

Thurrock: A place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **2 September 2015**

Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex RM17 6SL

Membership:

Councillors Cathy Kent (Chair), Chris Baker (Vice-Chair), Jan Baker, Clare Baldwin, Sue MacPherson and Tunde Ojetola

Lynn Mansfield, Housing Tenant Representative

Substitutes:

Councillors Yash Gupta (MBE), Graham Hamilton, Barry Johnson, Steve Liddiard and Joycelyn Redsell

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

	Page
1 Apologies for Absence	
2 Minutes	5 - 12
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 June 2015.	
3 Urgent Items	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
4 Declaration of Interests	
5 Repairs Policy and Service Update	13 - 38
6 Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2010-15	39 - 206

7	Elizabeth Gardens - Local Lettings Plan	207 - 212
8	Work Programme	213 - 214

Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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Agenda published on: **25 August 2015**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

When should you declare an interest *at a meeting*?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

What is a Non-Pecuniary interest? – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;
- Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and
- leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

Non- pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature



You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

Vision: Thurrock: A place of **opportunity**, **enterprise** and **excellence**, where **individuals**, **communities** and **businesses** flourish.

To achieve our vision, we have identified five strategic priorities:

1. Create a great place for learning and opportunity

- Ensure that every place of learning is rated “Good” or better
- Raise levels of aspiration and attainment so that residents can take advantage of local job opportunities
- Support families to give children the best possible start in life

2. Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity

- Promote Thurrock and encourage inward investment to enable and sustain growth
- Support business and develop the local skilled workforce they require
- Work with partners to secure improved infrastructure and built environment

3. Build pride, responsibility and respect

- Create welcoming, safe, and resilient communities which value fairness
- Work in partnership with communities to help them take responsibility for shaping their quality of life
- Empower residents through choice and independence to improve their health and well-being

4. Improve health and well-being

- Ensure people stay healthy longer, adding years to life and life to years
- Reduce inequalities in health and well-being and safeguard the most vulnerable people with timely intervention and care accessed closer to home
- Enhance quality of life through improved housing, employment and opportunity

5. Promote and protect our clean and green environment

- Enhance access to Thurrock's river frontage, cultural assets and leisure opportunities
- Promote Thurrock's natural environment and biodiversity
- Inspire high quality design and standards in our buildings and public space

Minutes of the Meeting of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 June 2015 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Cathy Kent (Chair), Chris Baker (Vice-Chair), Jan Baker, Clare Baldwin, Sue MacPherson and Tunde Ojetola (from 7.02pm)

Lynn Mansfield, Housing Tenant Representative

In attendance: Councillor Lynn Worrall – Cabinet Member for Housing
Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing
Kathryn Adedeji, Head of Housing, Investment and Development
Dermot Moloney, Strategic Lead Housing
Stephanie Cox, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on 18 February 2015, were approved as a correct record.

2. Urgent Items

There were no items of urgent business.

3. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Ojetola declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 6, 'Investment and Development Programme 2015/16', as he was a member of the Planning Committee and some of the developments referenced in the report may be referred to the Committee at a later date.

4. Terms of Reference

The Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference were noted.

5. Housing O&S Introduction Presentation

The Director of Housing summarised the role of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and presented a range of information on the Housing service, which included the Housing Strategy vision for 2015-20 and details of the Action Plan.

Councillor Ojetola requested that the Housing Strategy Action Plan for 2015-20 be circulated to members electronically.

Councillor MacPherson asked if the extension numbers of the Housing Department could be made available to Committee Members, in response the Director of Housing agreed that the extension numbers of the Senior Management Team would be circulated and explained the process of the Customer Contact Slip, which was the preferred method of contacting the Housing Service as every call is logged and recorded.

The Director of Housing agreed to discuss details of the Housing Strategy outside of the meeting with any Members who wished to do so.

The Committee agreed to review and monitor progress against the Housing Action Plan every 6 months.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Housing Strategy Action Plan be circulated electronically to the Committee.**
- 2. That the direct extension numbers of the Director of Housing and relevant Heads of Service be circulated to the Committee.**
- 3. That progress against delivery of the Housing Action Plan be reviewed and monitored every 6 months.**

6. Investment and Development Programme 2015/16

The Head of Housing and Corporate Commercial Services introduced the report which set out the key deliverables achieved in 2014/15 and the key priorities for 2015/16 related to the Housing Investment and Development Programmes.

Councillor Ojetola commended the apprenticeships and training programme and questioned how many residents were consulted to achieve the 80% good rating in repairs and maintenance. Officers reported that 3,600 residents were consulted throughout the year and that the service aimed to sample 10% of the 40,000 tenants each month.

The Committee were advised that the service was committed to improving the speed of which service calls were answered through the call handling team, and that new technology had been introduced to enable residents to monitor and receive updates on repair and maintenance jobs online.

Councillor MacPherson asked whether apprenticeship opportunities were targeted only at young people, in response officers explained that the pathway programme through the Princes Trust was aimed at 18-25 year olds, the

Housing Trust for those over 19 years of age, and the Definite Programme targeted those aged 50 years and above.

Members welcomed the fact the housing service offered an apprenticeship programme for older people to help retrain local residents to learn new skills.

Councillor Ojetola asked for clarification on the performance target for the Transforming Homes Programme and questioned what was being done differently in 2015/16 to address the issues that had been highlighted.

The Head of Housing and Corporate Commercial Services advised that the 'good to excellent' performance target for 2015/16 would be 80%, that was expected to be delivered through a number of new appointed contractors and improvement plans and targets that had been written into contracts.

Members were informed that a number of actions were being taken to address damp and mould in council properties, which included proactive surveys through contractors and information and advice offered to residents on how to increase ventilation in the home in order to reduce the number of incidences of mould growth.

The Committee were informed of the progress of tackling damp and mould in homes in Chadwell-St-Mary and Tilbury, which were in different phases of the Transforming Homes Programme.

Councillor Ojetola observed that the financial implications of damp and mould remedial works were dependent on the number cases that came to light through surveys and questioned how all works would be addressed within the existing budget.

In response the Head of Housing and Corporate Commercial Services explained that damp and mould issues were addressed both through the Damp and Mould and Repairs and Maintenance Programmes with the cost offset between both budgets, with the more extensive problems resolved through the Damp and Mould Programme.

Members were advised that a report would be referred to the Committee later in the year to set out a further 5-year programme, which would then be referred to Cabinet for approval.

Councillor Ojetola highlighted that the financial implications section of the report required further explanation and improvement in future, to which the Director of Housing noted.

Members commended the social value delivered through the Housing service, particularly in relation to the pathways into employment for young people and reducing those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET's).

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the contents of the report be noted.**
- 2. That the key housing programmes and objectives for 2015/16 be noted (as detailed in section 3), outlining the key benefits that will be delivered by each work stream in the Housing Investment and Development team work plan.**

7. Homelessness Prevention Strategy

The Strategic Lead Housing introduced the report which set out the plan for the prevention of homelessness and for securing sufficient accommodation and support for homeless residents or those at risk of becoming so. In introducing the report the following key points were highlighted:

- That there were four main causes of homelessness in Thurrock, which were eviction by parents, family or friend; the ending of an assured short hold tenancy; violence or harassment and mortgage and rent arrears.
- That over the past five years exclusion by parents, family or friends had been the most common cause for homelessness, which was a trend that was beginning to change as increasingly more residents were being made homeless through the termination of an assured short hold tenancy.
- That the impact of welfare reform and the introduction of Universal Credit had attributed to the changing trend as private landlords were concerned regarding the non-payment of rent.
- That it was expected that further welfare reform would have an impact on young people under the age of 25 years.

Officers recommended that a further period of consultation be undertaken and a final action plan be referred back to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

Councillor MacPherson questioned if the Right to Buy Scheme would reduce the number of houses available, to which it was explained that this may be the case but future housing development was essential.

A number of Members were concerned with the perception that people could intentionally make themselves homeless in order to be allocated a council property.

A discussion took place regarding the steps that were taken by the service in order to minimise those taking advantage of the service who were not most in need, during which the following key points were highlighted:

- That detailed investigations were undertaken when a resident declared themselves as homeless to identify whether homelessness had been caused intentionally, this included checks with previous landlords.

- That the local authority was duty bound to provide temporary accommodation to those homeless households with children whilst an investigation was ongoing. Temporary accommodation primarily comprises of two council run hostels based in the borough or council owned properties. The service limits the use of Bed and Breakfast provision which is not suitable for families with children and is very costly to the local authority.

The Director of Housing emphasised that process of declaring homelessness and the ensuing investigation was very thorough and that this discouraged those from intentionally doing so undertaking such action lightly.

Members were assured that people who arrived in Thurrock without a local connection under the Allocations Scheme were not eligible for homelessness support or Council housing.

Councillor Ojetola commended the Council's tough approach so that people could not act deceptively, but felt that genuine cases needed to be treated with sympathy and concern, to which officers explained that good case management was essential.

Councillor MacPherson noted that the report did not detail the support provided for armed forces service personnel through the Veterans Charter and a motion that had been proposed by Councillor Gledhill and agreed at full Council.

The Committee were advised that additional priority was already given to armed forces service personnel through the Veterans Charter and Local Allocations Policy which had ensured that to date no ex-service personnel had been declared homeless. It was further reported that a dedicated Veteran's house was not required in Thurrock to home ex-service personnel as homelessness was prevented through the Council's Allocation Policy.

The Director of Housing agreed to report on Homeless Armed Forces Service Personnel in future reports.

The Chair asked for clarification on the number of London Boroughs who had purchased or rented property in Thurrock, to which officers explained that they were working with private sector landlords to introduce an incentive scheme to benefit residents in Thurrock and reduce the number of properties let to other local authorities.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the outcomes of the initial review and draft action plan be noted (outlined in Appendix 1).**

2. **That a further period of consultation will be undertaken and that a final action plan will be referred back to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

8. **Right To Move**

The Strategic Lead Housing introduced the report which detailed a new statutory rule called the 'Right to Move' which came into force on the 20 April 2015. In introducing the report it was proposed that the annual quota of properties to be allocated under the new scheme be set at 1% of all council housing allocations for the preceding year, which equated to six properties.

The Committee were advised that Member's recommendations would be referred to Cabinet for determination and approval.

The Strategic Lead Housing set out the strict criteria that needed to be met in order to qualify for the scheme and confirmed that the 1% quota equated to six properties, based on the total number of relets in 2014-15 that would be available for re-letting under the new provisions.

The Housing Tenant representative asked for clarification as to whether someone outside the Borough or even Essex could move into Thurrock if they qualified. In response officers explained that someone from outside of the Borough could qualify if they met the strict criteria set out in scheme, and that they would be awarded Band 3 priority but would be required to follow the established bidding process and meet the behavioural and financial requirements set in the Allocations Policy.

Councillor Ojetola questioned why the annual quota proposed was set at 1%, to which it was explained that this was government's recommendation but that the local authority could increase or decrease the figure. However it was noted that if the quota was determined at less than 1% Thurrock would be required to issue a public statement to state the reasons why the quota was lower than the governments recommended standard.

Councillor MacPherson asked if the six properties allocated under the scheme would remain empty until required, following which it was clarified that properties would not be held empty and it was a case that once the quota was reached further lettings under the Right to Move regulation would cease for that year.

Council Ojetola felt that the set criteria were not clear enough and that the implications needed to be more defined.

Members were concerned that the introduction of the new quota could unfairly disadvantage Thurrock residents in favour of housing people from outside of the Borough and that it would in effect reduce the number of council housing stock available for Thurrock residents.

Officers explained that they believed it would be unlikely that there would be significant demand under the regulation in Thurrock and proposed that the Committee review the figures again at the end of the year, when if there had been any uptake the quota could be reconsidered if appropriate.

In response to the concerns raised by Members, the Director of Housing proposed that officers work to foster mutual exchanges with any 'Right to Move' applicant so as to reduce the impact on Thurrock Council housing stock.

Members indicated their agreement with the proposal and a brief discussion took place to re-word recommendation 1.2, as printed in the report, to read:

- 1.2 *That it be recommended to Cabinet for approval that the annual quota of properties to be allocated under the new provisions be set at 1% of all Council housing allocations for the preceding year (1st April to 31st March), with the provision that officers endeavour to seek mutual exchanges where possible to mitigate the impact on levels of Thurrock Council housing stock.*

Councillor MacPherson requested that the minutes of discussion be referred for consideration with the accompanying Cabinet report and asked for the Housing Service to work closely with the Leaving Care team to ensure that young people leaving care were adequately supported.

The Committee agreed that the 'Right to Move' item be referred back to the Committee in January 2016 for review.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the new 'Right to Move' regulations be noted.**
- 2. That it be recommended to Cabinet for approval that the annual quota of properties to be allocated under the new provisions be set at 1% of all Council housing allocations for the preceding year (1st April to 31st March), with the provision that officers endeavour to seek mutual exchanges where possible to mitigate the impact on levels of Thurrock Council housing stock.**
- 3. That an update on the Right to Move scheme be referred back to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2016.**

9. Work Programme

Democratic Services advised that since the publication of the agenda a number of amendments to the work programme had been proposed, which along with the amendments agreed earlier in the meeting, included:

- That an update on the Council's Repairs Policy be added to the work programme for September 2015.

- That an item on Rent Setting be included on the work programme for January 2016.
- That the Housing Asset Management Plan be included on the work programme for February 2016.
- That an end of year update on the Housing Strategy Action Plan be provided in March 2016.
- That an update on the Right to Move Scheme, detailing take-up against the set quota, be referred to the Committee in January 2016 for review.

Members were in agreement with the proposed changes to the work programme, following which the Chair requested that an updated work programme be circulated to the Committee and officers following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted, subject to the amendments detailed above.

The meeting finished at 8.47 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**

2 September 2015	ITEM: 5
Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
Repairs Policy and Service Update	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non Key
Report of: Kathryn Adedeji, Head of Housing	
Accountable Head of Service: Kathryn Adedeji – Head of Housing – Investment and Development and Commercial Services	
Accountable Director: Barbara Brownlee – Director of Housing	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

In December 2014 Cabinet agreed a new policy and contractual framework for the delivery of responsive repairs and maintenance to Council homes. The policy was designed around a number of principles, including the provision of an enhanced service for vulnerable residents, alongside reframing shared responsibility between tenants and the council once major capital investment through its Transforming Homes programme has been completed.

The new contractual framework was designed to ensure the council was in a position to deliver an enhanced responsive repairs service clearly underpinned by a set of measureable, transparent key performance indicators informed by resident feedback. Alongside providing a service that both provides value for money and added value to the local community through social value commitments set out as part of the contract award. Both the policy and contract were implemented in February 2015. This report provides the committee with updates on how the principles set out are being achieved within the first six months since both the new policy and contract were implemented.

Key highlights include:

- Continually improving independently assessed customer satisfaction rating of **87%** good to excellent.
- **82.3%** of repairs calls are now answered within 30sec up from **45%** pre transfer to Mears.
- **16%** Reduction in repairs expenditure over the last three years which represents over **£1M reduction in spend**.
- Addressing issues of greatest concern to residents such as damp and associated mould.

- Increased social value outcomes, with significant local added value at no additional cost.

1.0 Recommendation(s)

1.1 Note the continued progress made in the delivery of responsive repairs to Council managed homes.

1.2 Note the ongoing work being done to address the incidence of Damp, Condensation and associated mould.

2.0 Introduction and Background

2.1 Cabinet approved the termination of the Morrison FS contract in December 2012, and also approved the award of interim contract to Mears PLC (Morrison FS new parent company) under negotiated procedure, to ensure the immediate provision of repairs, maintenance and voids services.

2.2 Service under the Morrison contract had been very poor and did not deliver on the agreed objectives for the delivery of the service – including c 5,000 overdue repairs, poor customer satisfaction and complaints, poor KPI performance, and associated reputational damage for the Council.

2.3 During the interim arrangements, the Council put in place robust contractual arrangements in order to protect the Council in the provision of the repairs service. As part of the interim contract with Mears, the Council took steps to re-evaluate resource planning within the existing delivery structure with a view to providing sufficient resource to address contractual deficiencies. An integral part of this plan was a review of the repairs diagnostics and prioritisation framework, and undertaking a full review of Thurrock's repairs policy in consultation with residents.

Background to the new Repairs Policy

2.4 The repairs policy was revisited through the course of 2014-15, with a focus on addressing a range of issues. This included delivery of service provision to an increasing number of vulnerable and elderly residents in the borough, who often resided outside tailored provision of existing sheltered housing properties. There was also a need to establish a policy environment which was coherent with the ongoing capital works improvements to properties and the associated need to establish tenant responsibilities. Finally, in the context of financial constraints, there was a need to identify potential efficiencies in service provision and to establish more effective and appropriate modes of service delivery, with the repairs policy establishing a coherent policy framework.

2.5 The previous Thurrock Council repairs policy had been not been revised for over ten years and reflected a service delivery within a context defined by different constraints and options. A context of wider changes to housing service delivery, as well as transformations associated with HRA constraints, means the delivery of repairs and maintenance faces new challenges. A new Repairs Policy therefore had to address these challenges, while providing a policy framework for the refreshed strategic and integrated approach to planned capital works, maintenance and servicing.

2.6 The revised policy was widely consulted with tenants, leaseholders, and Members, and included workshops, letters, forums and presentations and a survey sent to all 10,000 plus households. This was further supplemented with an information letter and dedicated phone line for residents to call to discuss any aspect of the policy post implementation. A total of 25 residents called, with most wanting further information about additional services for vulnerable residents. This is explored in more detail under section 3.

3.0 Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The strategic context of developing an improved repairs service is one of a wider reorientation to more effective and efficient integrated asset management, focusing on value for money in service delivery, as well as the targeted use of resources where need is greatest. In this context, delivery of the repairs service has undergone substantial analysis, review and transformation, resulting in a substantially improved customer focused service that is part of a wider more effective integrated asset management that has also delivered substantial savings.

Overview of repairs policy development & implementation

3.2 The following provides an overview of the development and implementation of the new Repairs Policy, approximately six months from its introduction, including an overview of resident feedback on the policy since introduction.

Repairs Policy development: integrating residents in evidence based policy development

3.3 The process for developing the revised policy included a range of measures implemented to ensure the revised policy met resident needs and aspirations, effective integrated asset management, and service provision which is in line with comparable organisations.

3.4 Extensive consultation was undertaken with stakeholders, including residents and members, engaged through consultation forums and surveys:

- **Members Briefing:** Members were invited to a briefing session in January 2014 regarding the development of improvements to the Repairs Policy.
- **Residents Consultation:** Residents were invited, through publication in the local press, to a consultation session in January 2014.

- Sheltered Housing Consultation: A consultation session was undertaken at one of the largest complexes, Frederick Andrews Court, focusing on provision for vulnerable residents.
- Repairs Survey: Repairs surveys were delivered to 10,000 Council tenants in January and February 2014, with 1500 responses received.

- 3.5** Additionally, a benchmarking exercise was undertaken to review repairs policies of five local and comparable authorities, identifying where there were significant differences in approach. The benchmarking exercise identified that the type and nature of repairs delivered through the Council's current repairs policy exceeds that of four out of five authorities and thereby a realignment of provision should be considered.
- 3.6** Repairs delivery analysis was undertaken, using 18 months of repairs data, providing insight on the nature of repairs delivered. This established a basis for proposals for batched service provision as set out in the policy.
- 3.7** Analysing these consultation and data sources, an approach was been developed which identified a number of options for improvements to the Repairs Policy. This approach provides evidence driven improvements, ensuring that provision to general needs residents is in line with equivalent local authorities, whilst offering vulnerable residents improved services.

Repairs Policy development: focus on resident need, shared responsibility & efficiency in service provision

- 3.8** Following the analysis undertaken, the new repairs policy sets out a number of key themes which underlie the Council's approach to delivering a resident focused service which effectively and efficiently supports integrated asset management:
- Differentiated service provision for vulnerable residents: targeting resources where most needed.
 - Maintaining the fabric of the property: reframing shared responsibility for maintenance of internal property elements post-Transforming Homes.
 - Efficiency of service provision: delivering specific routine repairs in more efficient and effective planned programmes.
- 3.9** As set out in the December 2014 Repairs Policy Cabinet Report, performance improvements across these key areas provide potential savings in service delivery – projections as noted below:

Table 1: Potential repairs reductions following from Repairs Policy revisions

	Potential Reduction in Repairs Outturn	Potential Repairs per property Reduction
Batch Repairs Programmes	1808*	3.68%*
Post-Transforming Homes Repairs	736	1.70%
Tenant responsibility / other agency	1466	3.93%
Grand Total	4010	9.31%

*NB: batch repairs programmes remove repairs from responsive delivery streams

3.10 Indeed, these projections may already be being realised as demonstrated in reduced repairs demand (see section 3.34). The context of reduced responsive repairs is as demonstrated in the above table that repairs are increasingly delivered through more appropriate, efficient batch repairs delivery streams. Equally, while responsive repairs are reduced, the service delivered demonstrates continued improvements in resident satisfaction (see section 3.19).

Repairs Policy implementation: staff training & resident communications

3.11 In the course of implementing the new Repairs Policy, it was key that all staff and stakeholders affected were fully aware of changes being implemented.

3.12 For staff who deal with repairs related issues, a ‘train the trainers’ approach to disseminate information about the new policy has ensured training is given to the breadth of managers and team leaders from across the service, who are then able to replicate this for their particular service area.

3.13 Further to staff in the organisation, we have ensured that resident engagement and consultation which was central to the development of the policy was followed through in implementation, with residents able to provide feedback through organised forums focusing on the repairs delivery service:

- Publication of the policy has been undertaken through letters to residents, website updates and estate poster boards – providing wide ranging coverage.
- Resident Forums: the Repairs Policy has been part of the forum agenda, ensuring key active residents are aware of changes.

Repairs Policy implementation: resident feedback

3.14 Initial feedback sessions following implementation were undertaken these allowed residents to:

- Raise queries or feedback regarding the aims and objectives of the policy, and the key changes being introduced.
- Raise queries or feedback regarding specific repairs that may be affected by the revised Repairs Policy.

- 3.15** The forum provided an opportunity for a structured means of understanding any queries and concerns that residents may have regarding the Policy and Repairs.
- 3.16** In approximately six months from the introduction of the new policy, the Council has received 25 enquiries from residents, primarily around additional information on the service to vulnerable residents. With this low number of enquiries demonstrating a policy that is a progressive enhancement of previous practice, rather than radical change. Combined with the continued improvements in resident satisfaction (see section 3.19), this demonstrates a refinement of service delivery without significant negative impact on residents.

Overview of contract performance, learning & new contract implementation

Contract performance 2013-15

- 3.17** Figure 1 displays resident satisfaction with Thurrock Council’s Repairs and Maintenance service over three distinct periods: Morrison Facilities Services, Mears’ interim contract, and Mears’ new contract. This illustrates the continued improvement in resident satisfaction:

Figure 1: Resident satisfaction by contract

	Morrison Facilities Services	Interim Mears Contract		New Mears Contract		
	FY 2013	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2015	FY 2016
% Satisfied with Service	65%	81%	82%	84%	84%	88%
% Satisfied with Appointments	80%	85%	92%	93%	93%	92%

NB: FY 2013 refers to 2012-13, FY 2014 refers to 2013-14, FY 2015 refers to 2014-15, FY 2016 refers to 2015-16 Q1

- 3.18** Figure 2 displays an example of the monthly satisfaction statistics in this financial year – from 831 surveys undertaken 88% of residents have rated the service as good or excellent.

Figure 2: Q1 2015/16 Monthly Satisfaction Performance

	Q1			Grand Total
	April	May	June	
	86% (281)	86% (251)	91% (299)	88% (831)

Morrison Contract

- 3.19** In the 8 months between July 2013 and February 2013 1,279 residents were surveyed on their satisfaction with Morrison. 65% rated the service they received as good or excellent, whilst 20% rated it as poor or terrible. In October 2012 satisfaction levels dipped to a low of 56% from 152 surveys undertaken. In this same month satisfaction with the keeping of appointments and quality of repair also fell to 76% and 77% respectively.

Interim Contract

- 3.20** The initiation of the Mears interim contract saw an immediate rise in satisfaction levels with an increase of 8 percentage points in Q4 2013 to 81%. February 2013 (83%) represented the first month in which the 80% target had been met; previously the highest monthly figure was 70% in July 2013. Satisfaction levels remained consistent throughout the interim contract with overall satisfaction exceeding the 80% threshold in 7 of the 8 quarters. Satisfaction with the keeping of appointments also improved vastly in this period – up to 92% satisfaction compared with 80% during the Morrison contract.

New Contract

- 3.21** Since the start of the new contract with Mears, satisfaction levels have increased to 86%, with a contract high of 88% being achieved in the most recent quarter. In Q1 2016, 90% of residents were satisfied with the quality of the repair they received; the highest proportion since the satisfaction surveys began in Q2 2013. In June 2015, 91% of residents rated the overall service they received as good or excellent. This represents a 35 percentage point increase from October 2012 when satisfaction was at 56%.

KPI Performance

- 3.22** In December 2012 when the Morrison contract was terminated the contractor had a backlog of 5000 overdue repairs. One of the highlights of both the interim Mears contract and the New Mears contract is the adherence to contract KPI's which focus on completing jobs in target and having a low level of repairs in progress.
- 3.23** In July 2015, Mears completed 2,985 repairs in July 2015 with 98% of these being completed within the required timeframes (1 day for emergency repairs, 5 days for urgent repairs, and 20 days for routine repairs). Mears achieved high completion rates across all three repair categories.
- 3.24** In August 2015, the volume of repairs in progress was also considerably lower than during the Morrison contract. As shown in Figure 3, as of 6 August 2015 609 jobs were in progress. 98% (597) of these jobs were on target to be completed within their required timeframe with just 12 jobs in progress past target, a considerable decrease compared with the Morrison's contract.

Figure 3: Number of in-progress repairs as of 6 August 2015

Repairs in Target	Emergency	Urgent	Routine	Grand Total
Yes	11 (100%)	146 (99%)	440 (98%)	597 (98%)
No		1 (1%)	11 (2%)	12 (2%)
Grand Total	11 (100%)	147 (100%)	451 (100%)	609 (100%)

The new Repairs Contract: implementing learning for improved performance

3.25 The above review of performance prior to, and in the period of, the introduction of the new repairs contract, demonstrates the results of improvements that have been implemented across a number of variables.

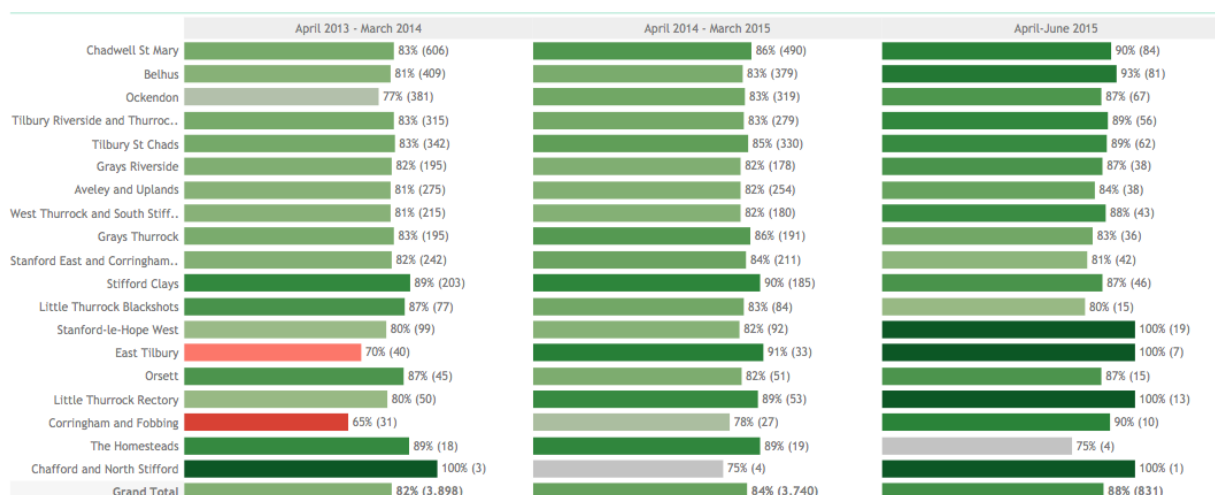
3.26 Contract management and monitoring has been a key focus of improved structuring of the contract delivery framework, and takes forward learning from the Morrison and interim contracts:

- A reframing of the organisational arrangements within the delivery team has been undertaken, putting in place a strengthened and robust structure with focus on service delivery and contract administration while continuing to fulfil the Council’s corporate and statutory obligations.
- An approach to governance and strategic delivery appropriate to the objectives and scope of the contract partnership: focusing on the development of robust performance management information and reports. Monitoring is carried out by the partnership Core Group, which consists of Head of housing management, senior managers from the property and investment service, the contractor. Operations Group meeting also take place, with this also attended by two residents.
- Arrangements for managing the financial performance of the contract: robust cost management and monitoring, underlying a reduction in expenditure of 1.2M when compared with 12/13, against a backdrop of improved service delivery and satisfaction from residents.
- Managing out of target repairs: Improvements in satisfaction have been driven by a improved management of out of target repairs – which are more easily identified through improved reporting as noted above.
- Monitoring resident satisfaction and feedback: allowing for the identification of areas of poor performance and ensures that the services that are delivered reflect our residents’ needs and aspirations.

3.27 As an example of improved monitoring of residents feedback, performance across wards is reported (figure 4) – ensuring consistency in performance across the borough can be monitored closely.

3.28 Further examples of contract monitoring and reporting can be found in Appendix A.

Figure 4: Ward Satisfaction Comparison –2013/14, 2014/15 and Q1 2015/16



3.29 Aligned to this improved contract management framework, the focus of the new Repairs & Maintenance contract, procured and mobilised through 2014 and early 2015, sets out a number of key terms which underlie driving performance improvements:

- Reduced number of responsive repairs per property per annum.
- Reduced annual responsive repairs spend per property per annum.
- Integrated asset management – increased proportion of maintenance that is delivered via planned and cyclical maintenance programmes – thereby delivering repairs through the most effective, efficient and appropriate delivery mode:
 - Targeted resourcing: continued addressing of damp & mould issues through tailored approach – surveys through both maintenance and capital works, and remedial works or residents guidance where required.
 - Innovative programmes: working with delivery partners, development of works programming using new technologies, including for example infrared heating, to improve conditions in properties susceptible to damp and mould.
- Implementing new technologies: a number of developments will be made including use of online and mobile repairs reporting, and the use of improved data analysis.

3.30 Including these key objectives within an effective performance management framework provides a basis for Thurrock to ensure a repairs service which can demonstrably improve value for money in delivery.

3.31 Figure 5 demonstrates repairs demand across 4 months of the current and preceding financial years – with demand shown to be reduced in the current year.

Figure 5: Monthly Repairs Demand Comparison – Q1 2014/15 vs Q1 2015/16



Integrated asset management: batched repairs provision

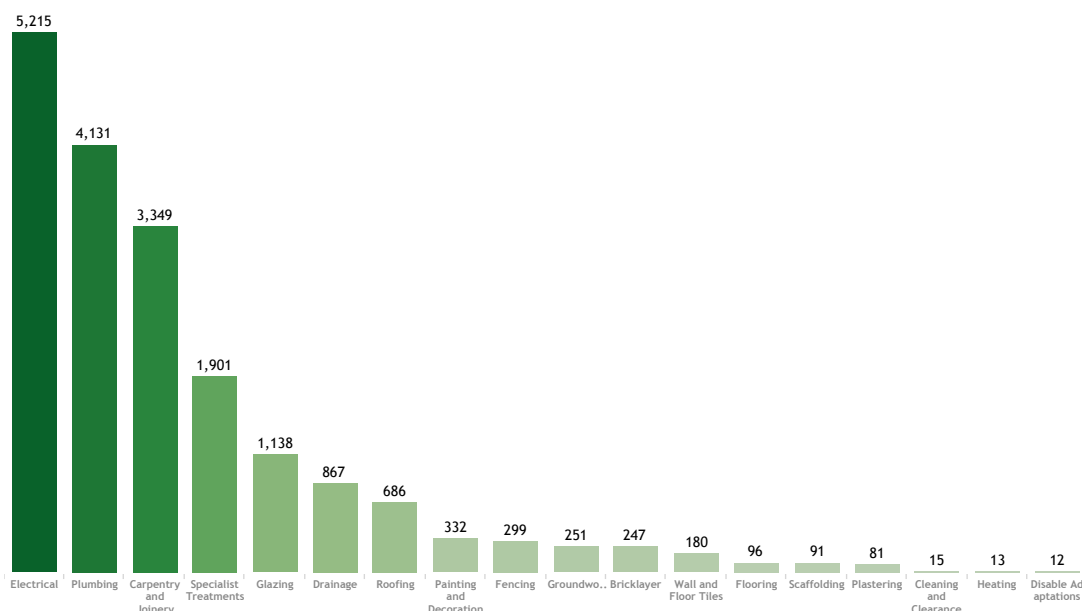
3.32 Taking forward the groundwork established in the interim contract, the development of the contractual terms and the associated policy framework, the new responsive repairs service has expanded the delivery of repairs through batched repairs programmes.

3.33 Identifying repairs which would be appropriate for delivery through a batched repairs service is based on ongoing analysis across a range of factors:

- Prioritisation of repair: only routine repairs would be appropriate for delivery in batched provision.
- Nature of repair: are there likely efficiencies in delivery – for example in materials, skills or other ordering processes which provide efficiencies in delivering volume repairs.
- Repairs analysis: volumes, frequency and locations of repairs – underlying potential efficiencies.

As an example of a means of improved repairs data analysis, trade data (figure 6) is increasingly used for the identification of efficiency saving planned programmes.

Figure 6: Repairs Demand, trade level analysis



3.34 Currently, there are a number of programmes being undertaken through the planned programme work stream within the repairs contract:

- Fencing programme: in place from July 2015, improved standard of boundary fencing, borough wide to 96 properties.
- Glazing programme: in place from July 2015, replacement of failed double glazing units, borough wide to 145 properties.
- Guttering programme: six monthly programme to restart in winter months, clearing block guttering and downpipes to >1000 properties.
- Jetting programme: cyclical annual programme, clear drains to c1500 properties.

3.35 It is anticipated that delivery of these repairs through planned programmes will provide a number of outcomes, ensuring the key objectives of improved value for money and effective asset management are met:

- Improved data analysis underlying improved asset management: moving away from responsive repairs as the default delivery model, using data analysis to identify improved delivery of asset management.
- Improved component management: consistency in components delivered through repairs, setting in place consistent lifecycle and repairs management.

Integrated asset management: tackling damp and mould issues

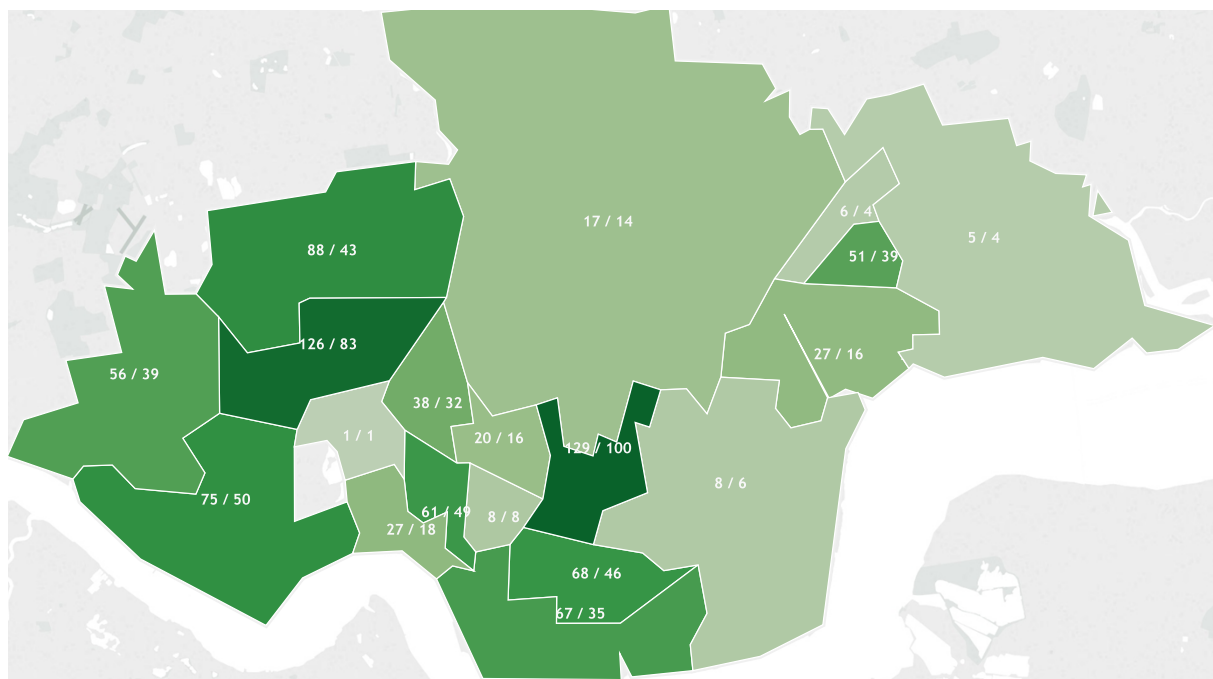
3.36 Further demonstrating the integrated asset management approach, delivery of damp and mould repairs in 2014-15 have been delivered through both planned and reactive programmes. Determined by the nature and extent of the repair required, work will be undertaken through the most appropriate programme – leading to efficiencies in delivery and effective asset management.

3.37 A reactive works programme has been set up with Mears to carry out remedial damp and mould works, including a three stage wash down and treatment to remove any mould spores in properties throughout the borough:

- 898 damp and mould surveys since February 2014, with 615 remedial works.
- weekly reporting to monitor turnaround times and ensure surveys and works are quickly undertaken once reported by the resident.
- 17 damp and mould surveys undertaken in August 2015 took on average 9 days from the date reported to the date of completion.

3.38 Figure 7 demonstrates the geographical spread of damp and mould works across the borough – with this reporting underlying targeted service delivery:

Figure 7: Damp and Mould surveys and remedial works by Ward



3.39 In addition to the reactive damp and mould surveys and repairs carried out by Mears, the Transforming Homes programme also focuses on tackling damp and mould through its planned programme. In Year 1 and 2 a total of 576 damp and mould surveys were carried out, with 441 instances of remedial works. Remedial works include a three stage wash down, and treatment to remove any mould spores.

Delivering Social Value: benefiting the wider community

3.40 Delivering Social Value frames how Housing Investment & Development deliver key benefits to Thurrock residents using our Social Value framework. Underlying this is a commissioning, contract management and partnering approach, ensuring Thurrock is working across sectors to support training and employment opportunities for all segments of our communities.

3.41 The contract put in place a number of requirements and commitments for the contractor to deliver social value for the local community, across employment, training, works experience, and the supply chain.

3.42 To date, Mears are surpassing commitments across the range of social value variables, with a number of key benefits already being delivered to local residents:

- Apprenticeships: A total of five are now in place in partnership with South Essex College with a further two to be taken on this year.

- Thurrock workforce: currently standing at 39% of the total workforce, with new employment opportunities to focus on Thurrock residents.
- Suppliers based in Thurrock: currently standing at 20%.
- Local spend in Thurrock: currently standing at 25%.
- Employment: the fencing planned programme is being used as a pilot to implement an ex-offenders employment programme, developed via the LEAF. Additionally, there are further measures being implemented to support local residents in returning to work.
- Training: the trade school continues to deliver tailored repairs & maintenance focused training skills for 14-16 year olds to date over 300 young people in Thurrock have benefited.



4.0 Reasons for Recommendation

Not applicable.

5.0 Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

Extensive consultation took place as part of the process of developing revised policy and service framework (as detailed in 3.5 above).

6.0 Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

The improvement of the Council's assets is linked to key corporate priorities:

- Creating a great place for learning and opportunity.
- Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity.
- Building pride, responsibility and respect.
- Improve health and well-being.

The different housing programmes will support strategic and local opportunities, investing in the long-term integrity of the Councils assets, new homes and new opportunities for our residents, contributing to their wellbeing and the long-term regeneration of Thurrock.

7.0 Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Michael Jones**
Strategic Resources Accountant

There are no financial implications arising from this report

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Assaf Chaudry**
Major Projects Solicitor

There are no legal implications arising from this report

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
**Community Development and Equalities
Manager**

Although there are no direct implications arising from this update report, An Equality and Community Impact Assessment will be completed for specific elements of the programme where appropriate. The programme seeks to benefit the community through new training and employment opportunities which would have a positive impact on health and wellbeing.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder

Not applicable.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Award Repairs and Maintenance contract - December 2014.
- Repairs policy report - December 2014.

9. Appendices to the report

Appendix A - Sample Contract Monitoring Reports.

Report Author:

Kathryn Adedeji

Head of Housing – Investment and Development and Commercial Services

Housing

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2 September 2015		ITEM: 5 Appendix A
Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee		
Repairs Policy and Service Update – Sample Contract Monitoring Reports		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non Key	
Report of: Kathryn Adedeji – Head of Housing		
Accountable Head of Service: Kathryn Adedeji – Head of Housing – Investment and Development and Commercial Services		
Accountable Director: Barbara Brownlee – Director of Housing		
This report is Public		

The following pages provide a number of sample contract monitoring reports developed for the improved management of repairs and maintenance in the borough. Attached are a number of reports, which assist both daily operational and governance management of the contract:

- Repairs and Maintenance Core Group Reports:
 - Resident satisfaction analysis – mapped
 - Resident satisfaction analysis – by period and driver
 - Resident satisfaction analysis – ward and year comparison
 - Repairs demand analysis – ward and year comparison
 - Repairs – volumes analysis – by repair priority and period
 - Repairs trade analysis
 - Repairs completions analysis
- Damp and Mould:
 - Completed surveys and remedial work – by ward

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Repairs and Maintenance Core Group Dashboards

Resident Satisfaction Analysis & Repair Demand - Financial YTD

Satisfaction Performance Trends

Satisfaction by Ward, sorted by Repairs Demand

Ward Demand Comparison

Repair trend by Contract and Priority

Repairs Issued by Trade

C o..

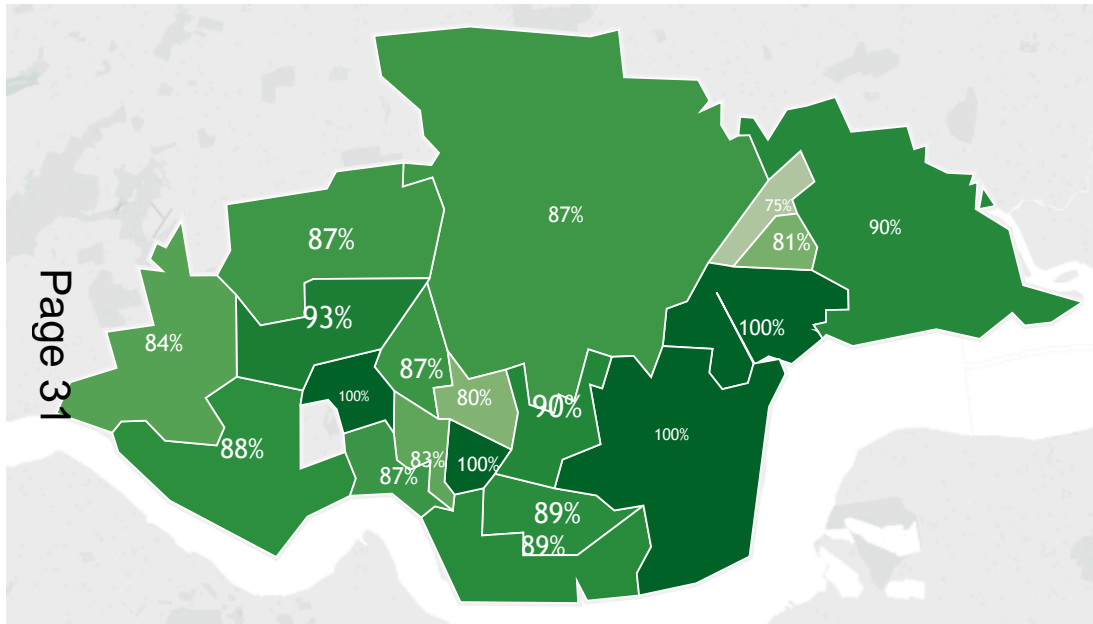


Repairs & Maintenance: Resident Satisfaction Analysis

View satisfaction by period & drivers RG1-3 / v1.0

Start 01/04/2015

End 30/06/2015



Repair Demand by Ward

	Apr 2013 - Jun 2013	Apr 2014 - Jun 2014	Apr 2015 - Jun 2015
Chadwell St Mary	756	945	731
Belhus	744	751	623
Tilbury Riverside and Thurroc..	569	663	563
Ockendon	626	696	522
Tilbury St Chads	560	505	419
Aveley and Uplands	371	430	369
Stanford East and Corringham..	331	398	356
Grays Thurrock	350	454	327
Grays Riverside	388	314	304
West Thurrock and South Stiff..	357	441	291
Stifford Clays	303	396	251
Little Thurrock Blackshots	169	197	175
Stanford-le-Hope West	140	124	121
Little Thurrock Rectory	48	66	83
Orsett	53	42	57
The Homesteads	9	23	37
East Tilbury	83	63	35
Corringham and Fobbing	28	30	32
Chafford and North Stifford	4	5	5

Total Responses

831

Overall Rating by Month Repair Completed (No. Responses)

April 2015

May 2015

June 2015

Satisfaction with Contractor

87.6%

85.8% (281)

85.7% (251)

91.0% (299)

Repairs and Maintenance Core Group Dashboards

Resident Satisfaction Analysis & Repair Demand - Financial YTD	Satisfaction Performance Trends	Satisfaction by Ward, sorted by Repairs Demand	Ward Demand Comparison	Repair trend by Contract and Priority	Repairs Issued by Trade	C o..
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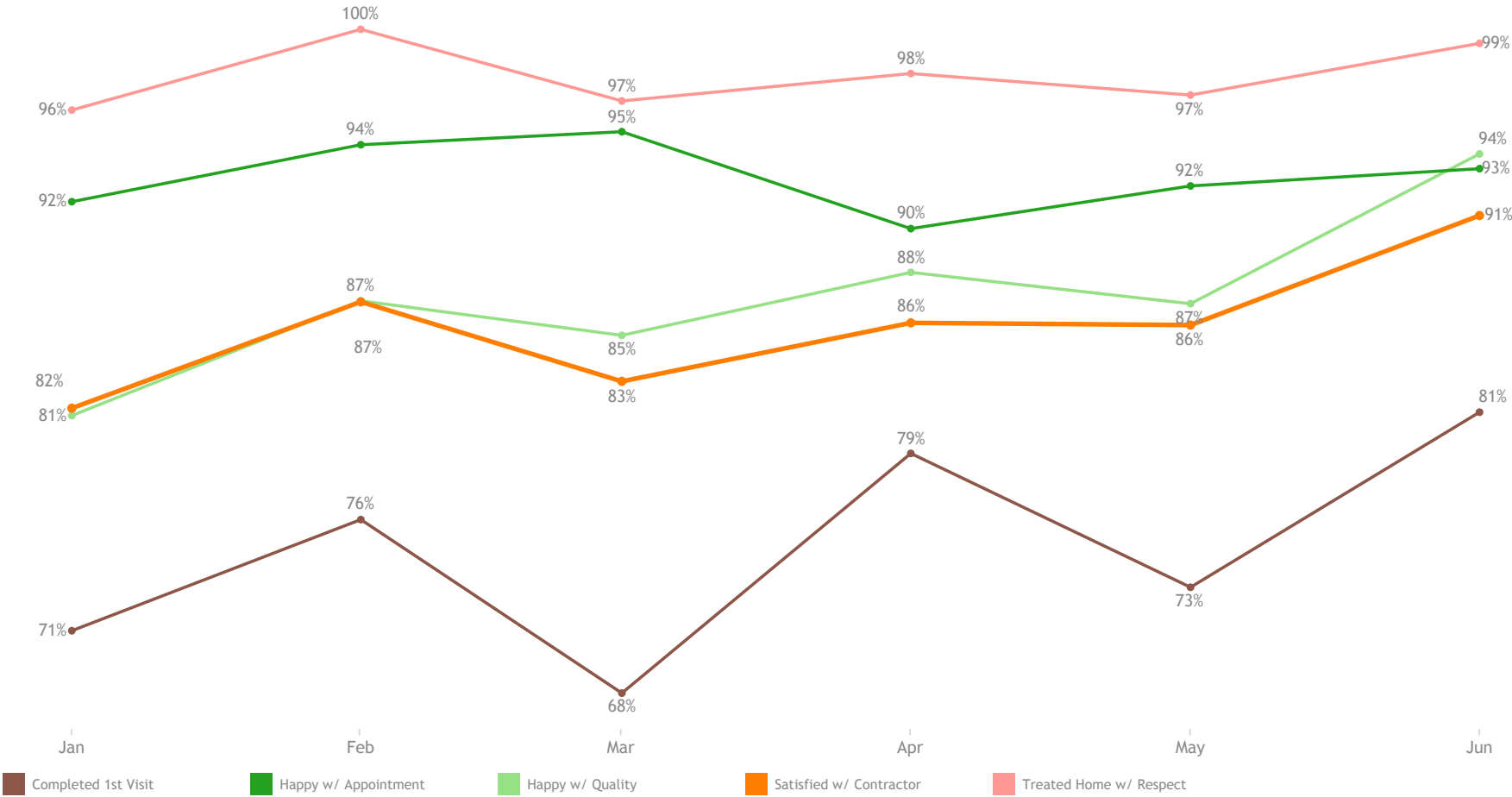
Repairs & Maintenance: Resident Satisfaction Analysis

View satisfaction by period & drivers RG1-3 / v1.0

Start Jan 2015
End Jun 2015

Satisfaction Performance Trends

Page 32



Repairs and Maintenance Core Group Dashboards

Resident Satisfaction Analysis & Repair Demand - Financial YTD

Satisfaction Performance Trends

Satisfaction by Ward, sorted by Repairs Demand

Ward Demand Comparison

Repair trend by Contract and Priority

Repairs Issued by Trade

C o..



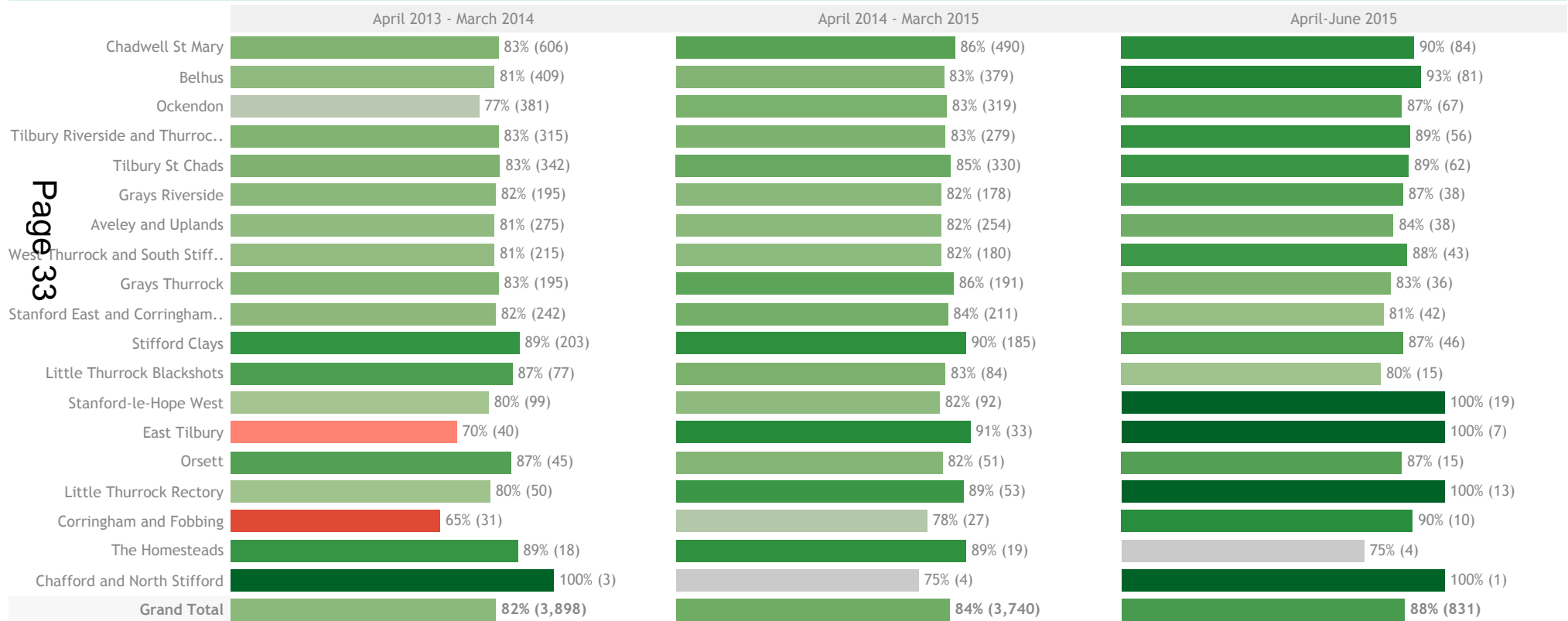
Repairs & Maintenance: Satisfaction Financial Year Comparison

View customer satisfaction in each month of the financial year to date, split by Ward RG1-13 / v1.0

Start Apr 2013

End Jun 2015

Ward Satisfaction Comparison - By Financial Year



Repairs and Maintenance Core Group Dashboards

Resident Satisfaction Analysis & R..	Satisfaction Performance Trends	Satisfaction by Ward, sorted by Repairs Demand	Ward Demand Comparison	Repair trend by Contract and Priority	Repairs Issued by Trade	Completions Analysis
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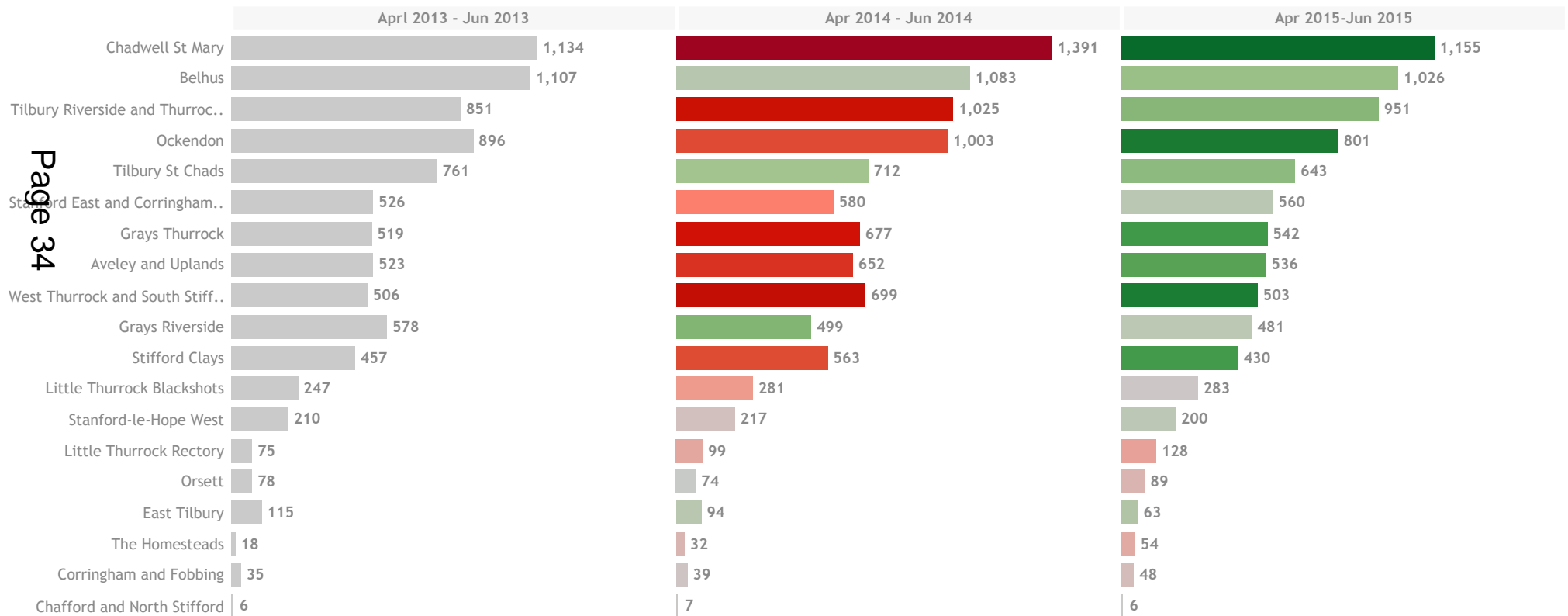
Repairs & Maintenance: Ward Demand Comparison

Displays repairs demand across wards, compared to previous period RG1-9 / v1.0

Start Apr 2013

End Jun 2015

Repair Demand by Ward



Repairs and Maintenance Core Group Dashboards

Reside..	Satisfaction Performance Trends	Satisfaction by Ward, sorted by Repairs Demand	Ward Demand Comparison	Repair trend by Contract and Priority	Repairs Issued by Trade	Completions Analysis
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Repairs & Maintenance: Repair Volumes by Type

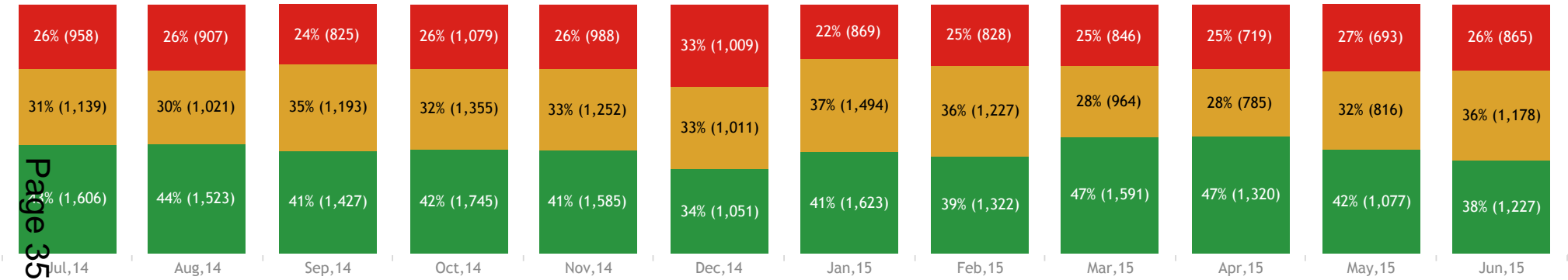
Breakdown of Repairs by Priority & Contract Type RG1-11 / v1.0

- Emergency
- Urgent
- Routine

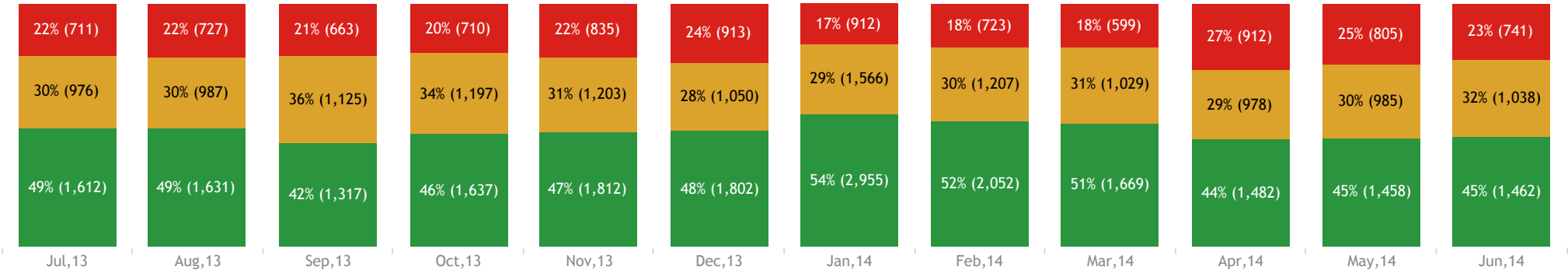
Start Jul 2014

End Jun 2015

Repair Volumes by Priority Trend



Repair Volumes by Priority Trend



Page 35

Repairs and Maintenance Core Group Dashboards

Reside..	Satisfaction Performance Trends	Satisfaction by Ward, sorted by Repairs Demand	Ward Demand Comparison	Repair trend by Contract and Priority	Repairs Issued by Trade	Completions Analysis
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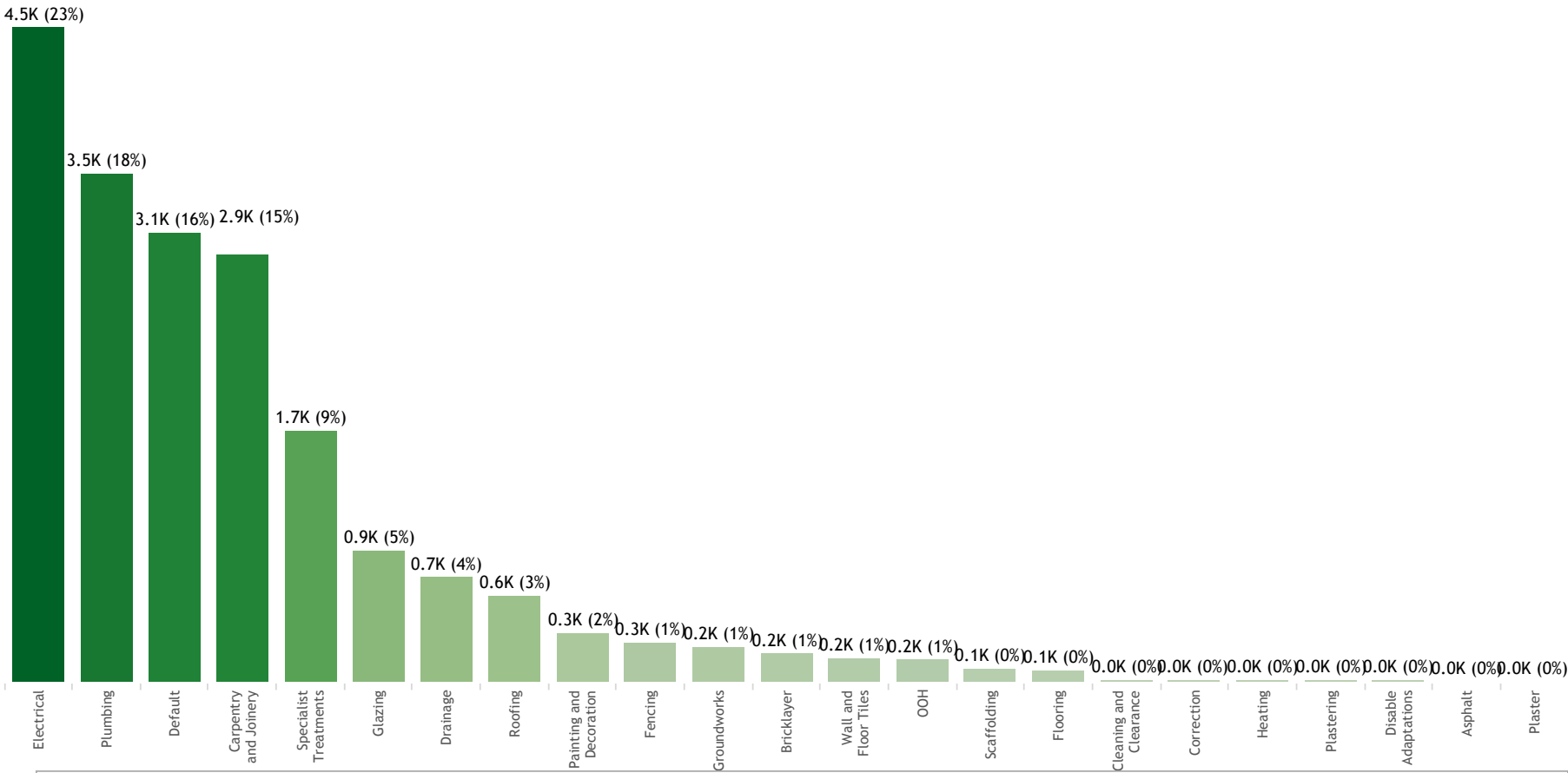
Repairs & Maintenance: Repairs Demand by Trade

View repairs demand spend by trade and month and identify properties with highest spend amounts

All
Start Jan 2015
All
End Jun 2015

Repairs Issued by trade - Jan-June 2015

Page 36



Since the commencement of the new Repairs & Maintenance contract in January 2015 trade level data is available which allows the service to further analyse repairs demand. This will be analysed on a financial year level once sufficient data is available.

Repairs and Maintenance Core Group Dashboards

Reside..	Satisfaction Performance Trends	Satisfaction by Ward, sorted by Repairs Demand	Ward Demand Comparison	Repair trend by Contract and Priority	Repairs Issued by Trade	Completions Analysis
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Repairs & Maintenance: Completions Analysis

Proportion of Repairs completed in required timeframes & breakdown of average turnaround times RG1-5 / v1.0

All Start 01/06/2015
End 30/06/2015

Number of Repairs Completed

Emergency	Urgent	Routine	Grand Total
847	1,166	1,178	3,191

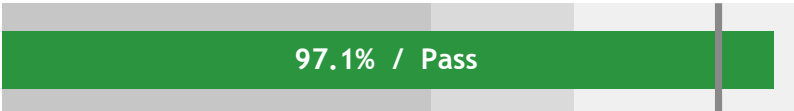
% Emergency Repairs in Target



% Urgent Repairs in Target



% Routine Repairs in Target



Emergency Completions by Month



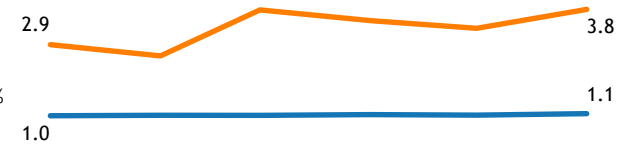
Urgent Completions by Month



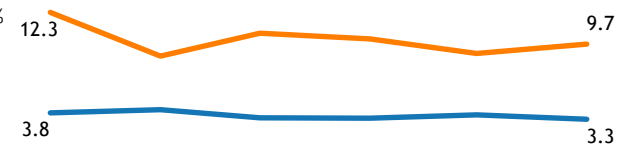
Routine Completions by Month



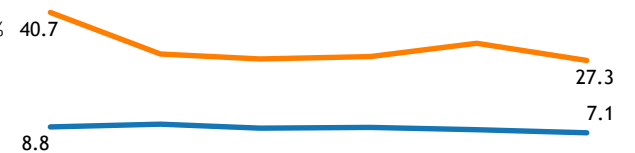
Average Working Days - Emergency



Average Working Days - Urgent



Average Working Days - Routine



Out of Target Repairs Detail

Pri	Descripti..	Job Description	Address	Contract Desc (group) 1	Working Days to Complete
Emergency		****PASSED TO OOH****Tnt broken in to last night back ground floor window will not shut. - wooden window also close board up hole to back door..	20 St Francis Way, Chadwell St Mary, Grays, Essex, RM164PD	Inclusion	2
		PASSED TO OOH *shletered housing electric door system not working unable to buzz in- tnt has carers and ambulances have tried to buzz up and was unable t..	37 Russell Road, Tilbury, Essex, RM18 7AH, RM187AH	Inclusion	2
		PASSED TO OOHAs per to job RE255126 - wetroom - water is still not draining	20 Helford Court, Cample Lane, South Ockendon,	Inclusion	2

Page 37



Damp & Mould Completed Surveys / Remedial Works

This dashboard displays the number of Damp & Mould Surveys & Remedial Works Completed

Number of Surveys / Remedial Works Completed

	Total Surveys	No. Proactive Surveys	% Proactive Surveys	Total Remedial Works	No. Proactive Remedial Works	% Proactive Remedial Works	Overall % Remedial Works
Chadwell St Mary	200	82	41%	139	69	50%	69.5%
Tilbury St Chads	191	145	76%	140	114	81%	73.3%
Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park	185	130	70%	145	109	75%	78.4%
Belhus	163	49	30%	110	41	37%	67.5%
Ockendon	112	35	31%	64	27	42%	57.1%
West Thurrock and South Stifford	89	15	17%	51	10	20%	57.3%
Grays Thurrock	75	26	35%	54	21	39%	72.0%
Grays Riverside	62	37	60%	35	22	63%	56.5%
Stanford East and Corringham Town	60	16	27%	36	7	19%	60.0%
Aveley and Uplands	54	4	7%	31	4	13%	57.4%
Little Thurrock Blackshots	39	16	41%	18	5	28%	46.2%
Stifford Clays	37	5	14%	30	3	10%	81.1%
Stanford-le-Hope West	24	1	4%	14	1	7%	58.3%
East Tilbury	14	8	57%	7	4	57%	50.0%
Orsett	13	2	15%	7	1	14%	53.8%
Little Thurrock Rectory	9	2	22%				
Corringham and Fobbing	6	2	33%	5	2	40%	83.3%
Chafford and North Stifford	2	1	50%	2	1	50%	100.0%
The Homesteads							
Grand Total	1,340	576	43%	897	441	49%	66.9%

2 September 2015	ITEM: 6
Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2010-15	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Dawn Shepherd, Housing Strategy Manager, Housing	
Accountable Head of Service: Dermot Moloney, Strategic Lead, Housing	
Accountable Director: Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

There is a statutory duty on every Local Authority to have a Homelessness Strategy which sets out the local authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support are, or will be, available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

The local authority must ensure that all organisations whose work can help to prevent homelessness and/or meet the needs of homeless people are involved in the strategy.

The last strategy was adopted in Thurrock in 2010.

A new homelessness prevention strategy is required which takes into account current homelessness in the borough, the impact of recent welfare reforms, and opportunities for preventing homelessness.

A review of current homelessness, its impacts and anticipated needs for prevention of homelessness in the future has recently been undertaken – this includes a full public consultation. The review findings are presented at **Appendix A**.

Subsequently, actions and timescales for addressing the findings have been developed into an action plan at **Appendix B**.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the board approves Thurrock Homelessness Review 2015 document - Appendix A.

1.2 That the board approves the Thurrock Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2015-20 - Appendix B.

1.3 That the board approves an annual review of the Action Plan – to be presented by officers at September O & S meetings.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Every Local Authority must have a Homelessness Strategy which sets out the local authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support are, or will be, available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

2.2 The local authority must ensure that all organisations whose work can help to prevent homelessness and/or meet the needs of homeless people are involved in the strategy.

2.3 Thurrock Council last implemented a homelessness strategy in 2010. Since then there have been many changes which have impacted homelessness including welfare reform, the Localism Act, a new housing allocations scheme, a new tenancy policy, recession and funding changes.

2.4 The new strategy will have an emphasis on prevention and will identify actions to address the main causes of homelessness in the borough.

2.5 To inform the new strategy a two stage consultation was implemented:

- Stage 1: Between February and April 2015 an initial consultation was undertaken, which included:
 - Face to face consultation sessions with Council staff and partner agencies (both Housing and non-Housing);
 - An online survey was sent to 850 recent service users;
 - A statistical analysis of local, national and regional data was undertaken in order to inform the review.

Subsequently a draft review document and draft action plan was written.

- Stage 2: Between April and July 2015 a further consultation using the draft documents was undertaken, which included:
 - Presentations to senior managers and directors of Children's and Adult's services;
 - Presentations to the Health & Wellbeing scrutiny board and the Youth Cabinet;

- 10 face to face consultations with staff, partner agencies, providers of temporary and supported accommodation in the Borough, Members, and Registered Providers;
- Face to face consultation session with representatives from BME groups;
- An online public consultation – advertised on the Council and the Thurrock Choice Homes websites and within the Thurrock Enquirer.

2.6 The finalised review document and strategy action plan are completed and presented to the Housing O & S Committee - **Appendix A and Appendix B.**

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Consultation and statistical analysis identified the following key issues, which the action plan will seek to specifically address:

- There are four main causes of homelessness in Thurrock:
 - Eviction by parents, family or friend;
 - The ending of an Assured Short hold tenancy;
 - Violence or harassment;
 - Mortgage or rent arrears.
- Non priority groups, i.e. those without children or vulnerabilities who would not be accommodated by the Council under a statutory duty if homeless, have few housing options:
 - Home ownership is beyond the reach of many;
 - Low cost home ownership is a more viable option for working residents;
 - Private renting can be expensive with increasingly rising rents;
 - Non-working residents in receipt of Housing Benefit may struggle to obtain good quality affordable rented accommodation since there is an increasing shortfall between Local Housing Allowances (the subsidy paid under benefit rules) and actual market rents.
- The impact of recent and future welfare reforms could make rehousing for clients more difficult - particularly the introduction of Universal Credit and the non-payment of Housing Benefit to young people under the age of 25 since there are reports of local landlords who previously let to people in receipt of Housing Benefit but are now refusing to take tenants in receipt of Universal Credit, due to concerns over potential non-payment;
- A number of London boroughs have purchased or rented property in the borough, as a means of accommodating people to whom they owe a duty to house. The impact is that landlords are asking for higher rents which

widen the gap between Local Housing Allowance and actual market rent. This means fewer properties are available for Thurrock residents;

- Anecdotally, a number of people have been moved into the borough with complex needs which are not being supported and there has been no pass over of services – this requires further investigation;
- Debt and poor money management is a key factor to homelessness with rent and mortgage arrears as one of the top four reasons

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to consult on and implement a five year homelessness strategy in order to set out the Local Authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness, and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support are, or will be, available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.
- 4.2 It is good practice to review the strategy action plan annually to ensure that it continues to meet the local needs.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 A two stage consultation was undertaken between February and July 2015 – full details and the results are outlined in **Appendix C**.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The Strategy Action Plan dovetails with the Housing Strategy 2015-20, incorporating and expanding on a number of the actions identified within that plan.
- 6.2 It also identifies specific areas for future work which address the corporate priorities of building pride, responsibility and respect within the home and improving health and wellbeing by preventing homelessness which can have an adverse impact.
- 6.3 During the consultation the impact of proposed actions was considered as part of the equality assessment. Specific face to face sessions with representatives of BME groups and the vulnerable were held. A community and equality impact assessment was completed.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Finance Manager

This strategy will formalise the objectives for the service; it is hoped an increase emphasis on prevention will help reduce costs and reduce homelessness in the long term.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Martin Hall**
Housing Solicitor / Housing Team Leader

The Homelessness act 2002, s1 (3) requires a Local Authority to review homelessness in its area and to produce a strategy. Section 1(4) requires that the strategy is reviewed and updated at least every 5 years.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development & Equalities manager

A community and equality impact assessment was conducted as part of the consultation process to assess the impact of the proposed strategy. Actions identified through this will inform the strategy and action plan – for example, the establishment of a homelessness forum with partners to support key issues and to support a regular review of the CEIA.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

Not applicable.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

Not applicable.

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix A - Thurrock Homelessness Review 2015
- Appendix B - Thurrock Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2015-20
- Appendix C - Consultation on Homelessness Prevention Strategy - February to August 2015
- Appendix 1 - Online Survey of Service Users
- Appendix 2 - 2nd Report - Online Survey Homelessness Strategy

Report Author:

Dawn Shepherd

Housing Strategy Manager

Housing, Business Development

Thurrock Homelessness

Review

May/June 2015

Contents

1. Background
2. Consultation
3. Statistical Background
 - a. Thurrock Population
 - b. Thurrock Migration
 - c. Thurrock Housing stock
 - d. Thurrock Home Ownership
 - e. Thurrock Private rental market
 - f. Social housing
 - g. Thurrock Homelessness
 - h. Homeless prevention & relief
 - i. Rough Sleepers
 - j. Temporary accommodation
4. Health & Wellbeing
 - a. Physical health & disability
 - b. Mental health
 - c. Teenage pregnancy
 - d. Drug & alcohol misuse
 - e. Learning, Education & support
 - f. Domestic abuse & sexual violence
5. Policy, legislative & the socio economic climate
 - 5.1 The recession, austerity & economic downturn
 - 5.2 Localism & social housing reform
 - 5.3 Welfare benefit reform
 - 5.4 No second night out
 - 5.5 Making every contact count
 - 5.6 The test for Priority Need
6. Gold Standard – ten local challenges
7. New ways of working
8. Partnerships
9. Next steps

Thurrock Homelessness Prevention Strategy Review - 2015

1. Background

Legal background

Section 1 of the Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities to formulate a homelessness strategy by carrying out a homelessness review for the district.

Section 2 of the Homelessness Act 2002 prescribes the considerations that local authorities should undertake in conducting a review of homelessness and the purpose of the review in terms of informing a future homelessness strategy.

The Homelessness Act 2002 determines that local authorities must formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review – the life of the strategy should be no more than 5 years, and when the strategy expires or is due for expiry, the authority must publish a new homelessness strategy.

There is a further duty on local authorities to keep the strategy under review – and they may modify it from time to time – however, any modifications must be published and before adoption of a homelessness strategy, or prior to modifying an existing strategy, the authority must carry out consultation.

In formulating or modifying a homelessness strategy, under section 153 of the Localism Act 2011, a local housing authority in England must also have regard to—

- (a) Its current allocation scheme under section 166A of the Housing Act 1996
- (b) Its current tenancy strategy under section 150 of the Localism Act 2011

Local background

Thurrock Council last reviewed its homelessness strategy in 2009 and implemented a new strategy in 2010.

In line with the legislative requirements and in view of the many changes over the past 5 years, including welfare reform, a new strategy is now required.

2. Consultation

In February and March 2015 an initial consultation was undertaken to review current homelessness. Meetings were held to receive feedback and those taking part included partner agencies, frontline housing staff and Council staff from other directorates. Three questions were asked:

- What are the issues & biggest challenges?
- Existing services & provision – what works well & where are the gaps?
- Identifying key areas for change / action points

Feedback from the groups can be broadly summarised into the following areas:

Private Landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of incentives for landlords working with the Council • Improve working relationships with landlords • Consider use of private landlords outside of the Borough where appropriate
Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase education & training on money management, budgeting and debt management • Provision of dedicated and specialised welfare advice for people across all tenures • Investigate options to increase Local Housing Allowance levels to meet higher market rents • Increase joint working over Discretionary Housing payments • Enable use of the homelessness prevention fund to include more creative options to prevent homelessness • Address welfare reforms in a more pro-active manner
Housing Supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the supply of accommodation for single people and those with no priority need including young people under 25 • Increase the supply of supported accommodation – particularly for people with complex/dual needs • Increase the number of alternative housing options for working households on a low income e.g. shared ownership schemes • Investigate options for direct access hostel accommodation – possibly for the sub region
Education & Mediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer school programmes to educate on homeless prevention & money management as part of their curriculum from year 7 • De- incentivise homeless applications through use of the allocations scheme to prioritise those who remain at home with family • Increase the use of mediation services to enabling people to remain in their current homes e.g. between landlord & tenant, Parent & child
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve working relationships through better understanding of roles and responsibilities • Agree clearly defined working practices and robust service level agreements and protocols between partners • Strive for the earlier identification of vulnerable people • Agree pathways into housing for clients • Increase joint professionals working groups
Regional Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange and monitor working agreements with London and regional boroughs particularly around moving people across boroughs and ensuring adequate support is in place • Joint working with other boroughs to minimise competition for private landlords

<p>Tenancy Sustainment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase resources for helping people to sustain tenancies – both Private and Social • Maximise the length of private sector tenancies to prevent the AST “revolving door” • Raise awareness of the implications of losing a social housing tenancy and be proactive in offering lessons in tenancy management • Robustly implement new Council introductory tenancy processes and intervene at an early stage to prevent evictions
<p>Customer Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make improvements to the online housing options assessment (HED) • Improve signposting and the customer service experience • Explore options for a one stop shop for housing to incorporate all tenures and options
<p>Health & Wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure temporary accommodation is used for only minimal periods and that residents are still linked into medical services e.g. GPs/health visitors • Temporary accommodation should have appropriate facilities to meet basic needs e.g. cooking & laundry facilities, access to public transport • Ensure people have access to other services such as alcohol and drug support, debt advice and counselling services • Improved hospital discharge procedures and provision of adapted accommodation including temporary accommodation • Expand use of the mental health forum

DRAFT

In addition to the meetings above, an 8 week online survey was also undertaken. Around 850 recent service users were contacted and invited to take part and 116 (14%) responded. Key points and actions can be broadly identified as follows:

Results from Service Users survey	Actions Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 66% expected the Council to rehouse them 85% felt that expectations were not fulfilled 	Need to better manage the expectations of service users before and after they approach for advice and assistance
<p>Around 30-45% of those surveyed felt that staff never</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listened to their problems Understood them Offered helpful advice 	<p>This matter will need to be addressed through training and monitoring.</p> <p>NB. Caution should be given that those presenting unfavourable information to the service users can often be seen as unwelcoming and impolite.</p>
<p>Approximately 50% of service users stated they were not given a Housing Officers name and contact details</p> <p>In addition, 60% stated they were not given any written information to take away with them</p> <p>55% claimed they did not know what would happen once the application had been made</p>	Need to improve initial contact between service users and front line officers and to ensure that every service user receives written advice along with contact details for the case officer
<p>90% felt that the council did not stay in regular contact with them regarding their housing circumstances</p> <p>96% of those responding felt that the council did not stay in touch with them during their stay in temporary accommodation and provide them with support.</p>	Need to improve communication between service users and front line officers throughout the assessment process and whilst in temporary accommodation
<p>Over 80% felt that the advice and information they were given was unhelpful for their housing problem</p> <p>72% of those responding felt that the Allocation Policy was not explained to them clearly</p> <p>86%, of those responding felt that although accommodation was not offered they were still not given good advice and guidance</p>	<p>Need to improve the standard of information and advice provided</p> <p>Need to ensure that advice given is relevant to the service users specific situation</p>

3. Statistical Background

- A) Thurrock Population
- B) Migration in and out of Thurrock
- C) Housing Stock and tenures
- D) Thurrock Housing market
- E) Thurrock Privately rented market
- F) Thurrock Social housing
- G) Homelessness
- H) Homeless Prevention & Relief
- I) Rough Sleeping
- J) Temporary Accommodation

A) Thurrock Population

Population:

At the 2011 census the population of Thurrock was recorded at just under 160,000

The population is predicted to grow by 5.2% over the next 5 years, which is not unexpected due to Thurrock being an area of regeneration – see A1

However, it is the 65+ age group that is anticipated to increase the most with an increase of over 13% on its 2011 level

A1 – Age comparison and predicted levels of population

	Current (at 2012)	Predicted (at 2017)	Increase	increase
0 to 19	42,700	44,800	2,100	4.92%
20 to 29	20,700	21,000	300	1.45%
30 to 44	36,300	36,400	100	0.28%
45 to 64	38,600	41,600	3,000	7.77%
65+	21,200	24,000	2,800	13.21%
Total	159,500	167,800	8,300	5.20%

Source: 2012 based ONS sub-national population projections

Ethnicity & Language

Thurrock has become increasingly diverse in the past 10 years; Black and Black British residents have replaced Asian and Asian British as the second largest group, with an increase of 6.65%, whilst white groups have reduced by over 9% - see A2

1.14% of the Thurrock population cannot speak English well or at all. This is higher than the neighbouring boroughs and the East of England see A3

Actions:

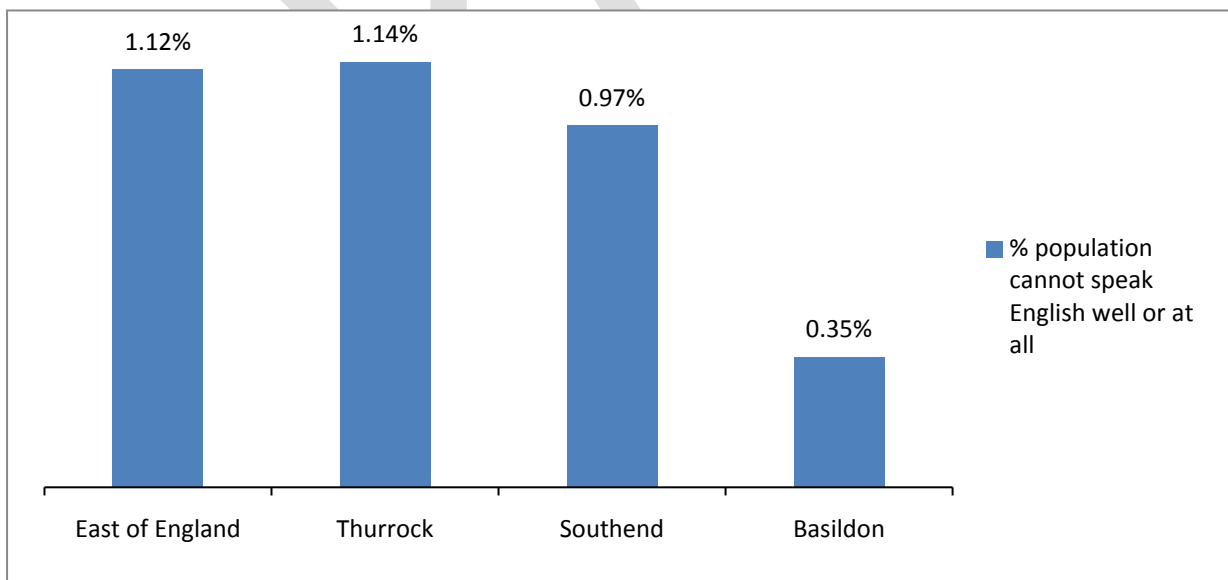
- Complete an equality impact assessment on the new strategy to monitor for adverse impacts on ethnic groups
- Continue to collect data on ethnicity of homeless households and monitor for any deviance from local data
- Ensure there are means of communication available for non-English speakers e.g. translations on web pages & application forms, translators available at interviews
- Encourage minority groups to be represented on Homelessness forums and during consultations

A2 – Ethnicity Comparison

	2001		2011		Change
White	136,399	95.30%	135,429	85.87%	-9.43%
Mixed	1,319	0.92%	3,099	1.97%	1.05%
Asian or Asian British	3,405	2.38%	5,927	3.76%	1.38%
Black or Black British	1,659	1.16%	12,323	7.81%	6.65%
Other Ethnic Group	346	0.24%	927	0.59%	0.35%

Source: ONS Census data 2011

A3 – English speaking



Source: ONS Census data 2011

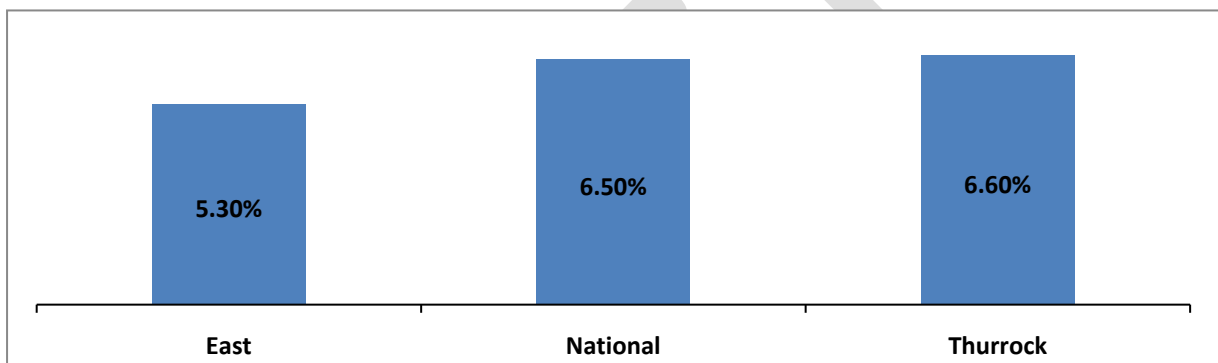
Unemployment:

Thurrock has a slightly higher level of unemployment compared to the regional and national picture – see A4

Actions:

- Ensure housing options incorporate employment advice and signposting
- Work in partnership with the Jobcentre to ensure access to skills training and employment services

A4 – Unemployment levels

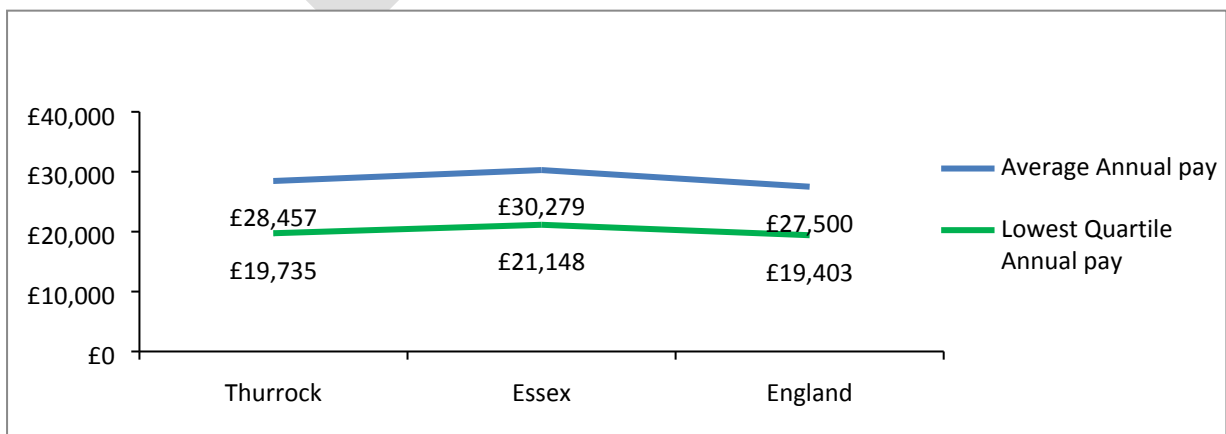


Source: ONS Census data 2011

Pay levels

Thurrock has slightly lower pay levels than Essex but is marginally higher than national figures – see A5

A5 – Pay levels



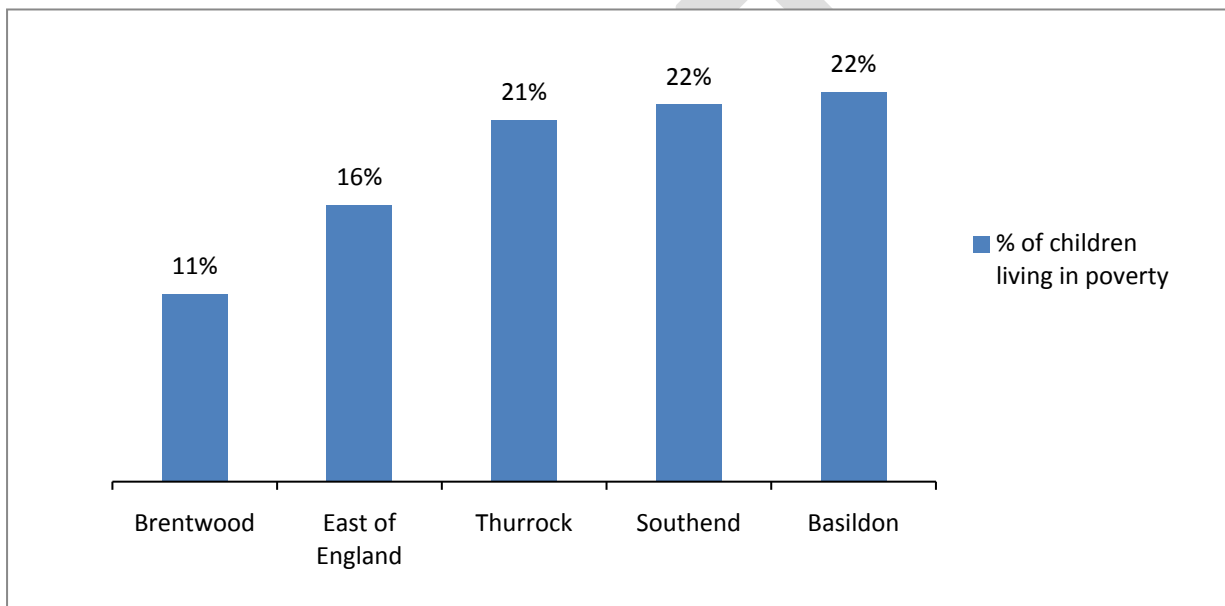
Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (2014)

Child Poverty

A6 shows the percentage of children in households where the income is less than 60% of the median income

Thurrock is higher than the East of England and the neighbouring borough of Brentwood and only slightly lower than its other neighbours Basildon and Southend

A6 – Child poverty levels



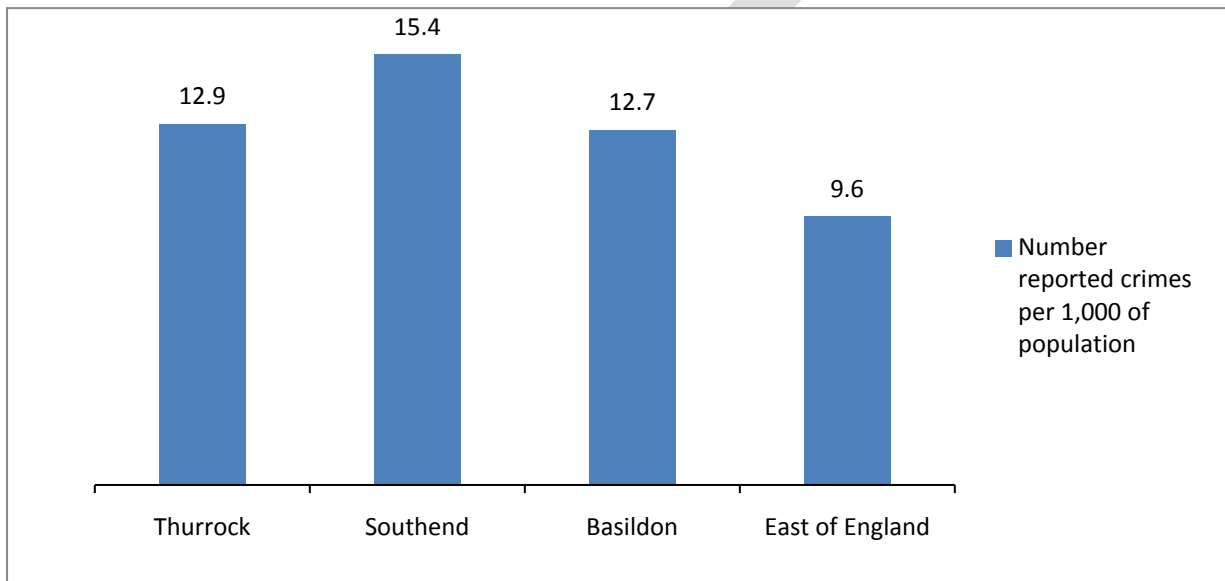
Source: Public Health England 2012

Crime levels

The borough has a higher level of reported violent crimes than the east of England as a whole but is lower than Southend and similar to Basildon - see A7

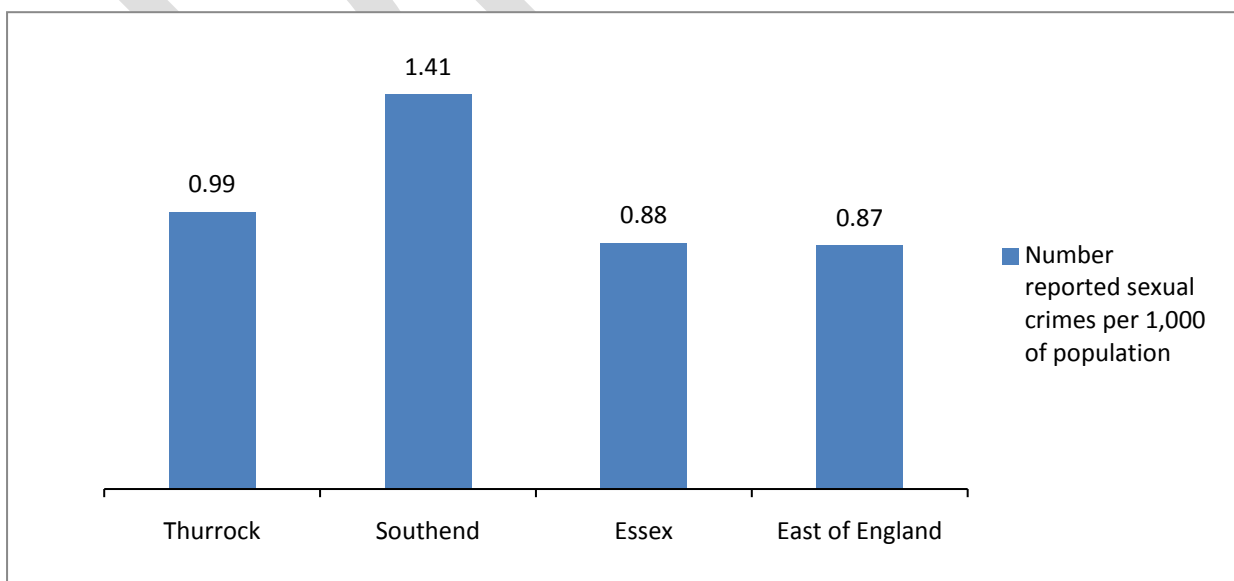
The picture is similar for sexual offences – see A8

A7 – Reported violent crimes and offences against a person



Source: Public Health England

A8 - Reported sexual offences



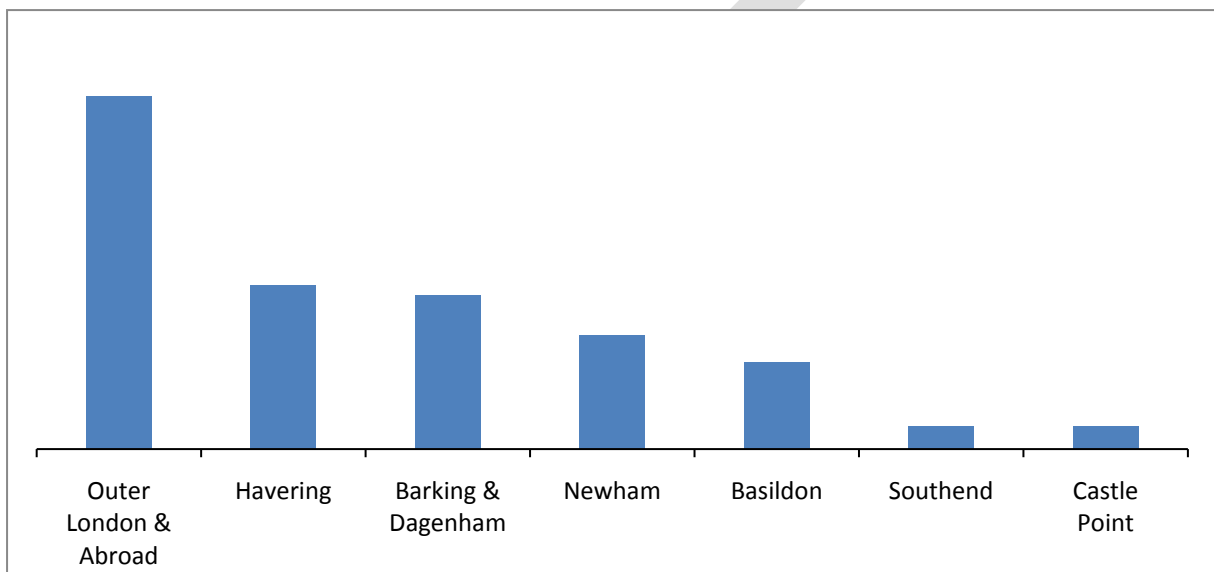
Source: Public Health England

B) Thurrock Migration

The 2011 census collected data on where people had migrated from and to and showed a net migration into Thurrock. It does not however show reasons why they have migrated.

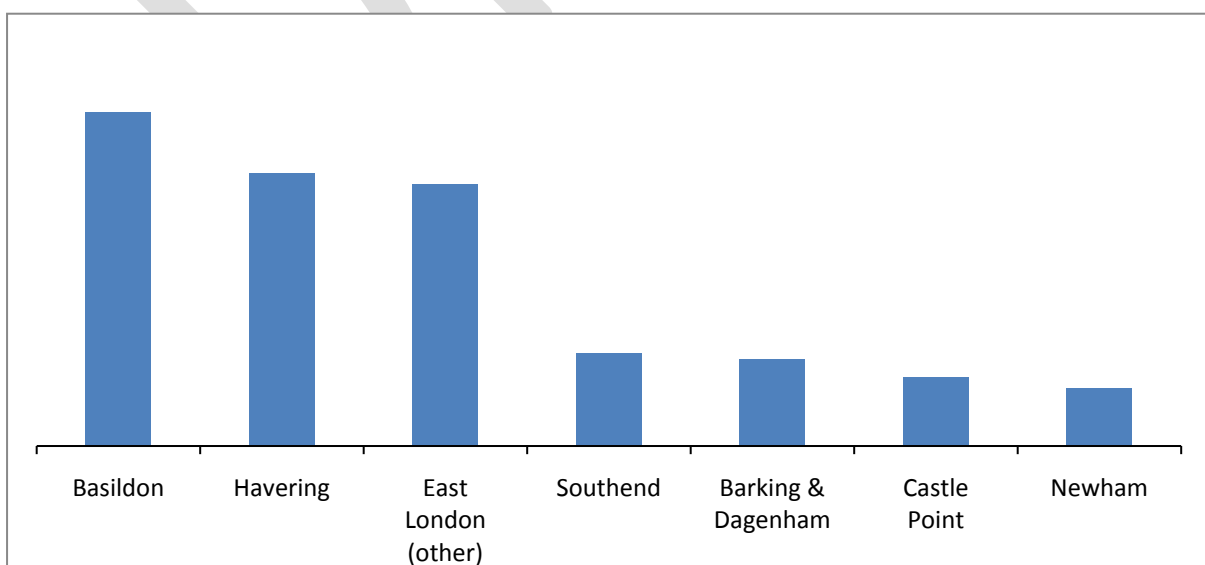
See B1 and B2

B1- Migration into Thurrock - Borough migrated from



Source: ONS Census data 2011

B2 – Migration out of Thurrock - Borough migrated to



Source: ONS Census data 2011

Out of borough placements in Thurrock:

London Boroughs:

A number of London boroughs are discharging their rehousing duty into Thurrock following greater freedoms introduced by the localism Act 2011 and a cap on benefits which makes local rents less affordable

Private properties in Thurrock are being used for accommodating London households in temporary accommodation either to meet the interim housing duty or whilst awaiting discharge of the full rehousing duty

Recent Examples:

- Havering Council are offering Landlords financial incentives for private sector leasing schemes and assured short hold tenancies
- Westminster Council has purchased 25 properties in the borough
- Newham Council placed at least 16 households in the borough in 2014
- Tower Hamlets advertised a £2,500 payment for one-bedroom properties to landlords agreeing to let to council-vetted tenants for two years and a £4,000 lump sum for homes with two or more bedrooms
- Westminster Council pay up to £4,000 as an incentive to Landlords

Under s 208 Housing Act 1996 local authorities who secure accommodation for applicants outside of their district, should give notice to the local housing authority in whose district the accommodation is situated. However, this is not consistently being followed and a recent Freedom of Information request by Inside Housing showed that at least 8,000 households have been placed outside of London in the past 2 years with no notification to the receiving local authority. (Source: Inside Housing 23rd April 2015)

Anecdotally, local partner agencies such as CMHT and Sericc have reported cases of households either being placed in inappropriate accommodation or in need of support services due to complex needs, with no referrals being made to the support services required

These events raise the following issues:

- London boroughs can offer greater incentives to private landlords due to greater resources
- There are concerns that this has led to an increase in notices on assured short hold tenancies in Thurrock (highest cause of homelessness)
- Because landlords can sign up to “better offers” with London boroughs, this reduces the private rented stock available to Thurrock residents

Neighbouring Boroughs

Basildon Council is also offering incentives to landlords in Thurrock and the surrounding areas with an offer of £1,000 for 12-month tenancies and £1,500 for 24-month tenancies.

Other neighbouring boroughs (within the sub-region) have indicated that they will not be offering incentives to Thurrock landlords in the near future

Actions:

- Investigate improved landlord incentives for Thurrock clients
- Improve working relationships with landlords
- Set up information sharing agreements with London boroughs, particularly regarding households with complex needs such as mental health, medical, specialist schooling and ASB issues
- Remind London boroughs of their duty to notify Local Authorities when placing people out of borough under s208 Housing Act 1996
- Work with other boroughs in the sub region to consider cross boundary joint partnerships to incentivise landlords

C) Thurrock housing stock

Tenures:

More than two thirds of the housing stock in Thurrock is owner occupied. This is slightly lower than figures for the region but slightly higher than the national figure. See C1 & C2

Nationally there has been a s50% increase in the private rented sector over the past 10 years, but the increase in Thurrock is more than twice this figures at 130%

Subsequently, the Private rented sector is now at similar levels to the social rented sector see C1 and C3

Reasons for the increase could include:

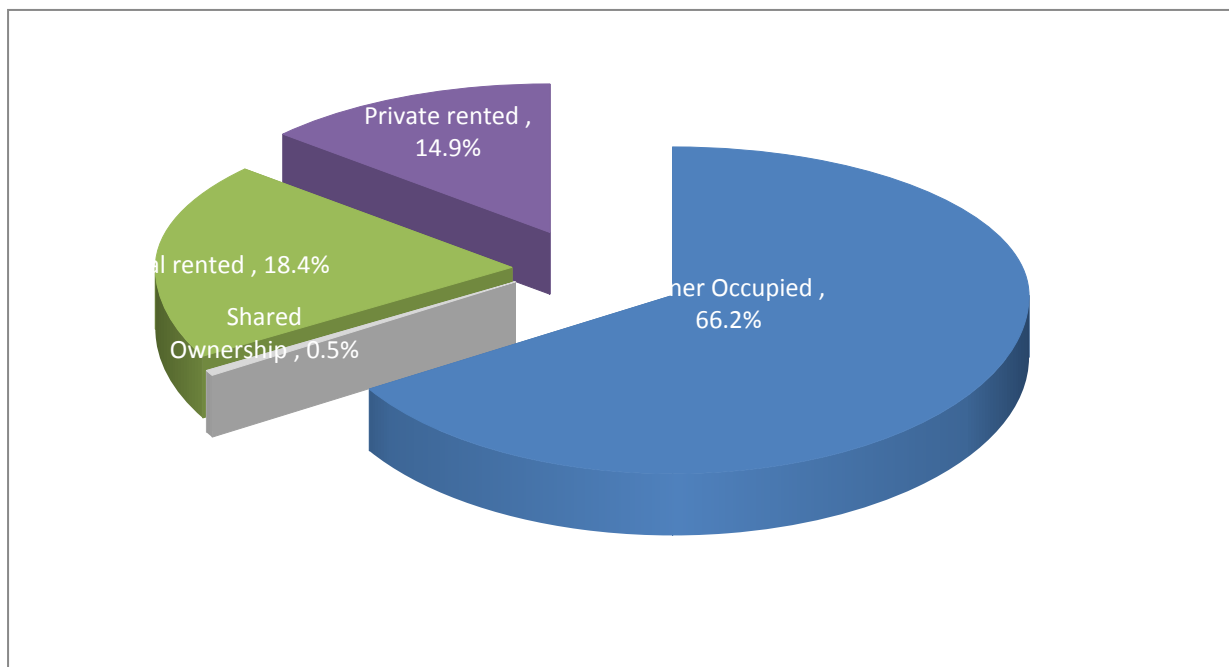
- reduced house prices over the past 10 years
- low interest rates for landlords buying to let
- an increase in the buy to let market

The increase provides greater opportunities for Thurrock residents to privately rent but also provides more opportunities for migration into the borough

Actions

- Explore incentives to landlords to offer accommodation to potentially homeless households
- Explore options for longer tenancies with private landlords
- Explore the long term impacts of welfare reforms on privately rented households – particularly Universal Credit - and any mitigations
- Consider improved monitoring of private landlords – e.g. Landlord licensing schemes

C1 – Tenure comparisons - Thurrock



Source: Source: ONS Census data 2011

C2 – National tenure comparisons

National Comparison				
	Thurrock	Essex	East	England
Tenure	%	%	%	%
Owner Occupied	66.2	71.4	67.6	63.4
Shared Ownership	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8
Social rented	18.4	14.3	15.7	17.7
Private rented	14.9	13.8	16.0	18.1

Source: ONS Census data 2011

C3 – Changes to tenure

Thurrock Housing Tenure Profile – Comparison 2001 & 2011			
Tenure	2001	2011	Change
Owner Occupied with Mortgage	47.9%	40.7%	-7.2%
Owner Occupied no Mortgage	23.8%	25.5%	1.7%
Shared Ownership	0.3%	0.5%	0.2%
Social rented	20.4%	18.4%	-2.0%
Private rented	6.5%	14.9%	8.4%

Source: ONS Census data 2001 and 2011

Property type and size

Houses represent over 77% of all housing - See C4

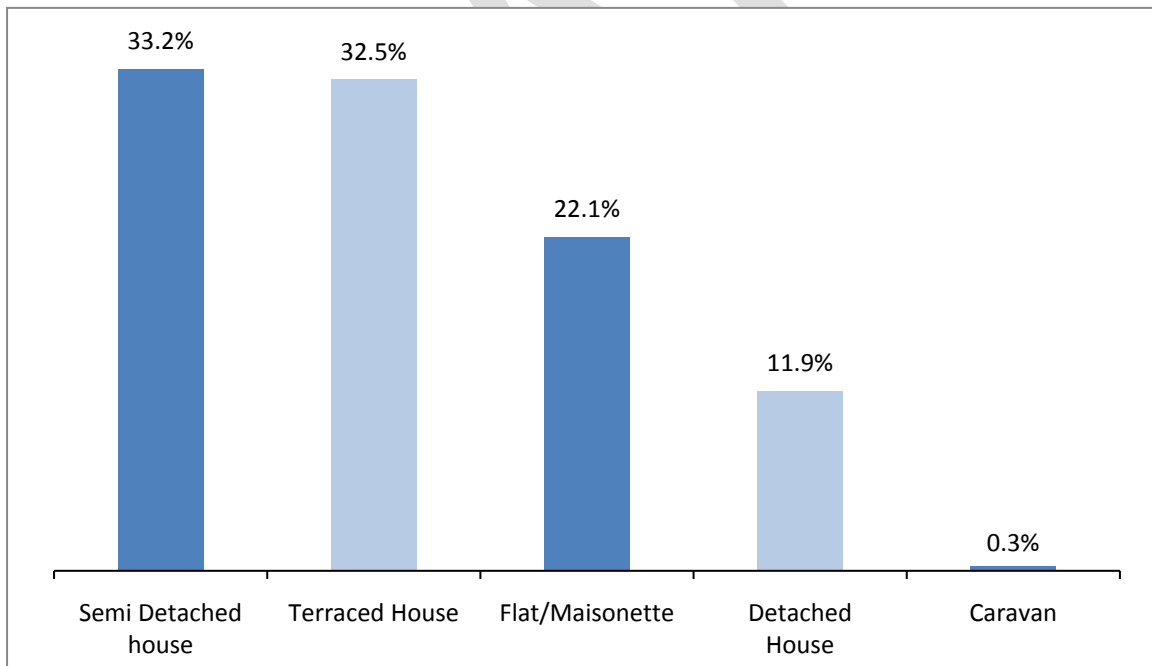
Over 75% of all housing stock is 2 or 3 bedroomed whilst just less than 12% is bedsit or 1 bedroomed. See C5

In comparison - 49% of households only require 1 bedroom (Singles and couples with no children). See C6

Action

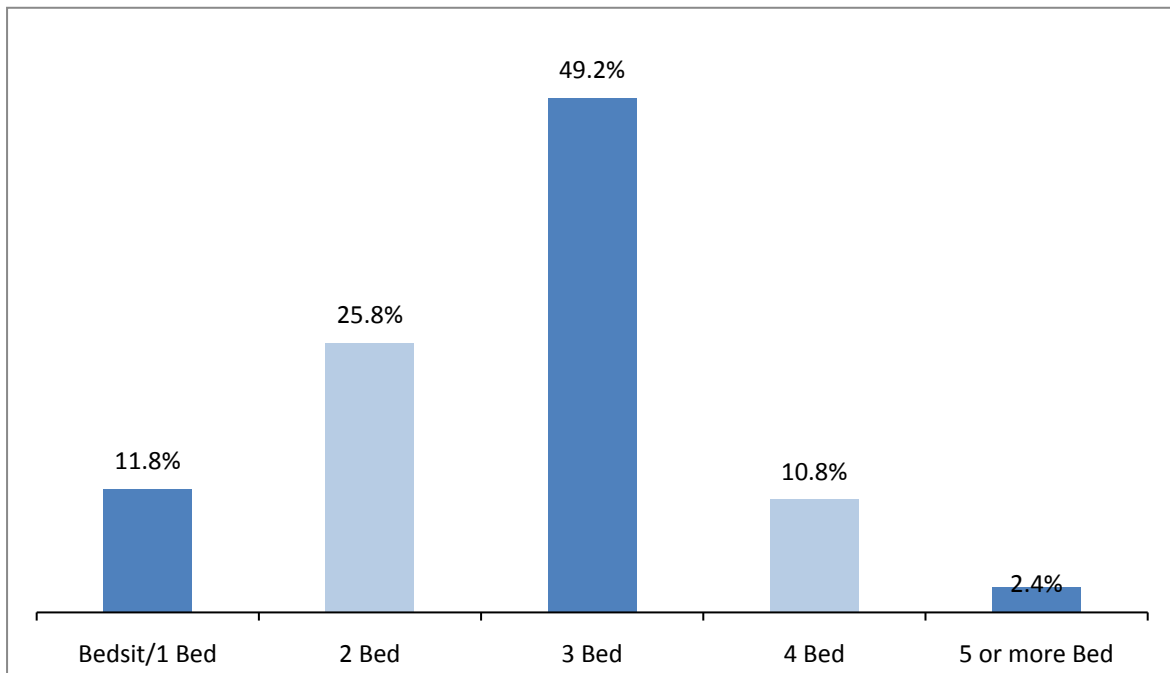
- Influence future house building and planning to achieve an increase in smaller properties (1 bedroom or studio) to meet smaller household needs

C4 – Comparison by property type (all tenures)



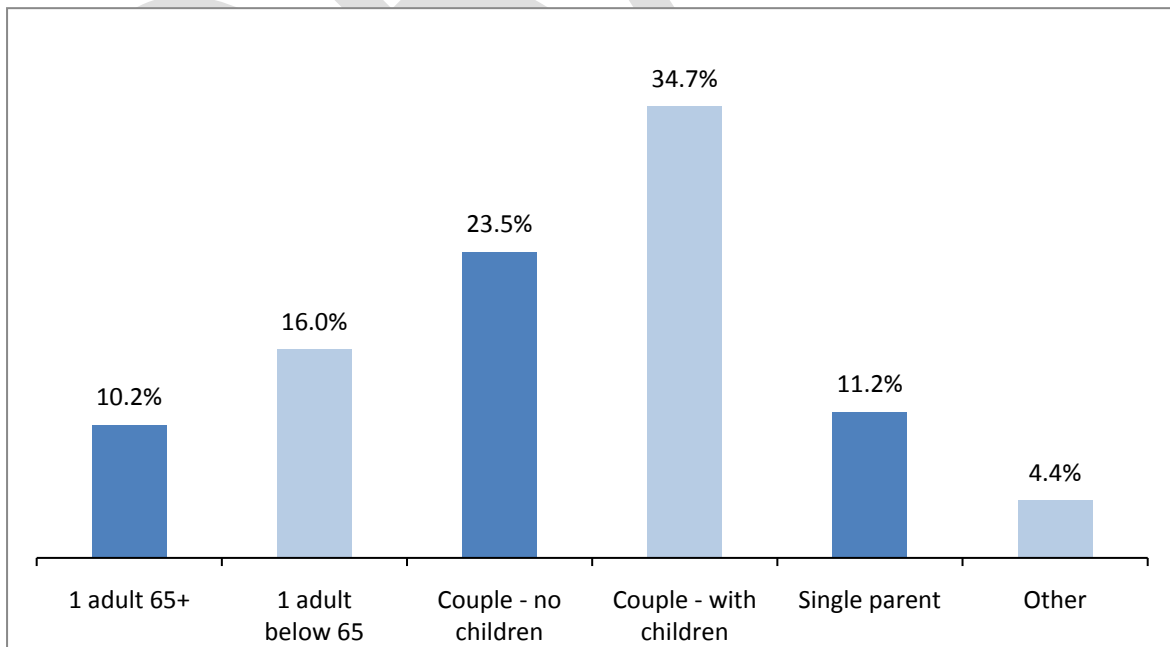
Source: ONS Census data 2011

C5 – Comparison by bedroom numbers (all tenures)



Source: ONS Census data 2011

C6 – Comparison by household make up (all tenures)



Source: ONS Census data 2011

Occupation levels

5.4% of households are over occupied (over crowded) in comparison to 64.3% who are under-occupied in the borough. See C7

The greatest overcrowding is in the private rented sector at 11.9% see C8
This is almost double the national average at 6% (Source: Survey of English Housing 2013/14)

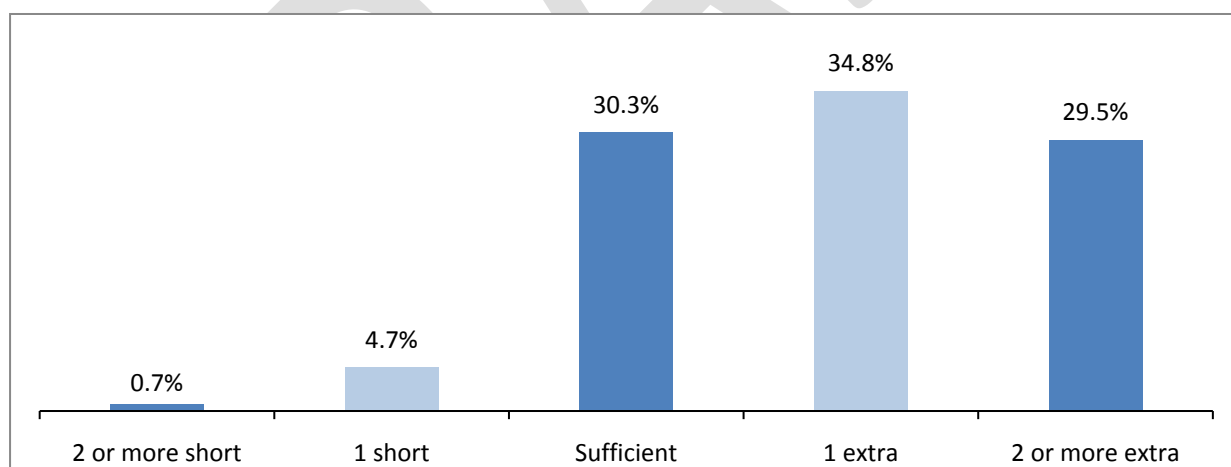
14.8% of socially rented stock is under occupied by 2 or more bedrooms – although lower than the owned stock, this represents around 1700 properties i.e. 36% of the total 3 and 4 bedroomed social stock

Actions

- Tackle under occupation across all tenure types
- Consider options for older under-occupiers (all tenures) to move into sheltered accommodation and rent out their properties to private renters
- Explore options for encouraging under-occupiers to take in lodgers

C7 – Comparison of overcrowding with under occupation (all tenures)

The chart shows the number of bedrooms short or extra to that required by the household size



Source: ONS Census data 2011

C8 – Overcrowding & under occupation by tenure comparison

Variance by tenure type	Under occupied (2 or more bedrooms)	Over occupied
Owned or shared ownership	37.6%	3.3%
Social rent	14.8%	7.8%
Private rented	10.9%	11.9%
All Stock	29.5%	5.4%

Source: ONS Census data 2011

D) Thurrock Home Ownership

Purchasing property

The average house price in Thurrock is £167,608 - lower than both the national and local figures. Average house prices in Thurrock have increased in the past 6 years by 12.35%. This also represents a lower increase than both Essex and the national figures – see D1 and D2

A survey in January 2015 identified lowest and average prices of properties available for sale - see D3

In order to outright purchase the cheapest property in Thurrock at that time, an annual income of at least £26,300 and a substantial deposit is required – see D3 and D4

Shared ownership allows households on a lower income the option to purchase a share of a property – lowest income requirement is £15,420 plus a deposit of £5,500 – see D5

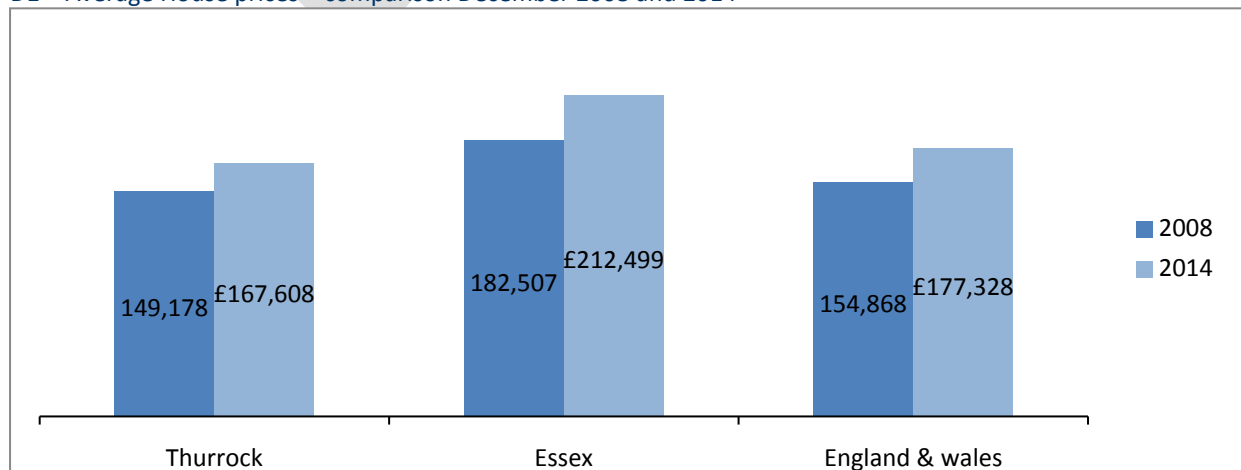
Help to Buy was introduced by the Government in 2013. Buyers can purchase a property with a 5% deposit and take out an interest free loan or mortgage guarantee for 20% of the purchase price.

Between April 2013 to March 2015, 47,018 properties were purchased across the country using the scheme of which 956 were purchased in Thurrock.

Actions

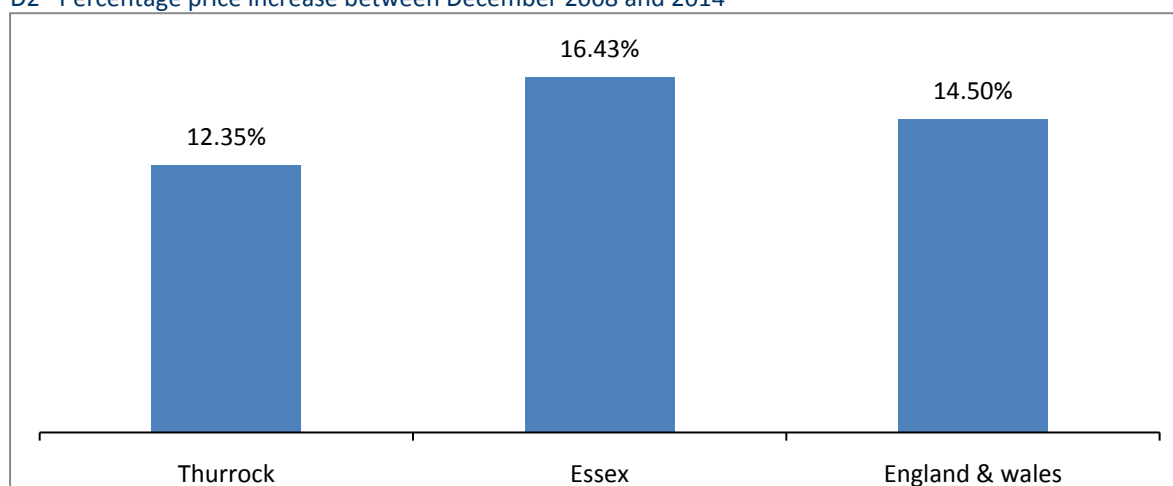
- Ensure all purchasing options are considered as a prevention to homelessness when providing advice and assistance through the housing options team
- Influence future housing supply to include more affordable purchasing options such as shared ownership

D1 – Average House prices – comparison December 2008 and 2014



Source: Land Registry

D2- Percentage price increase between December 2008 and 2014



Source: Land Registry

D3 – Property prices at January 2015

House Prices - sales	Lowest prices	Average prices
1 bed flat	£97,000	£115,313
2 bed flat	£124,995	£150,309
2 bed house	£178,995	£196,054
3 bed house	£199,995	£228,351

Source: DCA House price survey January 2015

D4 – Income Thresholds required to purchase

	Single income	Dual income	Deposit required 20%
1 bed flat	£26,300	£31,800	£19,400
2 bed flat	£33,900	£40,900	£24,999
2 bed house	£48,600	£58,600	£35,799
3 bed house	£54,300	£65,500	£39,999

Source: DCA House price survey January 2015

D4 – examples of shared ownership properties at January 2015

	Price	Share price	Share %	Rent	Mortgage	Total	Deposit needed	Income required
1 bed flat	£110,000	£55,000	50%	£126	£298	£424	£5,500	£15,420
2 bed flat	£150,000	£52,500	35%	£223	£284	£507	£5,250	£18,473
2 bed house	£200,000	£60,000	30%	£321	£325	£646	£6,000	£23,491
3 bed house	£230,000	£69,000	30%	£369	£374	£743	£6,900	£27,018

Source: share to buy

E) Thurrock Private Rental market

Privately renting property

The cost of privately renting is influenced by supply and demand and there are no restraints on how much rent a landlord can charge or achieve – see E1

Income threshold requirements are shown in E2

Average and lower quartile pay levels are shown in E3

Therefore whilst someone on an average income in Thurrock could afford to privately rent a one bedroom flat, if they are on an income in the lowest quartile or require a larger property, private rental becomes unaffordable without financial assistance (benefits). Affordability is determined as monthly housing costs not exceeding 33% of gross income

Housing Benefit provision for private tenants is available through Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and is means tested

LHA rates relate to the area in which the claim is made. These areas are called Broad Rental Market Areas (BRMA). A BRMA is where a person could reasonably be expected to live taking into account access to facilities and services

LHA rates for Thurrock at January 2015 are shown at E4

LHA rates are based on the lowest third of private market rents being paid in the BRMA; these can differ widely from advertised rents. Valuation Office Agency (VOA) Rent Officers collect the rental information from letting agents, landlords and tenants.

The BRMA for Thurrock includes Basildon, Brentwood, Billericay and Wickford

There is a shortfall between the Local Housing Allowance for Thurrock and actual rents in the borough – both average and lowest quartile – see E5

The impact of London Boroughs moving people into the area and paying London rates and incentives could lead to even higher market rents. In addition, the increasing population will also lead to higher demand. Therefore the shortfall could worsen over time

Actions

- Improve working partnerships with Housing benefits
- Investigate possible influences on LHA rates

E1– Cost of private rentals

	Average monthly rental (Jan 2015)	Lowest quartile monthly rental (Jan 2015)	Local monthly Housing Allowance (Jan 2015)
1 bed flat	£650	£595	£550
2 bed flat	£849	£750	£692
2 bed house	£885	£850	£692
3 bed house	£1,055	£950	£808

Source: Thurrock Housing Needs Assessment 2015 and GOV.

E2 - Income required

Income thresholds required for private rental	
1 bed flat	£28,600
2 bed flat	£36,000
2 bed house	£40,800
3 bed house	£45,600

Source: DCA House price survey January 2015

E3 – Pay levels Thurrock

	Average	Lowest quartile
	£28,457	£19,735

Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (2014)

E4 – LHA rates Thurrock

	Local monthly Housing Allowance (Jan 2015)
1 bed flat	£550
2 bed flat	£692
2 bed house	£692
3 bed house	£808

Source: Gov.UK

E5 – Shortfall levels

	Monthly shortfall for average rental (Jan 2015)	Monthly shortfall for lowest quartile (Jan 2015)
1 bed flat	£100	£45
2 bed flat	£157	£58
2 bed house	£193	£158
3 bed house	£247	£142

F) Social Housing

Social Housing stock

Thurrock Council own just over 10,000 properties and Registered Providers have around 1500 properties for social renting in Thurrock. Both are let through the Council's Choice based Lettings scheme Thurrock Choice Homes.

Waiting lists are long but the number of years required to supply full demand varies greatly according to the size of property required – see F1

Almost half of people waiting need a 1 bedroom property and of these almost 30% are aged 25 and under – see F2

Over 25% of people on the waiting list have a need for 2 bedroom properties but the time taken to supply full demand is the highest at more than 11 years.

Only 12.3% need a 3 bedroom property but 3 bedroom relets represent almost 30% of the total, hence the much shorter wait for a 3 bed property

Future building

Thurrock Council has an ambitious building programme with plans to build almost 1300 new affordable homes within the next 5 years, subject to planning etc. – see F3

Actions:

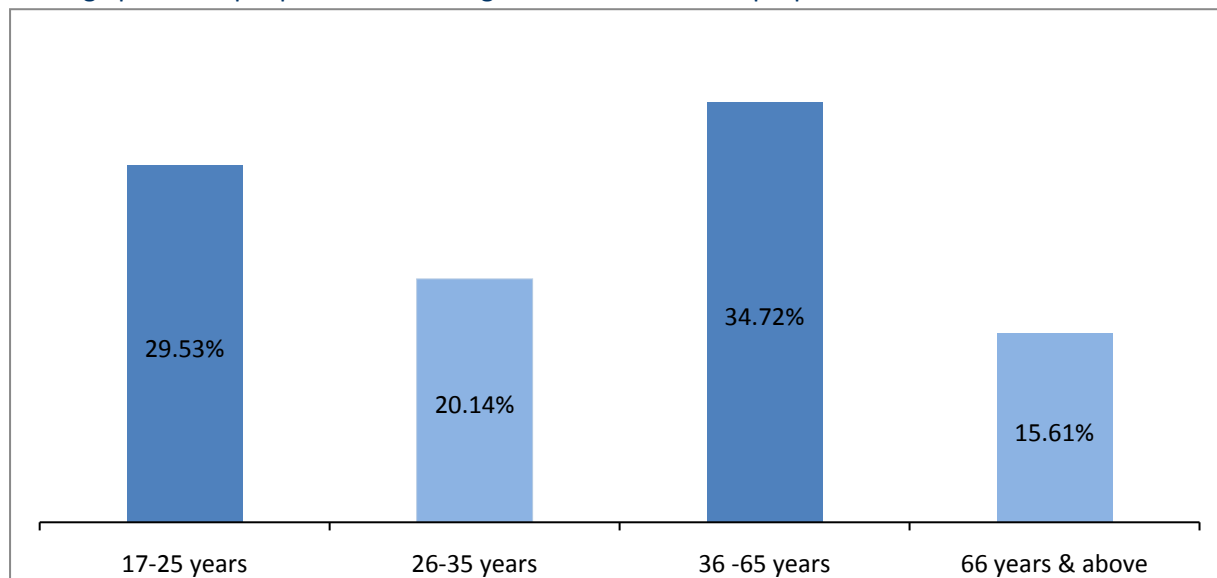
- Manage the expectation of being housed into social housing
- Ensure all housing options are represented in advice given
- Ensure a representative supply of 2 and 3 bedroom properties are included in the building programme

F1 – Council Housing stock

	Council stock	Waiting List (excl transfers)	% of waiting list	Relets in 2014	% of relets	*Years to supply full demand
1 bed	3,109	2,880	49.6%	317	44.1%	9.1
2 bed	2,307	2,066	25.6%	182	25.3%	11.4
3 bed	4,520	715	12.3%	214	29.8%	3.3
4+ bed	204	144	2.5%	6	0.8%	24
Total	10,140	5,805		719		

*Indicates the number of years required to fulfil the demand of current waiting list, through current rate of relets – i.e. takes no account of increases in waiting lists or other demands

F2 – Age profile of people on the waiting list for one bedroom properties



F3 – 5 year Building programme

	Total No. of units to be built	Of which - Affordable Homes	% of Affordable Housing on scheme	No. of units – affordable rented	No. of units – shared ownership/ LCHO
2014-15	709	148	20.9%	97	51
2015-16	305	142	46.6%	126	16
2016-17	635	419	66.0%	293	126
2017-18	1119	533	47.6%	328	205
2018-19	55	55	100.0%	30	25
Total	2823	1297	Av. 45.9%	874	423

The information is based on current planning permissions (April 2015) and the Council's own housing development programme

G) Thurrock Homelessness

Homelessness data

Data is provided to the DCLG quarterly via the P1E statutory return, and is broken down into:

- The number of people approaching the local authority for advice and assistance
- The numbers of homeless applications subsequently taken (where homelessness could not be prevented or relieved) and decisions made
- The number of people for whom a rehousing duty has been accepted by the Council

Thurrock Council has a Housing solutions team who provide a generic service incorporating housing advice, homeless prevention and homeless applications

Key Points

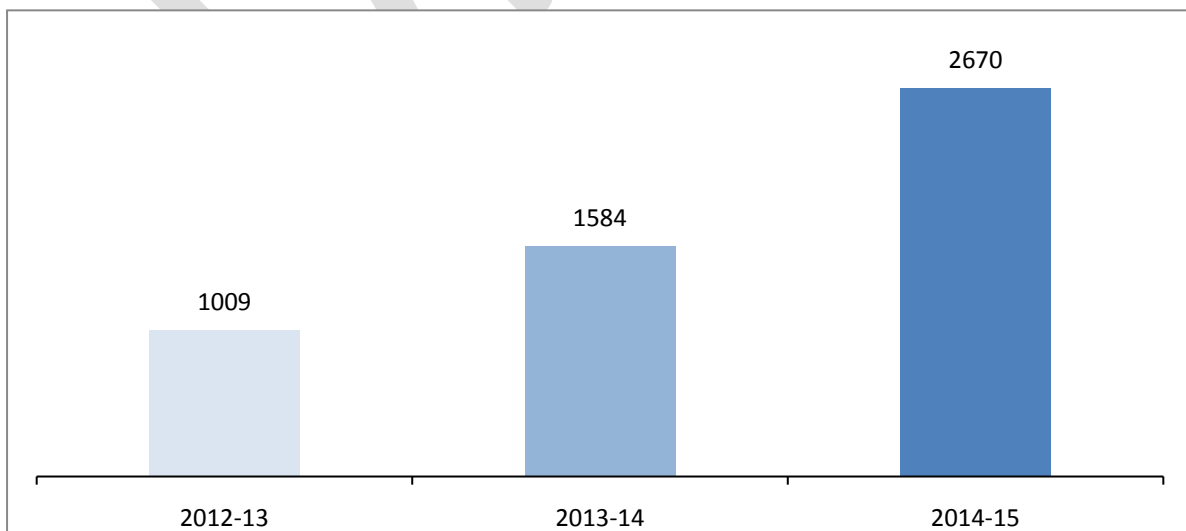
- The number of people approaching has increased by more than 260% in the past 3 years – see G1
- The ability to prevent homelessness has varied over the past 3 years but averages out at 38% of cases – see G2
- The number of homeless decisions made has also varied over the past 3 years but averages out at 254 decisions per year – see G3
- Of decisions made, just over half result in the full rehousing duty being accepted by Thurrock Council – see G5
- Reasons for homeless can be broken down into five main areas – see G6 and G7
 1. Exclusion (36%)
 2. Termination of an AST (27%)
 3. Violence (17%)
 4. Arrears (8%)
- Lone female parent households with dependent children have consistently been the largest household type – see G8
- Younger households (16 to 44) have also been more predominantly represented - see G9
- The largest reason for priority need has consistently been dependent children and/or pregnancy - see G12
- The 2nd largest reason for priority need is mental illness – see G12

- The ethnic makeup generally mirrors the population of Thurrock and does not identify any specific ethnic group as being over represented - see G10 and G11
- The number of 16 & 17 year olds for whom a rehousing duty was accepted has decreased dramatically since 2010-11. See G13. This follows the implementation of a Thurrock Council Housing and Children’s services protocol
- Council evictions were higher in 2014-15 than at any time in the past 7 years – see G14. The Council implemented a policy of Introductory tenancies for all new non sheltered tenancies from March 2014 in line with its Tenancy Policy. This allows a “trial” tenancy period during which tenants receive greater monitoring (quarterly visits) and more support if required to enable them to manage their tenancies. However, it also allows a mandatory right to possession within the introductory period where tenancies fail. It is impossible to determine whether or not the new policy has impacted eviction figures yet but careful monitoring is required

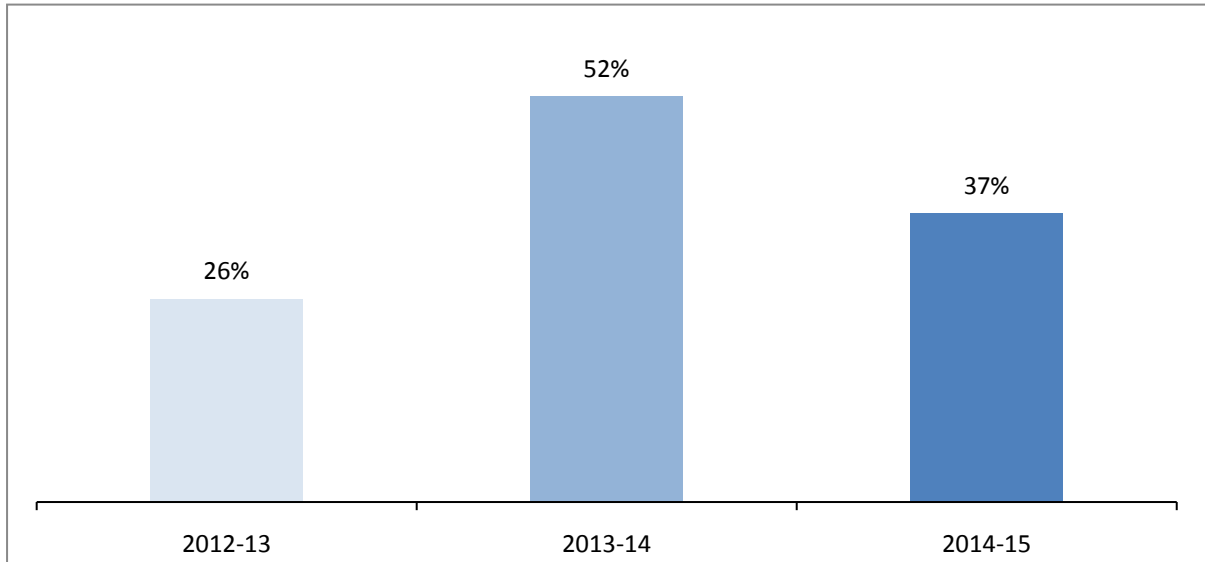
Actions:

- Develop action plans to specifically target the top 4 reasons for homelessness
- Continue to monitor ethnicity against local and national trends to ensure no specific ethnic groups is being adversely impacted
- Monitor Council evictions of Introductory tenancies to determine appropriate levels of support and monitoring
- Consider options for pre-tenancy training for potential tenants

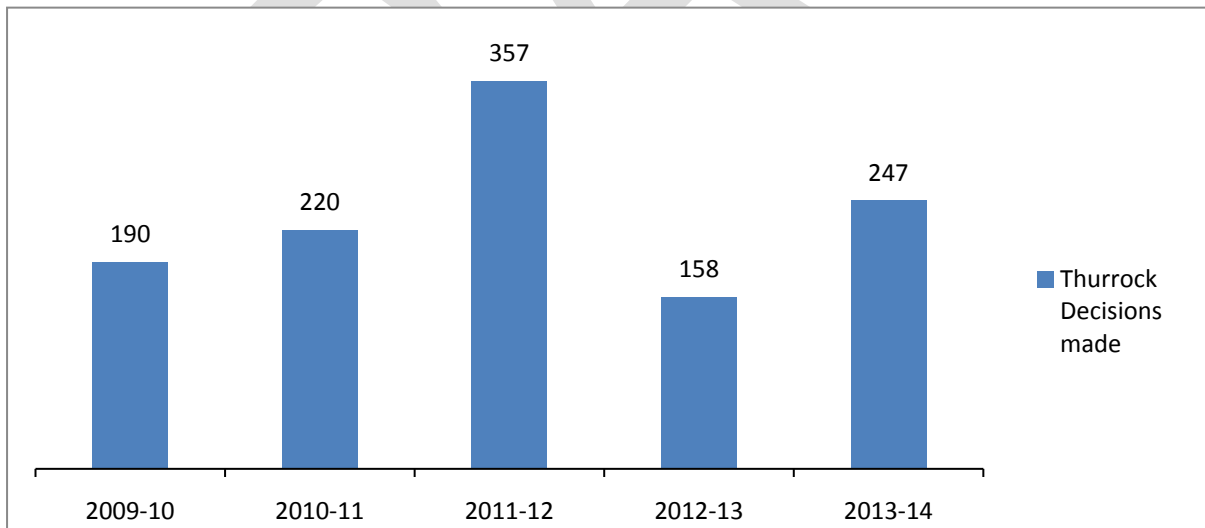
G1 – Number of households approaching for advice & assistance in Thurrock over past 3 years



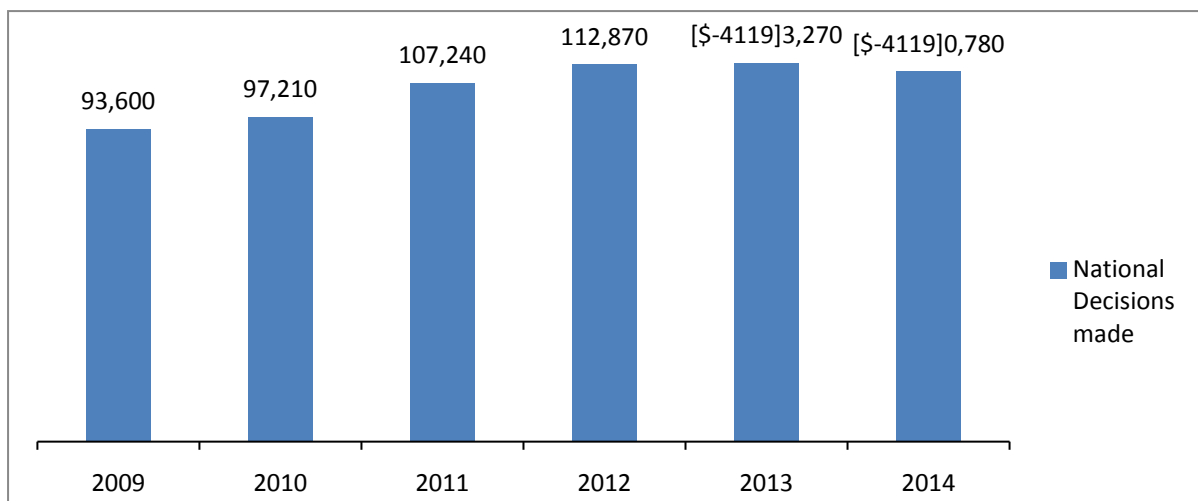
G2 Of these approaches –percentage where homelessness was prevented or relieved



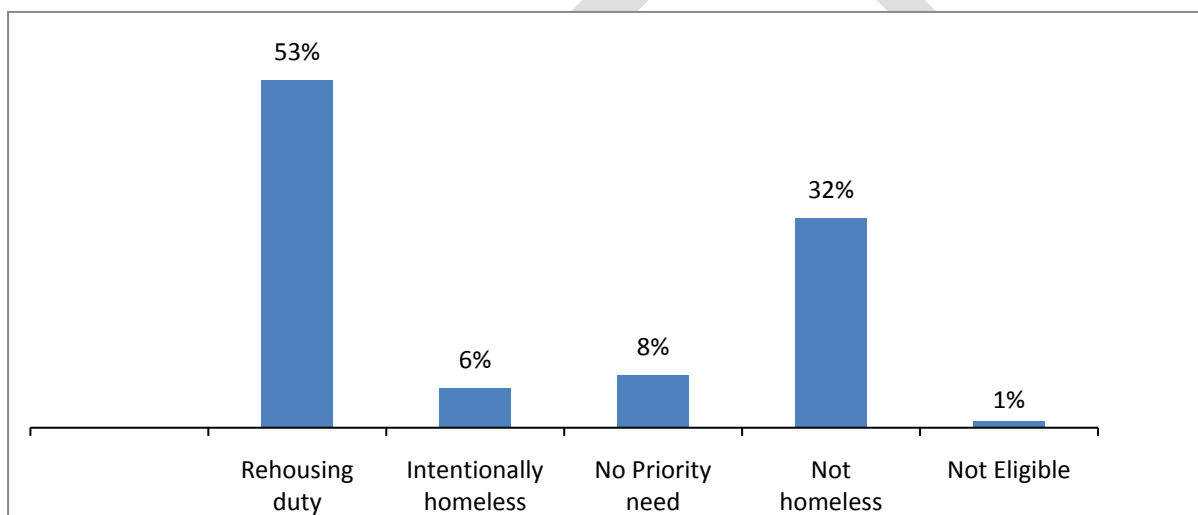
G3 – Number of homeless applications taken & decisions made in Thurrock



G4 – Number of homeless applications taken & decisions made nationally



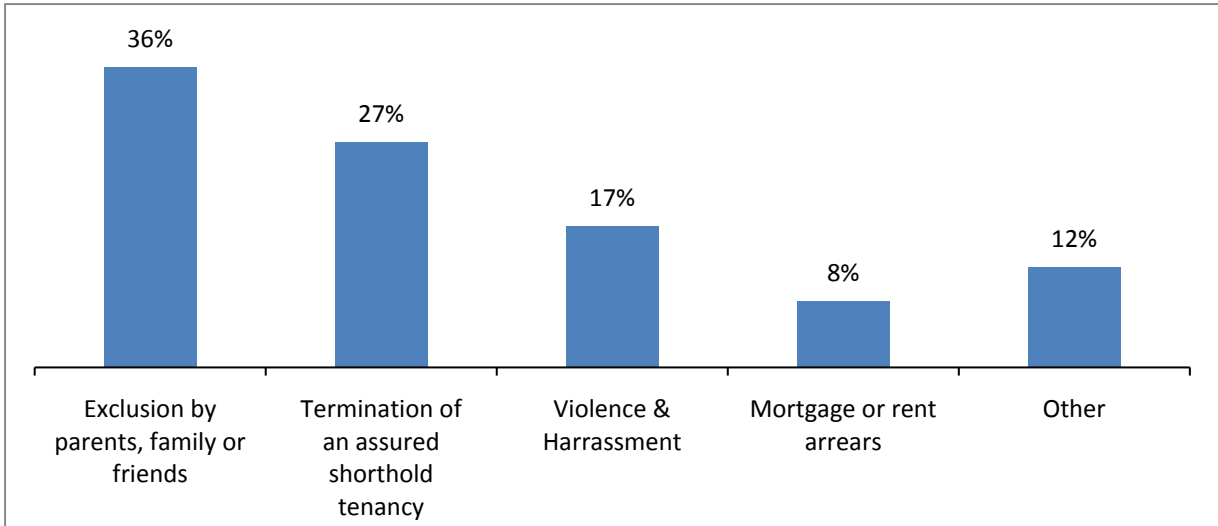
G5 Decisions made in Thurrock as a percentage over past 5 years



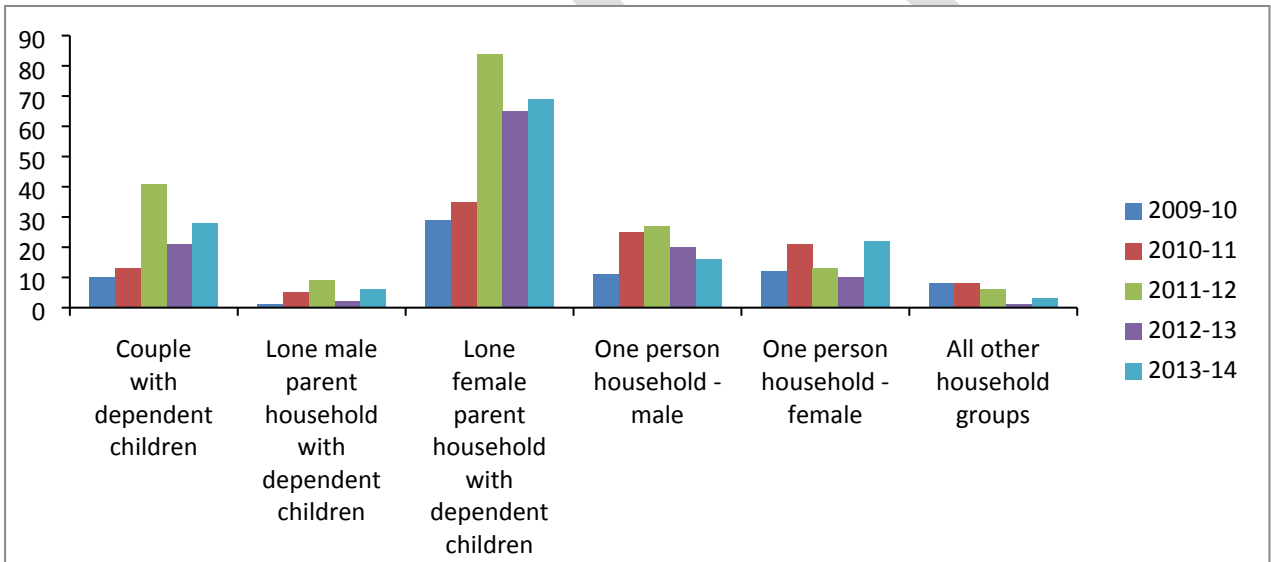
G6 – Top 10 reasons for homelessness in Thurrock for past 5 years (where rehousing duty accepted)

Causes of homelessness (2009 -14)	
Parental exclusion	25.44%
Termination of Assured short hold tenancy	23.67%
Other family or friends exclusion	10.95%
Violent relationship breakdown - partner	9.98%
Non-violent relationship breakdown	6.60%
Other reasons for ending AST	4.03%
Mortgage arrears	3.54%
Other forms of violence	2.74%
Violent relationship breakdown - associated person	2.42%
Rent arrears - Local Authority	2.25%

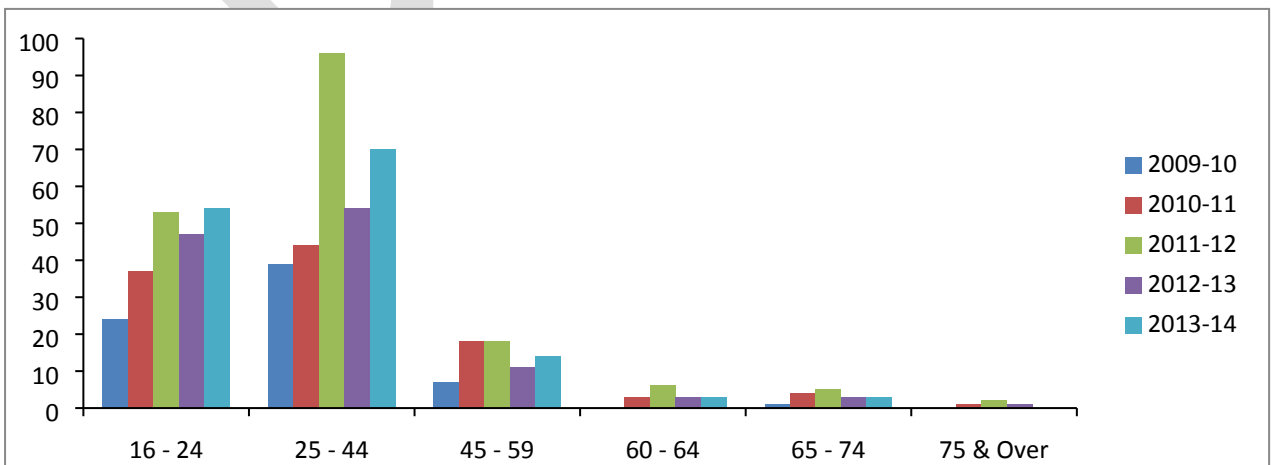
G7 – Homeless reasons by broad areas (where rehousing duty accepted)



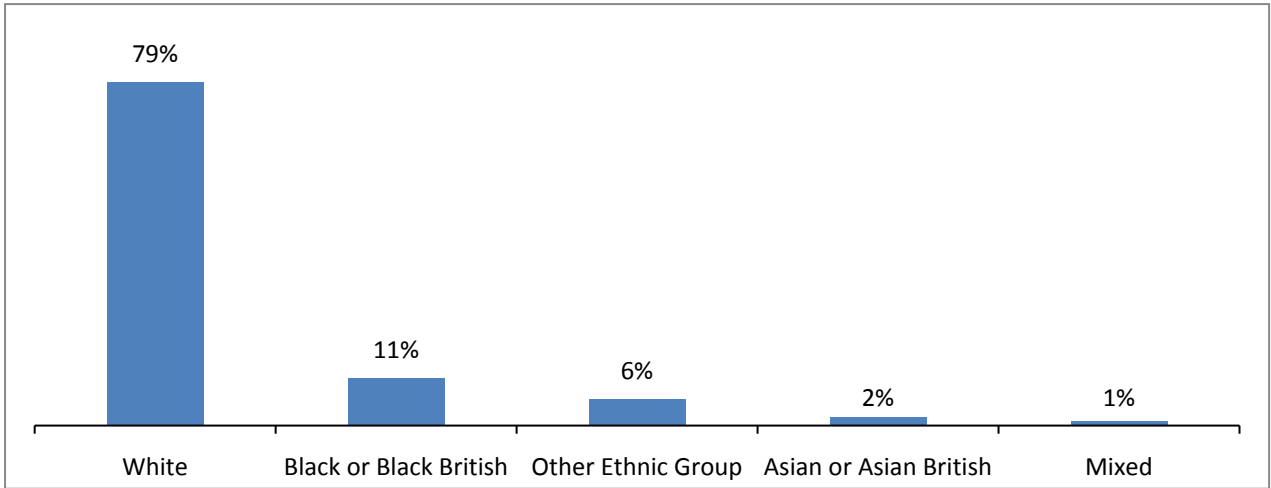
G8 -Household makeup (where rehousing duty accepted)



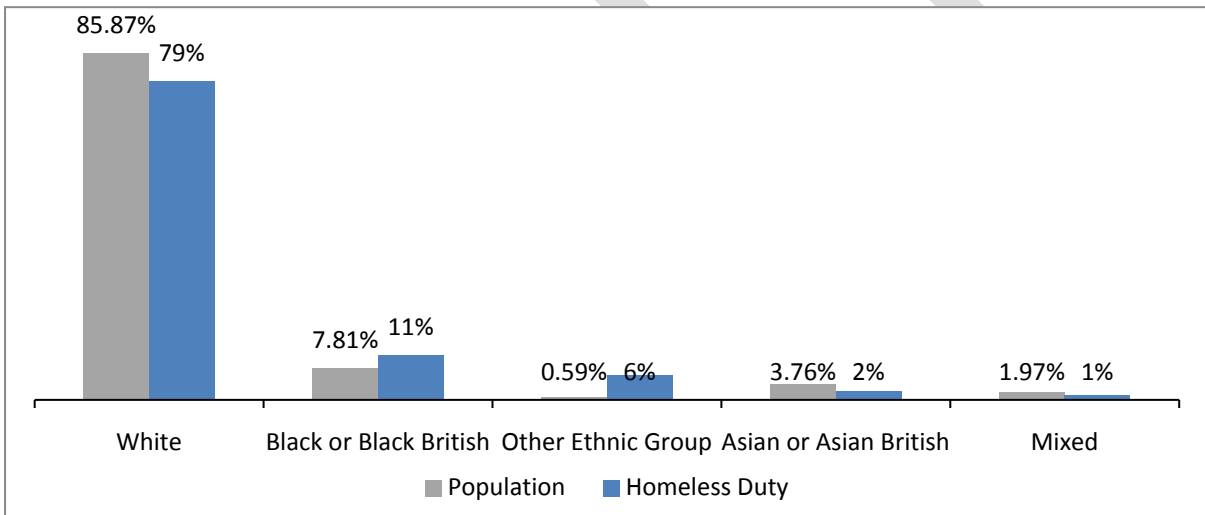
G9 - Household make up by age (where rehousing duty accepted)



G10 – Household make up by Ethnicity for past 5 years (where rehousing duty accepted)

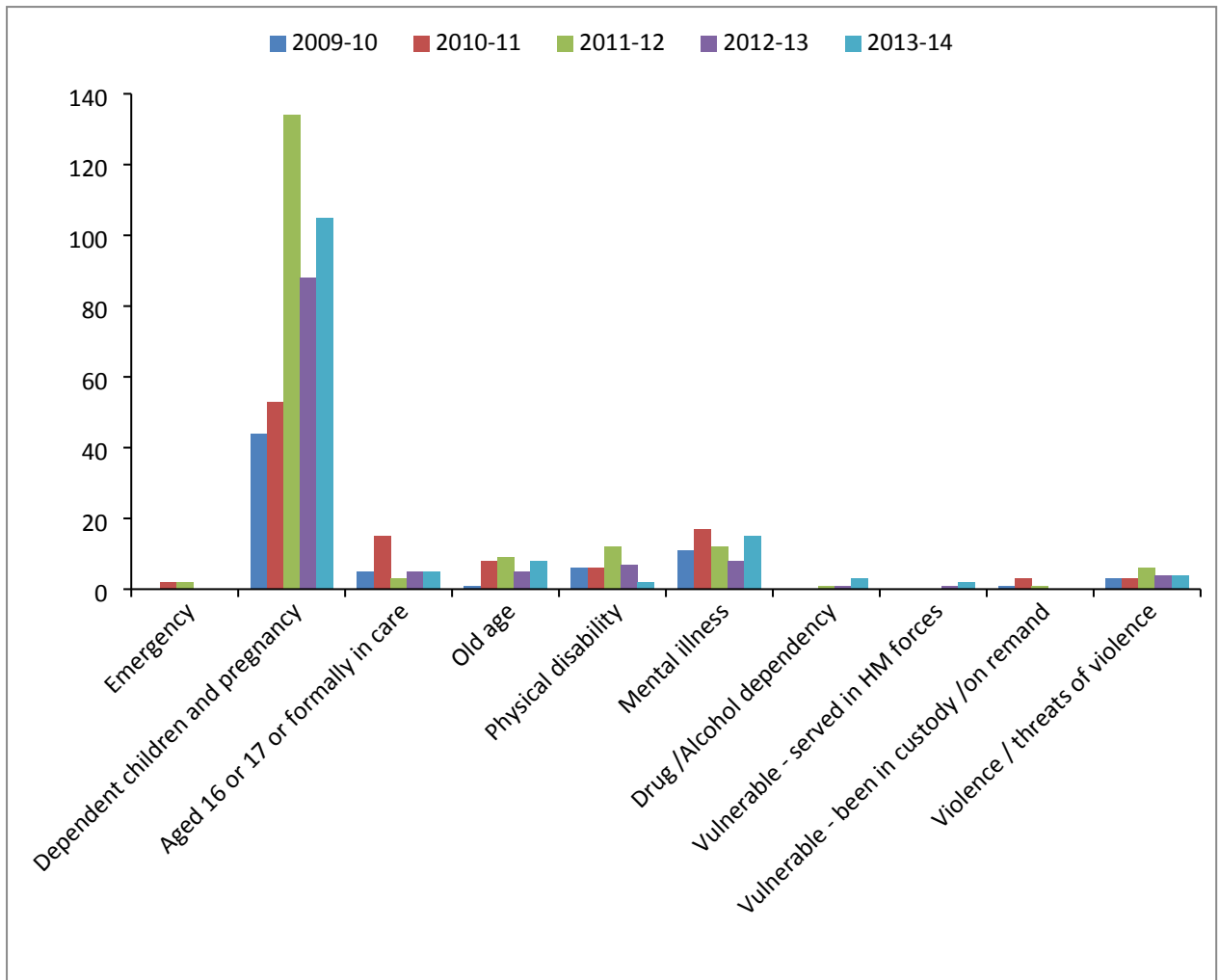


G11 – Comparison of Household ethnicity for homeless cases with the population of Thurrock

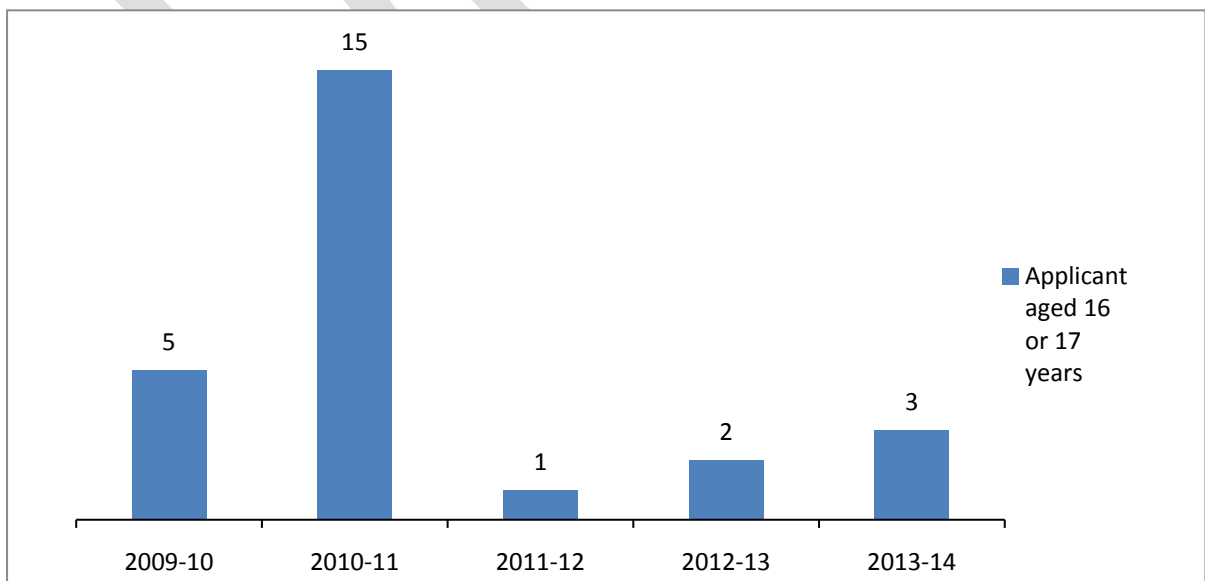


Source: ONS Census data 2011 & Thurrock Council data

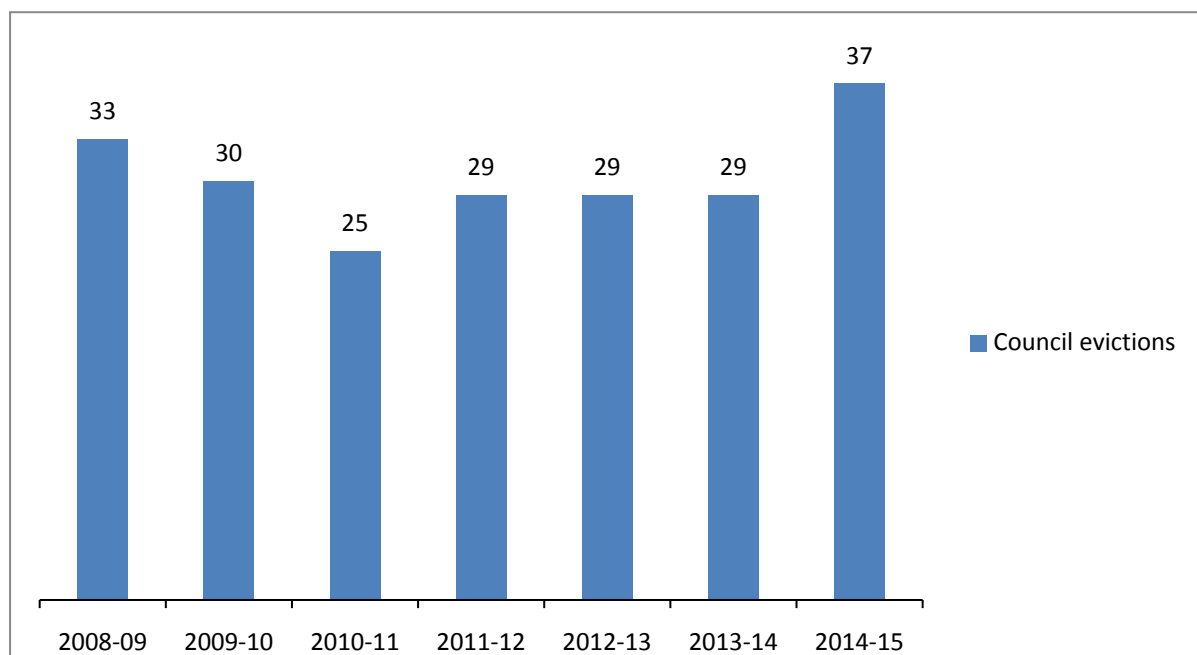
G12 - Household make up by Priority Need (where rehousing duty accepted)



G13 – Number of 16 & 17 year olds for whom a rehousing duty was accepted



G14 – Number of Council evictions



H) Homelessness Prevention & Relief

Where a person approaches the Council as homeless or potentially homeless but actions taken by the local authority mean that the homelessness does not materialise, then prevention is counted.

A prevention is the result of either

- i) An actual prevention where an action taken prevents the homelessness from happening – e.g. mediation with the excluder
- ii) A relief – where an action to find alternative accommodation for the household prevents the homelessness from happening - e.g. where alternative private rented accommodation is found

Prevention numbers were fairly consistent until 2012-13 but have decreased after that – see H1. Unfortunately, the statistics collected have not been consistently detailed – for example in quarter 4 of 2013-14, of the 120 cases where homelessness was prevented, 100 are described as “other” for the reason prevention was achieved.

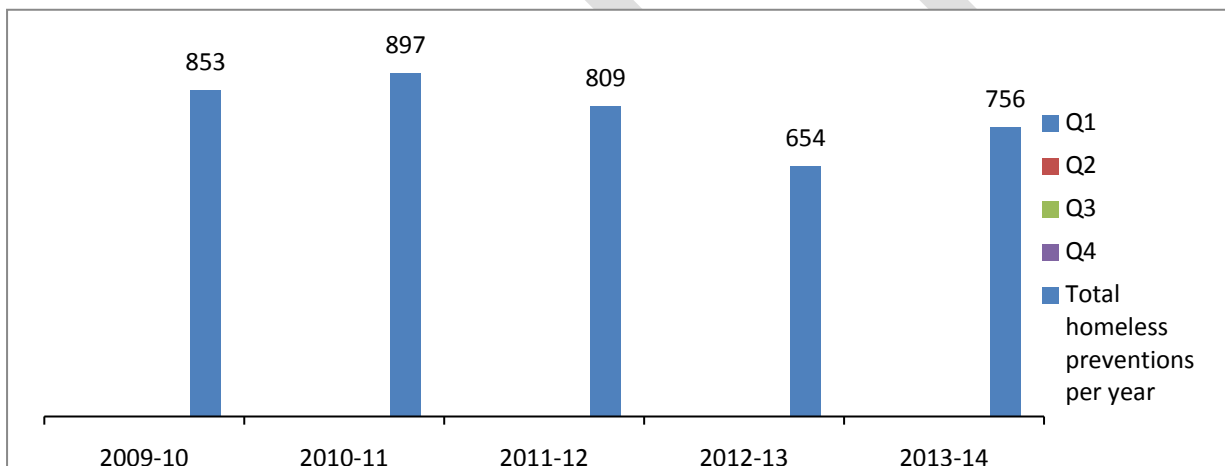
Homeless prevention is a primary aim and therefore it is essential to monitor the actions which are successful and those which are not in order to direct future limited resources

To do this a more detailed picture is required. Data is obtained through an integrated Housing IT system. The Council will be updating its IT system in 2014-15 so it is essential that the new system is configured to capture appropriate data.

Action:

- Ensure statistics collected are more detailed and consistent to enable a better understanding and assist with forward planning
- Ensure staff are trained in how to capture data accurately and that consistent definitions are used
- The new Housing IT system must capture appropriate and accurate data - ensure the correct parameters are set during the implementation programme
- Ensure sufficient expertise within the Housing department to update data requirements if necessary

H1 – total homeless preventions per year



I) Rough Sleepers

Rough sleeper count

Each year (October/November) local authorities report on the number of people sleeping rough in the borough on a specific night. This can be estimated through liaison with appropriate agencies such as the police, or an actual count can be organised.

Thurrock carried out an actual count in 2014 after 4 years of estimations. See I1

Of the ten people identified as meeting the criteria only one was actually sleeping rough on the street. The other nine were sleeping in 2 cars in a service station car park and were thought to be workers staying overnight in cars to prevent accommodation costs, however this could not be verified as the nine people were unwilling to engage.

Outreach & reconnection

In October 2014 Thurrock Council launched a new outreach and reconnection service through a sub-regional contract with St Mungos' Broadway. The key aims of the contract are

- (1) providing an outreach and intensive support service, to identify rough sleepers and enable them to access appropriate support such as health and substance misuse
- (2) providing assistance to reconnect where appropriate or to access new accommodation

A support worker is allocated to cover Thurrock, Basildon and Brentwood areas and he/she responds to reports of homeless individuals made via the national Street link website, which enables members of the public to report any person they believe is sleeping rough. Referrals are also made direct

The worker will attempt to locate the rough sleeper and support them as required. This involves joint working with the local authority and other partner agencies

Data provided by St Mungos Broadway show that 14 people were referred between the launch of the service and the end of year (Nov 14 to April 2015) - see I2 and I3

Of the 14 people identified 9 were rehoused from the streets – the other 5 refused to engage

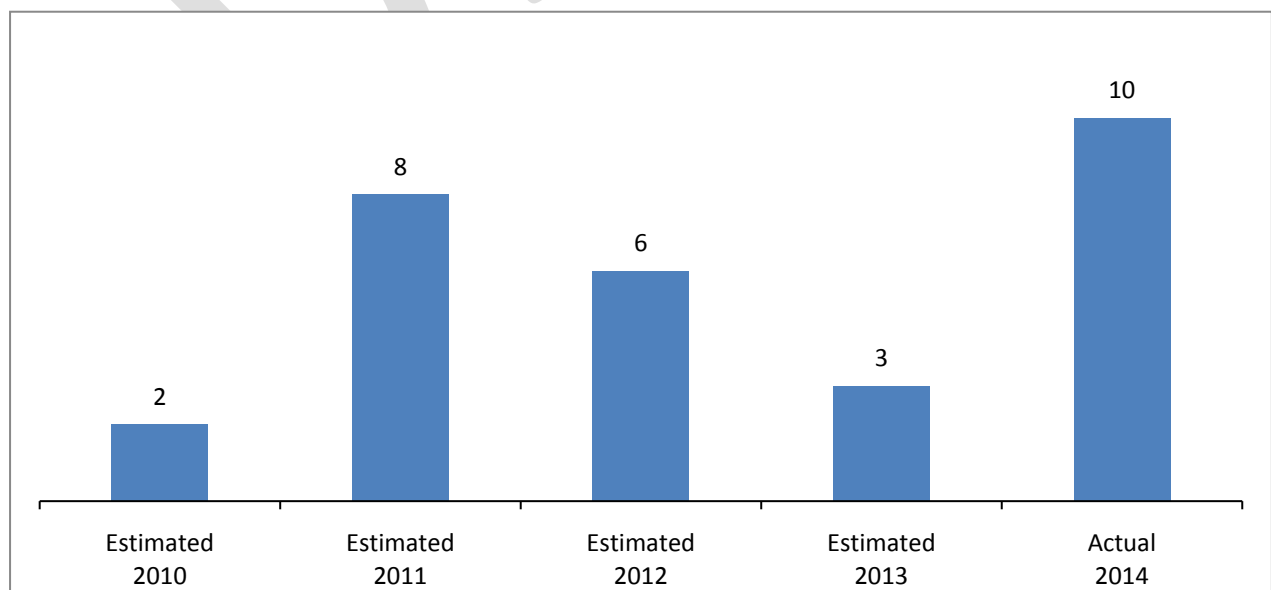
Whilst the data indicates that rough sleeping is not a large problem within the borough the Council is keen to promote the No second Night Out programme instigated by the DCLG – see section 5 below

Thurrock Council does not have a direct access hostel or night shelter and relies on space within other boroughs.

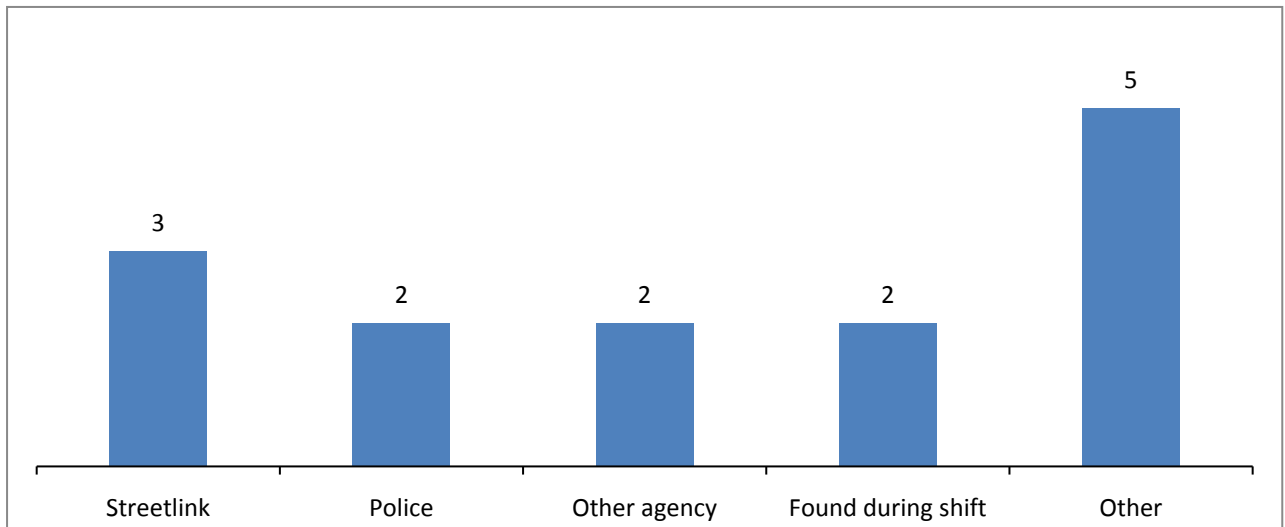
Action:

- Investigate options for non-priority need homeless applicants

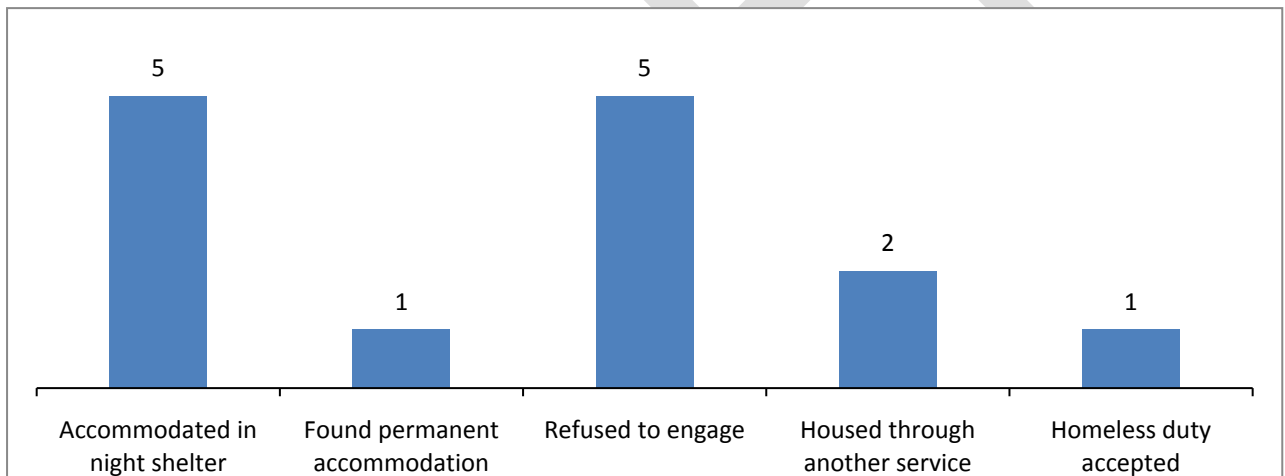
I1 – Rough Sleeper counts in Thurrock for past 5 years



I2 Referrals to St Mungos (Nov 2014 – April 2015)



I3 Outcomes of referrals received by St Mungos (Nov 2014 – April 2015)



J) Temporary Accommodation

Accommodation profile

There is a duty to provide temporary accommodation to applicants where there is reason to believe the applicant is homeless, eligible for assistance and in priority need. The duty continues whilst a homeless assessment is made and may continue until a rehousing duty is discharged

In order to meet this duty Thurrock Council uses the following types of temporary accommodation

- Bed & Breakfast (private establishments)
- Hostel (Charles Street hostel in Grays)
- Self-contained (Private accommodation rented on a nightly basis)
- Furnished lets (Furnished accommodation within the Council's own stock)

Thurrock Council recognises the unsuitability of bed & breakfast (B & B) accommodation for families and young people and is committed to using alternative suitable temporary accommodation

wherever possible

Charles Street hostel provides 29 units of supported accommodation for single people and families and includes 5 rooms for 16 & 17 year olds supported by Children's Services.

The Council acquired a new 18 bed hostel in Clarence Road, Grays which is due to open in May 2015. The accommodation consists of

- 16 single person rooms with en-suite shower rooms and shared kitchens.
- 2 self-contained family units

The accommodation will be managed by a 3rd party who will provide intensive housing management and support services. Four of the 16 single rooms will be provided to Children's Services as move on accommodation for care leavers and unaccompanied asylum seekers with a higher package of support

Brooke House in Grays accommodated 10 people, with referrals through a multi-disciplinary panel and was used to provide accommodation for single people who do not meet the priority need threshold. Due to funding cuts Brooke House closed on 31st March 2015 and there is subsequently no hostel or night shelter provision in the borough

During the recent Gold Standard peer review the standard of temporary accommodation was recognised as high with an overall score of 86%

Statistics

The number of households being provided with temporary accommodation has increased by 13.5% over the past 2 years –see J1

However the average time spent in the accommodation has decreased by more than 50% – see J2

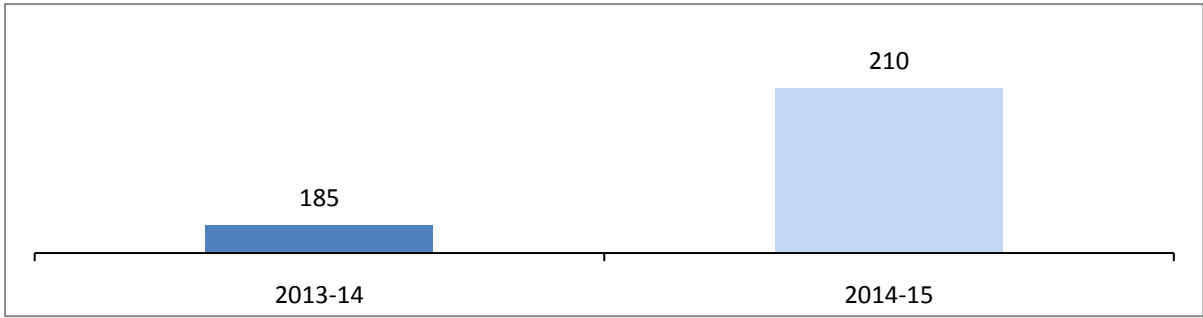
Four households with children have been accommodated in B & B for more than 6 weeks in the past 5 years (2009 – 2015)

No 16 & 17 year olds have been accommodated in B & B for more than 6 weeks in the past 5 years (2009 - 2015)

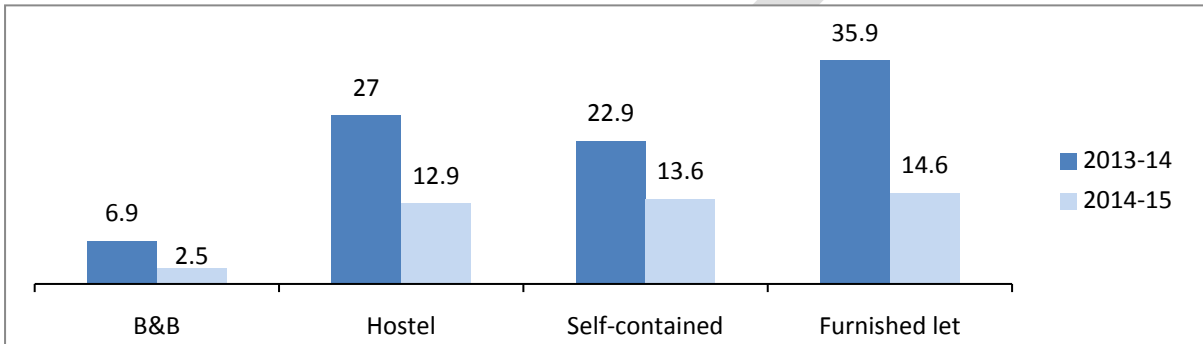
Actions:

- Ensure there is sufficient supported accommodation available so that no 16 & 17 years are placed in B & B accommodation
- Ensure no households with children are placed into B & B unless in an emergency
- Eliminate the use of B & B for all customers except in an emergency and then for a minimal period
- Work closely with children's services to provide suitable (supported) accommodation for homeless 16 & 17 year
- Ensure temporary accommodation meets high standards
- Consider options for accommodation for homeless non-priority need customers

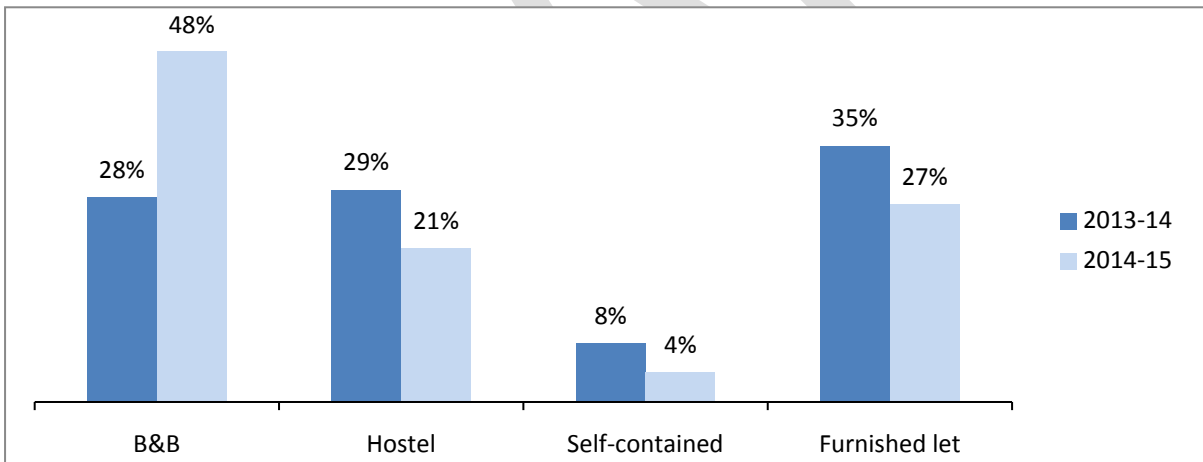
J1 – Households provided with temporary accommodation during the year



J2 – Average number of weeks spent in Temporary accommodation



J3 – Type of accommodation used as a percentage of total accommodation



4. Health & Wellbeing

Physical health & disability

Thurrock has a worse than average figure for overall premature deaths in England. It is particularly badly placed in the listings for lung cancer, heart disease and stroke

These statistics are supported by high overweight and obesity levels in the borough, both adults and children, which are linked to the prevalence of these diseases - see 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3

Obesity figures show that Thurrock is the worst local authority area in the east of England region with almost one third of adults categorised as obese and more than two thirds categorised as either

overweight or obese.

It is also the worst local authority area for smoking related deaths

Poor quality housing has long been established as a contributor to poor health:

- damp, mould and excess cold increases the risk of cardiovascular and respiratory disease
- psychological illness such as depression and anxiety are linked to poor housing and uncertainty around homelessness
- falls are more common when residents need adaptations or where there are structural faults
- high housing costs often lead to the purchase of cheaper unhealthy food

Thurrock Councils' Housing allocations scheme recognises the need to prioritise people with insanitary or hazardous housing conditions through its priority banding for reasonable preference groups. It also prioritises those with medical conditions which are worsened by their housing situation.

However, removing people from poor housing does not resolve the root of the problem and could result in those people simply being replaced with others. It is therefore important to tackle landlords of poor quality housing and provide alternative options for owner occupiers who are unable to meet the costs of repairing their own unsatisfactory housing.

People with disabilities who face homelessness will not only suffer the uncertainty of a homeless situation but may also be placed into temporary accommodation that is not adapted to meet their specific needs. Prevention of homelessness in such circumstances is of an even high priority.

Actions:

- Housing solutions team to work closely with environmental health and other enforcement agencies to ensure that landlords carry out their responsibilities to provide safe and sanitary conditions in order to prevent homelessness
- Consider options for offering alternative accommodation to owners who are frail or elderly and repairing their properties in return for long lease arrangements
- Ensure the Council makes good use of adapted properties via its Accessible Housing Register – for example by early maximisation of priority banding for potentially homeless applicants in need of adapted properties, even where they are not yet homeless within 28 days
- Ensure temporary accommodation meets disability criteria wherever possible

Mental health

Thurrock has a slightly lower percentage of people with long term mental health problems than the national picture but mental health is the 2nd highest reason for priority need in homeless people (after dependent children and/or pregnancy) - see 4.4

South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (SEPT) provide mental health services across Essex including the Assertive Outreach service from Grays Hall and the Community mental health team from Basildon hospital.

The Housing and Mental Health forum was established as a joint project between SEPT and Housing

in June 2011 and brings together housing, mental health and other professionals on a regular basis. Individual cases can be brought to the group for a multi-disciplinary approach to resolving housing issues and a number of successful homeless preventions have been achieved. However numbers attending can be low and when this is the case it is more difficult to resolve issues.

Thurrock has a supported housing scheme for adults with mental health problems – Balfour Court – which accommodates 8 people

Unfortunately a number of the tenancies at Balfour Court (historically) are assured tenancies which indicate a lifetime tenancy rather than a supported housing move on plan. This has meant that very few properties become available for new residents and subsequently people in need of supported accommodation may have to be housed in general needs without the support needed.

Thurrock has a number of agencies and charities that offer other support to people with mental health problems including Mind, POhWER and Family Mosaic. Support ranges from day to day budgeting skills & maintaining a tenancy through to advocacy and counselling

Often such support can prevent a homeless situation from occurring or escalating and therefore it is essential that all agencies are aware of service provision and how to access it

Thurrock Councils' housing strategy recognises the need to provide more specialist housing for those with mental health problems and one of its action points is to "support those with mental health needs, autism and learning disabilities through working with Adult Social care and identify suitable accommodation and support services meeting REACH standards"

Actions:

- Research the need for more supported housing accommodation for people with mental health problems and feed into development programmes
- Work with ASC to identify suitable accommodation and support services which meet REACH standards
- Improve knowledge of partnership support provisions and how to access them
- Improve commitment to, and attendance at, the mental health forum by all partners
- Encourage a programme of move on from Balfour Court to free up valuable supported accommodation

Learning Disabilities

Thurrock has a slightly lower percentage of adults with learning disabilities compared to Southend and Essex at 3.6% of the population - see 4.9. This equates to around 5700 people

Just over a quarter of these adults are living in unsettled accommodation – see 4.10

There are two supported housing accommodation schemes in Thurrock for adults with learning disabilities –

- Lloyd House – accommodates 8 people
- Devon House – accommodates 10 people

It is envisaged that many people with learning disabilities will be able to live independently but may

require a period of time in supported accommodation in order to build their independent living skills. The two schemes offer supported accommodation for up to two years

It is essential that spaces become available within supported housing schemes and that a robust move on programme is maintained

Thurrock council does not have statistics which quantify the number of adults who come through the housing solutions service and who need supported housing

Thurrock Councils' housing strategy recognises the need to provide more specialist housing for those with a learning disability and one of its action points is to "support those with mental health needs, autism and learning disabilities through working with Adult Social care and identify suitable accommodation and support services meeting REACH standards"

Actions:

- Promote and encourage move-on from the supported housing schemes
- Feed into the Councils housing development programme
- Work with ASC to identify suitable accommodation and support services which meet REACH standards
- Maintain statistics on people with learning disabilities approaching the Council for assistance

Young parents

Thurrock has a much higher level of teenage conceptions than neighbouring boroughs - see 4.5. However for live births the figure is similar to neighbouring areas. Subsequently there is a large gap between the two in comparison, suggesting higher levels of aborted pregnancies

The highest priority need group amongst homeless acceptances is single females with children or pregnancy

Thurrock has young parent accommodation at Ruth House which provides supported accommodation services for 9 people. There are also two move-on flats and a floating support service. The client group is primarily aged 16 to 25

Between January and December 2014

- 35 referrals were made to the scheme
- Referrals came from the Housing solutions team, Social care and self-referrals
- Of the 35 referrals made, 30 were added to the waiting list and of these 21 were accommodated during the year (60% of referrals)
- 10 of the 35 referrals were aged 16-17 years and 25 were 18 to 25 years

The Council offers a move on priority banding through its allocations scheme where residents of Ruth House have completed the required support programme and are ready to live independently – usually this lasts up to 2 years and allows a flow through of supported accommodation

Actions:

- Ensure all partners are aware of the young parent scheme and services for young people and

- make referrals to prevent homelessness
- Make use of the floating support service as a means of helping young women to remain at home where they are threatened with exclusion

Drug and Alcohol abuse

The percentage of people in drug treatment in Thurrock is lower than Southend but higher than the rest of Essex.

For alcohol treatment the figures are fairly consistent across Essex - see 4.6

20% of those in drug treatment and 15% in alcohol treatment have a housing problem – see 4.7 and 4.8

KCA have been commissioned by the Council to provide drug and alcohol services. Their aim is to provide a simplified whole treatment system to make it easier and more accessible for adults with drug and alcohol issues to get the support, guidance and treatment they need to achieve their recovery goals

Often people have both alcohol and drug abuse, and accompanied with mental health problems prove to have complex needs which often result in homelessness and abuse

There is no specific supported accommodation for people with complex needs. Where the person faces homelessness and has to be placed in temporary accommodation this often fails due to a chaotic lifestyle and/or behavioural issues. Subsequently the person loses their accommodation which exacerbates the problems. Often housing is an essential first requirement before any support can be implemented

Actions:

- Ensure all partners are aware of the young parent scheme and services for young people and make referrals to prevent homelessness
- Make use of the floating support service as a means of helping young women to remain at home where they are threatened with exclusion
- Explore options for a “Housing First” approach

Domestic Abuse and Sexual violence

Violent relationship breakdown with a partner represents almost 10% of reasons for homelessness where a rehousing duty has been accepted over the past 5 years – this equates to around 62 cases over 5 years but does not account for cases where Thurrock tenants apply to other local authorities for rehousing

Violent relation breakdown with an associated person represents a further 2.4%

The Council’s housing allocations policy provides for the highest banding (Band 1 priority) for applicants who need urgent rehousing due to violence or threats of violence and a housing management panel regularly reviews applications.

Band 2 priority can be awarded where the urgency to move is less

Thurrock Council has recently adopted a Community Safety Strategy which states the following:

- *We will not tolerate domestic abuse perpetrated by our tenants against their partners, family members or others who live with them*
- *We will work with other agencies to empower survivors and reduce immediate harm and use existing legal remedies against any tenant causing domestic abuse*
- *We will seek to reduce harm to both adults and children who are at risk as a result of domestic violence*
- *We will support survivors who report of domestic violence*
- *We will facilitate effective action against offenders so that they can be held accountable*
- *We will adopt a proactive multi-agency approach in preventing and reducing domestic abuse and violence*
- *We will work with Essex Police to allow victims to remain safe in their home with professionally installed security measures through the Sanctuary Project*
- *Our Domestic Abuse Officers are trained to carry out risk assessments and appropriate referrals; give practical information and advice on housing options and referrals to secondary support agencies for residents suffering domestic abuse*

The council uses management moves for Council tenants fleeing domestic abuse and provision of Sanctuary schemes where appropriate – both are effective homeless prevention measures

Thurrock has refuge provision which accommodates 15 women (plus children) and offers a floating support service

South Essex rape and incest crisis centre (SERICC) is based in Thurrock and offers information, support, advocacy and counselling

The housing directorate has dedicated domestic abuse officers who assess all homeless applicants and tenants who are victims of Domestic Abuse

Recent cases with very complex needs have highlighted requirements for safe houses/refuge with high levels of support especially around drug & alcohol abuse and mental health problems which are often associated with domestic abuse and sexual violence

Closer working with support agencies and defined housing pathways have been identified as necessary and a dedicated protocol is required

Actions

- Increase access to specialised refuge spaces
- Improve working relationships between housing solutions team and partners
- Promote the domestic abuse service within housing as the single point of entry for all homeless domestic abuse cases
- Increase training and awareness for housing staff
- Research options for safe houses within Council stock
- Promote the sanctuary scheme as an alternative to moving home – across all tenures
- Agree a working protocol with support agencies

Autism

Thurrock Council has a specialist school for children and young people (aged 3 to 19 years) on the autistic spectrum. A recent OFSTED report (November 2014) found the school to be Outstanding and subsequently it is a popular choice for parents around the country. This in turn has led to more people moving into the borough to attend the school and subsequently a higher chance of homelessness amongst households with a member who is on the autistic spectrum

Thurrock Council developed an autism strategy in 2014 which states:

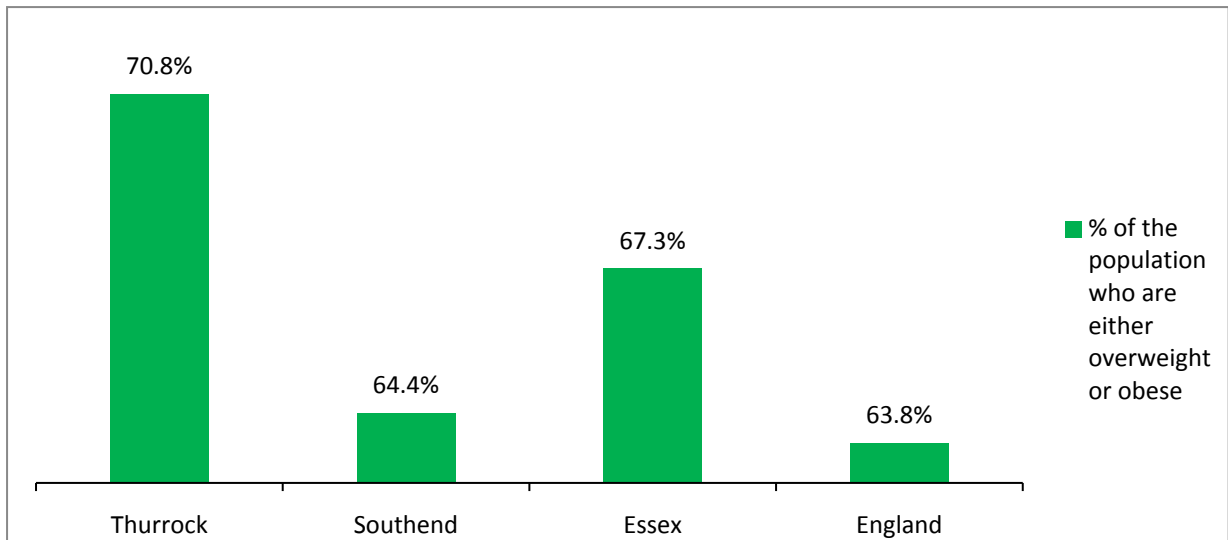
“People with autism have varying levels of support and housing needs with some being able to live completely independently whilst others need full residential care

Currently there is no specific provision within Thurrock and therefore no options for a household with a member on the autistic spectrum. Should the local authority have a homeless rehousing duty it would be very difficult to discharge that duty into a suitable accommodation locally”

Thurrock Councils’ housing strategy recognises the need to provide more specialist housing for those with autism and one of its action points is to *“support those with mental health needs, autism and learning disabilities through working with Adult Social care and identify suitable accommodation and support services meeting REACH standards”*

Action

- Work with the housing development team to ensure adequate numbers of supported accommodation are included in work programmes
- Work with ASC to identify suitable accommodation and support services which meet REACH standards for those in temporary accommodation or facing homelessness
- Improve the collection of data around homeless applicants with supported housing needs and autism in order to inform further development



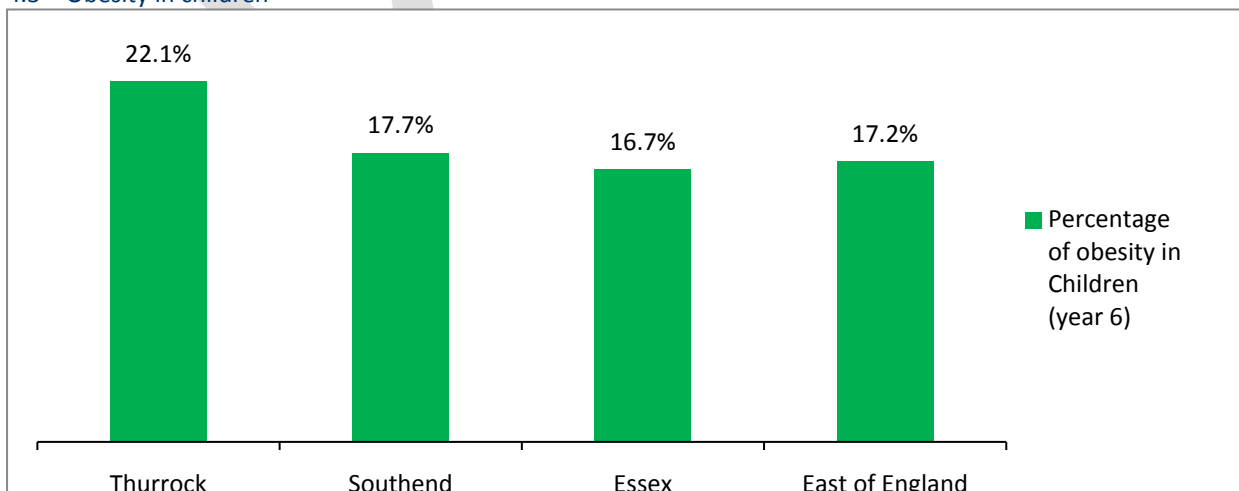
Source: Public Health England

4.2 – Obesity in Adults



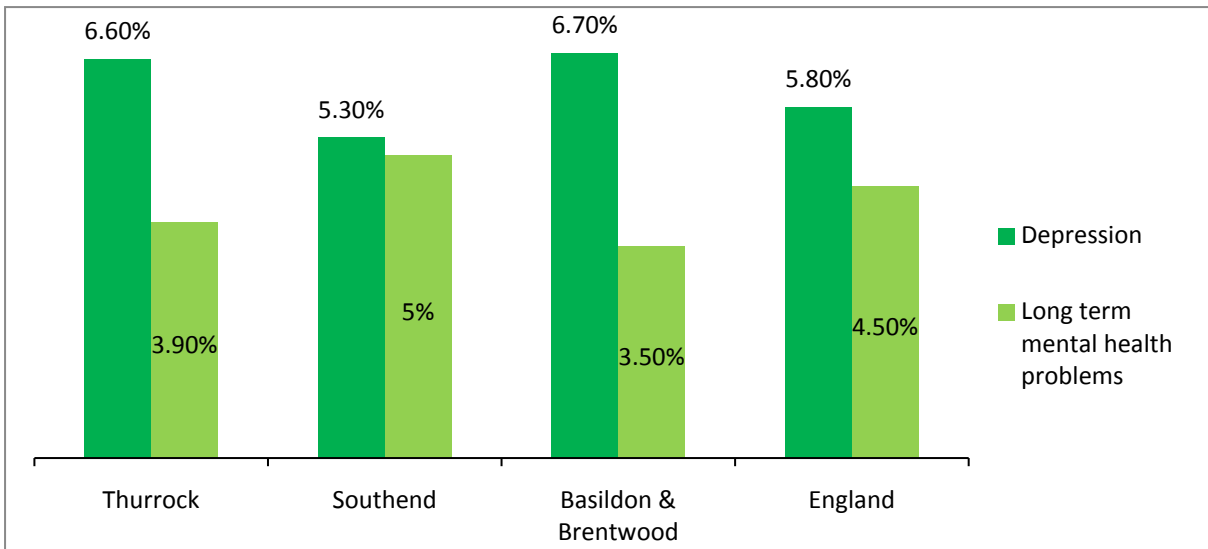
Source: Public Health England

4.3 – Obesity in children



Source: Public Health England

4.4 Prevalence of mental health problems



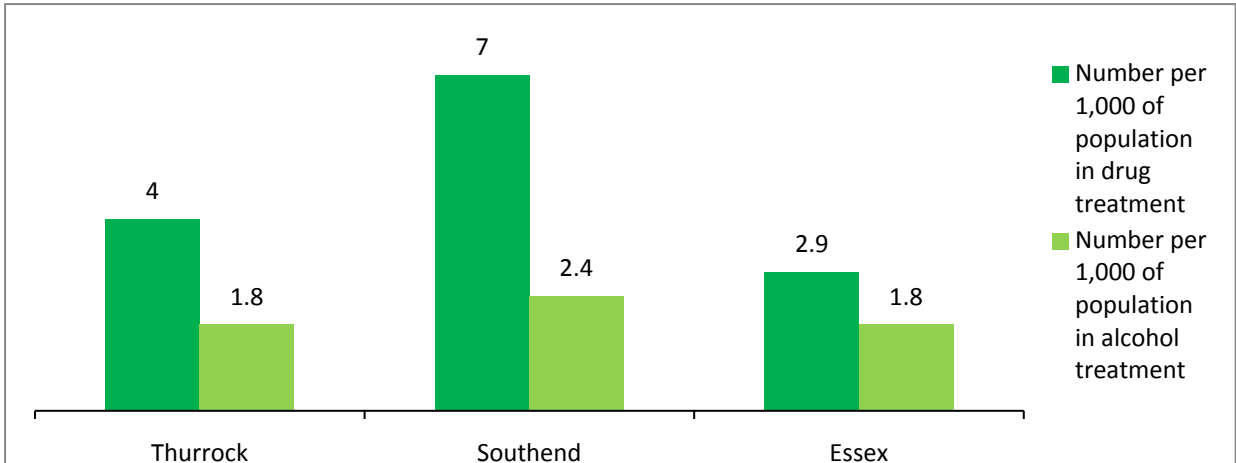
Source: Public Health England

4.5 Teenage pregnancies – rates per 1,000 of the population



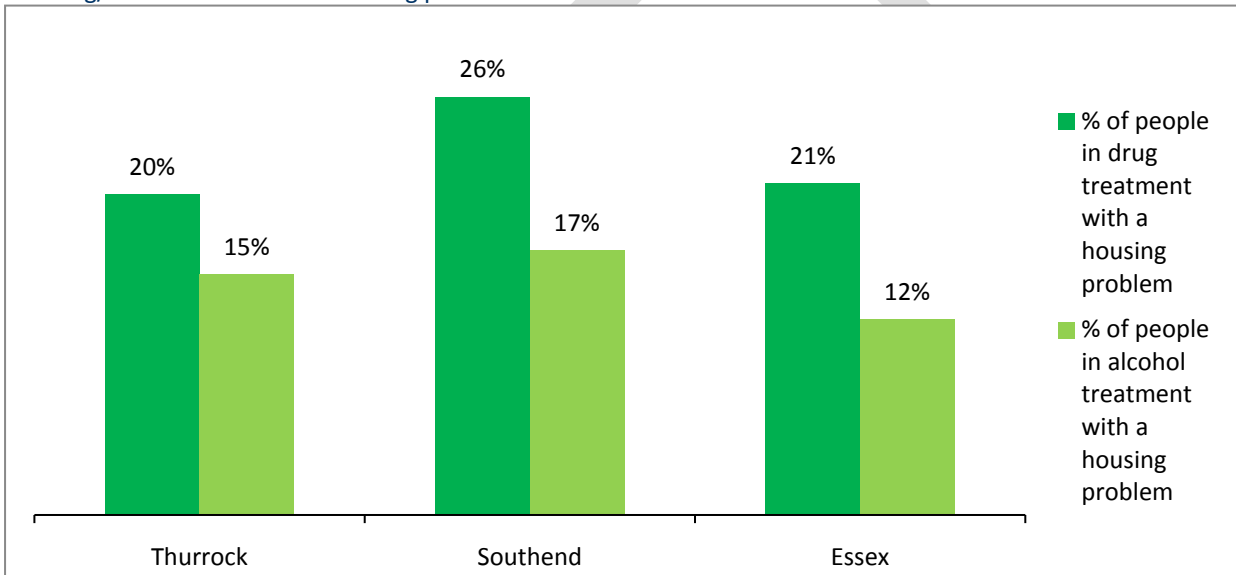
Source: Public Health England

4.6 Drug & alcohol treatment



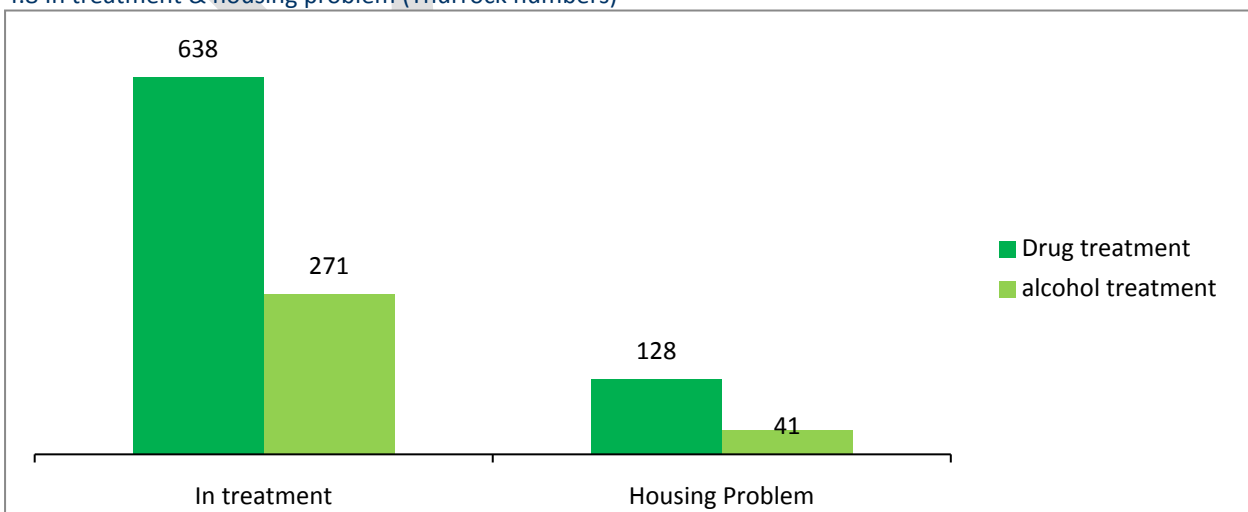
Source: Public Health England

4.7 Drug/alcohol treatment & housing problem



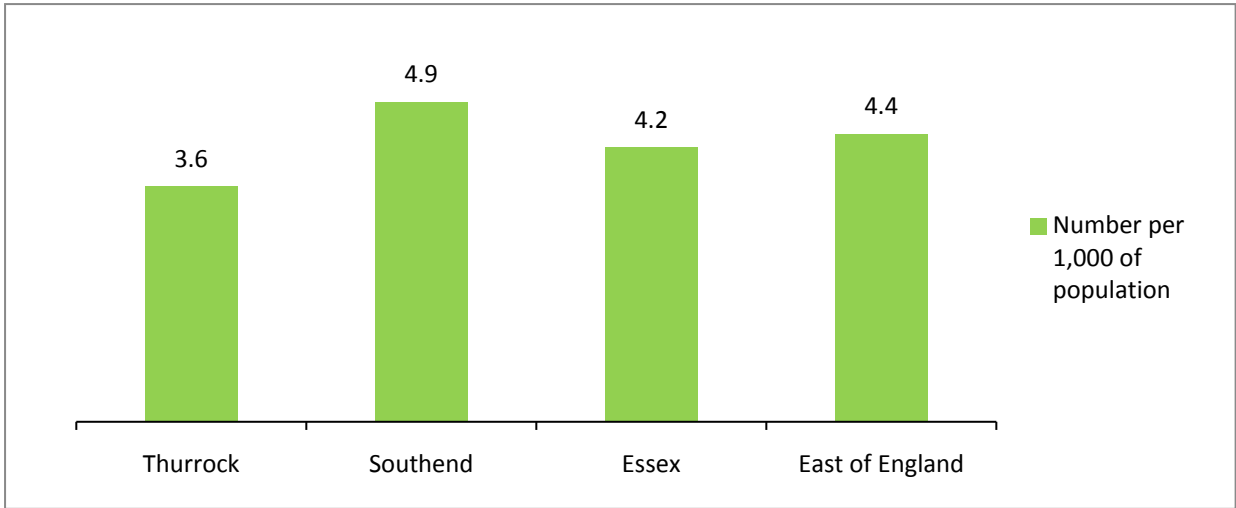
Source: Public Health England

4.8 In treatment & housing problem (Thurrock numbers)

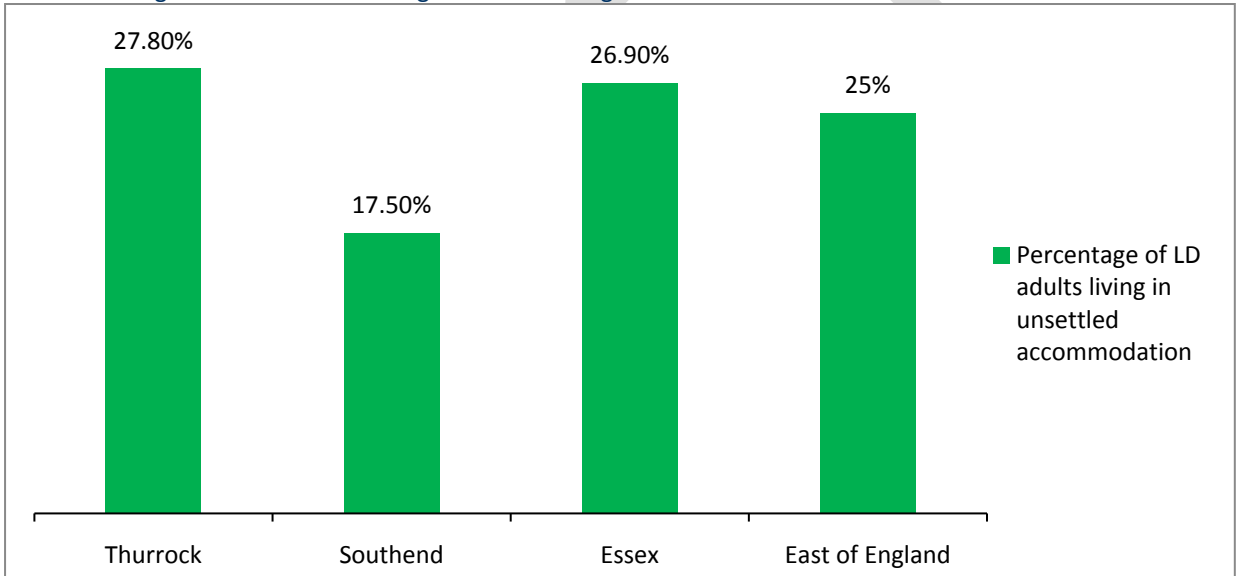


Source: Public Health England

4.9 Percentage of adults with learning difficulties who are known to the local authority



4.10 Percentage of adults with learning disabilities living in unsettled accommodation



5. Policy, legislative and the socio economic context

5.1 The recession, austerity measures and economic downturn

Due to the world economic situation and the need for financial austerity, the government has prioritised reducing the national deficit and both local authorities and voluntary sector organisations have seen a significant reduction in budgets over the last 5 years.

The impact of the reductions in public expenditure locally is:

- An end to ring fencing of LA grants – including supporting people and homelessness grant
- Reduction in homeless prevention budget
- Reduction in government subsidy for Council tax and localised schemes from 2013 – Thurrock council residents will have to make a contribution of at least 25% of their Council tax bill
- Localised welfare system has replaced community care grants and crisis loans for general living expenses (including rent in advance)
- Changes to the Legal Aid system resulting in decreased funding

5.2 Localism and social housing reform

The Localism Act 2011 gave new flexibilities and powers to local housing authorities and providers of social housing to meet local needs more effectively. The key measures of the Localism Act with regards to homelessness and housing include:

Flexible tenancies

From April 2012 all registered providers were able to introduce fixed term tenancies or continue with lifetime tenancies. These tenancies could be as short as two years although this would be viewed as exceptional.

Some Registered Providers in the borough have subsequently introduced flexible tenancies.

Thurrock Council Members chose not to introduce fixed term tenancies and the Council's Tenancy Strategy lays out its intention to continue with secure tenancies but to introduce an Introductory Tenancy period of one year with the option to extend if required.

Discharge homelessness duty into the private rented sector

Provisions allow Councils to end the main homelessness duty with the offer of a private rented property and unlike the preceding provision of a "Qualifying Offer" the duty may be ended without the applicants consent. The tenancy needs to be for a minimum period of 12 months and suitable in terms of affordability, property condition and household circumstances. Guidance on what constitutes suitability is provided.

Thurrock Council has chosen to use the new provisions as a means of discharging its main rehousing duty and has produced a policy document outlining how and when the provisions will be used.

Guidance on suitability with regards to location given in the recent case of *Nzolameso v City of Westminster* [2015] UKSC22 will also be taken into account.

Housing allocations

Provisions allow Local authorities to restrict who can access their Housing Waiting list by means of Qualification criteria. Thurrock Council reviewed its Allocations Scheme and in May 2013 implemented 5 year local connection, financial threshold and behaviour requirements.

However, applicants meeting the reasonable preference criteria within Part 6 of the Housing act 1996 cannot be disqualified.

Neighbouring boroughs have also implemented qualifying criteria including Basildon Council with a 7 year local connection qualification rule.

The new housing allocations scheme awards a priority banding (Band 3) to applicants who meet any of the Reasonable Preference criteria including the main rehousing duty under Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act.

A higher (Band 2) priority can be awarded where there is cumulative priority.

5.3 Welfare benefit reform

The government's welfare reforms have set out to cut the increasing expenditure on benefits, reduce benefit dependency, reduce the budget deficit, provide incentives for people to work and reduce under occupation of rented accommodation.

Reforms have included the following:

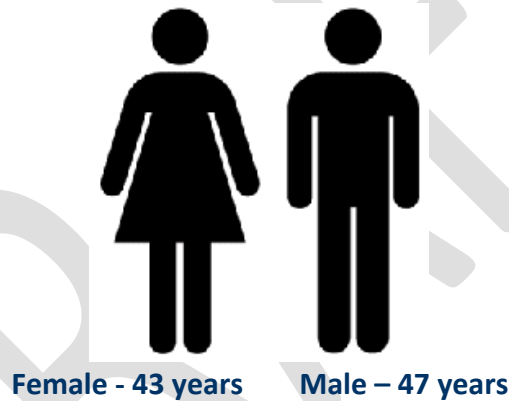
- Local Housing allowance – now fixed at the 30th percentile rather than the previous 50th – this means the LHA covers only one third of private rents rather than a half;
- An increase in non-dependent deductions for Housing benefit – this means council tenants with non-dependents will have to find more of their rent;
- Increasing the age threshold for the shared room rate in housing benefit from 25 to 35 years old – this means single people under the age of 35 will receive the lower level and may only be able to access shared accommodation; there are exemptions for certain categories;
- LHA rates set annually and indexed to CPI;
- The spare room subsidy – widely referred to as the “Bedroom Tax”. This affects social housing tenants of working age who are under-occupying their property. Tenants have had their housing benefit cut by 14% for one bedroom under-occupied and by 25% for two or more bedrooms under-occupied. Thurrock Council has offered incentives to council tenants wishing to downsize including a priority banding to transfer and financial payments. Where tenants have indicated a wish to down size and are actively bidding for properties Discretionary Housing Benefit has generally been awarded to meet any shortfall;
- Household benefit cap – this provides a cap (limit) to the total benefits a household can receive – currently capped at £500 a week for couples (with or without children living with them) and for single parents whose children live with them and £350 a week for single adults who don't have children, or whose children don't live with them

- Universal Credit replaces six benefits, including Housing Benefit and aims to give individuals responsibility to manage their own benefits; It is paid directly to the individual who is responsible for making payments for rent, Council tax etc. direct to their landlord. Payments are made monthly rather than weekly and in arrears. Thurrock has started to move over to Universal Credit, initially with all new claims for single people from April 2015. Private and social housing landlords have expressed concerns regarding potential arrears and some are refusing to offer tenancies/licences to people in receipt of Universal Credit

5.4 No Second Night Out

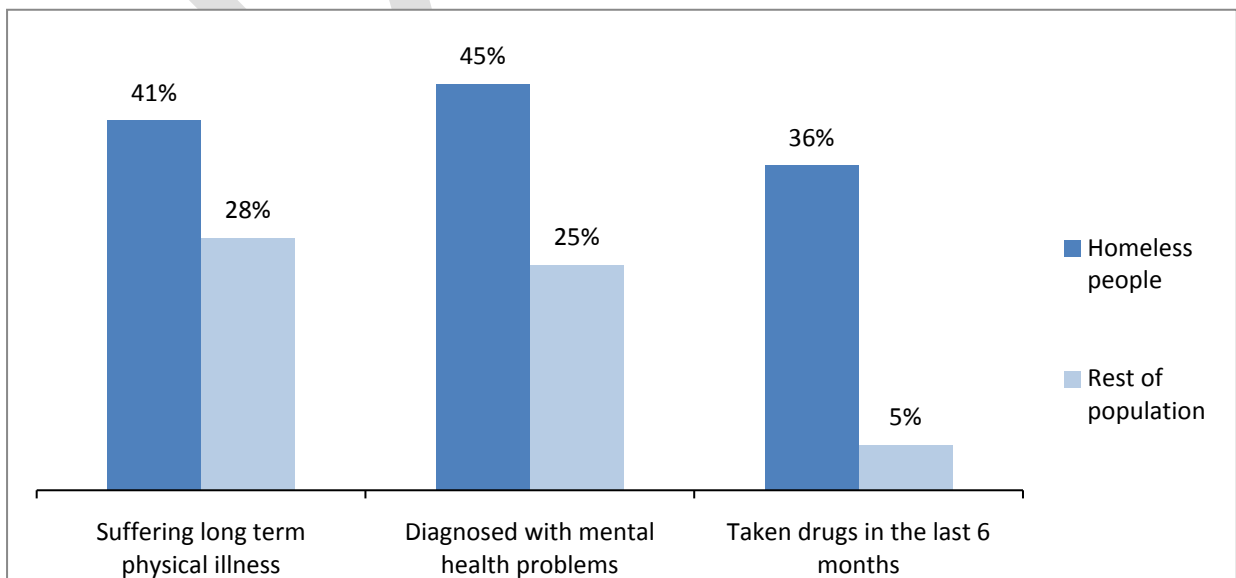
The government introduced a programme to identify new rough sleepers and reconnect them so that their rough sleeping was minimised.

It is estimated that rough sleeping shortens life expectancy by about 30 years with the average life expectancy of a rough sleeper estimated at:



Source: Crisis 2012

Rough sleeping can also lead to higher levels of illness and substance misuse



Source: Homeless Link 2014

Thurrock Council has joined with eight other local authorities in the region to provide a reconnection and support service through a joint contract with St Mungos Broadway

A reconnection worker seeks out rough sleepers in the borough following referrals from Homeless Link who provide a reporting mechanism for members of the public identifying rough sleepers. Referrals can be made via telephone, email or via an online form

The worker will assess any rough sleepers found and offer support to reconnect them or to find alternative accommodation. Referrals to support agencies can also be made

The contract which started in September 2014 lasts 18 months

5.5 Making every contact count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness

The government's second report on preventing homelessness was published in August 2012 and focuses on how services can be managed in a way that prevents all households, regardless of whether they are families, couples, or single people, from reaching a crisis point where they are faced with homelessness

The report aims to make sure that every contact local agencies make with vulnerable people and families really counts and it brings together a number of government commitments to:

- Tackle troubled childhoods and adolescence
- Improve health
- Reduce involvement in crime
- Improve skills; employment; and financial
- Pioneer social funding

From this report the DCLG posed ten local challenges to all local authorities:

1. Adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services
2. Actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
3. Offer a Housing Options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients
4. Adopt a *No Second Night Out* model or an effective local alternative
5. Have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support
6. Develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both clients and landlords
7. Actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme
8. Have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging need
9. Not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation
10. Not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency

These ten challenges form part of the Gold Standard programme which has been developed and administered by the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) to encourage local authorities to develop a continuous programme of improvement. Thurrock Council has pledged to develop this improvement and has subsequently signed up for the Gold Standard challenge.

5.6 The Test for Priority Need

The “Pereira Test” has been established law since 1998 and is identified within the 2006 Homelessness guidance as the test for vulnerability in homeless applicants without dependent children or pregnancy. The test required officers to determine:

“[whether the applicant] when homeless [will be] less able to fend for himself than an ordinary homeless person so that injury or detriment to him will result when a less vulnerable man would be able to cope without harmful effects”

Lord Justice Hobhouse in *R v Camden London Borough Council, Ex p Pereira* (1998) 31 HLR 317 at p.330

That test has been challenged in the courts through three joined cases and a Supreme Court ruling in May 2015 has determined that a different test now applies.

“In order to decide whether an applicant falls within section 189(1)(c), an authority or reviewing officer should compare him with an ordinary person, but an ordinary person if made homeless, not an ordinary actual homeless person.”

Lord Neuberger in *Hotak v London Borough of Southwark; Kanu v London Borough of Southwark; Johnson v Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council* [2015] UKSC at 58

The correct comparator is then, not the “ordinary homeless person”, but the ordinary person who is homeless.

We have yet to see further court definitions of the “ordinary person who is homeless” but the implication is that a wider group may now meet these criteria and that they are likely to be singles or couples with no children/pregnancy.

Since Thurrock Council’s highest cause of homelessness is eviction by family/friends this could increase the number of people owed a duty in the coming years and the requirement for studio or one bedroom accommodation.

It is also important to note that, following the Conservative Governments re-election on 7th May 2015 with a majority of seats in the House of Commons, further welfare reforms are expected. The possibility of removing Housing benefits for under 21 year olds job seekers has been widely predicted.

It is important to monitor the impact of any proposed reforms and to ensure a better supply of affordable accommodation for smaller households is available.

6. Gold Standard – Ten local challenges

As part of the Gold standard programme, Thurrock Council Housing solutions team undertook a Peer review of its services in November 2014 and achieved an overall score of 64%. This involved an intensive review of current services by housing service managers from Basildon and Southend Council's and enabled the service to move onto the next stage of the programme.

Subsequently, the service is working on the ten challenges set out by the Gold Standard Programme (see above) in order to achieve Gold Standard status and has identified specific areas work for improvement:

- To develop a Homelessness Prevention strategy with a proactive approach to preventing homelessness;
- To continually monitor the quality of the service provided including frontline service provision, case work and new procedures;
- To review and make good use of online services including an online Self-assessment programme (HED) which allows clients to access housing advice and information on line with sign posting to appropriate services including the facility to identify potentially homeless applicants at an earlier stage in order to take a more proactive approach to homeless prevention
- To actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs & to ensure partners are fully aware of the Councils strategic objectives
- To agree housing pathways with key partners and client groups that include appropriate accommodation and support
- To set up quarterly partnership forums for sharing information, training & developing links with the Housing solutions teams
- To work with partners to investigate the impacts of welfare reforms & austerity measures & develop an action plan to mitigate the impacts
- To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has "buy in" across all local authority services
- To investigate all funding streams to ensure effective use for homeless prevention including homelessness grant, DHP & DWP funding and one off government funding opportunities
- To develop a Housing advice service which encompasses all housing options
To investigate the option of a one stop shop for all housing options either within the Civic offices or in another location
- To investigate a local mortgage rescue scheme
- Prepare a pre-tenancy information programme/workshop and roll out for all new incoming tenants
- Develop specific Temporary Accommodation options for 16 & 17 year olds to eliminate the use of B & B for this group
- Review the terms of reference for the Joint Referral Panel to ensure co-operation and pathways through accommodation for non-statutory homeless
- Improve and develop services for all client groups – statutory and non-statutory homeless

7. New ways of working

Since the last homelessness strategy was implemented (2010) new operational working practices have been introduced:

- The Homeless and allocations teams were restructured into one Housing Solutions team in 2012
- An online Housing application form was introduced in 2013 and applications for housing (new applicants and transferring tenants) are accessed through this single entry
- An online single point of access for housing advice and options (HED) was introduced in 2014. Applicants completing the assessment who are facing homelessness are highlighted within the system and offered face to face and telephone appointments whilst those requiring only advice and information can obtain this 24/7. A specific action plan is produced to meet the individual requirements depending on the information provided.

8. Partnerships

Thurrock Council housing solutions work in partnership with many agencies including the following:

- Adult Social Care
- Children's Services
- Probation
- SEPT
- NHS Trust
- Public Health
- Education
- Police
- Family Mosaic
- Sanctuary housing association
- Open Door
- Mind
- POhWER
- Women's Aid
- Sericc
- Thurrock Racial Unity Support Task group (TRUST)
- St Mungos Broadway

9. Next steps

This review document and accompanying initial action plan will feed into a further consultation period and will provide an evidence base to identify key areas for improvement and development.

This second consultation period will provide an opportunity for meaningful and effective discussions on the issues identified, and communication of ideas for tackling them. It will be delivered across a range of mediums including

- Face to face conversations
- Joint meetings with a wide range of partners, staff, private and social landlords, and Members
- An online public survey

The review will also be presented to the Councils Youth Cabinet, the Education, Children's and Social Care directorates and the Health & Wellbeing Strategic Board for further consultation.

Because Prevention is key the Action plan will link every actions to one of the four main causes of homelessness which have been identified – this should focus attention on prevention

The Four main causes of homelessness are:

1. Exclusion by parents, family or friends
2. Termination of an assured short hold tenancy
3. Violence or Harassment
4. Mortgage or rent arrears

Clear proposals will be identified within the action plan that

- Are able to drive through improvements
- Are "SMART" with short, medium & long term aims
- Involve Partnership working – particularly amongst Social Care & Registered Providers who have a statutory duty to assist with the Homelessness strategy

There will be an Emphasis on positive and proactive actions and more delegated leadership across partners

Following the consultation period a new homelessness strategy will be completed with identified links into Thurrock Council's

- Allocations scheme
- Tenancy strategy
- Discharge into private sector strategy
- Housing Strategy
- Autism Strategy

Mechanism for regular reviews will be identified – including shorter (annual) reviews with the first review being 12 months after implementation of the strategy.

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Thurrock Council

Homelessness Prevention Strategy

Action Plan

2015-20

No	Key area	Objective	Action required	Outcome required	Measure of success	Completion By	Lead responsibility
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1	Housing Supply	Increase the supply of affordable housing in the borough	Influence future house building and planning to meet smaller household needs –i.e. studio, one and two bedroom properties	Reduction in the percentage of people waiting for 1 and 2 bedroom properties on the Housing Register	15% reduction in the waiting list for 1 and 2 bedroom properties	April 2020	Housing Allocations Manager
2			Influence future housing supply to include more affordable purchasing options such as shared ownership & help to buy	Increase in the number of Housing register applicants who are removed because they have purchased a property	0.5% of Housing Register applicants removed every year	April 2020	Housing Allocations Manager
3			Raise awareness of purchasing options & ensure all are considered as a prevention to homelessness when providing advice and assistance through the Housing Solutions service	All clients approaching the Housing Solutions team will receive information and advice on purchase options – target people via text messaging & social media	100% Housing Solutions team fully trained on purchasing options	April 2016	Housing Solutions Triage Managers
4			Ensure the Council makes good use of adapted properties via its Accessible Housing Register	Early maximisation of priority banding for potentially homeless applicants in need of adapted properties, even where they are not yet homeless within 28 days	No homeless applications taken from households who are in need of an adaptation	April 2016	Housing Allocations Manager

No	Key area	Objective	Action required	Outcome required	Measure of success	Completion By	Lead responsibility
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5	Housing Supply	Increase the supply of supported housing in the borough	Research the provision and need for supported housing for specific groups of people – to include those with Autism, learning difficulties, mental health, complex and dual needs and the under 25s	Extensive report on housing needs through liaison with support groups and partner agencies	Sufficient information and evidence base to support the next stage	April 2016	Housing Strategy Team
Page 103			Increased provision of supported housing in line with the research undertaken	Supported housing schemes built/identified/refurbished/designated to meet the needs identified in the research report	One new scheme developed every year	April 2020	Housing Strategy Team
7			Work with Adult Social Care to identify suitable accommodation and support services which meet REACH standards	Accommodation developed meets REACH standards and represents a joint working approach	All new schemes meet REACH standards	April 2020	Housing Strategy Team
8			Encourage a programme of move on from Supported accommodation to free up spaces	All eligible supported housing residents are on the Housing Register and are awarded the appropriate priority and encouraged to bid once ready for move on	Supported schemes have no more than two people waiting for supported accommodation at any time	April 2016	Housing Allocations Manager

No	Key area	Objective	Action required	Outcome required	Measure of success	Completion By	Lead responsibility
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9	Housing Supply	Increase the supply of good quality private rented housing in Thurrock	Improve working relationships with private landlords and options for longer tenancies	Re-establish a working Landlord forum	Landlord forum meets twice per year	April 2016	Housing Solutions - Private Housing Team
10			Develop incentives for Thurrock landlords to take Thurrock homeless applicants as a discharge of duty or prevention – including pre-tenancy training, gas servicing and extensive monitoring of tenants to mirror introductory tenancies processes	Officers are using a variety of incentives to entice landlords to work with the Council	50% increase in the number of landlords offering properties to the Council year on year	April 2020	Housing Strategy Team
11			Develop offers for under occupying elderly home-owners to enable them to rent back their properties to the Housing solutions team	Package of options available for owners who are frail or elderly in return for long lease arrangements or home share	5 properties leased to the Council each year and 5 home share arrangements set up	April 2017	Housing Strategy Team
12			Joint working with environmental health and other enforcement agencies to ensure that landlords carry out their responsibilities to provide safe and sanitary conditions in order to prevent homelessness	Reduction in number of homeless approaches and priority bandings due to insanitary conditions	25% reduction in number of priorities awarded year on year due to insanitary conditions	April 2020	Private Housing Team

No	Key area	Objective	Action required	Outcome required	Measure of success	Completion By	Lead responsibility
13	Housing Supply	Improve cross boundary working and monitoring of placements within Thurrock to reduce adverse impacts on Thurrock services	Improve working relationships with London boroughs and set up information sharing agreements particularly regarding households with complex needs such as mental health, medical, specialist schooling and ASB issues	Protocol in place with London boroughs identified as placing people in Thurrock – including a data sharing agreement.	Reduction in the number of cases presenting to services in crisis where the resident is unknown to the service	April 2016	Housing Solutions Team
14			Monitor the impact of placements on services within the borough	Set up monthly reporting and monitoring of placements within the borough and share with partner agencies as appropriate	Monthly monitoring reports set up with partner agencies Detailed knowledge and understanding of the impact on services	April 2016	Housing Solutions Team
15	Education & mediation	Reduce number of parental evictions	Develop an education programme for teachers and assistants to enable them to teach pupils about homelessness and its implications and to promote staying at home where it is safe to do so	Annual conferences set up with school staff providing access to resources and knowledge updates	One school conference held in September each year with representation from every secondary school and college	September 2015	Housing Strategy Team
16			Reduce the number of parental evictions through use of mediation and floating support services and crash pads for periods of respite	Reduction in the number of homeless applications from young people under 25 evicted by family or friends	10% reduction year on year in number of homeless applications from under 25s	April 2016	Housing Solutions Team

No	Key area	Objective	Action required	Outcome required	Measure of success	Completion By	Lead responsibility
17	Finance	Improve knowledge & understanding of money management and budgeting skills	Improve access to debt advice and encourage its use	Recruitment of a dedicated housing & welfare advice officer within the Housing solutions team	Officer in post	September 2015	Strategic Lead Housing
18			Improve working partnerships with Housing benefits & agree fast tracking of claims for the housing solutions service where all documentation is provided	Reduction in NTQs and evictions for non-payment of rent where delay in HB payment is the cause	Zero evictions caused though non-payment of HB	April 2016	Housing & Welfare Advice Officer
19			Increase understanding of access to welfare benefits amongst staff and customers through regular training updates	All Housing solutions staff can give accurate advice to clients on how to claim appropriate benefits	All housing solutions staff receive training at least once per year	April 2016	Housing & Welfare Advice Officer
20			Offer programmes to Increase understanding of money management & budgeting skills within secondary schools & colleges	Include money management & budgeting skills in annual conference for skills with offer of ongoing training for individual schools	Annual schools conference in place	September 2015	Housing Strategy Team
21			Investigate the use of prevention funds for loans to clear debts and pay deposits in advance – set up processes for monitoring and recharging	Prevention funds identified and recharging processes agreed to enable continued use	20 Households per year prevented from eviction though the use of loans	April 2016	Housing Solutions – Private Housing Team

No	Key area	Objective	Action required	Outcome required	Measure of success	Completion By	Lead responsibility
22	Tenancy Sustainment	Improve Tenancy sustainment across all tenures	Monitor Council evictions of Introductory and secure tenancies to determine appropriate levels of support and monitoring	Support provided in a timely manner to tenants in need	Decrease of 20% in Council evictions of secure and introductory tenancies year on year	April 2020	Thurrock Council Rents Manager
23			Investigate options for increased floating support across all tenures – offer as part of the incentive to private landlords	Business case for Senior management outlining floating support requirements – in preparation for procurement of service for 2016 onwards	Appropriate levels of support in place so that tenants wait no longer than one week for an assessment	September 2015	Housing Strategy Team
24			Increase awareness of the implications of eviction amongst tenants of all tenures	Production of a DVD outlining what can happen when a family are made homeless – “busting the myths” DVD sent to all failing Council tenants and new tenants at Sign Up – including private tenants assisted by the Council	Increased awareness amongst tenants – evidenced through floating support agencies (base lines to be agreed)	April 2017	Housing Strategy Team
25			Consider options for pre-tenancy training for potential tenants across all tenures	A package of mandatory pre-tenancy training available across tenures in a number of formats e.g. DVD / on line learning / classroom learning	Decrease of 10% year on year in evictions from all tenancy types due to tenancy breaches	April 2020	Housing Strategy Team

No	Key area	Objective	Action required	Outcome required	Measure of success	Completion By	Lead responsibility
24	Domestic abuse & sexual violence	Appropriate emergency and ongoing housing and support available	Increase access to specialised refuge spaces for people with complex needs such as drug, alcohol, mental health issues and complex needs and those with no recourse to public funds	Increase usage of the UK Gold online refuge service to enable links with specialist services	Appropriate refuge space to meet specific support needs of clients is found - in 100% of cases	April 2016	Housing Domestic Abuse Team
Page 108			Research options for safe houses within Council stock including options for a Crash Pad facility for short term needs and move on accommodation from the refuge	Business case detailing requirements to senior managers with recommendations	Appropriate accommodation available to meet the needs of clients where refuge is not a suitable option - in 100% of cases	April 2017	Housing Domestic Abuse Team
26			Promote the sanctuary scheme as an alternative to moving home across all tenures	Increased awareness of how the Sanctuary Scheme works amongst staff, agencies and clients – through use of literature, schools, advertising etc.	Increase of 20% in the number of Sanctuary Schemes used year on year to prevent a homeless application being made	April 2020	Housing Domestic Abuse Team
27			Increase awareness of services available to support clients with a variety of support needs	Increased use of Lead professionals to set up joint meetings involving partner agencies and support groups	Appropriate support is provided to clients in 95% of cases – evidenced through survey following episodes of involvement with the Housing department	April 2016	Housing Domestic Abuse Team

No	Key area	Objective	Action required	Outcome required	Measure of success	Completion By	Lead responsibility
28	Domestic abuse & sexual violence	Increase awareness of and appropriate responses to suspected and actual cases of domestic abuse and sexual violence	Increase training and awareness of sexual and domestic abuse for all housing staff	All Housing staff attend mandatory training on Domestic abuse and sexual violence and undertake the new process training	100% attendance at training by all Housing frontline staff every 3 years – monitoring programme in place	April 2016	Housing Strategy Team
29			Improve working relationships between professionals – including Council (all directorates) and partner agencies	<p>Opportunities made available to shadow Domestic Abuse officers and/or partner agency staff</p> <p>Open days, conferences etc. highlighted to Housing and other partner agencies</p> <p>Partners to be invited to team meetings and events</p>	<p>At least 5 people per year undertake a shadowing opportunity</p> <p>At least 5 teams per year invite partners to team meetings</p>	April 2020	Housing Strategy Team
30			Agree a working protocol with Domestic abuse support agencies with an agreed sharing data protocol. Protocol to include simplified flowchart for quick reference	All Housing staff have access to and regularly refer to the working protocol	Protocol completed and regularly updated; access given to all housing staff	April 2016	Housing Strategy Team

No	Key area	Objective	Action required	Outcome required	Measure of success	Completion By	Lead responsibility
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31	Partnership working	Develop agreed housing pathways	Develop SLAs and working protocols between Housing solutions and partner agencies - to include a robust hospital discharge policy for both mental health and physical health	Working protocols in use by all staff and regularly updated	Zero emergency presentations of homeless applicants because of a hospital or prison discharge	April 2016	Housing Strategy Team
Page 110			Explore options and consult with partners on a "Housing First" approach to include improved support provision by supporting agencies and partners	Business case presented to senior management with recommendations for future programme	Housing first approach in place with working agreements for support from partner services and agencies	April 2017	Housing Strategy Team
33			Homelessness forum to be set up to drive forward the action plan with identified leads for specific areas - leading on actions with regular updates	Quarterly homelessness forum in place for sharing information, training & developing links with the Housing solutions	Action Plan is a living document with identified objectives and successful outcomes	April 2016	Housing Strategy Team
34			Increase the use of case reviews at the earliest stage of threatened homelessness for complex cases and for identifying vulnerable people sooner	Increased number of, and confidence in, multi-agency case reviews with agreed outcomes and defined actions	100% of complex cases have an identified pathway into housing	April 2016	Housing Triage Managers

No	Key area	Objective	Action required	Outcome required	Measure of success	Completion By	Lead responsibility
35	Partnership working	Adopt a corporate commitment to preventing homelessness	Provision of regular opportunities for joint working, shadowing and training across the Council and with partner Agencies	Agreed programme in place allowing opportunities for shadowing and training	At least 5 shadowing opportunities are completed every year At least 2 joint training events completed every year	April 2016	Housing Strategy Team
36			Increase the knowledge of members around homelessness prevention and the advice they can provide to constituents	Regular Members training sessions provided	All members attend a training session at least once every two years	April 2016	Housing Triage Managers
Page 114			Work in partnership with the Job Centre to maximise job opportunities for customer	Housing options advice incorporates signposting to employment and training advice	Increase by 0.5% in number of applicants on Housing waiting lists who qualify for working household properties	April 2019	Housing Welfare Officer
38			Tackle under occupation across all tenure types but in particular social housing tenants unaffected by the bedroom under-occupation reforms	Incentive schemes in operation for all tenures to reduce under-occupation	Reduction in under occupation across the borough	April 2020	Housing Strategy Team

No	Key area	Objective	Action required	Outcome required	Measure of success	Completion By	Lead responsibility
----	----------	-----------	-----------------	------------------	--------------------	---------------	---------------------

39	Strategic planning	Improve monitoring to enable the highest standards of future strategic planning	Continue to monitor equality strands against local and national trends to ensure no specific equality group is being adversely impacted	Quarterly monitoring reports produced and presented as part of the annual strategy review	No evidence of adverse impacts identified	Ongoing	Homelessness Forum
40			Ensure statistics collected are more detailed and consistent to enable a better understanding and assist with forward planning including the collection of data around homeless applicants with supported housing needs	A comprehensive set of data with consistent written definitions is identified; the new Housing IT systems is programmed to capture the appropriate data and staff are fully trained in how to input the data accurately	Accurate comprehensive set of statistics is available quickly and easily, that managers are confident reflects the current housing climate	April 2016	Performance Manager
42		Decrease use of B & B	Ensure there is sufficient provision of adapted temporary accommodation	Review of temporary accommodation completed to identify availability of adapted accommodation against anticipated need	Zero number of incidents when adapted accommodation is not available when required	April 2016	Temporary Accommodation Manager
			Eliminate the use of B & B for all customers except in an emergency and then for a minimal period; Ensure no 16 & 17 years are placed in B & B accommodation	Sufficient temporary accommodation is available within the borough to meet needs as required	Zero use of B & B except exceptionally in an emergency	April 2016	Temporary Accommodation Manager
43		Review priority banding	Consider impact of priority bandings for statutory homeless and those who are homeless at home and options for improving priority to non- statutory homeless groups	Research paper produced which outlines all impacts and enables senior managers to make recommendations for the Housing Allocations Scheme review	Decisions made with highest level of information available	April 2017	Housing Strategy Team

No	Key area	Objective	Action required	Outcome required	Measure of success	Completion By	Lead responsibility
----	----------	-----------	-----------------	------------------	--------------------	---------------	---------------------

44	No Second Night Out	Increased options for rough sleepers	Increase emergency provision and self-referral options – HMOs, hostels etc.	Direct access available to suitable emergency accommodation for rough sleepers	100% of rough sleepers can access accommodation within 24 hours	April 2017	Housing Strategy Team
45			Effective system in place for forming an assessment of rough sleepers within 72 hours of identification, including those with no local connection/entitlement	All rough Sleepers taken to a safe place, their needs assessed and given housing options advice	100% of identified rough sleepers are assessed within 72 hours of identification and	April 2016	Reconnection worker
Page 119			Reconnection protocol in place which includes access to funding for documents and travel - includes support to prevent a return to rough sleeping	Offers of reconnection are made where possible and appropriate	100% of customers are reconnected where this is identified as a viable option	April 2016	Reconnection worker
47			Ensure that data around rough sleepers is accurate	Carry out a formal rough sleeper count every year	Formal count completed every year	Ongoing	Housing Strategy Team

No	Key area	Objective	Action required	Outcome required	Measure of success	Completion By	Lead responsibility
48	Customer services	Communication	Improve effective communications between officers and customers – both verbally and written including adequate means of communications for Non-English speakers and those with sight and hearing impairments	Improved delivery of advice ensuring accuracy and relevance and written advice is always provided in a language which the customer can understand	Improved satisfaction levels amongst service users	April 2016	Housing Triage Managers
Page 114			Investigate the option of a one stop shop for all housing options either within the Civic offices or in another location	Business case for senior managers to consider options and decide on best pathway	Business case informs senior management decision	April 2016	Housing Strategy Team
50			Improve the online housing advice tool to incorporate better options advice, signposting to employment and other services and to manage customer expectations better	The online advice tool provides sufficient information to allow customers to access all services required themselves and to fully understand any processes and next steps	50% reduction in appointments with Housing solutions staff	April 2019	Housing Strategy Team

Consultation on Homelessness Prevention Strategy – February to August 2015

The consultation was undertaken in two stages

Stage one

An initial consultation was undertaken between February and April 2015

This included:

- 3 face to face sessions with Council staff and partner agencies
- An online survey for recent service users – invites were sent to 850 people and 116 (13.4%) people responded – see responses at Appendix 1

Stage two

A further consultation was undertaken between April and August 2015 involving a number of face to face feedback sessions and presentations as follows:

Subject Group	Date	time	Invitees
Presentation to Children’s Services DMT	21st April	PM	Senior managers
Presentation to Adult Services DMT	28th April	PM	Senior managers
Landlords	1st June	11am -1pm	Private Landlords Social landlords Council estate management officers Environmental Health
Minority groups	1st June	2-4pm	Trust, LGBT groups, BME groups, monitoring groups
Members	1st June	5.30 to 7pm	Thurrock elected Members
Presentation to Health & Wellbeing Strategy Board	15th June	PM	Members, Senior officers & Directors
Public health	16th June	10-12am	Public health officers, Substance misuse workers, social workers, Troubled Families
Young people	16th June	2-4pm	Education, Young people, Autism, Leaving Care
Mental health	23rd June	10-12am	SEPT, MIND, POhWER
Vulnerable people	23rd June	1-3pm	ASC, Disability, Safeguarding, Hospital team, Age
Finance	30th June	10-12am	CAB, HB, Rents private landlords
Anti-social behaviour	30th June	2-4pm	ASB officers, Offenders, Community safety, Probation, MAPPA
Presentation to Youth Cabinet	1st July	5.30pm	Young people
Domestic Abuse (DA) group	16 th July	11am -1pm	Women’s Aid/Sericc/housing Domestic Abuse team, Children’s services DA officer

An online public consultation was available for 2 months. The survey was open to everyone and advertised on the Council and the Thurrock Choice Homes websites and within the Thurrock Enquirer.

Start date	18/06/15
End date	16/08/15
Number of responses	54

The results of the 2nd on line survey can be seen at Appendix 2

Points raised at the feedback sessions - notes

- When negotiating with RP's on requirements for new development – beneficial if TDC knows income and debt information to ascertain affordability criteria those on the housing register to ensure tenancy sustainability.
- Tenure should fit needs identified on housing register- improve understanding of applicants on housing register to make sure they realise that it is not just social housing that is an option at the earliest opportunity
- To ensure tenancy sustainability – offer budgeting advice at the earliest opportunity
- Tenancy Workshops good idea; to progress this need to ensure that those who are in with a chance of moving via the housing register are identified for workshops
- Idea of offering private landlords tenancy support from TDC e.g. Estate Management / Inspection of properties – act as management agents for these properties to foster confidence in private landlords.
- Discussed the idea of under occupation for elderly home-owners – this could work but depends on area (would have to be in high value area as those in lower value properties say under £130k can sell home and be rehoused on register at the moment) perhaps think about changing policy to lower this threshold further. If this is introduced then appropriate resources will have to be allocated to support this as it will be labour intensive. Idea of converting some of the 3 bed properties we have into HMO's to help house younger people and ensure it is affordable – especially as TDC do not have a huge overcrowding problem.
- First point if achieved the outcome would be to maximise benefits and prevent homelessness – Idea to speed up the process develop on-line form to help ascertain affordability issues at the earliest opportunity and improve income for applicants. – Lead responsibility for this suggested: Financial Inclusion Team.
- Tap into Family Mosaic service
- Use Step change debt advice charity
- The group agreed that a culture change is needed – need to change from support to enforcement
- Tenancy workshops need to be timely and to those who are going to be housed
- Make sure that applicants can afford the properties they are being nominated to – make this part of the assessment process before nominating to partner landlords
- Currently TDC require 4 weeks rent paid upfront – perhaps they have gotten into debt to pay off rent arrears (Loan Sharks) – consider changing Allocations Policy so that tenants have to have maintained regular payments of rent for 6/12 months prior to being offered alternative housing.

- Discussed project currently being looked into by CHP that ensures residents who pays rent regularly is counted towards positive credit rating
 - Idea: Develop thank you for good tenants like incentive offered such as a hamper or leisure pass
 - Monitor arrears levels
 - Get the message out – develop tenancy audits to get the message out using getting to know you visits
 - Introduce mandatory training or film that helps applicants understand their responsibilities
 - Develop a film that has a “true story” theme
 - Tenancy Audit will help to identify issue
 - Hold open days
 - Good feedback regarding schools education and awareness of services
 - Members would like informative session about Housing delivered to them so that they the correct procedures
 - Very pleased with the idea about training new tenants before they sign up for housing
 - Residents should let out rooms which they are not using
 - Lonely people living on their own, with high maintenance cost – can we help these people out
 - Website does not use easy to understand language
 - Could we provide free training to landlords
 - Could we become a management function on behalf of landlords as an incentive
 - Tenants are being told by housing solutions to wait until they get a bailiffs letter before they go to council for housing help
 - Converting old building to accommodation
 - HMO – specific for young people as a first home – important especially in light of affordability and living away from parents for the first time
 - Keep victims of DV in their homes if possible
 - Promote the sanctuary scheme – definitely agree with this
-
- Jim have forwarded the DV Strategy which we should link into
 - Let’s be more helpful to younger people, more supportive
 - What happens to people with no recourse to public funds
 - Prisoners – to avoid reoffending it’s important that they are housed and find employment quickly – protocol around this.
 - Gang members – loved into the area to detach from their normal setting, however this could have repercussions for Thurrock seen as a new ‘patch’.
 - Probation must be included with improved communication
 - KCA would like to be involved in the “how to be a good tenant” course.
 - Training for estate staff on alcohol/ drug misuse and how to offer simple advice.
 - Be aware that more children will be moving back in with their families or staying for longer with changes to the way benefits are paid – possibly need bigger homes
 - Add Social Services and KCA to those involved in strategic planning
 - HMO’s – need to build our own/ using our unused buildings
 - More studio flats
 - Students and “old” people living together
 - Positive response to training the tenants to be good tenants
 - Harris – include money centred training at their school
 - More awareness to the public about the impact repossession of a property could have on their life
 - Housing training for partner organisations and members
 - Respite for 18+ while mediation takes place

- Peer education programme and Super days at schools- discuss at conference
- Homelessness Forum – good idea
- Landlord Forum will improve the relationship with landlords.
- People will be asked to pay increased rent deposits with the universal credit – we need to have a strategy for this.
- Why are we knocking homes down when there is already a shortage
- More varied supported housing available
- Complex needs of resident's - need to check the environment is right for them.
- Once housed many people are more well, do to stability etc.
- Agree with housing first idea
- We should take water rates direct and not give option for paying themselves (problems with arrears)
- More 1 and 2 bed homes
- Younger people are more willing to move out of borough
- Older people need to stay with local connection
- Each area is looking in isolation
- Shelter housing required for younger groups – specifically built
- Convert existing buildings
- Repairs, rent guaranteed , direct payment, eviction management process, gas safety check all done by the council – landlord incentives
- Improved information sharing with mental health , said that the council was good with info sharing
- LAG involvement (mental health is not always the problem in isolation)
- Case conferences are important
- Increase remit for mental health forum
- Residents needs to be encouraged to downsize before their health deteriorates
- Adapt properties we have now into smaller units
- Where we have said “increase the provision of supported housing for people with Autism”, we should have older people as well, with Dual needs. They never fits into just one category.
- Definitely need a training programme for new tenants so we are discussing other options and not setting them up to fail
- Older people are leaving their partners later in life and therefore are without accommodation much later on.
- Ensure the new homes are wheelchair accessible
- Strengthen relationship between agencies and housing solutions team
- MARAC and other specialist groups should be coming to housing first, rather than an afterthought
- Banks used to go to schools and talk to them about managing money
- Malcom Taylor – Safeguarding and Inclusion Team (meets with Primary and secondary schools to talk about various issues – we may want a slot on this).
- Hostel for offenders – need to be housed without delay to avoid the cycle reoccurring
- Work with CRC – protocol not working.
- Alcohol brief intervention
- Our housing solutions need to learn more about benefits to give simple basic advice and look at status on the system.
- Develop better relations with SERRIC, Family mosaic, Grays Hall, Social Services, Probation, Hospitals, Open Door
- Mark Livermore commissions Kim Sinclair to work with PRU for a youth risk programme – we may want to tap into this as it's already set up.

- Need to have a fast track provision for those who are coming out of prison
- The action plan talked about “Increase options for home ownership e.g. equity share & low cost home ownership”. I wondered if there was any mileage in allowing homeless people to join or pool together to have more resources to access rental property, benefits etc.
- I also wondered about the local area coordinator approach and whether that sort of self-help support would work with homelessness
- Another thought occurred to me after the meeting this morning about teenage pregnancy. We commission the Family Nurse Partnership FNP which is for first time mums under 19. Would it be possible to link this up with the housing officers in terms of providing information to pregnant women under 19 who may seek housing advice. FNP work on the basis of 'notifications' rather than referrals. I could arrange for the provider to come as speak with housing officers?
In addition I thought the FNP nurses would be a group to add alongside GP and HVs in the communication section of the action plan.
- Talking to excluder
 - Mediation
 - Support workers
 - Counselling services
- Developing hostels & other supported accommodation
 - Immediate help
 - Crash pads
 - Breathing space
- Lodgings /foster care
- Support for DV victims
- Support for substance misusers
- Rehabilitation
- Mentoring by other homeless people
- Promotion of support services
- Specialist hostels
- Advertising services in youth groups/sports centres
- Education
 - Info in schools
 - Teachers being aware
 - Employment & life skills
- Hotline for homelessness
- Parent & child joint bonding sessions
- Break for parents/excluders
- Fast tracking for HB for tenants
- Promotion of downsizing for larger property tenants
- Development of modular housing
- Cooking facilities in TA – obesity levels high

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Report Settings Summary

Event	Homelessness Strategy Review
Total Responses	116
Total Respondents	1
Questions	<i>Custom selection (see Table Of Contents)</i>
Filter	<i>(none)</i>
Pivot	<i>(none)</i>
Document Name	APPENDIX 1 - service users online survey homelessness strategy
Created on	2015-08-10 16:59:34
Created by	Dawn Shepherd

Table 1

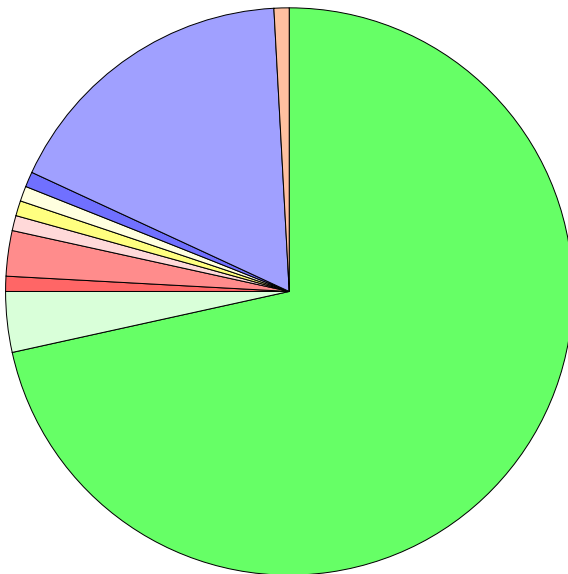
Contents

Ethnicity	3
Other ethnicity	5
Age	7
Gender	8
Sexual orientation	9
Religious belief	10
Other religion	11
Disability	13
Impairment	14
Impairment other	16

Ethnicity

Question responses: **116 (100.00%)**

What is your ethnic group, choose ONE and tick the appropriate box



Page 123

	% Total	% Answer	Count
White			
English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	71.55%	71.55%	83
Irish	0.00%	0.00%	0
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.00%	0.00%	0
Any other White background	3.45%	3.45%	4
Mixed			
White and Black Caribbean	0.86%	0.86%	1
White and Black African	2.59%	2.59%	3
White and Asian	0.00%	0.00%	0
Any other Mixed background	0.86%	0.86%	1
Asian or Asian British			
Indian	0.00%	0.00%	0
Pakistani	0.86%	0.86%	1

Ethnicity










	% Total	% Answer	Count
 Bangladeshi	0.00%	0.00%	0
 Chinese	0.00%	0.00%	0
 Any other Asian background	0.86%	0.86%	1
Black or Black British			
 Caribbean	0.86%	0.86%	1
 African	17.24%	17.24%	20
 Any other Black background	0.00%	0.00%	0
Other ethnic group			
 Arab	0.00%	0.00%	0
 Prefer not to say	0.86%	0.86%	1
 Any other ethnic group	0.00%	0.00%	0
Total	100.00%	100.00%	116

Table 3

Table 2

Other ethnicity

Question responses: **1 (0.86%)**

The above ethnic groups are those categories used on the 2011 census. If you feel that these categories do not represent your ethnicity please use your preferred description here e.g. Polish

If you selected other, please write in your ethnic group in the box below

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ [Responses]	0.86%	100.00%	1
■ [No Response]	99.14%	--	115
Total	100.00%	100.00%	116

Table 5

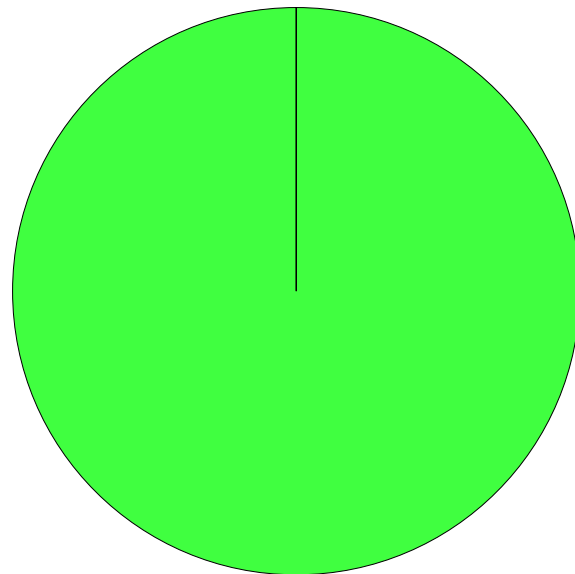


Table 4

Other ethnicity

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
67				AFGHANI BRITISH	18/02/15 14:47	0.1	Submitted	web

Table 6

Age

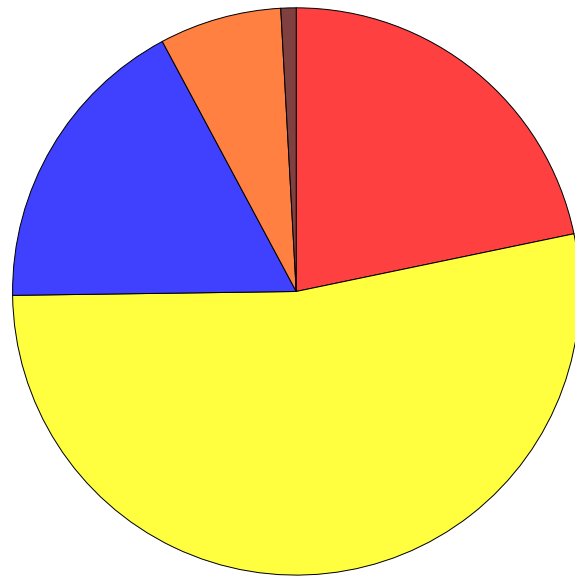
Question responses: 115 (99.14%)

Please specify your age group

	% Total	% Answer	Count
17 or under	0.00%	0.00%	0
18-24	21.55%	21.74%	25
25-44	52.59%	53.04%	61
45-59	17.24%	17.39%	20
Over 60 years	6.90%	6.96%	8
Prefer not to say	0.86%	0.87%	1
[No Response]	0.86%	--	1
Total	100.00%	100.00%	116

Table 8

Table 7



Gender

Gender

Question responses: **116 (100.00%)**

Please specify your gender

Page 128

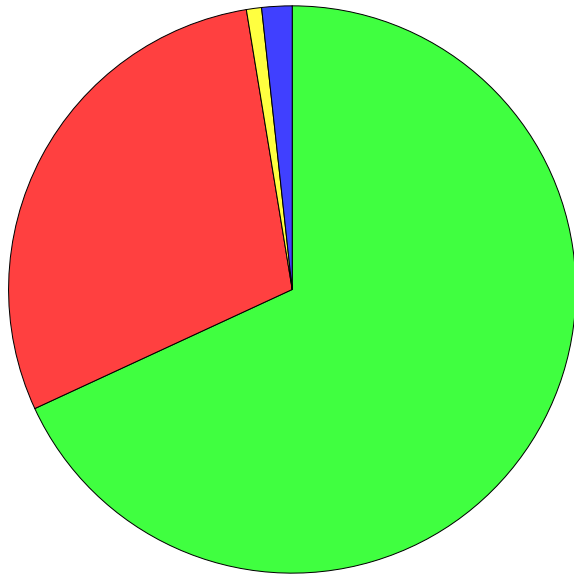


Table 9

	% Total	% Answer	Count
Female	68.10%	68.10%	79
Male	29.31%	29.31%	34
Transgender	0.86%	0.86%	1
Prefer not to say	1.72%	1.72%	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	116

Table 10

Sexual orientation

Question responses: **111 (95.69%)**

How would you define your sexual orientation?

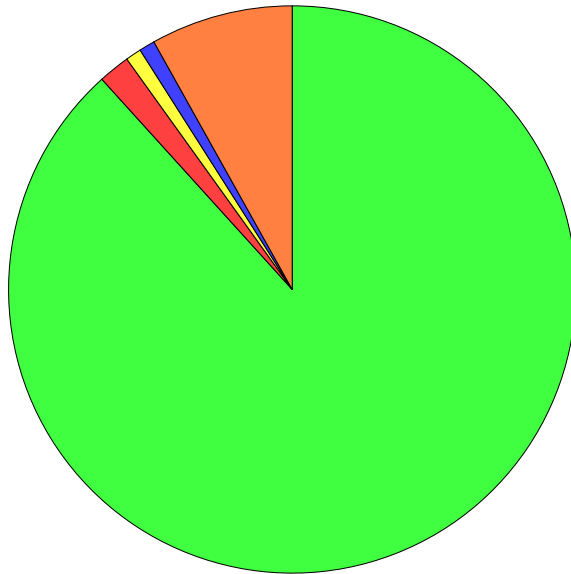


Table 11

	% Total	% Answer	Count
Heterosexual	84.48%	88.29%	98
Gay	1.72%	1.80%	2
Bisexual	0.86%	0.90%	1
Lesbian	0.86%	0.90%	1
Prefer not to say	7.76%	8.11%	9
[No Response]	4.31%	--	5
Total	100.00%	100.00%	116

Table 12

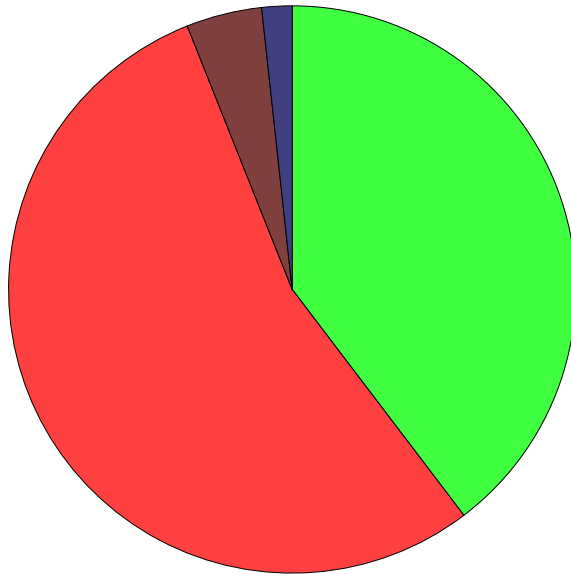
Religious belief

Religious belief

Question responses: 116 (100.00%)

What is your religion?

Page 130



	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ No religion	39.66%	39.66%	46
■ Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	54.31%	54.31%	63
■ Buddhist	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ Hindu	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ Jewish	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ Muslim	4.31%	4.31%	5
■ Sikh	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ Any other religion	1.72%	1.72%	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	116

Table 14

Table 13

Other religion

Other religion

Question responses: 2 (1.72%)

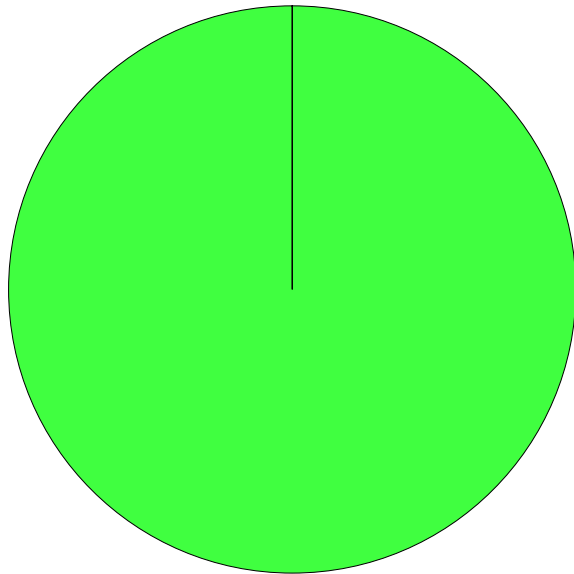
If you selected other, please write in your religion below

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ [Responses]	1.72%	100.00%	2
■ [No Response]	98.28%	--	114
Total	100.00%	100.00%	116

Table 16

Table 15

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
6				Not saying	10/02/15 09:16	0.1	Submitted	web



Other religion

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
98				jedi knight	17/03/15 19:57	0.1	Submitted	web

Table 17

Disability

Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

Question responses: **116 (100.00%)**

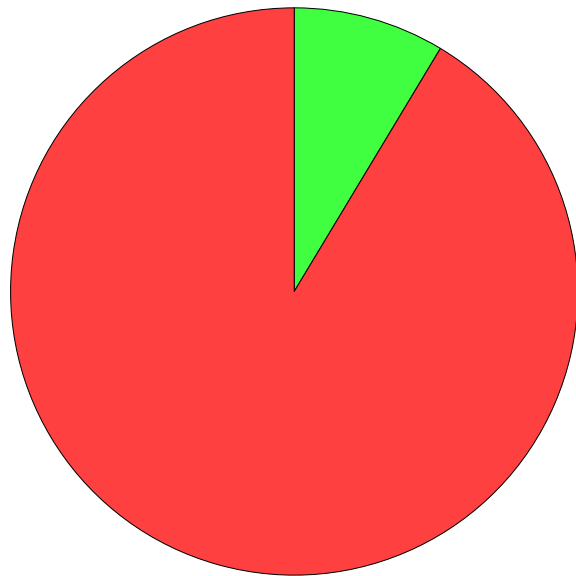


Table 18

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Yes	8.62%	8.62%	10
■ No	91.38%	91.38%	106
Total	100.00%	100.00%	116

Table 19

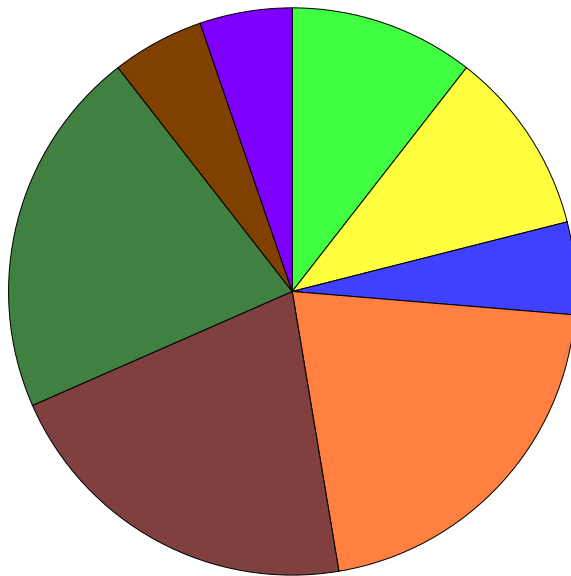
Impairment

Impairment

Question responses: **10 (8.62%)**

If you are disabled, how would you describe your disability? (tick all that apply)

Page 134



	% Total	% Answer	Frequency	Count
Visual impairment	1.60%	10.53%	1.72%	2
Speech impairment	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0
Hearing impairment	1.60%	10.53%	1.72%	2
Mobility (a wheelchair user)	0.80%	5.26%	0.86%	1
Mobility (not a wheelchair user)	3.20%	21.05%	3.45%	4
Mental health condition	3.20%	21.05%	3.45%	4
Long term medical condition	3.20%	21.05%	3.45%	4
Learning disability	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0
Hidden impairment	0.80%	5.26%	0.86%	1
Other	0.80%	5.26%	0.86%	1
[No Response]	84.80%	--	91.38%	106

Impairment

	% Total	% Answer	Frequency	Count
Total	100.00%	100.00%	0%	125

Table 21

Table 20

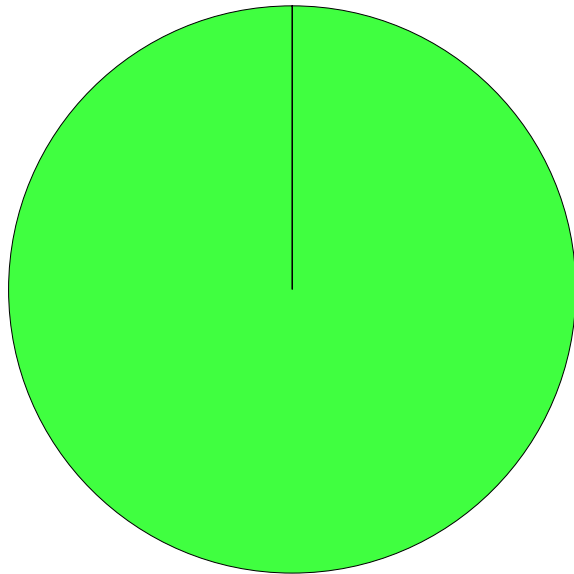
Impairment other

Impairment other

Question responses: 1 (0.86%)

Please specify disability

Page 136



	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ [Responses]	0.86%	100.00%	1
■ [No Response]	99.14%	--	115
Total	100.00%	100.00%	116

Table 23

Table 22

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
6				Not saying	10/02/15 09:16	0.1	Submitted	web

Table 24

Report Settings Summary

Event	Homelessness Prevention Strategy - Consultation
Total Responses	54
Total Respondents	1
Questions	All
Filter	<i>(none)</i>
Pivot	<i>(none)</i>
Document Name	Interim Report - homelessness strategy review
Created on	2015-08-10 08:04:38
Created by	Dawn Shepherd

Table 1

Contents

Eviction by Family member or friend 4

Comments: 9

Ending of an assured short hold (private) tenancy 13

Comments: 18

Violence or harassment 21

Comments: 25

Mortgage or rent arrears 27

Comments: 32

Working in partnerships 35

Comments: 41

Customer service 44

Comments: 48

Strategic planning 52

Comments: 56

Your role 58

Ethnicity 59

Other ethnicity 61

Age 62

Gender 63

Sexual orientation 64

Religious belief 65

Contents

Other religion	66
Disability	67
Impairment	68
Impairment other	70

Eviction by Family member or friend

Eviction by Family member or friend

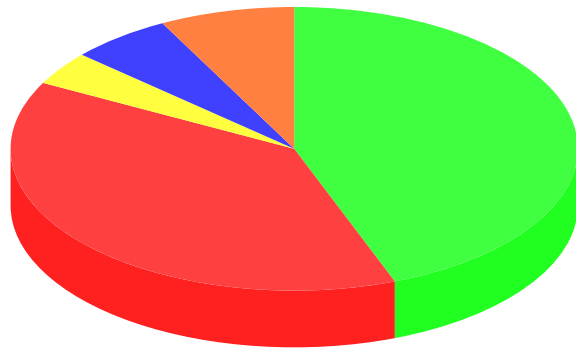
Question responses: **54 (100.00%)**

Being evicted by a parent, family member or friend is the top cause of homelessness in Thurrock at 36%

Build smaller homes for singles, couples and smaller households

Question responses: **52 (96.30%)**

Page 140



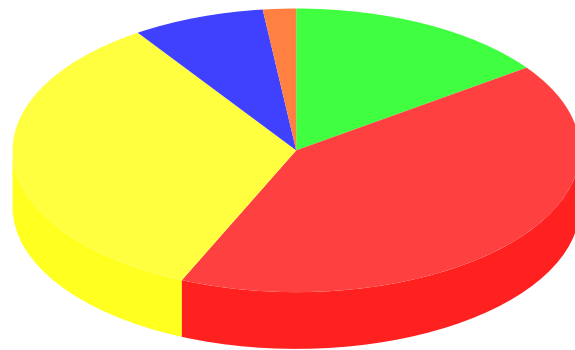
	% Total	% Answer	Count
Strongly agree	42.59%	44.23%	23
Agree	37.04%	38.46%	20
Disagree	3.70%	3.85%	2
Strongly disagree	5.56%	5.77%	3
No opinion	7.41%	7.69%	4
[No Response]	3.70%	--	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 3

Table 2

Eviction by Family member or friend

Encourage people who have spare rooms to take in lodgers

Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**

Page 141

Table 4

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	14.81%	15.09%	8
■ Agree	40.74%	41.51%	22
■ Disagree	33.33%	33.96%	18
■ Strongly disagree	7.41%	7.55%	4
■ No opinion	1.85%	1.89%	1
■ [No Response]	1.85%	--	1
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 5

Eviction by Family member or friend

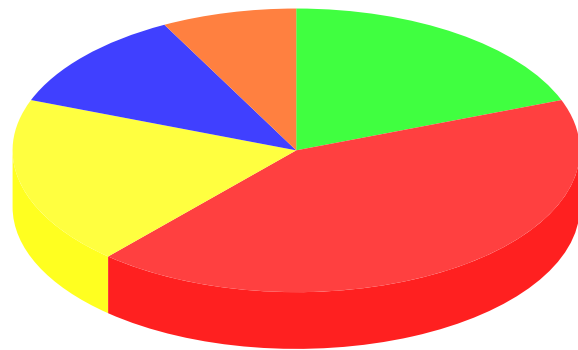
Give a higher priority banding on the housing waiting list to people who are able to remain at home rather than making a homeless application

Question responses: **52 (96.30%)**

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	18.52%	19.23%	10
■ Agree	40.74%	42.31%	22
■ Disagree	18.52%	19.23%	10
■ Strongly disagree	11.11%	11.54%	6
■ No opinion	7.41%	7.69%	4
■ [No Response]	3.70%	--	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 7

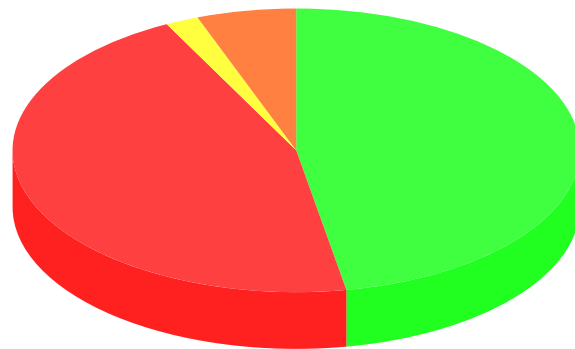
Table 6



Eviction by Family member or friend

Provide training in schools for young people on homelessness and its effects

Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**



Page 143

Table 8

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	46.30%	47.17%	25
■ Agree	44.44%	45.28%	24
■ Disagree	1.85%	1.89%	1
■ Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ No opinion	5.56%	5.66%	3
■ [No Response]	1.85%	--	1
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 9

Eviction by Family member or friend

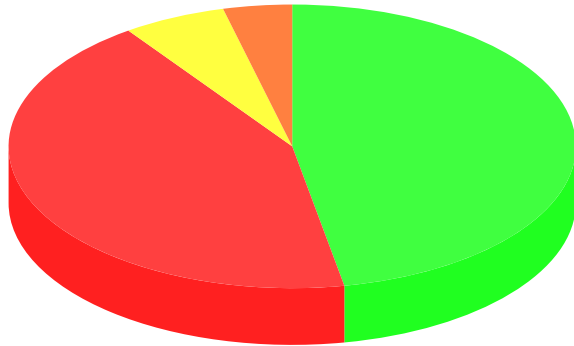
Increase the supply of supported accommodation in the borough

Question responses: 51 (94.44%)

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	44.44%	47.06%	24
■ Agree	40.74%	43.14%	22
■ Disagree	5.56%	5.88%	3
■ Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ No opinion	3.70%	3.92%	2
■ [No Response]	5.56%	--	3
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 11

Table 10



Comments:

Comments:

Question responses: 13 (24.07%)

Any other comments or ideas?

	% Total	% Answer	Count
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Responses]	24.07%	100.00%	13
<input type="checkbox"/> [No Response]	75.93%	--	41
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 13

Table 12

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
5				Maybe more social support to resolve the differences and avoid the eviction in the first place.	24/06/15 13:19	0.1	Submitted	web

Comments:

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
9				Great difficulty at present accessing supported housing - this need sto be improved	26/06/15 08:23	0.1	Submitted	web
14				There is not enough 2 bedroom properties in Thurrock. Also not everyone is a position to buy, Thurrock needs more properties owned by Local authorities / Housing Associations to rent.	26/06/15 14:18	0.1	Submitted	web
16				The shortages in 1 bed properties are in certain areas of Thurrock. This is where it needs to be provided.	29/06/15 08:42	0.1	Submitted	web
20				I would move from "encourage" to "incentivise" peopel who have a spare room to take in lodgers.	01/07/15 14:33	0.1	Submitted	web
27				Could consider providing support to address the reasons why those who are being evicted by family and work with all to avoid eviction.	02/07/15 08:12	0.1	Submitted	web
29				I agree with supported accommodation, what I dont agree with is them not being maintained, looking untidy and lottering outside, maybe if the restrictions were not so strict young people would use their properties like a home. If we are putting people into these types of properties they must be in a fit state	02/07/15 08:40	0.1	Submitted	web

Comments:

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
				in the first instance to make them feel like it is a home. There is a stigma with who is relocated in these properties and not all single parents, young people should feel this is the last post. Most of the young people, single parents that I visit feel ashamed to say that they live in homeless accommodation.				
30				Encourage housing associations to develop bedsits for single people.	02/07/15 09:44	0.1	Submitted	web
32				More mediation resource to resolve family conflict /disputes/relationship breakdowns and prevent young people being "kicked out"	02/07/15 11:31	0.1	Submitted	web
37				There is a need for a viariety of different typs of supported accomoadtion.	03/07/15 07:47	0.1	Submitted	web
40				I wouldn't encourage people to take lodgers as if it went wrong especially with the elderly you could feel responsible. I think if you give someone a higher band to stay at home then all young people would say they were going to be evicted to get a higher banding.	03/07/15 14:06	0.1	Submitted	web

Comments:

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
41				Give training to people who are thinking of taking lodgers on safety for themselves and families	03/07/15 14:23	0.1	Submitted	web
43				How do you deal with families where the parent declares they are evicting the (adult) son or daughter in order to allow them to claim homelessness? I'm unaware if this is a major problem, however I know of one example personally of where this has happened. I suppose it's always a risk?	06/07/15 08:58	0.1	Submitted	web

Table 14

Ending of an assured short hold (private) tenancy

Ending of an assured short hold (private) tenancy

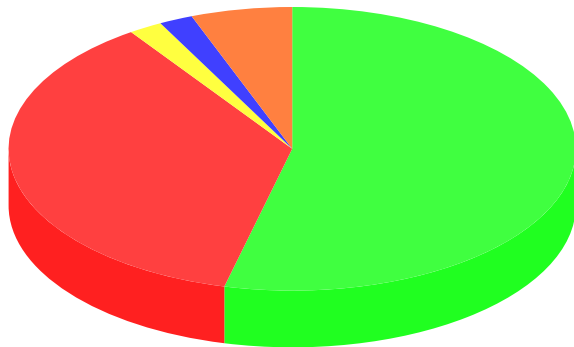
Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**

The ending of an assured short hold (private) tenancy is the 2 nd highest reason for homelessness in Thurrock at 27%

Increase options for home ownership e.g. equity share, low cost home ownership

Question responses: **52 (96.30%)**

Page 149



	% Total	% Answer	Count
Strongly agree	51.85%	53.85%	28
Agree	35.19%	36.54%	19
Disagree	1.85%	1.92%	1
Strongly disagree	1.85%	1.92%	1
No opinion	5.56%	5.77%	3
[No Response]	3.70%	--	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 16

Table 15

Ending of an assured short hold (private) tenancy

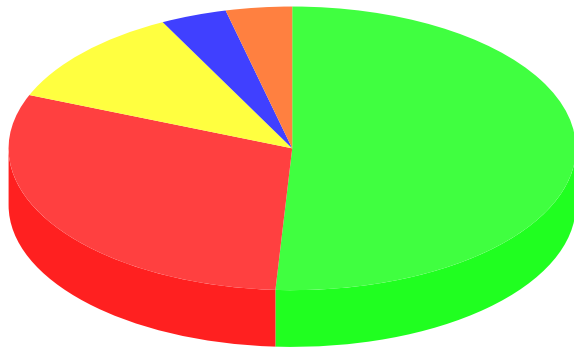
Offer incentives to Thurrock landlords who give longer tenancies

Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	50.00%	50.94%	27
■ Agree	29.63%	30.19%	16
■ Disagree	11.11%	11.32%	6
■ Strongly disagree	3.70%	3.77%	2
■ No opinion	3.70%	3.77%	2
■ [No Response]	1.85%	--	1
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 18

Table 17



Ending of an assured short hold (private) tenancy

Encourage private landlords to offer reasonable rents

Question responses: **51 (94.44%)**







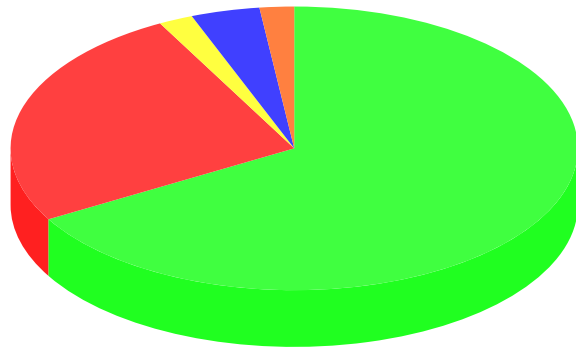
	% Total	% Answer	Count
 Strongly agree	62.96%	66.67%	34
 Agree	24.07%	25.49%	13
 Disagree	1.85%	1.96%	1
 Strongly disagree	3.70%	3.92%	2
 No opinion	1.85%	1.96%	1
 [No Response]	5.56%	--	3
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 20

Table 19



Ending of an assured short hold (private) tenancy

Build more affordable homes

Question responses: **52 (96.30%)**







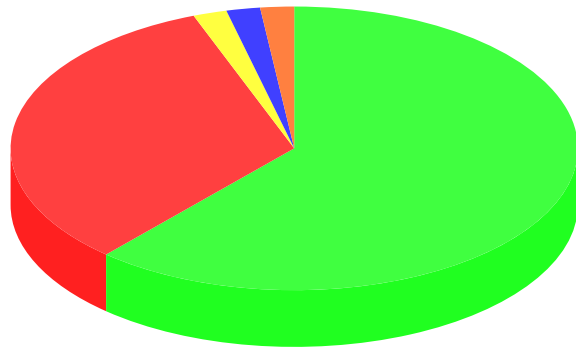
	% Total	% Answer	Count
 Strongly agree	59.26%	61.54%	32
 Agree	31.48%	32.69%	17
 Disagree	1.85%	1.92%	1
 Strongly disagree	1.85%	1.92%	1
 No opinion	1.85%	1.92%	1
 [No Response]	3.70%	--	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 22

Table 21



Ending of an assured short hold (private) tenancy

Develop offers for home owners who are under occupying to rent out their homes on longer tenancies and move to smaller rented accommodation themselves

Question responses: **51 (94.44%)**







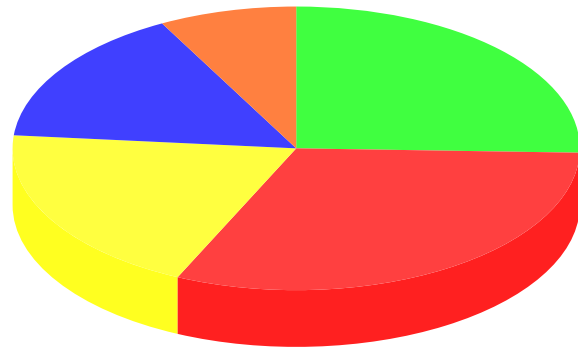
	% Total	% Answer	Count
 Strongly agree	24.07%	25.49%	13
 Agree	29.63%	31.37%	16
 Disagree	18.52%	19.61%	10
 Strongly disagree	14.81%	15.69%	8
 No opinion	7.41%	7.84%	4
 [No Response]	5.56%	--	3
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 24

Table 23



Comments:

Comments:

Question responses: **5 (9.26%)**

Any other comments or ideas?

	% Total	% Answer	Count
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Responses]	9.26%	100.00%	5
<input type="checkbox"/> [No Response]	90.74%	--	49
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 26

Table 25

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
14				Thurrock council should have its own letting agency free to use to Landlords to give private tenants more security and prevent the tenants being ripped off by unscrupulous lettings agencies.	26/06/15 14:18	0.1	Submitted	web

Comments:

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
19				LHA rates are so far behind private rents. I am on a 5 year tie in with Council due to having an empty homes grant, however I would not choose this route again. If I could ask for a top up from tenant that would be fine - just a reasonable top up - but I am unable to do this. The original procedure for the grant was far too slow, caused damage to exterior walls where we had to wait to repair gutter. Thus losing rent in the first instance and now being stuck in for another three years at low rents. In my case the grant was not worth it.	01/07/15 13:37	0.1	Submitted	web
29				We had Marston House some time ago which most of the residents in there looked after their property, maintained it until they were let go, unsightly and pulled down. Why does the council build then demolish waste of money. Surely it would be more cost effective to tidy up these properties and make sure people are aware that it is their responsibility to keep the home as tidy as possible. Checks should be made like estate agents who maintain properties. If this was put in place and they were NOT being looked after then they receive notice	02/07/15 08:40	0.1	Submitted	web

Comments:

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
				to leave. We all have to take some responsibility for our properties.				
43				Build more TRULY affordable homes (not the definition of X% less than market rents - it should be linked to incomes) Although I agree the department's focus should be on vulnerable people and social housing, as a Thurrock Council employee on a reasonable salary I still cannot afford private rents or to save for a deposit. I currently rent a spare bedroom with a live-in landlord because that's all I can afford. I have explored 2nd hand shared ownership and but there's very limited on offer in Thurrock.	06/07/15 08:58	0.1	Submitted	web
49				Help those who are working and struggling to stay in their homes whether they are own their property or council tenants this might help the homeless situation instead of only helping those who are out of work. I struggled for years trying to keep my home but was not allowed any help from the council because we worked and it was my own property. We have now lost our home seperated and homeless and relying on the council.	15/07/15 13:40	0.1	Submitted	web

Table 27

Violence or harassment

Violence or harassment

Question responses: **52 (96.30%)**

Violence or harassment is the 3rd highest reason for homelessness in Thurrock at 17%

Provide more accommodation for those fleeing violence or harassment e.g. refuges, safe houses

Question responses: **52 (96.30%)**







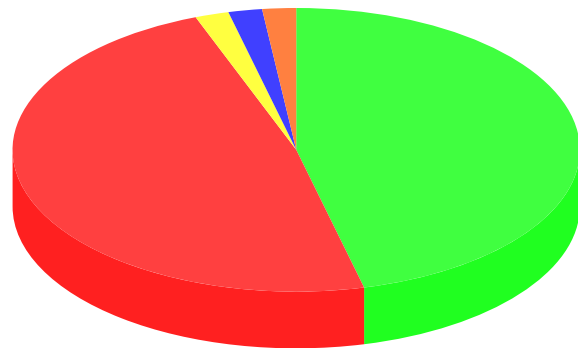
	% Total	% Answer	Count
 Strongly agree	44.44%	46.15%	24
 Agree	46.30%	48.08%	25
 Disagree	1.85%	1.92%	1
 Strongly disagree	1.85%	1.92%	1
 No opinion	1.85%	1.92%	1
 [No Response]	3.70%	--	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 29

Table 28



Violence or harassment

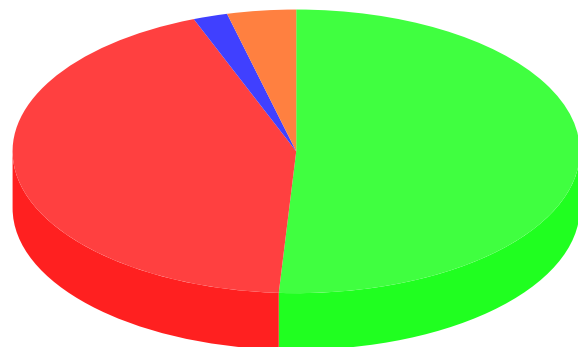
Promote the use of Sanctuary scheme –where safety measures are placed in the persons current home to make it safer

Question responses: **51 (94.44%)**

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	48.15%	50.98%	26
■ Agree	40.74%	43.14%	22
■ Disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ Strongly disagree	1.85%	1.96%	1
■ No opinion	3.70%	3.92%	2
■ [No Response]	5.56%	--	3
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 31

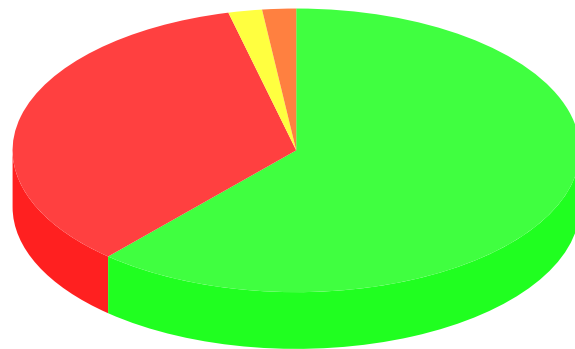
Table 30



Violence or harassment

Improve working arrangements between the Council and other organisations supporting victims of violence or harassment

Question responses: **52 (96.30%)**



Page 159

Table 32

	% Total	% Answer	Count
Strongly agree	59.26%	61.54%	32
Agree	33.33%	34.62%	18
Disagree	1.85%	1.92%	1
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
No opinion	1.85%	1.92%	1
[No Response]	3.70%	--	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 33

Violence or harassment

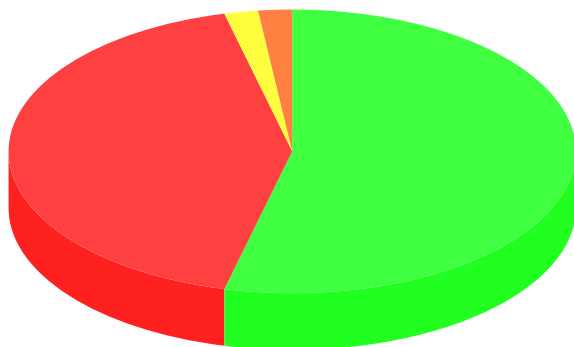
Provide more specialist refuges where the residents are offered support with drug, alcohol and mental health problems

Question responses: **52 (96.30%)**

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	51.85%	53.85%	28
■ Agree	40.74%	42.31%	22
■ Disagree	1.85%	1.92%	1
■ Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ No opinion	1.85%	1.92%	1
■ [No Response]	3.70%	--	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 35

Table 34



Comments:

Comments:

Question responses: 4 (7.41%)

Any other comments or ideas?

	% Total	% Answer	Count
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Responses]	7.41%	100.00%	4
<input type="checkbox"/> [No Response]	92.59%	--	50
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 37

Table 36

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
13				Needs to be support for the perpetrator as well with regards to drug / alcohol and MH probs so that they are able to remain in home violence free	26/06/15 10:54	0.1	Submitted	web

Comments:

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
14				A person fleeing violence is not safe in their home borough especially if they have children as it is too easy to find out what school they attend	26/06/15 14:18	0.1	Submitted	web
27				Work with other agencies such as police and courts to remove those who are causing the violence and harassment and apply sanctions. People who are victims should not be forced to leave their homes and communities due to the actions of others - these are the issues which need addressing, otherwise it is the victims who pay the penalty.	02/07/15 08:12	0.1	Submitted	web
29				Prevention is the key thing in this situation but all we seem to do as a council is cut the ground work.	02/07/15 08:40	0.1	Submitted	web

Table 38

Mortgage or rent arrears

Mortgage or rent arrears

Question responses: **54 (100.00%)**

Mortgage or rent arrears are the 4th highest reason for homelessness in Thurrock at 8%

Increase access to debt advice and money management

Question responses: **54 (100.00%)**






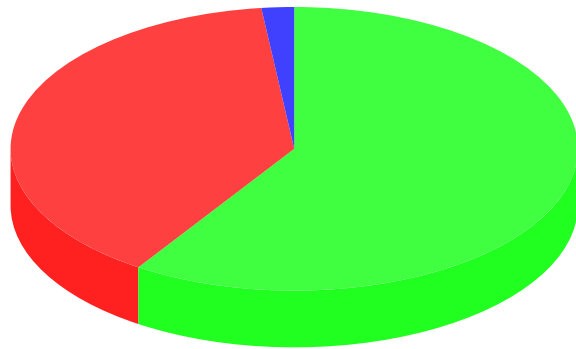
	% Total	% Answer	Count
 Strongly agree	59.26%	59.26%	32
 Agree	38.89%	38.89%	21
 Disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
 Strongly disagree	1.85%	1.85%	1
 No opinion	0.00%	0.00%	0
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 40

Table 39



Mortgage or rent arrears

Increase awareness of benefits and the tenants responsibilities

Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**







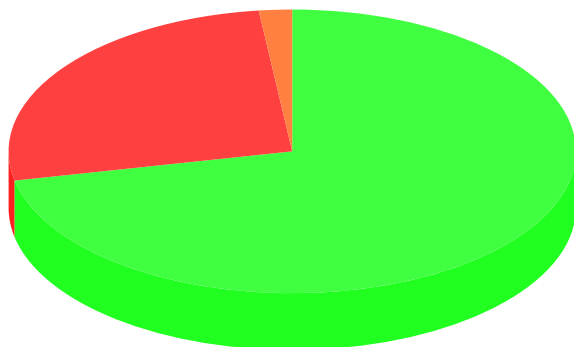
	% Total	% Answer	Count
 Strongly agree	70.37%	71.70%	38
 Agree	25.93%	26.42%	14
 Disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
 Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
 No opinion	1.85%	1.89%	1
 [No Response]	1.85%	--	1
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 42

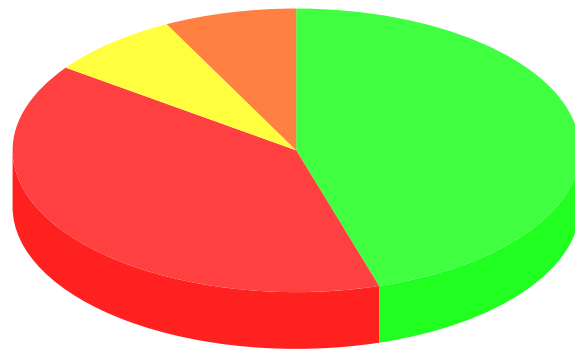
Table 41



Mortgage or rent arrears

Provide a tenancy training programme to potential tenants before they start a new tenancy

Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**



Page 165

Table 43

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	44.44%	45.28%	24
■ Agree	38.89%	39.62%	21
■ Disagree	7.41%	7.55%	4
■ Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ No opinion	7.41%	7.55%	4
■ [No Response]	1.85%	--	1
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 44

Mortgage or rent arrears

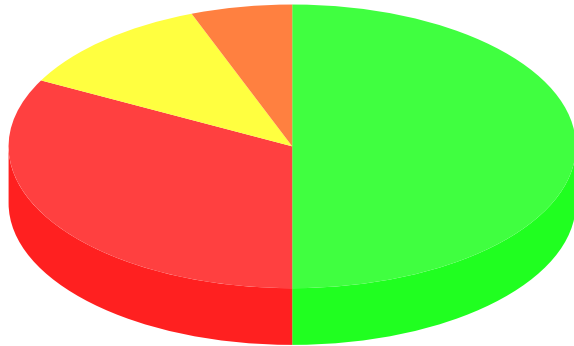
Increase the use of floating support for tenants who are failing in their tenancies

Question responses: **52 (96.30%)**

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	48.15%	50.00%	26
■ Agree	31.48%	32.69%	17
■ Disagree	11.11%	11.54%	6
■ Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ No opinion	5.56%	5.77%	3
■ [No Response]	3.70%	--	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 46

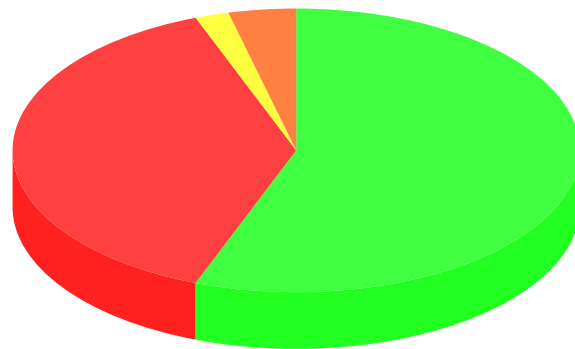
Table 45



Mortgage or rent arrears

Increase awareness on the homelessness process and its effects on households

Question responses: **52 (96.30%)**



	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	53.70%	55.77%	29
■ Agree	37.04%	38.46%	20
■ Disagree	1.85%	1.92%	1
■ Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ No opinion	3.70%	3.85%	2
■ [No Response]	3.70%	--	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 48

Table 47

Comments:

Comments:

Question responses: **6 (11.11%)**

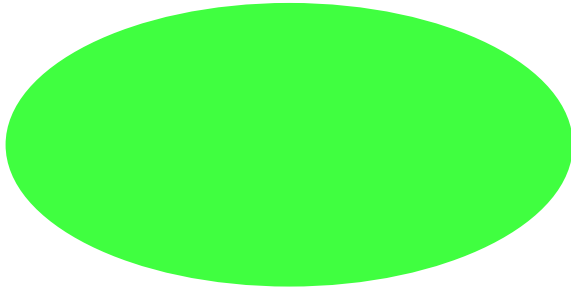
Any other comments or ideas?

	% Total	% Answer	Count
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Responses]	11.11%	100.00%	6
<input type="checkbox"/> [No Response]	88.89%	--	48
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 50

Table 49

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
19				Councils should work in support of the landlords who let their homes. At the moment they work in favour of tenants. Examples: As soon as tenants stop paying rent or part rent then Council	01/07/15 13:37	0.1	Submitted	web



Comments:

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
				pay rent to landlord immediately - no delays. Sort out eligibility problems faster. Do not encourage tenants to stay in property and not pay rent, ie until bailiffs come.				
20				I would also consider recognising private landlords in some way who Provide a tenancy training programme to potential tenants before they start a new tenancy	01/07/15 14:33	0.1	Submitted	web
41				People need to know how bad homelessness is in the borough teach them to pay their rent on time	03/07/15 14:23	0.1	Submitted	web
47				Floating support for failing tenancies is a fantastic idea, supporting more people to maintain their homes, and stopping evictions, court orders.	13/07/15 07:32	0.1	Submitted	web
50				It needs to be clear that the Council will provide assistance to only to those who are vulnerable. Training should be provided so that people know that it is best for them to sort out their situation without the Council's intervention or assistance where possible.	15/07/15 13:53	0.1	Submitted	web

Comments:

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
54				Provide jobs that have a decent livable income, And ban landlords charging extortionate rates!	01/08/15 17:45	0.1	Submitted	web

Table 51

Working in partnerships

Working in partnerships

Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**

Working in partnerships with other services is very important in the prevention of homelessness

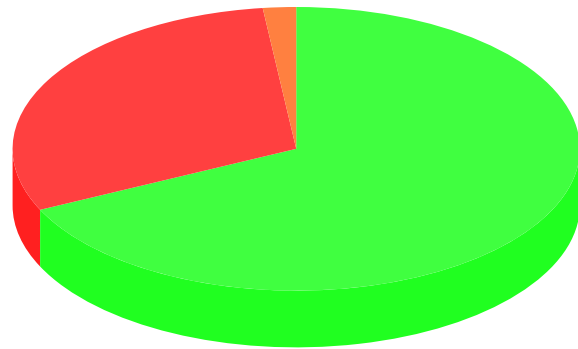
We need to develop “housing pathways” so that all partners understand how people can be housed and who is given priority

Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	66.67%	67.92%	36
■ Agree	29.63%	30.19%	16
■ Disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ No opinion	1.85%	1.89%	1
■ [No Response]	1.85%	--	1
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 53

Table 52



Working in partnerships

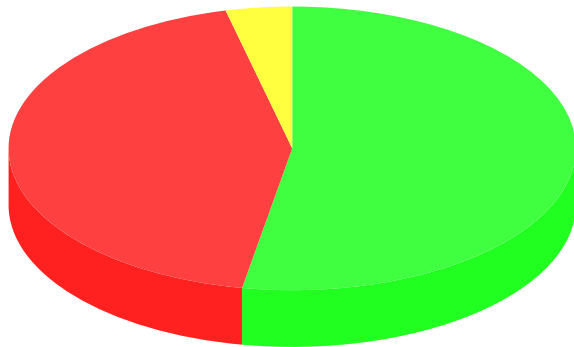
We need to ensure that people in supported housing are moved on to independent living when they are ready, so that supported housing is freed up for those who need it most

Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	51.85%	52.83%	28
■ Agree	42.59%	43.40%	23
■ Disagree	3.70%	3.77%	2
■ Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ No opinion	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ [No Response]	1.85%	--	1
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 55

Table 54



A homelessness forum should be set up to drive forward the strategy action plan

Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**







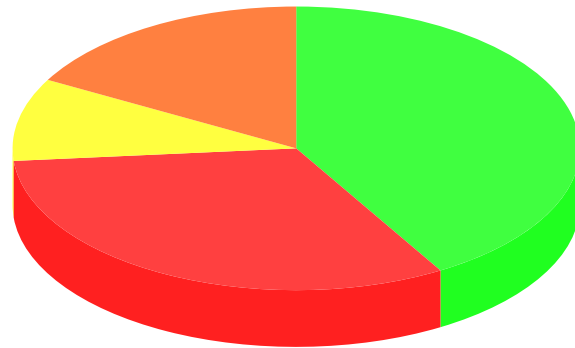
	% Total	% Answer	Count
 Strongly agree	40.74%	41.51%	22
 Agree	31.48%	32.08%	17
 Disagree	9.26%	9.43%	5
 Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
 No opinion	16.67%	16.98%	9
 [No Response]	1.85%	--	1
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 57

Table 56



Working in partnerships

The use of multi-disciplinary case reviews amongst partners should be increased

Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**







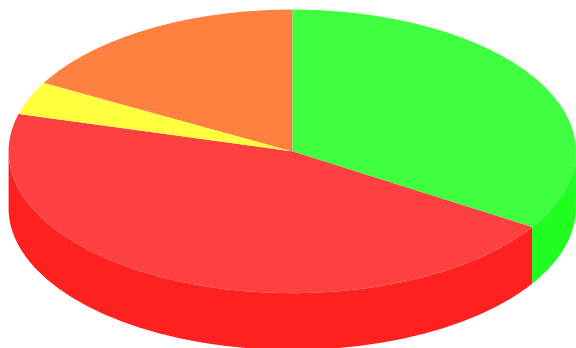
	% Total	% Answer	Count
 Strongly agree	33.33%	33.96%	18
 Agree	44.44%	45.28%	24
 Disagree	3.70%	3.77%	2
 Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
 No opinion	16.67%	16.98%	9
 [No Response]	1.85%	--	1
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 59

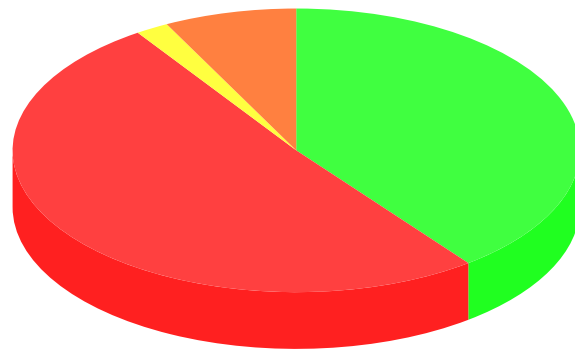
Table 58



Working in partnerships

There should be more opportunities for joint working, shadowing and joint training

Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**



	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	38.89%	39.62%	21
■ Agree	50.00%	50.94%	27
■ Disagree	1.85%	1.89%	1
■ Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ No opinion	7.41%	7.55%	4
■ [No Response]	1.85%	--	1
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 61

Table 60

Working in partnerships

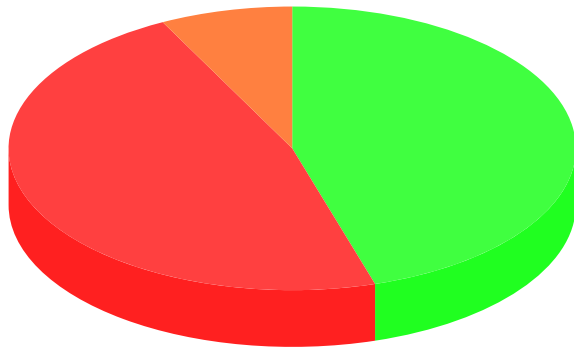
Members should be offered more specialised training around housing and homelessness

Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	44.44%	45.28%	24
■ Agree	46.30%	47.17%	25
■ Disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ No opinion	7.41%	7.55%	4
■ [No Response]	1.85%	--	1
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 63

Table 62

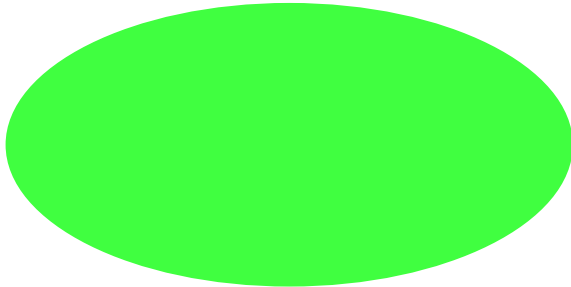


Comments:

Comments:

Question responses: **8 (14.81%)**

Any other comments or ideas?



	% Total	% Answer	Count
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Responses]	14.81%	100.00%	8
<input type="checkbox"/> [No Response]	85.19%	--	46
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 65

Table 64

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
19				Give landlords free training to enhance their Accreditation. Training easily accessible and free. Because rents we have to take are well below private rents. The council require that	01/07/15 13:37	0.1	Submitted	web

Comments:

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
				landlords do this training and yet many landlords probably already are aware and do not need the training offered, but they are forced to take it and pay for it. Perhaps you could ask landlords what training they require and maybe landlords themselves can offer the training to other landlords.				
27				For residents in supported living, it needs to be very clear for them that they will be working towards increasing their independence skills and will move on - this is particularly important for people with learning disabilities. The right levels of support to increase skills and independence should be in place too and a person-centred care plan should be agreed by all and worked towards.	02/07/15 08:12	0.1	Submitted	web
29				If you had the properties to move them on too, start building affordable housing not keep giving planning permission to private tenants. The only people getting rich in this instance are the property owners. Perhaps it would be a way of the council making money for once.	02/07/15 08:40	0.1	Submitted	web
30				i didnt understand what was meant by teh term "members" in the final question above. Did you mean	02/07/15 09:44	0.1	Submitted	web

Comments:

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
				"elected members" or "partnership members"?				
36				There are voluntary organisations who all ready have this training in your borough and could help and there by save you money on training with a little investment to the third sector.	02/07/15 15:54	0.1	Submitted	web
37				Joint working and shadowing between agencies is a good idea to increase understanding.	03/07/15 07:47	0.1	Submitted	web
47				Homeless forum should be open to any practitioner who works in the community with individuals.	13/07/15 07:32	0.1	Submitted	web
50				There is no need for a homelessness forum as the work can either be carried out by the Tenancy Panel or the Housing Scrutiny Committee. Social accommodation should be temporary, issued with a specific deadline and then the need reassessed. If there is still a need, then renew the tenancy, if not, the person moves out which frees up the property for someone else with a greater need.	15/07/15 13:53	0.1	Submitted	web

Table 66

Customer service

Customer service

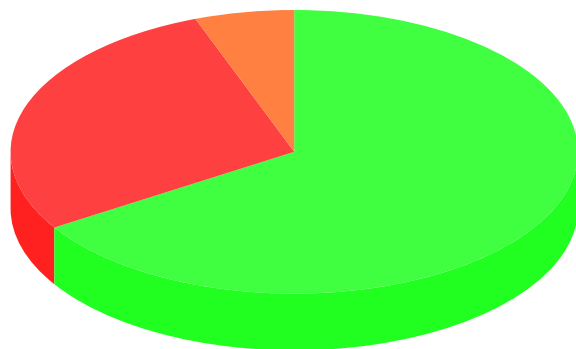
Question responses: **54 (100.00%)**

The Council undertook a survey of service users as part of the homelessness review and identified a number of areas for improvement

Officers should manage the expectation of customers better by explaining in more detail the outcomes they can expect

Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**

Page 180



	% Total	% Answer	Count
Strongly agree	64.81%	66.04%	35
Agree	27.78%	28.30%	15
Disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
No opinion	5.56%	5.66%	3
[No Response]	1.85%	--	1
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

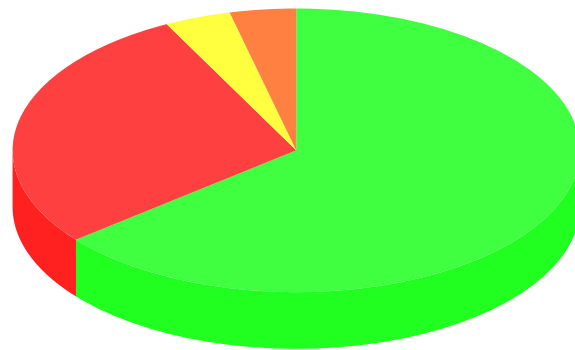
Table 68

Table 67

Customer service

Officers should communicate better with customers and provide written confirmation of the advice given at the first interview

Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**



	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	62.96%	64.15%	34
■ Agree	27.78%	28.30%	15
■ Disagree	3.70%	3.77%	2
■ Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ No opinion	3.70%	3.77%	2
■ [No Response]	1.85%	--	1
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 70

Table 69

Customer service

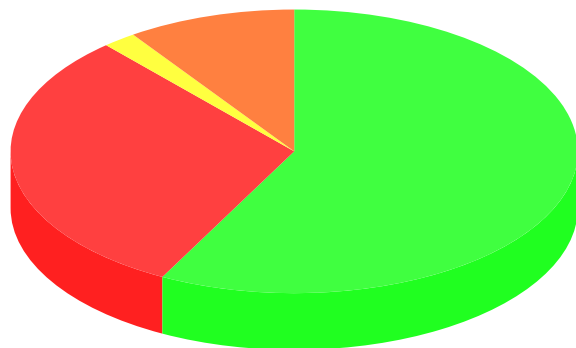
Officers should communicate with partners better

Question responses: **52 (96.30%)**

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	55.56%	57.69%	30
■ Agree	29.63%	30.77%	16
■ Disagree	1.85%	1.92%	1
■ Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ No opinion	9.26%	9.62%	5
■ [No Response]	3.70%	--	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 72

Table 71



The HED online advice service should provide advice which is easier to understand and access

Question responses: **53 (98.15%)**







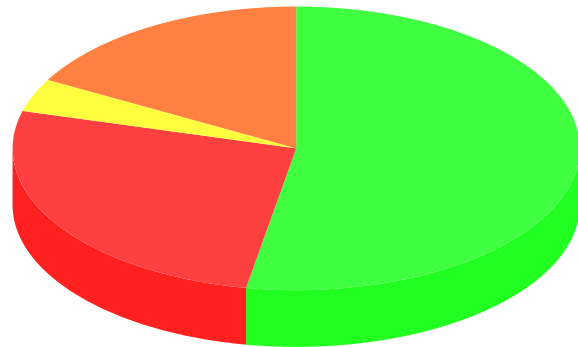
	% Total	% Answer	Count
 Strongly agree	51.85%	52.83%	28
 Agree	25.93%	26.42%	14
 Disagree	3.70%	3.77%	2
 Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
 No opinion	16.67%	16.98%	9
 [No Response]	1.85%	--	1
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 74

Table 73



Comments:

Comments:

Question responses: 10 (18.52%)

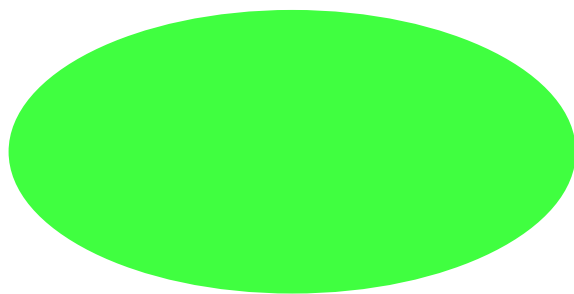
Any comments or ideas?

	% Total	% Answer	Count
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Responses]	18.52%	100.00%	10
<input type="checkbox"/> [No Response]	81.48%	--	44
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 76

Table 75

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
13				HED ?	26/06/15 10:54	0.1	Submitted	web
14				The HED advice service is very clear, what is not clear to the tenant is what happens next	26/06/15 14:18	0.1	Submitted	web



Comments:

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
18				Communication and advise is given at tenancy start up - this info is clear	01/07/15 10:20	0.1	Submitted	web
19				As a landlord I would like to see . . . Better rents if possible to landlords who give better homes. ie. not a one size fits all rent, so that they get closer to what they can achieve privately. I am well aware that we probably have less vacant periods by working with council and for the most part our rent is there and on time, so a bit of a reduction is fine. faster resolution of issues, ie. my empty homes grant took too long to process, my property suffered as a result of waiting to do repairs, and also income severely suffered. I felt that Council did not consider the landlord's loss of income at all. ALSO faster resolution of issues when HB is stopped for any reason.	01/07/15 13:37	0.1	Submitted	web
20				The HED online advise service should be so easy to use that, as a homeless person, I can get access to it direct or via staff at community hubs, libraries, CVS, CAb, Age Concern, Mind, etc. It should be considered as part of teh adult social care self-help portal too.	01/07/15 14:33	0.1	Submitted	web
27				Written communications should also be appropriately written and in easy-read for those residents with	02/07/15 08:12	0.1	Submitted	web

Comments:

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
				learning disabilities. Again, the same should apply to the HED service and also it should be understood that not everyone has access to online advice or this may be unsuitable to access using public emails systems.				
29				Partnership agreement whereby the person understands what is expected of them and perhaps we need to change our attitude towards these people.	02/07/15 08:40	0.1	Submitted	web
30				I dont know what the acronym HED stands for.	02/07/15 09:44	0.1	Submitted	web
36				For some people the internet is not an option and they need to be able to talk to a real person without going through a list of phone options. If your resident does not read or has a speech impediment you need to be able to address their needs, there are also charities that can assist you with this type of advocacy, and have had years of experience and know most of the vulnerable residents in your area.	02/07/15 15:54	0.1	Submitted	web

Comments:

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
50				There needs to be a clear, joined up approach to social housing in which all the partners are on par. Partners should not be promising people social housing or encouraging them to apply to the council where the person has alternate accommodation.	15/07/15 13:53	0.1	Submitted	web

Table 77

Strategic planning

Strategic planning

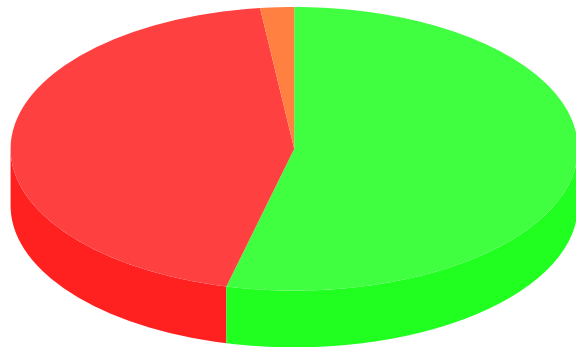
Question responses: **52 (96.30%)**

The Council needs to take a long term view of how it tackles homelessness.

The Council must explore the long term effects of welfare reform on privately renting households

Question responses: **52 (96.30%)**

Page 188



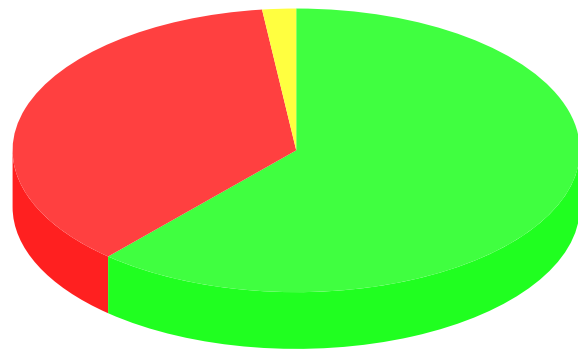
	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	51.85%	53.85%	28
■ Agree	42.59%	44.23%	23
■ Disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ No opinion	1.85%	1.92%	1
■ [No Response]	3.70%	--	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 79

Table 78

Officers need to investigate all funding streams to ensure effective use of funds for homeless prevention

Question responses: **52 (96.30%)**



	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Strongly agree	59.26%	61.54%	32
■ Agree	35.19%	36.54%	19
■ Disagree	1.85%	1.92%	1
■ Strongly disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ No opinion	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ [No Response]	3.70%	--	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 81

Table 80

Strategic planning

The council should tackle under-occupation across all tenures

Question responses: **51 (94.44%)**







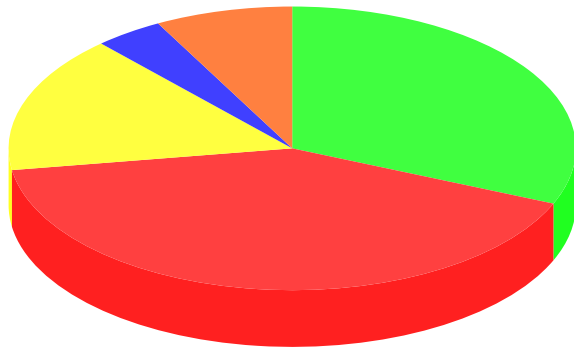
	% Total	% Answer	Count
 Strongly agree	29.63%	31.37%	16
 Agree	38.89%	41.18%	21
 Disagree	14.81%	15.69%	8
 Strongly disagree	3.70%	3.92%	2
 No opinion	7.41%	7.84%	4
 [No Response]	5.56%	--	3
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

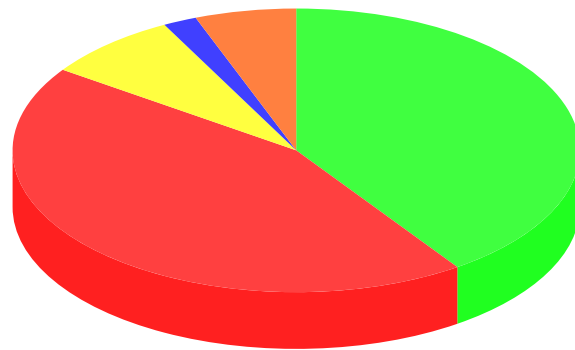
Table 83

Table 82



Officers need to continue to monitor equality strands against local and national data to ensure no specific group is impacted adversely

Question responses: **52 (96.30%)**



	% Total	% Answer	Count
Strongly agree	38.89%	40.38%	21
Agree	42.59%	44.23%	23
Disagree	7.41%	7.69%	4
Strongly disagree	1.85%	1.92%	1
No opinion	5.56%	5.77%	3
[No Response]	3.70%	--	2
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 85

Table 84

Comments:

Comments:

Question responses: 4 (7.41%)

Any comments or ideas?

	% Total	% Answer	Count
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> [Responses]	7.41%	100.00%	4
<input type="checkbox"/> [No Response]	92.59%	--	50
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 87

Table 86

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
13				Need to plan for the migration from London into London boro owned home and the impact that thsi will have after 2 years. Thurrock council needs to reduce no. of homes owned by	26/06/15 10:54	0.1	Submitted	web

Comments:

ID	Consultation Point	Consultee	Agent	Answer	Date	Version	Status	Type
				London Boroughs and use these for themselves to address local homeless issues				
27				Although there may need to be some work on under-occupation, residents should not be penalised if no other smaller accommodation is available.	02/07/15 08:12	0.1	Submitted	web
29				If a person has been living at their home for a number of years, bringing up their family in their family home why are we tackling under occupation. Put yourself in their shoes and this is where sometimes I feel we go wrong we are good and giving advice but do not understand the person sitting at the other end of the table.	02/07/15 08:40	0.1	Submitted	web
36				Resident who pay full rent for their property should be entitled to choose under occupancy if they wish, if that rent is being subsidised then I think that the council has a say in how much therapy for under occupancy and whether or not that resource should be used elsewhere. I don't think strands of equality national can help Thurrock as a unitary borough, I think you need to focus on the immediate environments cause and effect.	02/07/15 15:54	0.1	Submitted	web

Table 88

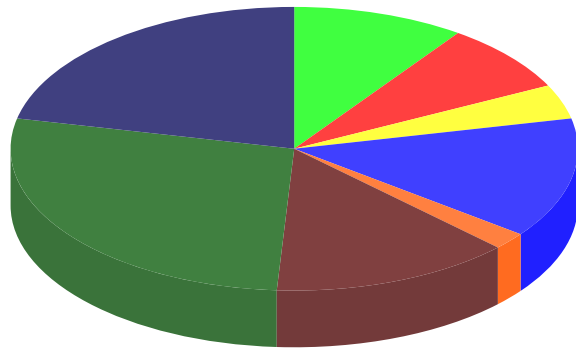
Your role

Your role

Question responses: **51 (94.44%)**

Please indicate which area your role sits in

Page 194



	% Total	% Answer	Count
Adult Social Care	9.26%	9.80%	5
Childrens Social Care	7.41%	7.84%	4
Public Health	3.70%	3.92%	2
Support services	12.96%	13.73%	7
Local Councillor / MP	1.85%	1.96%	1
Housing Options / Homelessness	12.96%	13.73%	7
Housing - Other	25.93%	27.45%	14
Other	20.37%	21.57%	11
[No Response]	5.56%	--	3
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 90

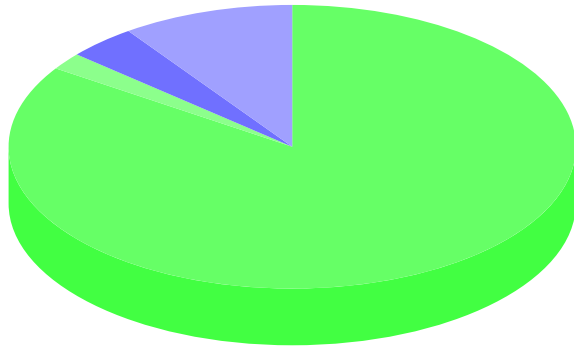
Table 89

Ethnicity

Ethnicity

Question responses: **51 (94.44%)**

What is your ethnic group, choose ONE and tick the appropriate box



Page 195

	% Total	% Answer	Count
White			
<input type="checkbox"/> English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	79.63%	84.31%	43
<input type="checkbox"/> Irish	1.85%	1.96%	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0.00%	0.00%	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other White background	0.00%	0.00%	0
Mixed			
<input type="checkbox"/> White and Black Caribbean	0.00%	0.00%	0
<input type="checkbox"/> White and Black African	0.00%	0.00%	0
<input type="checkbox"/> White and Asian	0.00%	0.00%	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Any other Mixed background	0.00%	0.00%	0
Asian or Asian British			
<input type="checkbox"/> Indian	0.00%	0.00%	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani	0.00%	0.00%	0

Ethnicity











	% Total	% Answer	Count
 Bangladeshi	0.00%	0.00%	0
 Chinese	0.00%	0.00%	0
 Any other Asian background	0.00%	0.00%	0
Black or Black British			
 Caribbean	3.70%	3.92%	2
 African	9.26%	9.80%	5
 Any other Black background	0.00%	0.00%	0
Other ethnic group			
 Arab	0.00%	0.00%	0
 Prefer not to say	0.00%	0.00%	0
 Any other ethnic group	0.00%	0.00%	0
 [No Response]	5.56%	--	3
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 92

Table 91

Other ethnicity

Other ethnicityQuestion responses: **0 (0.00%)**

The above ethnic groups are those categories used on the 2011 census. If you feel that these categories do not represent your ethnicity please use your preferred description here e.g. Polish

If you selected other, please write in your ethnic group in the box below

	% Total	% Answer	Count
<input type="checkbox"/> [Responses]	0.00%	0%	0
<input type="checkbox"/> [No Response]	100.00%	--	54
Total	100.00%	0%	54

Table 94**Table 93**

There is no data to display for this question

Age

Age

Question responses: **50 (92.59%)**

Please specify your age group

Page 198

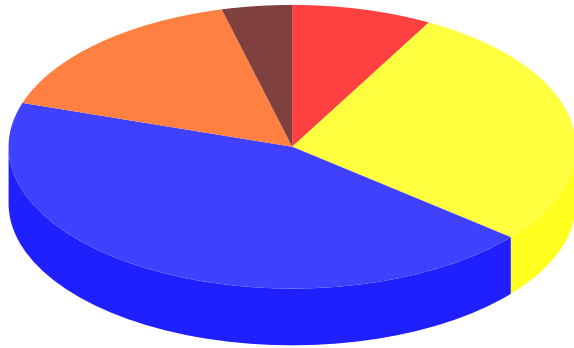


Table 95

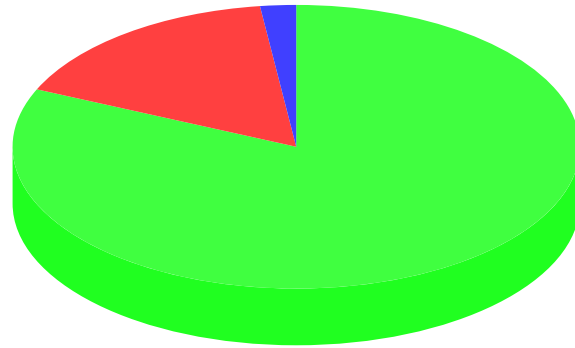
	% Total	% Answer	Count
17 or under	0.00%	0.00%	0
18-24	7.41%	8.00%	4
25-44	25.93%	28.00%	14
45-59	40.74%	44.00%	22
Over 60 years	14.81%	16.00%	8
Prefer not to say	3.70%	4.00%	2
[No Response]	7.41%	--	4
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 96

Gender

Question responses: **49 (90.74%)**

Please specify your gender



	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Female	74.07%	81.63%	40
■ Male	14.81%	16.33%	8
■ Transgender	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ Prefer not to say	1.85%	2.04%	1
■ [No Response]	9.26%	--	5
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 98

Table 97

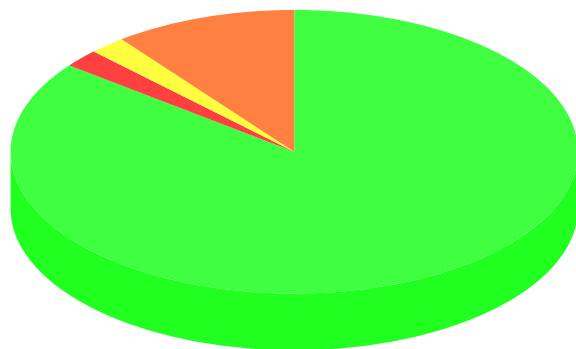
Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation

Question responses: 48 (88.89%)

How would you define your sexual orientation?

Page 200



	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Heterosexual	75.93%	85.42%	41
■ Gay	1.85%	2.08%	1
■ Bisexual	1.85%	2.08%	1
■ Lesbian	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ Prefer not to say	9.26%	10.42%	5
■ [No Response]	11.11%	--	6
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 100

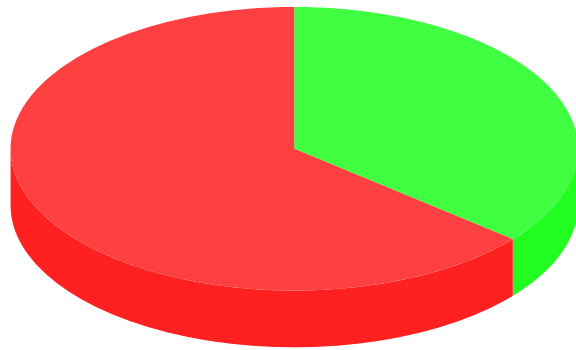
Table 99

Religious belief

Religious belief

Question responses: 50 (92.59%)

What is your religion?



Page 201

	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ No religion	33.33%	36.00%	18
■ Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	59.26%	64.00%	32
■ Buddhist	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ Hindu	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ Jewish	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ Muslim	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ Sikh	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ Any other religion	0.00%	0.00%	0
■ [No Response]	7.41%	--	4
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 102

Table 101

Other religion

Other religion

Question responses: **0 (0.00%)**

If you selected other, please write in your religion below

	% Total	% Answer	Count
<input type="checkbox"/> [Responses]	0.00%	0%	0
<input type="checkbox"/> [No Response]	100.00%	--	54
Total	100.00%	0%	54

Table 104

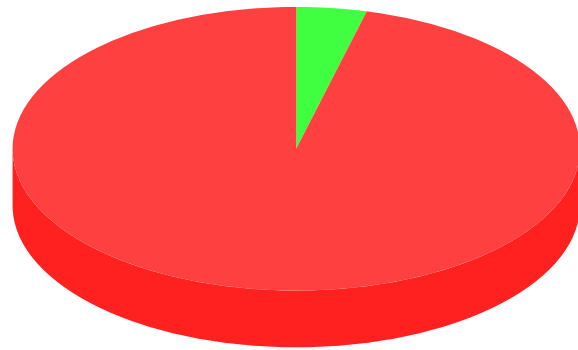
Table 103

There is no data to display for this question

Disability

Question responses: **50 (92.59%)**

Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?



	% Total	% Answer	Count
■ Yes	3.70%	4.00%	2
■ No	88.89%	96.00%	48
■ [No Response]	7.41%	--	4
Total	100.00%	100.00%	54

Table 106

Table 105

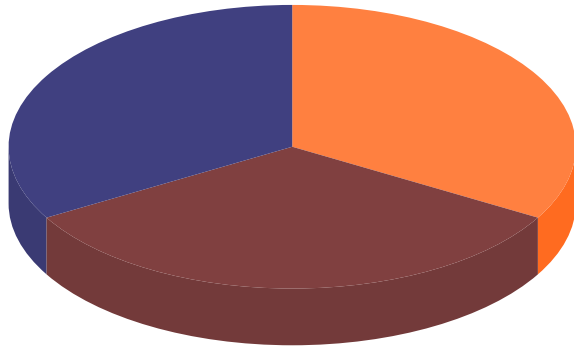
Impairment

Impairment

Question responses: 2 (3.70%)

If you are disabled, how would you describe your disability? (tick all that apply)

	% Total	% Answer	Frequency	Count
<input type="checkbox"/> Visual impairment	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Speech impairment	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Hearing impairment	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Mobility (a wheelchair user)	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mobility (not a wheelchair user)	1.82%	33.33%	1.85%	1
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mental health condition	1.82%	33.33%	1.85%	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Long term medical condition	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learning disability	1.82%	33.33%	1.85%	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Hidden impairment	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0
<input type="checkbox"/> [No Response]	94.55%	--	96.30%	52



Impairment

	% Total	% Answer	Frequency	Count
Total	100.00%	100.00%	0%	55

Table 108**Table 107**

Impairment other

Impairment other

Question responses: **0 (0.00%)**

Please specify disability

	% Total	% Answer	Count
<input type="checkbox"/> [Responses]	0.00%	0%	0
<input type="checkbox"/> [No Response]	100.00%	--	54
Total	100.00%	0%	54

Table 110

Table 109

There is no data to display for this question

2 September 2015		ITEM: 7
Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee		
Elizabeth Gardens – Local Lettings Plan		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Dawn Shepherd, Housing Strategy Manager, Housing		
Accountable Head of Service: Dermot Moloney, Strategic Lead, Housing		
Accountable Director: Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

Elizabeth Gardens is a purpose built extra care scheme for older people in Long Lane, Grays. There are 65 flats and the Council has nomination rights to 47 of these (16 x one bedroom and 31 x two bedroom).

The scheme is managed by Hanover Housing Association who requires nominations from the Council within 5 working days of a property being available to let. If the Council are unable to supply nominees within this timescale then Hanover may select people from their own waiting list.

Eligibility criteria includes the need for extra care support, but applicants must also be eligible for a nomination of social housing which means they must qualify in the usual manner for an allocation i.e. they must have the appropriate local connection etc.

Applicants are also assessed for the number of bedrooms they require according to their household size. A single person or couple would normally be eligible for a one bedroom property however, there may be situations where a two bedroom is required - for example where there is a need for a live in carer or to accommodate large medical equipment.

The Council has no difficulty in nominating applicants for the one bedroom flats, but often cannot find applicants who qualify for the two bedroom flats.

Many applicants who qualify for a one bedroom flat would like to have a two bedroom property but do not qualify under the allocations scheme for two bedrooms.

Subsequently there have been a number of occasions when the Council do not have nominees for two bedroom flats and Hanover have allocated properties to people on their own waiting list; since their waiting list has different criteria this could mean allocations to applicants from outside the borough without the 5 year local connection required by Thurrock Council.

Thurrock Council must nominate within its housing allocations scheme but there is a provision within the scheme that allows local lettings for specific sites where agreed through the Housing Overview and Scrutiny panel.

A local lettings scheme could be used to allow allocations to the two bedroom properties outside of the usual requirements where there are no suitable nominees waiting. This would resolve the issue of losing nominations to applicants with no local connection to the borough and ensure that the Councils own waiting list of applicants take priority.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the committee approves a Local lettings plan for nominations to the two bedroom flats at Elizabeth Gardens.**
- 1.2 That the local lettings plan allows nomination of the two bedroom properties to applicants outside of the usual bedroom size requirement where there are no waiting applicants who meet the usual criteria.**
- 1.3 That when the local lettings plan is used to nominate applicants, couples will take priority over single applicants for the two bedroom properties .**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Elizabeth Gardens is a purpose built extra care scheme for older people in Long Lane, Grays. There are 65 flats in the following combination:

	To Buy	To Rent	Total
One bedroom	2	16	18
Two bedroom	16	31	47
Total	18	47	65

- 2.2 The scheme is managed by Hanover Housing Association with whom the Council has a nominations agreement; the Council has nomination rights to all 47 rented units.
- 2.3 Under the nominations agreement, once notified of a vacancy, the Housing department must supply the names of potential tenants to Hanover within 5 working days. If the Council are unable to supply nominees within this timescale then Hanover may select people from their own separate waiting list.
- 2.4 The council has criteria for selecting potential tenants which includes the need for extra care support, but applicants must be eligible for a nomination of social

housing which means they must qualify in the usual manner for an allocation i.e. they must have the appropriate local connection etc. Places are allocated via an allocations panel which includes officers from Housing, Social Care and Health. The panel maintain a waiting list and meet regularly to agree nominees.

- 2.5 Applicants will also be assessed for the number of bedrooms that they require according to their household size. For this type of accommodation the household would usually only consist of a single person or couple who would normally be eligible for a one bedroom property. There may be situations where a two bedroom is required, for example where there is a need for a live in carer or to accommodate large medical equipment.
- 2.6 When the scheme was opened in 2013 an allocations procedure and criteria was implemented.
- 2.7 The allocations panel has no difficulty in allocating to the one bedroom flats, but often cannot find applicants who qualify for the two bedroom flats due to the bedroom size requirement and the larger number of these properties.
- 2.8 Many applicants who qualify for a one bedroom flat would like to have a two bedroom property but do not qualify under the allocations scheme for two bedrooms.
- 2.9 Subsequently there have been a number of occasions when the Council do not have nominees for two bedroom flats and Hanover have allocated properties to people on their own waiting list; since their waiting list has different criteria this could mean allocations to applicants from outside the borough without the 5 year local connection required by Thurrock Council
- 2.10 Thurrock Council must nominate within its housing allocations scheme but there is a provision within the scheme that allows local lettings for specific sites where agreed through the Housing Overview and Scrutiny panel.
- 2.11 A local lettings scheme could be used to allow allocations to the two bedroom properties outside of the usual requirements where there are no suitable nominees waiting. This would resolve the issue of losing nominations to Hanover and ensuring that the Councils own waiting list of applicants take priority.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Rent and Housing Benefit

Tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit would not usually receive the full Housing subsidy for a two bedroom flat where there is only a single person or couple in residence. However, people of pensionable age are not currently affected by the rules and therefore would still be eligible for the higher subsidy.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 Extra Care housing is designed for people in need of a higher level of support than can be offered within sheltered housing.
- 4.2 In addition to Elizabeth Gardens, Extra Care housing is available within Thurrock at two other schemes: Piggs Corner and Kynock Court. These are both Council schemes which only offer one bedroom properties.
- 4.3 The Council always have applicants waiting for extra care accommodation, although the numbers on the waiting list do naturally vary from time to time.
- 4.4 Opening up the two bedroom properties at Elizabeth Gardens to applicants waiting for one bedroom properties could potentially reduce the waiting time for a number of applicants. This can be crucial where applicants are currently living in unsuitable accommodation or where they are suffering from dementia and would benefit from a move as early as possible in order to minimise the impact of moving.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Joint meetings have been held between the Housing Directorate, Adult Services Directorate and Hanover and all are in agreement with the recommendation

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 A local lettings plan would help to achieve the Council's priority of improving health & wellbeing for those waiting for extra care accommodation because of the potential to allow an earlier move into more suitable accommodation with support.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Finance Manager

Currently, tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit would not usually receive the full Housing subsidy for a two bedroom flat, however opening up allocations criteria for two bedroom properties could potentially allow tenants to claim a higher subsidy.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Martin Hall**
Housing Solicitor & Team Leader

Under the Housing Act 1996 part VI Councils may only allocate properties within the terms of their published Housing Allocations scheme. This includes nominations to Registered Provider properties.

s.166A(6) Housing Act 1996 enables housing authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall in to the reasonable preference category. This is known as a local lettings plan and may be used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and other policy objectives.

Thurrock Councils' Housing allocations scheme allows the Housing Overview & Scrutiny committee to agree a local lettings plan to allocate to specific schemes outside of the usual requirements

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development and Equalities manager

The proposed changes would impact only elderly and disabled applicants with support needs and would have a positive impact by potentially reducing the amount of waiting time for appropriate accommodation for Thurrock applicants.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

Not applicable.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

Not applicable.

9. Appendices to the report

None.

Report Author:

Dawn Shepherd

Housing Strategy Manager

Housing, Business Development

**Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme
2015/16**

Dates of Meetings: 17 June 2015, 2 September 2015, 18 November 2015, 6 January 2016, 17 February 2016, 16 March 2016

Topic	Lead Officer	Date
Housing Investment and Development	Kathryn Adedeji	17 June 2015
Homeless Prevention Strategy	Dermot Moloney	17 June 2015
Right to Move	Dermot Moloney	17 June 2015
Update on Repairs Policy	Kathryn Adedeji	2 September 2015
Homelessness Prevention Strategy	Dawn Shepherd	2 September 2015
Elizabeth Gardens – local lettings plan (exception for 2 bed properties)	Dawn Shepherd	2 September 2015
Shaping the Council Budget Update on themed items as and when required	Sean Clark	18 November 2015
Housing Services Performance Update	Dermot Moloney	18 November 2015
Housing Strategy Action Plan	Dermot Moloney	18 November 2015
Housing Investment Programmes Update	Kathryn Adedeji	18 November 2015

Updated: 18 August 2015

Thurrock Choice Homes Adverts	Dermot Moloney	18 November 2015
Independent Living	Richard Parkin	18 November 2015
Shaping the Council Budget Update on themed items as and when required	Sean Clark	6 January 2016
Allocation Policy Update	Dermot Moloney	6 January 2016
Improving Energy Efficiency		6 January 2016
Update on Right to Move	Dermot Moloney	6 January 2016
Rent Setting	Richard Parkin/Mike Jones	6 January 2016
Shaping the Council Budget Update on themed items as and when required	Sean Clark	17 February 2016
Housing Asset Management Plan	Kathryn Adedeji	17 February 2016
Rent Setting	Richard Parkin/Mike Jones	17 February 2016
Shaping the Council Budget Update on themed items as and when required	Sean Clark	16 March 2016
Damp and Mould Update	Kathryn Adedeji	16 March 2016
Housing Strategy Action Plan – End of Year Update	Dermot Moloney	16 March 2016