



Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda

Wyre Borough Council
Date of Publication: 11 October 2019
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Scrutiny Officer
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**Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on Monday, 21 October 2019
at 6.00 pm in committee room 2 Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde**

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of interest

To receive any declarations of interest from any councillor or officer on any item on this agenda.

3. Confirmation of minutes

(Pages 1 - 6)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9 and 23 September 2019 respectively.

4. MyHomeChoice - review task group recommendations

(Pages 7 - 18)

The Private Sector Housing and Housing Options Manager, David McArthur, has submitted a report about the implementation of the recommendations of the MyHomeChoice Task Group, which reported to the Cabinet on 5 September 2018.

5. Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy - consultation

(Pages 19 - 46)

The Private Sector Housing and Housing Options Manager, David McArthur, has submitted a report. He will introduce the consultation about the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and invite questions and comments from members of the committee.

6. O&S Work Programme 2019/20 - update report

(Pages 47 - 54)

The Service Director Performance and Innovation, Marianne Hesketh, has submitted a report, updating councillors about the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Monday, 9 September 2019 in Committee Room 2, Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee members present:

Councillors Ibison, I Amos, R Amos, C Birch, E Ellison, Fail, Longton and O'Neill

Apologies for absence:

Councillors Matthew Vincent, Ballard, Collinson, Cropper, Leech and Minto

Other councillors present:

None

Officers present:

Ruth Hunter, Street Scene Manager
Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer
Emma Keany, Governance Trainee

No members of the public or press attended the meeting.

18 Declarations of interest

None.

19 Confirmation of minutes

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 22 July 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

20 District Environmental Enforcement Pilot

Ruth Hunter, Street Scene Manager, presented a report regarding the District Environmental Enforcement Pilot scheme.

She gave reasons as to why the scheme had been introduced, the impact the scheme had made on the Borough's streets and the desire for the committee to look into the next steps.

She gave insight into how the services had been monitored internally, the

back systems used by District Environmental Enforcement and how the Council had used social media to keep up momentum and to get the word out that Wyre had taken steps to keep the streets clean.

The committee discussed various points, which included littering by young people, purposeful and accidental littering, the financial benefits for both District Environmental Enforcement and the Council, and the transparency of the fine process.

Members discussed the possible scope of a Task Group regarding the contract with District Environmental Enforcement. It was highlighted that there may be a need for more information to be made available so that the Task Group could scrutinise all aspects of the contract, to ensure the Council delivered the best service for its residents.

It was agreed that the committee would commission a task group to review the District Environmental Enforcement pilot scheme and to provide recommendations for how the council should continue with environmental enforcement.

21 Business Plan 2019/20 - Quarterly performance statement

The Service Director Performance and Innovation submitted a report, the 1st Quarter Performance Statement 2019/20, April - June 2019.

Concern was expressed about the following worsening measures, to which particular attention would be paid on receipt of the Quarterly Performance Statement for Quarter 2 of 2019/2020 in December:

- Town Centre vacancy rates – Fleetwood
- Out of work benefit claimant count

Comment was made that the Council should be seeking to increase the employment rates of Wyre residents employed in Wyre.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

22 O&S Work Programme 2019/20 - update report

Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer, introduced a report that had been submitted by the Service Director Performance and Innovation.

An update was given to the committee on the current Task Groups and the progress they had made. Members were made aware of the planned meetings for the Poulton- Fleetwood Link Task Group and of the Residents Parking Permits Task Group, which was scheduled to start on the 16th September 2019.

It was highlighted that at the October meeting of the committee, a report would be submitted by David Thow, Head of Planning, regarding small businesses and Wyre's high streets. There was the possibility for this to lead

to a new task group, on Wyre's high streets to be commissioned in the New Year.

The Chairman, Councillor Ibison, reiterated the importance of attendance at the additional meeting, of the committee, on the 23rd September. The meeting was intended to be an opportunity for the committee to consider the implication for Wyre of the recently published Statutory Guidance on Scrutiny.

The meeting started at 18:00 and finished at 18:46.

Date of Publication: 13 September 2019

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Monday, 23 September 2019 in the Members' Lounge, Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee members present:

Councillors Ibison, I Amos, R Amos, Collinson, Cropper, E Ellison, Fail, Longton, Minto and O'Neill

Apologies for absence:

Councillors Matthew Vincent, Ballard and Leech

Officers present:

Peter Foulsham, Scrutiny Officer
Emma Keany, Governance Trainee

No members of the public or press attended the meeting.

23 Declarations of interest

None.

24 Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities

Dr Stephanie Snape facilitated a discussion about the Statutory Guidance for Scrutiny and the way that it could impact upon the work of the committee.

Dr Snape was an Associate Director of the Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) at the University of Birmingham who had worked for nine years at Warwick Business School at the University of Warwick. She had undertaken extensive work on local government overview & scrutiny since its inception and had worked on supporting the overview & scrutiny arrangements of over a hundred local councils in the past 20 years.

The committee refreshed their understanding of the key principles of scrutiny, as defined by the Centre for Public Scrutiny and underlined by the Statutory Guidance, considered the roles of the function and the tools and techniques for effective scrutiny.

A number of themes for future consideration were identified and agreed, including:

- Being aware of the place of scrutiny within the wider governance arrangements
- The importance of other groups of councillors and officers having an understanding of the purpose of scrutiny, not just the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Trying to anticipate any future policy or service developments within the council and seeking ways in which scrutiny might add value
- Being aware of a wide range of sources for potential Work Programme topics
- Understanding how to prioritise topics for a Work Programme, applying agreed criteria

The Chairman thanked Dr Snape for facilitating an inspirational and very positive discussion about the Statutory Scrutiny Guidance, which would be of benefit to committee and the wider council.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 8.34 pm.

Date of Publication: 24 September 2019

Extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 5 September 2018

15 MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast task group - final report

The Chairman of the MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast task group and Service Director Performance and Innovation submitted a report setting out the comments of the task group regarding the proposed changes to the allocation and letting of social housing in Wyre via MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast.

Decision taken

Cabinet thanked Councillor Ballard and the members of the task group and agreed that

- the proposed changes to the arrangements for the allocation and letting of social housing in Wyre via MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast be supported
- the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a report from the Service Director Health and Wellbeing on the implementation of the revised allocation and letting arrangements once they have been in place for twelve months (September 2019).

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Report of:	Meeting	Date
David McArthur (Housing Services Manager)	Overview and Scrutiny	21 st October 2019

Update on My Home Choice Fylde Coast

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To provide an update to the committee on the progress to date of the new My Home Choice system for letting social housing.

2. Background

2.1 MyHomeChoice is the Choice Based lettings (CBL) system across the Fylde Coast authorities of Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre. It provides a portal where all vacancies for social housing are advertised in one place and households can place bids for this accommodation. Properties are then allocated using a Consistent Assessment Policy for prioritising the housing need of applicants.

2.2 A review was undertaken of MyHomeChoice in 2016/17 which focussed on addressing issues of concern with the current Consistent Assessment Policy (CAP) raised by Registered Providers. These included addressing issues with delays in processing applications due to all applicants having to go through a full registration process, applicants losing a local connection if they move between boroughs and the system adopting a more flexible commercial approach to attract more households who would not necessarily have thought they would be eligible for social housing.

2.3 The principle changes were as follows:

1. Revised local connection requirement giving applicants access to the register if they can demonstrate a three year residency within Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre. However priority will still be given to Blackpool residents for Blackpool homes, Fylde residents for Fylde homes, and Wyre residents for Wyre homes.
2. At least 50% of homes, including those in the shortest supply, are available to people with a Banding priority for re-housing, Bands A-

C. The rest of the homes will be available to everyone on the list and offered on a first come first served basis (but still giving priority to Blackpool residents for Blackpool homes, Fylde residents for Fylde homes, and Wyre residents for Wyre homes).

3. Simplification of the priority bands for people with a legally defined housing need. There are now three bands A, B and C. There will be no bands given to households who do not have a housing need defined in law, but they will be able to bid for accommodation on a first come first served basis (subject to Borough priority). The criteria for each of the bands is set out in Appendix 1.
4. Restrictions on the use of the system by existing social housing tenants looking to transfer. Transfer applicants will only be able to access the housing register, if they have a banding priority for re-housing.
5. Priority given to people in paid or voluntary work by slightly increasing the chances for access to social housing for working applicants. 20% of homes made available on a first come first served basis will be offered with priority to people in paid or voluntary work.
6. Flexibility in the sizes of properties that applicants can bid for by allowing households where the rent is affordable to be able to get a home with an extra bedroom.

2.4 The proposed changes were discussed by a task group on 25th July 2018 and subsequently approved by Cabinet on the 5th September 2018 and it was recommended a further update on the progress of the Consistent Assessment Policy of MHC within Wyre be provided to this Committee within 12 months.

3. Key issues

3.1 In January 2019 My Home Choice brought about changes to the way that Housing Association properties were allocated. Reducing the banding categories from A-F to A-C and including a “No Band/ No Need” category for the households who were not homeless or at threat of homelessness. See Fact sheet that explains who will be given a banding, by accessing the following link [MyHomeChoice Quick Guide](#), also available in Appendix 2 of this report.

3.2 All available properties are now being split down the middle into two categories, My Home Need for households allocated a priority banding for rehousing and My Home Choice for the “No Band” Households. Households allocated a banding on My Home Need still have access to the full housing register from both the Need and No Need category. The following report will highlight how these changes have had an effect on the housing register since January 2019.

3.3 Table 1 details the number of households with a local connection to Wyre who are active on the Housing register and able to bid. This shows a slight increase in applicants throughout 2018 with the number of applicants registered in 2019 decreasing slightly due to a data cleanse of the system to remove applicants who had been inactive for a significant time. The number of transfer applicants has fallen and this will be as a result of households already housed in social housing being unable to transfer, unless they have a housing need to do so and awarded a priority banding. Registered Providers report that since the implementation of the changes in January 2019 there have been no significant delays in the processing and accessing of applications to join the Housing Register.

Table 1: Analysis of MHC for residents with a local connection to Wyre

Application Status	No. applicants on 30 th June 2018	No applicants on 31 st December 2018	No. applicants on 30 th June 2019
All active applicants	1903	2026	2007
Of which are transfer applicants	412 (21.7%)	413 (20.4%)	241 (12%)

3.4 Table 2 gives the breakdown for households with an active application who have been awarded a banding priority. The 2018 data is shown by banding as per the previous allocation scheme; the 2019 data shows the allocated bandings as per the new allocation scheme. The numbers shown in red highlight those bands with a defined housing need under that allocation scheme.

3.5 The changes were intended to speed up the registration process and allow households on both the “No Need” stream (MyHomeChoice) and “Need” stream (MyHomeNeed) to have a higher chance of securing accommodation. The data in Table 2 shows that households with a priority banding now take 511 of the total active applicants (25.5%), a reduction of 8.5% from 2018.

3.6 This will be explained by the reduction in priority bandings from A to C and households choosing not to complete a full application and being able to access the “no need” accommodation quickly despite not being awarded a priority banding.

Table 2: Breakdown of banding awarded to active households

	No. active applicants on 30 th June 2018	No. active applicants on 31 st December 2018	No. active applicants on 30 th June 2019
A	9	8	7
B	273	301	180

C	10	9	324
D	359	371	N/A
E	317	328	N/A
F	933	1007	N/A
No Band	2	2	1496
Number in Housing Need	651 (34.2%)	689 (34%)	511 (25.5%)
Total	1903	2026	2007

3.7 The data from 30th June 2019 shows highlights that there is a far greater number of applicants in Band C than the previous year. This is due to Bands C and D combining and Band D being removed. Band E and Band F have also been removed resulting in an increase in the number of applicants without a priority band.

3.8 Table 3 analyses the number of active applicants that are employed or undertaking voluntary work on the register during 2018 and on 30th June 2019. Under the new allocations scheme applicants who are not in housing need and are working, employed or voluntary, now become part of the “No Band/No Need” group and cannot bid for accommodation through the “Need” stream.

3.9 Whilst the percentage of working applicants remained consistent prior to the new system, there has been an increase from 24.1% to 29.6% since the system changes in January 2019. One of the reasons for updating the system was to encourage more working households to register on the system and to give them more chance of successfully bidding for properties through the introduction of the “no need” stream.

Table 3: Active applicants that are employed

	No. applicants on 30th June 2018	No applicants on 31st December 2018	No. applicants on 30th June 2019
Total no. active applicants	1903	2026	2007
No. active applicants employed	458	488	594
% active applicants employed	24.1	24.1	29.6

3.10 The Fylde Coast Housing Partnership agreed that at least 50% of properties must be let through the “Need” stream and no more than 50% through the “No Need” stream. Unfortunately due to problems with the

reporting system we do not have data available on lettings for this report but feedback from processing partners suggests this is happening as expected with no concerns raised.

- 3.11** The partnership also set out to retain the target of two thirds of all properties being let to applicants with a defined housing need. Processing partners understand that this target is being met and will check this once lettings data becomes available.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1** The changes implemented were to address issues raised by registered providers around delays in processing applications due to all applicants having to go through a full registration process, applicants losing a local connection if they move between boroughs and the system adopting a more flexible commercial approach to attract more households in employment or voluntary work, who would not necessarily have thought they would be eligible for social housing.
- 4.2** An analysis undertaken on the data available to date does show that the implemented changes are addressing those initial concerns:
1. Feedback from processing partners (within Wyre this is Regenda Homes) is that there have been no significant delays in the processing and assessment of applicants eligible for priority banding for rehousing. Wyre Council and Regenda work in partnership to fast track the assessment of applications presenting to Wyre Council Housing Options and facing homelessness.
 2. From December to January 18/19 the register was inactive to new applicants while changes the system were applied. As a result housing register since December 2018 has remained fairly static with 2007 active applicants registered.
 3. The number of transfer applicants has fallen with existing housing association tenants only being able to register if they have been awarded a priority banding.
 4. The percentage of applicants in employment has increased from 24.1% to 29.6% since 31st December 2018.
 5. The changes were expected to reduce the number of households in priority banding categories, speeding up the registration process and allow households on both the “Need” and “No Need” streams to have higher chance of securing accommodation. The data in Table 2 shows that households with a priority banding now take up 25.5% of the total active applicants, a reduction of 8.5% since December 2018.

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David McArthur	01253 887434	David.mcarthur@wyre.gov.uk	9 th October 2019

List of appendices

Appendix 1 – Priority Bandings

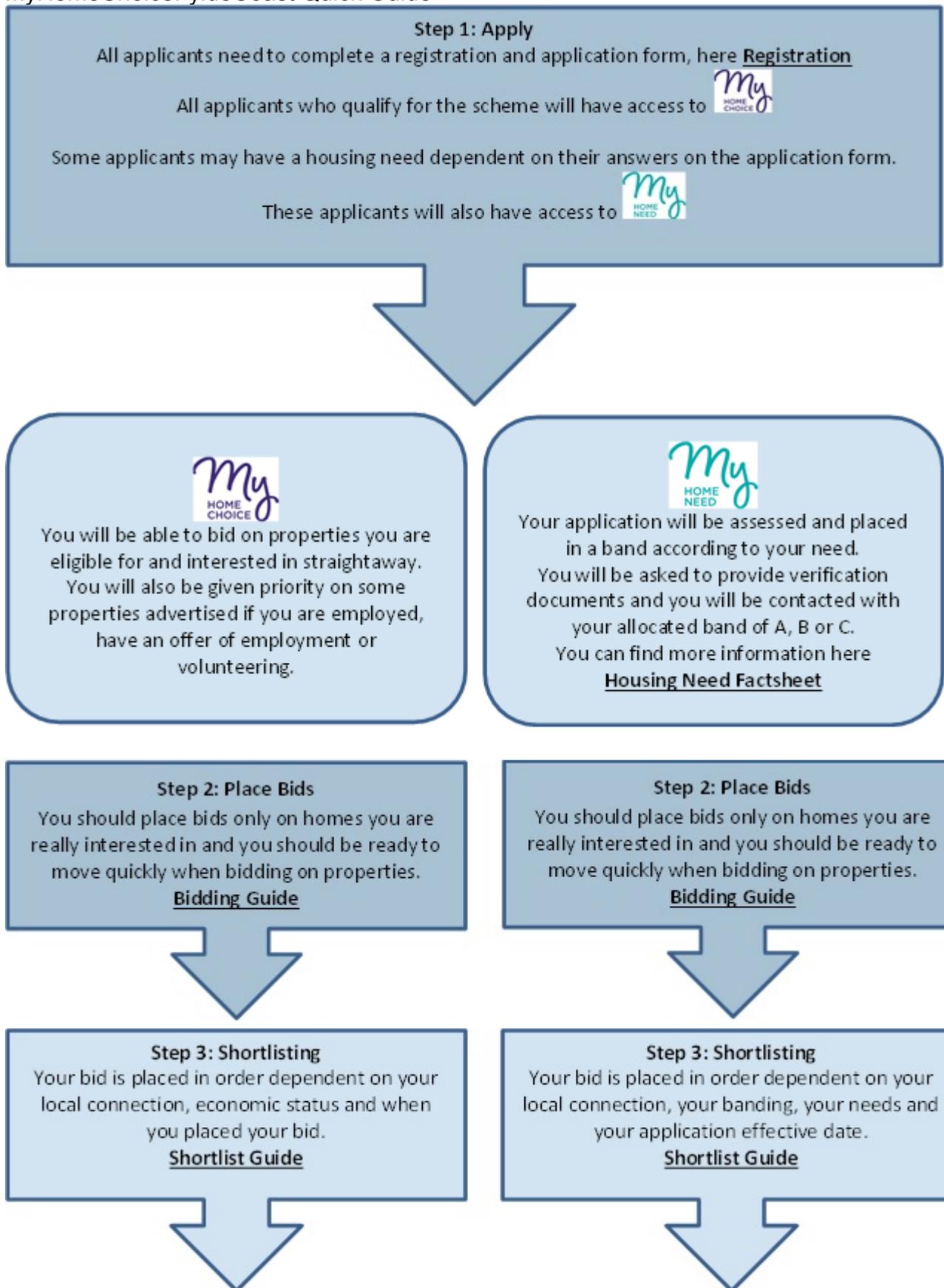
Appendix 2 – MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast Quick Guide

Appendix 1
Priority Bands

Housing Register	Needs	Criteria for Each Band
A		<p>Homeless applicants who Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre Council must provide with housing under a statutory duty</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Applicants with a local connection and at least one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vulnerable person who faces imminent discharge from hospital or temporary residential care and for whom there is no suitable accommodation to return to; • Applicants in exceptional circumstances including those in immediate danger of violence (at discretion).
B		<p>Applicants with a local connection and one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disrepair in current property with identified Category 1 hazard where the landlord has failed to take the required action; • Existing social housing tenant of a Partner Organisation who requires the property to be demolished or vacated; • Under occupancy of a property owned by a Partner Organisation (applicable after the start of a tenancy); • Living in an adapted property, owned by a Partner Organisation, no longer required; • Needs to move due to urgent medical or disability reasons, exacerbated due to current property conditions, with a medical assessment supporting the applicants (including household members) need to be rehoused; • Armed forces personnel, currently serving or have served in the last 5 years (who meet at least one criteria from Band C); • Urgent social or welfare needs, for example: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Admission into residential care or hospital if applicant is not rehoused 2. A dependent (under 16) will be accommodated by the Local Authority unless the applicant is rehoused into a suitable property 3. The need to give or receive essential care and support; • At risk of serious harm in present accommodation, for example, domestic abuse, hate crime, anti-social behaviour or witnesses of crime;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatened with homelessness, or owed the initial homelessness statutory duty by Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre Council; • Property unintentionally overcrowded and in need of at least two additional bedrooms; • Leaving Local Authority Care, with appropriate tenancy support, where there is a statutory duty under the Children Leaving Care Act 2000 to provide housing; • Rough Sleeping, threatened with or have a history of rough sleeping who are supported and referred by Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre Local Authority Housing Teams; • Leaving supported housing or rehabilitation accommodation and are ready for independent living with tenancy support (if required) in place.
C	<p>Applicants with a local connection and one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical or disability conditions (with no detrimental impact) with a medical assessment supporting the applicants need to be rehoused; • Social or Welfare needs, for example, applicant requires to be rehoused to a particular area to avoid hardship to themselves or others; • Disrepair in current property with identified Category 2 hazard where the landlord has failed to take the required action; • Property unintentionally overcrowded and in need of one additional bedroom; • Homeless with no priority need and no statutory duty owed by Blackpool, Fylde or Wyre Council; • In supported or rehabilitation accommodation and not ready for independent living and no tenancy support in place; • Armed forces personnel currently serving or have served in the last five years.

Appendix 2
MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast Quick Guide



Step 4: Offer
The property landlord will contact you to make you your provisional offer. You can only be on offer for one property at a time.
[Our Partners](#)



Step 5: Provide Documents
The landlord will conduct pre-tenancy checks. You will need to provide the landlord with your documents and ID within 3 days to continue with your offer. [Documents Required](#)



Step 6: View and Accept
The landlord will contact you to arrange an internal viewing of the property. All Social Housing Properties are unfurnished. For further information see our [Guide to Viewings](#)



Step 7: Sign Up
If you like the property and pass the checks you will be advised when the property is ready for your sign up appointment. You may have to pay some rent up front. [Sign Up Guide](#)



Step 8: Moving In
You are responsible for your rent from the day you receive your keys and you will need to set up how you will pay your rent. You will need to have arranged your removals and cooker reconnection at your new property. You will need to set up your utility accounts. For more information see our [Moving In Guide](#)

Step 4: Offer
The property landlord will contact you to make you your provisional offer. You can only be on offer for one property at a time.
[Our Partners](#)



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If you like the property and pass the checks you will be advised when the property is ready for your sign up appointment. You may have to pay some rent up front. [Sign Up Guide](#)



Step 8: Moving In
You are responsible for your rent from the day you receive your keys and you will need to set up how you will pay your rent. You will need to have arranged your removals and cooker reconnection at your new property. You will need to set up your utility accounts. For more information see our [Moving In Guide](#)



Report of:	Meeting	Date
David McArthur (Housing Services Manager)	Overview and Scrutiny	21 st October 2019

Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy Review

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide an update to committee on the homelessness review and proposed Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and Action Plan, enabling any comments to be considered during the consultation period before a final draft is proposed for Council approval.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires the local authority to conduct a five-yearly review of recent homelessness trends, evaluate prevention activities, plan the procurement of accommodation and subsequently develop a preventative strategy. There is also a specific requirement within the Ministry of Housing's Code of Guidance on Homelessness to ensure all strategies are refreshed and compliant with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA17).
- 2.2 Section 3 of the Homelessness Act 2002 states that before adopting a homelessness strategy local authorities shall consult such public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate. Within this parameter it is a decision for the local authority as to whom it shall consult. For a homelessness strategy to be robust, it is recommended that participation is sought from a wide range of partner agencies (statutory and voluntary sector), stakeholders, elected members, service users, and staff within the local authority itself.
- 2.3 The review of homeless trends depicts a borough with an increasing demand on the Housing Options Team. Factors such as welfare reform and the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act have seen approaches increase from 371 in 2016/17 to 536 in 2018/19. However the continued emphasis on prevention has ensured the use of temporary accommodation has decreased, and the number of full homeless applications has significantly dropped with only 2 in 2018/19. The main

causes related to the loss of last settled home have consistently been exclusion from the family home by parents and fleeing domestic abuse.

- 2.4** The draft strategy and action plan has been developed through the review and discussion with our key partners including supported accommodation providers and registered social landlords. The draft strategy seeks to embed and deepen what we know works well in prevention, to further reduce the use of temporary accommodation, reduce rough sleeping, and setting out new activities and proposals which strengthen those services and aim to further address the social, human, moral and financial costs of homelessness.

3. Key issues

- 3.1** The draft homelessness strategy is a response to a period of unprecedented change, including the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which came into force in April 2018, public services facing significant financial challenges and social housing and welfare reforms.
- 3.2** The effectiveness of the Homelessness Reduction Act, which has an emphasis on the prevention of homelessness, is twinned with the effectiveness of partnership work with statutory, voluntary and third sector agencies to ensure households' needs are met and that they are assisted as they engage and work through their personalised plans, which is another duty introduced by the Act.
- 3.3** The Act also has a focus on helping households to access housing and we need to make sure that we have effective pathways to work collaboratively with and encourage households to secure their own accommodation.
- 3.4** The Council will embed and deepen its current overall approach to preventing people from losing their homes and will improve the number of prevention outcomes, so that by 2023 Wyre is an exemplar borough in tackling homelessness. It will aim to reduce use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation to zero, and place further emphasis towards alleviating rough sleeping. While the recorded numbers of street sleepers are consistently very low the Council recognises that it must do more to identify hidden street homelessness and provide an appropriate pathway into safe, secure accommodation for those rough sleeping.
- 3.5** Following our homelessness review and with regard to national, regional and local context, policy and strategies we have defined three key objectives:
1. Prevent homelessness

2. Provide pathways to short and long term accommodation for those homeless and at risk of homelessness
3. Contribute to the improvement of the health and wellbeing of those homelessness and at risk of homelessness

3.6 Evidence highlighted in the strategy shows that nationally homelessness levels have steadily increased over the last five years. This is due in part to the impact of the welfare reforms and rising cost of the private rental market making it more difficult to find suitable and affordable accommodation for many households.

3.7 The timing of this homelessness strategy is particularly relevant in light of the Homelessness Reduction Act. The Homelessness Reduction Act changes the way homelessness advice and assistance is provided by local authorities and places additional statutory responsibilities upon local authorities. The strategy therefore sets out what we have already achieved in the first year of the Act in addition to setting out an action plan which outlines our ongoing and future aims.

3.8 The consultation ends shortly but any comments or suggestions will be taken into consideration in the preparation of the final draft for Council approval.

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David McArthur	01253 887434	David.mcarthur@wyre.gov.uk	10 th October 2019

List of appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy

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Draft Wyre Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023

Date:	September 2019
Version:	4.0 Draft
Review Date:	September 2023

1. Introduction

The Homelessness Strategy sets out the Council's plans to tackle homelessness for the next five years. The strategy has been developed against a backdrop of unprecedented change in national policy including fundamental reforms to welfare benefits.

The purpose of the strategy is to provide prevention measures and services primarily for those living in or with a local connection to Wyre.

In order to inform this strategy, a review of homelessness was carried out in 2018. The purpose of the review was to:

- Review the current and likely future levels of homelessness
- Identify the people likely to be most at risk of homelessness
- Identify the main causes of homelessness
- Review the homelessness prevention measures carried out by the Council
- Review the accommodation and support options available for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness

The data used to carry out the homelessness review and in turn inform this strategy is from a number of sources:

- Wyre Council's Homelessness Database
- H Click Returns (Government statistical return completed by local authorities)
- Office for National Statistics
- UK House Price Index
- Shelter Databank

In developing this strategy, the Council has also consulted with partners and stakeholders to ensure that their views are represented.

The strategy also reflects the Council's business plan objectives.

2. Background

In Wyre a small portion of homeless people are rough sleeping on the streets; the majority of homeless households are "hidden" as they may have access to some form of accommodation but lack a safe, stable, long term, settled home. For others, there are frequent moves from temporary

accommodation to another form of accommodation (e.g. emergency accommodation, friend's homes, 'sofa surfing' – people with no settled home).

Homelessness is not just a cause of wider problems, but is often a consequence of other difficulties. Many people who are at risk of homelessness are often struggling with a range of problems that come to a head, and some get into the cycle of falling in and out of accommodation. It is widely acknowledged that the effect that homelessness can have on health can be devastating.

Individuals or families who are homeless or threatened with becoming homeless can present themselves to the local authority where they have a local connection. Local Authorities assess each case and for those applicants who are homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need and not intentionally homeless the local authority has a main housing duty to secure suitable accommodation for that person/s.

3. National Context

The Government's main policy initiatives in relation to homelessness were issued in 2012. The No Second Night Out campaign aimed to end rough sleeping whilst Making Every Contact Count focussed on tackling the underlying causes of homelessness and preventing homelessness at an early age.

Both initiatives remain Government policy, however, a Select Committee Inquiry led to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which changed the way homelessness advice and assistance is provided by local authorities.

The majority of provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into force in April 2018. The aim of the Act was to reform the current homelessness duties to ensure that local authorities provide meaningful advice and assistance to those people who do not fall into a priority need category or who have been found to be intentionally homeless.

The principle implications of the Act are:

- The definition of being threatened with homelessness has been extended from 28 days to 56 days;
- Local authorities must accept a valid S.21 notice (a "no-fault" possession notice) as evidence that the tenant is threatened with homelessness;
- The creation of a stronger advice and information duty;
- An introduction on certain public authorities to refer service users who they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness;
- The creation of a stronger prevention duty for anyone threatened with homelessness and eligible for assistance;
- The introduction of a new relief duty for all eligible applicants who have a local connection meaning local authorities must take reasonable steps to secure accommodation regardless of priority need status;

- The introduction of a new duty to prepare personal housing plans for every person who approaches the council threatened with homelessness. The plans must be reviewed regularly until the relevant duty ends;
- Additional incentives to ensure people engage in prevention and relief work by allowing local authorities to discharge their prevent and relief duties if an applicant unreasonably refuses to cooperate with the course of action proposed;
- The introduction of a right to judicial review at the prevention, relief and main duty stages to ensure local authorities are held to account;
- Increased data collection in order to monitor the overall effectiveness of the new legislation; and
- The exploration of options for further enforcement such as through the creation of a regulator of housing and homelessness services.

4. Local Context

Wyre's geographical location in the North West of England is unique. The borough comprises a mix of urban towns, market towns and rural villages. The majority of people live in the borough's four main areas: Fleetwood, Thornton-Cleveleys, Poulton-le-Fylde, and Garstang, although a large number of small villages are located in the rural areas between Poulton-le-Fylde and Garstang and beyond.

In Wyre the authority has always operated a preventative approach to homelessness. This approach has always proved successful and fits in with the new provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Although acceptances have remained consistent over the last few years, presentations increased 2017/18 and 2018/19, potentially as a consequence of the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. There has also been a significant increase in the number of approaches involving one or more complex needs and in a number of cases at more advanced stages of homelessness.

Rough Sleeping

Rough sleeping has not previously been seen as a significant problem in Wyre, and estimates are taken annually and submitted to DCLG. There is no doubt however, that the number of reports is on the increase, which mirrors the trend nationally. The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) ensures any rough sleepers have accommodation for those nights with excessive low temperatures, although the numbers of people who are provided with accommodation under SWEP in Wyre is still very low.

In 2017/18 there were 29 reports of rough sleepers in Wyre, with 13 of these being located and identified by the Housing Options Team. In 2018/19 there were 23 reports of rough sleepers in Wyre and 17 located and identified by the Housing Options Team. From April 2019 to the end July 2019 there have been 16 reports of rough sleepers in Wyre with 8 being located by the team. It is clear that whilst rough sleeping may not historically have been an issue in Wyre, the numbers are on the increase, but this will be reflected in the action plan for this strategy with a clear objective to reduce

the number of rough sleepers. The No Second Night Out Policy (NSNO) is a pledge we make to anyone new to the streets and is part of our commitment to end rough sleeping.

5. Homelessness and Council Duties

Homelessness is a term that is used to describe various situations of housing need, and it is important to be clear about the different circumstances in which people are considered to be homeless. To summarise: Statutory homelessness refers to those people who have made a homeless application and have met the criteria in legislation (Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002) to be accepted by the Council as eligible for assistance, homeless and in **priority need**. This includes families, pregnant women and single people who are particularly vulnerable. A household may be accepted as 'homeless' because they are going to be evicted or are living in accommodation so unsuitable that it is not 'reasonable' for them to remain there. The Council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation to statutory homeless households.

Non-statutory/non-priority homeless people are primarily single people/childless couples who are not assessed as being in 'priority need' and therefore only entitled to 'advice and assistance' if homeless. However, the Council may exercise its "powers" to provide additional support if it chooses to do so.

Rough sleepers are people who are literally roofless and are bedded down on the streets, parks or other places where they may or may not be seen by the public. This group are normally a minority of the much larger group of non-priority homeless people, with a larger proportion of single homeless people sofa surfing (often described as the 'hidden homeless' because we have no means to calculate their numbers). Housing legislation does not set out specific statutory duties to people sleeping rough, but there is a strong policy focus on this group.

6. How We Respond to Homelessness in Wyre

A range of services are currently available from Housing Options which effectively creates a "one stop shop" for anyone in housing need:

Statutory Responsibilities:

- Provide housing advice to all
- Determine homelessness applications within statutory framework
- Provide temporary accommodation to those owed a duty
- Provide long term housing to those owed a duty
- Assess and process applications for Social Housing within statutory framework (Allocations Policy)
- Provide statutory returns relating to homelessness and prevention (H Click) to Central Government
- Investigate and prosecute landlords where appropriate (e.g. illegal evictions)

Homelessness prevention:

- Mediation for all persons who may have been excluded from the family home
- Negotiation with landlords
- Mortgage, debt and benefit advice
- Resolving welfare benefit issues
- Tenancy sustainment support
- Assistance with court paperwork and intervention where necessary
- Interventions within supported, social and private sector housing to prevent evictions

Accommodation options:

- Access to supported housing (range of providers)
- Facilitation of temporary accommodation
- Single point of access for all social housing in Wyre (Blackpool and Fylde) via the sub regional housing register MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast
- Access to good quality affordable private rented housing

Other services:

- Hospital /health link worker
- Responsibility for the Council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol and No Second Night Out Policy
- Strong multi agency working, referrals, and signposting
- Homeless prevention awareness raising/training for professionals
- Enforcement of the Council's local connection policy and provision of a re-connection offer to home area for those with no local connection
- Tenancy training provision
- Access to employment advisors
- Rent bond scheme

Housing Options is just one part of a wider system that supports people at risk of homelessness in Wyre.

Partnership Working

In order to alleviate the pressure on the system and increase the supportive factors, strong partnership working is critical. The Council cannot tackle homelessness alone and homelessness itself is rarely just a “housing issue”.

The issues that lead to homelessness in Wyre are often issues and problems shared by a number of services and agencies – homelessness is often just one symptom of a combination of transience, poverty, and social problems. We believe it is therefore essential that services work together effectively to address these issues holistically.

Housing Options partners include a range of internal and external stakeholders.

Internal key stakeholders include colleagues in Community Safety and Benefits.

External key stakeholders include:

- Adult and Children’s Social Care
- Social Housing Providers
- Supported Accommodation Providers – both commissioned and non-commissioned
- Health
- Food Bank
- Local churches
- Local substance misuse services
- The Police
- Offender management services
- Citizens Advice Bureau

Pathways and multi-agency approaches

Our commitment to partnership working has enabled us to successfully implement a number of key pathways and solutions to prevent homelessness.

These include:

Offender Pathways – joint working with offender management services and prisons to identify offenders at risk of homelessness prior to release

Action to help rough sleepers – a shared multi agency targeted response to understand the demands of this client group. This enables partners to identify those that are genuinely homeless (as opposed to street drinkers/beggars) and provide effective and holistic solutions.

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) volunteers– partnership working with a local church that utilises volunteers to deliver the SWEP assistance.

MyHomeChoiceFyldeCoast (Choice Based Lettings Scheme) – a partnership of the major social landlords across the Fylde Coast. Applications to the scheme are processed centrally for the whole Fylde Coast area.

In addition, there are a number of key multi agency working groups that enable coordinated responses to protect and support people at risk of homelessness in the following areas:

- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) – where agencies talk about the risk of future harm to people experiencing domestic abuse and if necessary their children, and draws up an action plan to help manage that risk.
- Integrated Team meetings – joint working with Police, Social Care, Mental Health Services and other relevant partners.
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) – the process through which various agencies such as the Police, Prison Service and Probation work together to protect the public by managing the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders living in the community.
- Child protection conferences and team around the family meetings.
- Antisocial Behaviour Meetings.
- Wyre Young People’s Service/Youth Offending Team.

Cross Boundary working and innovation

More recently a series of opportunities to work with neighbouring authorities has resulted in us being able to attract additional funding to Wyre to support the implementation and sharing of best practice.

These include:

- Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer (2017-2019) - Work between Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre, using an additional £600,000 over two years for upstream prevention and innovation across the Fylde Coast.
- Domestic Abuse Accommodation (2017) - Lancashire wide bid to secure accommodation-based wrap around support, including access to employment for victims of domestic abuse complex needs.
- Rapid Rehousing Pathway (2019) – Working with Lancaster and Fylde we won an additional £130,000 to support rough sleepers and people facing homelessness.

7. Homelessness Review – Main Findings

Our review of homelessness has found that homelessness is continuing to increase across the country, and this has generally been the case in Wyre, although the number of homeless presentations in Wyre did drop in 2016/17. In 2016/17 there were 370 presentations in Wyre compared with 458 in 2015/16. The number of presentations increased in 2017/18 to 491 and again in 2018/19 to 536, most probably due to the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Acceptances have remained relatively steady peaking at 10 acceptances in 2016/17 compared with 8 in 2015/16. In 2017/18 the number of acceptances dropped to 6, and only 2 in 2018/19. This is a direct result of the prevention and relief duties through the Homelessness Reduction Act, which aims to address homelessness quickly and without the complexity of traditional methods of accepting homeless applications.

More homeless presentations are made by people aged 21-65, with lone female parents and single males being most likely to seek assistance; again this reflects the national trend.

The main cause of homelessness nationally has consistently been the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy. Locally the main reasons for homelessness have varied, although parental eviction and fleeing domestic violence have consistently been prominent reasons.

The main reason for a homeless applicant to have a priority need for assistance in Wyre is having dependent children/pregnancy. This has generally been the trend both locally and nationally for the last five years, although the number of people with physical disabilities whose needs cannot be met in their current property is also high.

The use of temporary accommodation has fluctuated over the last few years, with 30 cases in 2016/17 and dropping to 18 in 2017/18. This number dropped slightly in 2018/19 to 15. The length of time staying in temporary accommodation has remained consistently low, averaging a little over 10 days in 2018/19.

The number of households who were prevented from becoming homeless has remained high, increasing from 285 in 2016/17 to 387 in 2017/18, and again to 398 in 2018/19. This emphasises Wyre's focus on preventing homelessness rather than making homeless applications.

There have been many changes in service provision – some have closed and some new ones have opened. Significant developments include:

- The establishment of a women's refuge;
- Increased emergency provision for families and young people;
- New and effective multi agency and partnership working; and
- A sustained reduction in use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation that is never used for young people.

Wyre Council demonstrates strong leadership and a clear commitment to partnership working to address homelessness and its attendant issues. Our success in forging partnerships across the sector in the past has ensured a healthy provision of beds available for those who do find themselves

without accommodation. However, ongoing reductions to supporting people budgets has reduced the provision of supported accommodation available. Our current provision includes:

- 9 beds for families – George Williams House
- 6 beds for young people – George Williams House
- 18 Beds for young people and 5 move on – Fleetwood Foyer
- 10 beds for homeless people with complex needs and 5 dispersed units of accommodation – Warrenhurst Court
- 5 beds for domestic violence victims (4 families and 1 single) – Fylde Coast Woman’s Aid

Due to the decreasing provision of supported accommodation, the role of the private rented sector has become of key significance in preventing homelessness. In seeing the private sector as being the increasingly likely route of accommodation, it is important that the authority works with landlords and partners to drive up standards in this sector, and that support continues to be provided by organisations.

Council departments work well together and there are some outstanding examples of good practice such as:

- Average time to assess a claim for Housing Benefit – four days
- Trained debt advisors and family mediators available
- Empty Homes Strategy

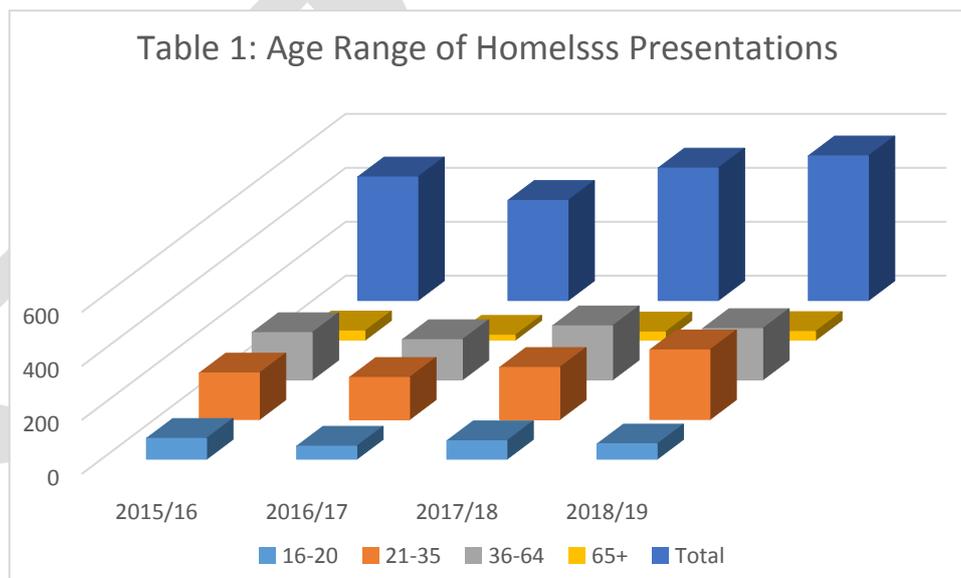
The following key elements have also been highlighted in the review:

- In 2017 the Fylde Coast Homelessness Forum was set up between Wyre, Blackpool and Fylde Councils, local housing providers and key agencies
- An updated joint protocol for working with young people aged between 16 and 17 has been developed
- The ‘No Second Night Out’ protocol
- A review of the Fylde Coast Choice Based Lettings Scheme (My Home Choice) has recently been completed to make applying for social housing easier
- Welfare reforms – in particular the spare room subsidy and the introduction of Universal Credit have the potential to be the factor with the single biggest impact on homelessness since the 2002 Homelessness Act came into force and the strategy will need to take account of this.

8. Homelessness Statistics

Homeless Presentations

Between April 2015 and March 2019, the Council dealt with 1856 presentations. Presentations were high in 2015/16 before a drop in 2016/17. There was then a significant increase in 2017/18 and 2018/19 (Table 1). The majority of presentations are made by people either aged 21-35 or 36-64, with numbers in both groups consistently being similar.



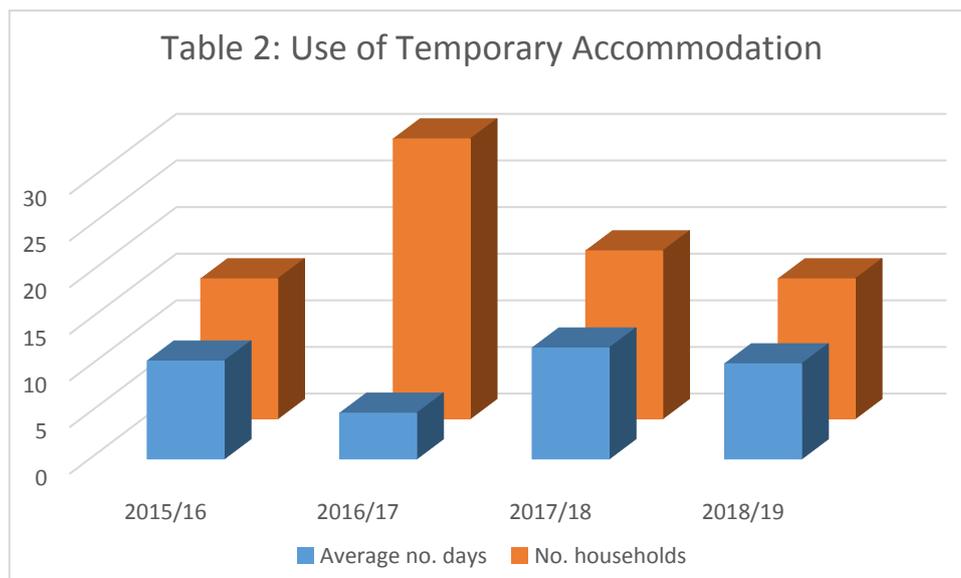
Not all homeless presentations result in a decision being made. There are many reasons for this, such as the applicant failing to make any further contact, or their homelessness is resolved in another way; but the main reason is Wyre's determination and efforts to prevent homelessness before it happens.

Homelessness - Temporary Accommodation

Where a person makes a homeless presentation to the Council and there is reason to believe that the person is homeless and may have a priority need for assistance, the Council is under a duty to provide temporary accommodation until a final decision is made on the case.

Government guidelines state that bed and breakfast accommodation should only be used in an emergency and families should not be placed in such accommodation for more than 6 weeks.

Table 2 shows the average length of time and number of people placed in temporary accommodation by the Council between 2015 and 2019.



Homelessness & Priority Need in Wyre

The Council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation to all applicants who they believe may be homeless and in priority need. This duty remains until a final decision on their case has been made. 18.2 S.193 (2) and s.195 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 set out the priority need categories.

If an applicant falls into one of the following categories, they will automatically have a priority need:

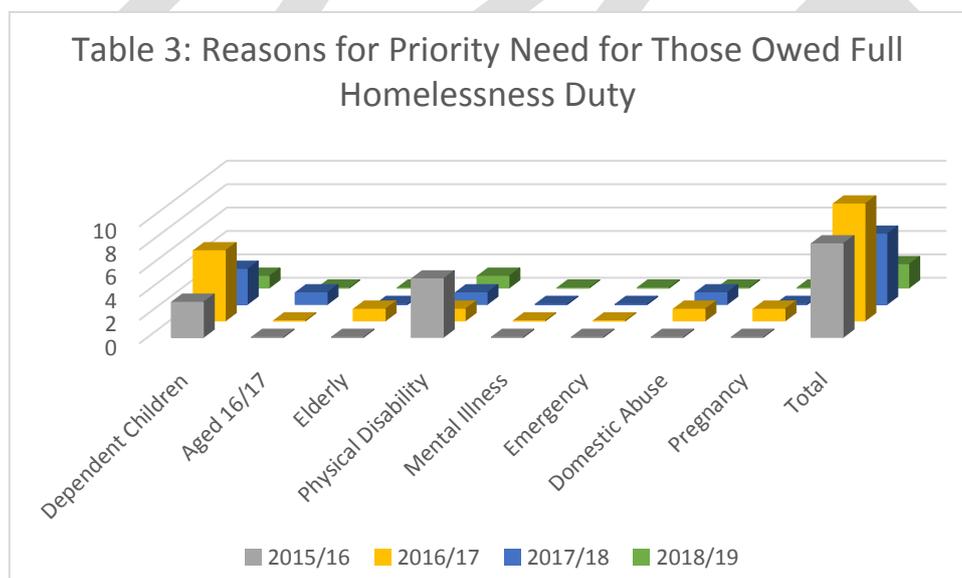
- A pregnant women or a person with whom she resides or might reasonably be expected to reside
- A person with whom dependent children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside
- A person aged 16/17 who is not a 'relevant child' or a child in need to whom a local authority owes a duty under s.20 of the Children Act 1989
- A person under 21 who was (but is no longer) looked after, accommodated or fostered between the ages of 16 & 18 (except a person who is a relevant student)
- A person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster

If an applicant falls into one of the categories below, they will only have a priority need if they are considered to be 'vulnerable' and it is for the local authority to make that decision.

- A person aged 21 or more who is vulnerable as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered (except a person who is a relevant student)

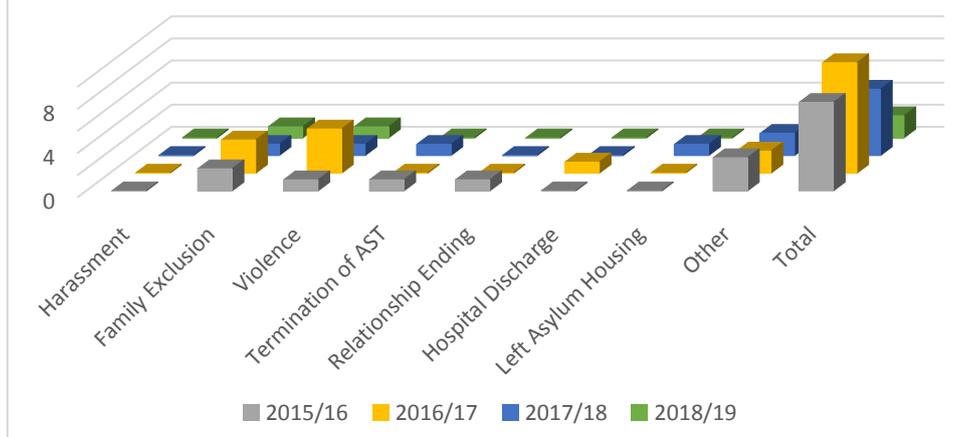
- A person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or handicap or physical disability or other special reason or with whom such a person resides or might reasonably be expected to reside
- A person who is vulnerable as a result of having been a member of HM regular naval, military or air forces
- A person who is vulnerable as a result of:
 - a) having served a custodial sentence
 - b) having been committed for contempt of court or any other kindred offence; or
 - c) having been remanded in custody
- A person who is vulnerable as a result of ceasing to occupy accommodation because of violence from another person or threats of violence from another person which are likely to be carried out
- A person who is vulnerable for any other special reason, or with whom such a person resides or might reasonably be expected to reside

The main reason for a person to be found to have a priority need is having dependent children. This has consistently been the main reason both locally and national (Table 3).



In Wyre the most common reasons for being homeless to those owed the full homeless duty is being forced to leave the parental/family home and through fleeing domestic violence (Table 4).

Table 4: Reasons for Loss of Last Settled Home for Those Owed Full Homeless Duty



Homelessness Prevention & Relief

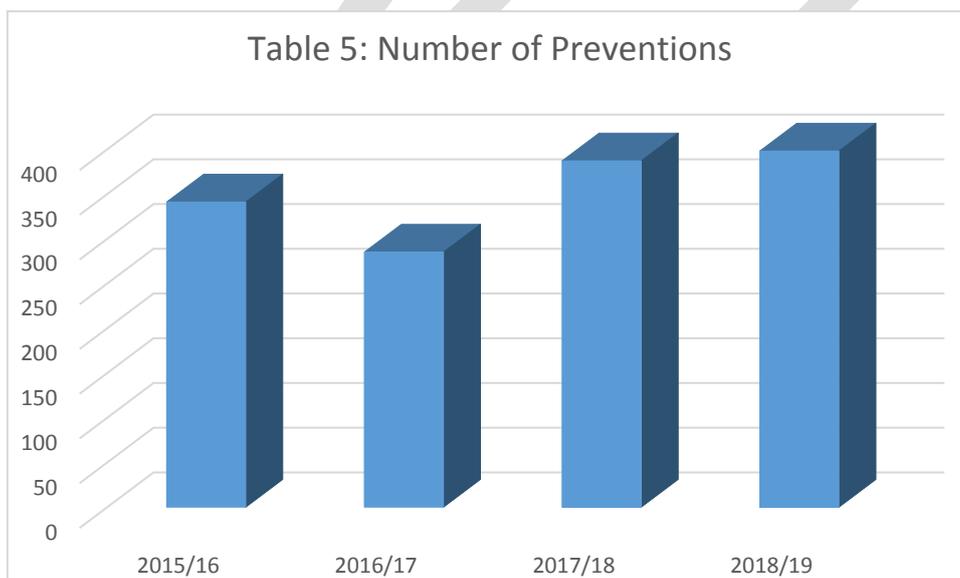
Under the Homelessness Act 2002, the Council must provide homelessness prevention advice to anyone in the Borough.

Homelessness prevention involves providing people with the means to address their housing and other needs to avoid homelessness. This is done by either assisting them into alternative accommodation or enabling them to remain in their existing home.

Homelessness relief occurs when it has not been possible to prevent the homelessness but the person has been helped to secure accommodation, even though the Council is under no statutory obligation to do so.

Previously, the numbers prevented and relieved were not distinguished. However following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 the relief duty meant the numbers being relieved being recorded separately.

Table 5: Number of Preventions



9. Current Challenges

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017 has already had a noticeable effect on the service. In particular the extension of the 'at risk of homelessness' to 56 days and further focus on prevention has resulted in a significant increase in the number of presentations to the Housing Options Team. It was anticipated that the new prevention and relief duties would significantly increase placements into temporary accommodation. Fortunately to date, this hasn't been the case in Wyre but it still remains a concern.

The preparation and review of personal housing plans has also added to the workload of the team and we will continue to monitor staffing capacity to ensure the service meets operational service standards and requirements.

Lack of Accommodation

A reduction in the number of supported housing units available is a continuing challenge and has led to increasing reliance on the private rented and social housing sectors. Further close working with partners and housing associations will be needed to explore opportunities to maximise the supply of appropriate housing and make additional bed spaces available.

Local Housing Allowance

Welfare reform has had a number of effects in relation to homelessness in Wyre, but most significant is the impact on 21-35 year olds. This age group now only qualifies for the shared room rate of Local Housing Allowance (LHA), restricting the housing available to this group. Whilst some areas of Wyre do have a reasonable supply of shared accommodation, placements into these properties are proving increasingly difficult, and the options open to this age group are limited. We will need to work closely with landlords and housing associations to explore every opportunity to make quality affordable housing available, including the provision of additional shared and dispersed housing.

Universal Credit

In Wyre full rollout of Universal Credit (UC) was implemented on 5th December 2018, but even prior to the full rollout there have been issues where service users have been eligible for UC. This has mirrored the national position, with a delay in processing claims proving a challenge to sourcing housing within the private rented sector. Supporting claimants and liaising with landlords is going to be essential in obtaining and sustaining tenancies.

Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer

Wyre has been part of the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer pilot, having won funding along with Blackpool and Fylde Councils. This funding was aimed at preparing for the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act with a focus on upstream prevention, particularly relating to those with one or more complex needs. As part of this pilot, Wyre has delivered:

- Two full-time complex needs support workers

- The introduction of a paperless rent-bond scheme
- Tenancy training
- An accommodation finding service
- A shared hospital link worker across the three districts

The success of the Trailblazer is overwhelming with over 200 cases being dealt with.

The project funding was for two years and ended in April 2019, but in order to continue the great work of the Trailblazer opportunities for additional funding will be explored.

10. Key Objectives

The main findings of the homelessness review have been used to inform the key objectives of the strategy.

Objective 1: Prevent Homelessness

Objective 2: Provide pathways to short and long term accommodation for those homelessness or at risk of homelessness

Objective 3: Contribute to the improvement of the health and wellbeing of those homeless or at risk of homelessness

Objective 1 - Prevent Homelessness

The main causes of homelessness amongst priority households is Domestic Abuse and parental/family exclusion. However, the greatest proportion of households that present for advice and assistance are aged between 21 - 64 years with the number between 21-35 and 36-64 consistently being very similar.

Although there has been an increase in the number of households becoming at risk of homelessness that are in paid employment or in receipt of partial benefit, the overwhelming majority of households seeking advice and support are fully reliant upon welfare benefits. While the secondary aim of most services and agencies is to enable people to achieve sustainable outcomes that includes help to get into work, access to and addressing problems with benefit payments and the compounding effects of personal debt are significant factors in many cases.

Prevention has been the key priority for all services and partner agencies and we have continued to achieve year on year improvements in the number of households that are either prevented from becoming homeless or are helped to find somewhere to live before they become homeless. In the last full year in Wyre 398 households were prevented from becoming homeless.

Much of this has been enabled through a continued commitment to partnership working across a number of third sector agencies and partners many of whom have enhanced their services by

bringing in additional funding from elsewhere. The Council acknowledges that without the support of partners across the Borough, that far fewer households would have been able to be able to achieve the successful prevention outcomes that have been evidenced.

Prevention is effective when it is timely and is aligned to the issues facing the individual or family at the time and we have found most successful results from a flexible and pragmatic approach. While longer term aims will always be to enable a household to achieve resilience and independence, there are times when direct action is what is required. Having sufficient funding available for rent in advance, bonds etc is essential, and whilst MHCLG has provided a Flexible Homelessness Support Grant over the last two years to assist with such provision, exploring any additional sources of external funding is a key priority in the strategy.

The Council will seek to continue to provide or facilitate support for all households at risk of homelessness and in particular to try to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation available to all priority households that are unable to find their own solution including households experiencing domestic abuse, households with children, young people previously cared for and those at risk as a result of mortgage default. The Council recognises that resolving homelessness and supporting people to find suitable housing is vital for the economic and community wellbeing of the Borough.

Key Actions:

- Continue to prevent any household with children from being placed in Bed & Breakfast Accommodation.
- Reduce Bed & Breakfast Accommodation use to zero.
- Continue to support households at risk of homelessness as a result of domestic abuse.
- Continue to administer funding to assist vulnerable people to sustain their tenancies and prevent homelessness.
- Explore opportunities for external funding to support people with complex needs to sustain tenancies.
- Reduce rough sleeping.

Objective 2 - Provide pathways to short and long term accommodation for those homelessness or at risk of homelessness

Access to housing and move on for those in supported accommodation has continued to be an issue particularly for those with poor housing records and those that are excluded by social landlords. There is still a lot of work to do with households to prevent them from building up rent arrears, and to ensure housing offers are affordable. The majority of private sector and social landlords require rent in advance and many continue to operate exclusions for households with previously unaddressed rent arrears and costs, in some cases going back years. Close work with private sector and social landlords is a key action to accessing secure accommodation.

Universal Credit full service rollout began on 5th December 2018. Housing cost decisions for UC claimants are no longer made locally leading to uncertainties in the level of housing costs and when payments will be received. Scaremongering in the national press and social media has had a negative effect on private sector landlords who were previously accepting of the housing benefit system. Many of the teething problems with the rollout of UC will no doubt be ironed out, and regaining the trust and confidence amongst private sector landlords will be important for the years ahead. Private sector housing remains a vital part of our prevention and relief duties and without it the use of temporary accommodation would significantly increase.

Key Actions:

- Work more closely with private sector landlords to promote the private rented sector as a viable housing option.
- Promote the updated Choice Based Lettings system to ensure the housing waiting list is accurate.
- Work with Planning Services to ensure the location and type of new affordable housing provision is appropriate.
- Continue to provide support for private sector tenants with complex needs.

Objective 3 - Contribute to the improvement of the health and wellbeing of those homeless or at risk of homelessness

While motivating and helping people to access training and vocational opportunities is a key aim in enabling people to improve their wellbeing and develop personal resilience, a significant proportion of households coming into contact with homelessness services are not at a level where they can realistically take up such opportunities. In some circumstances there are more practical barriers such as single parents with young children and access to suitable child care. Evidence from partners recognises that households with complex dependencies need a greater amount of intervention and support to get them to a level where by they can get involved.

Key points in housing sustainment and risk of homelessness include issues around social isolation and this is an increasingly recognised issue relating to the health and wellbeing of all sectors of the community. For homeless households this is often compounded by a lack of wholesome networks and while some disadvantaged or vulnerable people can often find mutual support and strength together, it can often have a detrimental effect. The opportunity and ability for providers to engage people in social, creative and confidence building activities is an essential element towards sustainable outcomes and better community engagement. It is essential that partners continue to work together to share opportunities, pool resources if possible and to record outcomes. Future commissioning could usefully include space within contracts to allow for this type of development and activity.

However, there is further work to be done. Pathways into statutory services can still be difficult and access to timely interventions particularly around mental health is still reported as being a significant

barrier. The issue of individuals considered to have a dual diagnosis, that is mental health issues and issues usually relating to drug or alcohol misuse, being unable to access health services is seen as a significant barrier by homelessness service providers. Demands upon health services appear to have resulted in high thresholds with support only becoming available when an individual is at crisis point. Improving access to mental health services is a key priority for this strategy.

Key Actions:

- Early engagement with mental health services to ensure correct support for those service users in need.
- Continue to adopt a multi-agency approach to preventing homelessness especially for those people with chaotic and complex dependencies.
- To help support and prevent service users with chaotic and complex lifestyles from losing their supported accommodation and becoming street homeless.
- Improve the health and wellbeing of people that are at risk of homelessness and to enable people to develop more healthy lifestyles.
- To prevent people being discharged from hospital before a suitable housing option is in place.



ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVE 1: PREVENT HOMELESSNESS

ACTION:	TASKS:	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	TIMESCALE:
Continue to prevent any household with children from being placed in Bed & Breakfast accommodation.	Continue prevention work and more efficient move on from SP family units	Housing Services Manager	Review September 2020
Reduce Bed & Breakfast accommodation use to zero	Continue prevention work and more efficient move on from supported accommodation	Housing Options Team Leader	Review September 2020
Continue to support households at risk of homelessness as a result of domestic abuse	Continue partnership working	Housing Services Manager	Throughout strategy
Continue to utilise available funding to assist vulnerable people to sustain their tenancies and prevent homelessness	Work with Benefits team on use of DHP and use FHSG for bonds/rent in advance where appropriate	Housing Options Team Leader	Monitored quarterly for duration of strategy
Explore opportunities for external funding to support those with complex needs to sustain tenancies	Apply for external funding whenever available and relevant	Housing Services Manager /Housing Options Team Leader	As opportunities arise
Reduce the number of rough sleepers	Further develop partnership working to address rough sleeping and begging, maintaining a coherent mix of enforcement pressure and appropriate support	Housing Services Manager /Housing Options Team Leader/ Community Safety Manager	September 2020

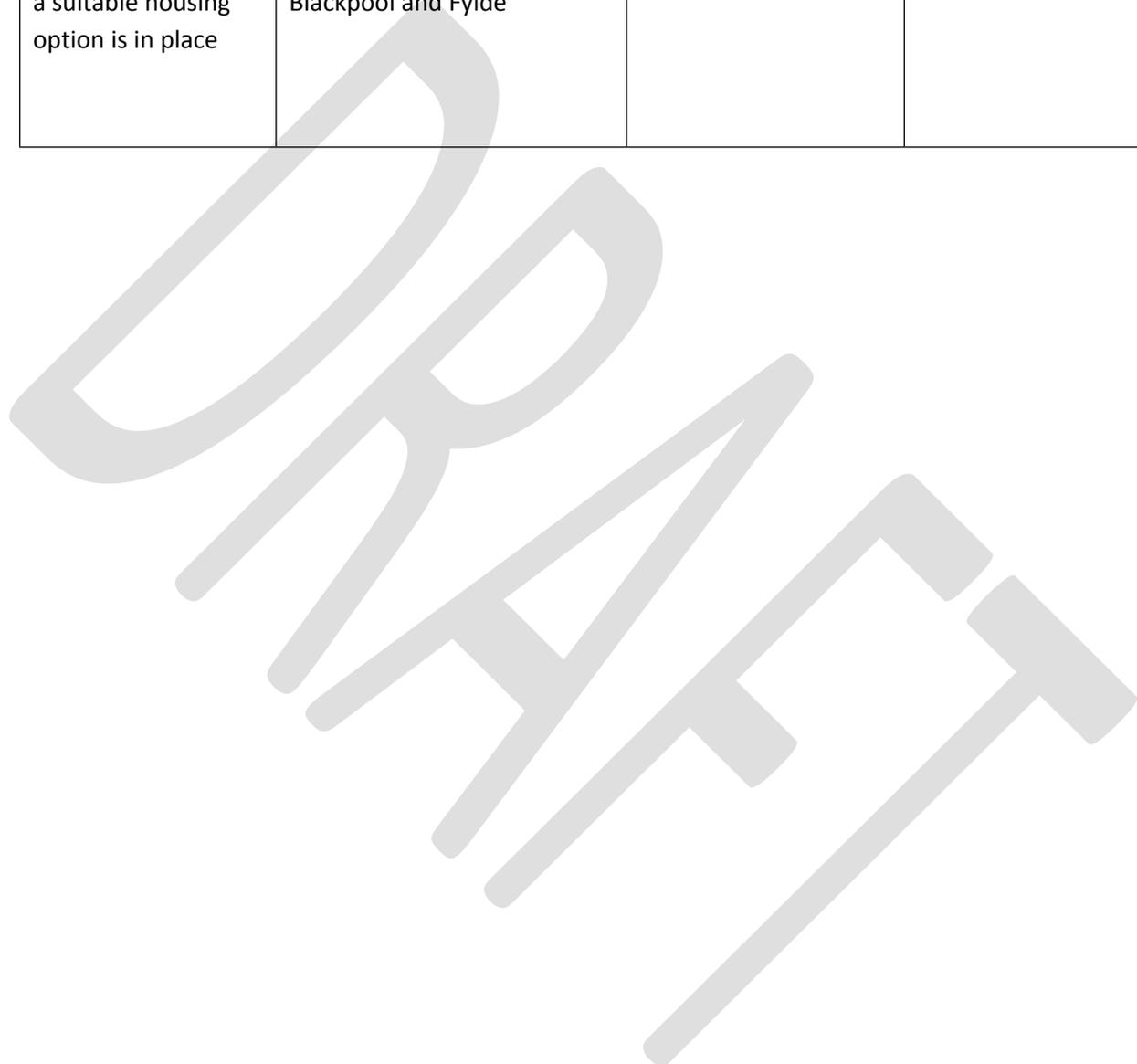
OBJECTIVE 2: PROVIDE PATHWAYS TO SHORT AND LONG TERM ACCOMMODATION FOR THOSE HOMELESSNESS OR AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

ACTION:	TASKS:	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	TIMESCALE:
Work more closely with private sector landlords to promote the private rented sector as a viable housing option	Establish a private landlord network to identify the barriers in offering tenancies to homeless households and to find ways to reduce the number of evictions from private rented accommodation	Housing Options Team Leader	September 2020
Promote updated MyHomeChoice (Choice Based Lettings System) to ensure the housing waiting list is accurate	Work with partners to raise awareness of updated My Home Choice portal	Housing Options Team Leader	March 2020
Work with Planning Services to ensure location and type of new affordable housing provision reflects need	Establish routine meetings between Planning and Housing teams to discuss affordable housing provision on new developments	Housing Services Manager	March 2020

OBJECTIVE 3: CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF THOSE HOMELESS OR AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

ACTION:	TASKS:	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	TIMESCALE:
Early engagement with mental health services to ensure appropriate support for those service users in need	Establish contacts within Mental Health teams to improve partnership working and signposting	Housing Services Manager	March 2020
Continue to work with a multi-agency approach to preventing homelessness with those people with chaotic and complex dependencies	Continue to fund support workers to work exclusively with those with complex needs to sustain tenancies (providing assistance with benefits and access to services etc)	Housing Services Manager	March 2020
Prevent service users with chaotic and complex lifestyles from losing their supported accommodation and becoming street homeless	Continue to fund support workers to work exclusively with those with complex needs to sustain tenancies (providing assistance with benefits and access to services etc)	Housing Options Team Leader	September 2020
Improve the health and wellbeing of people that are at risk of homelessness and to enable people to develop	Work with internal and external partners to promote health & wellbeing opportunities	Housing Options Team Leader	September 2020

more healthy lifestyles			
Prevent clients from being discharged from hospital before a suitable housing option is in place	To explore with partners the option to retain the Hospital Link Worker for Wyre, Blackpool and Fylde	Housing Services Manager	March 2020





Report of:	Meeting	Date
Marianne Hesketh, Service Director Performance and Innovation	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	21 October 2019

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2019/20 – update report

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the Overview and Scrutiny Work programme 2019/20.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the committee identifies areas of questioning about police and crime matters in preparation for receiving a report about the Neighbourhood Policing arrangements at the next meeting of the committee on 2 December 2019.

2.2 That the report be noted.

3. Current and completed work

3.1 Poulton – Fleetwood Link Task Group

The task group has completed three sub-group meetings with a range of stakeholders, the Chairman and Vice Chairman attending each one in order to provide some consistency of approach. The task group as a whole re-convened on 9 October to share and discuss the information gathered during the earlier sub-group meetings.

3.2 Resident Car Parking Permit Scheme Task Group

The first meeting of the task group took place on Monday 16 September 2019. A second meeting has been arranged for Tuesday 29 October 2019, which the Head of Finance will attend.

3.3 District Environmental Enforcement Task Group

The first meeting of this task group will take place on Monday 14 October 2019. The Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder will attend.

4. Other planned work

4.1 Task Group - Supporting Wyre's town centres

Following a suggestion made at the O&S Committee meeting held on 22 July 2019, a report and draft scoping document was to be submitted to the O&S Committee at this meeting. However, staffing pressures within the Economic Development Team means that the report will not now be received by the committee until 16 March 2020.

4.2 Neighbourhood policing

At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 30 July 2018 the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder, Councillor Roger Berry, provided a written note about the new arrangements for Neighbourhood Policing that were proposed to come into effect in the autumn of 2018. The committee agreed that an update report about the new arrangements should be requested once the arrangements had been in place for twelve months.

4.3 A report about Neighbourhood Policing will be received by the committee on 2 December 2019 when it is hoped that a senior police officer will be in attendance. The committee is asked to identify areas of questioning that will be used to brief the police officer before his/her attendance, in order to ensure that they come fully prepared (Appendix 2).

5. Work Programme

5.1 The O&S Work Programme for 2019/20 is attached at Appendix 1.

6. Other issues

6.1 Committee development

The committee met on 23 September 2019 to consider the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny, which was published in May. The meeting was attended by Dr Stephanie Snape, from North West Employers, who helped to provide some structure to a discussion about scrutiny best practice and how a scrutiny Work Programme is compiled, in the light of the Statutory Guidance.

6.2 North West Employers Strategic Scrutiny Network

The North West Employers organisation convenes a regional strategic scrutiny network for scrutiny members which meets three times a year. It

aims to share information and ideas about scrutiny and spread best practice. Scrutiny members from Wyre and the Scrutiny Officer have attended regularly in recent years.

Wyre will be hosting the next meeting of the Network on 29 November 2019 in the Council Chamber. All councillors involved in scrutiny are welcome to attend.

Councillor Emma Ellison is being proposed as the new Chair of the Network at the November meeting, with Councillor Howard Ballard being proposed as the Vice Chair.

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List of appendices

Appendix 1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20

Appendix 2 Extract from Lancashire County Council's *Lancashire Insight Newsletter*, published in August 2019

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
2019/20

Committee Meetings

(All meetings are held on Mondays starting at 6pm)

Date	Planned O&S Committee agenda items
2019	
3 June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Election of Chairman.ii. Election of Vice Chairman.iii. Marine Hall update and task group scoping (see O&SC 22 October 2018, minute 30).iv. Business Plan – Quarterly Performance Statementv. Public Conveniences Task Group – draft reportvi. O&S Work Programme 2019/20 – update and planning. To include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) Overview and Scrutiny training and development for the committee and newly elected councillors.(b) Scoping document – Resident Permits(c) Scoping Document – transport connectivity across Fylde Coast
22 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Update on health and care developments on the Fylde Coast – Dr Amanda Doyleii. Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee.iii. Annual Schedule of planned investment in assets (Service Director Performance and Innovation)iv. Budget consultation (Clare James)v. Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutinyvi. O&S Work Programme 2019/20 – update.
9 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. District Enforcement environmental crime pilot feedback (see O&SC 3 June 2019) and draft scoping documentii. Business Plan – Quarterly Performance Statementiii. O&S Work Programme 2019/20 – update.
23 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny – North West Employers - Single-item agenda
21 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. MyHomeChoice - review of first 12 months of implementation of new arrangements (see O&SC 30 July 2018 and Cabinet 5 September 2018).ii. Consultation – Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.iii. O&S Work Programme 2019/20 – update.

Date	Planned O&S Committee agenda items
2 December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Neighbourhood policing arrangements – review of first 12 months of implementation of new arrangements (see O&SC 30 July 2018, minute 18). ii. Fees and charges. iii. Cost profiles – benchmarking results. iv. Treasury management. v. Business Plan – Quarterly Performance Statement vi. Scrutiny of (i) health and (ii) police and crime matters. vii. O&S Work Programme 2019/20 – update.
2020	
27 January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Business Plan 2020/21 – Leader and Chief Executive. ii. Annual Schedule of planned investment in assets (see also, minutes of meeting of 22 July 2019). iii. Flooding Task Group – review of implementation of recommendations (Cabinet, 28 November 2018). iv. O&S Work Programme 2019/20 – update.
16 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Wyre Community Safety Partnership – annual scrutiny review. ii. Small businesses and Wyre’s High Streets – report David Thow (email dated 24 Sept 2019) and draft scoping document iii. Business Plan – Quarterly Performance Statement iv. O&S Work Programme 2019/20 – update.
27 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. O&S Work Programme 2019/20 – update.

Scrutiny task group reviews

Date	Format	Topic
Continued on 2 July 2019	Task Group	Poulton to Fleetwood Link
Started 16 September 2019	Task group	Resident Car Parking Permit Scheme
14 October 2019	Task group	District Environmental Enforcement Pilot
February 2020	Possible task group	Wyre’s Town Centres (see (O&SC 22 July 2019)
	Possible task group	Climate change (see O&SC 3 June 2019)
	Possible task group - originally proposed for 2018/19	Support a sustainable future for the fish processing industry

Updated 8 October 2019

Extract from Lancashire County Council's *Lancashire Insight Newsletter*, published in August 2019

Community safety overview - police recorded crime

The [2018 strategic assessment](#) states: Crime has been increasing in recent years, with a 30% increase from 2015/16 to 2017/18. The peak crime categories include assault with injury, assault without injury, criminal damage, other theft and shoplifting. These categories account for over half of all volume of crime.

When looking at crime in a different perspective – harm – and using the [ONS Crime Severity Tool](#), these volume crimes account for 20% of harm across the county. Using the ONS Crime Severity Tool to look at the most harmful crime categories, gives a different picture to that mentioned above. The most harmful crime types include residential and commercial burglary, assaults, wounding, rape, robbery and sexual activity involving a child. These crimes account for 25% of the volume, but 68% of harm. Investigations into the most harmful crimes are also the most resource intensive, not just for the police, but for partners as well. The score for each partnership can be seen on page 3 of the [community safety dashboard](#).

As part of the strategic process a Living in Lancashire survey was conducted, sending out 2,916 questionnaires to residents across Lancashire. There was a 68% (1,991) response rate with all community safety, crime and policing questions answered by respondents. Analysis of the results found the following highlights:

- 85% of respondents felt safe in their local area – with the age group of 60 yrs+ feeling most safe (88%).
- A lack of police presence (14%) was the most significant reason why respondents felt unsafe in their local area.
- More than three-quarters of respondents felt that issues with violence, sexual exploitation and organised crime were not a big problem.
- 38% of respondents felt that burglary, with half of respondents aged 25-44 years, was a problem.
- 53% felt drug dealing was a problem in their area, with respondents aged 25-59 years having most concern.
- Dangerous driving was seen as a big problem for 49% of respondents (increase from previous survey).
- Less than half of respondents felt that the police and other local public services are dealing with crime and ASB successfully – this has been reducing in recent surveys.
- Cleanliness of the streets (34%) and access to green areas (12%) were issues that had increased in dissatisfaction in local communities.

Crime in England and Wales 2018/19

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) for 12 months ending March 2019 shows a stable picture for all crime across the Country. However, this hides variation in individual crime types, with continued rises in some types of theft and fraud and falls in computer misuse. There were also increases in some of the less frequently occurring but higher-harm types of violence, including offences involving knives and sharp instruments.

Latest full year figures from the Home Office for 2018/19 on police recorded crime show that there were 165,368 crimes (excluding fraud) in the Lancashire-14 area. This represents a 30% increase (38,340 more crimes) in the Lancashire-14 area compared with 2017/18. This is significantly higher than the England and Wales increase of 8% and the second highest increase across all the police forces. Lancashire now has the 5th highest rate per thousand population of crime in England and Wales. Violence against the person increased by 53% (+63,324 crimes), driven by a 120% increase in stalking and harassment. This is likely to be due to improvements in recording these crimes. Data for Community Safety Partnerships areas has not been published for Lancashire Constabulary.

Please note, there have been changes both in categories recorded and in recording practice which have significantly impacted the figures. The [crime data integrity re-inspection 2019](#) judged that Lancashire Constabulary has significantly improved its crime-recording arrangements since the 2017 inspection and is therefore recording more crime. Lancashire Constabulary moved to a new crime recording system in November 2018.

A dashboard detailing the recorded crime data is available to view on the [dashboard page](#).

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