



Warwick District Council

Housing & Homelessness Strategy

2017-2020

Evidence Base

About Warwick district

This section contains some general information about Warwick district in comparison with the county of Warwickshire, the West Midlands region and England as a whole.

Geography

Our district covers an area of around 110 square miles in the southern half of the county of Warwickshire in the West Midlands and is home to around 58,700 households (137,600 people). The area includes the towns of Kenilworth, Leamington Spa, Warwick and Whitnash, which together accommodate around 80% of the population while the remainder live in a number of small rural villages many of which are in the green belt. The district is bordered to the south and west by Stratford-on-Avon district, to the east by Rugby borough and to the north by Solihull and the city of Coventry.

The district is in a central part of the country and has good strategic transport links. The M40 runs across the area providing direct access to London and the south-east, and indirect links to the north-west and Scotland via the M6 and to the south-west by the M5. There are junctions of the M1 and A14 outside the district near Rugby, providing links to the north and east. There are good rail links to the rest of the West Midlands and to London. The government's preferred route for the new high-speed rail line "HS2" passes through the district.

The Census 2011 provides a rich source of data and helps to build a pen-picture of our district and how it differs from, or is similar to, other councils in Warwickshire, the West Midlands region and the country as a whole. The majority of data for this section is derived from the census and thanks and acknowledgements are due to the Warwickshire Observatory for their useful analysis and summaries which can be found at <http://www.warwickshireobservatory.org/>

Population

The district has the largest population in the county and the population density of 4.9 people per hectare is the second highest in Warwickshire and is above national and regional averages. The population grew over the ten years from 2001 to 2011 by over 9%, a faster rate than England & Wales and the West Midlands and the second only to Rugby in the county.

In terms of age profile Warwick is not significantly different: the average age of the population at 39.7 is close to the national average (but the lowest in Warwickshire) while in fifteen-year age bands the only noticeable variations are slightly fewer people aged 0 to 14 and slightly more people aged 30 to 44.

Our district has the highest proportion of non- "White-British" people in the county at 16.6% but this is still lower than is the case nationally and regionally. The largest ethnic groups in the district after White-British are "Asian/Asian British: Indian" (4.9%) and "Other White" (4.2%).

Rugby (11.7%) and Warwick (11.6%) have the highest proportions in the county of people who have come from abroad but these percentages are still below the national average.

The types of household in the district show some interesting differences with the national, regional and county picture: we have one of the highest proportions of full-time students in the country (among the top 10%) and this feeds into an above average number of single-person households: the highest in the county. As a consequence we have the lowest proportions in the county for each of the following categories: married/civil partnership; separated; divorced; and widowed.

Economy

Our local economy is diverse but three sectors account for over 60% of employment: "public administration, education and health"; "financial and other business services"; and "wholesale and retail, including motor trades".

Compared to national and regional rates our unemployment rate is considerably lower and has been throughout the period from 2004 to the present while average earnings for employees living in the district are higher at £32,582 in 2015.

The level of vehicle ownership (81.5%) is relatively high: the proportion of people travelling to work by car (44%) is also higher than regional and national averages but is the lowest in Warwickshire. However over 10% of people travel to work on foot or by bicycle, the highest in Warwickshire and well above the national and regional figures.

Social indicators

According to government figures the district is ranked 267th out of 326 local authority areas in England for deprivation, where 1st would be the most deprived. In creating this ranking relatively small areas are also considered and one such area in our district, Lillington East, was ranked in the 10% most deprived areas of England.

Some 53% of households were not deprived in any sense, the highest figure in the county, 10% higher than the national average and 13% higher than the West Midlands. Only 17% were deprived in more than one way compared to 24% nationally and 27% regionally.

The population of the district is relatively healthy with 84.5% of the population being in good or very good health, the highest in the county and better than the national and regional averages. This is also true of the narrower age band: those aged 16 to 64.

More than 90% of people did not provide unpaid care, again the highest figure in the county exceeding national and regional averages.

The 2015 Department of Health profile for Warwick stated that "The health of people in Warwick is generally better than the England average. Deprivation is lower than average, however about 10.3% (2,400) children live in poverty. Life expectancy for both men and women is higher than the England average." Across 30 different indicators Warwick was "significantly better than England average" on 18 indicators and not significantly different on the remaining 12. Local health priorities were identified as addressing alcohol misuse, smoking in pregnancy, and tackling obesity.

Overall the picture is of a relatively prosperous and healthy district with a growing population that is slightly younger and more ethnically diverse, driven in part by a large student population.

The wider policy context

Warwick District Council's corporate vision for the district is to make it a great place to live, work and visit where we aspire to build sustainable, safe, stronger and healthier communities. There is a corporate policy framework, known as Fit For the Future, that ensures that all strategies, projects and service plans focus upon three key themes: services, people and money.

Sustainable communities

A good quality, settled home environment is of central importance to almost every aspect of life and as a consequence housing strategy impacts upon many other areas of public policy.

The council has an over-arching Sustainable Communities Strategy with five broad themes (one of which is housing) that cover most of this wider context. Our aims and priorities for each of the other themes are set out below but it is important to stress that very often we, or another public sector body, have a duty to produce some form of strategy for tackling these wider issues and representatives from housing services have participated in the development of those strategies and plans. This strategy is not intended to replace those plans but to sit alongside them and complement and reinforce them where necessary.

Prosperity

Good quality, affordable housing of all tenures close to main employment centres or with convenient transport links can play a key role in enhancing the prosperity of the district. It is important so that people relocating to the district for work can find accommodation, normally in the private sector, while social housing can provide the stability for local people to find work and indirectly help those on benefits to get into work. Settled housing has also been shown to be important for educational attainment, enhancing the job prospects of younger people.

Our aim is to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Warwick district by pursuing a balanced and sustainable growth agenda that delivers improvements in each of these areas whilst protecting those things that make the Warwick district special.

Our strategic priorities are:

- Ensuring there are sufficient suitable and deliverable sites to accommodate growth
- Removing barriers to 'good' development and sustainable growth
- Ensuring the right infrastructure is available, at the right time, to encourage and support growth
- Ensuring effective promotion of the district to attract growth
- Helping to create the right environment for unemployed people to move into work
- Helping to uplift skills across the workforce
- Retaining the increased spending power created by economic development within the district to the benefit of the whole community
- Harnessing the economic benefits of growth (e.g. increased Council Tax base, increased business rates, new homes bonus etc.) to supplement Council resources and ensure high quality service delivery is maintained
- Making better use of public sector assets to increase financial returns
- Incentivising growth of existing businesses and attracting inward investment

Health and well-being

Housing has a significant impact upon mental, physical and social wellbeing. The negative impact that poor quality, overcrowded, unsuitable or expensive housing or the insecurity of having no home at all can have on an individual and their family is self-evident.

The Warwickshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) analyses the current and future health and well-being needs of the county's population to establish a shared, evidence-based consensus on the key local priorities across health and social care. This is used by the Health & Wellbeing Board to develop Health and Wellbeing Strategies and by Clinical Commissioning Groups to prepare commissioning and transformation plans for the local health economy.

The following priorities were identified in the Warwickshire JSNA Review and are the agreed priorities for the JSNA for 2015-18:

Vulnerable Young People

- Looked After Children (LAC)
- Educational Attainment of Disadvantaged Children
- Vulnerable Children

Mental wellbeing

- Mental Health (adults and children)
- Dementia

Long-term conditions

- Cancer
- Cardiovascular Disease (CVD)

Physical wellbeing

- Weight Management
- Smoking in Pregnancy/Smoking
- Substance Misuse and Alcohol

Carers

- Carers (adults and children)

It is worth recalling that local health priorities for Warwick have been identified as addressing alcohol misuse, smoking in pregnancy, and tackling obesity, all of which are included in the above list.

Warwick District Council's aim is to enable and encourage the people of the district to have an equal access to a healthy life and sense of wellbeing, ensuring that our actions are aligned with the Warwickshire Health & Wellbeing Board's strategy.

Our strategic priorities are:

To make every contact count (MECC) in recognising that the Council has many opportunities to impact on people's mental and physical health and wellbeing by:

- Increasing opportunities for everyone to engage in sport, the arts and cultural activities
- Supporting independent living and decent housing for all
- Reducing obesity, particularly in children, and improving health outcomes generally by encouraging the availability and choices for healthy eating
- Reducing exposure to tobacco smoke
- Discouraging drug and alcohol misuse
- Promoting and engaging in robust equality and disability policy

Safer communities

Good housing positively contributes to safer communities by well-designed estates with natural overlooking of public spaces and individual properties with strong and secure entry points. The reverse is also true though – poor housing can create the conditions for crime to thrive and, through its impact on individual's health and well-being, can also lead to people turning to crime. Furthermore housing landlords have a number of powers and duties to deal with nuisance occupiers, giving them an important role in tackling anti-social behaviour.

Our aim is to work in partnership to reduce violent crime, anti-social behaviour and re-offending.

Our strategic priorities are:

- Focusing on prevention of harm to the community and on the causes or risk factors which impact upon it
- Working in partnership with external agencies and the voluntary and business sectors to deliver our community safety priorities
- Focusing on areas where we can have the most impact and contribute to 'narrowing deprivation' in our District
- Reducing the prospect of serious flooding

Partnership working is critical to addressing crime and for our district the South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership is the key mechanism for this. It has adopted a wide range of

strategies for tackling various issues and fuller details of these can be found on our website at: http://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/info/20112/community_safety

Sustainability

Our aim is to minimise our use of natural resources and CO2 emissions, improve the energy and water efficiency of our buildings and operations and source as much of our energy as possible from renewable sources. We will also act as a lead in the community on climate change and energy efficiency issues.

Our strategic priorities are:

- Using our procurement processes to minimise energy use and CO2 emissions
- Ensuring our services adapt and have greater resilience to the impacts of climate change
- Promoting community leadership by supporting and encouraging community and business-led initiatives to reduce energy use and to secure more renewable and low carbon energy
- Maintaining a visible commitment to tackling climate change by retaining our commitments to the Nottingham Declaration and the 10:10 campaign
- Ensuring climate change impacts will be taken into account in decision making, policy development and significant operational initiatives

The council has an important role in addressing environmental issues at the local level. Housing policy in turn plays a part because homes are a major consumer of energy and therefore a major producer of carbon dioxide. Furthermore high energy costs impact upon disposable household incomes and can result in fuel poverty and housing debt, with physical and mental health effects and, at the extreme, homelessness.

In our district greenhouse gas emissions are higher than national and regional averages and domestic properties account for 28% of such emissions in our district. The most significant contributor is transport with 43% while industrial and commercial premises emit 29%. Total emissions in the district have fallen by around 11% since 2005 but modelling suggests that without intervention they are likely to stay constant from 2012 to 2027.

Our corporate approach is set out in detail in [Warwick District Council's strategic approach to sustainability and climate change](#) adopted as policy in 2015, which has three strategic aims:

- 1: Embed sustainability at a strategic level with the organisation
- 2: Address our own impacts relating to sustainability and ensure our physical assets and operations remain resilient in the face of a changing climate
- 3: Promote and enable sustainability and climate change resilience in the wider district.

More detailed objectives are defined under each aim with specific actions, a number of which relate directly to housing. The way in which the corporate strategy is cascaded into more specific housing-related actions is set out in the [Home Energy Conservation Act First Progress Report](#) from March 2015. This includes: making the council's own housing stock more energy efficient; providing more energy from renewable and low-carbon sources; reducing fuel poverty in the district; and engaging with other public bodies to achieve joint aims on sustainability.

Housing

The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the following five broad strategic objectives for housing.

- Improving the standard of new and existing housing in order to build healthy, safe and strong communities
- Increasing the supply of housing to meet housing need
- Increasing the range of housing options available to maintain independent living and prevent homelessness
- Meeting the housing and support needs of vulnerable people
- Engaging with our communities to understand and respond to their views

The council agreed a three-year Housing Strategy in 2013 to guide work on housing for the period from 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2017. The objectives for the strategy were arrived at after very wide-ranging consultation and were defined as follows:

- Meeting the need for housing in the district
- Raising standards of management, repair and improvement of existing housing and neighbourhoods
- Enabling and providing services that help people to sustain their homes

While there is no legal requirement for the council to have a Housing Strategy there is an obligation to have a Homelessness Strategy for the district and a new one was produced in 2015. We decided to prepare a two-year strategy so that it would run to the same end-point as the Housing Strategy and the two could then be combined into a single new document.

A full review of progress on the actions set out in both strategies has been undertaken and this is included in appendix 1.

The national policy framework

As well as a change of government in 2015 there has been a great deal of new legislation in housing and related policy areas since the last Housing Strategy was developed. This body of law and guidance /regulation sets the national policy framework within which local policies and strategies must operate. A summary of the most relevant changes is included below.

Energy Act 2013

This included provisions to enable the Secretary of State to issue regulations requiring private landlords to provide smoke and/or carbon monoxide alarms. The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015 took effect from 1st October 2015 and require a smoke alarm on every floor and a carbon monoxide alarm in any room which contains a solid fuel-burning combustion appliance. The landlord also has to ensure that any such alarm is in proper working order at the start of a new tenancy. Local authorities are required to enforce the regulations.

Growth & Infrastructure Act 2013

From 1st May 2013 this introduced a new procedure for developers to apply to the local authority to review affordable housing obligations attached to planning permissions on viability grounds, with a right of appeal to the Secretary of State. This three-year provision expired on 30th April 2016.

Enterprise & Regulatory Reform Act 2013

Regulations made by the Secretary of State under this Act require letting agents and property managers in England to belong to one of three "approved redress" schemes. The intended effect is that complaints against such agents/managers can be investigated and determined by an independent person.

Welfare Benefits Up-rating Act 2013

This placed a limit on the level of a range of welfare benefits in the United Kingdom. It introduced a cap on most working-age benefits, limiting rises to 1% per year for three years from April 2014, regardless of inflation.

Mobile Homes Act 2013

The licensing system that applies to mobile home sites in England has been brought more closely in line with other local authority licensing regimes by this Act. The Act also includes powers (not yet used) for the Secretary of State to introduce a "fit and proper" person requirement for managers of mobile home sites and to require local authorities to keep and publish a register of such people.

Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013

This Act makes it a criminal offence for a tenant of social housing to sublet the whole of their home for a profit and strengthens the powers of social landlords to tackle tenants who do sublet.

Care Act 2014

The Care Act is mainly about adults in need of care and support, and their adult carers. It outlines the way in which local authorities should carry out carer's assessments and needs assessments; how local authorities should determine who is eligible for support; how local authorities should charge for both residential care and community care; and places new obligations on local authorities. From April 2020 it also introduces a cap (value yet to be announced) on the amount people have to pay towards the cost of care and support over their lifetime.

Immigration Act 2014

The Right to Rent scheme was introduced through this Act to prohibit illegal migrants from accessing private sector rented housing. Under the scheme, private landlords, letting agents and homeowners who let rooms need to check the right of prospective tenants to be in the country by checking documents, for example a passport or biometric residence permit. Landlords who fail to make the right checks are liable for a civil penalty of up to £3,000 per illegal migrant tenant. The scheme was first implemented in part of the West Midlands from 1 October 2014 and rolled out across the rest of England from 1 February 2016.

Anti-social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014

This Act reformed the powers available to police officers, council staff and social landlords to tackle anti-social behaviour. It includes measures on injunctions; criminal behaviour orders; dispersal powers; community protection; and housing possession proceedings. It introduces the "Community Trigger" where a victim or community can require action if a locally-set threshold of level/persistence of behaviour has been reached. The "Community Remedy" gives victims and communities a say in out-of-court punishments for perpetrators.

Housing Standards Review outcome 2015

Starting in 2012 this review investigated the complexity of the various design standards being asked of house builders and brought forward proposals to streamline them. The outcome was to incorporate housing standards, with a small number of exceptions, into the nationally prescribed Building Regulations system from 1st October 2015. Additional standards can no longer be required through the planning process. The exceptions are three nationally defined optional standards: accessibility; water efficiency; and space. The local authority may require one or more of these provided that it has been tested for viability and then included in the adopted Local Plan for the area.

Deregulation Act 2015

Miscellaneous housing measures here included: reducing the qualifying period for council tenants wishing to buy their home from five years to three; removing the Secretary of State's power to require a council to produce a housing strategy; and clarifying the law around tenancy deposit schemes.

However the main new provisions in this Act apply to the private rented sector. It prevents tenants from being evicted where they have raised a legitimate complaint about the state of repair of their home. Private landlords must also provide all new tenants with information about their rights and responsibilities and, for new Assured Shorthold Tenancies, a landlord cannot serve a notice to quit ("section 21 notice") within the first four months of the tenancy, and can only serve the notice after that time if they have complied with certain legal responsibilities.

Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015

This Act places a new duty on local authorities to keep a register of individuals and community groups who have expressed an interest in acquiring land to bring forward self-build and custom-build projects and to take account of the register in developing housing initiatives and local plans.

The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding (Register) Regulations 2016 about the form, content and procedures around the register came into effect from 1st April 2016.

Stamp Duty Land Tax Act 2015

A new calculation method for Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) on residential properties was introduced whereby the rate of tax is now paid on the amount above certain thresholds rather than one rate on the total amount.

Although not within this Act it is worth mentioning that in the 2016 Budget the government also introduced a new higher rate of SDLT from 1st April 2016 for those buying second homes, adding an extra 3% of the purchase price to the standard SDLT rate for the property. The government's aim for this measure was to reduce competition between buy-to-let landlords and first-time buyers. It also overhauled commercial stamp duty, raising the top rate from 4% to 5%, thus increasing the transaction costs of land deals worth more than £1.05m and affecting those, including housing associations, buying sites to develop for market rent homes.

Cities and local Government Devolution Act 2016

This offers areas the opportunity to negotiate with the government for additional powers they feel they may need to create jobs, strengthen healthy communities, protect the vulnerable and build homes. A West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) came into being on 17th June 2016 and published its Investment Prospectus on 29th June. It has identified housing as a key priority and is setting up a Land Commission to help identify the land required for the homes of the future. Warwick has opted not to join the WMCA.

Immigration Act 2016

Supplementing the Right to Rent measures from 2014 covered above this statute makes it a criminal offence for a private landlord to knowingly rent premises to an illegal migrant and, if found guilty, the

landlord can face up to five years in prison. The Act also introduces a new mandatory possession ground related to illegal migrants in private sector tenancies.

Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016

From autumn 2016 the benefit cap will be lowered so that the total amount of benefits that a family on out-of-work benefits can receive in a year will not exceed £20,000 for couples and lone parents, and £13,400 for single claimants. A number of Tax Credit rates and welfare benefit rates, including Housing Benefit, are to be frozen for four years starting from 2016/17 while rents in social housing in England are being reduced by 1 per cent a year for four years starting in April 2016. Benefit support for mortgage interest payments is to be replaced by a loan scheme.

Housing and Planning Act 2016

This major piece of legislation is the most significant for the housing sector and for this strategy as it sets the future direction for government housing policy. It contains wide-ranging changes in all housing tenures. However much of the detail is left to regulations which have not been published at the time of writing.

On owner occupation it introduces the "starter home", which is a new home available to first-time buyers at a discount of at least 20% of market value and a price (after discount) of less than £250,000 outside Greater London. The buyer must be aged 23 to 39. Councils are put under a duty to promote the supply of starter homes through the planning system and will only be able to grant planning permission on most housing sites where a specified proportion of starter homes has been included.

The Act amends the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 placing a duty on local authorities to give enough planning permissions for serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in their district.

Among a range of other changes to the planning system it also gives the Secretary of State power to make regulations to impose restrictions or conditions on the enforceability of planning obligations in connection with affordable housing.

In the private rented sector the Secretary of State has powers to require landlords to ensure that their properties meet electrical safety standards and a national database of rogue landlords and letting agents is to be set up. Local authorities will be able to apply for "banning orders" against landlords/letting agents who have committed certain housing offences and both local authorities and tenants will be allowed to apply for a "Rent Repayment Order" for up to 12 months' rent against a landlord who has committed certain offences. There will be a new process for private landlords to repossess a property without a court order if they believe it has been abandoned.

For local authority housing the Act creates a new duty to consider selling "higher value" homes when they become vacant. The government will estimate for each local authority how much it could raise from such sales each year and the council will be required to pay that amount to the Treasury, regardless of how much it has actually been able to raise. Tenants who are not in receipt of Housing Benefit and earning more than £31,000 per year will be required to pay higher rents on a sliding scale at an extra 15 pence for every pound earned above the threshold. The additional rental income is not retained by the council but has to be paid to the Treasury. Finally the periodic secure tenancies (often called "lifetime tenancies") used by local authorities almost universally are to be phased out and replaced with fixed-term tenancies of between two and 10 years.

For housing associations the Right To Buy is to be extended on a voluntary basis to tenants, with full compensation for any discounts being paid to the landlord by the government. The intention is that this will be funded by the money generated by charging councils for higher value home sales although this link is not explicitly included in the Act.

In light of a reclassification by the Office for National Statistics and the consequent transfer of housing association debt to the public sector balance sheet there is a package of deregulation measures in the Act aimed at reversing this. This includes making it easier for associations to sell properties and to restructure their businesses and also limiting local authority influence. Alongside this are safeguards in new detailed procedures for dealing with insolvency of housing associations.

More to come:

Some of the changes set out above are still in the process of being implemented and, particularly in the case of the Housing and Planning Act 2016, many regulations are still to be produced. In addition there are other changes that have been announced or are being consulted upon that will need to be considered.

Neighbourhood Planning & Infrastructure Bill

Another bill was announced in the Queen's Speech in May 2016, to include: strengthening neighbourhood planning; changes to the use of planning conditions; consolidating and clarifying the law on compulsory purchase; putting the Independent National Infrastructure Commission on a statutory basis; and enabling the privatisation of the Land Registry.

New rules on licensing of houses in multiple occupation

In the winter of 2015 the government produced a technical discussion paper for consultation setting out proposals for improving the process for licensing houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)¹ and options for extending the scope of mandatory licensing of HMOs. (Currently only larger HMOs have to be licensed i.e. those with three or more storeys occupied by five or more people that aren't a single household.) Options put forward included extending licensing to all HMOs or to just those of two storeys and bringing poorly converted blocks of flats, and flats above or below business premises, into mandatory licensing. The consultation closed on 18th December 2015.

Capping of Housing Benefit on social housing rents

In the Autumn Statement 2015 the Chancellor announced that Housing Benefit for council and housing association rents (both social and affordable) will be capped at the same level as applies to the private rented sector for the area, known as the Local Housing Allowance rate and described in more detail later. This includes restricting Housing Benefit for single people younger than 35 to the rate for a shared room rather than a self-contained flat. This is to take effect from 1st April 2018 but will apply to all new tenancies entered into from 1st April 2016, or 1st April 2017 where the tenancy is of supported accommodation (see below).

DWP & DCLG joint review of supported accommodation

The two government departments have jointly commissioned a research project to map the type, scale and cost of the supported housing sector, along with who uses it and who provides it. This will be followed by a policy review to determine the way forward in light of the capping of Housing Benefit in the social sector and its potentially disproportionate impact on supported accommodation given the higher costs of provision.

Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

In December 2015 the government consulted on a number of changes to the NPPF with proposals to broaden the definition of affordable housing for planning purposes so that it encompasses a wider range of low cost housing opportunities for those aspiring to own their own home, including the starter home product referred to above.

Other proposals included: increasing the density of development around commuter hubs; supporting sustainable new settlements, development on brownfield land and small sites, and delivery of housing allocated in plans; and supporting delivery of starter homes. Final decisions are still awaited.

Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016 – 2021

In April 2016 the Homes & Communities Agency published the prospectus for a new programme of grant funding for affordable housing for the period from 2016 to 2021. A total of £4.7 billion is available to support provision of 135,000 homes for shared ownership, 10,000 homes for Rent To Buy and 8,000 homes for supported and older people's rental accommodation. The bidding round is open until noon on 2nd September 2016 but the prospectus anticipates a "back-loaded" programme with 90% of the grant being spent over the last three years. A continuous market engagement process will therefore run once the initial grant allocations have been announced.

Syrian refugees

Following a significant increase in the number of migrants fleeing Syria in 2015 the government decided in September that year to significantly extend its 'Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement

1 Broadly an HMO is a building or flat where basic facilities are shared by people who don't live together.

Programme' to help up to 20,000 refugees from the region over a five year period. The government works with local authorities and their associations to plan the resettlement programme and provides financial support to those authorities that agree to assist with resettlement in their area.

Warwick District Council is liaising with other local authorities in the region, the West Midlands Migration Partnership and the Home Office to determine ways to support Syrian refugees in our area.

Leaving the European Union

In the national referendum on 23rd June 2016 the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. The process for leaving takes a minimum of two years and there may be ramifications in a number of key housing-related areas, such as:

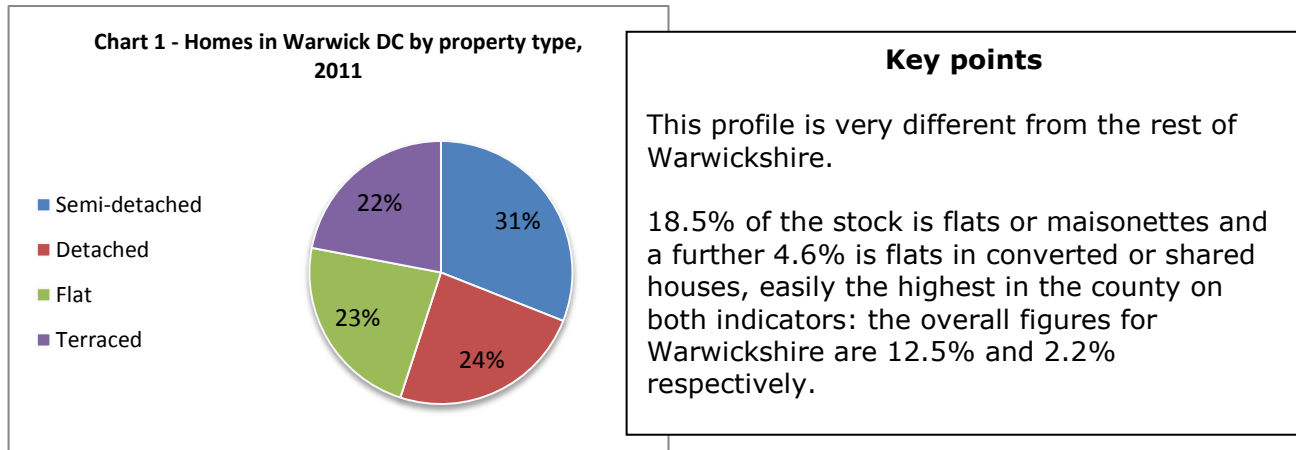
- The housing market
- The labour market
- Forecast and actual population growth
- The economy
- Financing programmes
- Procurement rules

Housing in Warwick district

The census in 2011 found that there were 60,427 dwellings in the district. In this section we sketch out a broad picture of this stock: the proportion of different types of housing, different sizes (in terms of numbers of bedrooms) and different tenures. We then go on to present some headline information about housing standards and conditions in the district and the spread of property values.

Property types

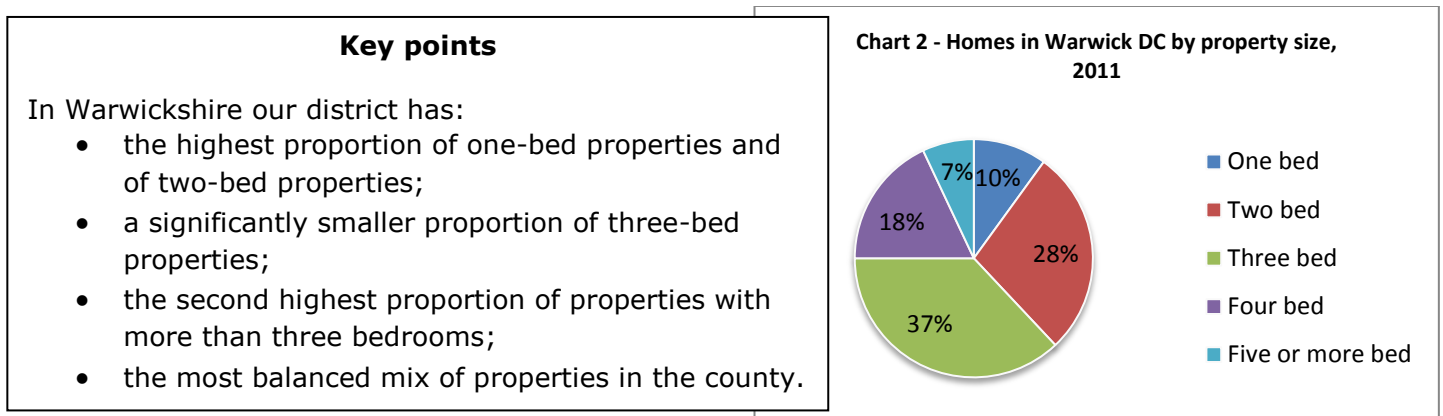
Chart 1 shows the proportions of the various property types.



When making comparisons the relatively high proportion of flats has a distorting effect. When this is removed and houses and bungalows only are considered the spread of terraced (28%), semi-detached (40%) and detached (32%) is broadly similar to the county average.

Property size mix

Chart 2 shows the distribution of properties in the district by number of bedrooms and the key points box flags up some significant differences with the rest of the county.



Tenure mix

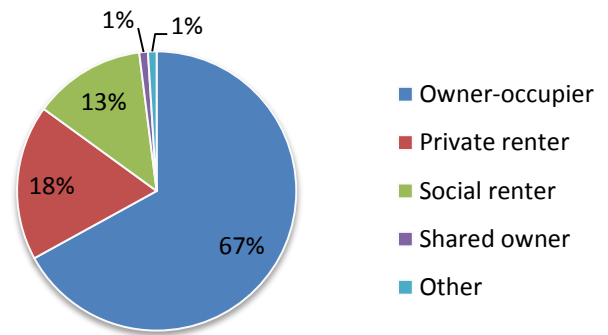
Chart 3 shows the spread of homes in the district according to tenure and again highlights how this contrasts with other councils in the county.

Key points

Warwick differs from the rest of the county in that it has the lowest rate of owner-occupation (67%) and the highest rate of private renting (18%), both figures being higher than the national averages.

The amount of social rented housing (13%) is the second lowest in Warwickshire and around 4% below the national average.

Chart 3 - Homes in Warwick DC by tenure type, 2011



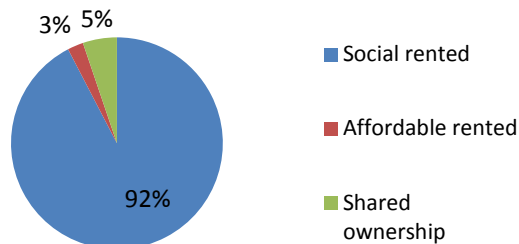
Affordable housing

In 2015/16 there were around 8,250 rented homes in the district owned by affordable housing providers (i.e. the council or a housing association) and around 450 further homes owned by affordable housing providers where a share of the property had been sold to the resident (known as "shared ownership").

Of the rented homes 93% were in the towns and 7% were in rural areas. The overwhelming majority of the properties were let at a social rent with a little over 200 being on the new (more expensive) affordable rent tenure.

The breakdown of all affordable properties by tenure type is shown in chart 4.

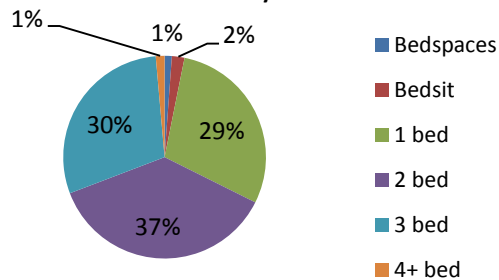
Chart 4 - Affordable housing by tenure type



As regards the size of affordable homes, information about shared ownership properties is not available but it is likely that the vast majority, if not all, will have either two or three bedrooms, with most having two bedrooms.

For rented homes the breakdown by property size is shown in chart 5.

Chart 5 - Affordable housing, rented homes by size



The above excludes around 100 properties for which details were unknown. These were mainly specialist accommodation owned by small providers and are most likely to be shared accommodation or to have only one bedroom.

Housing conditions

Data from recent stock condition surveys shows that the housing stock is mainly post-war with 73% of private housing and 85% of council housing having been built since 1945, compared to 59% and 81% respectively nationwide. In relative terms this is quite a “young” profile but it is worth noting that many of these post-war dwellings are now over 50 years old.

Housing standards and conditions are generally good with only just over two per cent of households in the district lacking central heating, lower than national and regional averages. Three per cent of households are overcrowded; the highest in the county but this is still well below national and regional figures.

Property values

Council Tax band data shows Warwick to have 61,386 properties on the Valuation List as at 2015, an increase of almost 1,000 properties (1.6%) since the census in 2011. The distribution of these by Council Tax band is shown in chart 6 while table 1 shows the range of value covered by each band. The values are not current day values; they are as at April 1991 so it is the spread of properties across the bands that is of interest here not the values themselves. We will look at today’s values in more detail in the next section.

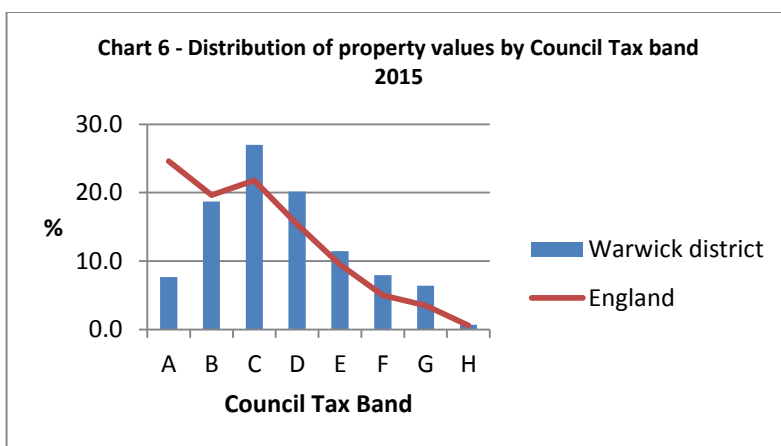


Table 1 – Council Tax Band values

Band	Range of values at 1 April 1991
A	Up to £40,000
B	£40,001 to £52,000
C	£52,001 to £68,000
D	£68,001 to £88,000
E	£88,001 to £120,000
F	£120,001 to £160,000
G	£160,001 to £320,000
H	£320,001 upwards

Chart 6 shows that just over a quarter of properties are in the lower value bands A and B, just under half are in the middle bands C and D and just over a quarter are in band E or higher. This looks reasonably balanced but in comparison with the distribution for England as a whole the district has many fewer Band A properties (i.e. the cheapest) and more in every band from Band C upwards.

In summary, the housing stock of the district differs in many important respects from other nearby councils and from the national and regional housing stock. We have:

- Noticeably higher proportions of flats and one- and two-bed properties;
- A larger private rented sector;
- Mostly post-war housing in good condition on census indicators;
- A much smaller proportion of low value properties.

The housing market

This section describes the local housing market in terms of the different tenures. It draws heavily upon a Joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Coventry and Warwickshire housing market area (JSHMA) published in November 2013 and an associated update in September 2015. Both were undertaken by GL Hearn Ltd and are available on our website. Other data sources are also used where appropriate and these are identified at the relevant point in the document.

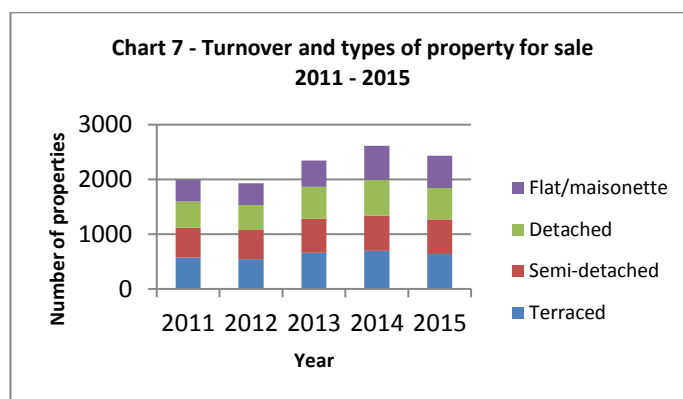
Housing for sale

There are estimated to be around 42,500 homes in the owner-occupied sector in the district (67%) and the "for sale" market is very strong, characterised by high and rising prices for all property types. Data from Hometrack at the time of writing showed that the average price for a home in the district was £338,600 compared to a regional average of £205,200. Prices had risen by 12.3% over the 12 months to November 2015, properties were taking just 2.3 weeks to sell and the selling prices obtained were 99.3% of the asking price. The ratio of house prices to average earnings in the district was 9:1.

As regards property types and sizes the average prices at the time of writing and the volume of sales by type of property over the last five years, again from Hometrack, are shown in table 2 and chart 7 below.

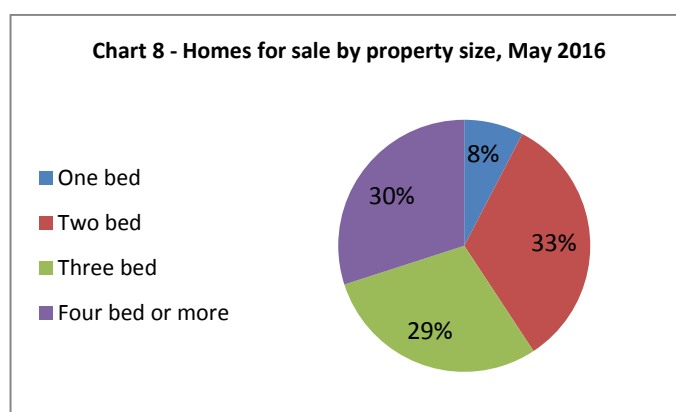
Table 2 – Average property prices in Warwick district by size. April 2016

Property type	Average price (£)
One-bedroom flat	142,800
Two-bedroom flat	191,600
Two-bedroom house	234,300
Three-bedroom house	293,700
Four-bedroom house	459,600

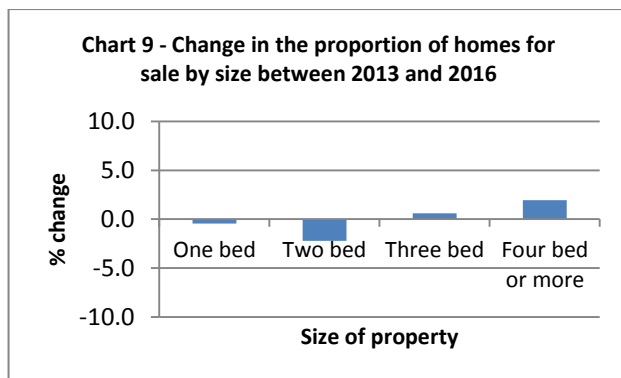


The supply of properties is relatively well balanced in terms of the proportion of types of homes for sale and has increased by over 20% in the last five years. Activity was highest in 2014 and did fall back in 2015 as chart 7 shows. The update to the JSHMA showed that the 2014 level of activity was still well below the average annual turnover between 1998 and 2007 (i.e. the ten years prior to the economic recession).

Data on sales by the size of property, i.e. number of bedrooms, is not available. However a search of the Rightmove website in May 2016 showed that there were over 700 homes available for sale at that time. Although mainly concentrated around the towns there were also a good number of homes available in the rural areas as well. Chart 8 shows the proportion of available properties by property size.



It is important to note that this only represents a particular point in time. However a survey of online estate and letting agents was undertaken in May 2013 to inform the JSHMA and this also analysed the results by property size. Again this only represents a position at a point in time but given that it was taken at the same time of year as the current data the two can be compared and seasonal differences can be discounted. Chart 9 shows how the two datasets compare.



There is a very close correlation between the two surveys. As they were taken three years apart from each other, this suggests that the May 2016 data shows a representative spread of properties generally available for sale in the district at that time of year.

The private rental market

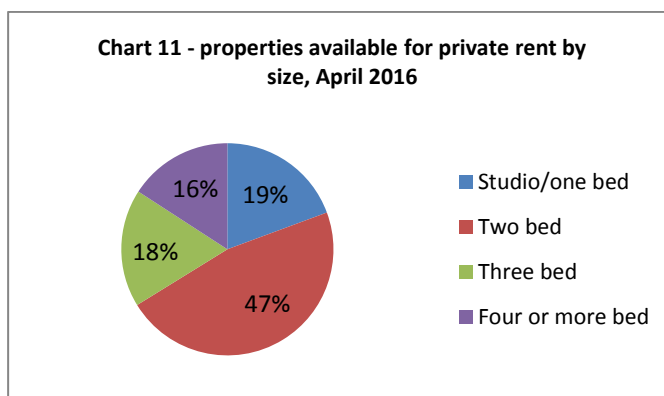
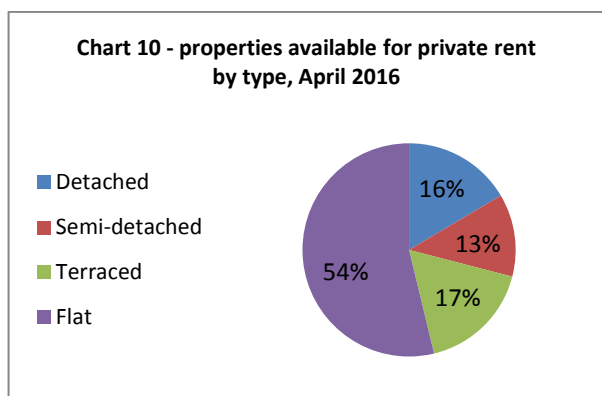
At 18% of the total stock there are estimated to be 11,400 private rented homes in the district. Hometrack data shows that median weekly rents across the 12 months from March 2015 to February 2016 by size of property were as shown in table 3.

Property Size	Weekly Rent (£)
One-bedroom	150
Two-bedroom	190
Three-bedroom	242
Four-bedroom	322

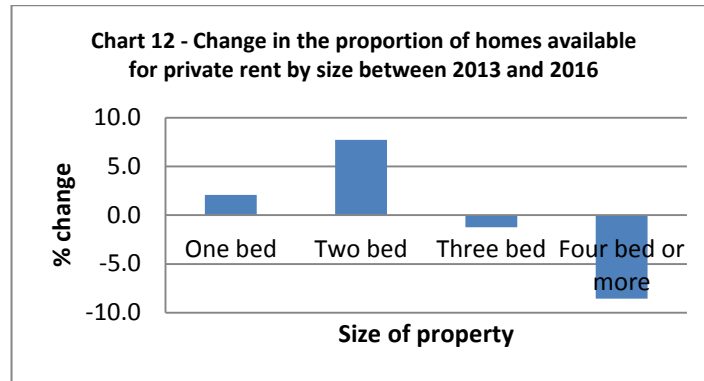
The update to the JSHMA showed that overall median monthly prices in the district were above regional and national averages and grew by 22% from September 2011 to March 2015: easily the highest growth rate in the housing market area.

As regards availability of private rented homes official statistics at district level are not available. Again using the Rightmove website this showed that there were around 280 homes available for rent at that time. These were mainly concentrated around the towns with a small number in the rural areas.

Chart 10 shows the relative availability of different types of property for private rent while chart 11 analyses the same data according to size of properties, in terms of number of bedrooms.



As with the “for sale” analysis above a survey of online estate and letting agents was undertaken in May 2013 to inform the JSHMA and included data on property size. Chart 12 shows how the two datasets compare.

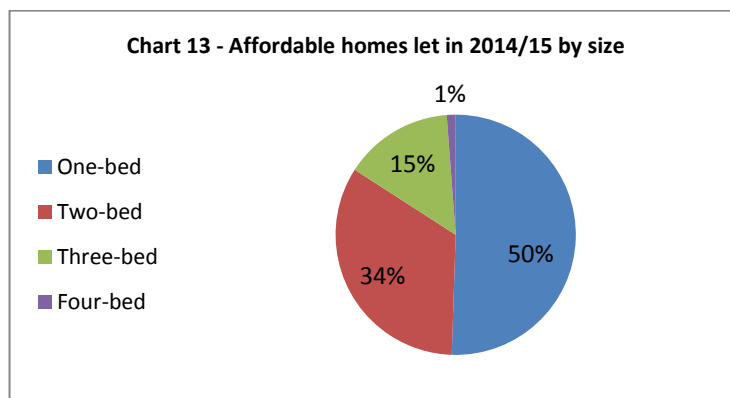


There is broad similarity between the two datasets as regards one-beds and three-beds but there was an 8% increase in two-beds with a similar reduction in four-beds. The differences are large enough to suggest that there has been some change in the market over the last three years but they are similar enough overall to suggest that the 2016 figures can be considered representative of the private rented market at the current time.

Affordable housing

At any point in time the number of affordable homes empty and available for rent is much smaller than is the case in either the “for sale” or the private rented market. In the whole of the last full financial year for which data is available (2014/15) there were 667 lettings of affordable homes for rent. This compares with well over 2,000 homes sold in the same year. Full year lettings data for the private rented sector is not available but the survey mentioned earlier found around 280 properties available at a single point in time.

The breakdown of the affordable lettings by size is shown in chart 13.



Comparing this with chart 5 above, which showed the spread of sizes across the whole of the affordable stock, it can be seen that turnover of one-bed properties is significantly higher than would be expected while turnover of two-bed properties is slightly lower and turnover of three-beds is half of what would be expected.

The higher turnover of one-bedroom accommodation may be explained by the fact that households with a one-bedroom need are single people and couples and are much more susceptible to change. At the younger end of the spectrum change is due to people forming couples and having children while for the older age group turnover may be expected to be higher due to people dying or having to move due to increasing care needs.

Rent levels differ considerably between council and housing association properties and within the latter there is a further distinction between social rent and affordable rent levels and between general needs and supported housing. The following table shows the rent levels in 2015/16.

Table 4 – Rent levels in affordable housing 2015/16

Property type	Council Social rent	Housing Association		
		General needs – social rent	General needs – affordable rent	Supported housing
Bedspace	N/A	105.71	N/A	194.92
Bedsit	63.73	85.89	101.45	151.70
One bed	80.33	98.60	114.16	124.65
Two	88.34	111.20	132.05	171.23
Three bed	100.09	120.94	146.98	159.82*
Four bed or more	110.03	138.12	158.09	N/A

* Based on a single property

As at February 2016 there were 4,949 tenants of the council or a housing association who were receiving Housing Benefit support towards their rent. This is around 63% of all such tenants in the district, well below the England figure of approximately 83%.

Housing needs

There are a number of key issues that tell us that there is a substantial need for more housing across the district:

- Demographic forecasts of population growth;
- A very expensive local housing market – a large private rented sector, high rent levels and high house prices;
- High numbers of people on our housing register;

Further information on each of these issues is set out in this section which again draws heavily upon the JSHMA and associated update.

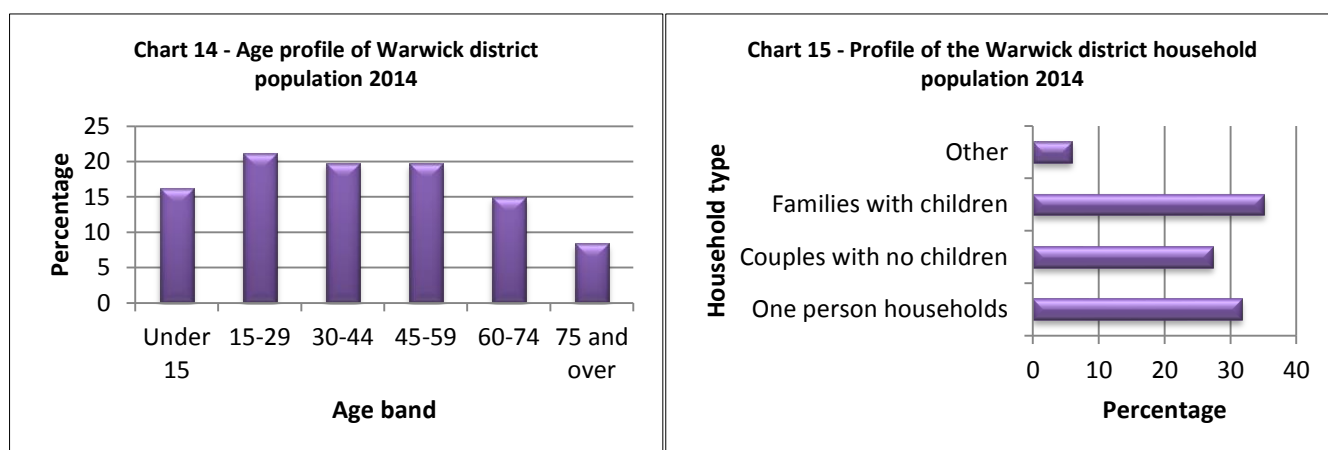
Homelessness is another key indicator of need and this is covered in a later section.

Demographic forecasts

A key driver of the housing market and the needs of the district is the size of the population, in terms of people and households, and how it is expected to change in the future.

As at the 2011 Census the population of the district was 137,600 people comprising 58,700 households so that the average household size was 2.34 persons.

The age profile of the population in 15-year bands is shown in chart 14 while types of household are profiled in chart 15.



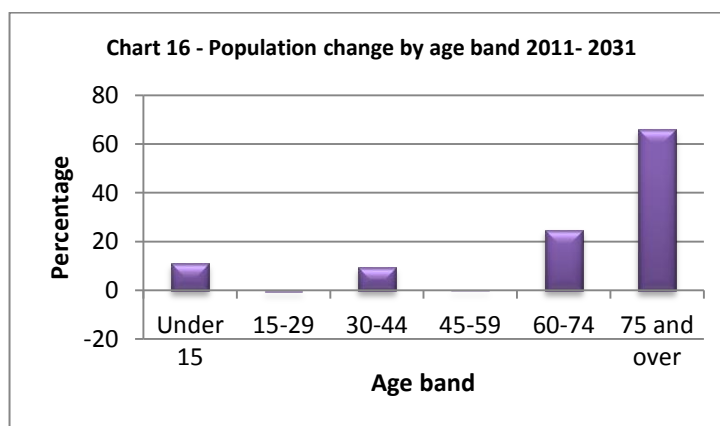
An important facet of the household population of the district that is not clear from the above chart is the number of students in the district. Full-time students account for 1.7% of households and are included in the "Other" category above. While this may not sound like a lot it is almost three times the national figure of 0.6% and puts Warwick in the top 10% of districts for students nationally.

The population grew by 9.3% between the two censuses of 2001 and 2011 while the growth in households was 9.9% over the same period.

In the 13 years from 2001/02 to 2013/14 the components of population growth were:

- 43% due to net internal migration (people moving to/from other parts of the country);
- 31% due to natural change (births and deaths); and
- 26% due to net international migration (people moving to/from other countries).

The population is projected to grow by a further 12.6% from 2011 to 2031 to 155,100 forming an additional 11,600 households (19.8% growth) with average household size falling to 2.2 people suggesting a big increase in single-person households. Looking at the change in population in each 15-year age band it is clear to see that the biggest increases are at the older end of the spectrum as chart 16 shows.



Affordability

Among other things the earlier parts of this section have set out the average costs of accessing the various tenures available in the district. In order to put this into context it is important to also consider the incomes of the population of the district but unfortunately there is no single authoritative source for this data.

Data from the Office for National Statistics states that average earnings for employees living in the district were £32,582 in 2015 while the median figure was £26,022. This excludes those in self-employment, for whom income details are much more difficult to locate from official figures.

However bespoke analysis for the JSHMA update that used a range of data sources and modelling assumptions, that would theoretically include all employment, suggested that the figures were £39,344 for the average and £29,925 for the median.

In considering affordability it is accepted practice to consider the price at "entry-level", normally taken to be the cheapest 25%, or "lower quartile" of properties compared to the lower quartile of earnings in the district. In 2013 this ratio for house prices was 7.82 compared to the national figure of 6.45.

The following table shows the lower quartile for-sale price in 2014 (taken from the JSHMA update)

Table 5 - Lower quartile sale prices, 2014	
Property type	Price of cheapest 25% (£)
Flat	127,900
Terraced	182,950
Semi-detached	201,000
Detached	315,000

The JSHMA update went on to find that the income required to be able to afford to buy a property at the lower quartile price was £51,430. Household income data from Hometrack suggests that 69% of households in the district earn less than this and theoretically therefore could not afford to buy a home at the lower quartile price.

The update also set out lower quartile private rent levels for various sizes of properties. In the private rental market Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is available for tenants as a system of financial support for people who need help to pay a private sector rent. The maximum level of private sector rent that can be met by LHA varies according to geographic area, known as Broad Rental Market Areas (BRMAs). While there are very small parts of the north and north-west of the Warwick district that fall in the Coventry BRMA and the Solihull BRMA respectively, the vast majority of the district is in the Warwickshire South BRMA so only this is included in the table below alongside the lower quartile rents from the JSHMA update.

Property size	Price of cheapest 25% (£ per month)	Maximum rent that can be met by LHA (£ per month)
Single room	329	291
One bedroom	550	511
Two bedroom	695	645
Three bedrooms	800	780
Four plus bedrooms	1,175	1,027

This shows that a household renting a property in the private sector at a lower quartile rent on an income low enough to be entitled to maximum Local Housing Allowance would not have their full rent covered and would have to fund a proportion of their rent from other benefits.

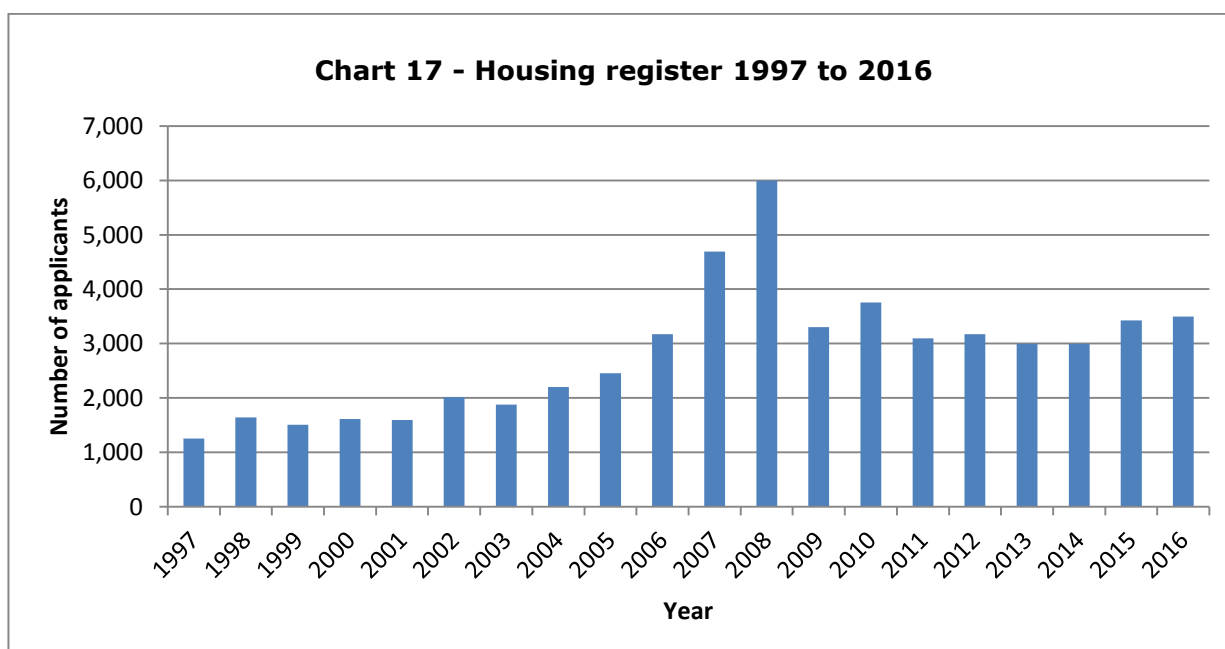
As at February 2016 there were 1,448 private tenants in the district claiming Local Housing Allowance. This is roughly 13% of all private tenants, well below the national figure which is around 35%.

The housing register

It is generally acknowledged that councils' housing registers are not definitive indicators of housing need for a number of reasons: people in need may not be registered; high proportions of people without a need may be registered either in hope or simply as a future safeguard; different councils define housing need differently; registers are not always well-maintained so that there may be significant numbers of applicants whose circumstances have changed and are therefore different to those that are recorded on the register.

Nevertheless provided that it is not considered as the only source of information and that the above limitations are borne in mind the housing register can still be used as one indication of levels of need in the district.

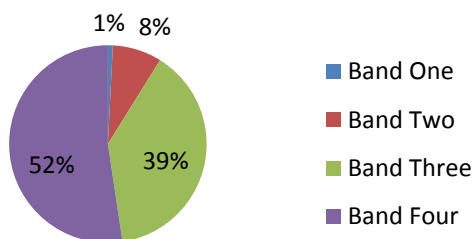
As at 21st April 2016 there were 3,496 households on the register. This was almost the same number as the previous April. The long term trend is shown on chart 17.



The number of applications was fewer than 2,000 until 2002 and first exceeded 3,000 in 2006. It increased hugely in 2007 and 2008 to almost 6,000 but fell back sharply in 2009. From 2011 it was consistently around 3,000 until increasing to around 3,500 in 2015.

The degree of housing need being experienced by an applicant is measured by their "banding" where band one represents the highest need and band four represents no housing need.

Chart 18 - Housing register by band, April 2016



Key points

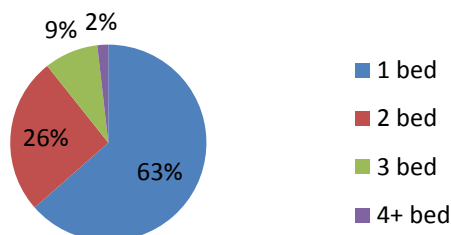
- Only 1% (28 applicants) are in the highest need.
- The two highest need bands together account for fewer than 10% of applicants.
- More than half of applicants on the housing register are assessed as having no housing need.

The housing register can also be analysed according to how many bedrooms the applicant needs

Key points

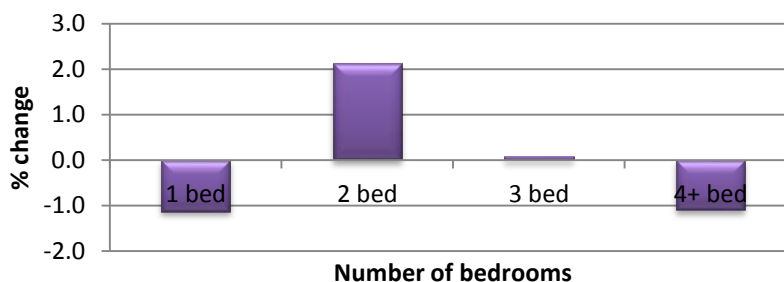
- By far the most predominant need is for one-bedroom property, accounting for almost two-thirds of applicants.
- Just over a quarter of applicants need two bedrooms.
- There is a very small need for large properties with four or more bedrooms.

Chart 19 - Housing register by bedroom need, April 2016



A similar analysis was carried out in June 2013 so that it is possible to see how this has changed over the last three years. This is shown on the following chart.

Chart 20 - Change in housing register bedroom need 2013 - 2016



It is important to note the scale on the vertical axis: these are relatively small changes. The biggest change is an increase of a little over 2% in two-bed need offset by falls of around 1% each in one-bed and four-bed need but the picture overall is relatively stable.

The overall housing needs of the district

The JSHMA update considered all of the demographic, economic, market, affordability and needs information and drew this together to form conclusions about the housing needs of each of the districts in the housing market area (HMA). The following are the conclusions from that study.

Across the whole of Coventry and Warwickshire there is an objectively assessed need for 4,272 new homes per annum from 2011 to 2031. Of this total the Warwick district needs 600 new homes per year.

Based upon the definition of affordable housing set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (i.e. not including starter homes) the annual affordable housing need is 1,462 new homes

across the HMA and 280 in Warwick district. This represents 39% of the HMA housing need and 47% of the Warwick district housing need.

Based on the income profile for Warwick district the net need from households who cannot afford more than social rent levels is 62%. From those able to afford more than social rents without welfare benefits but not able to afford equity-based products the need amounted to 24% and the net need for equity-based products was 14%.

As regards the Affordable Rent product the JSHMA notes that Affordable Rents will be higher than current Social Rents and that "This suggests that for new build, in viability terms, Affordable Rent might work for some sizes and locations – the affordability of such accommodation should however also be considered. This latter point provides some support for providing Affordable Rent at below the 80% maximum (particularly for larger properties), particularly in terms of limiting the growth in the benefit bill."

The JSHMA also provides guidance on the mix by size of properties for both market and affordable housing as follows:

Table 7 – JSHMA guidance on housing mix for Warwick DC by size of property

	One-bed	Two-bed	Three-bed	Four-bed
Market mix	5 – 10%	25 – 30%	40 – 45%	20-25%
Affordable mix	30 – 35%	25 – 30%	30 – 35%	5 – 10%

It goes on to state that "Individual authorities may therefore decide to provide an alternative proportion of one bedroom homes, in particular taking account of the fact that one bedroom homes:

- Make no provision for future household growth;
- Restrict opportunities to have guests to stay;
- Restrict opportunities for people to have access rights to their children;
- Do not accommodate couples who need a bedroom each, for example because of disability;
- Do not present an attractive option for people looking to downsize."

Rural housing needs

As well as the assessment of housing needs at a district level that supports strategic planning we also commission much more localised parish-level housing needs surveys. Warwickshire Rural Community Council carries out these studies on our behalf provided that it can secure the support of the local parish council. The purposes of these surveys are twofold: to consider whether an exception to planning policy could be justified to provide affordable housing on a site that would not normally get planning permission; and to trigger the rural housing allocations policy in that parish. Both of these are explained in more detail on the following page.

These surveys are generally considered to have a "shelf life" of five years. At the time of writing surveys covering the following parishes had been adopted by the relevant parish council and were still in date.

Table 8 – Identified parish level housing needs

Parish	Date of Housing Needs Survey	Housing need numbers	
		Affordable	Market
Baddesley Clinton	January 2012	2	0
Barford, Sherbourne & Wasperton	March 2014	8	7
Bishops Tachbrook	February 2014	5	11
Budbrooke	March 2014	7	8
Burton Green	June 2013	1	8
Cubbington	March 2016	6	3
Hatton	June 2014	7	6
Lapworth	June 2016	3	2
Leek Wootton & Guy's Cliffe	February 2013	6	0
Norton Lindsey	November 2011	3	0
Rowington	October 2014	8	4
Shrewley	December 2014	1	0
Stoneleigh & Ashow	February 2016	2	2

The surveys identify the size of property and tenure required and wider views about the parish. Full reports are available on request.

Need for gypsy and traveller pitches

A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment in November 2013 found a need for 31 permanent pitches over a 15 year period, of which 25 needed to be found within the first five years. There was also a need for 12 transit pitches over the same 15 year period.

Current initiatives on housing need

The principal issue in housing need is the shortage of suitable housing. In broad terms there are two ways of tackling this: by making better use of the existing stock of homes and by increasing the provision of new homes.

Making better use of existing stock

There isn't a significant problem with empty properties in any sector of the housing market and the impact that we can make by bringing empty homes back into use is limited. Nevertheless we do monitor Council Tax data and periodically write to the owners of long-term empty properties and we will support, advise and encourage them to take action. The private sector leasing scheme is an option which enables an owner to keep their property but lease it to a social landlord who will sub-let it to a household in need of a home for a set period of time. Where necessary we will use enforcement powers and we do charge the full rate of Council Tax on the majority of properties that have been empty for more than one month to avoid creating a financial incentive to keep a home empty.

For affordable housing we have revised our allocations policy, known as Homechoice, to give more opportunities for existing tenants to move to more appropriate accommodation if they so wish. This can help to tackle issues such as under-occupation and overcrowding while still creating a further vacancy for a non-tenant in housing need. Additional practical and/or financial support is available to help people wishing to move to smaller accommodation. We also promote and encourage the option for tenants to swap homes with another tenant as a further way of moving to more suitable accommodation.

We have a rural local lettings policy which seeks to develop sustainable communities in rural areas by giving first priority to people with a local connection in parishes where a need has been identified by an up-to-date Housing Needs Survey.

Local Plan

Warwick district does not have swathes of derelict brownfield land that can be regenerated and re-used and so provision of new housing is largely dependent upon the release of land for housing through the planning system. Over the last few years we have been developing a new Local Plan for the district and this is expected to be subjected to an Examination In Public between September and December 2016 and adopted if all goes well by the summer of 2017.

The plan provides for enough land to meet the full objectively assessed need of the district for housing identified by the JSHMA, including affordable housing, sites for gypsies and travellers, and housing to meet specific needs. It also provides additional land to cater for unmet need in other parts of the housing market area, principally Coventry.

It directs housing towards the four urban areas and to 10 growth villages and 24 limited infill villages. Development on garden land is only allowed in very limited and specific situations. Housing in the open countryside is restricted to five defined circumstances, one of which is on a site that would meet a local need identified by a parish-level assessment – known as a "rural exception" site. These are the sites for which the rural housing needs surveys discussed earlier provide the necessary supporting evidence.

The plan requires that sites with 10 or more dwellings should include 40% affordable housing on site although there may be rare instances where offsite provision or payment of a financial contribution may be accepted instead. Affordable housing of this nature is often called "Section 106 housing" after the relevant legal provision by which we are able to require developers to include it on their sites.

The mix of affordable housing required on these sites in terms of size of property (i.e. number of bedrooms) is based upon the findings of the JSHMA although some adjustments are made to the size requirements in response to the finding in the JSHMA about the lack of sustainability of one-bedroom accommodation. At the current time tenure requirements are expressed in terms of social rented, affordable rented and shared ownership. However the introduction of starter homes to the definition of affordable housing will require this to be revisited.

Delivery partners

As regards landlords to take ownership of new affordable homes in the district we have a number of “preferred partner” housing associations who we work with and that developers can choose from to buy the affordable housing on the large sites. The associations are also in the market themselves for land opportunities in the district.

In 2011 we entered into a joint venture with Waterloo Housing Group, known as W², with a view to accelerating delivery of new affordable homes. The original intention had been that the council would provide land and Waterloo would enable access to government grant via the Homes & Communities Agency. The number of pieces of suitable land in council ownership was found to be very limited but by looking for other opportunities the joint venture has nevertheless been able to provide 161 new affordable homes by the end of 2015/16 with a further 230 planned.

Council house building

When new financial rules for council housing came into force in 2012 our projections suggested that we would be in a position to institute a healthy programme of new council housing and to bid for section 106 housing. The replacement of an old sheltered scheme is underway and we also successfully purchased 21 new affordable homes on a section 106 site. However the announcement of the government’s intention to charge council’s a sum of money each year for potential sales of higher value properties has cast doubt on our ability to continue to fund a new-build programme.

Council Development Company

We have considered the possibility of setting up a housing development company at sufficient arms-length from the council to enable it to be considered as being within the private sector to enable us to develop housing outside of the local government system. However without substantial land, finance or other assets that could be transferred to the company it has been difficult to take this further although the option has not been ruled out at this stage.

Affordable homes programme

In the last three financial years (2013/14 to 2015/16) there were 494 new affordable homes completed in the district.

Table 9 shows the sites in the district that include affordable homes and are currently under construction.

Table 9 – Affordable homes onsite, July 2016

Site Address	Affordable homes
Hawkes Meadow, Harbury Lane, Warwick	64
Mallory Grange, Harbury Lane, Whitnash	99
The Fairways, Whitnash	34
Chesterton Gardens, Whitnash	51
Sayer Court, Tachbrook Road, Royal Leamington Spa (active elderly)	81
Newbold Centre, Leicester Street, Royal Leamington Spa	31
Napton House, Wharf Street, Warwick (physical and/or learning difficulties)	15
Warwick Gates Care Village, Warwick (retirement village)	24
Nursery Meadow, Barford	23
Semele Park, Radford Semele	24
Oakley Grove, Harbury Lane, Bishop’s Tachbrook	80
Lower Heathcote Farm, Warwick	314
North of Oakley Wood Road, Bishop’s Tachbrook	60
The Redwoods, Warwick	34
Sydenham Drive, Royal Leamington Spa	88
TOTAL	1,022

In total, at the time of writing (21 July 2016) there are 1,022 affordable homes on sites under construction. Most of these sites are being built in phases. While a number of them are well advanced with some homes already completed others are at a much earlier stage with the first completions still some way off.

Table 10 shows sites in the district with planning permission that include affordable homes where building has not started as at July 2016.

Table 10 – Affordable homes not yet onsite, July 2016	
Site Address	Affordable homes
Station Approach, Royal Leamington Spa	160
Bath Place, Royal Leamington Spa (adults with disabilities)	16
Quarry Street, Royal Leamington Spa	7
Theatre Street, Warwick	39
North of Gallows Hill, Warwick	170
Myton Road/Europa Way, Warwick	243
South of Gallows Hill, Warwick	180
Common Lane, Kenilworth	37
Parkfield Centre, Kenilworth (physical disabilities)	2
Westham Lane, Barford	9
West of Bridge Street, Barford	10
Wasperton Lane, Barford	3
Spring Lane, Radford Semele	26
West of Southam Road, Radford Semele	10
South of Offchurch Lane, Radford Semele	60
Seven Acre Close, Bishop's Tachbrook	20
Tollgate House, Banbury Road, Bishop's Tachbrook	2
Asps Farm, Bishop's Tachbrook	360
Grove Farm, Bishop's Tachbrook	208
TOTAL	1,562

In total there are permissions for a further 1,562 affordable homes on sites that have not yet begun to be developed.

Other specific sites that have been allocated in the draft Local Plan but for which a planning application has not yet been submitted make provision for approximately 7,174 dwellings, around 40% of which (2,870) would be expected to be affordable homes.

Housing conditions

The housing stock of the District is generally in good condition. This is partly because it is relatively new, with an above average proportion of private stock having been built between 1945 and 1980 and much of the social housing in the district being post-1964.

Across all stock, whether owned or rented:

- The 2011 census found that 2.1% of households lacked central heating, and 3% of households were overcrowded;
- Council Tax records showed that there were 1,364 empty homes in the district as at October 2015, approximately 2.2% of the stock of which 497 (fewer than 1%) had been empty for more than six months;
- In 2012 an assessment of the scale of fuel poverty (people unable to heat their homes sufficiently to keep warm) suggested that around 6,700 households (11.6%) were at risk of fuel poverty.

It makes sense to consider housing conditions by tenure because our powers and duties as a council differ according to tenure and because most of the data that we have is also tenure specific.

Council homes

Full details on the condition of the Council's housing stock and investment priorities are contained in the Council's Housing Revenue Account Business Plan which was produced in 2012 when we became responsible for the full financing of the plan following the government's ending of the subsidy system.

We own around 5,500 rented homes and they are in reasonably good condition. All of these homes meet the government's Decent Homes Standard. This states that housing should be: fit to live in; in a reasonable state of repair; have reasonably modern facilities and services; and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. We also own the freehold of over 500 homes sold on long leases, for which we retain some residual responsibility should major works be required.

Our current data on stock condition is drawn from a 2010 sample stock-condition survey which was validated and updated in October 2011. This estimated that we will need to spend £661 million on our housing stock over the following 50 years. It found that there was not a significant backlog of responsive repairs and as a consequence our revenue budget for cyclical, responsive and void repairs has been profiled at around £4.3 million per year. Less than 1% of the stock is empty at any one time, representing the normal flow of vacancies and there are few if any difficult to let or low demand properties. However there is an ongoing need to continue to repair, maintain and improve the stock and enhance the living environment to meet tenants' requirements.

Housing association homes

There are now over 2,700 housing association rented homes in the District and a further 450 homes in shared ownership. The vast majority of these are relatively new, having been built over the last 20 to 30 years to modern standards of design, facilities and energy efficiency. The condition of these properties is therefore believed to be good. Furthermore housing associations have for many years been required to put money aside for future repairs and improvements. They should therefore be able to finance such works as are necessary from their own resources.

The small proportion of housing association properties that are older are mainly second hand properties bought by associations for subsequent letting as rented housing. However even in these circumstances if the property is not in a satisfactory condition at the time of purchase the association is required by its regulator, the Homes and Communities Agency, to carry out repairs to bring it up to standard before letting it. These properties may have more significant future investment needs and housing associations do consider selling such properties when they become vacant to divest themselves of the financial liability and to generate money to invest into building new homes.

Under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 housing associations have been given greater discretion to make such sales without the need for permission so this may become an increasing part of their strategies in years to come. The Warwick district will be a particularly attractive area to consider for a disposals strategy because of the strong housing market and the high values that can be realised from sales.

As at 1st April 2015 only 4 units of housing association stock failed the Decent Homes Standard and there were just 9 housing association general needs homes vacant at that time, of which two were not available for letting.

Private sector homes

In 2011 a private sector housing stock condition survey was undertaken to provide us with a detailed understanding of the condition of housing in the owner-occupied and private-rented sector.

Key information on the private sector is as follows.

Private housing stock condition

- There are fewer old dwellings than the national average but more converted flats, semi-detached houses and houses in multiple occupation
- 19% of the private sector stock as a whole, and 34% of the private-rented stock, was built prior to 1919 and is likely to have higher ongoing maintenance costs
- 24% of the stock, and 32% of the private rented stock, does not meet the Decent Homes Standard. In terms of failure reasons 15% contain a category one hazard, 10% have a poor degree of thermal comfort, 3% are in need of repair and 0.4% lack modern facilities*
- Generally the older properties have the higher rates of failure but there is one exception to this: properties built between 1965 and 1980 have significantly higher failure rates than would be expected. This is due to a large number of purpose-built flats and other dwellings in this age band with thermal comfort and excess cold issues.
- Energy efficiency in the private stock is around the national average of 52 on the government's Standard Assessment Procedure rating where 1 is poor and 100 is excellent.
- There are no areas of abandoned or derelict housing in the District.
- As at 5 October 2015 there were 1,315 empty private properties (2.5%) of which 495 had been empty for more than 6 months.
- There are 330 licensed houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in the District and an estimated 1,100 non-licensed HMOs.

* The figures do not add up to 24% as some properties fail on multiple grounds.

Overall the private sector stock of 51,700 homes at that time was found to be in better condition than the national average on all indicators.

Current initiatives on housing conditions

Private sector

Our overall approach is to provide advice and guidance for owners, landlords and tenants to encourage a positive, well-managed and thriving sector that meets the needs of all parties. However where necessary we also use our powers to take enforcement action against bad housing conditions or poor management standards where we become aware of them.

Our website is the primary source of information about the principal rights and obligations of private landlords and tenants and this is kept up to date as new legislation and regulations are produced.

We have set up the Warwick District Landlords' Blog and produce a newsletter for private landlords as additional resources for landlords through which training events, new government consultations and regulations are publicised. We also have a long-standing Landlord Steering Group which operates

across the Warwick and Stratford districts and seeks to establish effective working relationships between private landlords, agents and stakeholders and the two district councils.

Within the Private Sector Housing Team we employ Housing Standards Officers to take action on poor housing conditions. In September 2014 we agreed a new corporate enforcement policy to ensure that we deal with all types of enforcement, including standards in housing, in a consistent manner. We follow any legal requirements but we try to work with and negotiate with all relevant parties to resolve the issue without the need for formal legal action which we regard as the last resort. Nevertheless where it is not possible to reach agreement with the person responsible we will use whatever statutory powers we have and will deal firmly with those that deliberately or persistently fail to comply with the normal rules and standards.

In limited circumstances we may be able to provide grant or loan funding towards the costs of works to bring homes up to reasonable standards. Most grants are means-tested and subject to certain eligibility rules and repayment conditions. Spending on these grants and loans over the last three years is shown in table 11.

Grant or loan type	Yearly expenditure (£)		
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Renovation grants	19,964	0	0
Renovation loans	7,035	2,956	0
Disabled facilities loans	0	0	0
Home repair assistance	7,630	4,539	42
Decent homes grant	8,340	26,235	23,949
Discretionary disabled facility grants	36,705	24,594	34,018
TOTAL	79,674	58,324	58,009

Houses in multiple occupation

There has been an increase in the number of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in Royal Leamington Spa in recent years, driven in the main by the increasing number of students living in the area and particularly in the central and southern parts of the town. It is estimated that over 80% of HMOs in the district are student accommodation.

While bringing positive benefits to the local economy, this also unfortunately brings problems for the settled community with increased complaints of noise in the early hours, poor property conditions and litter and household refuse in the streets.

In April 2012 the Council agreed an "Article 4 direction" for Royal Leamington Spa, which is a mechanism to require that planning permission is needed to change a single dwelling into a small HMO. This enables us to control the location of new HMOs and so limit their concentration in particular parts of the town.

Despite this complaints have continued to increase and recently the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee has set up a Task and Finish Group to investigate all of the issues around HMOs in the district. This is expected to report its findings and recommendations later this year.

Student housing

We also do work more generally on student housing. Our Landlord Liaison Officer (LLO) attended the Student Housing Day at the University in autumn 2015 and will be attending again in 2016. Over 1000 first year students attended for advice on renting private property in their second year. We used this as an opportunity to promote an app developed by Homestamp (of which we are a member) which covers everything students need to look at when viewing properties, particularly safety and legislative issues.

The LLO spent an afternoon with a Student Advisor at the Students' Union to see how we could work together to support students and encourage referrals to us for serious disrepair and have since worked with them on a couple of individual cases. Our waste contractor Suez and the Students' Union are trying to arrange a student initiative (litter picking) in Royal Leamington Spa during the next academic year.

Warwick Accommodation, which is the Warwick University lettings company, has two members on the Landlord Steering Group. We have had several meetings since November with Community Protection, Neighbourhood Services and Warwick Accommodation regarding student refuse and HMO issues.

Strategically we support the provision of student accommodation on the campus of the University of Warwick, which falls within our district, and the draft Local Plan allows for further expansion.

Local authority – major repairs and improvements

We have continued to carry out planned maintenance and improvements to our own housing stock based on the data that we have. In the last three financial years (2013/14 to 2015/16) we spent £7.2 million on cyclical and major works to the housing stock and £13.8 million on capital improvement and renewals.

A new full stock condition survey was commissioned in April 2016 and the results will be used to review the Business Plan and to produce a new Asset Management and Investment Strategy. The full range of actions to be taken on maintaining and improving our stock will be set out in that document rather than here.

Help and Support Needs

The majority of people are able to find and keep a home of their own. However there are still a significant number of people who require some form of help and support, either to access a home in the first place, or to enable them to continue to live there for as long as they wish. This may be through the provision of personal support services or aids and adaptations within a general needs home or through some form of supported housing.

Homelessness

We have a range of powers and duties to advise and assist homeless people including a duty to have a strategy for tackling homelessness in the district which we are incorporating into the new strategy from 2017.

Most homeless people and families will be on the housing register discussed earlier and will be banded according to the duty owed to them by the council but it's important to consider a wider range of information for the purpose of formulating the homelessness aspect of the strategy. This has been compiled and used to carry out a review of homelessness and to form the basis for consultation around homelessness issues. The full review is included as appendix 2 but the principal statistics and key points are highlighted below.

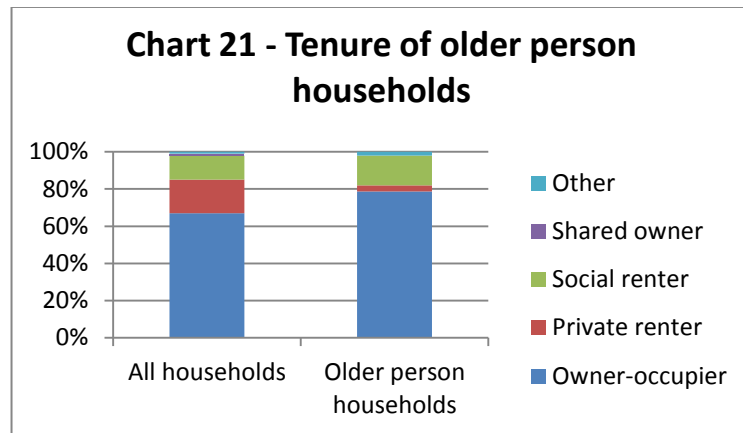
Year	Homelessness cases dealt with	Full duty accepted	In temporary accommodation at year-end	Homelessness prevented
2010/11	639	109	14	269
2011/12	489	123	12	144
2012/13	643	174	16	108
2013/14	708	129	14	136
2014/15	575	142	16	58
2015/16	705	172	13	71

- There have been big increases locally in both the numbers of homelessness applications received and the numbers accepted by the council. Both rose by a higher proportion than was the case nationally.
- The numbers accommodated in temporary accommodation at the year-end rose more slowly locally than nationally and the overall numbers per 1,000 households were well below the national average.
- Warwick District Council makes more use of local authority/housing association accommodation for temporary accommodation than is the case across England.
- Official rough sleeper counts show a significant increase in the district in 2015. Longer term, since 2010 the increase has been below the national increase.
- The main reasons for homelessness are "termination of an assured shorthold tenancy" and "parents no longer willing or able to accommodate". These were also the two most common causes in 2010 albeit in reverse order.
- A downward trend in those becoming homeless as a result of "violent relationship breakdown involving partner" between 2010 and 2014 has unfortunately reversed over the last two years but is still slightly below the level six years ago.
- The main priority need is overwhelmingly the presence of children or an expected child in the household. Physical disability cases increased each year to 2014 but fell back in the two years since, to 3%. Conversely mental illness fell from 9% to 1% by 2013/14 but has risen again now to 5%.
- The number of cases where homelessness was either prevented or relieved has declined significantly since 2010/11.
- The ethnicity profile of accepted homeless cases differs in some respects from the district profile with fewer white households and more who describe their ethnic origin as "other" or "not stated".
- Ministry of Justice figures on repossession actions show that social landlord actions have increased the most over the past six years. Private landlord actions have reduced albeit partly offset by more use of the accelerated landlord process. Mortgage actions have reduced the most of any tenure.

Older people

At 28% in 2011 Warwick has the smallest proportion of population aged 55 or more in the housing market area. This is projected to increase by 37.6% by 2031.

As regards the current tenure of older person households chart 21 shows the breakdown compared to the district as a whole.



There are many more owner-occupiers and slightly more living in social rented homes than is the case district-wide. Only a very small proportion (3.3%) rent privately.

Under-occupancy is very common among older households in the district with 57.5% having at least two spare bedrooms and a further 28.5% having one. Overcrowding is negligible at 0.1%.

An increase in the population of older people brings with it an increase in the number and percentage of people with dementia and mobility problems. Looking out to 2031 the increases are projected to be 81.1% for dementia and 66.3% for mobility.

Health and disability

Across the whole district population 14.8% of people are estimated to have a long-term health problem or disability (LTHPD) and 22% of households are estimated to include someone with LTHPD.

As at 2011 WDC had 3,429 mental health service users. As a rate per 1,000 adult population this was the highest in the county but this is no doubt influenced by the presence in the district of a mental health hospital/unit with 33 places in the district. Only Nuneaton and Bedworth also has such a facility and that has only six units.

Within Warwickshire, approximately 275 Warwickshire County Council customers with learning disabilities and 36 customers with physical disabilities are currently living in residential care, and in order to provide an alternative, the county council has a programme in place to deliver housing with care units that are suitable for adults with disabilities, i.e. there is a move away from commissioning additional residential care. In addition, several customers currently living within the family home environment, e.g. those making the transition from children to adult services, could also benefit from supported living accommodation as an alternative to a residential care placement. This includes customers with elderly carers who are finding it increasingly hard to cope and who could therefore share and have their individual needs met within a supported living environment.

In terms of local need or anticipated demand, in 2014/15 there were 261 customers with learning disabilities living in the community across the Warwick district, with a further 29 customers living in residential care. There were also 139 customers with physical disabilities and/or sensory impairment living in the community across the district, and a further 13 customers living in residential care.

The JSHMA assesses the need for extra-care housing to meet the demand arising from these growth trends and finds a need for 122 new homes per year in Warwick district of which 30 need to be affordable. These are included in the figures for overall housing need set out earlier, not additional to them.

Teenage pregnancy

In 2013 there were 42 conceptions by females under the age of 18 in the Warwick district. Half of these led to an abortion and half to a live birth. As a rate per 1,000 females aged 15 to 17 Warwick had the lowest rate of abortions and of live births in the county.

Need for adaptations

On the issue of support needs the JSHMA found that 14% of households have such needs and 11% of these (around 900 households) currently live in unsuitable housing. The most common support needs were for alterations to bathrooms and toilets, for emergency alarms, for help maintaining the home, or for level-access showers. Population growth would add an estimated 3,000 households with a support need over the next twenty years although many of these needs could be met within the existing home.

Current initiatives on help and support needs

Housing options and advice

We have a Housing Advice Team which acts as the first point of contact for people with housing problems. As well as offering advice on a wide range of housing issues and whether the council may be able to provide direct help it is also able to signpost people to other organisations and services operating in the district in appropriate cases. The team manages the Homechoice allocation scheme which is used to select prospective tenants for vacant council and housing association homes and also deals with enquiries from people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Homelessness

The Homelessness Strategy 2015 - 2017 had three objectives:

- Ensuring accessible and effective homelessness and housing advice & support services.
- Providing suitable accommodation for all homeless households.
- Preventing homelessness.

A particular difficulty when the strategy was being drawn up was the likely shortage of resources to deliver many of the actions that were considered desirable and this had to be made clear in the action plan. An additional problem then arose in that the managerial post responsible for taking forward many of the actions was vacant for a substantial proportion of 2015-16 and this inevitably affected our ability to complete a number of the tasks. Nevertheless we made progress on some of the workstreams and a full review of progress on the actions is included in appendix 1.

Specific needs schemes

We are currently building Sayer Court in Royal Leamington Spa with 76 flats for active people aged 55 or more and five bungalows for households that include someone with a disability or mobility issue.

Warwickshire County Council has led on a programme of extra-care provision with an objective of ensuring that there is a scheme in every major town across the county. A 42 home scheme for older people was opened in Warwick in 2013 and a 178 home scheme in Royal Leamington Spa for the same client group opened in 2015. It has not yet been possible to find an appropriate site for a development in Kenilworth but this remains a priority.

A scheme of 15 one-bedroom rented flats for adults with learning difficulties is under construction at Wharf Street in Warwick and is expected to open later in 2016.

Another scheme at Bath Place in Royal Leamington Spa also has planning permission and will in due course provide 16 one-bedroom flats for vulnerable adults with disabilities and there is planning permission for two bungalows in Kenilworth for physically disabled people.

Housing related support

Most housing-related support (HRS) for people with specific needs is delivered through the HRS programme. This scheme is administered by Warwickshire County Council through a partnership arrangement involving all the district councils and other providers of special needs services. This support fits into two broad categories: accommodation-based, where support is provided to

customers living in designated accommodation, or floating support where the support worker visits customers in their own homes in the community.

Due to the need to make savings over the last two years, the services being provided under this programme have been subjected to a fundamental review. This culminated in some streamlining and a retendering process for the services identified as being the highest priority but the termination of floating support services on 31st March 2016 for the following client groups:

- Gypsies and travellers
- Single Homeless with support needs
- Homeless families
- Adult offenders
- Young offenders

The transition to the new system is now underway with four new countywide contracts let from 1st August 2016 for:

- Accommodation-based housing related support for homeless and ex-offenders aged 25 or more
- Accommodation-based housing related support for young people aged 16 to 24, including young parents
- Generic floating support for people aged 25 or more
- Floating support for young people aged 16 to 24, including young parents

The five districts/boroughs in Warwickshire have been working with Warwickshire County Council on the development of improved arrangements for the delivery of services to 16 to 24 year olds for several years.

This greater coordination has led to a general improvement in the dialogue between agencies, improved safeguarding and the development of the Warwickshire Protocol for Assessing and Managing the Housing Needs of Homeless Young People.

The five districts and boroughs are now seeking to develop this successful work further through a proposal for the joint recruitment of a policy officer. The role would map existing arrangements and work across the two tiers of local government, the voluntary and community sector and support providers to design and promote the implementation of a joint 'Positive Pathway' to adulthood that supports all of our aspirations for young people.

Better Care Fund

The Better Care Fund (BCF) was announced by the Government in the June 2013 spending round, to drive forward a transformation in integrated health and social care. The fund will be deployed locally on health and social care through pooled budget arrangements between local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups. The Care Act 2014 amended the NHS Act 2006 to provide the legislative basis for the BCF. The planning guidance published on 23rd February 2016 states that "the housing element has been strengthened through the National Conditions, which require local housing authority representatives to be involved in developing and agreeing BCF plans." This marks a new and important role for housing authorities in helping to shape the long-term housing, health and social care agenda and extends beyond consultation about Disability Facilities Grants allocations, which are now channelled through the BCF. In Warwickshire, the BCF is overseen by 'Warwickshire Cares – Better Together', a joint body representing health and local authority bodies. Housing is represented through the Warwickshire Housing Group, with the current lead being Warwick.

Housing Assessment Team

We are currently piloting a collaborative project aimed at creating a new way of delivering housing aids and adaptations and home improvements for disabled and older people in south Warwickshire. It began in January 2014 and also involves Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwickshire County Council.

The objective of the new service is to deliver holistic housing assessment and solutions (including aids and adaptations) to enable residents to live independently at home. This approach represents an expansion of the old service delivered by district councils (primarily focused on just delivering

disabled adaptations) to provide a broader range of interventions to support service users to maintain independence and continue living at home. These include:

- the prescription and provision of equipment;
- advice on a range of housing matters including financial benefits, falls prevention, home safety, energy efficiency, accessing charitable funding etc;
- advice and support with alternative housing options including moving.

We are currently evaluating the pilot with a view to determining the way forward.

Housing and the Armed Forces Community Covenant

The armed forces community consists of those who are serving or have served in the Army, Royal Navy, marines or Air Force including reservists, along with their family and dependants.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a national commitment that aims to address the disadvantages potentially faced by the armed forces community. It is supported by more localised Armed Forces Community Covenants, which are voluntary statements of mutual support between local civilian and armed forces communities.

Warwick District Council is a signatory to the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Community Covenant and is fully committed to the principles and aims set out therein: to support the armed forces community and to encourage all those within the civilian community to make it easier for service personnel, their families and veterans to access the help and support they need.

In 2015 we reviewed our housing allocations policy and, among the changes, we updated our approach to applications from members of the armed forces community to ensure that it was in keeping with the principles of the covenant. In particular the armed forces are exempt from our local connection criteria and we have introduced the facility to give increased priority to those with urgent housing needs.

In December 2015 we began a 12 month survey specific to Warwick district to collect information from customers with a connection to the forces that accessed services within the district with a view to building up a picture of the armed forces community and their support needs.

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) is currently working on an e-learning project which will be used to help to train and educate frontline workers, housing and homelessness staff, serving armed forces personnel and their families. The relevant section of the WCC website is also being expanded.

Warwick District Council
Housing Strategy 2017 - 2020

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Review of Housing Strategy 2014-17 and
Homelessness Strategy 2015-17

Appendix 2 – Homelessness Review 2016



Appendix one

Housing Strategy 2014 – 17

Homelessness Strategy 2015 – 17

Review of Action Plans

HOUSING STRATEGY 2014 - 2017

Objective 1 – Enabling and providing services that help people to sustain their homes

Action	Progress
1.1 Working with Warwickshire County Council as it identifies its priorities for housing-related support services that have in the past been funded by the Supporting People regime, such as people with mental health problems, people suffering domestic abuse, substance mis-users, and homeless people with support needs.	Complete. Warwickshire County Council is now re-procuring providers for the services that it has identified as being a continued priority in the context of a significant cut in available funding.
1.2 Being fair and supportive but firm. This means using all available means to provide help and support to those who need it but also using our enforcement powers as a local authority for those who are causing problems (to themselves or to others) if they refuse to engage with or respond to our offer of help.	Complete. Staff were briefed through existing team communication channels about this approach to customer service.
1.3 Working with our partners across all sectors to support people in financial difficulties.	Ongoing. We work with Breathing Space to offer financial and debt advice to all residents of the district regardless of tenure. We have been working with Warwickshire CC to set up a viable Credit Union in the district and we also work in partnership with CAB.
1.4 Redesigning our service structure, reviewing policies and procedures across the service and developing service level agreements, internally and with service providers, to deliver better outcomes for customers.	Complete. The new service structure was implemented from September 2014.
1.5 Reviewing and updating the homelessness strategy.	Complete. A new strategy was introduced from 1 st April 2015.
1.6 Working with Warwickshire County Council on its extra-care programme providing more flexible housing-with-support options for older people.	Schemes are open in Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa. Work to find a site in Kenilworth is ongoing.
1.7 Continuing to provide grants/loans to help low-income owner-occupiers with essential repairs or to rectify dangerous conditions.	Provision for grants in these circumstances is still available in special circumstances.
1.8 Working with partners to raise awareness and educate residents on energy efficiency issues, assisting with grants and loans where appropriate and seeking to raise energy ratings, particularly in the private rented sector using the Housing, Health & Safety Rating System.	We have a service level agreement with Act On Energy to give free energy-saving advice to local householders and training for staff. We are also part of a county-wide partnership funded through Public Health Warwickshire called "Warm and Well in Warwickshire". This provides a number of specialist services for the most vulnerable members of the community. Fuller details can be found in the Warwick District Council Home Energy Conservation Act First progress Report, March 2015.

Objective 1 – Enabling and providing services that help people to sustain their homes

Action	Progress
1.9 Continuing to seek a proportion of properties built to the Lifetime Homes Standard on new-build schemes.	We continued to require this until the government introduced new national rules about housing standards which prevent us from doing so.
1.10 Expecting new developments to achieve “secured by design” standards for the estate layout.	We continued to require this until the government introduced new national rules about housing standards which prevent us from doing so.
1.11 Requiring new-build affordable housing to meet a minimum of Code For Sustainable Homes level three standard.	We continued to require this until the government introduced new national rules about housing standards which prevent us from doing so.
1.12 Gaining a better understanding of the support needs of our tenants through annual customer visits, making every contact count by using feedback from repairs and gas servicing contractors to prioritise visits to customers.	Complete. Annual customer visits were introduced in summer 2015.
1.13 Reviewing the information provided to tenants and applicants.	Complete.

Objective Two – Meeting the need for housing across the district

Action	Progress
2.1.1 Updating and broadening our understanding of district and local housing markets and needs and responding to the findings of the new Joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (JSHMA).	We incorporated the JSHMA findings into our requirements for new affordable housing schemes from 1 st April 2014. An update to the JSHMA was completed in September 2015.
2.1.2 Completing the development of the new Local Plan to identify the land needed to deliver the housing that the district needs.	Not yet complete due to a requirement imposed by the Inspector to identify further housing sites to accommodate wider housing needs.
2.1.3 Ensuring that larger housing schemes include an appropriate proportion of affordable housing and a sustainable mix of property types and sizes.	An affordable housing policy mix based upon JSHMA needs has been required on all large sites.
2.1.4 Working with our partner housing associations to ensure that new affordable homes are provided by a mixture of social landlords across the district.	Work has continued with the existing range of partners and a new partner, Fortis Living, was invited to, and joined, the partnership from 1 st April 2015.
2.1.5 Creatively using the council’s assets and finance to deliver further new homes working in partnership with Waterloo Housing Group through the W2 Joint Venture.	Work through W2 continues and has achieved 161 new homes with a further 230 affordable homes in the pipeline.
2.1.6 Investigating the best way of using the new financial freedoms to build new council housing.	This was overtaken by events as the new government proposed a policy to charge a levy council housing based upon estimates of high value vacant properties each year. This introduced a high degree of uncertainty into what funds would be available, which has yet to be resolved.
2.1.7 Looking to provide for the identified gypsy and traveller needs through the planning system.	This work is ongoing through the Local Plan process referred to in 2.1.2 above.

Objective Two – Meeting the need for housing across the district

Action	Progress
2.1.8 Restricting rents on Affordable Rent homes so that the average on any scheme is no more than the mid-point between average social rent and 80% of average market rent.	In place and ongoing.
2.1.9 Refreshing our approach to the provision of rural housing, taking account of the new scheme for neighbourhood planning and the new Local Plan policies on village housing options.	We revised our Local Plan policies on rural housing and a number of sites have been identified in rural areas. Warwickshire Rural Community Council has been procured to carry out parish-level housing needs surveys (where the parish council is supportive) with the programme of surveys based upon prioritising villages with identified sites.
2.2.1 Developing a “Buy To Flip” policy whereby the council and its housing association partners consider purchasing existing homes for sale to let them on social or affordable rents.	This was incorporated into the wider work under action 2.1.6 to consider the use of any surpluses in housing funds
2.2.2 Reviewing the housing allocations policy, giving consideration to prioritising existing tenants, local connection policies, the potential use of fixed term tenancies and the handling of applicants with no housing need.	Complete. The new allocations policy went live in June 2016 and gives tenants greater priority for vacancies and introduces local connection policies. Fixed term tenancies and exclusion of applicants with no housing need was not taken forward.
2.2.3 Looking for new ways to incentivise people who are under-occupying their homes to move to more appropriate accommodation.	We have implemented a new scheme offering practical and financial support with downsizing and greater priority through the allocations policy.
2.2.4 Reviewing and updating our strategy for bringing empty homes back into use.	We assessed the available data and decided that the number of properties involved did not warrant developing a completely new strategy.
2.2.5 Looking for opportunities to create more appropriate housing with a higher degree of energy efficiency by the modernisation, remodelling or regeneration of existing housing schemes and estates.	Ongoing. One modernisation scheme is underway on the site of an old sheltered housing scheme – Fetherston Court – and possibilities are being investigated around Lillington.

Objective Three – Raising standards of management, repair and improvement of existing housing and neighbourhoods

Action	Progress
3.1 Working to develop ways to inform and advise private landlords and tenants of their rights and obligations.	Ongoing. We have set up the Warwick District Landlords’ Blog, begun publishing a newsletter for private landlords, have updated our website with relevant information and continued to disseminate information and good practice through the Landlord Steering Group and Forum.
3.2 Developing an enforcement policy for private sector housing to be followed where landlords fail to engage or respond to more informal approaches.	Complete. The council adopted a new corporate policy on enforcement across all relevant enforcement services from October 2014.

Objective Three – Raising standards of management, repair and improvement of existing housing and neighbourhoods

Action	Progress
3.3 Refreshing our data on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and investigating whether to extend the licensing of HMOs to other HMOs not currently covered.	An internal refresh of the data was undertaken. The government consulted on extending the rules on HMO licensing and action was therefore deferred pending the outcome of that review. However due to increasing issues with HMOs in the district the Overview & Scrutiny Committee decided to set up a Task & Finish Group in 2016/17 to investigate the issue in depth.
3.4 Investigating whether to introduce additional licensing for buildings converted into flats and also for shared houses.	See 3.3 above.
3.5 Completing a pilot scheme remodelling Home Improvement Agency services on a cross-tenure basis across southern Warwickshire and evaluating the results.	The pilot scheme has been extended until March 2017.
3.6 Building on our working relationship with the University of Warwick in relation to student housing in the district.	Ongoing. We attended Student Housing Day at the University and have worked with the Students' Union housing advisor on specific cases. We have also done some joint work with the university's lettings company to try to tackle refuse problems and HMO issues.
3.7 Reviewing the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (HRABP) to ensure that our approach to managing, maintaining and improving our own stock remains relevant and up-to-date.	The HRABP is regularly reviewed to ensure no major variance from projections. A fuller review is now underway to take account of new government legislation and will also incorporate the findings of a new stock condition survey that commenced in July 2016.
3.8 Engaging with our council tenants to develop a WDC Standard for homes and neighbourhoods that exceeds the Decent Homes Standard and that embraces customer choice where possible.	Not yet started.
3.9 Looking at how to creatively manage our housing assets by developing a new Asset Management Strategy.	A new stock condition survey is underway to enable the new Asset Management Strategy to be prepared during 2017.
3.10 Reviewing our management of leaseholder properties.	Complete.

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2015 – 2017

Action	Progress
HS1 Reviewing and updating literature for Housing Advice Services and making it more widely available, including a Services Directory for the district to be distributed online and in paper form with clear information on people’s housing options to prevent homelessness	Some progress has been made with the Homechoice application form and guidance booklet having been rewritten to plain English standard. A review of the other literature has been carried out and the findings are being considered at the time of writing. The Services Directory has not been done.
HS2 Investigating whether housing staff can do drop-in surgeries in other agencies’ buildings.	This has been considered and drop-ins have been introduced at the Salvation Army as this was the most appropriate location.
HS3 Establishing links with the emerging migrant and black and minority ethnic communities to ensure access to services	Some work has been done to engage with communities via the local Sikh temple and the Sydni centre.
HS4 Setting up a seminar with voluntary sector organisations to agree housing options	Not done.
HS5 Including visits to other agencies in staff training programmes	This is now part of the induction process for the Housing Advice & Allocations Manager position. More junior appointments attend the Salvation Army drop-in with existing staff.
HS6 Preventing homelessness as a result of eviction or abandonment from Council and Registered Social Landlord accommodation	Not done.
HS7 Developing a Mental Health Protocol for homeless people	Not done.
HS8 Reviewing the approach to people leaving prison - building links with relevant persons in the criminal justice and prison systems	Not done.
HS9 Developing a clear Protocol for the Council’s Housing Management team and Registered Providers with stock in the District on how cases threatened with homelessness involving tenants who are victims of domestic abuse should be dealt with	Work is underway internally to draft this protocol for WDC and this will then be discussed with Registered Providers to see if it can be more widely adopted.
HS10 Setting up regular partnership meeting to discuss individual cases	Partnership meetings have been set up involving Police, Way Ahead, Helping Hands, Housing, Health & Community Protection, Night Shelter.
HS11 Explore opportunities and prepare bids for additional resources for actions HS12 to HS20	This was undertaken with limited success (see HS12 and HS19 below).
The following actions were all intended for the second year of the strategy provided that resources could be found under action HS11.	
HS12 Increasing online housing options.	We secured funding from central government and will be introducing online housing applications in 2016/17.
HS13 Looking at potential for outreach services and linking these to	Not resourced.

	employment and training advice	
HS14	Investigating the need for an independent Housing Advice Service for Young People	Not resourced.
HS15	Investigating whether lockers could be provided for street homeless	Not resourced.
HS16	Arranging joint training for council housing staff and voluntary sector workers run by an independent provider	Not resourced.
HS17	Reviewing the accommodation needs of homeless people and considering options for provision	The review has begun.
HS18	Working in partnership with schools and prisons to raise awareness of homelessness – developing a training module for students	Not resourced.
HS19	Exploring opportunities to extend mediation services	Work is underway to introduce a mediation service that will operate corporately across all council services.
HS20	Setting up robust record-keeping systems for all contacts with rough sleepers	Partially implemented – we now record approaches through the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol and contacts through the drop-in work at the Salvation Army.



Appendix two

Homelessness Review 2016

Executive Summary

- While the priority in housing policy for national government is home ownership it continues to promote preventing and tackling homelessness and action on rough sleeping within the framework of welfare reform and public sector spending restraint.
- In the context of seeking to create sustainable communities Warwick District Council regards housing as a priority theme and aims to tackle housing needs through its Housing Strategy and Local Plan.
- There have been big increases locally in both the numbers of homelessness applications received and the numbers accepted by the council. Both rose by a higher proportion than was the case nationally.
- The numbers accommodated in temporary accommodation at the year-end rose more slowly locally than nationally and the overall number per 1,000 households was well below the national average.
- Warwick District Council makes more use of local authority/housing association accommodation for temporary accommodation than is the case across England.
- Official rough sleeper counts show a significant increase in the district in 2015. Longer term, since 2010 the increase has been below the national increase.
- The main reasons for homelessness are "termination of an assured shorthold tenancy" and "parents no longer willing or able to accommodate". These were also the two most common causes in 2010 albeit in reverse order.
- A downward trend in those becoming homeless as a result of "violent relationship breakdown involving partner" between 2010 and 2014 has unfortunately reversed over the last two years but is still slightly below the level six years ago.
- The main priority need is overwhelmingly the presence of either children or an expected child in the household. Physical disability cases increased each year to 2014 but fell back in the two years since, to 3%. Conversely mental illness fell from 9% to 1% by 2013/14 but has risen again now to 5%.
- The number of cases where homelessness was either prevented or relieved increased by 39% from 2010 to 2014. It fell significantly in 2014/15 and despite a small rise in 2015/16 it is still well below the 2014 level.
- The ethnicity profile of accepted homeless cases shows some differences from the district profile with fewer white households and more who describe their ethnic origin as "other" or "not stated".
- Ministry of Justice figures on repossession actions show that social landlord actions have increased the most over the past six years. Private landlord actions have reduced albeit partly offset by more use of the accelerated landlord process. Mortgage actions have reduced the most of any tenure.
- Local agency data supplements the official statistics and provides valuable additional detail and context in describing the picture of homelessness locally.

1 Introduction

Under the Homelessness Act 2002 district councils have a duty to prepare a Homelessness Strategy and, in order to inform this, may undertake a homelessness review for their district.

Warwick District Council's current Homelessness Strategy lasts until 2017 and we are therefore doing a new homelessness review to help with the preparation of a replacement strategy. As the council's Housing Strategy also runs until 2017 we are taking the opportunity to combine the two into a single cohesive strategy for the district from 2017.

The action plan for the current strategy is being reviewed with local service providers to see how much has been done and whether there are any outstanding actions that should be carried forward into the new strategy.

Nevertheless a homelessness review is still important to inform the relevant elements of the new strategy. This report contains a range of statistics about homelessness in the Warwick district since the last strategy was introduced in 2015 and compares this with the national situation.

2 Government policy

Nationally government policy on housing since the 2015 General Election has shifted significantly towards the promotion and extension of home ownership. However it continues to fund the National Homelessness Advice Service and increasingly sees homelessness prevention as critical: it has continued the homelessness prevention funding of £315 million across the current Spending Review period.

The ministerial working group set up under the coalition government continues to meet, bringing together nine different departments across government to ensure that the policy agendas of those departments recognise and take account of homelessness and how what they do interacts with it. It has set up a programme of work to address the underlying factors of homelessness, looking at rough sleeping, mental and other health services and ex-offenders. A joint project between the Department for Communities & Local Government and the Department of Health is spending £40 million on improving the quality of hostels while, in the Budget, the Chancellor announced £100 million to create 2,000 places of move-on accommodation for rough sleepers leaving hostel accommodation and domestic abuse victims and their families moving on from refuges. This in turn will free up hostel places for others.

In addition the budget included: £10 million over two years to support and scale-up prevention and reduction of rough sleeping and a doubling in funding for the Rough Sleeping Social Impact Bond from £5 million to £10 million, to drive innovative ways of tackling entrenched rough sleeping.

The government has also commissioned a review of supported housing in the context of restrictions on Housing Benefit for social housing although at the time of writing the report is still awaited.

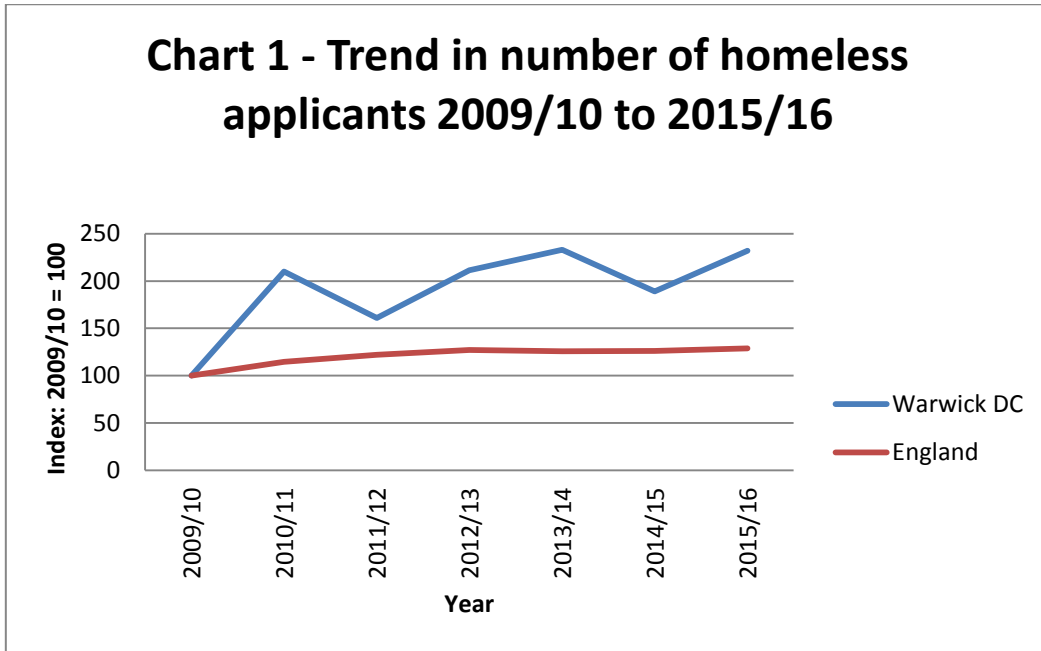
3 National & local homelessness statistics

The following statistics help to build up a picture of homelessness in Warwick district since the last Homeless Strategy was written in 2014/15 and over the longer term back to 2010 in comparison to what has been happening nationally.

a) Levels of homelessness

The council received 705 applications from people applying as homeless in 2015/16. This was broadly similar to the number of 708 in 2013/14 but an increase of 132% on the number received in 2009/10 compared to a 29% increase nationally over the same time period. Chart one shows the trend over the past seven years compared to the national position. It can be seen that the local trend has been much more erratic.

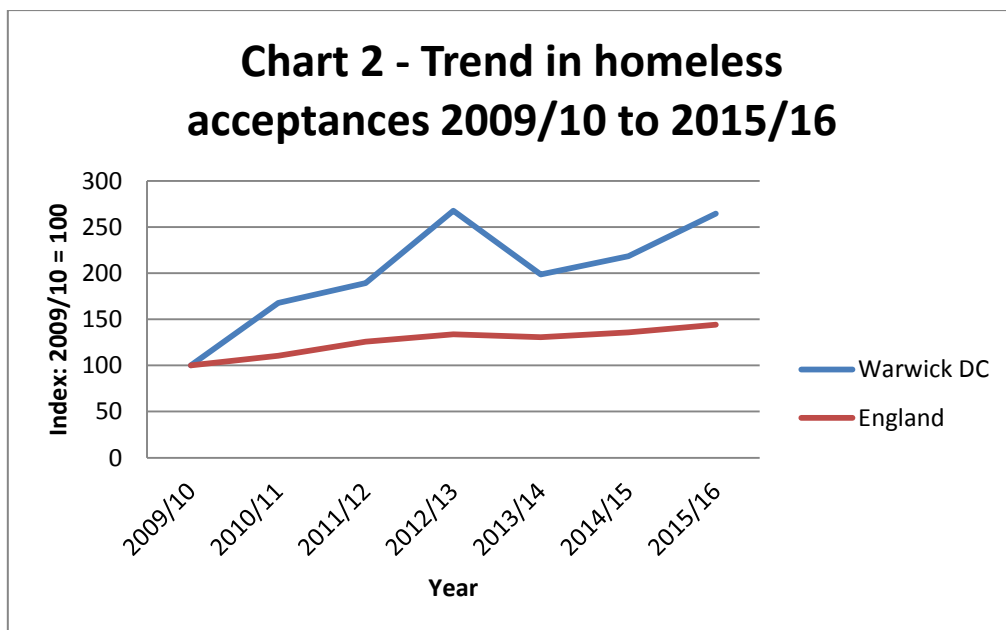
Chart 1 - Trend in number of homeless applicants 2009/10 to 2015/16



Around half of all applicants (54%) were assessed as not homeless, not significantly different from 2013/14 or from 2009/10.

The number of applicants for which a "full" duty was accepted was 172 in 2015/16, an increase of 164% over the number accepted in 2009/10 compared to a 44% increase nationally. The trend has followed the national pattern as chart two shows but the size of the changes has been significantly bigger locally.

Chart 2 - Trend in homeless acceptances 2009/10 to 2015/16



The percentage of all applicants for which a full duty was accepted was below national levels but rose from 21% in 2009/10 to 24% in 2015/16 compared to a national rise from 45% to 50%.

b) Numbers accommodated

The number of homeless households accommodated in temporary accommodation at the year-end increased from 10 at 1st April 2010 to 13 at 31st March 2016. This represented an increase of 30% compared to a national increase of 39%.

In terms of current numbers, 13 cases represent 0.22 per thousand households in WDC compared to 3.1 for England as a whole.

The proportion of households accommodated in local authority/housing association stock is considerably higher locally at 46% than nationally (18%).

c) Rough sleeping

The official Rough Sleeper counts over the last six years are as follows.

Year	Rough Sleeper count
2010	12
2011	13
2012	11
2013	14
2014	14
2015	19

This represents a 58% increase locally. Although this is well below the national increase of 102% over the same period, it is nevertheless a substantial increase in its own right and the annual figures suggest that there is a clear upward trend in the local figures.

Figures from Leamington Night Shelter showed that that they had 261 different clients in the 12 months up to and including September 2015 of which an estimated 59 were rough sleepers.

d) Reasons for homelessness

Table two shows the five main causes of homelessness in 2010/11 and 2015/16.

2010/11		2015/16	
Cause	%	Cause	%
Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate	28	Termination of assured shorthold tenancy	37
Termination of assured shorthold tenancy	25	Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate	21
Violent relationship breakdown involving partner	16	Violent relationship breakdown involving partner	13
Loss of rented accommodation (excluding termination of assured shorthold)	10	Relatives/friends (excluding parents) no longer willing/able to accommodate	9
Relatives/friends (excluding parents) no longer willing/able to accommodate	10	Non-violent relationship breakdown with partner	7

Four of the major causes of homelessness in 2010/11 were also significant in 2015/16. There was an increase of 12% in the proportion made homeless due to termination of an assured shorthold tenancy although loss of other rented accommodation fell and is no longer among the five main causes. The proportion due to parents no longer being willing or able to accommodate fell by 7%.

A downward trend in those becoming homeless as a result of "violent relationship breakdown involving partner" between 2010 and 2014 has unfortunately reversed over the last two years but is still slightly below the level six years ago.

e) Types of priority need

The main reason for priority need is the presence of children or an expected child in the household. Together these accounted for 83% of cases in 2015/16, down slightly from 85% in 2010/11.

The proportion of cases where physical disability was the priority need increased each year, from 2% up to 7% in 2013/14 but fell back in the two years since, to 3%. Conversely mental illness fell from 9% to 1% in 2013/14 but has risen again now to 5%. No other category accounted for more than 2% of cases in 2010/11. However in 2015/16 those fleeing their home due to violence or threat of violence accounted for 5% of cases.

f) Preventions

The number of cases of prevention/relief increased massively in 2010/11 (from 98 to 269) but fell back in each of the following two years to 108 in 2012/13 before rising again to 136 in 2013/14. It fell to 58 in 2014/15 but rose to 71 in 2015/16.

The fall in the number of cases of prevention over the last two years is similar to the national situation, although the proportionate size of the fall is much larger locally at 48% than nationally where it was only 7%.

g) Ethnicity of accepted homeless cases

The following table shows the ethnic profile of accepted homeless applicants compared with the profile of the Warwick District Council area.

Table 3 – Ethnicity of accepted homeless cases 2015/16		
Ethnic group	Profile of Warwick DC Census 2011	Profile of accepted homeless cases
White	89	78
Black/Black British	1	3
Asian/Asian British	7	5
Mixed	2	2
Other	1	8
Not stated	0	4

The two profiles differ in that there is an 11% lower proportion of white households accepted as homeless, a 7% higher proportion of those classed as "other" and 4% who didn't give their details.

h) Ministry of Justice repossession action statistics

Table four overleaf shows repossession statistics from the courts in Warwick district from 2010 to 2015.

These figures are compiled from quarterly figures where any value below five is suppressed. In adding together figures for four quarters the suppressed data could be significant enough to cause errors. They are therefore included here for illustration only and should not be used for statistical analysis.

This shows that for mortgaged properties, despite occasional single year rises, the number of claims brought and the number of each of the various outcomes have fallen significantly between 2010 and 2015. Claims by private landlords fell too although this has in part been offset by an increase in landlords using the accelerated procedure. As regards social landlords there was a substantial increase in the number of claims while the number of possessions nearly doubled.

Table 4 – Ministry of Justice repossession statistics in WDC 2010 – 2015

Possessor type	Possession action	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Social Landlord	Claims	160	160	170	283	209	259
Social Landlord	Suspended Orders	96	104	103	149	151	121
Social Landlord	Outright Orders	44	42	52	55	30	47
Social Landlord	Warrants	77	94	127	142	131	156
Social Landlord	Possessions	23	49	36	50	38	45
Private Landlord	Claims	33	31	27	28	21	6
Private Landlord	Outright Orders	14	24	23	20	9	-
Private Landlord	Warrants	0	3	10	9	7	-
Private Landlord	Possessions	0	6	3	7	6	-
Mortgage	Claims	108	96	80	91	65	14
Mortgage	Outright Orders	47	35	33	28	-	-
Mortgage	Suspended Orders	34	30	32	30	8	-
Mortgage	Warrants	79	85	72	69	40	25
Mortgage	Possessions	26	53	29	19	7	-
Accelerated Landlord	Claims	15	25	40	25	35	25
Accelerated Landlord	Outright Orders	11	18	31	28	17	18
Accelerated Landlord	Warrants	0	0	7	6	6	-
Accelerated Landlord	Possessions	0	0	4	0	-	-

4 Local Agency data

There are several local agencies that provide services for vulnerable people and the homeless in the Warwick district. Some of these have provided data about their work for inclusion in this review which is invaluable in supplementing the council's own statistics. Details are included in this section.

ROOF Homeless & Housing - advice & support for 16yrs - 19yrs

(The project will work with people up to age 25 years if the client has a disability.)

In the calendar year of 2015 a total of 13 individuals were supported, one of them on two separate occasions. Ten of the individuals were female and three were male. This was a decrease of 65% on the previous year's total of young people supported.

The individuals were supported in a variety of ways such as, over the phone advice, making a benefit claim, purchasing new clothing, one-to-one mentoring, filling out referral forms for supported accommodation, moving into supported accommodation, advocacy support, adult safeguarding, Children's Services, assessment interviews, Priority Families referral and starting Common Assessment Framework (CAF), support around sexuality, food shopping and family mediation to allow the young person to return home and mental health support.

Warwick District Citizens' Advice

The service took 287 enquiries about homelessness in 2015/16, down from 318 the previous year. The majority in each year were from people who were threatened with homelessness but there were also significant numbers of cases of actual homelessness and enquiries on the local authority homelessness service.

The three main reasons for homelessness were "friends or relatives unable/unwilling to house", "local authority possession action" and "private landlord possession action" in that order.

As regards gender the majority of clients were female (58%) while in terms of household types 69% were single people and there were slightly more employed than unemployed people.

Of those with a disability or long-term health problem, the largest number had some form of mental health problem, followed by people with a long-term health condition.

Leamington Night Shelter

Over the six months to March 2016 the Leamington Night Shelter had 291 different clients of which 62 were rough sleepers. It had an average of 83 different clients per month. The average number of clients each evening was 29 and on average ten people stayed overnight. The graph over the page shows the long-term trend in number of different clients attending and, in the grey shaded areas, the number of repeat attenders over time in each cohort of 100 different clients.

LEAMINGTON NIGHT SHELTER

