LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

Committee: **CABINET**

Date: **TUESDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2023**

Venue: **LANCASTER TOWN HALL**

Time: **6.00 P.M.**

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies**

2. **Minutes**

   To receive as a correct record the minutes of Cabinet held on Tuesday, 12 September 2023 (previously circulated).

3. **Items of Urgent Business Authorised by the Leader**

   To consider any such items authorised by the Leader and to consider where in the agenda the item(s) are to be considered.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

   To receive declarations by Councillors of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.

   Councillors are reminded that, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. (It is a criminal offence not to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest either in the Register or at the meeting).

   Whilst not a legal requirement, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 and in the interests of clarity and transparency, Councillors should declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared in the Register, at this point in the meeting.

   In accordance with Part B Section 2 of the Code Of Conduct, Councillors are required to declare the existence and nature of any other interests as defined in paragraphs 8(1) or 9(2) of the Code of Conduct.

5. **Public Speaking**

   To consider any such requests received in accordance with the approved procedure.

6. **Reports from Overview and Scrutiny**

   None.

Reports

7. **Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy** (Pages 4 - 87)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Caroline Jackson)

Report of Chief Officer – Housing & Property (report published 18.10.23)

8. **Livestreaming of Cabinet Meetings** (Pages 88 - 90)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Wood)

Report of Chief Officer - Governance

9. **Treasury Management Strategy Mid Year Review** (Pages 91 - 111)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)

Report of Chief Officer Resources (report published 18.10.23)

10. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

This is to give further notice in accordance with Part 2, paragraph 5 (4) and 5 (5) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 of the intention to take the following item in private.

Cabinet is recommended to pass the following recommendation in relation to the following item:-

“That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act.”

Members are reminded that, whilst the following item has been marked as exempt, it is for Cabinet itself to decide whether or not to consider it in private or in public. In making the decision, Members should consider the relevant paragraph of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and also whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. In considering their discretion Members should also be mindful of the advice of Council Officers.

11. **White Lund Depot Improvements** (Pages 112 - 142)

(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Cllr Phillip Black)

Report of Chief Officer – Housing & Property (report published 20.10.23)

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

(i) Membership

Councillors Phillip Black (Chair), Caroline Jackson, Joanne Ainscough, Gina Dowding, Tim Hamilton-Cox, Peter Jackson, Jean Parr, Catherine Potter, Nick Wilkinson and Jason Wood

(ii) Queries regarding this Agenda

Please contact Liz Bateson, Democratic Services - email ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk.

(iii) Changes to Membership, substitutions or apologies

Please contact Democratic Support, telephone 582000, or alternatively email democracy@lancaster.gov.uk.

MARK DAVIES,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
TOWN HALL,
DALTON SQUARE,
LANCASTER, LA1 1PJ

Published on MONDAY 16 OCTOBER, 2023.

CABINET

Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy

Report of Chief Officer Housing & Property

PURPOSE OF REPORT					
To request members approval of the Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 – 2028.					
Key Decision		**Non-Key Decision**	**X**	**Referral from Cabinet Member**	
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	n/a				
This report is public					

RECOMMENDATIONS OF CLLR CAROLINE JACKSON

(1) To approve and adopt the Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy and the three-year action plan (Appendix One).

(2) That annual updates on progress be presented to Cabinet.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 In July 2020 the Council adopted the Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy for 2020 – 2023 to prevent homelessness. The previous Strategy was approved at the start of the Covid pandemic, since then a number of priorities have been achieved (see below for more details), whilst others were no longer deemed relevant. Latterly housing market conditions and homelessness has inexplicably changed with inflationary increases, the cost of living crisis, increasing refugees / asylum seekers being accommodated, increased use of bed and breakfast / temporary accommodation and an increasing shortage of access to affordable accommodation contributing to a wider housing crisis, therefore it has been prudent to review the strategy early and replace with a new strategy and action plan.

1.2 A consultant was commissioned to undertake a review of the 2020 – 2023 strategy (Appendix Two) and to develop the new strategy. Information from the review, and meetings with partners and the voluntary sector, including those with lived experience, was used to inform the 2023 – 2028 strategy (Appendix One).

2.0 Homelessness Review

2.1 The review shows considerable progress made from 2020. Highlights include:

2.1.1 the successful capital funding bid to acquire and take forward the development of 12 self-contained move on flats for single homeless people (Jubilee Court), with revenue funding to provide visiting support enabling residents to receive floating support prior to moving to independent living.

2.1.2 Successful rough sleeper funding and next steps revenue funding bids have enabled the commissioning of the rough sleeper floating support contract with extended funding to continue this until 2025 provided by Calico. Calico also provides an accommodation finding service, with referrals received from the Housing Options Team. They have built positive relationships with private landlords and housed 120 households in settled accommodation, from 2020 to date.

2.1.3 A rough sleeper navigator is employed, by Calico and funded by rough sleeper initiative revenue funding bid via the Council which provides, outreach, support and liaison for rough sleepers and people in short stay accommodation. This service has helped to significantly reduce the numbers rough sleeping in the district.

2.1.4 In August 2022 a joint bid for funding with Preston City Council led by Lancaster was submitted following two pilots in Lancashire for the supported housing improvement programme to improve the quality and value for money within the unregulated supported housing sector. This bid was successful to employ a team of officers who will be in post by the end of 2023.

2.1.5 A new 5 bed supported housing project has opened to use for homeless temporary accommodation at Mary Street in Lancaster managed by Calico/Acorn and a redesigned 4 bed service is now available for single homeless female (only) temporary accommodation at Portland Street.

2.1.6 A new housing young people's LGBT homeless accommodation scheme has opened in Morecambe in partnership with Calico.

2.1.7 A new Women's refuge was opened in late 2021 to accommodate families fleeing domestic abuse with 6-units within the scheme to accommodate single females with more complex needs including mental health and substance misuse.

2.1.8 Extra funding from central government has enabled the city council to fund specialist housing options officers including: a specialist temporary accommodation support officer, landlord liaison officer to support the work with landlords and letting agencies in the private rented sector and a domestic abuse housing options officer.

2.1.9 Peer led befriending is provided by Let's Be Friends, by those with lived experience commissioned by the Council to match fund the service funded via the Rough sleeper initiative.

3.0 Local Context

3.1 The local and national picture shows there is still more to do, at the end of June 2023 there were over 3,000 people on the housing register wanting Council Housing and the number of people rough sleeping locally is increasing between July and September 2022 the Council recorded 8 people as rough sleeping during that period, for the same timeframe in 2023 this had risen to 19, whilst those statutorily recorded as homeless and requiring re-housing from the Council has risen from 19 at the end of September 2022 for that quarter to 40 at the same point this year.

3.2 Due to the lack of available housing, the numbers of residents living in hotel accommodation is also rising significantly, throughout July-September 2022 the Local Authority had accommodated 17 families, three of who had gone over the statutory maximum of 6 weeks, whilst for the same period in 2023, these figures had increased to 40 families having been accommodated and 31 going over the statutory maximum 6 week limit. Whilst this is not unique to Lancaster District it places significant pressure on the Council's limited finances, staffing resources in managing the increase in applications as well as the Council's housing stock.

3.3 The 5 most common assessed support needs for people who were accepted as homeless or threatened with homelessness in Quarter 4 2021/22 were mental health problems, physical ill health, and disability, offending, rough sleeping and repeat homelessness. In Quarter 4 2022/23 the 5 most common assessed support needs were mental health problems, physical ill health, and disability, rough sleeping and domestic abuse (physical and non-physical). This shows an increase in the numbers presenting with domestic abuse as the main support need, compared to the same period the previous year. Further detail can be found within the Homelessness Review.

4.0 Homelessness Strategy

4.1 The draft strategy includes several key priorities to address homelessness and rough sleeping within the District which are supported by a range of actions and recognises the importance of partnership working, including across council departments, statutory and voluntary agencies.

4.2 The strategy is underpinned by the following key priorities which have corresponding actions:

- Priority 1: Prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Priority 2: Intervention to relieve homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Priority 3: Recovery from homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Priority 4: Underlying improvements to reducing homelessness in Lancaster and improving our services locally.

4.3 These priorities were informed by a review of the 2020 – 2023 homelessness and rough sleeping strategy and the priorities align with those detailed in DLUHC's Ending Rough Sleeping Strategy, which was published in September 2022.

4.4 The action plan reflects the four priorities and will be a living document, which is monitored, reviewed and reported on at the Lancaster Advisory Group and the Homelessness Forum. It is recognised that changes may need to be made to this so local need and circumstances are responded to.

5.0 Details of Consultation

5.1 Consultation was undertaken at the Housing Advisory Group, Homelessness Forum, on the Council's website and by directly emailing city councillors, parish councillors, health professionals, voluntary sector, registered social landlords council colleagues, and other statutory and public services such as Social Care. In addition to discussions at forums, people were encouraged to complete the online questionnaire or directly email with comments.

5.2 The feedback asked respondents what they think the biggest challenges are around preventing homelessness and rough sleeping in the Lancaster District and to comment on the four priorities which are included in the draft strategy.

5.3 The biggest challenges cited were lack of affordable accommodation, meeting the needs of people with complex needs and a lack of funding for adequate staffing levels and a wider range of supported housing.

5.4 There is overall agreement with the four priorities, our online consultation shows 85% agreeing with priority one, 80% with priority 2, 91% with priority 3, and 89% with priority 4. These will guide the action plan and the key performance indicators (KPIs) for monitoring progress on our actions.

5.5 The independent consultant also met with the Housing Options Team, providers of services and those with lived experience, to ensure a wide range of voices were heard and able to influence the strategy and action plan, whilst also taking into account the resources available both to the City Council and other contributory services who will be responsible for supporting with the action plan.

6.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: Do not approve the revised Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy.	**Option 2:** Approve the revised Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy.
Advantages	No notable advantages	• Independently reviewed strategy which is compliant with current legislation and good practice. • Reduction in homelessness. • Reduction in use of bed and breakfast, for families and single people. • Provides a clear framework and action plan for the council and partners to reduce homelessness. • Improved community cohesion.

Disadvantages	• Unable to carry out statutory duties to prevent homelessness. • Increased statutory homeless applications. • Increased health inequalities. • Increase in temporary accommodation costs.	• No notable disadvantages
Risks	• Legal challenge – the council would be in breach of its legal requirements and face censure, and the loss of funding support, form the Government. • Increased costs to the council through increasing levels of homelessness and rough sleeping. • Reduced community cohesion and increase in ASB.	• Targets are not achieved.

7.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

7.1 The officer preferred option is 2.

8.0 Conclusion

The report provides information on progress made with the 2020 – 2023 strategy and sets out priorities in the draft 2023 – 2028 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which we are seeking approval for. Whilst the national and local housing context is undeniably challenging setting out a clear plan for action and working in partnership with others provides the best opportunity to support some of the District's most vulnerable residents.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

Corporate Priorities: The priorities directly contribute to the Council's approved priorities, which includes focussing on early intervention approaches and involving our communities.
Homes Strategy: contributes to supporting independent living, creating sustainable communities, and improving health through housing.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and concludes no adverse impact.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Section 1 Homelessness Act 2002 provides that the Council as a housing authority must have in place a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in in their district. The Strategy must be renewed at least every 5 years.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The process of adopting and implementing the strategy can be resourced from within existing budgets.

However, it should be noted that the council is currently under significant financial pressure due to the costs associated with relatively high numbers of eligible families currently being housed within temporary accommodation under our statutory duty. In the short term, this may require drawdown of the unspent government grant from previous years which is ringfenced to be spent on reducing homelessness (£455K as of 1 April 2023). This strategy will be instrumental in reducing these costs in future years, and preparing to make the provision more sustainable, where required.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

Where the need for additional resources is identified applications will be made for funding through Government funding relating to their Ending Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Information Services:

None

Property:

None

Open Spaces:

None

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, the increase in homelessness and the use of Bed & Breakfast, or other temporary accommodation is a significant budgetary pressure for all Councils. As we work towards the 2024/25 Budget it is likely that the costs of meeting our statutory obligations will outstrip available grants.

This strategy will be instrument in not only looking at means of prevention and early intervention but also presenting a range of options which may require significant investment by the Council in future years.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	Contact Officer
Appendix 1: Draft Lancaster City Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Action Plan 2023 – 2028 (for approval) **Appendix 2:** Lancaster City Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review. **Appendix 3**: Equality Impact Assessment	**Contact Officer:** Mary Whitfield **Telephone: 01524 582621** **E-mail: mwhitfield**@lancaster.gov.uk

Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 - 2028

Contents

Foreword from Cabinet Member

I am delighted to be able to introduce the new Homelessness Strategy for Lancaster District. It is important to note we have taken the unusual step of revising our strategy earlier than the necessary five-year interval. This reflects the impressive changes that have taken place here within homelessness provision. They have rendered the previous strategy in large part irrelevant.

Four years ago, the context of homeless provision was often scattered, largely reactive and even competitive. Things have changed because our thriving local partnership focuses on what is best and most effective in keeping people housed and getting rough sleepers off the streets for good. We now have key improvements; floating support, the nurse provision, Let's Be Friends and the SHIP project but we know there is far more to do to reach those in danger of homelessness earlier, to support mental health difficulties and to improve the endless problem of finding suitable, affordable accommodation.

My thanks go to council officers, but I acknowledge everybody in the district who contributed to the strategy and contributes every day to the work of getting and keeping people housed. The partnership between the city council, agencies and the third sector has brought renewed kindness and hope to many. With your help the new strategy will continue and extend that work.

Councillor Caroline Jackson, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Introduction

Lancaster's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2023-2028 has been developed during a period of national economic uncertainty. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, and the tightening housing market, typified by demand outstripping supply and rising rental costs, have combined with other underlying challenges affecting communities and public services, to have an impact on homelessness in our local area.

Demand for homelessness services has been rising in Lancaster and it is likely this will continue for two years or more, as low-income households in particular struggle to keep a foothold in the housing market. Helping people to find alternative suitable housing is increasingly difficult as the private rented sector becomes less affordable to those on low incomes and fewer social housing properties are available for rent. It can be more difficult for people who have experienced multiple disadvantage and complexity of needs.

Local, but increasingly national and global factors can play a large part in risks of homelessness and these factors are beyond the control of individual households at risk and those agencies working on homelessness locally. For example, the invasion of Ukraine and withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan have both resulted in the UK taking more refugees. Lancaster is playing a significant part in the County response, including finding homes for families and single people arriving in the area.

To ensure we are focused on clear priorities, designed to overcome some of the challenges and make continual improvement in our services to those who are or may be homeless, we decided to review homelessness in Lancaster and develop a new strategy only 3 years since our last strategy, 2 years earlier than was legally required.

This Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy aims to build on what is working well in our area, our local partnerships and our work with other District Councils and Lancashire County Council. We want to focus on the prevention of homelessness, making any episode of homelessness one that is short, and better meeting customer's needs so homelessness is not a feature of their lives. Our priorities need to be broad enough to have longevity, despite any change in trends, and actions will have to be reviewed routinely to adjust according to evidence based information. Where possible, we need to change what has not been working well, through together identifying and addressing barriers to continual improvement.

We have used data, other information, and feedback to review homelessness in the Lancaster City Council area, its causes and how these effects different groups of people in our communities. There is a lot of detail provided in our Review of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, which we undertook in the Autumn and Winter of 2022/23. The Review is available separately to this strategy document.

Progress since our last Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Over the last 3 years, which have been some of the most unpredictable and challenging times for the nation, Lancaster City Council, usually with the help and support of some our partners, have continued to work on our priorities as set out in our previous Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Overall, our partners have told us that there is improved partnership working, in part because of our much closer joint working to assist people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness over the Covid-19 pandemic.

Examples of some of the progresses are:

- Everyone In - supporting people rough sleeping off the streets during the first lock down of the pandemic and helping to prevent rough sleeping for single people who were on the 'edge' of being roofless during the pandemic.
- Development of accommodation and support services to assist people recovering from rough sleeping, including new accommodation options and a befriending organisation run by people with lived experience of homelessness.
- There have been some developments in health provision for people who are rough sleeping or recovering from homeless, for example:
    - A new Parish Nurse role has been established to work with people who are or have been rough sleeping on their health and well-being.
    - Establishing Health and Well-Being Coaches from Salt Ayre Leisure Centre to support homeless people in our supported housing schemes, and free gym passes are available to all those recovering from rough sleeping.
    - The Protect and Vaccinate Programme offered Covid-19 vaccinations to people who were formerly rough sleeping.
    - A multi-agency planning approach for people who are homeless and with complex or multiple needs who are in hospital, including the A&E Department

- A partnership in Lancaster and Morecambe is delivering Changing Futures, which is a government funded programme to pilot a new way of working on a voluntary basis with people experiencing multiple disadvantages, including homelessness. We have a multi-agency team in place, including a nurse practitioner.
- We have strengthened our day-to-day working relationships with local hospitals and with the National Probation Service, to try to reach people earlier who may be at high risk of homelessness on leaving either hospital or prison.
- The Home Improvement Agency within the Council works to prevent homelessness by helping people to stay in their own homes, through making improvements and adaptions.
- There is significantly more refuge and second stage accommodation for victims of domestic abuse, provided by SafeNet.
- There is a new 4 bed supported accommodation scheme specifically for LGBTQIA young people.
- Calico run an Accommodation Finding Service, working with local private landlords. They also provide floating support for people who have been rough sleeping to assist them in sustaining tenancies. The remit of the Accommodation Finding Service has been expanded to include other households who are at risk of homelessness.
- A number of new specialist functions have been created in the Housing Options Service - a Temporary Accommodation Officer, a Domestic Abuse Housing Options Officer, and an

additional Housing Options Prevention Officer. A private sector liaison officer is employed by Calico, assisting to source accommodation and build relationships with private landlords.

- Lancaster City Council has also funded a full-time homeless debt advisor at NLCAB.
- We are now part of a scheme called Help2Rent, which provides landlords with private accommodation free insurance packages for homeless households coming through the Housing Options Service
- Lancaster City Council with Preston City Council have been awarded £627,299 funding through the Government's Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP). This is a 3-year national programme to improve non-commissioned supported housing provision where it is of poor quality and has been funded via 'exempt' Housing Benefit.

Our ambition over the next 5 years

Our ambition is to end rough sleeping and significantly reduce the numbers of household having to present as homelessness in the Lancaster district; we aim to provide services which mean no one is sleeping rough due to a lack of support or accommodation being made available. We will do this by working in collaboration with our voluntary and statutory sector and with the voices of those with lived experience at the forefront of our commissioning decisions and good practice, ensuring the service is focussed on the prevention of homelessness and the service offered is tailored to meet local needs.

Summary of findings from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review undertaken in the Autumn and Winter of 2022/23:

About Lancaster City Council area

- The population of the Lancaster City Council area has grown by 3.3%, from 138,400 in 2011 to 142,900 in 2021 and is predicted to rise to 154,297 by 2032.
- Overall, the population has become older, with a slight decline in numbers aged under 50 and an increase in the numbers and proportion of the population aged over 50.
- Out of 317 local authority areas in England, Lancaster is in the third which are most deprived, based on a scoring of measures within the Indices of Multiple Deprivation
- The proportion of income needed to buy a house for those in the lowest quartile of earnings has almost doubled over the last 20 years, with properties in the lower end of the market costing an average of £132,500, a rise from around £40,000 in 2001.
- Private rented housing accounted for 21% of the housing market in the Lancaster City Council area in 2020, this has not changed since 2014. 10% of the housing market was social and affordable rented in 2020, again this has not changed.
- The number of people of working age claiming out of work benefits decreased from 5.4 % (5,405 people) in March 2020 to 2.8% (2,620 people) in August 2022.

Homelessness and its causes

- Homelessness applications have increased - in the first 3 months of 2021 there were 139 applications for assistance, but this had risen to 234 in the same period, in 2022. This is a rise of 62% and is in part a result of the impact of Covid-19, which led to temporary changes to the law on evictions resulting in fewer people moving during periods of lockdown.
- The most common causes of people being at risk of homelessness have changed in Lancaster, with ending of a tenancy in private rented sector driving more threats of

homelessness in 2022 than the previous year. There have been changes in the private market, with higher demand as more landlords are selling up and leaving the market or seeking higher rents. The increase in evictions appears to be set to continue at the moment, based on the most available data.

- Family and friends being no longer willing or able to accommodate was the second most common reason where there was a threat of homelessness.
- The most common causes of people becoming homeless in 2022 are different – with 'family and friends no longer being willing or able to accommodate' being the most given reason. Domestic abuse, ending of a non-violent relationship and eviction from supported housing were also reasons which featured strongly in reasons for homelessness.
- It is widely expected that the pressures on low-income households as a result of the cost-of-living crisis and the lack of supply of accommodation which people can afford to rent, will increase the levels of homelessness. This is a national issue.

Which groups are at highest risk of homelessness?

- Single people are at higher risk of homelessness in Lancaster than those with children.
- Men are more likely to present as homeless than women. Most men in this position are single, whereas most women who are seeking assistance have dependent children.
- People aged between 25 and 44 are at much higher risk of homelessness than people aged over 45.
- Younger adults overall do not appear to be at greater risk, but this position is not straightforward to understand as the population includes a large proportion of students who are not from Lancaster. The extent of youth homelessness within the non-student population may well be slightly hidden as a result.
- Care leavers may be at higher risk of homelessness than other young people in Lancaster because referrals from Children's Social Care are not made with sufficient notice to enable planned moves for looked after placements. This is an area that needs to be addressed.
- People who are not working are at much higher risk of homelessness than those in employment. A quarter of the working age population in Lancaster is not working for a range of reasons, including ill health, being unemployed, caring for children or being a student. Around 75% of homeless households are not in work.
- There is a strong link between poor physical and mental health and homelessness, with 38% of people self-reporting poor physical health or a disability and nearly half of all applicants reporting mental health issues. There are better joint working arrangements in place but still gaps, especially for those with mental health issues who have multiple or complex needs and need more direct access routes and responses to what are often significant unmet mental health needs.
- More data collection and analysis are needed to understand if people from different ethnic groups or with different sexual orientation identities are more at risk of homelessness locally.

People with support needs

- The 5 most common assessed support needs for people who were accepted as homeless or threatened with homelessness in Quarter 4 2021/22 were:
    - mental health problems
    - physical ill health and disability
    - offending
    - rough sleeping

        - repeat homelessness.
- Domestic abuse also featured highly, with around 17% of all support needs relating to domestic abuse. The number seeking assistance with homelessness due to domestic abuse rose slightly from 14 to 17 households, between 2021 and 2022, based on numbers taken from January to March in both years.

Rough sleeping

- Early in the Covid-19 pandemic the Government instructed all councils to bring in off the streets all people rough sleeping. Within a few days in March 2020, 22 people in Lancaster were offered accommodation. By the end of Everyone In, 59 people had been assisted, not all of whom were rough sleeping, but at high risk of doing so.
- Despite our shared focus on ending rough sleeping, this is still a problem in Lancaster. At the last ‘snapshot’ in November 2022, 9 people were reported to be rough sleeping, a rise from 3 people on a single night in November 2021.
- Most people reported to be sleeping rough are men aged between 25 and 60.
- Over the last 3 years, the local authority has developed a much better understanding of rough sleeping in the area and ways to address this. There has been significant investment in local services, funded by central Government.
- There are a mixture of services providing outreach, short term supported accommodation, help to find and to keep a home, befriending and drop-in services. A partnership of voluntary and faith organisations, as well as housing associations, Lancaster City Council, Police, the National Probation Service and health agencies, all work together to support people away from rough sleeping.
- There are some new accommodation options for people who have been rough sleeping: A new Housing First pilot is under development. And in the pipeline are 12 units of ‘second stage’ self-contained accommodation, which will be in Jubilee Court in Lancaster. This will be move-on from the first stage supported accommodation in Calico’s Acorn Recovery Services (Portland Street, Mary Street, Aldcliffe House and Walter Lyon House). Jubilee Court has been commissioned by the Council and provided by Calico. This provision has been modelled so the rents are low and will therefore enable people to work.
- There is more focus on improving the physical and mental health of people who have experienced rough sleeping. Substance misuse services are accessible and available to people who need them, there is strong partnership working with local hospitals and there is a new Parish Nurse role and access to Health and Well-Being Coaches.
- Whilst this is positive there are still gaps in health provision for vulnerable people who are or have been homeless. There are significant issues accessing mental health services. There is no straightforward route into more specialist mental health services and there are no counselling services which people with more complex needs can easily engage with.
- Funding for Changing Futures was awarded for a 3-year period, but due to central Government delays in start times, this has reduced to around 26 months. The focus of this programme is on positive outcomes for people with multiple and complex needs, including finding and keeping a home.

Temporary Accommodation

- The number of households in Temporary Accommodation (TA) rose from 8 in March 2019 to 38 in March 2022. By June 2022 this had reduced to 28 households. This is a mixture of single people (13), households with dependent children (13) and two households which were neither of these groups.

- The most used type of Temporary Accommodation is Bed and Breakfast (B&B) which includes hotels. This is high cost for councils and tends to be of lower quality. More single people are placed into B&B as this type of accommodation is not suitable for families. It is unlawful for families to be placed in B&B when homeless for more than 6 weeks.
- Eight of the 28 households in TA were in stock owned by a housing association or by Lancaster City Council. This arrangement is more suitable for homelessness households whose homelessness is not resolved quickly and is also lower cost for the local authority.

Types of supported housing

- There are a range of types of supported accommodation in Lancaster and Morecambe to better meet the needs of different groups:
    - Young people aged 16 – 25, including a bespoke accommodation scheme for LGBTQ+ young people.
    - Refuge and second stage accommodation for victims of domestic abuse
    - People who were formerly rough sleeping
    - Those recovering from addiction to alcohol or other substances.
    - People with complex needs
    - People with mental health problems
- Some accommodation has shared facilities, and some is self-contained.
- In addition, there is some 'floating support' available for people when they move into their own tenancies.

Settled accommodation - finding a home.

- At the end of October 2022 there were 2,655 people on the housing register, a rise of 36% from 2019.
- Waiting times vary from a few months to several years. This is dependent on the level of priority awarded and types of housing that are in most demand. There has been a slowdown in the amount of vacant social housing each year, with around 8% of all stock being let, around 290 properties.
- A significant proportion of social housing lettings recently have been to older people, for Independent Living housing, as these were suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic to avoid the spread of infection.
- The demand for and cost of renting privately has risen in Lancaster City Council area. Some areas are more affordable for people who are on low incomes and may need to claim benefit for assistance with housing costs.
- Overall, there continues to be a shortfall between the amount of Local Housing Allowance which can be claimed, and the rent charged, with the difference being most significant for 1 bedroom and 3-bedroom properties. This makes access into the private rented sector challenging for those on low incomes.

Partnership working

Lancaster City Council works with a wide range of other agencies to prevent and relieve homelessness in our area. A Homelessness Advisory Group has been established, with representatives from the public and voluntary sectors, as well as housing associations and private landlords.

People with lived experience of homelessness are a key stakeholder as well in the Homelessness Advisory Group, through Let's Be Friends, a peer led organisation offering company and support to people who have experienced homelessness.

Lancaster City Council works with Lancashire County Council and is party to some cross-borough working with neighbouring Councils on some homelessness and related initiatives – for example, young people and victims of domestic abuse.

Whilst not an exhaustive list, the below sets out some of the key partners that Lancaster City Council works with to prevent and relieve homelessness and assist people in their recovery from homelessness.

- Acorn Recovery
- Barnardo's
- Calico
- Change Grow Live
- Changing Futures
- Citizen's Advice North Lancashire
- SafeNet - services for victims of domestic abuse
- Global Link Refugee Service
- Jigsaw
- Job Centre – Department for Work and Pensions
- Lancaster and District Homeless Advice Service
- Lancashire County Council
- Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Trust Foundation
- Lancashire Police
- Let's Be Friends
- Methodist House
- National Probation Service
- Out in the Bay
- The Salvation Army
- University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Trust
- The Well Communities
- West End Impact

Strategic fit

The 2023 - 2028 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy reflects a number of local and national priorities:

National context:

The most recent **Rough Sleeping Strategy, 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good'** was published by the Government in September 2022. The strategy aims to focus on 'prevent first' to stop more people rough sleeping in the future. Earlier identification of those who may be at risk of rough sleeping, prevention, and swift intervention to stop homelessness are key themes in the new strategy. The importance of partnerships between statutory and community sector partners and a more transparent and joined-up system are highlighted, so all partners are doing what they can to deliver these goals. There is an intention to reduce and end homelessness when people leave institutions like hospital and prison.

Government introduced new legislation to improve rates of preventing homelessness and to assist all households which are eligible and may be at risk of homelessness through the **Homelessness Reduction Act 2017,** which amended Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. One aim of the Act was to encourage more single people to approach for assistance, regardless of whether they have a priority need for accommodation or not.

Assistance on prevention of homelessness within 56 days has been in place since April 2018, to help eligible households to resolve a threat of homelessness. Some public bodies must, with consent, refer people under ‘the duty to refer’ to a housing options service, if they believe they may be at risk of homelessness.

The **Domestic Abuse Act** received Royal Assent in April 2021 and introduced some significant changes in homelessness, through the amending of Part 7 of Housing Act 1996, giving victims of domestic abuse a priority need for accommodation. The definition of domestic abuse, as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act has been incorporated into the homelessness legislation. Consequently, local authorities must ensure they can offer safe temporary accommodation to those fleeing domestic abuse and set out an annual strategy for doing so based on local needs.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) produced a report in February 2023, with several recommendations, to improve standards, these could be implemented during the lifetime of the Strategy and impact the expectation on private sector landlords.

Local context:

Lancaster Corporate Priorities 2030

There are some outcomes in the Corporate Plan which align directly with the Lancaster Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, for example:

- being focused on early intervention approaches and involving our communities in the service design and delivery
- (re) developing housing to ensure people of all incomes are comfortable and able to maintain their independence.
- Working in partnership with residents, local organisations, anchor institutions and partners, recognising the strength and skills in our community to build a powerful force working for our District.

Lancaster City Council’s Homes Strategy 2020 – 2025 has set out a wide range of plans which indirectly and directly support work to prevent and relieve homelessness, in terms of improving the quality and quantity of affordable housing locally. Set out in the Strategy are plans to commence small scale social and affordable house building programmes, developing a new local authority owned housing company as a vehicle for achieving this, as well as measures to improve the energy efficiency of social housing and the overall quality of both social and private rented housing stock, working with other landlords to do so.

Governance and Delivery of the Strategy

The Homelessness Forum will oversee the delivery of this Strategy through developing an action plan, with timescales and leads for each action and monitoring the Plan quarterly. The Group is comprised of representatives from Lancaster City Council and a range of partner organisations from the public, voluntary and faith sectors, as well as people with lived experience, and some housing associations.

Lancaster City Council's Cabinet will be presented with an annual update on progress against the actions, any changes made to the Plan and the areas which are more challenging to address regarding delivery.

It is expected that priorities and actions within the Plan will change over the 5 years duration of the Strategy and any significant changes will be noted in the Strategy and Plan, updated accordingly, and published on-line.

Relevant Links

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (legislation.gov.uk)

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (legislation.gov.uk)

Ending rough sleeping for good - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Housing strategy - Lancaster City Council

Corporate plan - Lancaster City Council

PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS FOR THE NEXT 3 YEARS (OCTOBER 2023 – SEPTEMBER 2026)

PRIORITY AREA 1: PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING			
What will we be doing and when?	**Timescales**	**Responsible Officer / Service**	**How will we know if actions are having an impact?**
1.1 Encouraging people to contact us earlier if there is a housing need or risk of homelessness by: 1.1.1 Updating our website to provide comprehensive and up-to-date information to people, with specific information aimed at different groups who are at high risk of homelessness.	**Make Changes in Year 1**	Homelessness Strategy Officer	• Annual increase of at least X % in proportion of households assisted whose homelessness is prevented. • Annual increase of at least x % in proportion of households where homelessness is prevented and who retain their accommodation. • A reduction in the number and proportion of single people who become homeless whilst owed the prevention duty. • A higher number of referrals per year via the 'Duty to Refer.' • Lower numbers of households report the main cause of homelessness is leaving an institution. • Instances of repeat homelessness, including rough sleeping, are reduced**.**
1.1.2 Supporting and updating partner agencies who work directly with or have 'touch points' with people where there may be a future risk of homelessness, so households get help earlier, understand the limitations of housing options locally and work with agencies to avoid a threat of homelessness.	**Agree With Agencies Based on Agreed Priority Over Year 1 & 2**	Homelessness Strategy Officer / Housing Options Manager	

1.2 Mitigating risks of homelessness due to the Impact of the cost-of-living increases on vulnerable households by: 1.2.1 Providing money advice services through the North Lancaster Citizen's Advice Bureau and support to households at risk of losing their home, including court desk services, due to cost-of-living crisis.	**Years 1, 2 & 3**	Housing Options Manager / NLCAB	
1.2.2 Working together to utilise available funding sources, including the Household Support Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments, to prevent homelessness.	**Deliver Through Years 1, 2 & 3**	Housing Options Manager / LCC Community Hub / Revs and Bens (Shared Service)	
1.2.3 Enabling and supporting households living in social housing to 'downsize' where they have spare bedrooms, to reduce their household costs.	**Years 1, 2 & 3**	Council Housing Team / LCC Choice Based Lettings Team	
1.2.4 Working more closely with private landlords through a landlord offer of tangible solutions /problem solving where there is a risk of a	**Develop In Year 1.**	Housing Options Manager / Housing Options Team /	

Section 21 or Section 8 notice leading to homelessness.	**Options Available Years 2 & 3**	Private Sector Housing Team	
1.2.5 Take pre-emptive action with Lancashire County Council to prevent repeat homelessness by identifying families with dependent children who seek assistance and have already had one or more episode of homelessness, ensuring a multi-agency approach as required.	**Years 1, 2 & 3**	Housing Options Manager / Housing Options Team	
1.3 Increasing the number of single people where a threat of homelessness is prevented by: 1.3.1 Enhancing our prevention options/tools for single people to ensure we offer solutions which are bespoke and innovative, and which enable people, including victims of domestic abuse, to retain their accommodation wherever possible.	**DEVELOP IN YEAR 1. OPTIONS AVAILABLE YEARS 2 & 3**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Housing Options Team	
1.3.2 Developing incentivised 'planned move' options for some single people who cannot remain in their current accommodation long	**Develop In Year 1. Options Available Years 2 & 3**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer	

term, so they avoid the cliff edge of homelessness.			
1.3.3 Reviewing with partners the effectiveness of joint protocols, the use of Duty to Refer and working arrangements for people who are leaving: ○ Local Authority Care ○ Hospital ○ Prison ○ The Armed Forces ○ Relationships which feature domestic abuse	**Review And Update in Years 1, 2 & 3 Based on Current Effectiveness**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Lancashire County Council (Social Care) / NHS Foundation Trust / Lancaster Farms (Prison Service) / Armed Forces links including named LCC Officer / MARAC partners	

PRIORITY AREA 2: INTERVENTION TO RELIEVE HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING			
What will we be doing and when?	**Timescales**	**Responsible Officer / Service**	**How will we know if actions are having an impact?**
2.1 Improving options and access into the Private Rented Sector by: 2.1.1 Working with Calico to review, enhance and promote the package of financial and other incentives for private landlords, including specific incentives for 12 month lets, which enable the main housing duty to be ended, more floating support for tenants if needed; a Landlord Forum for improved communication and contingency plans for tenancies which are at high risk of failure.	**Review In Year 1 And Implement in Year 2**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Calico	• Annual increase of at least X % in proportion of households assisted whose homelessness is relieved. • Reduction in use of B&B for families • No families in B&B for more than 6 weeks • TA portfolio is more balanced, with less use of B&B overall and minimal use of B&B for families. • A drop of x % in eviction from supported housing being the cause of homelessness over the next 5 years • Improved rates of successful relief of homelessness for single people
2.1.2 Increasing the speed and efficiency of provision of rent in advance and deposits to landlords through transferring some of the Homelessness Prevention funding from Lancaster City Council to Calico's Accommodation Finding Service	**Decide in Year 1 And Allocate Funding**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Calico	

2.2	**Developing more access to social renting options in Lancaster by:** 2.2.1 Building of new social housing, as set out in the 2020-2025 Lancaster Homes Strategy.	**Years 1, 2 & 3**	Principal Housing Strategy Officer / Head of Housing	
2.2.2	Continuing to ensure there is flexibility and discretion to allow for direct lets into social housing to households in Temporary Accommodation or supported housing	**Years 1, 2 & 3**	LCC Choice Based Lettings Team / Housing Options Manager	
2.3	**Lowering numbers of single people approaching as already homeless by:** 2.3.1 Creating with partners a Lancaster 'minimum service offer' of practical assistance and support for people who were formerly rough sleeping and are now re-settling, to reduce risks of repeat homelessness.	**Develop In Year 1 And Implement in Year 2**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer	
2.3.2	Reviewing and improving the package of relief tools/options for single people who are not rough sleeping and do not have a priority need for accommodation or support needs, e.g., mediation with	**Year 1**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer	

family /friends, practical assistance to access short- term/emergency accommodation which is safe and suitable.			
2.3.3. Reviewing as a partnership the need for emergency/off the street options for people who are rough sleeping and if this is a gap, how this could be best addressed.	**Year 1**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer	
2.3.4. Establishing and embedding multi-agency contingency planning for people with multiple disadvantage /complex needs, including victims of domestic abuse, who have been rough sleeping, are rehoused but at risk of eviction and rough sleeping again.	**Year 1**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer	
2.3.5. Reducing rates of eviction from supported housing as a cause of homelessness through agreeing a pre-eviction protocol with commissioners of supported accommodation and providers	**Develop And Implement in Year 2**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Lancashire County Council / Supported Accommodation Providers	

PRIORITY AREA 3: RECOVERY FROM HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING			
What will we be doing and when?	**Timescales**	**Responsible Officer / Service**	**How will we know if actions are having an impact?**
3.1 Ensuring every person sleeping rough receives the support they need to recover and move away from the streets long-term, helping them set up a stable home, and move into work or training if they can by: ○ Learning from the Changing Futures Programme and shaping services based on what is working well. ○ Continuing to improve what is already working well in meeting the health needs of people formerly rough sleeping. ○ Undertaking with Health partners and other stakeholders, including people with lived experience, a Joint Needs Analysis - to cover physical and in particular mental health & well-being, relating to people recovering	**On-Going In Years 1 & 2** **On-Going In Years 1, 2 & 3** **Set Up and Complete Audit in Year 1. Planning Agreed to Address Gaps in Provision Year 2. Changes To Access**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Health partners / Lets Be Friends / Calico / Job Centre	• **Instances of repeat homelessness, including rough sleeping, are reduced.**

from rough sleeping and using this as the basis for planning.	**Routes/Additional Services**		
○ Setting up and opening the Housing First provision and support for people with multiple and complex needs recovering from rough sleeping	**Year 1**		
○ Working with Calico to open Jubilee Court as second -stage low cost rented housing for up to 12 people formerly rough sleeping, so they can enter work/training and afford to pay the rent.	**Year 1**		
○ Developing further the partnership with the Job Centre to support people recovering from rough sleeping to take up work experience and/or paid employment or apprenticeships.	**On-Going Through Years 1, 2 & 3**		
○ Continuing to fund Let's Be Friends and support other work which offers peer support and company to people recovering from rough sleeping, as well as lived experience expertise and insights.	**On-Going Through Years 1, 2 & 3**		

3.2	**Assisting other homeless households, including families, to recover from homelessness and minimise risks of any repeat homelessness by:** ○ A local multi-agency offer for resettlement support to victims of domestic abuse leaving SafeNet or other refuge provision and returning to the area. ○ Incentivising and supporting households to seek employment once homelessness is relieved, through discretionary short-term topping up of private sector rents where there is a shortfall for people who are in work or actively seeking work.	**Develop In Year 2**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Job Centre	

PRIORITY AREA 4: UNDERLYING IMPROVEMENTS TO REDUCING HOMELESSNESS IN LANCASTER AND IMPROVING OUR SERVICES LOCALLY			
What will we be doing and when?	**Timescales**	**Responsible Officer / Service**	**How will we know if actions are having an impact?**
4.1 Improving partnership working through the Homelessness Forum and other networks/groups in Lancaster by: 4.1.1 Establishing joint planning and improved communication within the Homelessness Forum by sharing of: ○ homelessness & rough sleeping statistics ○ other related data from partner agencies ○ customer feedback ○ local/regional/national policy changes ○ what is working well. ○ analysis and other business intelligence insights	**Establish In Year 1**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer	• Partners and stakeholders report improved joint working around homelessness. • H-CLIC returns are submitted and published in full, with significantly reduced use of ‘catch all’ categories e.g. ‘Not Known’ or ‘Other’ • Rough sleeping reporting is a standing agenda item on the Homelessness Advisory Group/Homelessness Forum • Business intelligence reporting and analysis is a standing item on the agenda for: ○ Housing Options meetings ○ Homelessness Forum ○ Homeless Advisory Group meetings

4.1.2 Ensuring the voices and insights of people who have lived experience through Let's Be Friends and other routes/forums are at the heart of service planning and improvements.	**Establish In Year 1**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Lets Be Friends / other lived experience groups e.g., young people, families	
4.1.3 Supporting and retaining the local workforce (staff working in public sector, voluntary, community and faith-based services) through agreed shared training needs and holding shared training events	**Programme Of Training in Place by End of Year 1**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / Homelessness Forum / Homelessness Advisory Group	
4.2 Improving the performance of the Council's work on homelessness and rough sleeping by: 4.2.1 Reviewing Temporary Accommodation (TA) to better project future demand, reduce use of B&B and consider options for a more flexible portfolio of suitable TA which also represents better value for money.	**Year 1**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer	

4.2.2 Reviewing and clarifying roles, responsibilities, workflow, and key processes and amend within the different functions of the Housing Options Service and in work with the Choice Based Lettings service.	**Year 1**	Housing Options Manager / Homelessness Strategy Officer / LCC Choice Based Lettings Team	
4.2.3 Developing an internal workforce strategy to retain and develop Housing Options Service officers	**Years 1 & 2**	Housing Options Manager	
4.2.4 Building a team culture of learning, confidence, support, and inclusion through a blend of all the team working both remotely at agreed times, and in person in the Town Hall and with other agencies.	**Year 1**	Housing Options Manager / Housing Options Team	
4.2.5 Undertaking dip sampling of cases to improve casework recording	**Year 1**	Housing Options Manager	
4.2.6 Agreeing a set of performance targets for the Team and service standards residents can expect from Lancaster's Housing Options Services to work towards around improving prevention and relief of homelessness and reducing rough sleeping.	**Year 1**	Housing Options Manager	

LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL
Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

Lancaster Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Review

Undertaken between October 2022 – January 2023

Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all local housing authorities to compile a Homelessness Strategy and to renew the strategy at least every five years. To do that, a review of homelessness needs to take place, which informs both the development of the new strategy and the action planning needed to deliver the objectives within the strategy.

The issues surrounding homelessness in any local area are multi-faceted and complex. Since the last Homelessness Strategy was published in 2020 there have been some significant changes nationally which have had an impact on homelessness and the services to assist people at risk of homelessness in Lancaster:

- The Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on local communities, the economy and public services
- The cost-of-living crisis and its impact on households, in particular the significantly higher levels of inflation, rise in energy costs and interest rates.
- More people needed assistance through homelessness services because they are newly arrived refugees, notably from Afghanistan and Ukraine

Because of these and other significant changes nationally since the last Review and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy were published in 2020, Lancaster City Council has undertaken a new Review earlier than the statutory requirement and the Strategy has been re-written based on the Review.

This review will focus on understanding the local context, homelessness patterns and local service delivery, including our partnership working, given some of the significant changes since the last Homelessness and Rough Sleeping review, as outlined above.

We have followed the Government's Homelessness Code of Guidance in preparing this review. Chapter 2 of the Code sets out the minimal requirements that a review should cover. Based on this we have split the review into 2 sections:

Section 1: The local housing context and data available on homelessness

Section 2: The current activity and resources available to manage homelessness services.

The housing context and data section will cover much of the detail set out in the Code of Guidance:

- General information about Lancaster's social and economic context
- Homelessness casework records and other local sources of data
- Trends in homelessness approaches and in underlying causes
- Which cohorts may be more likely to become homeless or be threatened with homelessness.
- The profile of households who have experienced homelessness.
- Equality monitoring data, including that relating to homelessness applications and outcomes.
- The range of factors that may affect future levels of homelessness in Lancaster.
- The personal and structural factors that may contribute to people becoming homeless.

- Any planned legislation or local policy changes that are likely to impact on levels of homelessness for particular groups in the district.

The second section of the Review outlines current activity and resources in Lancaster and will cover the following:

- Financial resources within the Council specifically for homelessness
- Other services to support homeless people, including some services not provided directly by or on behalf of the Council.
- Current activity to prevent homelessness.
- Types of accommodation available to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- How we assist people rough sleeping to come off the streets and into recovery and support services.
- What types of temporary and supported accommodation are available in Lancaster and use of temporary accommodation outside Lancaster

The information contained within the review come from a range of sources:

- Government and local authority information and statistics that are available in the public domain.
- Relevant policy and research documents for several different agencies, as well as key directives, guidance, and communications which Lancaster, Lancashire County Council or the Government have published.
- Consultation in both late 2019 for the last Review and in 2022 with people in Lancaster, with people who have lived experience of homelessness, with other organisations and with Lancaster City Council officers in the Housing Options Service.

Whilst there are specific legal duties placed on local housing authorities in England in terms of homelessness, which are outlined below, it is useful to note that this is not the whole picture, in terms of the services delivered by different agencies and services. Many of the services that can prevent homelessness occurring in the first place or support people who are recovering from homelessness do not sit within a legal framework and whilst some of these are delivered by Lancaster City Council, some are delivered by other organisations.

The Covid -19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

The purpose of a homelessness and rough sleeping review is to inform a future strategy by understanding and learning from what has happened recently, highlighting through data, other service specific information and consultation what is working well, progress, pressure points and gaps in services. The last 3 years are of most significance for the purposes of this review, in terms of the Covid-19 pandemic and more recently the cost-of-living crisis.

Since March 2020 the UK has been significantly impacted by the unforeseen national and global socio-economic and political changes, including the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. Lancaster City Council like every authority, is continually assessing the impact these changes on the local authority area, with residents and partner agencies, including Health agencies, Lancashire Police, local businesses, landlords, including housing associations, faith organisations and the voluntary and community sector.

Where relevant, the short and medium term impacts of the pandemic and/or the cost of living crisis on homelessness and rough sleeping are noted, for example in changes in homelessness trends, the housing market and impacts on health, well-being and relationships.

Projecting into the future is challenging for all organisations and there have been constant shifts in trends and policy changes which indirectly and directly impact on homelessness. The impact of both rising inflation and interest rates and increasing levels of household poverty are all factors which are likely to drive homelessness.

The homelessness legislation that will inform this Review.

In 2017, Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 was changed to incorporate the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) and on the 3 April 2018, the local authorities started to work under the new legislation. This is a significant change, with many commentators describing it as the biggest change in homelessness for 40 years.

This Act does not replace the previous legislation but adds into Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 some new duties. These aim to ensure local authorities intervene earlier to prevent homelessness and to take 'reasonable steps' to assist people who are eligible to prevent homelessness or 'relieve' their homelessness.

It is important to set out the basic elements of the legislation at this point in the Review, so the reader can then understand some of the tables and data set out later in this document.

The overall aims of the Act are to reduce homelessness by:

- Improving the quality of the advice available
- Refocusing local authorities on prevention work and sets this within a new legal framework.
- Increasing support for single people
- Joining up services to provide better support for people, especially those leaving prison/hospital and other groups at increased risk of homelessness, such as people fleeing domestic abuse and care leavers.

The Act requires local authorities to give free information and advice on:

- Preventing homelessness and securing accommodation when homeless
- The rights of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- How to get help
- Information on tenants' rights, rights to benefits, advice on debt, rent and mortgage arrears, help for people at risk of violence and abuse and advice on how to obtain accommodation in the social sector and private rented sector.
- Help available for specific groups of people who are at higher risk of homelessness, including victims of domestic abuse, young people leaving care, people leaving prison, people leaving hospital.

The 'Prevention Duty':

Local Authorities' must take reasonable steps to prevent homelessness for any eligible applicant, at risk of homelessness within 56 days, regardless of priority need. This can involve assisting them to stay in their current accommodation or helping them to find a new place to live.

The ‘Relief’ Duty:
Local authorities have a 56-day duty to take ‘reasonable steps’ to help the applicant to secure suitable accommodation. Help could be, for example, providing a bond guarantee, funding a rent deposit, or working with a private landlord to make properties available. Where an eligible applicant who is homeless, has or may have, a ‘priority need’ for accommodation they must be offered temporary accommodation.

If the relief duty activity fails after 56 days, and the applicant is still homeless, the tests of priority need, and intentionality are applied to ascertain if the person is owed the ‘main’ homelessness duty. If they are not owed the main duty, the ‘relief duty’ can continue at the discretion of the local authority.

Assessments and Personal Housing Plans:
Councils must carry out a holistic assessment of the applicant’s housing circumstances if they are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The assessment covers their housing needs, and any support needs they have which need to be addressed for them to be able to sustain accommodation in the future. This assessment will result in developing a Personal Housing Plan with them, that sets out the ‘reasonable steps’ that the Council and the applicant and, if applicable, other professionals, will take to prevent or relieve their homelessness.

A **‘Duty to Refer’** on some public bodies:
Some public bodies must refer (with consent) details of any person they are aware of who is at risk of homelessness, within 56 days, to the housing department. The list of the public bodies are:

- prisons
- youth offender institutions
- secure training centres
- secure colleges
- youth offending teams.
- probation services (including community rehabilitation companies)
- Jobcentre Plus
- social service authorities
- emergency departments
- urgent treatment centres
- hospitals in their function of providing inpatient care.
- Secretary of State for defence in relation to members of the armed forces

Prevention and relief duties can be ended in a number of ways including:

- The 56 days of prevention or relief duty has expired.
- If an applicant becomes homeless during the ‘Prevention Duty’ stage, that duty ends and a new ‘relief’ duty would be owed for 56 days.
- Refusing an offer of suitable accommodation that is likely to be available for 6 months or more.
- Deliberate and unreasonable non-co-operation with the Personal Housing Plan, after a formal warning notification
- Becoming intentionally homeless from accommodation provided as a ‘reasonable step’.
- Securing suitable accommodation that has a reasonable prospect of being available for a minimum of 6 months.

- No longer being ‘eligible’.
- Withdrawal of the homelessness application

Care Leavers

Care leavers who are homeless have a local connection to the authority who looked after them. For Lancaster City Council this means that any care leaver from any part of Lancashire has a local connection if homeless with Lancaster. A care leaver will also have a local connection with an area outside Lancashire if they have lived there for 2 years, including some time before their 16th birthday.

More detail on this can be found on the Government website, where there is an overview of the legislation and what it means in practice in the MHCLG Homelessness Code of Guidance. See here for the link:

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities

Section 1: The local housing context and data available on homelessness

General information about Lancaster’s social and economic context

The population of Lancaster at the 2021 census was recorded as 142,900 people. This is a rise of 3.3% from the 2011 Census which recorded 138,375 people residing in the area. This is a lower rate of increase than the North West as a whole (5.2%) and England’s population, which increased by 6.6% between 2011 and 2021[1].

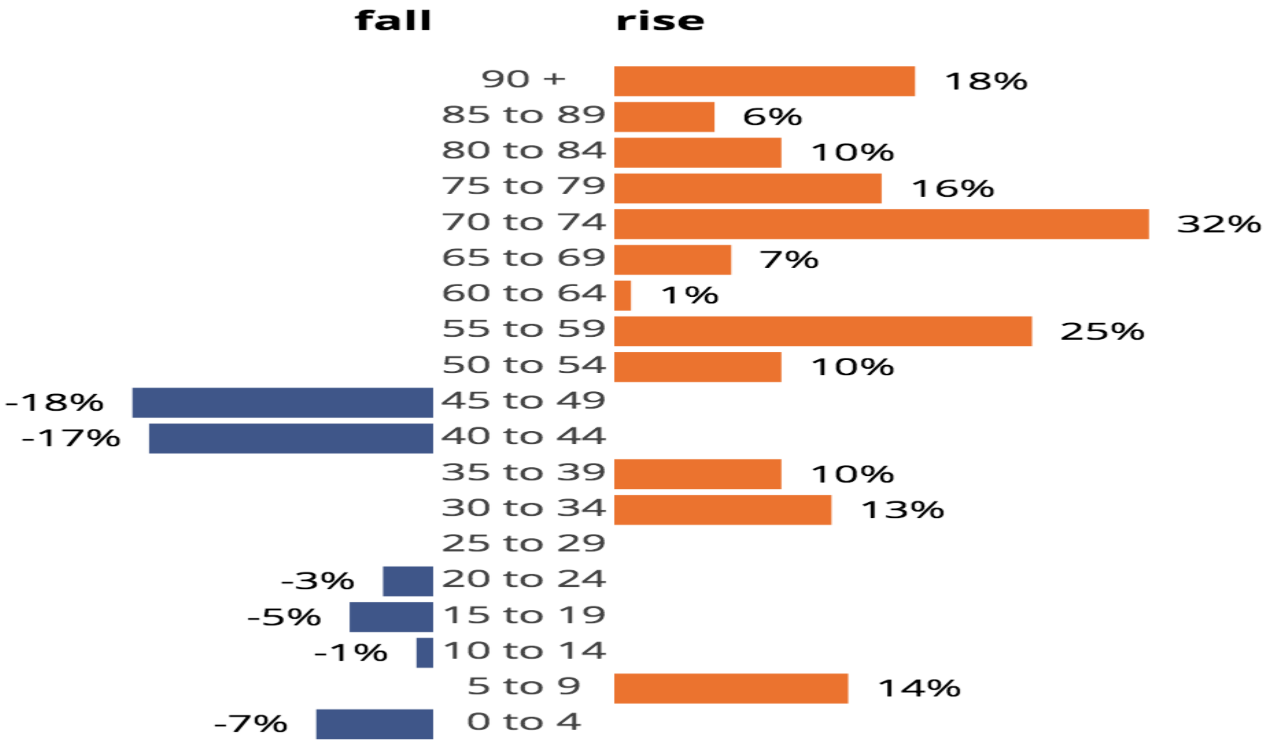
Overall, in England, there has been an increase of 20.1% in people aged 65 years and over, an increase of 3.6% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 5% in children aged under 15 years. The picture in Lancaster is different: since the 2011 Census, the proportion of older people aged over 65 has risen the most significantly in Lancaster, with an increase of 15.5%, which is lower than the national position overall. There is only a very slight increase of 0.3%, in people aged 15 to 64 years in Lancaster, and a small increase of 1.3%, in children aged under 15 years.

Morecambe, the coastal town near to the city of Lancaster and the easy access to the Lake District, makes the Lancaster City Council area a desirable place for inward migration, including retirement, so there is net migration into the area of over 65-year-olds.

In terms of trends around the age demographics, the presence of University in Lancaster means that there is a student population which, like every university area, will have fluctuated between 2020 – 2022 due to some students opting to save money and study from their parental home during the Covid-19 pandemic.

[1] See the 2021 Census here for more information on Lancaster, Lancashire and England: https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E07000121/

Table 1: Population change (%) by age group in Lancaster between 2011 and 2021:



The Office of National Statistics undertake population estimates and project Lancaster City Council's population to continue to rise[2]. The latest estimate was made in 2018 and projects that by 2032 the population will rise to 154,297.

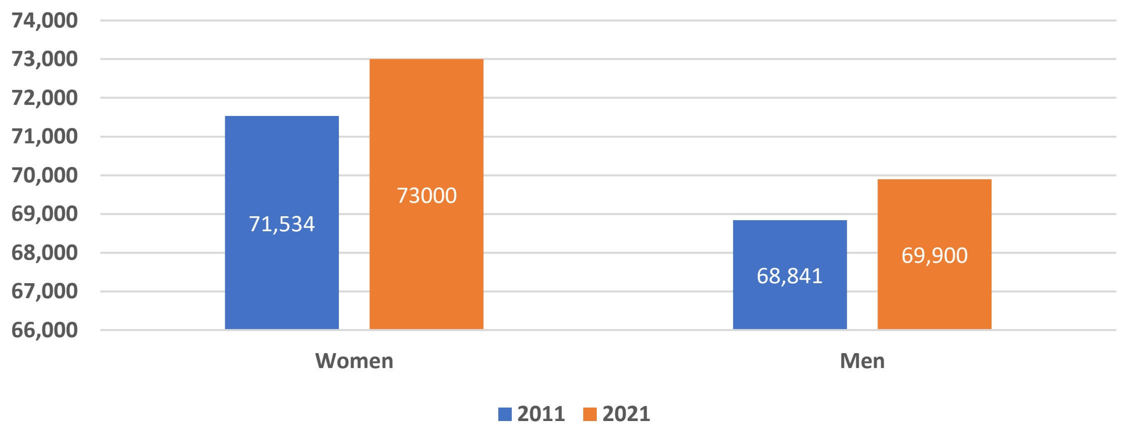
Changes in population affect the housing needs of any area. In terms of an increase in the proportion of people aged 65 and over, this will have significant implications for health and social care provision, as well as the types of housing which will be needed for older people with more limited mobility.

Gender

Based on the census from 2011 and 2021, the number of women in Lancaster has increased by 2% over the last 10 years, and the number of men by 5%. In 2021, women made up 51.1% of the population and men made up 48.9% of the population. This follows the regional and national trends on the gender within the population.

[2] See: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2

Table 2: The change in population 2011 - 2021 in Lancaster by gender



Ethnicity

There is a changing profile in every local authority in terms of ethnicity of the population. In Lancaster there are slight changes to the population, as set out in the Table below.

Table 3: The ethnic composition of the population in Lancaster

Ethnicity by ONS groupings	White British	Other White	Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	Asian /Asian British	Black/African/ Caribbean/ Black British	Other ethnic group
2011 Census	91.5%	4.1%	0.9%	2.7%	0.4%	0.2%
2021 Census	87.8%	5.3%	1.5%	3.5%	0.8%	0.9%

Deprivation

In the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, out of the 317 authorities in England, Lancaster is ranked as the 89th most deprived.

Table 4: Lancaster ranking overall compared to neighbouring boroughs.

Local authority area	Overall ranking by score in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation
Blackpool	1st
Lancaster	89th
Wyre	129th
Fylde	195th
Craven	245th
South Lakeland	250th

The Indices scoring is based on an average score, combining data across several domains. The individual scoring in 2019 against each domain for Lancaster is highlighted below.

- **Income Deprivation:** the proportion of the population experiencing deprivation relating to low income. The definition of low income used includes both those people that are out-of-work, and those that are in work but who have low earnings. **Rank for Lancaster is 110th**.
- **Employment Deprivation**: the proportion of the working-age population in an area involuntarily excluded from the labour market. This includes people who would like to work but are unable to do so due to unemployment, sickness or disability, or caring responsibilities. **Rank for Lancaster is 94th**.
- **Education, Skills, and Training Deprivation:** the lack of attainment and skills in the local population. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: one relating to children and young people and one relating to adult skills. **Rank for Lancaster is 187th.**
- **Health Deprivation and Disability**: the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The domain measures morbidity, disability and premature mortality but not aspects of behaviour or environment that may be predictive of future health deprivation. **Rank for Lancaster is 59th.**
- **Crime**: the risk of personal and material victimisation at local level. **Rank for Lancaster is 125th.**
- **Barriers to Housing and Services:** the physical and financial accessibility of housing and local services. The indicators fall into two sub-domains: 'geographical barriers', which relate to the physical proximity of local services, and 'wider barriers' which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability. **Rank for Lancaster is 275th.**
- **Living Environment Deprivation:** the quality of the local environment. The indicators fall into two sub-domains. The 'indoors' living environment measures the quality of housing, while the 'outdoors' living environment contains measures of air quality and road traffic accidents. **Rank for Lancaster is 41st.**

The 3 domains which indicate higher levels of deprivation in Lancaster area are living environment, health, and employment. There is more information about the levels and types of deprivation in Lancaster here: https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/lancashire-insight/

The full set of information can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019

At any time, a significant proportion of Lancaster's adult population is not economically active. Overall this amounted in August 2022 to 19,400 people, or 22.6% of the adult population of working age (16 – 64). But nearly 90% of this group did not wish to work and were not actively seeking work, in the main due to being retired, long term sick, being a student or caring for a family.

The most useful measure to use in terms of unemployment levels amongst the working age population are claimant counts for those who are available and actively seeking work:

Table 5: Claimant rates in Lancaster over 3 years, compared to the regional and national positions.

Month	Lancaster % & nos.	North West %	England %
March 2020	5.4% (5,405)	7.1%	6.5%
March 2021	4.1% (3,855)	5.7%	5.2%
August 2022	2.8 % (2,620)	4.3%	3.7%

Table 6: Claimant rates in Lancaster in August 2022 by age

Age group (years)	Lancaster % & nos.	North West %	England %
16/17	0.3% (10)	0.3%	0.2%
18 – 24	2.4% (505)	5.5%	4.6%
25 -49	3.5% (1,484)	5%	4.2%
50+	2.2% (620)	3%	2.9%

Lancaster does not have a significantly higher rate of unemployment compared to the North West, and wages are slightly higher overall when compared to the North West, although women in Lancaster earn less each week than the regional average based on gender. Wages are lower when compared to the all England position:

Table 7: Earnings by place of residence in 2021

Gross weekly pay			
	Lancaster	North West	England
Full time workers	£610.80	£578.00	£613.10
Male full-time workers	£628.00	£615.80	£655.50
Female full-time workers	£522.60	£529.00	£558.10

More information on the labour market is available here: https://www.nomisweb.co.uk

An overview of the housing market in Lancaster

Whilst the causes of homelessness are complex and multi-faceted, spanning a range of underlying structural factors and individual circumstances, the availability of decent and affordable local housing is a key factor in protecting many households from homelessness altogether and quickly resolving homelessness if this occurs.

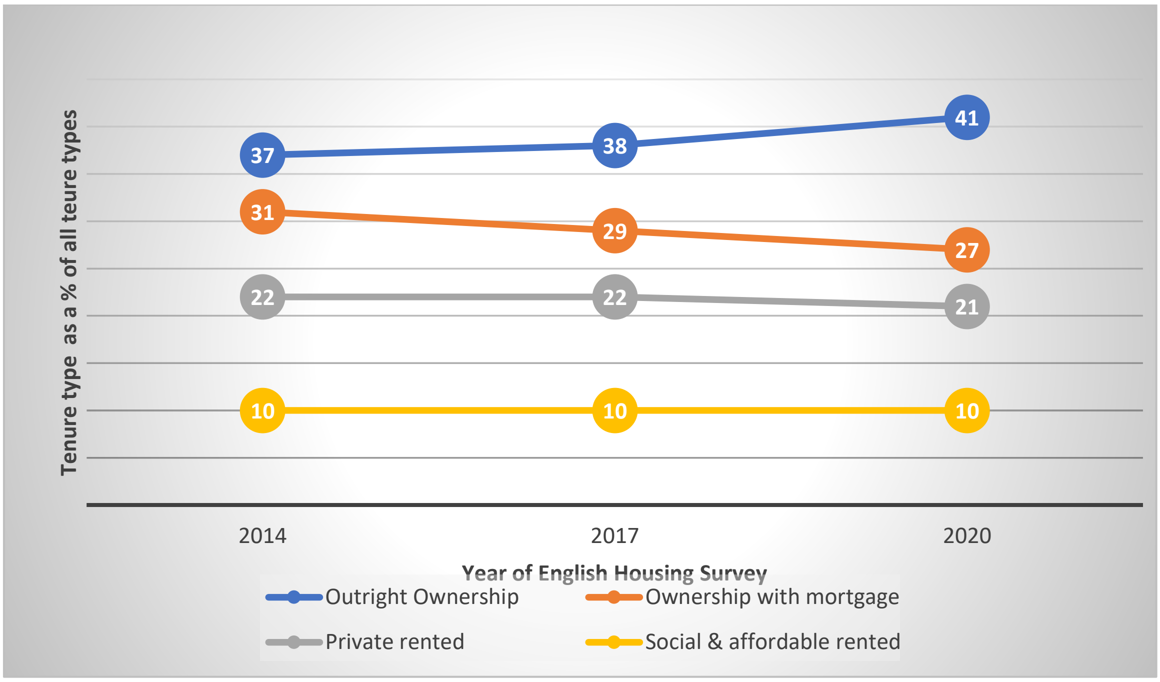
The diversity of the local housing market, in terms of types of housing available and levels of affordability determine the ability of residents to find and keep a suitable home and local authorities to prevent and resolve homelessness.

There is a high level of detail in Lancaster's 2018 Strategic Housing Market Assessment document[3] where the general housing needs of the population, including the predicted changes in the age of the population, in the future is outlined.

[3] See here for the 2018 Lancaster Strategic Housing Market Assessment: https://planningdocs.lancaster.gov.uk/NorthgatePublicDocs/00930527.pdf

The breakdown of tenure type within the housing stock across Lancaster has only changed marginally, based on the most up to date statistics[4]:

Table 8: Estimated changes in tenure of all housing stock in Lancaster



The breakdown of tenure type within the housing stock across Lancaster has changed over the 6 years, with a significant increase in homes being owned outright. This may reflect the increased proportion of the population who are aged 60 or over, who were owner occupiers with a mortgage and are more likely to be a point where they are mortgage-free. There has been little change in terms of social or affordable rented housing or the private rented sector. These estimates have been made before the Covid-19 pandemic and recent levels of inflation, coupled with rising interest rates. These factors are influencing the housing market and will continue to do so. Many local authorities anecdotally report that there is higher demand for private rented housing, outstripping supply and this in turn pushes up rents.

Home Ownership

Around 68% of homes in Lancaster were owner occupied in 2020, with no significant rise in this proportion since 2014.

The table below sets out the increase over the last 20 years on the proportion of income which households in the middle and lower-income brackets in Lancaster would need to spend on home ownership, set against the North West and England positions[5]. Like every area of the country, the amount of money and proportion of income needed to purchase a property has increased

---

[4] See the ONS estimates of tenure types by local authority up to 2020 here: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/subnationaldwellingstockbytenureestimates

[5] See: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian

significantly, with almost double the proportion of income needed for home ownership in Lancaster than 20 years ago. Despite this, Lancaster is still, in relatively terms, more affordable than many other parts of England.

The rising cost of living generally and recent rises in interest rates may make home ownership less likely for those on lower incomes, because higher proportions of incomes are being spent on essential items like energy and food costs.

Table 9: Ratios of earnings for purchase of median priced housing in Lancaster, the North West and England.

	England		North West		Lancaster	
Year	Median House Price (and ratio to median earnings)	Lower Quartile House Price (and ratio to LQ earnings)	Median House Price (and ratio to median earnings)	Lower Quartile House Price (and ratio to LQ earnings)	Median House Price (and ratio to median earnings)	Lower Quartile House Price (and ratio to LQ earnings)
2001	£89,950 (4.40)	£58,500 (4.08)	£59,950 (3.23)	£38,500 (2.88)	£55,000 (2.84)	£40,000 (2.98)
2011	£180,000 (6.89)	£127,000 (6.77)	£127,500 (5.28)	£89,950 (5.14)	£125,000 (4.97)	£97,500 (5.49)
2021	£240,000 (7.55)	£158,500 (6.91)	£190,000 (6.43)	£133,000 (6.11)	£180,00 (6.34)	£132.500 (5.97)

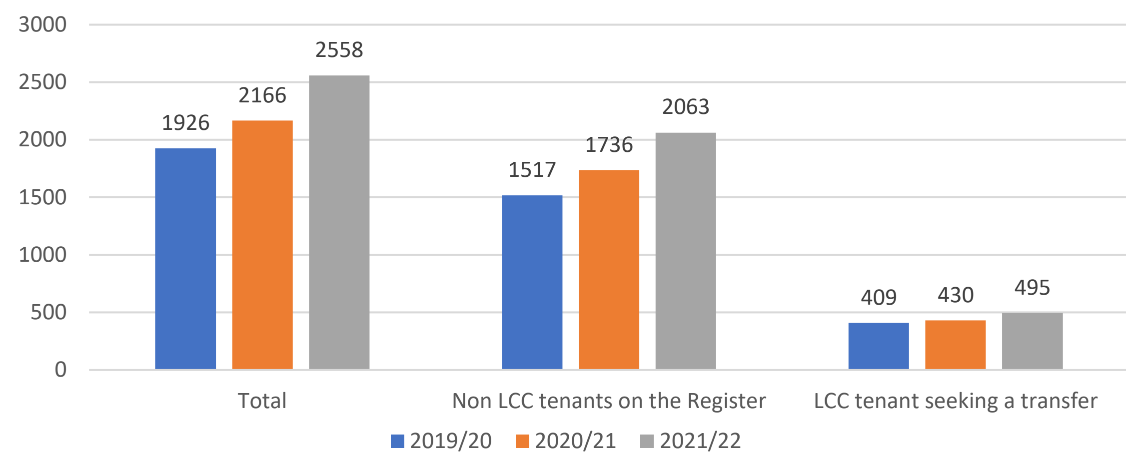
Social Housing

Lancaster has retained its own stock and currently has 3,660 social housing properties. In addition, there are 2,910 properties owned by other Registered Providers (RPs)[6], including Places for People and The Guinness Partnership.

At the end of October 2022, there were 2,655 households on the Housing Register. The number of households is rising year on year based on the last 3 years of statistics as shown in the table below.

[6] See: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants#full-publication-update-history

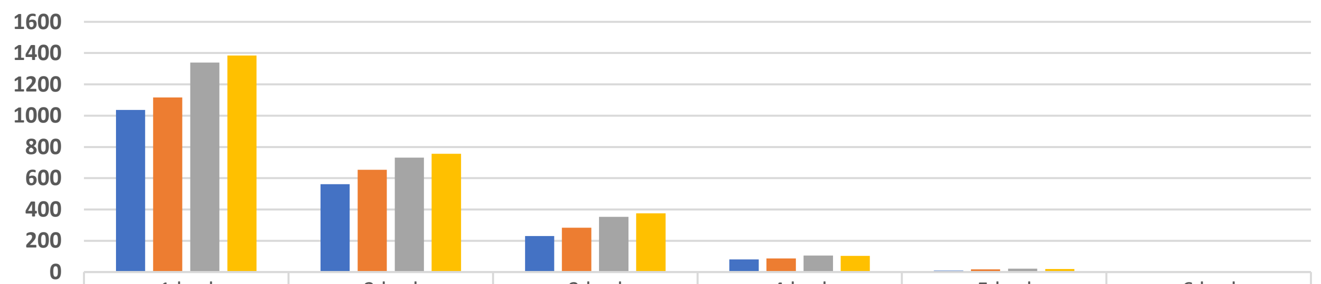
Table 10: Numbers on Lancaster's Housing Register



During the Covid-19 pandemic there was a national slowdown in letting of properties, in part due to lower rates of turnover, as people decided not to move or were protected from eviction under Government policy to place a temporary stay on evictions. In addition, there was reported to be a scarcity of some building and repair supplies and in some areas, a shortage of labour, meaning that properties remained void for greater lengths of time between lets.

Different households have different needs in terms of size of property. The Table below shows the overall position over the last 3 years.

Table 11: Applicants on Lancaster's Housing Register by property size need



	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed	6 bed
2019/20	1036	561	231	82	9	6
2020/21	1117	654	284	87	18	6
2021/22	1339	731	354	105	22	6
Q2 2022/23	1385	757	375	103	19	6

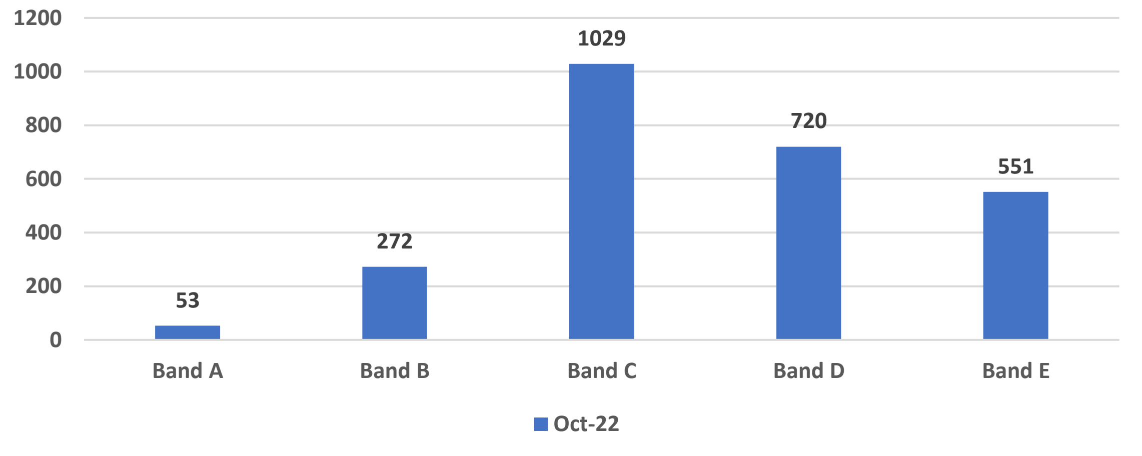
2019/20 **2020/21** **2021/22** **Q2 2022/23**

The numbers of households seeking different types of social housing is one part of the equation of what makes up demand and likely waiting times. The other main factors are the level of priority households are awarded, expressed in Lancaster through banding; the rate of turnover of different types and sizes of stock, which then creates voids; the overall size of the portfolio of social housing against demand; and whether there is a particular preference or need in terms of area of Lancaster a household wishes or needs to live.

A ‘choice based lettings’ scheme, Ideal Choice Homes, is in place which means that households can bid for properties when they become available. There is also some discretion to enable ‘direct offers’ to be made to some households.

Lancaster City Council’s allocation scheme gives each household on the Register a banding based on their housing needs and circumstances[7]. Of the 2,655 households on the Register in Lancaster at the end of October 2022, they were in the following bandings:

Table 12: All households on the Register by banding award in October 2022



Some households must be given some ‘reasonable preference’ under law, based on their circumstances, including households which are statutorily homeless. Homeless households owed a reasonable preference are not all given the same banding. Those who are homeless and who have a priority need will be awarded Band A in Lancaster. Households which are homeless but have no priority need are awarded Band C. Households found to be homeless but intentionally so are awarded Band D. It is not possible to provide a breakdown of the numbers of homeless households with reasonable preference in each banding, but the overall reasons for award of reasonable preference is shown below.

[7] See here for the list of housing needs and circumstances against the bandings for Lancaster: https://www.idealchoicehomes.co.uk/Data/ASPPages/1/32.aspx

Table 13: Reasonable Preference on Lancaster's Housing Register

Reasonable Preference awarded		Homeless within meaning within Part VII of Housing Act, regardless of whether there is a statutory duty to house them	Owed a duty by a housing authority under S190(2), S193(2) or S195(2) or are occupying accommodation on secured by any such authority under the Act	Occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions	Need to move on medical or welfare grounds, including grounds relating to a disability	Need to move to a particular locality in the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).	And of the households in reasonable preference groups, how many have urgent housing needs & are given additional preference	of which, how many are members of the Armed Forces community
Numbers waiting on the Housing Register with 'reasonable preference'	2019/20	15	28	154	290	1	72	2
	2020/21	13	51	212	327	1	134	2
	2021/22	28	103	270	390	1	212	3

Demand expressed over the last 3.5 years, through a combination of both property size need and banding is outlined below. This shows there is a growing level of demand for 1- and 2-bedroom properties for those in Bands C, D and E.

Table 14: Numbers on the Housing Register over the last 3.5 years, by bedroom need and banding

		1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed
Band A **Emergency housing need**	2019/20	16	7	2	1	0	1
	2020/21	13	13	5	2	0	1
	2021/22	19	26	9	5	2	1
	Q2 2022/23	**14**	**20**	**13**	**4**	**1**	**1**
Band B **High housing need**	2019/20	92	43	16	4	6	4
	2020/21	84	62	30	9	12	4
	2021/22	129	79	41	14	14	4
	Q2 2022/23	**117**	**68**	**49**	**23**	**11**	**4**
Band C **Medium housing need**	2019/20	319	260	131	41	2	0
	2020/21	345	285	154	44	1	0
	2021/22	436	316	190	47	1	0
	Q2 2022/23	**471**	**379**	**194**	**43**	**2**	**0**

Band D **Low housing need**	2019/20	307	178	50	26	1	1
	2020/21	340	205	57	23	4	1
	2021/22	379	209	72	28	4	1
	Q2 2022/23	**395**	**212**	**74**	**33**	**5**	**1**
Band E **Very low housing need**	2019/20	302	73	32	10	0	0
	2020/21	335	89	38	9	1	0
	2021/22	376	101	42	11	1	0
	Q2 2022/23	**388**	**108**	**45**	**9**	**0**	**0**

The Table below sets out the number of lettings in total per year for the last 3 years. A significant proportion of lettings on 2021/22 were for Independent Living housing, which is designated for people aged 60 and over. This is because there was a decision during the Covid-19 pandemic not to let new tenancies in Independent Living stock due to the health issues of tenants and concerns about risks of transmission of the Covid-19 virus.

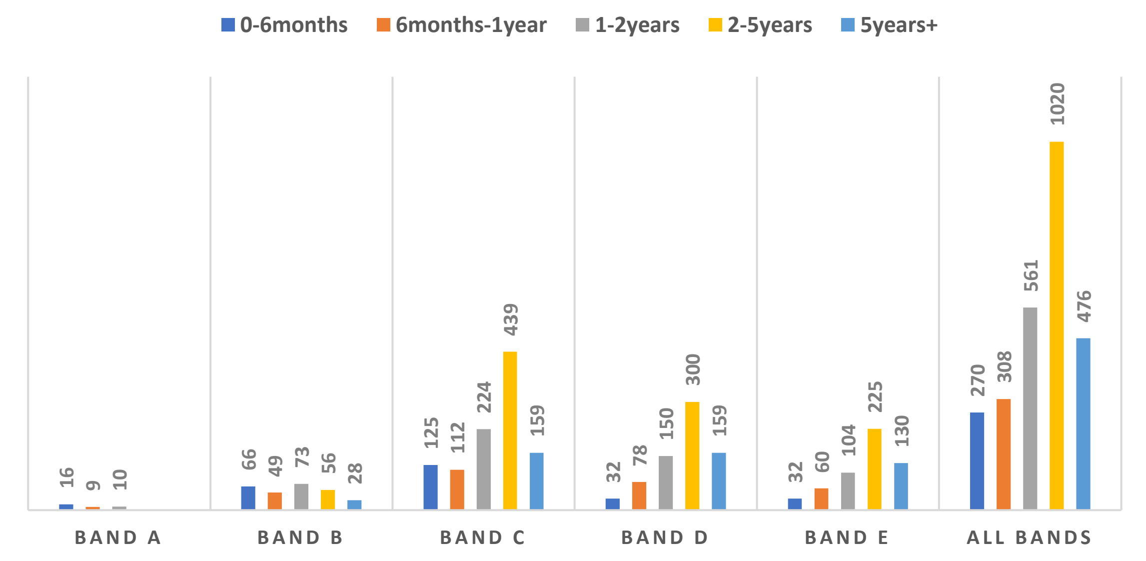
The level of turnover generally is low, but in part this may be attributable to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and resultant shortages of staff and some building supplies for repairs and maintenance.

Table 15: Lettings per year

Year	Number of social housing units in the portfolio	Number on the Housing Register	Total number re-housed through the Register	Of which, how many were re-housed into Independent Living (sheltered) stock	% re-housed through the Housing Register	Rate of lettings as a % of all stock
2019/20	3677	1926	305	67	15.8%	8.2%
2020/21	3660	2166	234	48	10.8%	6.3%
2021/22	3644	2558	289	104	11.2%	7.9%

Because of increasing overall demand and low turnover of stock, waiting times can be lengthy and vary based on banding, with the longest waiting times in Band C and Band E.

TABLE 16: LENGTH OF WAITING TIMES BASED ON BANDING



Private rented accommodation

Around 20% of all homes in Lancaster are reported to be privately rented as shown in Table 8 above.

Nationally there has been a significant rise in private rent costs over the last 2 years, with rents outside London in October 2022 estimated to be 11.8% higher than in the autumn of 2021. The number of new /available rental properties is still lower than in 2021 but is improving. New rental listings are up 8% in June compared to the start of the year.

There is significant demand for private rented property, and this is not expected to reduce. As a consequence of demand and the slowdown in available supply, combined with rising inflation and interest rates, rents are expected to continue to rise.

Where households need welfare support to pay their rent, the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) sets out local entitlement. The levels of benefit payable for housing are set through a Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) assessment of rental costs. Lancaster spans 2 different BRMAs, Lancaster and Kendal.

The LHA rates were revised by the Government in April 2020 so housing support from the benefits system would be sufficient to cover the cheapest 30% of all rental properties in any area. Rates have since been frozen and there was no announcement of an increase in the Chancellor's 2022 Autumn Statement.

Whilst the LHA rates have not risen since they were uprated in 2020/21, the market conditions and reports suggest that rents are likely to have increased, alongside the significant increases in the cost of living for all households. The overall picture is one of reduced affordability for lower income households.

In some areas of England, the uprating in 2020 of the LHA rates helped address the reductions made by the Government to the LHA levels since 2012, when the rates increased with inflation until 2015, and were then subject to the four-year nominal freeze that affected most means-tested benefits.

The table below, using the current LHA rates, shows that the uprated LHA rates for Lancaster should mean that the bottom end of the market is more affordable in the Kendal area for those households with a self -contained 1 bedroom need or larger. It is less affordable within the Lancaster BRMA for single people or couples with no dependents and may be affordable for those with larger families. Note that the table below is based on 2021/22 rates and does not take account of rent rises that may occur over the recent period of interest rate rises.

Table 17: Affordability of private rented accommodation in Lancaster for households on low incomes

	LHA rates PCM for Lancaster 2021/22		ONS Lower Quartile Rent PCM in Lancaster for 2021/22[8]
	Lancaster	**Kendal**	**Lancaster**
Shared accommodation rate	£305.25	£295.47	£386
1 bed	£420.01	£495.00	£450
2 bed	£524.99	£601.29	£542
3 bed	£599.99	£725.00	£625
4 bed	£700.01	£850.01	£650

There is a significantly higher proportion of private rented accommodation in the Morecambe area within Lancaster. Private rented accommodation in some areas of Morecambe was considered for targeted improvement through selective licensing[9]. The intention was to improve general housing conditions by:

- Eliminating poor standards of management in the private rented sector
- Obtaining a named individual, responsible for properties
- Reducing anti-social behaviour within the designated area
- Targeting rogue landlords

Following an extensive consultation in 2017, a decision was reached by Lancaster City Council not to introduce selective licensing. However, there has been a more recent decision to consult again on selective licensing, which will commence in 2023.

As will be highlighted later in this review, the ending of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy in the private rented sector is now the most common cause of threat of homelessness in England, the North West and in Lancaster.

---

[8] See: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/privaterentalmarketsummarystatisticsinengland

[9] See: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/selective-licensing-in-the-private-rented-sector-a-guide-for-local-authorities

Homeless statistics

For this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping review, we are drawing on a range of information sources:

- **Casework information from work under statutory duties**. Since April 2018, when the Homelessness Reduction Act commenced, a new system, called 'H-CLIC' has been used in England to record statutory homelessness. See below for more information on this.
- **Other information recorded outside the H-CLIC requirements.** This includes people who contact Lancaster for advice and information because they have a housing need and the numbers of people who are sleeping rough in Lancaster.
- **Other information** on services available in Lancaster

As outlined earlier, in April 2018 new homelessness legislation commenced in England. Alongside a range of new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness for everyone who is eligible and homeless, or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, some other changes also came in. New case level information collection requirements were set out for local housing authorities to adhere to. All cases where a homelessness application is taken should be reported to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) through a quarterly return, known as 'H-CLIC'.

Because H-CLIC is a relatively new system for recording and the legislation changed so significantly, some authorities have found it difficult to consistently return data. This is the case for Lancaster.

Ideally this Review should draw on 3 or more full years of Lancaster's homelessness statistics on H-CLIC, but this is not possible due to some quarters in each year not being available on-line. As a result, we are not able to compare data and analyse trends across any whole years of homelessness data including the last year.

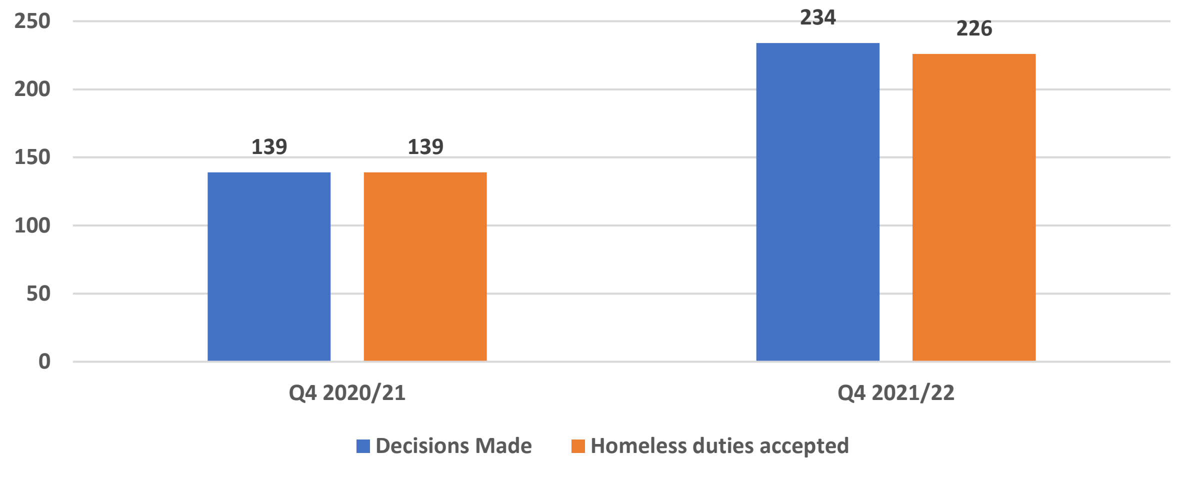
As a 'work around' we are looking, in the main, at some Quarters in the last 2 years, drawing on Quarter 4 (January - March in both 2020/21 and 2021/22) for most information. This includes a time during the Covid-19 pandemic where England was in a period of 'lockdown' and trends were different due to short term changes in the law to protect tenants from eviction during the pandemic.

Where helpful we have looked at other available Lancaster H-CLIC statistics, to check to see if patterns are repeated and is more of a trend than on a 'one-off' and this is referenced where this is or is not the case.

What do we know about how many households in Lancaster are at risk of homelessness or have become homeless?

The first table shows the numbers of homelessness decisions made and the numbers owed a statutory duty. Note this includes households who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days.

Table 18: Lancaster All Decisions and Duties Accepted between January and March in 2020/21 and 2021/22



In Quarter 4 of 2020/21 all of the applications led to a duty being accepted. This is unusual but may be in part explained by the Covid-19 pandemic and a period of lockdown in England at that time. In Quarter 4 of 2021/22, 96.6% of all applicants had a homelessness duty owed to them, in line with the national position during that Quarter, and slightly lower than the North West position of 97.2%.

Rates of homelessness per 1000 households

Another way of understanding levels of homelessness in any area in relative terms, is to look at the rate of homelessness per 1,000 households. This can be broken down into rates of households where the applicant is threatened with homelessness within 56 days and owed the 'prevention' duty and households which are already homeless and are owed the 'relief' duty.

Table 19: Rates of homelessness per 1,000 households in Quarter 4 of 2020/21 and 2021/22

	Rate of prevention duty accepted.			Rate of relief duty accepted.		
Rate of homelessness per 1,000 households	**Lancaster**	**North West**	**England**	**Lancaster**	**North West**	**England**
Q4 2020/21	0.82	1.41	1.33	1.47	1.89	1.55
Q4 2021/22	2.07	1.72	1.56	1.64	1.84	1.55

The table above should be treated with some caution because of the lockdown during Quarter 4 of 2020/21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. If the 2 different rates (prevention and relief) are added together for both years, Lancaster has a lower rate of overall homelessness in Quarter 4 of 2020/21 but that position reverses in Quarter 4 of 2021/22, with a rate of 3.71 compared to the North West rate of 3.56 and England rate of 3.11.

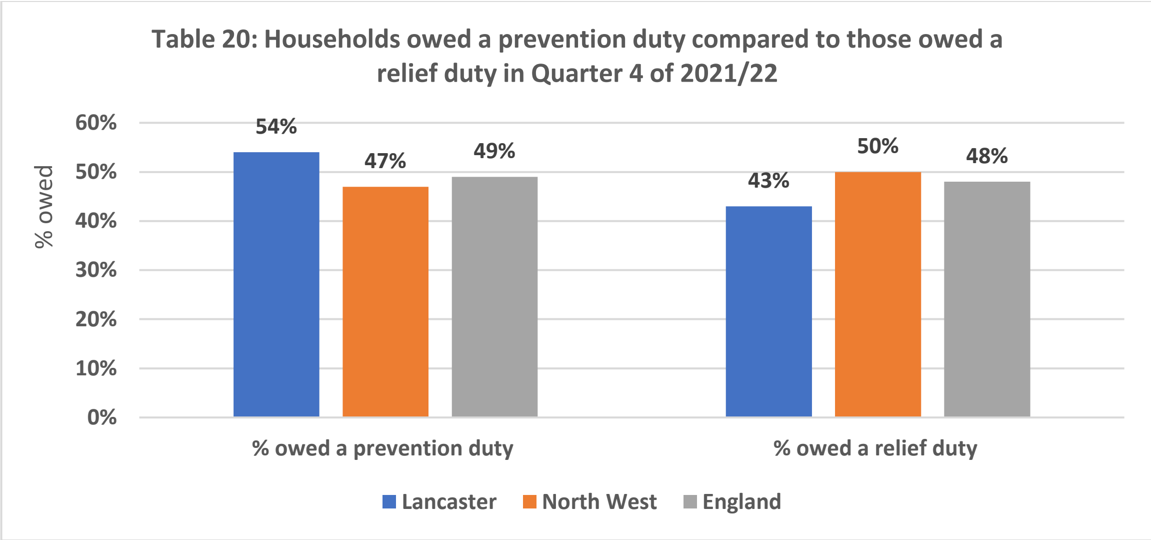


Table 20: Households owed a prevention duty compared to those owed a relief duty in Quarter 4 of 2021/22

More households in Lancaster were owed the prevention duty in Quarter 4 of 2021/22, which can be viewed as positive in comparison to both the North West and to England. Where homelessness has not yet occurred, there is time to prevent this, and avoid the impact of a crisis on households, as well avoiding additional pressures on some services. But this is not a trend and cannot be relied on, for example, in the previous Quarter, (October – December 2021), there was a slightly higher proportion of relief cases than prevention cases in Lancaster.

Homelessness casework records and other local sources of data

The most acute form of homelessness is rough sleeping. In most local authority areas not everyone who is rough sleeping has approached the Council for help and therefore they may not appear as ‘relief’ cases in the statutory homelessness statistics set out in Tables 18 and 19 above.

Later in this document there is more detail on what we know about rough sleeping in Lancaster and what we and our partners are doing about this currently. But to give an overview of rough sleeping numbers at this point, Table 21 sets this out. The Council are required to complete a count of people rough sleeping or provide an estimate each year to DLUHC. In Lancaster an estimate is made based on a range of local information and using a nationally agreed methodology. This takes place in November each year and is verified by Homeless Link. The table below sets out the numbers estimated in Lancaster based on this methodology[10].

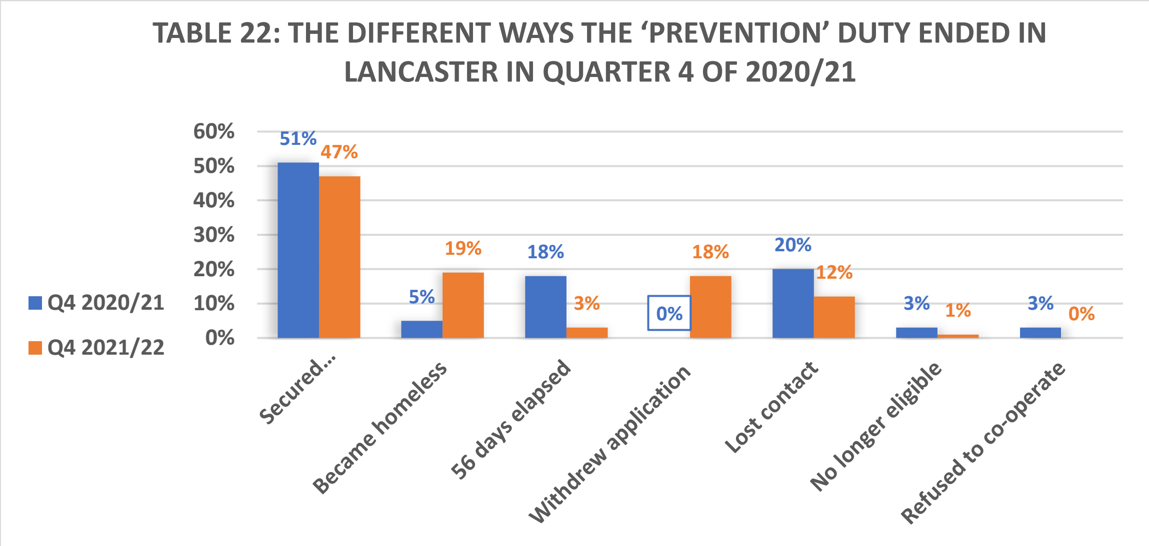
Table 21: Annual rough sleeping estimates in Lancaster 2014 - 2022

Rough sleeping estimates for Lancaster taken in November each year								
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
6	8	8	4	4	6	2	3	9

10

How successful is the Council at preventing homelessness?

When a local authority accepts a prevention duty to an applicant, the duty must be ended , and this can happen in one of several ways.

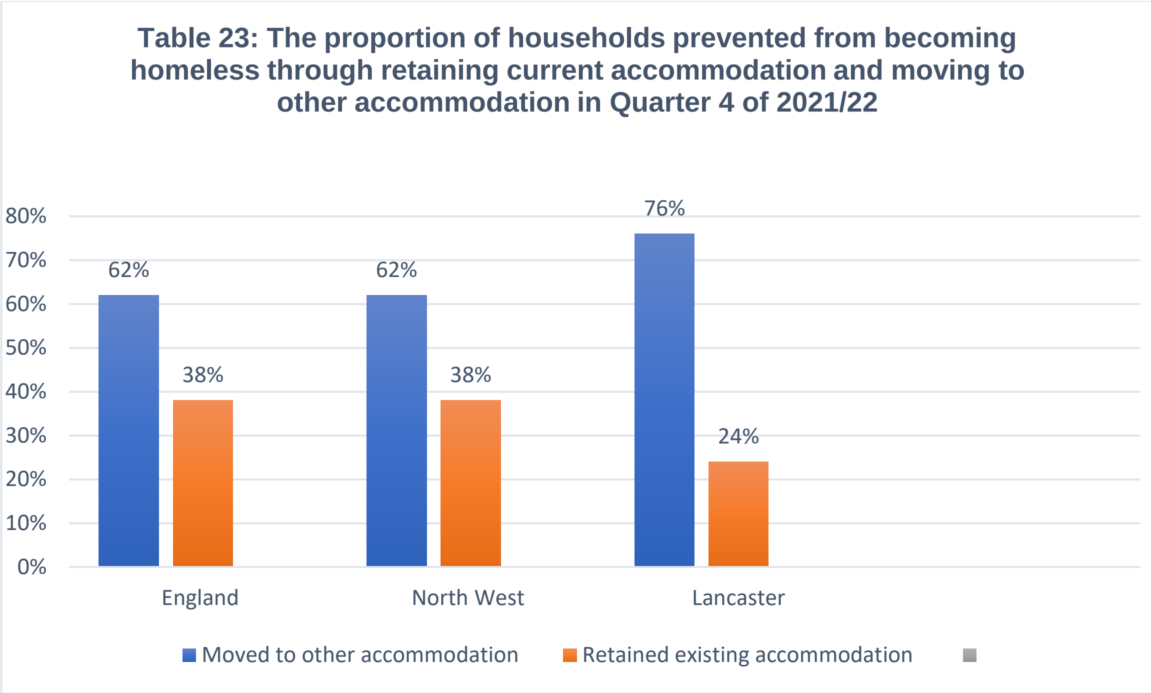


The rate of securing accommodation, which is the most positive outcome, dipped in Q4 of 2021/22. Lancaster trails behind both the North West and the national rates of prevention by about 10 percentage points in Quarter 4 2021/22. There was a much higher rate of applicants withdrawing their applications in Lancaster (18%) in Quarter 4 of 2021/22 when compared to both the North West (4.3%) and England rate (4.5%). This may account for some of the dip in performance.

Note that the prevention duty can also be lawfully ended through 2 other means, the 'refusal of a suitable offer' and 'Not known' but these were not used by Lancaster in either of the Quarters outlined above.

Assisting an applicant to secure accommodation can be broadly split into 2 sub-outcomes: the applicant is assisted to move to new accommodation, or they retain their current accommodation because they resolve whatever was the underlying cause(s) of the threat of homelessness. In both scenarios, the accommodation must be suitable, and the local authority need to be satisfied that this has a 'reasonable prospect' of being available for six months or more.

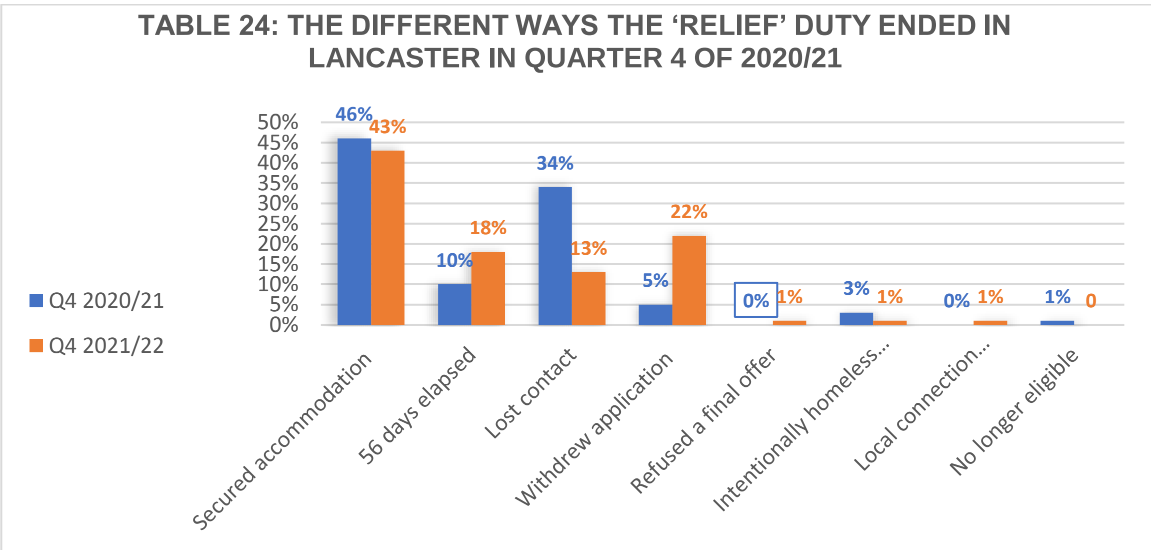
Retaining accommodation is generally viewed as the most positive outcome and is an indication of timely, pro-active prevention work. Lancaster have a significantly lower rate of assisting people to stay in their own accommodation when compared to the North West overall and England. This is set out in the table below for Quarter 4 of 2021/22, but this is also true in other H-CLIC Quarters.



How successful is the Council at relieving homelessness?

Table 24 below sets out how households who were owed a ‘relief’ duty had the duty ended in Quarter 4 over the last 2 years. The most common outcome is a successful resolution of homelessness in Lancaster through the securing of suitable accommodation for at least 6 months. The proportion of households with this outcome is slightly higher across both years than the North West and England overall, which is positive. Lancaster is also performing well on resolving homelessness within 56 days, with a significantly lower proportion of households having the relief duty ended because the statutory 56 days to relieve homelessness has passed.

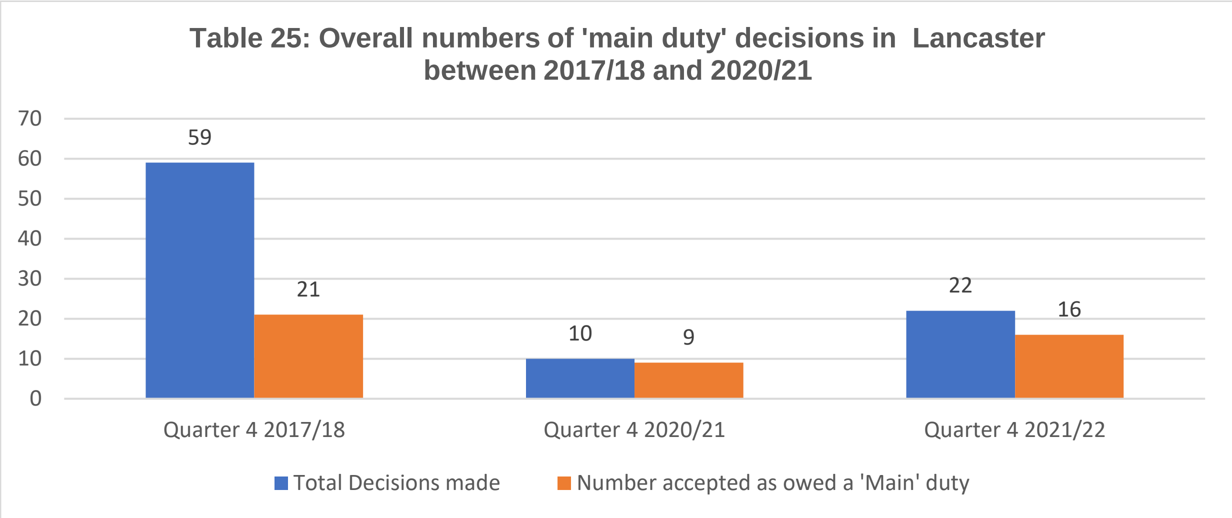
The relief duty can also be lawfully ended through other means which are shown on the table below. Most of these are related to households making their own arrangements and withdrawing their applications or losing contact. Some categories are not frequently used, reflecting the regional and national position but are in the Table for completeness.



Main duty acceptances

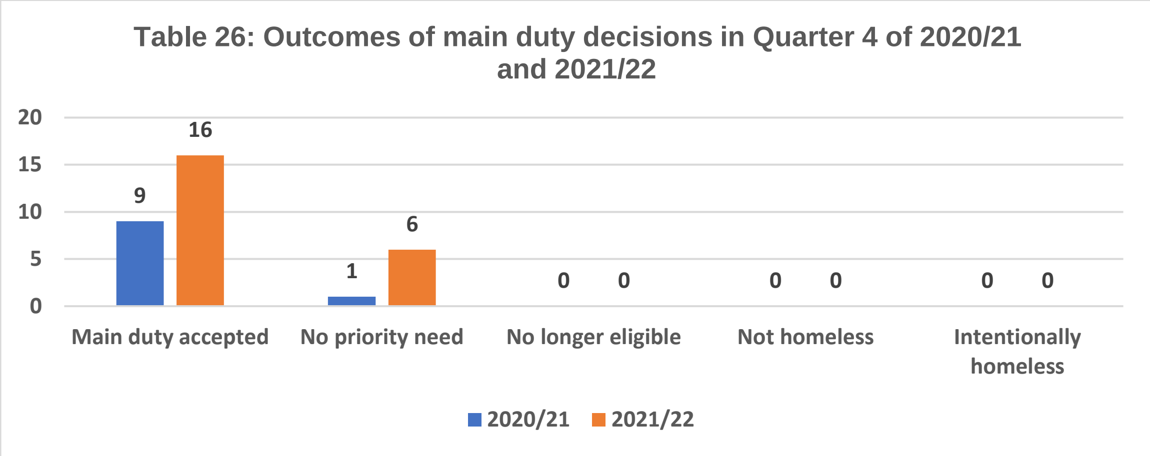
The number of households accepted as owed the ‘main’ homelessness duty has fallen in England since 2017/18, including Lancaster, because of the change in legislation, which brought in the ‘prevention’ and ‘relief’ duties as statutory stages to go through before the ‘main’ duty tests of priority need and intentionality are applied. Every household is therefore assisted for at least 56 days, if not longer, before they reach the ‘main’ duty point and if homelessness can be resolved then the main duty is not applied.

Since the commencement of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018, the number of ‘main duty’ decisions being made has reduced by 63% in Lancaster, based on Quarter 4 of 2017/18, which was just before the commencement of the Homelessness Reduction Act, to Quarter 4 in 2021/22. However, as the table below indicates, the number of main duty decisions did increase in Quarter 4 of 2021/22, compared to the previous year’s Quarter 4. This may not be a ‘blip’ as this is also the case in Quarter 3 of 2021/22, when, like Quarter 4 of 2021/22, 22 decisions were made.

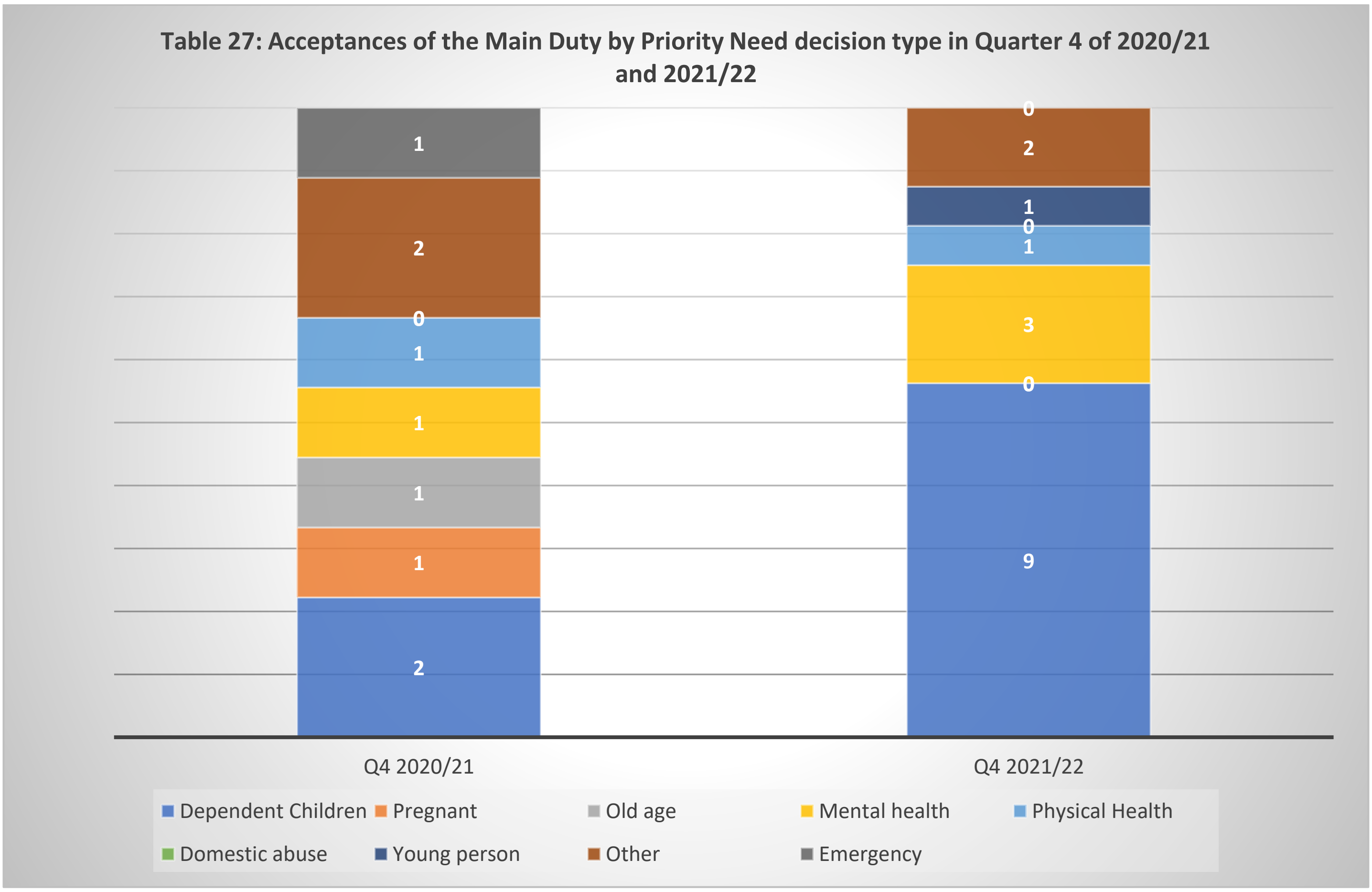


Whilst the number of decisions has significantly dropped since 2017/18, the proportion of main duty decisions which are then accepted as owed the ‘main’ duty has increased. For example, in Quarter 4 of 2017/18, of the 59 decisions made, only 21, or 36%, were owed the main duty compared to Quarter 4 of 2021/22, when 73% of applicants were owed the main duty. This should be treated with some caution, as there is no full year position to compare with and there is considerable variation between Quarters. However, at decision stage, the overall ratio of acceptances of the main duty has increased, even though actual numbers are lower.

This is likely to be attributable to the change in the legislation which gives single people more meaningful assistance at an earlier point through prevention or relief support. As will be shown later in Tables 31 and 32, this has changed to composition of the overall customer groups in Lancaster, as it has in all other areas, with many more single people approaching for assistance.

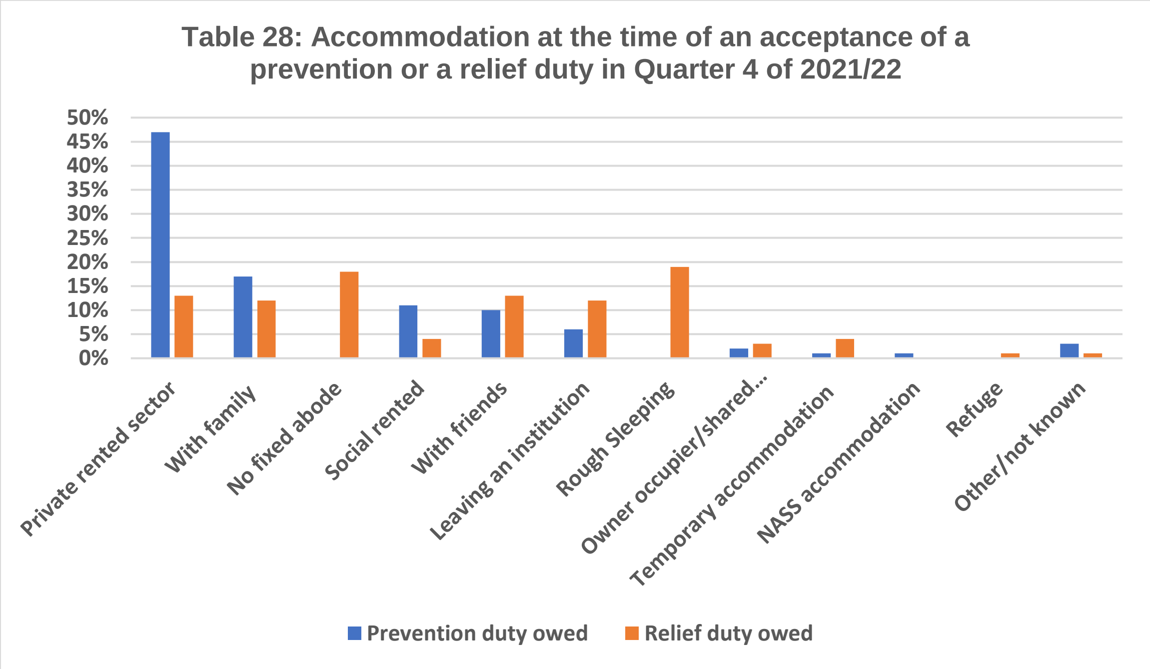


It is helpful to understand the profiles of those people or households who were accepted as being owed main duty. This provides insight into which groups may need more assistance at an earlier point and could suggest a need to take more pro-active action in some instances.



Where were people living at the time, they became homeless or were threatened with homelessness?

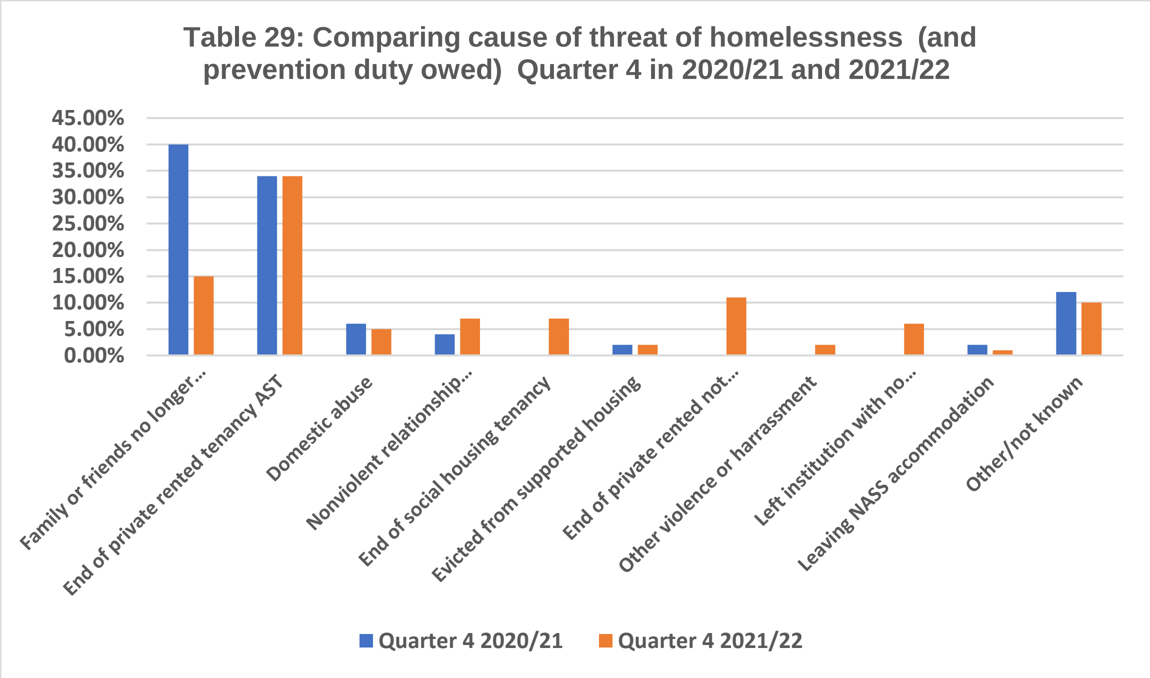
To understand the causes of homelessness, there are several data sources in the H-CLIC statistics to draw on. Firstly, data on where applicants were living at the point, they approached the Council can give some context regarding what has driven their homelessness, although this alone does not tell us why someone became homeless or is threatened with homelessness. This information is based on the assessment of an applicants' housing circumstances.



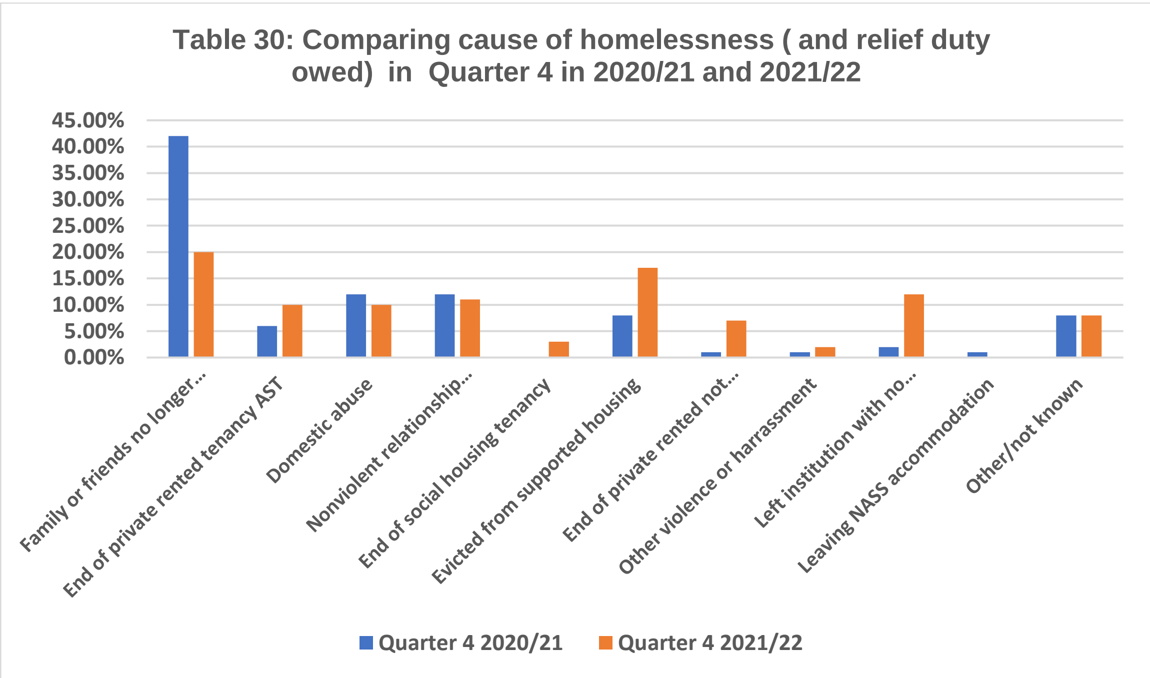
Because the numbers are relatively low in Lancaster, spotting trends is not always straightforward based on limited data sets, but comparing Q4 of 2020/21 to Quarter 4 2021/22 there has been an increase in:

- households owed a prevention duty who were living in the private rented sector (from 38% to 47%) or in social housing (from 0% to 11%). These are likely to be attributable at least in part to the ending of the Covid-19 pandemic measures to prevent evictions through a stay on court action following a Section 21 or a Section 8 notice.
- applicants owed a relief duty who were rough sleeping as their last address has risen from 6% to 19%, whilst those who have no fixed abode has dropped significantly from 43% to 18%. This change may also be related to the Covid-19 pandemic and the 'Everyone In' programme which assisted those rough sleeping off the streets during 2020/21.

The main causes of a threat of homelessness within 56 days are family or friends no longer being able or willing to accommodate and ending of a tenancy in the private rented sector, as set out in the Table 29 below. In the most recent Quarter 4 statistics, the loss of a tenancy in the private rented sector is driving more applications than the threat of eviction from family or friends. This is likely to be due to mixture of the policy which placed a temporary stay on evictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic with rising demand pushing up rents and some landlords leaving the market.



The main drivers of actual homelessness differ slightly from those which drive a threat of homelessness. The main cause, as set out in Table 30 below, is family and friends no longer being willing or able to accommodate, with domestic abuse, ending of a non-violent relationship and eviction from supported housing being the other more frequent reasons. There is a tendency to record some causes in the 'other' category, which provides no further information.



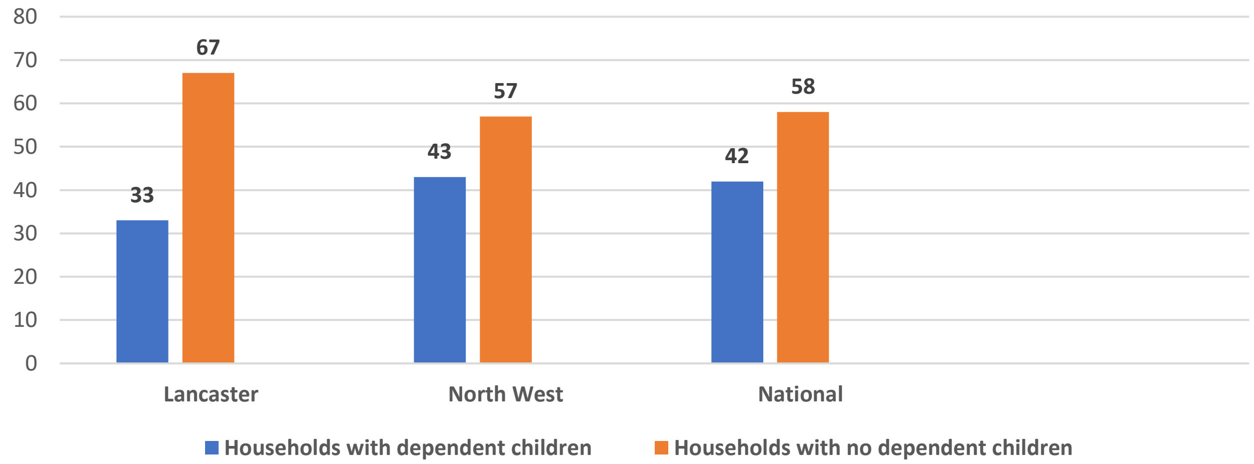
Which groups of people are at higher risk of becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness in Lancaster?

More single people with no dependent children or childless couples approach the Council seeking assistance than families, see Tables 31 and 32 below. This is a national trend, which is more pronounced since the commencement of the new homelessness legislation in April 2018.

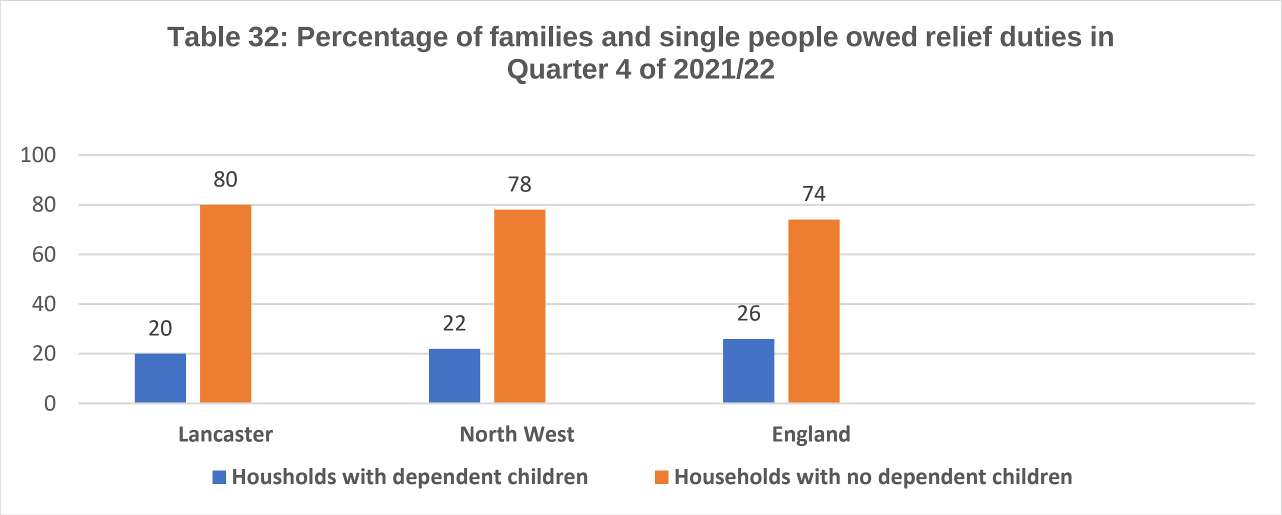
A significantly higher proportion of single people approach Lancaster for assistance, compared to families, when they are threatened with homelessness than the regional or national position. This indicates that insecure housing and the threat of homelessness is much more prevalent amongst those who do not have children living with them.

This position does fluctuate by a few percentage points each Quarter, in terms of the ratio between the 2 different types of household in Lancaster, but it is an established trend that there are significantly more single people and childless couples approaching for assistance and are accepted as being owed the prevention duty in Lancaster.

Table 31: Ratios of households with dependent children and no dependent children owed the prevention duty in Quarter 4 2021/22

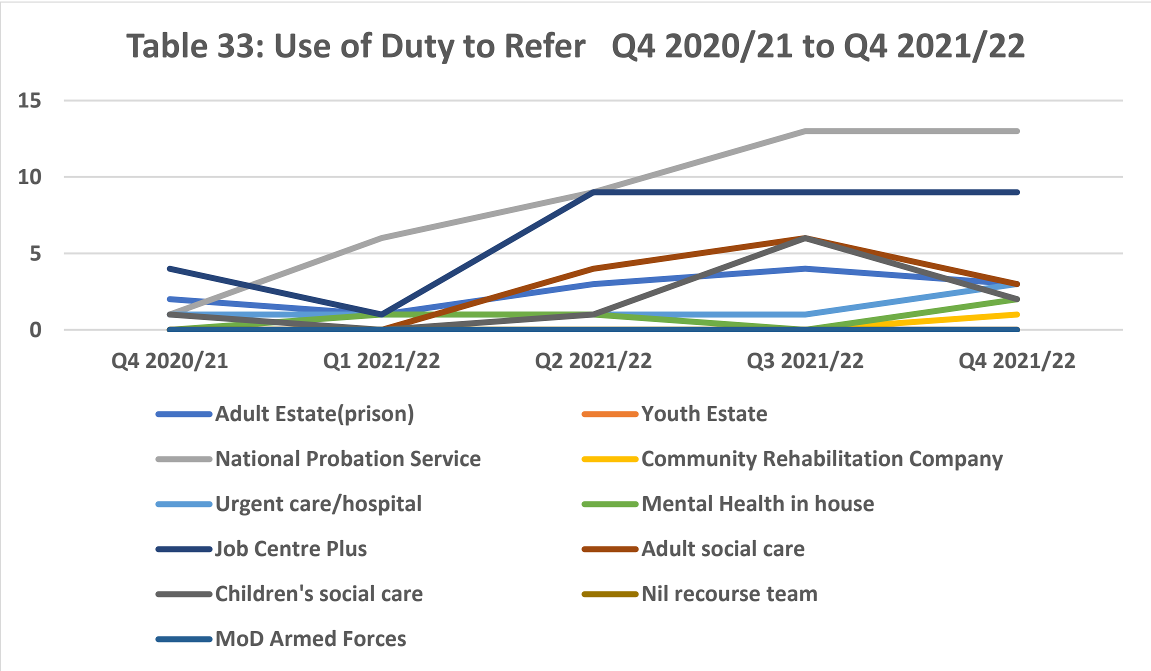


When compared to the regional and national position, there is a less significant difference in the proportion of single people and childless couples approaching the Council for assistance when they are already homeless, as set out in Table 32 below.



The homelessness legislation places a duty on some public bodies to refer to a housing authority anyone that they believe is or may be at risk of homelessness within 56 days. The referral can only take place with the consent of the client. The referral, in itself, does not automatically trigger a homelessness application as the housing authority would need to be satisfied that there was reason to believe the person was homeless or may be at risk of homelessness within 56 days.

The problems with reporting of data into the Government's system means that it is not possible to compare the annual change in use of the 'duty to refer' route. However, there appears to an increase in the use of the 'duty to refer' just over the last 5 Quarters of published data, as set out below, using the available H-CLIC data from Quarter 4 2020/21 onward:



This is likely to be a reflection of the strength of partnership working during and after the Covid-19 pandemic, which will be outlined later in more detail later in this review and came through strongly in consultation with other agencies. However, referrals are also an indication of demand for services to address housing need and homelessness.

Other referrals were received by the Housing Options Service in Lancaster as well over the same period, and these are also recorded, though not specified.

Table 34: Referrals into Lancaster's Housing Options Service

	'Duty to Refer' referrals	Other referrals	Total referrals
Q4 2020/21	8	4	12
Q1 2021/22	12	3	15
Q2 2021/22	28	29	57
Q3 2021/22	39	57	96
Q4 2021/22	36	34	70

We have looked at our statistics in relation to different groups of people, including those groups which are named within the protected characteristics set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty. This is important to help us understand if any groups are over or under represented the homelessness statistics and any changes needed to priorities and services to address any in-balances or possibilities of direct or indirect discrimination.

Age

In the table below those aged between 25 and 44, and in particular the 35–44-year-old group appear to be significantly over-represented in homelessness figures.

A sizeable, but unquantifiable proportion of the 18–24-year-old population in Lancaster are students from other areas and are less likely to be at risk of homelessness than their peers not at university in Lancaster. This may mask to some extent the prevalence of youth homelessness in Lancaster.

TABLE 35: AGE OF HOMELESS APPPLICANTS IN Quarter 4 of 2021/22 COMPARED TO THE OVERALL POPULATION

Age	% of Homeless applicants aged 18 and over (and number) by age	% of Lancaster population by age group aged 18 and over in Lancaster in 2021 (census)
18-24*	21% (48)	20%
25- 34	25% (57)	11%
35-44	28% (63)	14%
45-54	12% (26)	15%
55-64	7% (15)	16%
65-74	5% (12)	13%
75+	2% (5)	11%

*Note that the general population figure for the 18-24 age group includes some of the over 8,000 students at Lancaster University

In the table below, men are over-represented in the homelessness statistics, indicating as a group they are at higher risk of homelessness in Lancaster.

TABLE 35: GENDER OF HOMELESS APPLICANT (where specified) OWED A DUTY IN QUARTER 4 of 2021/22 COMPARED TO THE OVERALL POPULATION		
	% of Homeless applicants (and number)	**% of Lancaster population by gender (Census 2021)**
Female	39% (88)	51% (73,000)
Male	46% (104)	49% (69,900)

The table below shows the gender breakdown locally by the type of duty owed. This shows a clear pattern, reflecting a national trend, of more women owed duties due to threat of homelessness and more men owed relief duties.

TABLE 36: GENDER OF HOMELESS APPLICANTS BY TYPE OF DUTY OWED IN QUARTER 4 OF 2021/22		
	Prevention duty owed	**Relief duty owed**
Female	53	35
Male	49	55

Whole year data on ethnicity is not available for the reasons set out earlier in this document, so the figures below should also be treated with caution as the numbers are small. This warrants some further investigation once more up to date and complete data is available through the Census and H-CLIC. But based on the 2021 Census information on ethnicity, this indicates that those who are White or Asian are slightly under-represented in the homelessness statistics and households which are headed up by some who is Black, African, Caribbean or Back British are over-represented.

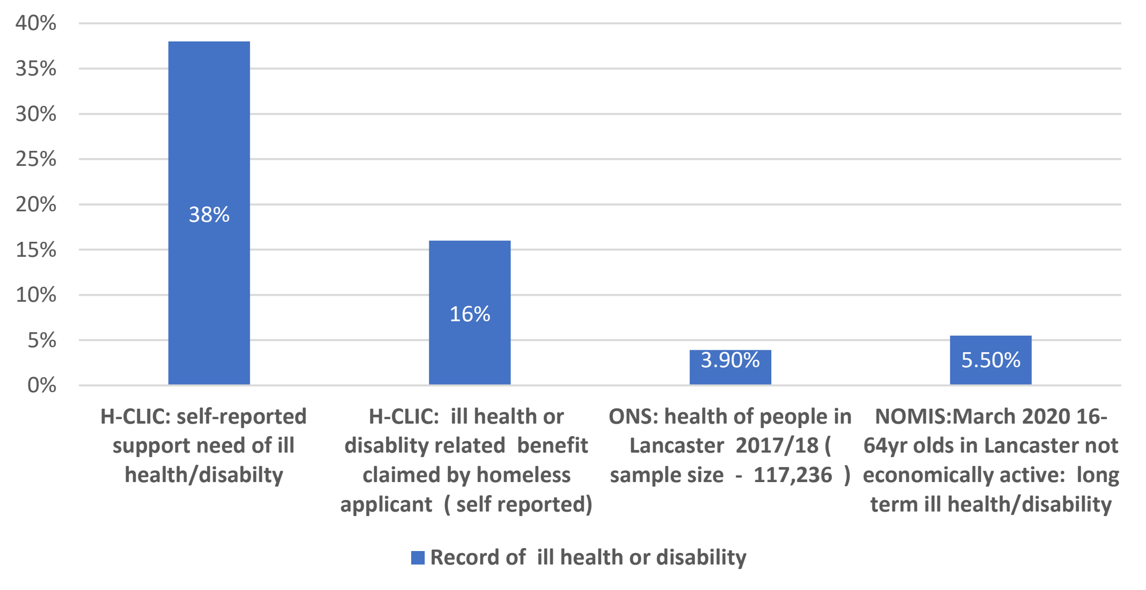
TABLE 37: ETHNICITY OF HOMELESS APPLICANTS COMPARED TO THE OVERALL POPULATION			
Ethnicity	**% of Homeless applicants (and number) in Q4 of 2020/21 and 2021/22**		**Population in Lancaster by ethnicity**
	Q4 2020/21	**Q4 2021/22**	
White (White British and White Other)	90.6% (126)	92.9% (210)	93.1%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	2.2% (3)	1.3% (3)	0.8%
Asian/Asian British	0.7% (1)	1.3% (3)	3.5%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	0.7% (1)	1.3% (3)	1.5%
Other ethnic groups	1.4% (2)	0.4% (1)	0.9%
Don't know	4.3% (6)	2.7% (6)	-

As the UK has now left the European Union, migration patterns are changing and the way in which EU citizens are recorded has changed. Eligibility for public funding is subject to the same rules as people from outside the EU unless an EU citizen already has settled status or pre-settled status.

The national and local authority data on H-CLIC regarding homelessness, nationality and eligibility is not available for Quarter 4 in 2021/22. It is not possible in any case to make comparisons directly between estimates from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) on nationality in each local authority area and the data reported through H-CLIC on nationality, as the former does not require any test of eligibility. Different criteria are used by DLUHC and the ONS, which mean some groupings of residents do not correspond.

There are several different ways of presenting information about health and disability. We have both the self-reported claims of physical ill health and disability and information on benefit related claims (for ESA, incapacity benefit and Disability benefit) in the table below to show that there are several sources of data and that this may be an area which warrants more focus in the future, as it appears that people with ill health and disability are significantly over -represented in homelessness statistics when compared to the overall population.

Table 38: Ill health and disability in Lancaster



In 2018 the Office of National Statistics estimated that 2.1% of the population in the North West of England were gay, lesbian, or bisexual. More detailed breakdowns by local authority are not available.

Table 39: Homelessness data on sexual orientation of applicants in Lancaster.

	% of Homeless applicants (and number) in Q4 of 2021/22
Heterosexual	68% (154)
Gay Lesbian and Bisexual	2.2% (5)
Prefer not to say	27.8% (63)
Other	1.7% (4)

The accuracy of the H-CLIC statistics should be treated with caution, because, as the Table above indicates, a high proportion of applicants may not wish to disclose their sexual orientation. There is national research to draw on in relation to the increased likelihood of homelessness for people who identify as LGBTQI+. [11]

Finally, economic activity is a protective factor in terms of reducing the risk of homelessness in Lancaster. People who are not in paid work are at a higher risk of becoming homeless. A lower proportion of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in Lancaster are economically active compared to the North West overall. This quite significant and it may be useful to consider prevention and relief options which also support employment activity for some households, as well as assisting with homelessness.

TABLE 40: OVERALL ECONOMIC STATUS OF HOMELESS APPLICANTS IN QUARTER 4 OF 2021/22 COMPARED TO THE OVERALL POPULATION

	% of Homeless applicants (and number) in Lancaster	% of Homeless applicants in the North West region	% of Homeless applicants in England	NOMIS Labour Market Profile 2021/22: % of working age population in Lancaster
Economically active (part time, full time, self-employed or in training/apprenticeship)	15.9% (36)	22.4%	25%	75.5% (64,700)
Economically inactive and seeking work	43.3% (98)	37.9%	37.2%	4.6% (3,100)
Economically inactive due to sickness or disability, carer for children or others in family, retired, students.	29.6% (67)	26.4%	25%	20.8% (17,800)
‘Not known’ and ‘Other’.	11% (25)	13.2%	12.8%	-

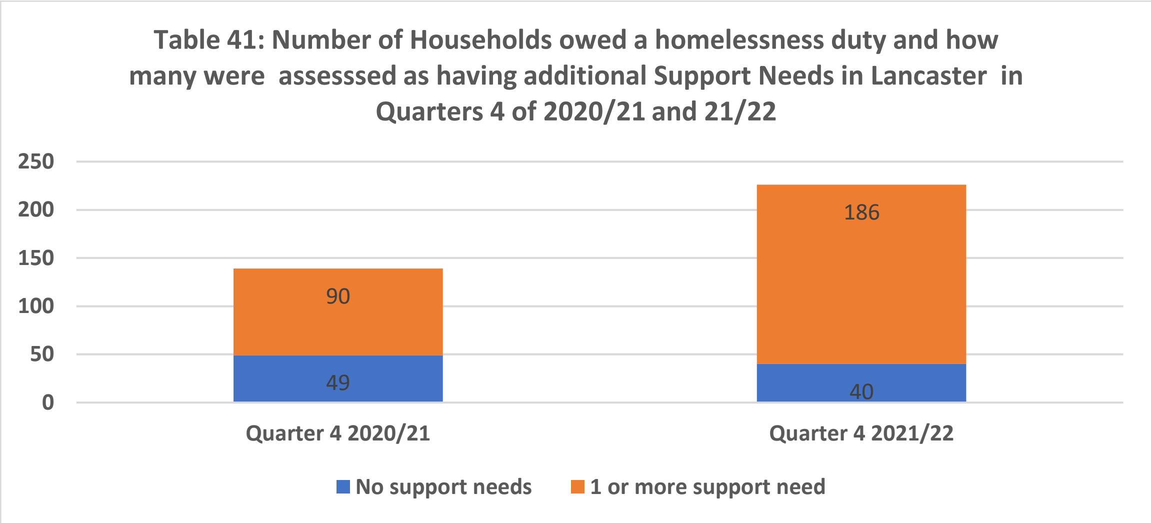
What do we know about the support needs of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in Lancaster?

The assessment process under the homelessness legislation requires Councils to find out about particular issues that an applicant might need support with in order to have and to sustain suitable accommodation. We compared Quarter 4 in 2020/21 with the most recently published Quarter 4 in 2021/22.

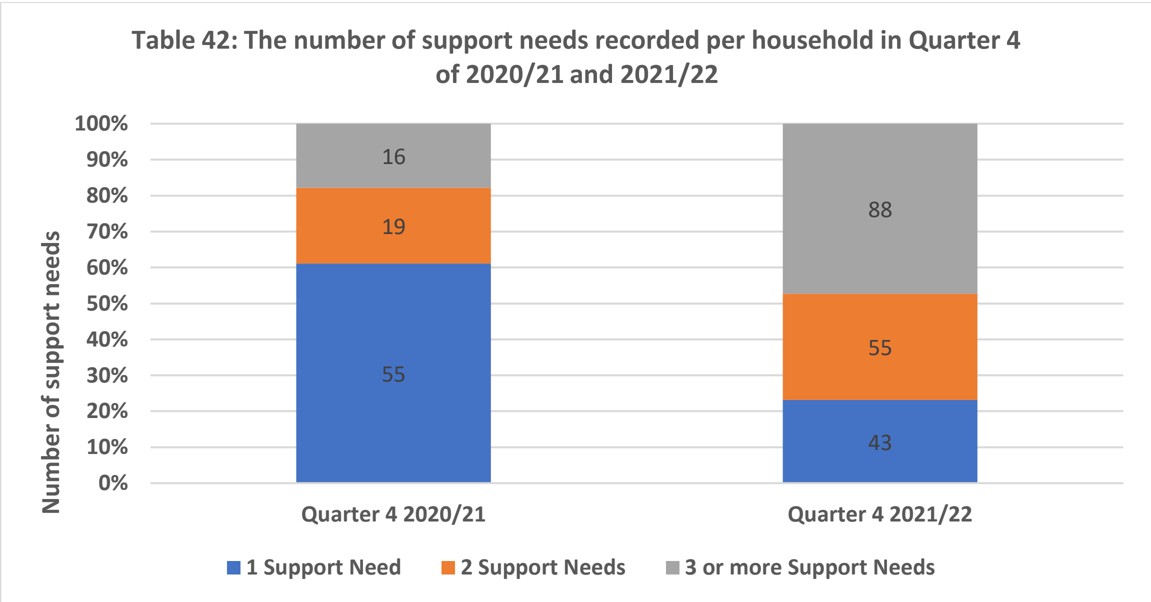
More households made homeless applications in Quarter 4 of 2021/22 than in Quarter 4 of 2020/21

[11] For example see: https://www.akt.org.uk/report and also https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02673037.2022.2104819

and of these, a higher proportion (82.3%) were reported to have support needs than the same period in the previous year (64.7%). This could be because of improved assessments identifying higher levels of support needs, or that support needs had risen due to a range of other factors. To better understand this, monitoring using a full year of data, or more is necessary in the future.



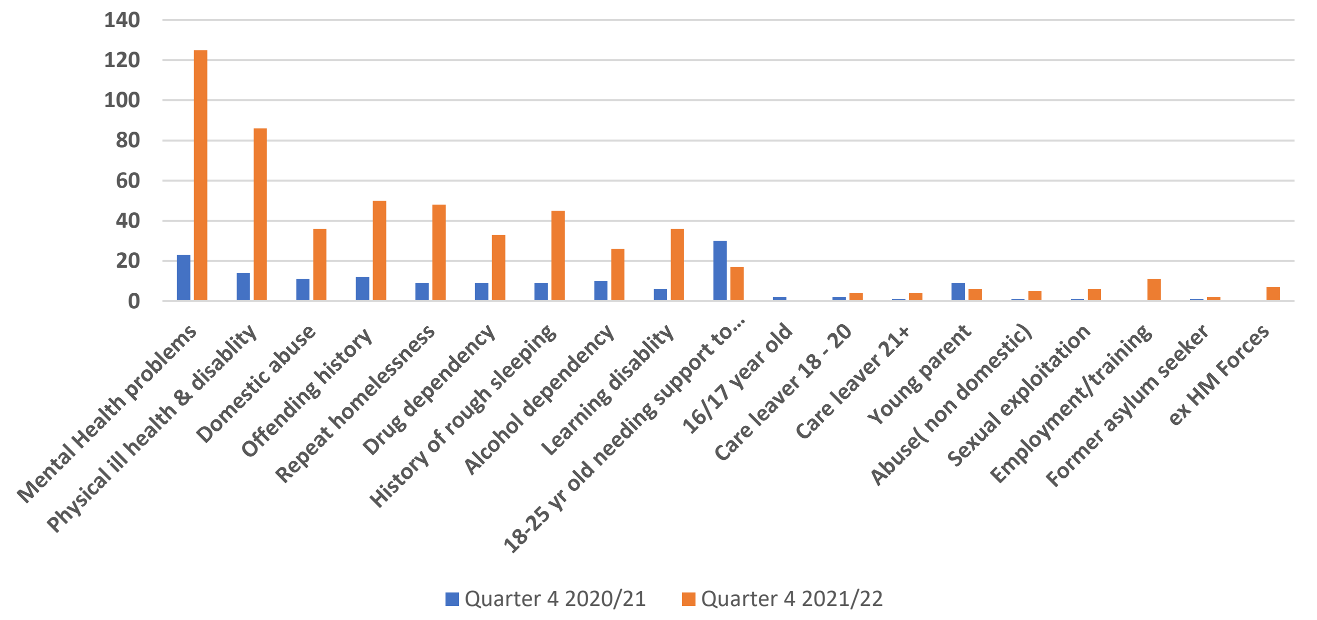
The chart below sets out the number of assessed support needs of applicants owed either a prevention or a relief duty. Assessments can record up to 3 support needs per household, so the number of support needs recorded in any authority do not equate exactly to the number of applicants.



As noted above, in Lancaster, there was a significant difference in the proportion of applicants with support needs between Quarter 4 of 2020/21 and the same Quarter in 2021/22, with a rise from 16 applicants with 3 or more support needs to 88 applicants in Quarter 2 of 2021/22.

The detail of the type of support needs households had is set out in the chart below. The 5 highest support needs in Quarter 4 2021/22 were: Mental health; physical ill health and disability; offending, rough sleeping and repeat homelessness. This is a pattern which is repeated regionally and nationally with one exception: domestic abuse is higher in the North West and England overall, replacing rough sleeping. The other difference is that Lancaster City Council are reporting much higher proportions of the most common support needs in Quarter 4 of 2021/22, when compared regionally and nationally. This may reflect the types of households approaching for assistance – as noted earlier (See Tables 31 and 32) many more single people approach for help both at the point of homelessness, as well as when there is a threat of homelessness. A significantly higher proportion of men are owed the ‘relief’ duty than women. The extent of ‘repeat’ homelessness is high and may warrant further analysis to plan services to reduce risks of tenancy failure in the future.

Table 43: The Assessed Support Needs of People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness



What do we know about people who are rough sleeping in Lancaster and their support needs?

Some people who sleep on the streets or outside do so for relatively short periods of time, days or weeks, whilst for other people, sleeping rough can last for several months or more. Like many other areas of England, in Lancaster there are some people who have spent significant periods of time living in hostels, sofa surfing and rough sleeping.

In 2019/20 the Housing Options Service began to commission services, funded by DLUHC’s Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) programme, to improve services for people who are rough sleeping in Lancaster. The data and other qualitative evidence inform the increasingly detailed picture about people who are rough sleeping in Lancaster, with monthly counts and estimates providing a continual picture of trends in rough sleeping in the local authority.

Table 44: The characteristics of those counted as rough sleeping.

Annual Rough Sleeping Snapshot	2019	2020	2021	2022
Overall number	6	2	3	9
Gender	Male: 5 Female: 1	Male: 0 Female: 2	Male: 3 Female: 0	Male: 7 Female: 2
Nationality	UK: 6	UK: 2	UK: 2 Not known: 1	UK: 9
Age	Over 26: 6	Over 26: 2	Over 26: 3	Over 26: 9

In 2022, the Lancaster and District Homeless Action Service (LDHAS) worked with 142 different people who were homeless and rough sleeping or at high risk of doing so. The average age of clients they worked with was 40 years old and 80% of all those accessing services were male. There is more about LDHAS in Section Two of this Review.

As the UK entered lockdown in March 2020, people who were rough sleeping or at high risk of doing so were offered accommodation under the 'Everyone In' programme[12]. Whilst the pandemic has had a negative impact in many areas of society and the economy, for some people sleeping rough it was a catalyst to being helped come off the street and stay off the streets in the longer term.

In Lancaster, 59 people who were either rough sleeping or at high risk of doing so were assisted. Of these, 22 people had been rough sleeping regularly and were assessed as 'entrenched' rough sleepers. This positive action continued, with only 1 person still rough sleeping at the height of the pandemic.

People rough sleeping usually have a number of support needs. It is well understood nationally and locally that a significant proportion of people who rough sleep have had a high number of 'adverse childhood experiences[13]' and these can impact on adult lives. Support needs are not reflected in detail in some of the data collected through H-CLIC, as this cannot be extrapolated to particular groups. But through Everyone In, we assessed the needs of people we assisted, including the 22 people who were rough sleeping.

[12] A Government-led programme in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown from March 2020 onward, which required local authorities to get people off the streets through an offer short stay accommodation to all rough sleepers.

[13] For example: abuse (physical, sexual, emotional); living with someone who abused drug or alcohol; exposure to domestic violence; living with someone who has gone to prison; living with someone with serious mental illness; losing a parent through divorce, death, or abandonment.

Equality Impact Assessment

This **online** equality impact assessment should:

An equality impact assessment should take place when considering doing something in a new way. Please submit your completed EIA as an appendix to your committee report. Please remember that this will be a public document – do not use jargon or abbreviations.

`

Service Housing Options Service

Title of policy, service, function, project or strategy

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Type of policy, service, function, project or strategy: Existing ☐ New/Proposed ☒

Lead Officer Sharon Parkinson / Mary Whitfield

People involved with completing the EIA

Mary Whitfield

Step 1.1: Make sure you have clear aims and objectives

Q1. What is the aim of your policy, service, function, project or strategy?

To set out Lancaster City Council's approach to reducing homelessness and rough sleeping, including a clear action plan to demonstrate how this will be achieved. The strategy focuses on clear priorities, designed to overcome the challenges and make continuous improvements to services and homelessness reduction.

Q2. Who is intended to benefit? Who will it have a detrimental effect on and how?

The strategy benefits those who are rough sleeping, homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, detailing clear actions to minimise the occurences of homelessness through prevention work and where this does occur services are in place to minmise the period of homelessness. The strategy also supports wider council strategies to build inclusive communities, for example the Corporate priority of focussing on early intervention approaches and involving our communities.

Step 1.2: Collecting your information

Q3. Using existing data (if available) and thinking about each group below, does, or could, the policy, service, function, project or strategy have a negative impact on the groups below?

Group	Negative	Positive/No Impact	Unclear
Age	☐	☒	☐
Disability	☐	☒	☐
Faith, religion or belief	☐	☒	☐
Gender including marriage, pregnancy and maternity	☐	☒	☐
Gender reassignment	☐	☒	☐
Race	☐	☒	☐
Sexual orientation including civic partnerships	☐	☒	☐
Other socially excluded groups such as carers, areas of deprivation	☐	☒	☐
Rural communities	☐	☒	☐

Top Tip: Have a read of the “An easy guide for staff who need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment”

LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL
Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

Equality Impact Assessment

Step 1.3 – Is there a need to consult!

Q4. Who have you consulted with? If you haven't consulted yet please list who you are going to consult with? Please give examples of how you have or are going to consult with specific groups of communities

Consultation was undertaken using a variety of methods - online consultation, presentations and discussion at the Homelessness Forum, Housing Advisory Group which includes those with lived experience, meetings with partners, the Housing Options team and direct contact with councillors, parish councillors and the third sector. Comemnts from forums, online consultation and email responses were taken into account when develping the strategy and action plan.

Step 1.4 – Assessing the impact

Q5. Using the existing data and the assessment in questions 3 what does it tell you, is there an impact on some groups in the community?

Age: No significant impact directly related to this group.
Disability: No significant impact directly related to this group.
Faith, Religion or Belief: No significant impact directly related to this group.
Gender including Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity: No significant impact directly related to this group.
Gender Reassignment: No significant impact directly related to this group.
Race: No significant impact directly related to this group.
Sexual Orientation including Civic Partnership: No significant impact directly related to this group.
Rural Communities: No significant impact directly related to this group.

Step 1.5 – What are the differences?

Q6. If you are either directly or indirectly discriminating, how are you going to change this or mitigate the negative impact?

No areas of discrimination based on protected characterisitcs have been identified.

Q7. Do you need any more information/evidence eg statistic, consultation. If so how do you plan to address this?

No

Step 1.6 – Make a recommendation based on steps 1.1 to 1.5

Q8. If you are in a position to make a recommendation to change or introduce the policy, service, function, project or strategy, clearly show how it was decided on.

The Equality Impact Assessment concludes there is no adverse impact on individuals based on the protected characterisitc groups and therefore it is recommended the revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is approved. During the consultation the impact on those with a protected characteristic was considered and services put in place to alleviate homelessness and rough sleeping are inclusive.

Q9. If you are not in a position to go ahead, what actions are you going to take?

Top Tip: Have a read of the "An easy guide for staff who need to complete an Equality Impact Assessment"

Equality Impact Assessment

LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL
Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

N/A

Q10. Where necessary, how do you plan to monitor the impact and effectiveness of this change or decision?

We will continue to collect data relating to the protected characteristics and if patterns emerge showing discrimination against a particular group good pracice examples will be researched and actions will be put in place to minimise / eradicate the identifed practice which is causing discrimination.

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY CONSULTATION SUMMARY.

Comments on the draft strategy were collated following consultation, undertaken using the following methods:

- Online consultation via Keep Connected on Lancaster City Council website, which received 46 responses.
- Direct emails to statutory bodies included social services and health trusts, voluntary sector, and council colleagues, the homelessness forum and advisory group, encouraging them to complete the online consultation.
- Presentations to the Homelessness Forum, Housing Advisory Group and the Poverty and Truth Commission Housing sub-group.

Prior to the draft consultation meetings with the providers of supported housing and floating support services, in the district, took place.

The summary below includes responses from all these sources, and how this will be reflected in the strategy and action plan. The action plan reflects the four priorities and will be a living document, which is monitored and reported on at the Lancaster Advisory Group and the Homelessness Forum. It is recognised that changes may need to be made to this so local need and circumstances are responded to.

QUESTION	SUMMARY OF RESPONSES	LCC COMMENT
1. What do you feel are the biggest challenges around preventing homelessness and/or rough sleeping in the Lancaster district? Please provide up to three challenges below	• **The affordability and supply of housing is not meeting demand.** Within the strategy the importance of influencing and taking account of the wider agenda to meet priorities is stated. The private rented sector market, was highlighted for several reasons, including rent levels being unaffordable, quality of accommodation and a need to proactively work with private landlords in the area. It was also noted there is too much student accommodation in the area, which impacts the private rented market. It was felt supported housing supply and move on options are limited, and not always meeting the needs of individuals.	An example of linking work across the council is Lancaster City Council Housing Strategy includes the need for affordable housing and progress has been demonstrated by the purchase of the old Skerton secondary school site. The supply of supported housing has increased over the past few years and work has been done to respond, for example Jubilee Court opened in 2023, providing 12 self-contained flats, with floating support. It is important that when developing services best use is made of the funding to develop services which meet local need and are delivered in a way which achieves outcomes for individuals.

	• **A lack of funding to provide services and staffing.** Feedback showed the view is a lack of funding impacts the services provided, and staffing levels are lower than needed to respond to the complex needs presenting. • **Meeting the needs of people with complex needs**. As above it was commented there is a lack of staffing to work with the complex needs presenting, and working to support individual need is key. • **Positive Feedback** Feedback also highlighted examples of good practice and solutions to minimise homelessness, such as the positive work of our Rough Sleeper Navigator and the Changing Futures Programme. The successful work completed in the previous strategy is a good base on which to build over the lifetime of the revised strategy.	An example of our response is the development of a Housing First pilot to support up to six rough sleepers who have committed to wanting to maintain a tenancy. All the points highlighted are interlinked and cannot be seen in isolation and highlights the need for our partnership work to continue and increase. At a local level we aim to respond to local circumstances, and this will be reflected in the action plan. However, we are working within a national framework and guidance provided by the department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) The strategy highlights the national and local context in which the strategy and action plan are operating, during the life of the strategy there could be changes in these, with an election in 2024, the approach and priorities of Government could change, and this would need to be reflected in the strategy.
2. PRIORITIES: The following priorities are included in our strategy. Please tell us if you agree with these priorities, if you disagree with any of these priorities, please give a reason in the next section below. **Priority one:** We will continue working to prevent all forms of homelessness and rough sleeping.	There was overall agreement with the four priorities, our online consultation shows: • 85% agreeing with priority 1 • 80% agreeing with priority 2 • 91% agreeing with priority 3 • 89% agreeing with priority 4	These four priorities will guide the action plan and the key performance indicators (KPIs) for monitoring progress on our actions

Priority two: We will ensure services minimise repeat rough sleeping and homelessness. **Priority three**: We will work towards increasing the availability of affordable and suitable rented accommodation, reducing our reliance on temporary accommodation. **Priority four:** We will further build on the existing strong partnerships with external agencies and increase customer satisfaction for those experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping.		
3. If you disagree with any of these priorities, please explain why.	Responses covered a range of views, from stating nothing is working to prevent homelessness through to recognising that waiting times for council housing is increasing and a lack of accommodation will make priorities difficult to achieve.	The council will continue to work with statutory agencies, landlords, people with lived experience and the voluntary sector to minimise homelessness and will adapt the action plan to take account of national and local strategies/policy and guidance, which impact service development and delivery.
4. Are there any additional priorities you feel should be included in this strategy? If yes, please explain in the box below.	A range of responses • Increasing the Local Housing Allowance. • Minimising empty homes • Complex needs clients provided with the needed support to end their homelessness. • Incentives for private sector landlords • Protect housing for local residents. • Ensuring availability of adapted homes	Where Lancaster City Council can influence national policy, we will do so and access funding to respond to needs.
5. Do you have any further comments that you would like to make about this strategy?	Wide ranging and often repeating comments in earlier questions.	

DETAILED FEEDBACK FROM THE KEEP CONNECTED CONSULTATION

The text below are the full responses received for each question asked.

1. **What do you feel are the biggest challenges around preventing homelessness and/or rough sleeping in the Lancaster district? Please provide up to three challenges below**

Themes
AFFORDABILITY AND SUPPLY OF HOUSING
Council/Social Housing
A big shortage of affordable housing
Not enough funding from central government for social housing.
Not enough housing.
Stop selling council properties.
Lack of suitable housing
There's not enough council properties at all in and around Lancaster
Lack of adapted/disabled accommodation
Private Rented Sector
Rising private rents.
A council that does not encourage landlords in PRS.
Pay rent direct to landlord or letting agent.
Identifying people with no secure tenancies Access to bonds: deposits.
Increase in no fault evictions.
Poor landlords who leave the property in disrepair and charge disproportionate rent.
Good landlords who can't afford to pay the mortgage due to the cost of living or the non payment of rent.
Student Accommodation
Too many Student properties
Not enough available housing too much emphasis on student accommodation.
Lack of Move On Options
Move-on accommodation from temporary accommodation has been an issue and continues to cause backlogs and bed-blocking issues within temporary services.
Supported Housing Portfolio

One of the biggest challenges is the range of services provided in accommodating homeless and rough-sleeping individuals, a variety of accommodation options are necessary for supporting individuals and meeting their needs.
The majority of temporary accommodations are in communal-based service and more options such as housing first should be continued to develop. This would also support the issue of repeat homelessness.
Insufficient hostel beds, the lack of a night shelter

RESOURCES
Staffing / Funding
Lack of staff to manage the situation.
Lack of outreach support in the Morecambe area.
Lack of housing support for problematic complex individuals.
Lack of evening outreach engagement work.
Lack of Funding
Money - lack thereof- central govt to blame on many fronts.
LHA - Not enough being done to prevent people being homeless... more help with paying rent the cost of renting has outgrown the housing benefit rates.
Priorities have to be affordable and suitable rented accommodation for all. We live in a society where only the rich care about themselves and leave the rest of us swindleing in poverty.

COMPLEXITY OF NEED
Substance Misuse and Mental Health
Addiction to alcohol/drugs
The alcohol and drugs addiction in the town centre
Not enough being done to prevent people being homeless – i.e., social care ...
Substance Abuse
Use of alcohol and drugs Mental Health
Lack of mental health support
Family breakups
Anti-social behaviour - help with mandatory attendance.
Worklessness
Most homeless refuses to work and pay their bills. Some will prefer not to work and get handouts.
Other
- A waste of funds by council on meaningless consultations and grants for certain people.

- The council's response, or lack of it. Why set rules and guidelines that you then ignore, or twist to suit yourselves. Also middle class attitudes, little understanding and actively not listening.
- Public push-back, not wanting 'rough' individuals next door.
- A big shortage of affordable housing. A council that does not encourage landlords in PRS. A waste of funds by council on meaningless consultations and grants for certain people.
- A council that does not encourage landlords in PRS. Too many Student properties. Not enough funding from central government for social housing.
- Rising private rents. Family breakups. Addiction to alcohol/drugs
- The alcohol and drugs addiction in the town centre
- Most homeless refuses to work and pay their bills. Some will prefer not to work and get handouts.
- Not enough housing. Not enough being done to prevent people being homeless – i.e. social care ... more help with paying rent the cost of renting has outgrown the housing benefit rates
- Pay rent direct to landlord or letting agent. Anti-social behaviour help with mandatory attendance. Stop selling council properties.
- Money - lack thereof- central govt to blame on many fronts.
- One of the biggest challenges is the range of services provided in accommodating homeless and rough-sleeping individuals, a variety of accommodation options are necessary for supporting individuals and meeting their needs. The majority of temporary accommodations are in communal-based service and more options such as housing first should be continued to develop. This would also support the issue of repeat homelessness. Further support for case management, Changing futures have had a significant impact on this, but it is not far-reaching enough to support all those who would benefit. Move-on accommodation from temporary accommodation has been an issue and continues to cause backlogs and bed-blocking issues within temporary services.
- Substance abuse. Lack of suitable housing. Lack of staff to manage the situation.
- Not enough available housing too much emphasis on student accommodation
- Identifying people with no secure tenancies Access to bonds: deposits. Increase in no risk evictions.
- Lack of outreach support in the Morecambe area. Lack of housing support for problematic complex individuals. Lack of evening outreach engagement work.
- Drug & alcohol use. Homeless sleepers preferring the streets to accommodation offers.
- Knowing who is at risk, before they become homeless. Providing accommodation for any person, especially when they may have complex problems and may not be safe to themselves or others.
- Public push-back, not wanting 'rough' individuals next door.
- Lack of accommodation and help

- The issues that cause homelessness such as the cost of living, addiction, long term mental health issues, long term unemployment. Also poor landlords who leave the property in disrepair and charge disproportionate rent. Our keep an empty property for long periods. Also, good landlords who can't afford to pay the mortgage due to the cost of living or the non-payment of rent.
- Lack of mental health care, stresses of modern living, costs being too high - rent prices - lack of appropriate accommodation
- Identifying genuine homeless people
- The council's response, or lack of it. Why set rules and guidelines that you then ignore, or twist to suit yourselves. Also middle class attitudes, little understanding and actively not listening
- Lack of affordable rental housing
- Safe place for the homeless, homeless people crime, loneliness and health
- Use of alcohol and drugs Mental Health. A service which could help someone in trouble, who was considering homelessness.
- Lack of accommodation. So much student accommodation.
- For all Council Officers and other designated officials, volunteers to ascertain , from the homeless person or persons concerned, if there is a modicum of the individual wanting to be helped. Perhaps a strategy might be to ask " do you want to helped". This view recognises, that on the ground at the time, the individual might not be in condition to be asked but the question should be put asap.
- To recognise that some individuals, who are apparently " homeless " may not actually be so and adopted the "apparently homeless" stance for their own reasons. Some of which may well involve criminality. 3.To challenge some members of the public's view that giving those who are apparently homeless cash donations.
- It would seem that the policy of some Local Authorities to set up a collection fund which, individuals who wanted to donate cash to local schemes for the homeless, is better than members of the public giving money direct to those who present has homeless.
- Growing number of people struggling to find affordable accommodation. Vulnerable people are not sure where to find help. Resources from other agencies such as faith groups and churches are not as available as before COVID.
- There's not enough council properties at all in and around Lancaster
- Insufficient available social housing. Insufficient hostel beds, the lack of a night shelter
- Money, compassion, support from over stretched and underfunded resources.
- lack of suitable properties / incorrect priorities - for example – asylum seekers getting prioritised over ex forces which I feel is disgraceful.
- Lack of private Landlords willing to house people on low incomes or UC, Increased rents, cost of living, Student housing and now the Eden Project will also impact on low income households and the rental market. Rough sleeping- There are difficulties with people who have complex needs as their needs are too great for the supported housing we have to keep other residents safe and staff. These people are often the most difficult to house or to support to sustain their accommodation.
- not enough supported housing, not enough social housing, not enough high needs supported housing.
- Lack of affordable renting accommodation Private landlords profiteering
- Finances Lack of support and information working with drug and alcohol services

• Housing costs Lack of mechanisms to develop self-worth and aspire to being accommodated A failure to make support and/or housing offers that rough sleepers should/would believe. • Substance misuse is at its highest peak ever. It is prevalent in every part of society now with crack cocaine being abused by the highest prevalence ever seen. Crack cocaine is responsible for far more crime than heroin as its the most powerful drug and there is no limit on the amount desired. Until substance misuse is given a large injection of funding homelessness will continue to rise. Additionally, the introduction of universal credit giving the rent to the individual was ridiculous as in the hands of the vulnerable, that money will never get to the place it is supposed to. Also, inflation has pushed rents up with top ups being required in the private sector and if trying to sustain a property on benefits, it is now literally impossible. • The biggest challenge in the short will be Prioritising temporary accommodation (b&b/hotel rooms) for local needs.

2. **PRIORITIES:** The following priorities are included in our strategy. Please tell us if you agree with these priorities, if you disagree with any of these priorities, please give a reason in the next section below.

PRIORITY	AGREE	DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
Priority one: We will continue working to prevent all forms of homelessness and rough sleeping. Do you agree with this priority?	40	4	3
Priority two: We will ensure services minimise repeat rough sleeping and homelessness. Do you agree with this priority?	38	5	4
Priority three: We will work towards increasing the availability of affordable and suitable rented accommodation, reducing our reliance on temporary accommodation. Do you agree with this priority?	42	2	3
Priority four: We will further build on the existing strong partnerships with external agencies and increase customer satisfaction for those experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping. Do you agree with this priority?	43	1	3

3. If you disagree with any of these priorities, please explain why in the box below:

- Nothing in Priority 1 or 2 is working.
- Give priority to those to work hard to provide for their families. These individuals should be sent back to school and learn how to manage their finances and go to work.
- Repeat homelessness can mean people need tenancy support to manage finances and often regulate behaviours.
- I don't think it's about the services provided by the Council it's about reaching out to other service who can provide a wraparound service that address the multiple issues that cause homelessness. Homeless people often find it hard to engage with people in authority as they feel they have been let down by government and statutory services so much.
- I don't believe that focusing on reducing rough sleeping is an effective priority - it is treating the symptom but not the cause. A focus on helping improve and support healthy mental and physical living needs to be the priority.
- Again, a priority needs to be if genuinely homeless.
- I agree with all, but I will note it doesn't give any guarantees.
- More proactive measures might be needed. Is it possible to fund a designated officer, who duties do not relate to general housing homelessness, who could be tasked towards prevention.
- It is all very well having these statements but in reality, they are not practiced. The vulnerable are conned into giving up their council properties to go into temporary accommodation without understanding that if they break rules in the temp accommodation, they are homeless and told they are intentionally homeless and owed no duty. Many of the most vulnerable cannot cope or abide by rules due to the chaos of their lifestyles. They are set up to fail.
- I agree with priorities but having worked closely with housing over many years and seen available accommodation and waiting lists times increase year on year so don't see how this will be achieved.

4. Are there any additional priorities you feel should be included in this strategy? If yes, please explain in the box below.

- Yea there are a number of ways 1. Increase local housing rates 2. Try and get landlords in. PRS to trust and work with you Which I being one of those said landlords completely do not trust any council or Councillor and will not work with local council.
- Make the town centre less attractive to rough sleepers move them on
- Working hard should pay
- Increase housing benefit it's about preventing homeless as well.
- Stop selling council property and do not rely on others to supply accommodation.
- Tackling substance abuse Mental health support.

- Access to ideal choice via a person initially as registration excludes people with minimal literacy and IT skills.
- Teaching younger homeless youths housekeeping and self-hygiene skills.
- Dealing with people who come into the district and wild camp, I think this group of people are the most worrisome for local people. An easy conclusion to jump to is that the person in the tent is 'bad' no matter who they may be. Having a clear way for members of the public to report this, so that the person gets some help and guidance, would be reassuring.
- We need to find out why they are sleeping rough. I also feel that some of this is just accepted as the norm. For example, Morecambe Town centre
- Not allowing property owners to keep their properties empty. There are schemes in other parts of the country to prevent properties being disused. Is there not an empty property tax or something similar?
- Focus on diversity, in lifestyles as well as people. Supporting different ways of thinking, different needs, rather than making everyone conform to one way of life and pathologising anyone who struggles to fit in with this.
- While it is not going to be as many people as just needing any accommodation, there is a very significant lack of disabled, adapted/accessible properties in the area. I personally know 4 people in accommodation which does not meet their requirements - none of them have proper wheelchair access (often needing to drag portable ramps around) let alone the wet rooms they need. Combining this with the significantly higher price of flats as compared to general houses and the higher likelihood of disabled people being out of work or on very low pay, this causes a lot of problems. My rent on an unsuitable property (but literally all I can find that I can make work) increased 12% this year, after a 13% increase last year. This is not an uncommon problem with people I speak to, and everyone is on the verge of not being able to afford it at all.
- The policies are fine, but will they actually happen in reality?
- Protect a proportion of housing to keep it available for local residents, not students. Not sure how but if it could be done it would help?
- LGBT + People need to be housed according to need - rather than hetronormative values.
- Utilising some of the board up and derelict buildings to accommodate homeless people.
- Knowledge for young people should be made available to all, at seigniorage school and university. People should be made aware of short-, mid- and long-term consequences on all aspects of homelessness.
- Coming from an agency with difficult to house people feel that LCC more so than other areas continue to put barriers in the way preventing them being housed. Outreach worker service has been positive on some occasions and poor on others.
- A public campaign asking people not to give directly to people who are apparently homeless, on the street, setting up of the public donation scheme (as previouly mentioned) and ,at the same time, publicising the said donation scheme.There
- Yes to rehouse family's who aren't getting where they want to live.
- The bringing on stream of a night shelter providing temporary accommodation whilst referrals and assessments are being
- Ex war veterans should get some type of priority
- Incentives for Landlords- we need to be creative with this and make sure Landlords know they're supported in all ways if they have difficult tenants, this may encourage new landlords and existing ones to not sell up. Set up Landlord forum.

- I was speaking to someone the other morning Liam who works with the rough sleepers of Lancaster one morning he said he worked with LCC and I just wanted to send over my praise for this individual. And feel he is a credit to the team.
- Having contactable services. Need to able to contact homelessness team (phone off) and out of hours phone also off. I tried at 4:10 on 26th June.
- To provide accommodation to all rough sleepers every night.
  To operate a no exclusions policy.
- To operate an all in policy.
- To purchase as a council or through ESP's accommodation that's affordable.
- To account for the financial costs of rough sleepers in society on the public purse when compared to those with similar care act needs in accommodation when considering investments in capital and services.
- To promote access to support services to those who are rough sleepers in recognition of the need for 'stepping stone' services.
- To dispel the notion that the first three points above have a negative impact on the numbers of people rough sleeping and recognise the contradiction in that notion when also referring to positive impacts from the COVID all in policy.
- To promote charitable and church services that the Council has sought to oppress into closing down and allow them to provide the above services where the Council fails to do so.
- To describe the service delivery in the plan that supports rough sleepers in living on the streets in recognition of the need to avoid human rights breaches and provide believable stepping stones.
- To match service delivery to need rather than to offer services to those who best meet criteria. Homeless people identify criteria as systems to reject them which makes a barrier to entry to support.
- To provide a plan that names services, access routes in a language that service users would understand.
- To allow staff to be honest about the issues.
- My experience of the Head of Service was one where they appeared to be dishonest and seemed comfortable in acknowledging they were being dishonest.
- To develop a culture of integrity, consistency and care.
- There needs to be far more supported accommodation. Newcastle has a far better strategy than here. Everyone is offered overnight accommodation unless there has been extreme risk to staff.
- I think the application process to ideal choice social housing should be far easier and a quicker process. It can take months for an application to be active. It can be quite complicated and off putting for alot people. I support alot of people who find the process totally overwhelming and confusing. It can at times take so long that time ltd support that is in place for people has ended before the application is fully completed and the account active.

5. Do you have any further comments that you would like to make about this strategy. Please state the relevant paragraph and page number that you are commenting on and provide details of the changes you would like made.

- You have obviously seen the survey that has been brought Forward by yourself Councillor Caroline Jackson on licensing and I believe you have made the homeless situation far Worse in the past few days and we have yet to see what carnage you Created in the future months for families with this selective licensing sham. (passed to Housing Standards)
- Send them back to school and we hope they will learn to read and write
- Building more homes and flats so there is cheap as possible homes for people NOT the nearly £1000 a month homes on Westminster road
- One singular system should be commissioned by the local authority so that providers and support agencies can view details of clients they are working with, it is often difficult in this climate to get information shared between agencies or to see what has been done or what support is required, this applies to changing futures, LDHAS, and accommodation providers, who should work in unity for the individuals they are supporting.
- Accountability so that suitable accommodation isn't misused
- Get people with lived experience of homelessness around the table when making strategies. Don't make decisions about homelessness unless some homeless people or some who have been homeless are in the room
- Why not also look at properties that are empty and not lived in
- Multiple people move in with others, but keep their home for when a relationship breaks down. Frequently the benefits system is paying for this. It's so wrong. There would be a lot more available properties if you actually monitored where people live. You could work with the benefits fraud teams!
- Whilst I agree that society should support people, I can't help notice that the numbers are relatively small, a lot of investment for a small minority. Maybe parents could be more informative to their children. I would think most parents would naturally warn their children of the dangers of smoking, drinking and probably sexually related matters. I wonder how many of them actually talk to their children about homelessness the possible implications for all.
- Really think that the working with other agencies should be higher priority in light of us working with so many difficult to house people
- There may be cases on homelessness where the individuals have had no choice about their homeless circumstances but, again, it should be recognised that some people have made a choice to adopt the apparently homelessness stance or continually take no action to improve their circumstances.
- I'm currently homeless and I have asked to be rehoused in Lancaster due to me being emergency moved I have been put in a hotel which is disgusting and unclean. Me and my children have been made to stay in a hotel full of drug addicts I'm expected to be staying in Morecambe and to get my children to school and nursery every day I'm struggling with food and facing financial hardship as it is. I think it's disgusting how the council aren't prioritising families and just trying to dump them wherever they fell is appropriate which is causing people's mental health and also their safety.
- I haven't seen a strategy; I agree with the wish list above but surely that isn't a strategy"!

• The strategy lacks a financial discourse about the opportunity cost of policies proposed. The strategy is not clear in what the actions will mean in terms of service delivery in the future. The strategy does not define present service delivery. The strategy misrepresents the financial pressures in the private rental and Housing Association market and does not reference the Housing Strategy properly SMART targets are absent making the strategy feel disingenuous. How many beds would be created, what would the access criteria be and how does that correlate to the number of rough sleepers. In what way is the number of people on the count relevant to the number of rough sleepers. The count number simply gives the number of people who choose to be prominent in the community when sleeping. Where's the references to the Adult Social Care commitment to service provision and how does that enable an open-door practice to those who at times reject service provision. The policy does not reflect upon the community-based services which have closed over the last few years and in what ways that has been a gain or loss to rough sleepers. Policies that don't recognise mistakes are fundamentally flawed. The policy does not reflect, or have sufficient links to, government policy which would explain much of it's following content. The key issue is that it does not have SMART targets for providing services to rough sleepers to have better lives as rough sleepers so that they can access services. I've been on first name terms with more rough sleepers than you acknowledge exist and all but a few want housing. Their lifestyles leave them unable to meet criteria or maintain themselves in housing. I can't find how you will improve their lives, engage them in society and provide the stability and belief that enables them to access housing. I can't find reference to where the author has had fundamental consultation with service users on the issues. This document needs a plethora of appendices and links. • The council severely underestimate homelessness by discounting all those who on the count nights who aren't observed on the streets. They preach good practice but in reality the most vulnerable cannot access quality support. The boundaries put in place make it impossible for them to progress. There is a distinct lack of understanding of the barriers faced by the individual who has multiple barriers to accessing housing. You cannot expect a homeless substance misuse to behave in the same way as a standard member of society. Until that is understood and addressed, nothing will change.

CABINET

Livestreaming of Cabinet Meetings
24 October 2023

Report of Senior Manager, Elections and Democratic Support

PURPOSE OF REPORT To enable Cabinet to consider livestreaming meetings during the municipal year 2024/2025.					
Key Decision		**Non-Key Decision**	**X**	**Referral from Cabinet Member**	
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision	N/A				
This report is public					

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR JASON WOOD

(1) That Cabinet meetings be livestreamed during the municipal year 2024/25.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Dates, venues and start times of meetings are now being considered for the municipal year 2024/25 to enable a committee timetable to be compiled and agreed. At time of drafting this report the dates, time and venues for meetings in 2024/25 were due to go to Council Business Committee on 12 October 2023 for consideration. Council Business Committee has authority to approve the committee timetable.

1.2 As Cabinet Members are aware, professional livestreaming equipment with the facility for e-voting was installed in the Council Chamber at Morecambe Town Hall earlier this year for use for full Council meetings. This report is brought to Cabinet to allow members to consider extending the Council's livestreaming offer to include formal Cabinet meetings.

2.0 Proposal Details

Currently, meetings of Cabinet alternate between the two Town Halls in Lancaster and Morecambe and have done so for many years. This allows members of the public to attend a Cabinet meeting at a venue closest to them. However, it should be noted that the equipment for livestreaming is not portable. It is fixed in the Council Chamber at Morecambe Town Hall. Should Cabinet take the decision to livestream their meetings, the venue for future meetings will have to be Morecambe Town Hall. If there is a wish to continue alternating meetings between Morecambe and Lancaster Town Halls, only the meetings held at Morecambe Town Hall would be livestreamed (see Option 3, below).

3.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	Option 1: To livestream meetings of Cabinet from May 2024.	**Option 2:** Not to livestream meetings of Cabinet.	**Option 3:** To livestream meetings of Cabinet held at Morecambe Town Hall only.
Advantages	Fits with the modernising local government agenda, allowing people to watch meetings as they happen without having to attend in person. Reduces the need for the public to travel to meetings. Increased transparency, accountability, and openness.	Continuation of alternating venues would allow people to attend in person at venues in and Lancaster Town Hall as well as Morecambe.	Would allow the public to continue to attend Cabinet meetings in Lancaster Town Hall in person.
Disadvantages	All meetings would have to be held at Morecambe Town Hall.	Would not take advantage of the livestreaming equipment. The public would have to attend in person to be able to watch/listen to the meeting as it happens.	Would not take full advantage of the livestreaming equipment.
Risks	None identified. Livestreaming of meetings is now used by many local authorities and has been for some time.	May attract criticism if the equipment is in place but not used for Cabinet meetings where the Council’s key decisions are taken.	Could confuse the public – they are likely to expect all meetings to be livestreamed and it may attract criticism if only half the formal meetings are livestreamed.

4.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

4.1 The officer preferred option is Option 1, to allow the public to access a livestream of Cabinet meetings and make full use of the equipment in the Council Chamber. The public will still be able to attend at Morecambe Town Hall if they do not have access to the software to watch the livestream.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Cabinet is asked to consider the merits of livestreaming its formal meetings from May 2024.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

Improves accessibility and transparency of decision making in line with the focus on serving residents.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

A livestreaming facility has a very positive effect during a pandemic, when attending meetings in person can create health and safety concerns.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources: None identified.

Information Services: None identified.

Property: None identified.

Open Spaces: None identified.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

In accordance with Rule 6 of the Cabinet Procedure Rules the Cabinet will usually meet monthly on dates and at times to be agreed by the Leader. The Leader may agree to hold additional meetings as required. In determining the time for the meeting, regard should be had to maximising the accessibility of the public. The Monitoring Officer is of the opinion that, by implication, this also extends to the venue and the use of technology to facilitate public viewing.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	**Contact Officer:** Debbie Chambers
None.	**Telephone: 01524 582057** **E-mail:** dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk **Ref:**

Cabinet Report

Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2023/24
24th October 2023

Report of Chief Finance Officer

PURPOSE OF REPORT					
This report seeks Cabinet's consideration of various matters in connection with the amendments to the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 and the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2023/24.					
Key Decision		**Non-Key Decision**	x	**Referral from Cabinet Member**	
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision					
This report is public					

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet

(1) Consider the various matters in connection with the amendments to the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 and the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2023/24

(2) Forward the amendments to the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 as set out in **Appendix B** on to Budget & Performance Panel for consideration and comment then to Full Council for approval in accordance with CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code.

(3) Forward the Mid-Year Review 2023/24 as set out in **Appendix C** on to Budget & Performance Panel and Full Council for consideration in accordance with CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Council's Treasury Management Activities are regulated the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code) issued under the Local Government Act 2003

1.2.1 During 2022/23 the minimum reporting requirements are that Full Council should receive the following reports:

- an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (Council 23 February 2022)
- a mid-year (minimum) treasury update report (This report).
- an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy

1.3 In addition, Members will receive treasury management update reports on which are presented to Cabinet and Budget and Performance Panel.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 As part of the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 approved by Council on 22 February 2023 an amended Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy in relation to 2022/23 enabling savings of £2M to be realised in that year.

2.2 In order to fully reflect the impact of the change in MRP policy in financial years 2023/24 to 2026/27 several of the prudential indicators included in the original approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 now require amendment. These amendments need to be considered by Budget & Performance Panel and referred on the Full Council for approval.

2.3 The Mid-Year Review (Appendix A) sets out the performance of treasury operations for the first six months of the 2022/23 financial year in terms of long and short-term borrowing, investment activities and relevant borrowing limits and prudential indicators.

2.4 Under CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code) it is a requirement that an information report on these matters be presented to Cabinet and full Council.

3.0 AMENDMENTS TO THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2023/24-2026/27

3.1 In compliance with the Prudential Framework the Council sets an annual Treasury Management Strategy including key indicators, determined under regulation, to assist Members in assessing the affordability of borrowing and in determining that it is prudent and sustainable.

3.2 The change to the MRP policy included within the original Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 was not able to be fully reflected in the prudential indicators at that time. Officers have now updated the indicators for adoption within the amended strategy and these require Council approval. Given that the 2022/23 accounts have been finalised and slippage on the capital programme has been approved this has also been incorporated into the amended strategy.

3.3 The impact of the change in policy is reflected primarily in the capital financing requirement which has increased by circa £2m. The same circa £2m impact can also be seen in an increase in the level of under-borrowing and an upwards movement in the operational boundary and authorised limit.

3.4 The amended indicators are set out in **Appendix B** and for comparative purposes the original indicators are set out in **Appendix C**. The remainder of the strategy is unchanged.

4.0 MID YEAR REVIEW SUMMARY DETAILS

4.1 Mid-year quarter 2 position incorporates the amended indicators set out in the amended TM strategy

Investments

4.2 The average level of funds available for investment purposes over the six-month period was £32.9M (2022/23 £44.5M). These funds were available on a temporary basis, and the level of funds available was mainly dependent on the timing of precept and business rate related payments, the receipt of grants and progress on the Capital Programme.

4.3 The Council's investments returned a weighted average rate of 5.07% on deposit generating £748K of interest against a profiled budget of £433K.

Borrowing

4.4 The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) measures the Council's underlining need to borrow for capital purpose, i.e., its borrowing requirement. The CFR is the amount of capital expenditure that has not yet been financed by capital receipts, capital grants or contributions from revenue.

4.5 The Council's capital financing requirement (CFR) for 2023/24 was forecast as £105.97M with the current forecast CFR at quarter 2 is, however, £108.14M. This is principally due to the impact of the change in MRP policy as set out earlier in this report.

4.6 If the CFR is positive the Council may borrow from the PWLB, or the market (external borrowing) or from internal balances on a temporary basis (internal borrowing). The balance of external and internal borrowing is generally driven by market conditions. The Council currently has borrowings of £59.01M and has utilised £49.13M of cash flow funds in lieu of borrowing and with current forecasts estimating new borrowing of £15.5M later in the financial year. However, the potential for slippage & uncertainty regarding the progress of some schemes under development make this difficult to quantify with certainty and the actual amount of borrowing may be lower.

4.7 Consideration also needs to be given to the recent volatility in the markets leading to PWLB interest rates being in excess of 5% at the time of writing. In light of this it may be prudent to delay borrowing or consider the use of short-term borrowing as an interim measure.

Prudential Indicators

4.8 In compliance with the Prudential Framework the Council sets an annual Treasury Management Strategy including key indicators, determined under regulation, to assist Members in assessing the affordability of borrowing and in determining that it is prudent and sustainable. The indicators are set out in **Annex A** of The Mid -Year Report at **Appendix A**

5.0 OPTIONS AND OPTIONS ANALYSIS

5.1 As the report is for consideration and progressing to Budget and Performance Panel and Full Council, no alternative options are put forward.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 Consideration of Treasury Management Mid-Year Review and presentation to Full Council will ensure the Council complies with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK Treasury Management forms part of the Councils budget framework	
CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT **(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)** Effective Treasury Management and use of the Councils' resources is fundamental to the delivery of its priorities and outcomes.	
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS None directly arising from this report.	
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, due to the financial pressures faced by the Council, and the significant increase in interest rates and borrowing costs areas of capital investment may be delayed, reprofiled or stopped. Financial due diligence and assessment will ensure that all the appropriate costs are considered for each proposal and external advice considered ahead of any borrowing being incurred.	
OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS There are no additional resource or risk implications	
SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS The s151 Officer has written this report in his role as Chief Finance Officer	
MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments	
BACKGROUND PAPERS	**Contact Officer:** Paul Thompson **Telephone:** 01524 582603 **E-mail:** pthompson@lancaster.gov.uk **Ref:** N/A

Appendix A

Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy

Mid-Year Review 2023/24

Report of Chief Finance Officer

1. Background

Capital Strategy

In December 2021, CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) issued revised Prudential and Treasury Management codes. These require all local authorities to prepare a Capital Strategy which is intended to provide the following:

- a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed
- the implications for future financial sustainability

A report setting out our Capital Strategy was taken to Council on 22 February 2023.

Treasury Management

The Council operates a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet its cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operations ensure this cash flow is adequately planned with surplus monies being invested in low-risk counterparties, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering optimising investment return.

The second main function of the treasury management services is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer-term cash flow planning to ensure the Council can meet its capital spending operations. This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses, and, on occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

Accordingly, treasury management is defined as:

> "The management of the local authority's borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

2. Introduction

This report has been written in accordance with the requirements of CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management.

The primary requirements of the Code are as follows:

(i) Creation and maintenance of a Treasury Management Policy Statement which sets out the policies and objectives of the Council's treasury management activities.

(ii) Creation and maintenance of Treasury Management Practices which set out the manner in which the Council will seek to achieve those policies and objectives.

(iii) Receipt by full council of an annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement – including the Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy – for the year ahead, a Mid-year Review Report and an Annual Report, covering activities during the previous year.

(iv) Delegation by the Council of responsibilities for implementing and monitoring treasury management policies and practices and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions.

(v) Delegation by the council of the role of scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies to a specific named body. For this Council the delegated body is Budget and Performance Panel.

This mid-year report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management, and covers the following:

- An economic update for the first part of the 2023/24 financial year
- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy
- The Council's capital expenditure, as set out in the Capital Strategy, and prudential indicators
- A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2023/24
- A review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2023/24
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken during 2023/24
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2023/24

3. Economics update (provided by Link Asset Services)

- *The first half of 2023/24 saw:*
  - *Interest rates rise by a further 100 basis points, taking Bank Rate from 4.25% to 5.25% and, possibly, the peak in the tightening cycle.*
  - *Short, medium and long-dated gilts remain elevated as inflation is continually surprised to the upside.*
  - *A 0.5% month on month decline in real GDP in July, mainly due to more strikes.*
  - *CPI inflation falling from 8.7% in April to 6.7% in August, its lowest rate since February 2022, but still the highest in the G7.*
  - *Core CPI inflation declining to 6.2% in August from 7.1% in April and May, a then 31 years high.*
  - *A cooling in labour market conditions, but no evidence yet that it has led to an easing in wage.*
- *The 0.5% month on month fall in GDP in July suggests that underlying growth has lost momentum since earlier in the year. Some of the weakness in July was due to there being almost twice as many working days lost to strikes in July (281,000) than in June (160,000). But with output falling in 10 out of the 17 sectors, there is an air of underlying weakness.*
- *As the growing drag from higher interest rates intensifies over the next six months, we think the economy will continue to lose momentum and soon fall*

into a mild recession. Strong labour demand, fast wage growth and government handouts have all supported household incomes over the past year. And with CPI inflation past its peak and expected to decline further, the economy has got through the cost-of- living crisis without recession. But even though the worst of the falls in real household disposable incomes are behind us, the phasing out of financial support packages provided by the government during the energy crisis means real incomes are unlikely to grow strongly. Higher interest rates will soon bite harder too. We expect the Bank of England to keep interest rates at the probable peak of 5.25% until the second half of 2024. Mortgage rates are likely to stay above 5.0% for around a year.

- *The tightness of the labour market continued to ease, with employment in the three months to July falling by 207,000. The further decline in the number of job vacancies from 1.017m in July to 0.989m in August suggests that the labour market has loosened a bit further since July. The cooling in labour market conditions still has not fed through to an easing in wage growth.*
- *CPI inflation declined from 6.8% in July to 6.7% in August, the lowest rate since February 2022. The biggest positive surprise was the drop in core CPI inflation, which declined from 6.9% to 6.2%. That reverses all the rise since March and means the gap between the UK and elsewhere has shrunk.*
- *In its latest monetary policy meeting on 20 September, the Bank of England left interest rates unchanged at 5.25%. The weak August CPI inflation release, the recent loosening in the labour market and the downbeat activity surveys appear to have convinced the Bank of England that it has already raised rates far enough. The Bank also retained the hawkish guidance that rates will stay "sufficiently restrictive for sufficiently long".*

4. Interest Rate Forecast

The Council's treasury advisor, Link Asset Services, provided the following forecast on 25 September 2023. This sets out a view that, short, medium and long-dated interest rates will be elevated for some little while as the Bank of England seeks to squeeze inflation out of the economy. The PWLB rate forecasts below are based on the Certainty Rate (the standard rate minus 20 bps) which has been accessible to most authorities since 1st November 2012:

Link Group Interest Rate View	25.09.23												
	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26
BANK RATE	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75
3 month ave earnings	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80
6 month ave earnings	5.60	5.50	5.40	5.10	4.60	4.10	3.60	3.10	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90
12 month ave earnings	5.80	5.70	5.50	5.20	4.70	4.20	3.70	3.20	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
5 yr PWLB	5.10	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.40	4.20	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50
10 yr PWLB	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.60	4.40	4.20	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.50
25 yr PWLB	5.40	5.20	5.10	4.90	4.70	4.40	4.30	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.80	3.80
50 yr PWLB	5.20	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.60

5. Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Update

The Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) for 2023/24, which includes the Annual Investment Strategy was approved by the Council on 22 February 2023. The underlying TMS approved previously requires revision in light of the change in MRP policy. The required changes are reflected in the quarter 2 position reported in Annex A and will be forwarded on to Budget & Performance Panel for consideration and comment then to Full Council for approval.

6. Investment Portfolio

In accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice the Council's investment priorities are set out as being:

- Security of capital
- Liquidity
- Yield

The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return (yield) on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity and with the Council's risk appetite. In the current economic climate it is considered appropriate to keep investments short term to cover cash flow needs, but also to seek out value available in periods up to 12 months with high credit rated financial institutions, using the Link suggested creditworthiness approach, including a minimum sovereign credit rating and Credit Default Swap (CDS) overlay information.

Following the Government's fiscal event on 23rd September 2022, both S&P and Fitch have placed the UK sovereign debt rating on Negative Outlook, reflecting a downside bias to the current ratings in light of expectations of weaker finances and the economic outlook. Nothing further has evoved in the first half of 2023/24.

The current investment counterparty criteria selection approved in the TMSS is meeting the requirement of the treasury management function.

It is noted that sentiment in the current economic climate can easily shift, so it remains important to undertake continual monitoring of all aspects of risk and return in the current circumstances.

The average level of funds available for investment purposes over the six-month period was **£32.9M**. These funds were available on a temporary basis, and the level of funds available was mainly dependent on the timing of precept and business rate related payments, the receipt of grants and progress on the Capital Programme.

In terms of performance against external benchmarks, the return on investments compared to the SONIA (average) and bank rates at the end of the period is as follows. This is viewed as reasonable performance, given the need to prioritise security of investments, and liquidity (i.e. making sure that the Council's cashflow meets its needs):

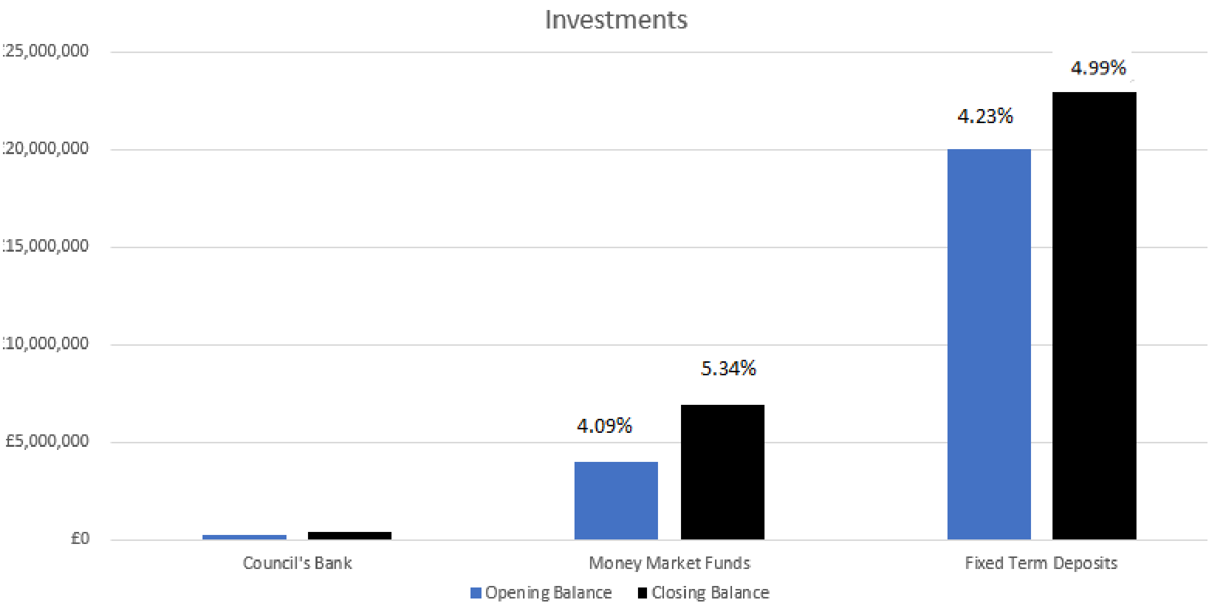
Base Rate	5.25%
SONIA (average)	4.74%
Lancaster City Council investments	5.07%

Investment Balances – quarter ended 30 September 2023

At the start of the year investments totalled £24.0M rising to £29.9M by 30 September. Fixed term investments rose from £20M to £23M whilst Money Market Fund balances rose from £4M to £6.9M

.

Other Investments	Term	Maturity Date	Opening 1.4.23 £	Closing 3.09.23 £	Indicative Rate (YTD)	Current Fixed Rate	Interest to Date £
Call Accounts							
Natwest (Cash Manager Plus)			244,000	396,500	0.12%		3,797
Money Market Funds							
Aberdeen Life Investments			0	900,000	5.28%		105,515
Blackrock Sterling Liquidity First Fund			4,000,000	0	4.09%		51,739
LGIM			0	6,000,000	5.35%		106,022
Insight			0	0	5.14%		34,512
Goldman Sachs			0	0	5.14%		7,045
Lancashire County Council			0	0	5.00%		2,147
Fixed Term Deposits							
London Borough of Newham	233 days	26/05/2023	5,000,000	0		3.50%	26,370
West Dunbartonshire	184 days	22/11/2023	5,000,000	5,000,000		4.55%	104,979
Halton Borough Council	186 days	20/11/2023	5,000,000	5,000,000		4.50%	104,438
Aberdeen City Council	92 days	03/08/2023	5,000,000	0		4.35%	68,849
Birmingham City Council	213 days	19/01/2024	0	5,000,000		5.05%	71,253
Bradford City Council	184 days	31/01/2024	0	5,000,000		5.50%	46,712
London Borough of Barking & Dagenham	153 days	30/01/2024	0	3,000,000		5.60%	14,729
Sub-total			**24,244,000**	**30,296,500**			**748,107**
						Budgeted income	**433,000**
							315,107



Investment Counterparty criteria

The current investment counterparty criteria selection approved in the TMS is meeting the requirement of the treasury management function.

Approved Limits

Officers can confirm that, with one exception where funds held in the Council's bank account overnight exceeded the £1.5M specified limit, the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during the period ended 30th September 2023.

Borrowing

The Council's capital financing requirement (CFR) for 2023/24 was forecast as £105.97M as set out in **Annex A**. The current forecast CFR at quarter 2 is, however, £108.14M. this is principally due to the impact of the change in the Council's MRP policy during 2022/23. The CFR denotes the Council's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. If the CFR is positive the Council may borrow from the PWLB or the market (external borrowing), or from internal balances on a temporary basis (internal borrowing). The balance of external and internal borrowing is generally driven by market conditions. The Council currently has borrowings of £59.01m and has utilised £49.13m of cash flow funds in lieu of borrowing. This is a prudent and cost-effective approach in the current economic climate but will require ongoing monitoring in the event that any upside risk to gilt yields prevails.

No new external borrowing has, to date, been undertaken. The capital programme is being kept under regular review due to the effects of inflationary pressures, shortages of materials and labour. Our borrowing strategy will, therefore, also be regularly reviewed and then revised, if necessary, in order to achieve optimum value and risk exposure in the long-term.

Gilt yields and PWLB certainty rates were on a generally rising trend throughout the first half of 2023/24. July saw short-dated rates peak at their most expensive. The 1-year rate spiked to 6.36% and the 5-year rate to 5.93%. Although, in due course, short-dated rate expectations fell, the medium dates shifted higher through August and the 10-year rate pushed higher to 5.51% and the 25-year rate to 5.73%. The 50-year rate was 4.27% on 5th April but rose to 5.45% on 28th September.

Rates are forecast to fall back over the next two to three years as inflation dampens and 50 year rates are forecast to stand at 3.9% by the end of September 2025, however, there is a high degree of uncertainty as to whether rates will fall that far.

It is anticipated that further borrowing will need to be undertaken during this financial year. This is currently in the region of £15.5M, however, the potential for slippage & uncertainty regarding the progress of some schemes under development make this difficult to quantify with certainty and the actual amount of borrowing may be lower. Consideration also needs to be given to the recent volatility in the markets leading to PWLB interest rates being in excess of 5% at the time of writing. In light of this it may be prudent to delay borrowing or consider the use of short-term borrowing as an interim measure.

7. Debt Rescheduling

Debt rescheduling opportunities have increased over the course of the past six months and will be considered if giving rise to long-term savings. However, no debt rescheduling has been undertaken to date in the current financial year.

8. Compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits

It is a statutory duty for the Council to determine and keep under review the affordable borrowing limits. During the half year ended 30th September 2023, the Council has operated within the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2023/24. The amendments to the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 are reflected in the quarter 2 position set out at Annex A and will be passed on the Budget & Performance panel for consideration and comment then presented to Dull Council for approval. The Chief Finance Officer reports that no difficulties are envisaged for the current or future years in complying with these indicators.

All treasury management operations have also been conducted in full compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices.

9. Other Issues

Changes in risk appetite

The 2021 CIPFA Codes and guidance notes have placed enhanced importance on risk management. Where an authority changes its risk appetite e.g. for moving surplus cash into or out of certain types of investment funds or to other types of investment instruments this change in risk appetite and policy should be brought to members' attention in treasury management update reports. There are no such changes to report.

ANNEX A

PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS - MID YEAR REVIEW

Prudential Indicator for Capital Expenditure

This table shows the current estimates for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account capital programmes, compared to the original estimates.

Capital Expenditure by Fund	2023/24 Original Estimate £m	2023/24 Quarter 2 Position £m
General Fund	19.61	23.97
Council Housing (HRA)	6.20	7.22
Total Capital Expenditure	**25.81**	**31.19**

Changes to the Financing of the Capital Programmes

This table shows the changes in the financing of the capital programme and the level of borrowing required.

Capital Expenditure	2023/24 Original Estimate £m	2023/24 Quarter 2 Position £m
Total capital expenditure	**25.81**	**31.19**
Financed by:		
Capital receipts	1.52	1.53
Capital grants	8.25	10.54
Reserves	2.77	4.77
Revenue	2.21	2.55
Total Financing	**14.75**	**19.39**
Borrowing Requirement	**11.06**	**11.80**

Changes to the Capital Financing Requirement

Capital Financing Requirement	2023/24 Original Estimate £m	2023/24 Quarter 2 Position £m
General Fund	71.87	74.05
HRA	34.10	34.09
Total Capital Financing Requirement	**105.97**	**108.14**
Net movement in CFR	**3.47**	**2.17**

Limits to Borrowing Activity

A key control over treasury management activity is to ensure that over the medium term, net borrowing (borrowings less investments) will only be for capital purposes. Gross external borrowing should not, except in the short term, exceed the total capital financing requirement.

External Debt v Borrowing Need (CFR)	2023/24 Original Estimate £m	2023/24 Quarter 2 Position £m
External Debt	59.01	59.01
Expected Change in Other long term liabilities	14.46	14.46
Total Debt	**73.47**	**73.47**
Compared to current :		
Capital Financing Requirement	**105.97**	**108.14**
Operational Boundary:-		
Debt	**106.96**	**109.14**
Authorised Limit:-		
Debt	**122.00**	**124.00**

Definitions:

Operational Boundary

The limit beyond which external debt is not normally expected to exceed is known as the operational boundary.

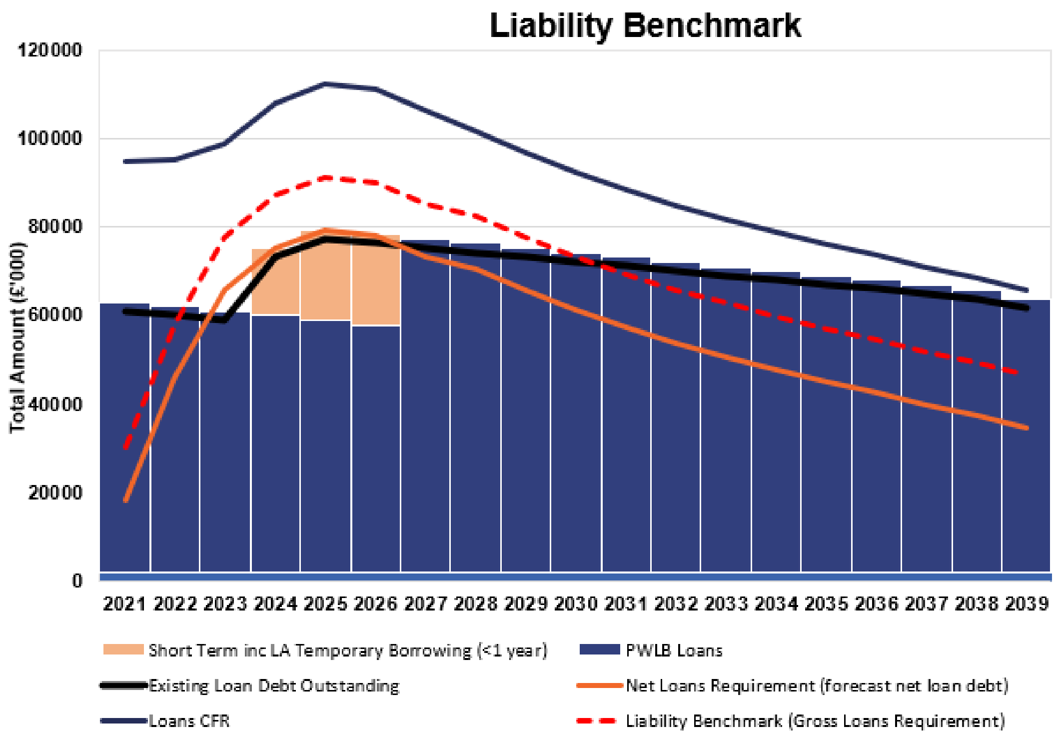
Authorised Limit for External Debt

A further prudential indicator controls the overall level of borrowing. This is the authorised limit which represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited. It reflects the level of borrowing which, whilst not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but it is not sustainable in the longer term. It is the expected maximum borrowing need with some headroom for unexpected movements.

Liability Benchmark

The Council's liability benchmark reflecting the mid-year position is set out below. This charts the following four key components:

1. **Existing loan debt outstanding**: the Authority's existing loans that are still outstanding in future years.
2. **Loans CFR**: this is calculated in accordance with the loans CFR definition in the Prudential Code and projected into the future based on approved prudential borrowing and planned MRP.
3. **Net loans requirement**: this will show the Authority's gross loan debt less treasury management investments at the last financial year-end, projected into the future and based on its approved prudential borrowing, planned MRP and any other major cash flows forecast.
4. **Liability benchmark** (or gross loans requirement): this equals net loans requirement plus short-term liquidity allowance.


Liability Benchmark
Total Amount (£'000)
120000
100000
80000
60000
40000
20000
0
2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026 2027 2028 2029 2030 2031 2032 2033 2034 2035 2036 2037 2038 2039
Short Term inc LA Temporary Borrowing (<1 year)
PWLB Loans
Existing Loan Debt Outstanding
Net Loans Requirement (forecast net loan debt)
Loans CFR
Liability Benchmark (Gross Loans Requirement)

AMENDED CAPITAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS **Appendix B**

Capital Expenditure	2021/22 Actual £m	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Estimate £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
General Fund	11.22	10.44	23.97	14.29	5.73	2.78
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	3.76	5.31	7.22	4.46	4.00	3.90
Total	**14.98**	**15.75**	**31.19**	**18.75**	**9.73**	**6.68**
Financed by:						
Capital receipts	-0.06	-0.22	-1.53	-0.54	-0.50	-0.50
Capital grants	-7.49	-5.15	-10.54	-4.55	-2.21	-2.23
Capital reserves	-3.46	-4.94	-3.45	-3.85	-3.43	-3.40
Revenue	-0.48	-0.83	-2.55	-0.11	-0.07	-0.00
Net financing need for the year	**3.49**	**4.61**	**13.12**	**8.53**	**3.52**	**0.55**

Capital Financing Requirement	2021/22 Actual £m	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Estimate £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
CFR – Non Housing	59.06	63.56	74.05	79.17	78.97	75.47
CFR – Housing	36.18	35.13	34.09	33.05	32.01	30.97
Total CFR	**95.24**	**98.69**	**108.14**	**112.22**	**108.78**	**106.44**
Movement in CFR						
Non Housing	1.34	4.51	10.48	5.12	-0.20	-3.49
Housing	-1.04	-1.05	-1.04	-1.04	-1.04	-1.04
Net Movement in CFR	**0.29**	**3.46**	**9.44**	**4.08**	**-1.24**	**-4.54**

Movement in CFR represented by						
Net financing need for the year (above) re Non Housing	3.49	4.61	13.12	8.53	3.52	0.55
Less MRP/VRP and other financing movements	-3.20	-1.15	-3.68	-4.45	-4.76	-5.09
Net Movement in CFR	**0.29**	**3.46**	**9.44**	**4.08**	**-1.24**	**-4.54**

Year End Resources	2021/22 Actual £m	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Estimate £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
Fund balances / reserves	42.60	33.85	28.41	27.22	27.39	27.93
Capital receipts	1.27	2.39	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Provisions	6.66	4.74	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Total core funds	**50.53**	**40.98**	**33.41**	**32.22**	**32.39**	**32.93**
Working capital*	32.85	19.02	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00
Under borrowing	-35.19	-39.68	-34.67	-34.79	-34.58	-31.09
Expected investments	**48.19**	**20.32**	**13.74**	**12.43**	**12.81**	**16.84**

*Working capital balances shown are estimated year end; these may be higher mid-year

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	2021/22 Actual %	2022/23 Actual %	2023/24 Estimate %	2024/25 Estimate %	2025/26 Estimate %	2026/27 Estimate %
General Fund	18.50	5.90	22.96	25.01	25.08	24.34
HRA	19.87	18.79	17.00	16.22	16.25	15.99

	2021/22 Actual £m	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Estimate £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
External Debt						
Debt at 1 April	61.09	60.05	59.01	73.47	77.43	76.39
Expected change in Debt	-1.04	-1.04	14.46	3.96	-1.04	-1.04
Other long-term liabilities (OLTL)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Expected change in OLTL	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Actual gross debt at 31 March	**60.05**	**59.01**	**73.47**	**77.43**	**76.39**	**75.35**
The Capital Financing Requirement	95.24	98.69	108.14	112.22	110.97	106.44
Under Borrowing	**-35.19**	**-39.68**	**-34.67**	**-34.79**	**-34.58**	**-31.09**

Operational boundary for external debt	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Estimate £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
Debt*	99.00	108.14	112.22	110.97	106.44
Other long term liabilities	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Total	**99.00**	**109.14**	**113.22**	**111.97**	**107.44**

Authorised Limit for external debt	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Estimate £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
Debt	115.00	123.00	127.00	126.00	121.00
Other long-term liabilities	0.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Total	**115.00**	**124.00**	**128.00**	**127.00**	**122.00**

ORIGINAL CAPITAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS **Appendix C**

Capital Expenditure	2021/22 Actual £m	2022/23 Estimate £m	2023/24 Estimate £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
General Fund	11.22	13.90	19.61	13.12	5.73	2.78
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	3.76	7.06	6.20	4.46	4.00	3.90
Total	**14.98**	**20.96**	**25.81**	**17.58**	**9.73**	**6.68**
Financed by:						
Capital receipts	-0.06	-0.67	-1.52	-0.54	-0.50	-0.50
Capital grants	-7.49	-6.51	-8.25	-4.55	-2.21	-2.23
Capital reserves	-3.46	-4.87	-2.77	-3.85	-3.43	-3.40
Revenue	-0.48	-2.14	-2.21	-0.11	-0.07	-0.00
Net financing need for the year	**3.49**	**6.77**	**11.06**	**8.53**	**3.52**	**0.55**

Capital Financing Requirement	2021/22 Actual £m	2022/23 Estimate £m	2023/24 Estimate £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
CFR – Non Housing	59.06	63.73	71.87	76.98	76.77	73.30
CFR – Housing	36.18	35.14	34.10	33.05	32.01	30.97
Total CFR	**95.24**	**98.86**	**105.96**	**110.04**	**108.78**	**104.28**
Movement in CFR						
Non Housing	1.34	4.67	8.14	5.11	-0.21	-3.46
Housing	-1.04	-1.04	-1.04	-1.04	-1.04	-1.04
Net Movement in CFR	**0.29**	**3.63**	**7.10**	**4.07**	**-1.26**	**-4.51**

Movement in CFR represented by						
Net financing need for the year (above) re Non Housing	3.49	6.77	11.06	8.53	3.52	0.55
Less MRP/VRP and other financing movements	-3.20	-3.14	-3.96	-4.46	-4.78	-5.06
Net Movement in CFR	**0.29**	**3.63**	**7.10**	**4.07**	**-1.26**	**-4.51**

Year End Resources	2021/22 Actual £m	2022/23 Estimate £m	2023/24 Estimate £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
Fund balances / reserves	42.60	31.50	28.41	27.22	27.39	27.93
Capital receipts	1.27	0.73	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Provisions	6.66	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Total core funds	**50.53**	**37.23**	**33.41**	**32.22**	**32.39**	**32.93**
Working capital*	32.85	31.00	15.00	15.00	15.00	15.00
Under borrowing	-35.20	-39.86	-32.50	-32.62	-32.40	-28.94
Expected investments	**48.18**	**28.37**	**15.91**	**14.60**	**14.99**	**18.99**

*Working capital balances shown are estimated year end; these may be higher mid-year

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	2021/22 Actual %	2022/23 Estimate %	2023/24 Estimate %	2024/25 Estimate %	2025/26 Estimate %	2026/27 Estimate %
General Fund	18.50	14.90	24.31	25.05	25.12	24.23
HRA	19.87	18.57	17.00	16.22	16.25	15.99

	2021/22 Actual £m	2022/23 Estimate £m	2023/24 Estimate £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
External Debt						
Debt at 1 April	61.08	60.04	59.00	73.46	77.42	76.38
Expected change in Debt	-1.04	-1.04	14.46	3.96	-1.04	-1.04
Other long-term liabilities (OLTL)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Expected change in OLTL	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Actual gross debt at 31 March	**60.04**	**59.00**	**73.46**	**77.42**	**76.38**	**75.34**
The Capital Financing Requirement	95.24	98.86	105.96	110.04	108.78	104.28
Under Borrowing	**-35.20**	**-39.86**	**-32.50**	**-32.62**	**-32.40**	**-28.94**

Operational boundary for external debt	2022/23 Estimate £m	2023/24 Estimate £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
Debt*	98.86	105.96	110.04	108.78	104.28
Other long term liabilities	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Total	**99.86**	**106.96**	**110.04**	**109.78**	**105.28**

Authorised Limit for external debt	2022/23 Estimate £m	2023/24 Estimate £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
Debt	114.00	121.00	125.00	124.00	119.00
Other long-term liabilities	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Total	**115.00**	**122.00**	**126.00**	**125.00**	**120.00**

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted