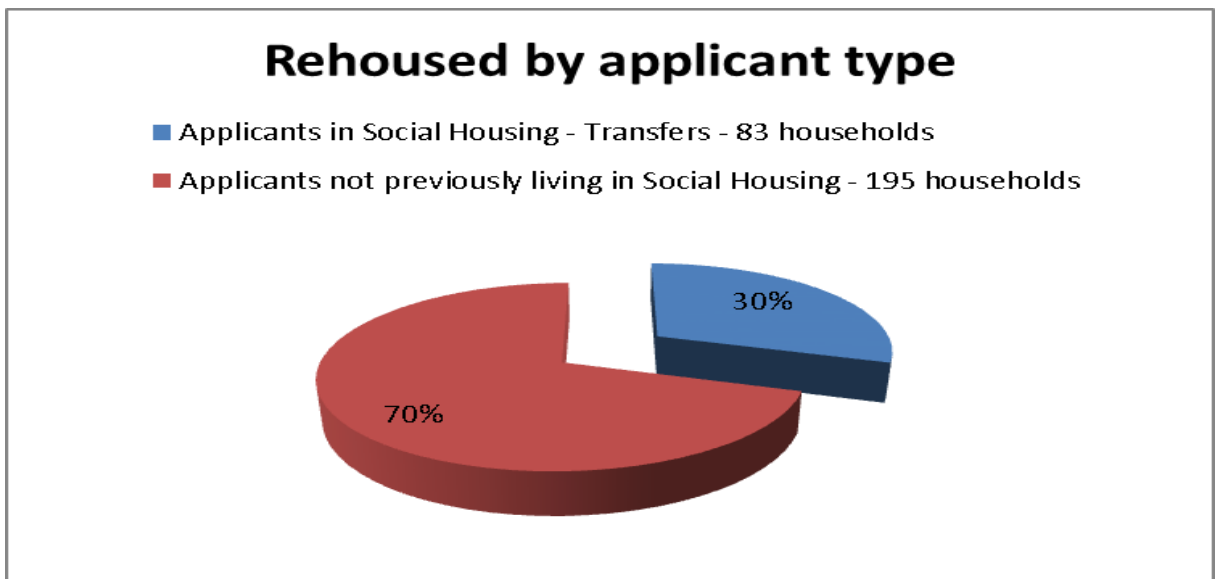
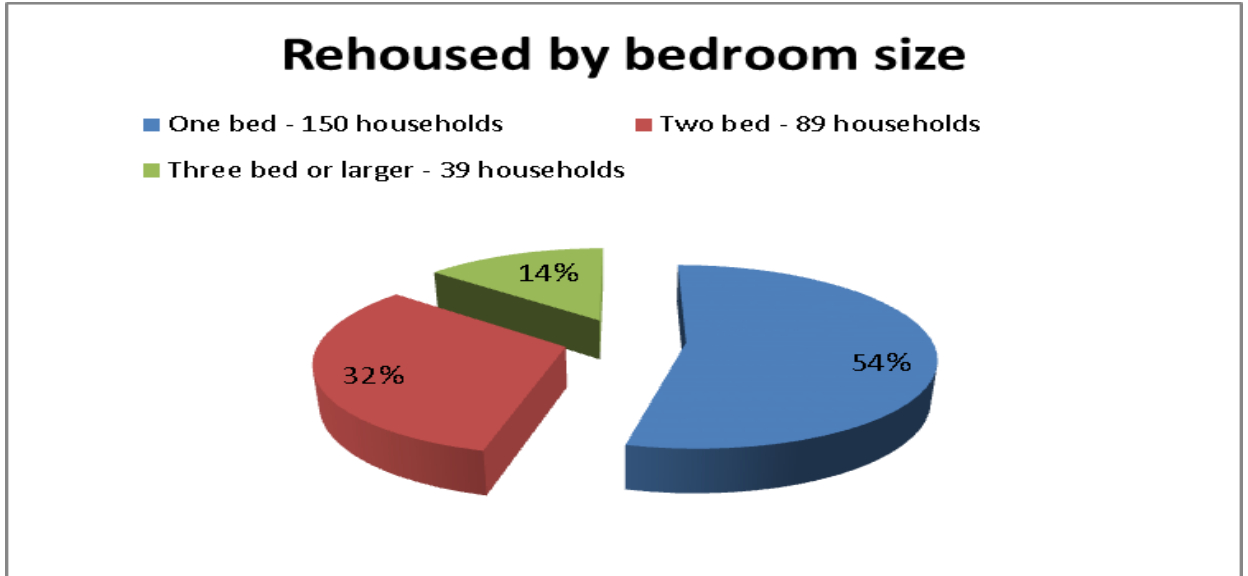
#### Council homes let

	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	1 Bed Over 50	1 Bed Elderly	2 Bed Elderly	TOTAL
ALFOLD	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
BRAMLEY	4	2	2	0	1	4	0	13
CHIDDINGFOLD	1	2	3	0	2	1	0	9
CRANLEIGH	11	6	6	0	1	5	3	32
DUNSFOLD	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	6
ELSTEAD	3	3	0	0	0	1	0	7
EWHURST	0	3	2	0	1	3	0	9
FARNHAM	19	26	7	0	6	20	0	78
FRENHAM	3	0	3	0	1	0	0	7
GODALMING	8	24	8	0	3	12	1	56
HAMBLEDON	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
HASLEMERE	13	14	4	0	4	7	0	42
MILFORD	1	1	1	0	2	4	0	9
WITLEY	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
WONERSH	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	5
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>278</b>



The majority of homes (60%) were let to applicants in band C.

**c) Lettings - Who was rehoused 2016-2017? Cont.**



## How long does it take to bid successfully for a new home?

The time that applicants wait on the Housing Register depends on their priority band and how flexible they are in regard to where they want to live. The average number of days that applicants had to wait before being re-housed during 2016-2017 was:

	Band A	Band B	Band C	Discretionary Pool	Average by bed size
<b>1 bedroom</b>	847	879	1066	550	835
<b>2 bedroom</b>	1278	564	1109	–	983
<b>3+ bedrooms</b>	506	780	1314	2413	1253
<b>Average by band</b>	891	788	1105	816	1023

**This table shows that on average it takes nearly 3 years to be rehoused.**

## 5. Homelessness in Waverley

### Rough Sleeping

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
0	3	0	2	4	1

The Council is required by the Government to carry out a rough sleeping estimate each autumn. It does this with the help of our statutory and voluntary partners such as the Police, Citizens Advice Waverley, Faith groups, Probation and the Council's park rangers. It is very important to stress that the low numbers of estimated rough sleeping in Waverley does not tell the whole story. Rough sleepers tend to gravitate to areas where there is night-shelter provision. Given the fact that Guildford and Woking night-shelters / homeless hostels, it is reasonable to conclude that a number of rough sleepers with a connection to Waverley sleep rough in the Guildford and Woking area and would be included in their rough sleeping counts/estimates. Anecdotal evidence from statutory and voluntary partners in Guildford and Woking bears this out.

### Homelessness applications and acceptances 2005-2017

	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17
<b>Apps</b>	72	35	12	13	12	11	17	24	18	28	23	10
<b>Accs</b>	32	22	3	1	2	2	0	2	1	0	2	1

### Homeless households in temporary accommodation as at 31 March 2004 - 2017

04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
107	80	53	28	17	5	7	2	2	1	4	5	1	1

### Homeless households in temporary accommodation in Surrey as at 31 March 2010 - 2017

	31 Mar 10	31 Mar 11	31 Mar 12	31 Mar 13	31 Mar 14	31 Mar 15	31 Mar 16	31 Mar 17
EBC	18	22	23	41	33	38	46	43
EEBC	16	32	37	65	139	156	156	155
GBC	7	9	27	25	27	34	46	61
MVDC	12	18	18	28	37	39	39	48
RBBC	16	24	65	99	101	136	142	130
RBC	23	23	68	41	70	62	68	101
SBC	2	7	24	47	95	113	117	103
SHBC	47	50	48	59	67	44	48	49
TDC	16	16	15	17	16	25	42	27
<b>Wav</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
WBC	23	28	30	38	35	55	83	112
<b>Total</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>788</b>	<b>830</b>

### Homeless households placed in B&B by Waverley 2010 - 2017

10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17
9	16	16	28 (7 flood decants)	29	23	12

**879**

Average number of households contacting housing  
options regarding homelessness

**574**

Average number of successful homeless preventions each year

**101**

Number of Out of Hours homelessness emergency calls dealt with by Officers over the last 5 years

**78**

Number of Sanctuary Schemes providing extra home security for victims of domestic abuse in the last 5 years

**373**

Number of households we have helped secure private rented accommodation in the last 5 years

The reduction in number of homeless applications and households in temporary accommodation is a reflection of the success of the adoption of a homeless prevention approach adopted and the Council and its partners.

### **Comment on Homelessness Statistics**

In previous strategies, homelessness application decision statistics provided to the Government by the Council each quarter were analysed to determine trends and to help inform priorities for the strategy. However with the Council's success in preventing homelessness, the value of such statistics is considerably diminished – last year the Council dealt with 10 homelessness applications compared with 72 in 2005-6. Whilst the Council does record and report some

statistical information in regard to its homeless preventions, this only relates to the outcome of the prevention (see below) rather than details on household type and reason for homelessness in the first place.

With the introduction of Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the new data collection and reporting duties that accompany it, much more robust data will be available from April 2018 onwards. To enable the Council to collect and record the data, a new database has been purchased.

Anecdotally the predominant causes of homelessness in Waverley reflect the National picture outlined above, namely: the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy, being asked to leave accommodation by family of friends and relationship breakdown.

### Homelessness Prevention activities

The main activity by the Housing Options team that prevent or relieve homelessness in Waverley is helping customers secure alternative accommodation as shown by the table below:

	Total preventions	Help to secure private rented through deposit scheme	Help to secure private rented without help from deposit scheme	Help to secure supported accommodation	Help to secure social housing through the Housing Register	Total
<b>2013-14</b>	222	94 (42%)	28 (12.5%)	28 (12.5%)	11 (5%)	161 ( <b>72%</b> )
<b>2014-15</b>	241	101 (42%)	35 (14.5%)	35 (14.5%)	30 (12%)	201( <b>83%</b> )
<b>2015-16</b>	220	62 (28%)	36 (16%)	32 (14.5%)	43 (19.5%)	173 ( <b>78%</b> )
<b>2016-17</b>	232	52 (22.5%)	49 (21%)	29 (12.5%)	32 (14%)	162 ( <b>70%</b> )
<b>2017-18 (Jan)</b>	184	64 (35%)	27 (15%)	30 (16%)	29 (16%)	150 ( <b>82%</b> )
<b>Average</b>	220	373 ( <b>34%</b> )	175 ( <b>16%</b> )	154 ( <b>14%</b> )	145 ( <b>13%</b> )	169 ( <b>77%</b> )

### Analysis

The table shows that the majority of the Housing Options team homeless prevention work (77%) is on securing alternative accommodation. Given the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is likely to bring increased numbers of customers, particularly single people, there is a clear need to increase accommodation options for those threatened with homelessness across all tenure types – particularly private rented, supported and social housing.

Whilst the Housing Options Team will always try to help customers retain existing suitable accommodation, if customers approach at crisis point, then the chances of providing support and mediation to retain existing accommodation is much more limited and challenging. This explains the high percentage of preventions as a result of securing alternative accommodation. One of the significant changes in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 is to extend the period when a customer is regarded as threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days. The intention is



to provide a wider window of opportunity to enable local authorities to help customers to retain their current accommodation and avoid the upheaval and expense of moving elsewhere. However, whatever time period is set, if customers do not seek help soon enough then the opportunities to retain accommodation will continue to be much reduced. Notwithstanding this, given the main cause of homelessness nationally and in Waverley is the loss of private rented tenancies, there are strong reasons for targeting more resources at support services so the chances of retaining existing accommodation through negotiation, mediation and tenancy support, are maximised. Even when a homeless prevention is to secure alternative private rented accommodation, given the welfare benefit reform impacts, it is in the Council's and the customer's interests for tenancy support to be available to ensure that new tenancies are maintained and do not result in repeat, cyclical homelessness.

For many customers social housing is likely to be the most realistic long term housing solution, particularly for those with complex backgrounds and social and welfare needs. It is therefore imperative that when customers are assisted into private rented accommodation they do not incur avoidable, unmanageable debts that could exclude them from being eligible to go on the Council's Housing Register. Having tenancy support to help them successfully set up and maintain the tenancy and to help them navigate complex welfare benefit changes, can help set them on the right track to obtain future housing, employment and improved health and wellbeing.

Homeless prevention extends much wider than the work of the Council's Housing Options Team. The Council's Rent Officers and Welfare Benefit Officer, as well as Rent Officers working for housing associations, work hard to ensure that social housing tenants are able to successfully retain their tenancies by meeting their rental liabilities. Organisations such as Citizens Advice Waverley and Three Counties Money Advice provide debt and other advice to help customers in all housing tenures sustain their accommodation and avoid homelessness. The Council also administers a Government grant called Discretionary Housing Payments that gives short term financial relief for eligible benefit claimants to help them retain existing accommodation for a short period whilst alternative, more affordable accommodation options are explored. The grant can also be used to help homeless customers with deposit or rent in advance payments to secure alternative accommodation. Specialist outreach support to rough sleepers provided by the York Road Project helps identify the best pathways to help break the cycle of homelessness by engaging homeless people with the most appropriate support and accommodation options.

## **6. Legislation, national policy and related Waverley / Surrey strategies**

**Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

**Housing Act 1996 Parts VI & VII (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, Housing & Regeneration Act 2008 and Localism Act 2011)**

**Draft Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities – October 2017**

**Welfare Reform Act 2012**

**Children Act 1989, Children and Social Work Act 2017**

**The Housing & Planning Act 2016**

**Making Every Contact Count – a joint approach to preventing Homelessness 2012 - DCLG**

**No Second Night Out Nationwide 2011 – DCLG**

**MHCLG Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel – Commitment to halve Rough Sleeping by 2022 and eradicate it by 2027**

**Equality Act 2010**

**Human Rights Act 1998**

**Waverley Corporate Plan 2016-2019**

**Waverley's Tenancy Strategy 2012**

**Waverley's Local Plan**

**Waverley's Wellbeing Strategy 2016 – 2021, Waverley Economic Strategy 2018**

**Waverley's Aging Well Strategy 2015 – 2018, Waverley's Housing Strategy 2018**

**Waverley's Allocation Scheme 2013**

**Adult Social Care Directorate Strategy 2016-17**

**Market Position Statement 2018 – Accommodation with care and support for people with mental health and/or substance misuse needs**

**Surrey Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2017**

## 7. Case Studies

Whilst the statistics and facts and figures help give an idea of trends and demand on services it is vital not to lose sight of the human element and of the interventions that need to be made before homelessness can be prevented or crisis situations stabilised. The following case studies give a flavour of the work carried out by the Housing Options Service to prevent homelessness:

### Case Study 1

X was living in a property in Waverley with an abusive partner and their two young children. The Housing Options team supported X in reporting domestic abuse incidents to the Police and encouraged her to accept support from the South West Surrey Domestic Abuse Outreach Service. As the tenancy of the property was in joint names the Options team guided X through the process of gaining the tenancy in her own right. The abusive partner eventually left the home and was later imprisoned for various offences. X was able to stabilise her life and that of her children temporarily. However, X entered into another relationship and moved away from Waverley with her children and the new partner. Unfortunately the new partner was also abusive. X had another child and contacted Housing Options to seek advice about returning to the Waverley. X returned with her children following a difficult period of legal action. Housing Options helped X secure a private rented property close to her network of support with financial help with a deposit, rent in advance and set up costs. X's abusive ex-partner also returned to Waverley shortly afterwards so X continued to feel unsafe in her home. Housing Options arranged for a security assessment with Surrey Police and then arranged for appropriate Sanctuary Scheme security measures to be fitted to the property, having first of all sought permission from the private landlord to do so. Housing Options intervention meant emergency B&B accommodation was avoided as has the disruption of X having to move to a refuge in another area.

X settled her children into local schools and applied to go on the Council's Housing Register. X is now bidding for properties each week and it is hoped she will be successful in securing social housing soon.

### Case Study 2

Y approached Housing Options having been advised to do so by Children's Services. Y was a teenage mother whose young daughter was deemed to be at risk from her father, Y's partner. Children's Services insisted that Y remove herself from the accommodation that she shared with the partner or risk Child Protection proceedings. Y had nowhere else to go but to return to her family home, which was already severely overcrowded. Housing Options arranged a meeting with Y and offered assistance into private rented accommodation. Y and Housing Options were unable to find any suitable private rented accommodation and it was apparent that her young age, the fact that she was reliant on benefits with no guarantor and had a young daughter was counting against her. Y's father told her she had to leave the home as the overcrowding was causing tensions in the home. Housing Options were aware of a vacancy becoming available in a housing association short term housing scheme in the Borough and nominated Y. Whilst waiting for the outcome of the

nomination, Housing Options successfully negotiated with Y's father for Y to remain in the family home. Y moved in very soon after this and has settled very well into the accommodation, avoiding the disruption and expense of emergency Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

### **Case Study 3**

A senior Community Psychiatric Nurse requested a Housing Options appointment for her client Z. Z had been known to and engaging with Mental health Services and Children's Services Disability Team for three years. She had experienced long term domestic abuse from the father of her two sons, one of which has a serious medical and cognitive condition. Both sons had also witnessed and experienced abuse. Z was in privately rented accommodation but had reached breaking point with the demands of sustaining the household, the emotional needs of her children and the ongoing practical issues of managing her finances. As a result the tenancy was in jeopardy. The Housing Options Officers were able to re-build the bridges with Lettings Agency to avoid possession action and help Z claim Discretionary Housing Payments and disability benefits for her son. Additionally, with the current housing stabilised, Housing Options were able to advocate for Z to have a higher banding on the Council's Housing Register. Z was able to successful bid on a social housing property suitable for her and her two sons.

### **Case Study 4**

A is a single male who has enduring psychotic mental illness. He has been living in a privately rented flat in Waverley for 8 years and his condition has been relatively stable and managed by his GP. A attends various voluntary support groups. A's GP identified stress as a relapse trigger in regard to his mental health.

Following changes in Housing Benefit rules, A could no longer afford his rent and received notice from his landlord. He was struggling to comprehend the situation and approached Housing Options for advice. He had also become confused when dealing with the benefit agency and had not been able to comply with the Employment Support Allowance requirements leading to his claim being cancelled. This left him living solely on his Disability Living Allowance award. A presented as stressed and agitated about the situation and did not always demonstrate full understanding of what he needs to do. Recognising the impact the current situation is having on his mental health A has been signposted to his GP to be referred back to the Community Mental Health Recovery Service (CMHRS).

At the same time A was assisted in applying for a short term discretionary top-up to his Housing Benefit to give him some time to make a long term plan. It was found that A had previously applied for social housing but had not kept up with the renewal paperwork and so his application had been cancelled. Housing Options have assisted A to appeal this decision successfully and he is now able to bid on suitable properties as they become available. Having shown that he can cope living in the community and managing his home and his mental illness with a minimum of support, it is hoped that A's housing situation will be resolved by bidding successfully for cheaper and more secure social housing in the future.

### **Case Study 5**

B has approached Housing Options for assistance twice. In April 2016 she was pregnant and living with her parents. The father of her unborn child was sadly killed in an accident. Her parent's home was overcrowded already and they could not accommodate her upon the arrival of her baby. Unable to work as the baby was imminent and with no savings or family who could help fund housing, B faced homelessness.

B was assisted financially with an interest free loan (repayable at an affordable rate) to secure a privately rented property through the rent deposit scheme. A year into her tenancy the landlord decided he required the property back for a family member. He issued a Section 21 notice (no grounds required) and B came back to the Housing Options service as she was again facing homelessness, this time with an infant child in her household.

B had maintained repayments toward her previous loan and was in receipt of Housing Benefit when she received the Section 21 notice. She was assisted to find another privately rented property and this time was eligible for a Discretionary Housing Payment (non repayable grant) to help in part with the start up costs of the tenancy. The new deposit was funded by the rent deposit scheme as another interest free loan. B has also applied to the Council's Housing Register and she and her daughter are bidding for social housing through the Council Homechoice Scheme.

### **Case Study 6**

C&D have five children ranging in age from thirteen to four. D has a CPN as she struggles with bi-polar disorder and she spent much of her childhood as a Looked After Child. The five children are an open case to Children's Services due to concerns about neglect when D's mental health deteriorates as well as poor attendance at school.

The family were living in a privately rented four bedroom house in Waverley which had been sourced and funded independently. C's father acted as guarantor for the tenancy. The couple fell out with his father who then withdrew from the guarantor role leading to the letting agent issuing a Section 21 notice.

Housing Options worked to find another privately rented property of a suitable size in Waverley. However, nothing presented itself within the family's timescale. They were advised of their right to remain beyond the end of the notice in their current tenancy, however they decided not to. They came to the Council on the last day to present as homeless having surrendered their house keys to the letting agent. Emergency bed and breakfast accommodation was arranged and their belongings were placed in storage. The family made a formal homeless application and the Council accepted a duty to accommodate them. They were placed in temporary accommodation in Waverley until a private rented property of suitable size and affordable price became available. After two months living in temporary accommodation a three bedroom, two reception privately rented property was sourced in a neighbouring Borough. This was the closest property that could be found of an adequate size.

The family moved to the property in the neighbouring Borough were unhappy about the location and exercised their statutory right to appeal against the suitability of the offer of accommodation. Following assessment of the review/appeal by the Reviewing Officer the suitability of the offer was upheld. The family then declared they would do all they could to sabotage the tenancy and six months later they received a Section 21 Notice as they have not paid any of their contribution towards the rent. As a result, unless they can be persuaded to abide by their tenancy obligations, it is highly likely that they will face homelessness again and this time the Council may not have a duty to assist them.

### **Case Study 7**

E came to Housing Options whilst living in a privately rented property in Waverley with her partner and their two children. The children were open to Children's Services due to concerns about E being a victim of domestic abuse from her partner and her misusing alcohol. E was working part time. The couple were given a Section 21 Notice by their landlord and meanwhile the domestic abuse continued. The abuse was so serious that E's case was discussed at the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). During all of this E was being supported by Catalyst for her alcohol issues, the Domestic Abuse Outreach Service and Children's Services, as well as Housing Options.

With Housing Options financial assistance and the ongoing support from multiple agencies, E and her children were able to leave her abusive partner and were sourced a privately rented tenancy of her own in a safe location. Being away from her abuser E was able to address her alcohol misuse issues and she has successfully maintained her tenancy. Her children are no longer open to Children's Services. E has maintained her employment throughout her ordeal.

These cases give flavour of the work carried out by Waverley's Housing Options Team to prevent homelessness. It can be the case that despite officers' and partner agencies' best efforts, interventions fail due to chaotic behaviour, mental health difficulties, drug/alcohol or an unwillingness from customers to co-operate. Sometimes it takes a number of interventions from Housing Options Officers and other agencies before customers fully engage and co-operate with the help that is on offer.

## 8. The Council's Housing Options Service

### **Background**

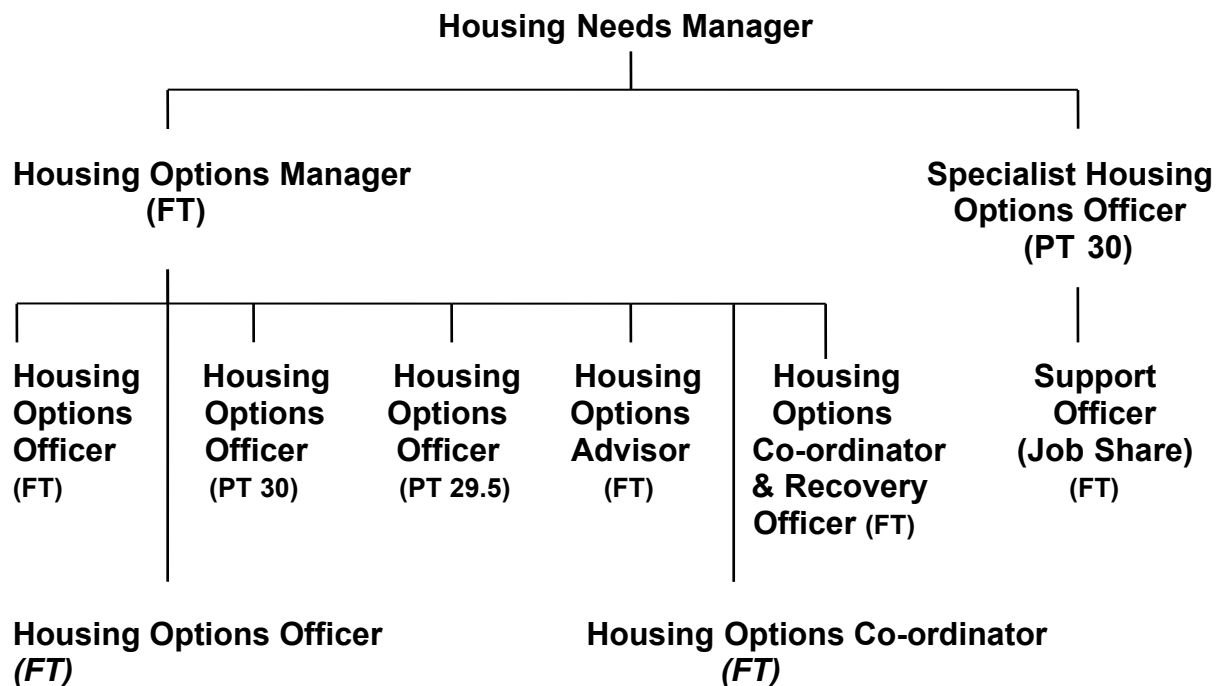
Waverley's Housing Options Service is divided into 3 main sections:

Housing Options Team that deal with homelessness, housing advice and housing support and the management of the majority of the Council's Housing Register.

Homechoice Team that are responsible the letting of Council and housing associations properties and managing the Council's Housing Register for applicants already living in social housing.

The Don't Lose Your Home or Business Service that gives advice to those who are under less immediate threat of homelessness or those who are struggling with business costs.

The management of the Housing Register by the Housing Options Team is a recent change following a service review in 2017 and has enabled additional staff resources to be based within the team. The team structure is as follows:



For the purposes of the review, the work of the Housing Options Team and the Don't Lose your Home or Business Service will be examined in more detail.

### **Housing Options Team**

The service provided by the Housing Options Team has continued to adapt and evolve to deliver an effective homeless prevention service.

Among the measures used to help prevent homelessness are the following:

- Initial triage
- Housing Options interviews
- Online Housing Options software
- Waverley Homechoice and Homeselecta
- Home visits
- Negotiation with families, third parties or landlords
- Mediation
- Provision of deposit bonds, cash deposits and rent in advance
- Spend to Save Payments
- Sanctuary scheme to enable people experiencing domestic abuse to remain at home
- Referral to supported accommodation providers for people with specific special needs
- Referral to Night-shelters and Hostels
- Rough Sleepers and a Local Alternative to 'No Second Night Out'
- Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

These measures are discussed in turn below:

#### **a) Initial triage**

Customers enquiries can be received by phone, by email or letter or in person. With the HRA 2017 coming into force in April 2018 Officers are already trialling a triage process to determine whether the customer approach will trigger the new 56 day prevention and relief duties. Basic details regarding the customer's household, address and reason for threatened homelessness are recorded and if the prevention or relief duties are triggered customers are booked in for a Housing Options interview.

#### **b) Housing Options Interviews**

During the Options interview, a Housing Options Officer will note down all relevant information and identify any consequential or connected issues on a Housing Advice Interview Form. The Officer then provides the customer with bespoke housing advice, intended to identify appropriate and realistic solutions from which the customer may choose.

All customers are provided with a copy of the Housing Options Interview sheet prior to leaving the offices. The Interview sheet will note the customer's circumstances and list any identified actions points for the customer to take unilaterally or with the support of the Housing Options Officer. The Housing Options Officer also provides the Council with the customer's consent to contact third parties, and to hold the information in accordance with the principles of data protection.

With the introduction of the HRA 2017 from April 2018, the Options interview process will be more formalised and Officers will gather and record additional information electronically. The interview sheet will be replaced by the Personal



Housing Plan (PHP) detailing what the Council will do to assist the customer and what the customer is expected to do.

The Council values the feedback it receives from customers regarding Housing Options interviews. Accordingly, all customers are asked to complete a self-completion questionnaire after their interview. Completion of the questionnaire is voluntary. Feedback from customers is recorded and analysed and used to shape future service provision.

### **b) Online housing options software**

In order to provide more comprehensive, accurate housing options advice to a wider range and number of customers during and outside of working hours, the Council has implemented housing options software known as a 'wizard'. The wizard is accessed from the Council's website and customers can use it to obtain an action plan relevant to their situation. The wizard has been well received by customers and partners, and has successfully improved the accessibility of good quality housing options advice.

### **c) Waverley Homechoice and Homeselecta**

The Council introduced its Choice Based Lettings scheme called Waverley Homechoice on 29 March 2007. In addition a sub-regional scheme was also introduced called Homeselecta whereby Waverley applicants have the opportunity of expressing an interest or 'bidding' for social housing vacancies in the neighbouring Boroughs/Districts of Guildford, Rushmoor and Hart. However, the value of the sub-regional scheme has proved very limited for Waverley clients. Accordingly, the sub-regional partnership have agreed that we will only open up advertised properties for sub-regional applicants if properties are particularly hard to let.

The Allocation Scheme continues to complement the Council's housing options approach. It does this by not reducing the priority of housing register applicants who move from shared accommodation with friends or relatives into self-contained private rented accommodation. Under the old points based system there was, by default, a perverse incentive for applicants not to look to improve their housing situation through fear of reducing their priority on the Housing Register. This is no longer the case and helps the Council's Housing Options Officers encourage households threatened with homelessness to see that private rented accommodation is a viable housing option. Waverley's Allocation Scheme introduced on 1 January 2013 and updated since then with minor legislative and operational changes, maintains this approach.

However, given the mismatch between the scarce supply and huge demand for social housing, Waverley Homechoice is rarely a solution to imminent and acute housing need. Nevertheless, as part of the Housing Options interview process and when helping customers into private rented accommodation, Housing Options Officers (Advice) will issue customers with Housing Register forms, check customers are aware of their banding and priority date, and provide an approximate verbal assessment of customers' chances of submitting a successful bid.

Housing Options Officers will, as part of casework, remind customers to bid for suitable properties or where absolutely necessary, submit bids on behalf of customers.

#### **d) Home visits**

These will be routinely carried out when customers approach the Council as homeless, but are most relevant when dealing with family evictions. They are also relevant in establishing the condition of properties in order to establish suitability and reasonableness. Visits can be an opportunity to negotiate with families and dispel myths or preconceptions about homelessness and the Council's duties.

#### **e) Negotiation with families/third parties/landlords**

In terms of resources it is more effective to prevent a customer from losing accommodation than to invest time and resources in securing alternative accommodation. It is acknowledged that it may not always be possible to make successful interventions that secure existing accommodation. However, in all cases, Officers will consider and then act to establish if current accommodation may be retained before proceeding to other measures.

#### **f) Mediation**

Many cases of potential homelessness arise from disagreements between families and friends who are no longer willing to provide accommodation for others. Minor problems in the home can escalate into more major issues resulting in homelessness.

Mediation helps people to identify their differences and to find a solution which is acceptable to all parties. It also enables people to remain secure in their homes until alternative accommodation can be planned.

Mediation can be particularly appropriate to a range of situations including:

- Young people who have disagreements/disputes with parents or friends
- People who are going through a non-violent relationship breakdown
- People involved in neighbour disputes

Where it is considered that homelessness can be prevented through mediation, and all parties concerned are willing to undergo such mediation, there will be instances when Council officers will provide mediation. However, for many situations referral to independent mediators is a more appropriate option. Waverley Borough Council will, so far as resources allow, continue to fund a mediation provider to facilitate external mediation.

### **g) Deposit Bond Scheme**

Whilst the Council owns its own housing stock and works closely with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in providing social housing in the borough, as noted earlier in this review, demand for social housing far outstrips supply.

The Council's rent deposit bond scheme therefore provides an invaluable alternative for those who are unlikely to be able to secure social housing in Waverley.

The scheme objectives are to:

- Prevent and reduce homelessness in the borough by enabling access to private rented accommodation
- Give customers greater choice in where they can be housed
- Maintain Waverley's excellent work in keeping numbers of homeless households having to be placed in temporary accommodation to a minimum.

Where Officers are satisfied that a customer requires assistance under the scheme customers will be supported into private rented accommodation in their area of choice backed by a deposit bond or cash deposit and possibly rent in advance. Deposits will normally only be issued in the Waverley area or within a 5 mile radius.

In all cases the Council will under take a financial assessment of the applicant to verify that s/he cannot afford to provide their own deposit and to establish that the proposed private rent is financially sustainable.

All applicants are required to enter into agreement with the Council to repay any cash deposit or rent in advance by instalment or to pay back any money paid out as a result of a claim against a deposit bond. Any default against the agreed arrangement will be dealt with in line with corporate procedures.

There is no limit placed on the number of applications to the scheme that can be made by an applicant. However, if previous deposit/rent in advance is outstanding, assistance will not be granted.

On recent challenge is that the Council is increasingly having to help customers with larger rent in advance payments in order to help encourage a landlord to take a customer who may be reliant on welfare benefits.

### **h) Spend to Save Payments**

Sometimes it is more cost effective to maintain a customer's tenancy by making a one-off payment (to clear rent arrears for example) rather than to pay larger amounts of money and invest staff time to secure an alternative home. Officers have flexibility to do this following a very thorough assessment of a case including an analysis of how the arrears occurred and that the necessary income/benefits are in place to sustain the tenancy going forward.

### **i) Housing Support**

Within the Housing Options Team we have a housing support team that provides additional support and assistance for clients with complex needs or poor coping skills. Such clients may be victims of domestic abuse, those suffering from mental health or learning difficulties or those with drug or alcohol dependencies or a combination of such circumstances. The support team is led by the Specialist Housing Options Officer with expertise in providing support and guidance to clients with such vulnerabilities. Given the increased emphasis under the HRA 2017 in regard to preventing homelessness and where possible keeping people in existing suitable accommodation, we anticipate that we will need to increase resources in the area of housing support. Currently the team consists of 1.8 full time equivalent posts.

### **j) Domestic Abuse & Sanctuary Scheme**

Local Authorities play a vital role in tackling domestic abuse through their community safety role and through funding and co-ordinating services with other partner organisations. Partners include the South West Surrey Domestic Abuse Outreach Service provided by SAHA (Salvation Army Housing Association), Surrey County Council, Surrey Women's Aid, Community Harm and Risk Management Meetings (CHarMM), Surrey Police (who co-ordinate the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences - MARAC), Social Services and Registered Social Landlords.

There are many reasons why Local Authorities need to tackle domestic abuse. Local government has statutory responsibilities to work in partnership with other agencies to reduce crime and disorder. Domestic abuse accounts for a significant amount of all recorded crime and disorder but it also impacts on areas such as housing, homelessness and Children Services.

In March 2006 the Council launched a pilot Sanctuary Scheme using £6,000 of funding supplied by the Safer Waverley Partnership. The scheme has continued using the Council's homelessness budget and is co-ordinated by the Council's Specialist Housing Options Officer, in liaison with the local Crime Reduction Officer from the Police and the Council's Repairs and Maintenance Section

Sanctuary Scheme measures involve providing additional security measures to a home to enable victims to remain in their home where this is appropriate and desired. This helps avoid the prospect of being forced to move to a women's refuge in another area, thus cutting off family and other support networks, disrupting education and employment.

The scheme is voluntary and subject to finite resources but available to men and women residing in the borough in any form of tenure.

The security measures could include:

- Change of/improvement of door and window locks
- Strengthening doors
- Provision of spy holes
- Secure room within the home
- Panic alarm

-Mobile phone

Waverley's Specialist Housing Options Officer (who previously managed Waverley Domestic Abuse Outreach Service), plays a key role in liaising with the South West Surrey Domestic Abuse Outreach service so that clients with a housing difficulty can be assisted in the most appropriate way. She also represents Waverley at the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences co-ordinated by Surrey police where the most serious domestic abuse cases are discussed by key statutory agencies and support plans are made to ensure the level of risk to victims and their children are minimised.

### **k) Referral to supported accommodation providers**

The Council works with partner organisations to provide supported housing placements to customers with special needs. The Council can only access a limited amount of accommodation, which is configured in different ways and located in different areas. The Council will only refer customers to supported housing if they have a Waverley connection, are in identified housing need, and are prepared to engage with the support services offered.

Placement is dependent upon the customer attending an interview with a supported housing provider and meeting the scheme criteria. Successful applicants may be accommodated in supported housing for up to two years; after which it is expected that they will have the skills to move to general needs accommodation in the social or private sector. Details of supported accommodation in and around Waverley can be found in the accommodation section.

### **k) Referral to night-shelters and hostels**

Officers refer homeless clients to night-shelters and hostels to access emergency bed-spaces. However, there is generally a shortage of bed-spaces because Councils where the hostels are located and who funded the projects initially, will have priority for their nominations. Details of night-shelters and hostels near Waverley are outlined in the accommodation section.

### **l) Rough Sleepers and a local alternative to 'No Second Night Out'**

No Second Night Out (NSNO) was launched on 1 April 2011 as a pilot project aimed at ensuring those who find themselves sleeping rough in central London for the first time need not spend a second night on the streets. Since then successive governments have been keen for all Local Authorities to adopt NSNO or a local alternative. The principles of NSNO are that:

- no one new to the streets should spend a second night out,
- no one should live on the streets,
- no one should return to the streets when they have been helped off and ultimately
- no one should arrive on the streets.

These principles are ambitious. However, the Council has made very good progress in improving its work with rough sleepers in recent years. The Council has registered with Streetlink, a nationwide rough sleeping database through which

members of the public can alert the Council to local rough sleepers by telephone or online. Upon receipt of information regarding a rough-sleeper, the Housing Options Team or the York Road Project Outreach Team can assess their circumstances, connection to the borough and housing options.

Under current homelessness legislation rough sleepers without a Waverley connection will be assisted with travel to an area where they have a connection. Officers will help the rough sleeper to reconnect with the area by contacting family or community members and the receiving Local Authority.

Rough sleepers with a Waverley connection will be signposted to appropriate support services to meet their needs. They will also be signposted to night shelters, and referred to hostels where it is identified that the rough sleepers has unmet support needs and would benefit from hostel accommodation. Officers will prioritise rough sleeper hostel referrals, although success of referrals depends upon vacancies being available and the rough sleeper attending an assessment. Help will be available with travel costs to hostel assessments should this be needed.

The Council will also explore the appropriateness of assistance into private rented accommodation. Where a client with historic offending or drug-alcohol problems will benefit from a fresh start in a new area, the Council is able to refer to a specialist organisation called Vision Housing that can source private rented accommodation and support in the London area.

Under the HRA 2017, rough sleepers will be assessed on the same basis as any other customer to determine the Council's prevention and relief duties.

#### **m) Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP)**

The Government requires all Councils to make accommodation available to all homeless households, irrespective of priority need under statutory homelessness duties, when the weather is forecast to be 0 or below for 3 consecutive nights. Through partnership working with Guildford and Woking Councils and homeless hostels in Guildford and Woking, extra hostel bed spaces or emergency bed and breakfast placement are offered to rough sleepers.

#### **Don't Lose Your Home or Business Service**

Waverley's Don't Lose your Home or Business service has been operational since October 2008. It was set up by the Council to assist residents and businesses struggling with their finances due to the economic downturn. The aim of the service is to keep families and individuals in their homes through negotiation and interaction with banks, lenders, landlords, lettings agents etc and sign posting customers organisations that can help with debt and benefit advice. The service complements and works alongside other services such as Citizens Advice Waverley and the Council's Housing Options Service. However in recent years referrals to the service have dropped.

### New referrals to Don't Lose Your Home or Business Service

08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18
206	227	145	91	84	59	67	31	32	26 (April-Jan)

Given the reduction in referrals to the service the Council will be reviewing the service and as part of the review will explore how the post holder / service can best contribute to priorities being identified in its forthcoming Financial Inclusion Strategy.

## 9. Accommodation

Among the contributory factors for homelessness is a lack of affordable housing for those living in Waverley. Waverley is one of the most sought after and therefore expensive places to live in the UK. This means house prices and private rent levels are often beyond the reach of many people. As a result people have to live with relatives and friends far longer than either party would wish and this in turn can create tensions in households that leads to homelessness. The development of a range of affordable and supported housing and making best use of existing housing can therefore play a key role in reducing homelessness and providing accommodation for those who are under threat of homelessness.

### Council temporary accommodation

Hostel	Type of accommodation
The Cottage, Bramley	- 3 units <b>Sold</b>
Marshalls, Farnham	- 11 units <b>Re-developed</b>
Priory Orchard, Godalming	- 2 units <b>Re-developed</b>
Woolmer Hill Lodge, Haslemere	- 4 units <b>Sold</b>
Highways, Hindhead	- 5 units <b>Sold</b>
Chapel Court, Milford	- 6 units - of which: 4 units have shared facilities, 1 self contained unit leased as a homeless prevention unit to Ethical lettings 1 self contained unit converted to a shared unit and leased to York Road Project, Woking, as move on accommodation for 2 clients
Ladymead, Womersley	- 5 units <b>Re-developed</b>
<b>Previous total</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Remaining units for use as temporary accommodation</b>	<b>6 (two leased to other providers)</b>

The Council's excellent performance in preventing homelessness has led to a dramatic reduction in the use of and need for temporary accommodation as shown by the above table. However, the HRA 2017 means that the Council is likely to need a range of accommodation options, including temporary accommodation. The Council has to strike a sensitive balance between having sufficient temporary accommodation to fulfil its statutory homelessness responsibilities and not having a large number of units standing empty. It is a question of achieving a balance between need and supply and being able to respond to emergencies in a timely fashion. Given the Council is a stockholding authority it always has flexibility in using its permanent stock on a temporary basis, if needed. It is not felt necessary at this stage to commission additional Council owned temporary accommodation units. However, such an approach will be kept under review during the course of the Homelessness Strategy as the impacts of the HRA 2017 are assessed.



## Supported Accommodation

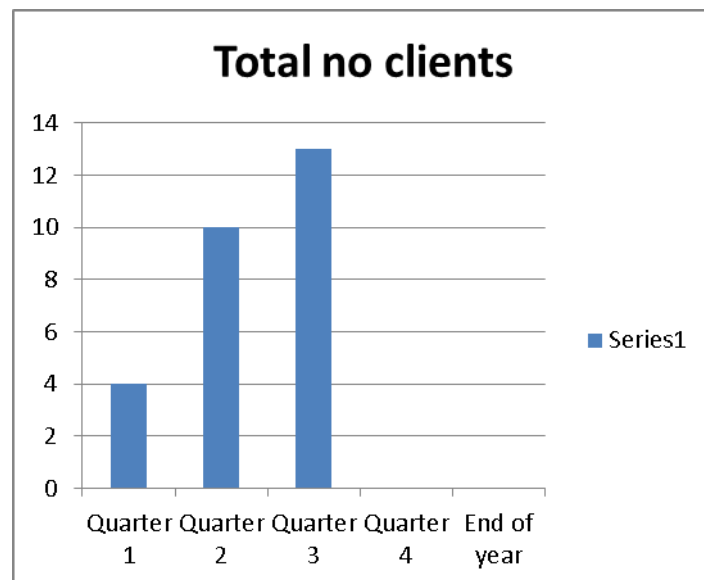
Waverley has a range of supported housing schemes in its area but does not have the ability to nominate to all the vacancies in the schemes. It is also very reliant of supported housing schemes outside of Waverley, particularly for single homeless clients.

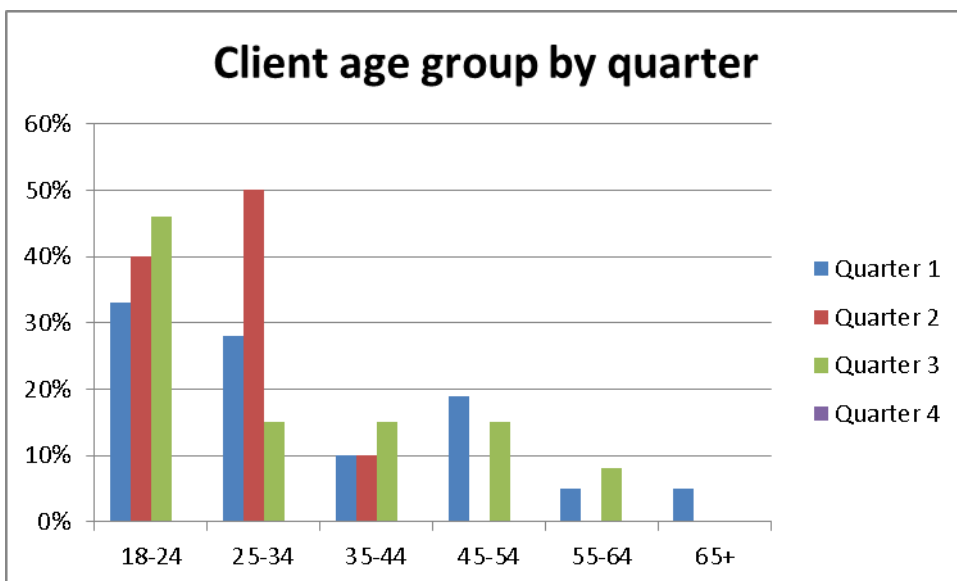
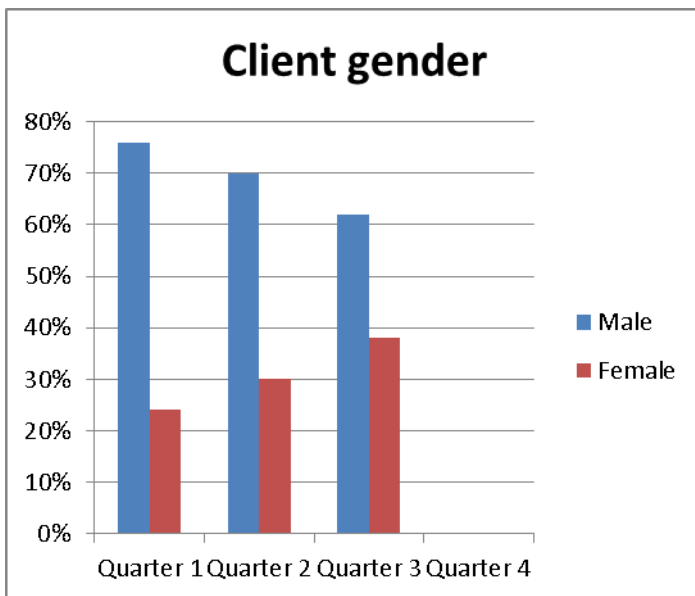
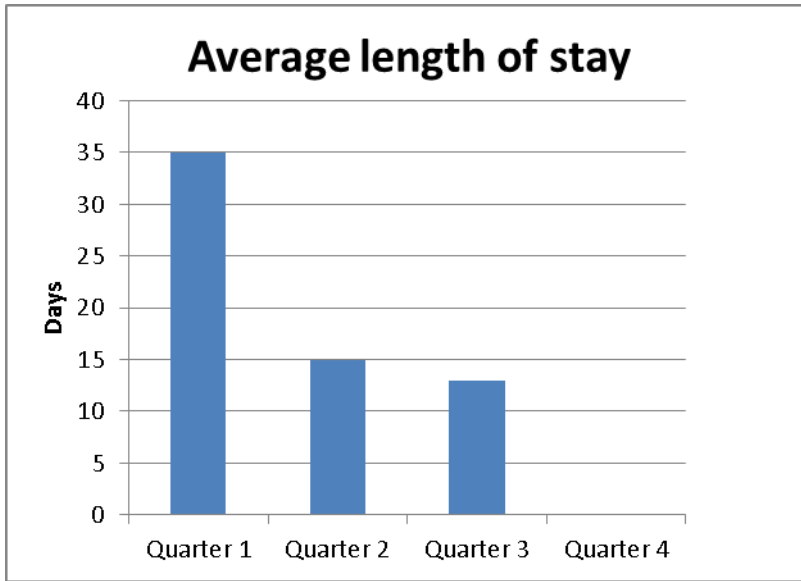
### York Road Project, Woking

Significant progress has been made during the course of the current Homelessness Strategy in improving housing options for single homeless clients. Much of this progress has been achieved by working in partnership with the York Road Project, Woking, (YRP). Along with other West Surrey Borough Councils, Waverley was successful in bidding for DCLG funding for an outreach support service for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping. The service was provided by YRP who specialise in accommodating and supporting rough sleepers. Due to the value of the service for Waverley clients, the Council decided to continue to part fund the outreach service with Woking Borough Council, when the DCLG funding ended.

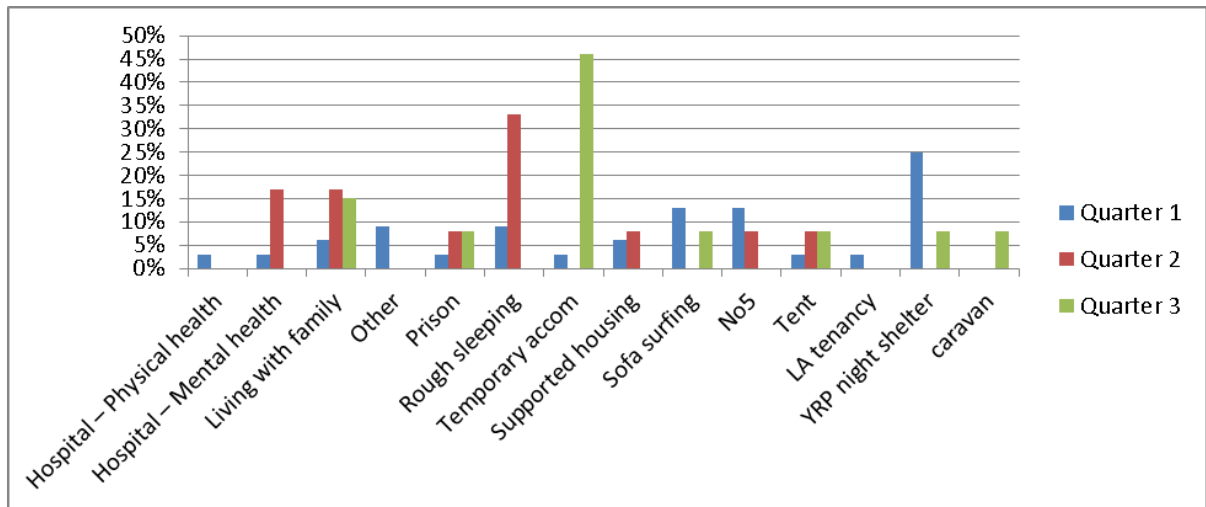
In addition, the Council has purchased bed spaces in the specialist hostel managed by YRP in Woking so customers could be offered short term emergency accommodation and then received support to find longer term accommodation options. To provide through put from the higher support hostel in Woking the Council leases a move on property in Milford to YRP, for Waverley clients.

Some statistical information regarding Waverley placements at YRP during between April 2017 and 31 Dec 2017 is outlined below:

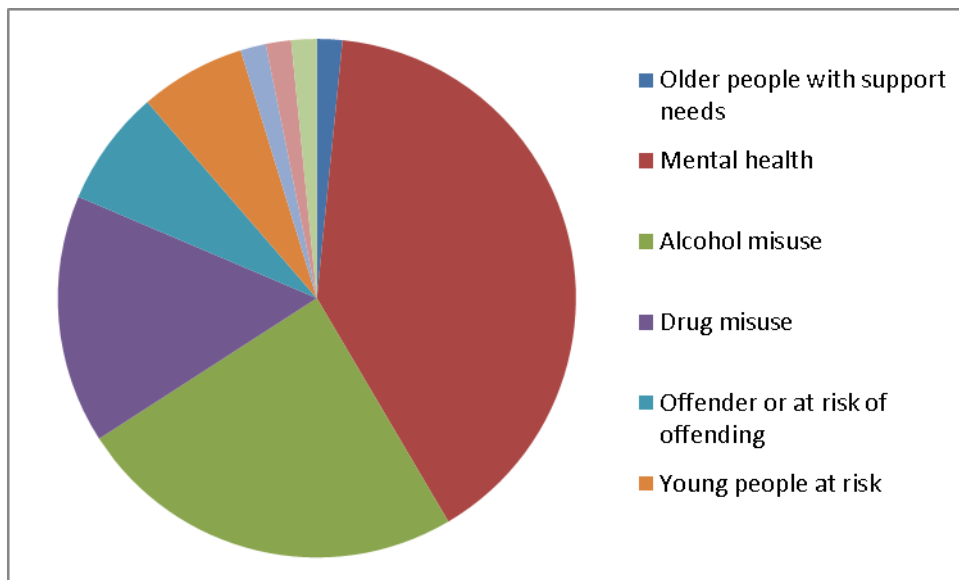




### Accommodation prior to Shelter



### Primary Support Need



Analysis:

The above tables highlight the following:

- Male clients account for a higher percentage than females, but the number of females accessing the night-shelter increased over the 3 quarters.
- Young people account for between 70-85 % of clients accessing the night-shelter. This indicates that accessing secure affordable housing is increasingly out of reach for people under the age of 35 years.
- Mental health is reported as the greatest support need amongst rough sleepers, closely followed by alcohol misuse and drug misuse, indicating acute demand for these services from a client group that struggles to access the most basic medical services.

## **Private rented accommodation**

Key to Waverley's partnership approach in tackling homelessness has been the way the Council has forged links with private sector landlords and lettings agents. This has enabled the Council, through its deposit bond scheme, to place households threatened with homeless into suitable private rented accommodation. The Council will continue to work with private landlords and given it is very much a 'landlords' market' it will need to be adaptable in how it can further incentivise private landlords to look favourably on potential tenants referred by the Council. In recent months, just to help households secure private rented properties, the Options Team have had to use larger up front payments / loans to ensure landlords accept referred households. To help maintain accessibility to the private sector the Council will need to keep its current service to private landlords, that already includes free check in and check out inventories for Council referrals, under review. Having the flexibility to offer one off 'golden hello' payments to landlords letting to a Council referral or covering the costs of offering insurance backed guarantees for rent arrears can all help, depending on the developing market conditions. Welfare reform changes have already led to London boroughs placing households outside of London into Surrey and Waverley itself, so the Council continues to look at how it can gain a competitive edge to maintain accommodation options. The Council has not had the need to keep under create a specific private sector officer role within the housing Options Team but can always keep this under review. One reason for not needing a specific role has been the Council's partnership with Ethical Lettings.

## **Ethical Lettings**

For a number of years now Waverley has worked in partnership with a social lettings company called Ethical Lettings. Ethical Lettings is a not for profit organisation that specialises in sourcing and managing private rented properties for local authorities. This partnership has enabled Waverley to have access to more private rented properties both within and outside Waverley than it otherwise would be able to, as the landlords receive guaranteed rent payments and a management service from Ethical Lettings. The properties are let to Waverley clients at or close to the Local Housing Allowance rates. The partnership has added value in that if a landlord of a property wishes to end a tenancy Ethical lettings can search its portfolio for alternative accommodation thus minimising chances of a new housing options approach to the Council. Ethical lettings also have a small furniture store to help clients furnish properties.

One strategy that has proved effective in attracting additional landlords to the scheme is a radio advertising campaign jointly funded by the Council and Ethical Lettings. As a result of the advertising campaign, property procurement during 2017 increased by 300% from 23 properties in 2016 to 75 in 2017.

With the need for more shared accommodation a partnership between Waverley and Woking Councils and Ethical Lettings has also secured shared houses for single homeless applicants.

The following table provides further details:

	<b>Q1 (1 July – 30 Sept 17)</b>	<b>Q2 (1 Oct – 31 Dec 17)</b>
No properties secured	1 (1)	2 (2)
No rooms secured	4 (3)	9 (7)
No tenancies created	4	8
No void rooms at end of quarter	0	1
Reasons for tenancy ending	N/A	ASB and rent arrears

The figures in brackets show procurement target. Targets have been met or exceeded demonstrating that the pilot is on track and evidencing value for money.

## **Homeless prevention units**

Despite the success of using the private sector to help households threatened with homelessness, it does not provide a suitable solution in all cases. Some clients have a chequered history in regard to managing their finances and successfully maintaining private rented or other previous accommodation. As a result they are a harder client group to 'sell' to a prospective private landlord. In addition sourcing private rented accommodation in an area where the client already has support, work or educational networks is not always possible within the timescale of their impending homelessness. Aware of such difficulties some housing association schemes that have been developed in Waverley have a certain number of units set aside to help households under threat of homelessness. This innovative approach has provided a crucial source of accommodation to help prevent homelessness. To date there are two such units in a housing association scheme in Godalming and nine in Farnham. Provision of these units has helped the Council maintain the low number of households in its own temporary accommodation, despite the challenging economic climate. However, what has been less successful is the clients successfully maintaining these tenancies so they can move on and provide a steady flow of future vacancies. The Council is continuing to liaise with its housing association partners to improve in this area.

## **Affordable housing**

### **Developing new affordable housing**

Development of new good quality affordable housing in Waverley is always welcome and helps compensate for the loss of social units through the Right to Buy. One welcome development during the course of the current Strategy is that under the new financial arrangements for funding its landlord service, the Council has been

able to invest its rental income in the development of new Council homes. Since 2015 the Council has developed 50 new Council homes and in the next year it is anticipated that 24 Council homes will be completed, along with 48 Housing Association properties.

### **Maximising affordable housing stock**

One of Waverley's challenges is to make the best of its existing stock. It is already using of its improved financial position to invest in long overdue improvements to its homes so they meet and exceed the decent homes standard. The other challenge is to maximise the stock by reducing under-occupation. The Council's Allocation Scheme has for a long time prioritised the housing applications of those who wish to downsize and the Council provides incentive payments to those who wish to do so. The Welfare Reform measures introduced in April 2013 mean that any housing benefit dependent social housing tenants under pensionable age under occupying their homes will not be entitled to full benefit payments. To avoid getting into arrears and potentially facing eviction this measure will also encourage under occupiers to downsize and therefore release family sized homes.

Changes under Universal Credit rules will mean that more households will be affected by the under-occupation charge. Currently if a one member of a couple is of pensionable age and the other is not then they are not affected by the bedroom tax, whereas this will change so the age is taken from the younger member of a couple.

One action highlighted during this review is for their to be greater joined up working between the Rents, Housing Benefit and Homechoice teams in regard to social housing under-occupation, so affected households are helped as swiftly as possible to downsize

### **Flexible tenancies**

Under previous housing law all tenancies of Council properties had to either be temporary licences for those the Council has a homelessness duty to (temporary accommodation) or secure tenancies (permanent accommodation) allocated through the housing register. Whilst secure tenancies have the benefit of providing a 'home for life' and the security that brings, the negative impact is that often over time family sized homes are under occupied. Whilst the Council can encourage people to downsize it has no power to require them to do so. In order to address this issue the Localism Act 2011 gave Councils the power to offer time limited, flexible tenancies to new housing tenants. In its Tenancy Strategy 2013 the Council decided to make use of these freedoms and to offer five year flexible tenancies to new tenants rather than secure tenancies. Whilst it is likely that the majority of these tenancies will be renewed after five years, the review process will enable the Council to require those who are under occupying properties to move to smaller homes and those who no longer need the affordable housing to make their own alternative housing arrangements. These measures do not affect secure existing tenants but will help free up some social housing to those on the Housing Register who are in most need.

## Supported Housing Providers

<b>SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION PROVIDER</b>	<b>NAME &amp; LOCATION OF ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION AVAILABLE</b>
A2 DOMINION	<b>PILGRIM COURT</b> Milford Lodge Surrey	Self contained 4 x 1 bed flats Currently 3 x 2bed flats for single parents/couples with support needs. As the 4 <sup>th</sup> 2bed is occupied by staff. Floating support hours in place of staff occupation of a 2 bed flat
Chapter One	<b>MULBERRY HOUSE</b> 32 Epsom Road Guildford	Young women aged 18-35, low/medium support needs, self catering single rooms – 70% noms to GBC 30% Surrey
MTI (Move to Independence)	<b>2 + 4 ST JAMES AVE</b> FARNHAM	Shared accommodation, own room, shared kitchen and bathroom For applicants with WBC connection and Subject to CPA
MTI	<b>AARONS HILL</b> GODALMING	Shared accommodation, own room, shared kitchen and bathroom. For applicants with WBC connection and subject to CPA
Riverside Care and Support	<b>Vaughan House</b> 5-7 Chertsey Street Guildford	Hostel accommodation with support for men and women aged 18 - 65, general flats, alcohol flats (dry) and 1 detox unit, lift in building. Priority for GBC – 70% of beds
VISION HOUSING	<b>VISION HOUSING</b>	Accommodation usually shared for single people (usually male) in Croydon or South London. Support provided if required.

<p>WOKING NIGHTSHELTER</p>	<p><b>1 YORK ROAD WOKING</b></p>	<p>Three (from 1/4/18) Night shelter bed-spaces for single male or female usually with support needs. Must have a connection to Waverley</p> <p>Those who engage may be able to access move on accommodation (priority to Woking clients) or at The Crescent.</p> <p>Small room with kitchenette and shared bathroom at <u>33a Guildford Rd, Woking</u> can be available for single people/couples for limited period if move on agreed on B&amp;B basis.</p>
<p>MAYBURY ROAD FLATS</p>	<p><b>MAYBURY ROAD WOKING</b></p>	<p>Shared accomm for single people usually with support needs, can be follow on from York Rd Project, applicants usually need connection to Woking but occasionally vacancies become available to Surrey LAs</p>
<p>TRANSFORM HOUSING &amp; SUPPORT</p>	<p><b>THE CRESCENT</b> Woking</p>	<p>About 13 bedspaces, of which Waverley can access <b>3</b> for those with medium/high support needs but who can cope over the weekend (48 hours) without support. Staffed Monday-Friday 8.30 – 19.00 and 21:00-23:00 (one member of staff only), with out of hours on call service. Offer own room (large) with ensuite shower room plus kitchen area inc fridge/freezer/sink</p>



		but no cooker. Communal kitchen
TRANSFORM HOUSING & SUPPORT	<b>SIMMONDS COURT</b> FARNHAM	13 bed spaces, split between Waverley(5) Rushmoor (4), Hart Councils (4). Self contained acc For ages 25 – 65 yrs
TRANSFORM HOUSING & SUPPORT	<b>FRIARS COURT</b> FARNHAM	Low support, self contained acc, generally used as move on, split between WBC and TRANSFORM. For ages 18-65 yrs.
TRANSFORM HOUSING & SUPPORT	<b>CHESTNUT COURT</b> FARNHAM	Low support, self contained acc, generally used as move on, split between WBC and TRANSFORM. For ages 18-65 yrs.
TRANSFORM HOUSING & SUPPORT	<b>BELMONT COURT</b> FARNHAM	Low support, self contained acc, generally used as move on, within TRANSFORM schemes - split between WBC and TRANSFORM . For ages 18-65 yrs.
TRANSFORM HOUSING & SUPPORT	<b>GUILDFORD, KNAPHILL, HORSELL, LEATHERHEAD</b>	Shared houses for clients aged 16-21 who have been in care/previously in residential accommodation/referred by Social Services/YSS and have a Surrey connection
TRANSFORM HOUSING & SUPPORT	<b>67 BUSBRIDGE LANE</b> GODALMING	6 bed spaces & 1 bed annexe bed (move on), shared accommodation for applicants from anywhere in Surrey with mental health diagnosis and ongoing support from CMHRS (no imminent discharge). On site staffing Mon-Fri 9-5 with 24 hours on call service. 18yrs and over

TRANSFORM HOUSING & SUPPORT	<b>11 RYLE ROAD FARNHAM</b>	3 bed, lower support dry/ drug free house for clients moving from Hawkins House who have lived at the house successfully and who are ready to take a further step towards independence. For ages 18 – 65 years
TRANSFORM HOUSING & SUPPORT	<b>HAWKINS HOUSE FARNHAM</b>	11 bed house, high level of support, clean/dry licence for people <b>who have successfully completed a recognised detox and rehab programme. Clients must move in directly from treatment.</b> For ages 18 – 65 years
TRANSFORM HOUSING & SUPPORT	<b>EX OFFENDER HOUSES Farnham Reigate</b>	11 bedspaces in Farnham and about 13 in Reigate. Will take from prison, St Caths AP or nightshelters etc.
TRANSFORM HOUSING & SUPPORT	<b>TYPE 1 HOUSING</b>	2 bed cottage for people who are completely abstinent from alcohol and substances but who have not necessarily been through a recognised treatment programme (e.g. prison programme is not recognised)
Guildford YMCA	<b>The Y GUILDFORD</b>	Shared accomm for single people aged 16-21 with support needs  Subject to availability and priority to those with a Guildford connection  Max occupancy of 6 months. LA must send email to the Y guaranteeing move on at 6 months and the Y expect an officer to be working with the client

		after month 3 to help find alternative accommodation to which to move. (December 2016)
ABILITY HOUSING 01252 727100	<b>CAVELL HOUSE</b> FARNHAM	SELF CONTAINED FLATS FOR CLIENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES & a long standing FARNHAM connection– referrals made mostly from Learning Disability Teams. Applicants must be in receipt of Housing Related support funding from SS for approx. 12 hours per week.
AMBER 01306 627927	<b>FARM PLACE</b> STANE STREET OCKLEY DORKING SURREY RH5 5NG	Provides a short term <b>activity</b> orientated home and support to help unemployed 17-30 yr olds who want to make a new start. No drugs/alcohol on premises. Shared accommodation bedding, toiletries, towels and all meals provided. Length of stay depends on client but most are ready to move to work/training within 6 months
CAMELIA BOTNAR FOUNDATION 01403 864556	<b>CAMELIA BOTNAR</b> Maplehurst Road Cowfold W Sussex RH13 8DQ	Provides opportunity to learn a trade & get qualifications, accommodation, wages and a 2 <sup>nd</sup> chance for 16-21 yr olds
Surrey HOST Service	<b>Volunteer Host Service</b> Addresses across Surrey including in and near Waverley	1-3 nights emergency accommodation for 18-25 year olds (including young women fleeing DA and parents with babies under age of 2)  Safe & secure shared accommodation with

		Host family – meals provided
<b>Number Five Project – Night Shelter</b>	<b>Number Five Project, 3 - 5 York Road, Guildford, Surrey.</b>	<p>16 bed shelter with 5 shared rooms for single homeless men over 18 as well as 2 female beds.</p> <p>Direct access from 6.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.</p> <p>Maximum stay - 14 nights.</p> <p>Evening meal and breakfast provided.</p> <p>Residents must be out during the day.</p> <p>£1.00 per night personal contribution. Rent is also charged.</p>

## 10. Advice & Support

Waverley benefits from having a number of advice and support providers.

The Council funds the services of Citizens Advice Waverley which has a presence in each of the 4 main settlements in Waverley (Godalming, Farnham, Cranleigh and Haslemere). Citizens advice help prevent homelessness by ensuring that clients receive their benefit entitlements, maximise their income, prioritise their debts and negotiate realistic repayment arrangements with landlords and creditors. Similar help and support is also provided by Three Counties Money Advice.

The Citizens Advice Bureau network also provide help in preventing homelessness through their work at the Court desk at Guildford and Aldershot Courts. Whilst Waverley thankfully has some of the lowest repossession rates in the UK regarding mortgaged properties, the Court desk service provides independent advice to the full range of possession actions such as those facing eviction from social housing, private rented housing as well as from mortgaged properties.

Key to preventing homelessness is the provision of services to help vulnerable clients manage their tenancies and financial affairs and provide support in times of crisis. Unfortunately funding cuts to floating support services by Surrey County Council will mean that the Riverside Floating Support Service, funded by Surrey Supporting People that helps clients develop independent living skills and sustain their tenancy, will cease from April 2018. However, as noted above, the Council does still benefit from having 1.8 FTE support officer service based within the Housing Options Team and a Welfare Benefit Officer based in the Rents team is able to provide help and advice for Council tenants.

The South West Surrey Domestic Abuse Outreach Service, managed by Chapter One Housing Association, that supports victims of domestic abuse.

i-access provide a support service to those with substance misuse issues.

Support for young families can be accessed through Guildford Action for Families who provide support to families in Guildford and Waverley. Support can include help with advocacy, parenting skills, relationship breakdown, debt, isolation etc. Higher need cases can also receive support from Waverley's Family Support Team.

Help and assistance to those in housing difficulties, such as disrepair or disabled adaptations, is provided by the Council's Private Sector Housing Team and for those with relationship/neighbour issues by Mediation First. Help for those reliant on benefits needing essential furniture/white goods is available from Furniture Helpline and for those needing food from the Farnham Foodbank.

## 11. Consultation

### a) Customer Consultation

#### Customer satisfaction surveys for the Housing Options Team

Following every housing options interview clients are given a customer survey to complete to provide feedback regarding the service they have received. Analysis of the surveys reveals the following:

64% of customers were very satisfied with the service – marking the overall service 5 out of 5

26% were more than satisfied – marking the overall service 4 out of 5

10 % were satisfied – marking the overall service 3 out of 5.

Given the fact that the Housing Options Team often has the difficult task of helping customers with unrealistic expectations as to what the Council can do to help prevent homelessness, these are very encouraging and positive results.

Some of the additional comments from the customers about the Housing Options Service were as follows:

*Very helpful and treated respectfully. Covered all areas which really helped us see the best way forward*

*Very friendly, good advice, a lot of which I was unaware of*

*Very good information given which I did not know about*

*Very helpful and very friendly advice service, It is very re-assuring to know that after paying tax for years I now get the help and support during this difficult phase of my life – I am very grateful to all the staff*

*Very satisfied with advice and understanding from advisor today*

*Has been really helpful and been very understanding and patient with me and took time to read everything to me. Very helpful*

*Extremely helpful in explaining all options*

*Very helpful! Thank you*

*Very helpful, answered every question that I had*

*Empathetic, Thank you*

*Excellent person, pleasant manner, good advice*

## **Consultation with customers about priorities for the Strategy**

Since August 2017 we have been asking housing options customers whether the Council should focus its priorities on the following:

- Increase supply of affordable housing
- Increased shared accommodation options for under 35s
- To work in partnership with other agencies to help clients with complex needs avoid or exit homelessness
- Help customers deal with financial difficulties as a result of a reduction in their welfare benefits

In response there was overwhelming support from these priorities and when asked about what else should the Council and its partners do to prevent homelessness customers responding to the question said the following:

*Move on accommodation for younger people in bad situations*

*Build more social housing*

*Increase building of social housing*

*Nothing, you are doing great*

*You could build more single Council properties*

*More affordable homes and more help with deposit*

### **b) Consultation Statutory and Voluntary Partners**

#### **Homelessness Strategy Consultation Conference 17 October 2017**

Waverley's Housing Options team hosted a Homelessness Strategy consultation event that was attended by a number of partners including:

Other housing colleagues (Rents, Family Support, Strategy and Enabling, Private Sector Housing, Corporate Policy, Service Improvement)

Supported Housing Providers

Adult Social Care

Domestic Abuse Outreach Service

Representatives from other Surrey Borough and District Councils

Citizens Advice Waverley Borough Council

Health

SSAFA

Probation

At the conference Housing Options staff gave presentations about the National and Local context of homelessness, recent successes, homeless prevention case

studies, the main features of the HRA 2017 and the changes and challenges it will bring. There were also discussion groups to share best practice, gaps in provision and identify how partners could work in a more co-ordinated way. Attendees found the event very valuable and were in agreement with the five suggested priorities for Waverley's Homelessness Strategy for 2018-23: The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Prevention/Early Help, Accommodation, Support and Partnership work.

### **Other Liaison with Partners**

The Housing Options Team members have given presentations about the housing options and homeless prevention at Waverley's Faith Forum, SSAFA Surrey and Children's Centres and GP surgeries. In addition there are regular liaison meetings with Ethical Lettings, the Single Housing Panel, Citizens Advice Waverley and housing association and supported housing providers.

### **Outcomes from Consultation**

Whilst there was much to be positive about following the consultation, including the positive customer survey results and Waverley's success in preventing homelessness through effective partnership working, a number of issues were highlighted:

1. Concern in regard to the national rise in homelessness and within Surrey and the budget and service challenges faced by statutory and voluntary services.
2. The need for more social housing and supported housing
3. The need for accommodation for under 35 year-olds
4. Concern as to the impact of the HRA 2017 and the continued roll out of welfare reform changes.
5. Concern in regard to the impact of the continued roll out of Welfare Benefit changes such as the benefit cap, universal credit and the freezing of Local Housing Allowance rates
6. The difficulties in accessing suitable supported accommodation for those with higher support needs but who don't meet the eligibility criteria for statutory help from Adult Social Care or the CMRHS.
7. The value of the Housing Options Services working in closer co-operation with Children's Services – particularly around the Early Help Local Family partnership meetings in Waverley.
8. The value of working collaboratively and in partnership and having an annual partnership event to discuss homelessness in Waverley, in addition to the regular liaison meetings.

The following chapter highlights in greater detail some of the Risks, Challenges and Opportunities highlighted following the consultation and review process.



## 12. Challenges, Risks and Opportunities

Following the consultation and review of services, the following challenges, risks and opportunities have been identified:

- a) The fact that homelessness numbers for all household groups nationally and in Surrey are on an upward trend and the challenge this represents.
- b) The challenge of helping customers and supporting and training staff through the significant changes being introduced by the HRA 2017 and the continued role out of welfare reform measures.
- c) The challenge of recruiting and retaining staff following implementation of the HRA 2017 in order to manage the likely increased work load and expectations from customers.
- d) The risk of increased numbers of homeless households being placed in private rented accommodation in Waverley by neighbouring boroughs and by London Boroughs. We are already aware of households being placed in Waverley by a London Borough and given the extra pressures on London Boroughs will face under the new legislation, the competition to secure affordable private rented properties will increase. It is a sobering thought that a Surrey Borough on the outskirts of London had very similar low numbers in temporary accommodation to Waverley in 2011. Now this Council has numbers above 100. This will partly be the result of London Boroughs widening their search to secure private rented properties in neighbouring Surrey Boroughs. This makes it much more difficult for the Surrey Boroughs and Districts to secure accommodation and drives up prices and costs of trying to incentivise private landlords to continue to let to welfare benefit dependent tenants.
- e) The risk that if Waverley is not able to successfully adapt its service to fulfil the new duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, particularly towards single households, temporary accommodation numbers and associated costs will rise. One Surrey Borough spent in excess of £1 million pounds on emergency temporary accommodation costs alone in 2015-16.
- f) The reduction in Housing Related Support funding across Surrey for floating support and supported accommodation service for vulnerable single clients. Such services will have reduced capacity placing increased pressures on Borough and Districts to source and fund alternative accommodation and support.
- g) The Government is proposing a very radical change in how short term supported housing schemes are funded from 2020. There are risks that if these proposals do not properly reflect concerns raised by local authorities and supported housing providers, existing schemes may not continue and there will be little appetite for the development of new provision.
- h) The opportunity for Surrey Borough and Districts to directly purchase bed spaces in the supported housing schemes negatively affected by the cuts in Housing Related Support funding by Surrey.

- i) The opportunities the Council has in developing new affordable housing and building on its success in this area to date.
- j) The opportunities to work collaboratively and innovatively with other Councils and statutory and voluntary partners as we all seek sustainable solutions to meet the increased demand on homelessness services.
- k) Whilst temporary funding streams have been introduced to help Council's transition to meet the new HRA 2017 duties, these are only guaranteed for 2-3 years. Councils with high temporary accommodation numbers and expenditure may be able to re-invest any savings from any increased homelessness prevention resulting from the legislation. However, given Waverley already has very low numbers and expenditure in regard on emergency accommodation costs, the Council's ability to fund on going staffing and accommodation costs will be much more challenging if time limited Central Government funding streams are not renewed.
- l) The opportunity to review how Discretionary Housing Payments are targeted so that the budget is maximised to reduce the need for significant homelessness budget increases on the General Fund.

Following feedback from Waverley's Homelessness Strategy Consultation event in October 2017, consultation with customers and partners and the Review of homeless services in Waverley, five priorities have been identified to form the basis of Waverley's Homelessness Strategy Action Plan:

- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Prevention / Early Help
- Accommodation
- Support
- Partnership Working

### **1. Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA 2017)**

The HRA 2017 will have a significant impact on how the Council and its partners respond to those under threat of homelessness. The Action Plan outlines a range of measures including training for staff and statutory/voluntary partners, updating IT, procedures and processes and reviewing staffing.

### **2. Homeless Prevention**

Successful homelessness prevention has been the cornerstone of the Waverley's housing options approach and it will need to remain so with the added duties under the HRA 2017. The Action Plan therefore recommends maintaining and building on previous successes in this area. This includes developing our partnership approach in tackling homelessness and continuing to use budgets flexibly on a 'spend to save' basis to prevent homelessness where it is in the Council's and the applicant's interests to do so. It also involves maximising resources such as Discretionary Housing Payments and continuing to invest in schemes such as the Sanctuary scheme for victims of domestic

abuse and the peer education programme for school aged children delivered by Step by Step.

### **3. Accommodation**

Among the contributory factors for homelessness is a lack of affordable housing in Waverley. As noted above, Waverley is one of the most sought after and expensive places to live in the UK, which means that house prices and private rent levels are often beyond the reach of many people, particularly those reliant on welfare benefits. Waverley has an excellent track record in pioneering new initiatives to maximise access to private rented accommodation on behalf its customers. The Action Plan therefore recommends that such a proactive approach is continued, particularly in obtaining shared accommodation for younger clients. In addition, the Council will continue to work with its partners to maximise the availability of existing social and supported housing and also work to develop or commission/enable additional units of such accommodation.

### **4. Support**

One of the key ways to prevent homelessness is to ensure that households receive the necessary support to enable them to maintain their tenancy. This can range from help with filling in forms to claim benefits or setting up utility bills to negotiation and advocacy to engage with landlords and social care and health professionals. Support to help customers retain existing accommodation avoids additional expense for households and the Council in finding and securing alternative accommodation and it also prevents disruption to social, education and employment networks. However, even if retaining existing accommodation is not possible, it is crucial that any alternative private rented accommodation starts on the right footing, particularly as the loss of private rented accommodation is the main cause of homelessness locally and nationally. Good housing support is key to this particularly given the complexities and vulnerabilities of many homeless customers. The Action Plan recommends additional resource in this area, particularly in the context of a 50% Surrey wide cut in funding in floating support services from April 2018. Support can take many forms such as expertise and guidance on welfare benefits and debt to outreach support to rough sleepers and families.

### **5. Partnership Work**

In the context of a very challenging financial climate for statutory and voluntary services, it has become even more important to look creatively at how the Council and its partners can maximise diminishing resources by working together. Waverley's success in maintaining its excellent homeless prevention performance over the previous 5 years has been based on building on existing partnership work and developing new partnerships. The Council's partnership with Ethical Lettings, letting agents and private landlords has been key to providing as wide a possible access to affordable private sector properties. Developing a partnership with the York Road Project in Woking has also been key in improving its assistance to single people and rough sleepers.

The Council continues to fund Citizens Advice Waverley in its work in providing independent advocacy and advice on the full range of issues facing Waverley residents such as welfare benefits, debts, housing, relationship breakdown, employments issues etc. The Council's Family Support Team is established and has expanded its work to include assistance with the Government's Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme.

The Strategy Action Plan recommends building on these and other partnerships such as working with Social Services, Education and Health through involvement in Local Family Partnership meetings and holding an annual homelessness forum/conference with key partners/stakeholders.