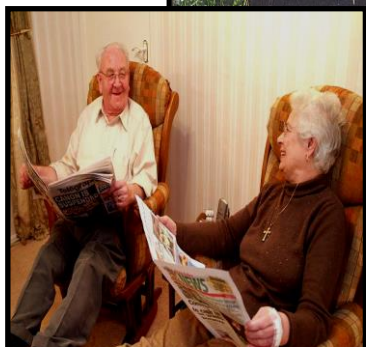


Ribble Valley Borough Council



Homelessness Strategy

2013-2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Homelessness Act 2002 imposes a duty on local authorities to carry out a homelessness review for their district and, thereafter, to formulate and publish a strategy to prevent homeless and to provide accommodation and support to people who are, or may become homeless.

This is Ribble Valley's fourth Homelessness Strategy and it follows an annual review of service delivery and priorities. The Homelessness Review is required to cover:

- the scale and nature of homelessness in the Borough and consideration of the factors which could affect future levels upon the district;
- an audit and mapping of homelessness services within the Borough, looking at the various provision for accommodation and support for homeless people, how homelessness can be prevented and where gaps in the service are.
- a review of the resources available for preventing homelessness and ensuring that accommodation and support is available to homeless people in the area;
- a record of the views of stakeholders and service users;
- the links to other strategies which have an impact on the prevention and tackling of homelessness in the Borough.

A review of homelessness in Ribble Valley has been conducted using various tools, including data obtained from the P1E statistics, best value performance figures and an in-house homelessness database. Stakeholders in the public, private and voluntary sectors have been consulted via the housing, homelessness and landlords forums operating in the Borough. These stakeholders represent service users from a wide range of agencies working with both priority and none priority homeless groups.

Continual regular and extensive consultations with stakeholders, including service users and a strong commitment to encourage all parties who participate in the Strategy vital to its success. The Strategy will cover a five-year period 2013 to 2018 and consequently implementation and action planning will be monitored regularly throughout the life of the Strategy. Monitoring will occur through both the Homelessness and Housing Forums who will analyse the result of various initiatives and actions and will make sure targets are being met.

Introduction to Homelessness Strategy

The development of Ribble Valley Borough Council's first Homelessness Strategy 2002 initiated a cultural shift in the Council's response to homelessness. Ribble Valley now places a high priority on tackling and responding to homelessness wherever the case is viewed as potentially preventable. At transfer stage the Council decided that the homelessness and housing advice functions will remain with the Council. However, Ribble Valley Homes will be a key partner delivering the homelessness service in that they will manage the temporary accommodation, housing waiting list and housing allocations on behalf of the Council. The Council recognises that homelessness is an issue that can only be tackled in partnership. Whilst the Council will lead on this work and retain the statutory responsibilities, key partners such as Housing Associations, Floating Support providers, CAB and many other agencies and organisations all have an important role to play. It is therefore essential at this time that both the Council and its partners set out clearly the roles and responsibilities of each party to ensure the successful implementation of the Strategy.

The Homelessness Strategy therefore:

- Sets out the Council's vision and objectives for services for homeless people;
- Examines the national regional, sub regional and local context in which services operate;
- Assesses the needs of the borough's population in relation to homelessness services;
- Audits its current service;
- Sets out an action plan for service improvement.

Vision and Objectives

The Strategy must have a clear and concise vision of where it aims to be in the next five years. Through extensive consultation with all stakeholders in the Borough the Council has confirmed that the vision is

“through partnership working with all stakeholders the Council's strategy sets out to prevent homelessness, provide effective support for households who are or may become homeless and make available sufficient affordable accommodation within the borough”.

The Context

The Ribble Valley Borough is situated in the North East of Lancashire and with an area of 585 square kilometres is the largest district in the County. Over seventy percent of the Borough is in the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a clear reflection of the landscape quality of the area.



The borough has a population of around 56,900 with Clitheroe, the main administrative centre having 13,200 inhabitants. Clitheroe lies at the heart of the Borough whilst Longridge, the other main town, lies in the west. Longridge has a population of approximately 7,500. The remainder of the area is mainly rural with a number of villages ranging in size from large villages such as Whalley, Sabden and Chatburn through to small hamlets such as Great Mitton and Paythorne.

Ribble Valley is a relatively affluent area and is ranked 290th out of 354 English districts in the Index of Deprivation. However, six wards within the borough fall within the worst 10% of all English wards under the Access to Housing Services Index. This is due to the rural nature of the borough and the isolation faced by the population in a number of settlements, particularly those within the Forest of Bowland an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Health Profile for Ribble Valley is in the main far better than that for the region and nation. Life expectancy is in line with national levels but higher than neighbouring areas in Pennine Lancashire.

There are few teenage pregnancies and GCSE achievement is good. It is estimated that far fewer adults smoke than the national average and less than five per cent of the population reported their health as “poor” which is much lower than the regional and national average.

Within the Housing Strategy delivery plan the main focus is development of affordable housing. The homelessness objectives within the document lifts the main priorities from this strategy. The diagram below shows where this document sits corporately and the links with other strategies.



The National Context

The Homelessness Act 2002 required all local authorities to produce a Homelessness Strategy by 2003. The Strategy had to be the result of multi agency working and be informed by a thorough review of homelessness in the area under the services currently available to address it. The purpose of the review would highlight where there are gaps in the service provision and/or where service can be improved. The Strategy had to be realistic, jointly agreed as to how each agency intends to fill the gap and improve the services over a period of up to five years. The aims of the Strategy therefore are to achieve effective ways of:

- Planning and developing services that prevent homelessness in the Borough in line with the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Homelessness Strategy “Sustainable Communities, Settled Homes, Changing Lives”;
- Improving the standard of temporary accommodation in the Borough DCLG has issued revised statutory guidance on the quality of temporary accommodation used by local authorities;
- Working with other agencies that provides support to those households who are, or may become, homeless; who have been homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again;
- Working with Housing Associations, private developers, private landlords and the Development Department, to deliver 50 units of affordable housing each year.

The Action Plan details the activities under each of these aims that the Council will be coordinating.

The National Strategies and guidance that have helped shape this homeless strategy includes;

- Vision to end rough sleeping; No second night out Nationwide (2011).
- Localism Act 2011; enables Local authorities to discharge the main homeless duty into the Private rented sector.
- Homelessness (suitability of accommodation)(England) Order 2012
- Allocation of accommodation; guidance for local housing authorities in England June 2012.
- Making every contact count; A joint approach to preventing homelessness2012. Sets local challenges for housing authorities to ensure that every contact local agencies make with

vulnerable people and families really counts to ensure that we prevent households, regardless of households make-up, from reaching a crisis point where they are faced with homelessness.

Regional Context

A Lancashire Wide Homelessness Forum was launched late 2008. The quarterly meetings are a valuable communication and networking tool for all authorities. The meetings have also allowed for funding opportunities. CLG made available funding for single homeless and Lancashire authorities have been awarded grant monies to deliver a single homeless initiative increasing housing options for single households through house shares and accommodation finding.

Sub-Regional Context

Pennine Lancashire has a well established sub regional working group to assist in the development of strategies and shared best practice. The lead offices and officers working groups continue to meet and provide valuable opportunity to work in partnership, co-ordinate shared procedures and to network. Many initiatives have been developed through this group including the Pennine Lancs. Mental health and Housing Project which has secured a mental health project worker. An inspire bond scheme and currently developing the Single Homeless Project.

Housing Strategy



The availability of affordable housing is one of the most important needs for families and communities in the Ribble Valley. Developing affordable housing is a corporate ambition of the Council to meet the identified 'housing need'.
(Clyder Park, Mitchell Street)

With an average house priced to an affordability ratio of 5.5 in 2012 the highest being 8.4 in Waddington and West Bradford – addressing affordability is a key factor in providing the homelessness service. In Ribble Valley there is proportionately less stock in the lower Council Tax bands of A and B with 33% compared to Lancashire's 58% profile.

The tenure choice in the borough is limited; with only 700 social rented properties, the borough has one of the lowest percentages of social housing stock in Lancashire. The situation was further exacerbated since the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance. Ribble Valley is no longer considered a 'locality' in its own right. The majority of the borough is in a locality with Blackburn, reducing the housing allowance to be paid to Ribble Valley occupants. This authority was in the top five nationally for being most affected by the introduction of the new housing allowance. The introduction of LHA rates being calculated from the 30th percentile from April 2012 again reduced the LHA rates in the borough.

Policies introduced to address the situation include:

- Addressing housing needs Policy 2012 introduced a requirement for 30% of all sites to be affordable and 15% to be housing for older people.
- Grant initiatives for development of private rented properties with affordable rent levels.
- Programme to maintain current housing needs information on a parish basis to assist developers
- A protocol to work closely with planning and housing association to advise developers and enable development

Community Strategy

The community strategy lifts the key issues from this strategy as the actions to be achieved in the housing theme. These include to ensure supported housing is available for vulnerable households with the actions of reducing the length of time spent in temporary accommodation to 7 weeks and

surveying users of the service to continue to improve the satisfaction. These actions are monitored annually.

Partnership Working with Ribble Valley Homes

Six years ago stock transfer took place after an overwhelming majority vote. Within the transfer proposal the following promises were included to be delivered within the first 5 years;

- £14.8 million pounds of improvements bringing all properties up to the Ribble Valley Standard agreed with tenants.
- Direct Involvement in the running of the business with 4 tenants on the board.
- Additional services including the Handyman and Occupational Therapist.
- The provision of 60 new homes within the first 5 years.

All these promises have been delivered and RVH continue to be a key partner in the delivery of the homeless service.

The housing needs service within the Council carry out the main duties in respect of homelessness:

- Making enquiries and/or decisions on homeless applications.
- Providing general housing advice.
- Reviewing homeless decisions upon appeal.
- Carrying out periodic review of homelessness and publish a homeless strategy.
- Monitoring the service provided by RVH as per service level agreement.

RVH deliver the following roles on behalf of the Council these include:

- Maintaining the housing register.
- Securing permanent accommodation to discharge homelessness duty.
- Allocating the RVH stock as properties become available.
- Management of the Clitheroe Homeless Hostel and dedicated Longridge temporary accommodation units.
- Nomination to Housing Associations as their stock becomes available.

The Council have maintained strong connections with Ribble Valley Homes and have established a monthly monitoring group to discuss nominations and procedures between the organisations.

Achievements to date

The Council's first homelessness strategy was published in July 2003. This provided a strategic direction for the homeless prevention approach that has subsequently been adopted. Since 2008 there have been many significant achievements in Ribble Valley's response to tackling homeless and the Council has:

- Remodelled the service to deliver a housing advice approach and focus on homelessness prevention;
- Provide a highly effective tenancy protection scheme which to date has provided 261 households to access accommodation in the private rented sector;

- Reviewed the Allocations policy in light of the Localism Bill which was published Jan 2013.
- Developed a sanctuary scheme with HARV (Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Domestic Violence Organisation);
- Introduced the YNOT scheme one to one support for young people facing homelessness;
- Maintained a successful and well attended homeless forum;
- Maintained a low use of families being placed into bed and breakfast (0 in 2013);
- Carried out consultation events with homeless households;
- Worked with supporting people and Places for people to develop a support service that covered both the hostel and the sidings to share resources.

- Increased nomination rights to the private sector properties by 33 through grant initiatives for landlords;
- Maintain a repossession prevention fund to assist owner occupiers or tenants at risk of losing their home through no fault of their own. 19 households have been assisted through this scheme.

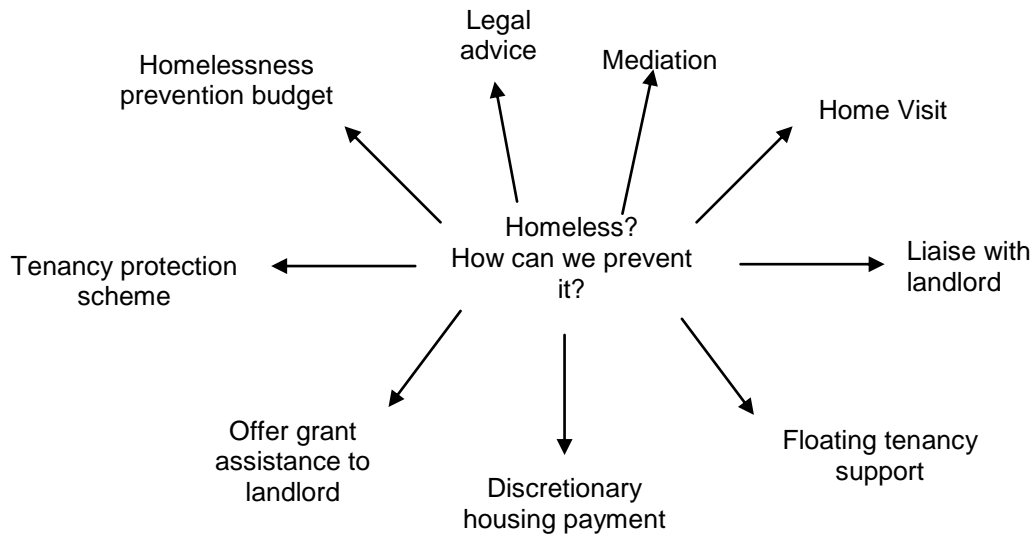


(Whipp Avenue, Clitheroe)

- Improved temporary accommodation facilities at the hostel with new garden play equipment and sofa and football table in the communal space.
- Introduced referral health visitors to all families in temporary accommodation with children under 5;
- In our enabling role supported housing associations in their bids for 2008/2011, which has been successful in achieving grants of 54 affordable units of accommodation.



- Introduced a homelessness database to more accurate record keeping.
- Commissioned an East Lancs mental health and housing post to support households facing homelessness who have mental health issues.
- Worked in partnership with the Ribble Valley foodbank to support households struggling to feed their family.
- In partnership with the Castlegate project and YMCA there are 3 house share properties available for young people .
- Secured a CLG grant for single homeless to prevent rough sleeping.
- Undertaken a review of all RP stock in the borough and produced an upto date leaflet listing all affordable properties.



Ribble Valley Borough Council's Homeless Vision

Ribble Valley Borough Council's vision for homelessness is that every homeless case would be treated as preventable. We will respond in a supportive fashion and work with households to ensure that homelessness is prevented or that other appropriate and sustainable accommodation is found.

By 2018, Ribble Valley Borough Council aims to:

- Ensure all the borough is served by the housing needs service.
- Ensure all new housing schemes reflect the housing needs of the parish.
- Completely eradicate the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for all homeless households
- Sustain our levels of homelessness presentations and acceptances;
- Continue to ensure that homelessness is prevented wherever possible and to prevent reoccurring;
- Reduce the length of time in temporary accommodation to an average of 7 weeks;
- Meet our corporate ambition of delivering 50 affordable homes per year.

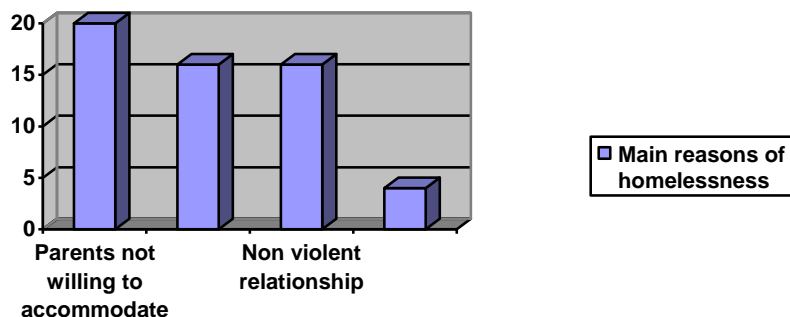
All of the actions contained within the Strategy sit under one of the above strategic priorities. The Strategy is broken down into four key areas detailing current performance in gaps in service against each strategic priority heading. Under each heading actions are detailed which will meet the identified gap. Whilst actions are identified throughout the Strategy, under each section a more detailed structure plan can be found at the end of the document that pulls together all of the actions we intend to deliver over the next three years.

In order to make this Strategy a live document that actually delivers against its action plan, all actions are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound). The Action Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and provisions will be made to take into account new priorities and targets.

The Homelessness Prevention Form will monitor the implementation of the Strategy Action Plan. The Action Plan has been developed in consultation with the Homelessness Prevention Form and the full

Strategy document will be sent to all stakeholders and the wider public for consultation prior to formal adoption of the Strategy.

REVIEW of current scale and nature of homelessness in Ribble Valley



The graph allows us to identify where our prevention measures should be concentrated. The main cause is parental eviction relationship, which is difficult to prevent, but mediation is offered in these cases. The YNOT scheme was commissioned for 2013 /14, which introduced one to one support for young people at a vulnerable time. Loss of rented accommodation is the second main cause and raising awareness of early intervention there are many initiatives introduced to prevent this, landlords renovation grants and a floating support service. Non-violent relationship breakdown is the 3rd most common cause. Therefore it is limited as to how much assistance can be offered other than advice as to the individuals rights.

Table & Graph to show households seeking advice over the past 5 years.

Year	Number of households seeking advice
2008	267
2009	282
2010	282
2011	275
2012	259
2013	249

The data above demonstrates the number of households that are assisted by the housing needs service each year and reflects the amount prevention work undertaken in order to reduce the households that are placed in temporary accommodation. The table demonstrates demand for the service is static the slight decrease in 2013 could be due to staffing issues in the service as one of the part time housing needs officers post was not filled for 4 months.

At this stage a homeless application has not been taken, these are households where homelessness is seen as being preventable. Through the housing options interview it becomes evident that some households will be owed a statutory duty and therefore the advice case is converted to an application.

The following data concentrates on homelessness applications.

The age profile and household type shows the majority of homeless households are those with dependants.

Ages of accepted households	2012/2013	2011/2012	2010/2011	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06
16-24	8	4	4	4	5	12

25-44	5	5	8	8	12	24
45-59	3	3	0	2	1	2
60-64	0	0	1	0	1	0
65-74	0	0	0	0	1	0
75 & over	1	0	0	0	0	0

Household type	12/13	11/12	10/11	07/08	06/07
Single female	5	2	0		1
Single male	3	2	1		4
Couple expecting or with children	0	0	0	2	2
Lone parent expecting or with children	8	7	10	5	10 (2 male – 8 female)
Other groups	1	1	0	1	3

Reason for homelessness	10/11	11/12	12/13
1.Parents no longer willing to accommodate	1	3	9
2.Other relatives no longer willing to accommodate	1	2	2
3.Non-violent breakdown of relationship	3	3	9
4.Violence	2		
a.violence from partner		1	2
b.violent breakdown associated person	0	0	0
c.racially motivated violence	0	0	0
d.other	1	0	2
5.Harrassment threats intimidation	0		
a. racially motivated		0	0
b.other forms of harassment	0	0	0
6.Mortgage arrears	0	0	0
7.Rent arrears:	0		
a.Local Authority or Public Building		0	0
b.Registered social landlord	1	0	0
c.private dwellings	1	0	5
8.Loss of rented or tied accommodation due to:	1		
a.terms of assured shorthold tenancy		6	4
b.reasons other than termination of assured shorthold tenancy	0	2	2
9.required to leave National Asylum Support Service	0	0	0
10.Institution or care	0	0	1
11.Other	0	3	3

Reason for acceptance

	April 10- March2011	11/12	12/13
1.Emergency (fire, flood)	0	0	1
2.Applicant whose household includes dependent children	9	9	9
3.Applicant is, or household includes pregnant woman	1	2	4
4.Aged 16/17	0	4	6
5.Applicant formerly in "care"	0	1	0
6.Old age	0	0	0
7.Physical disability	1	0	0
8.Mental illness or disability	2	2	0
9.Other special reason	0	0	0
a.Drug dependency	0	0	0
b.Alcohol dependency	0	0	0
c.Former asylum seeker	0	0	0
d.other	0	0	0
10.Having been in care	0	0	0
11.Having served in armed forces	0	0	0
12.Having been in custody	0	0	0
13.Having fled home because of violence	0	0	0
14.Total	11	18	19

Homelessness decisions

	12/13	11/12	10/11	09/10	08/9	07/08
Accepted	16	12	15	5	13	14
Intentionally homeless	4	3	4	3	9	6
Not priority	3	1	0	3	3	1
Not homeless	4	2	5	9	6	17
Ineligible	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	27	18	24	20	31	38

Reduced homeless presentations by 35% between 2003/04 and 2006/07 and then by a further 65% by 07/08. Presentations have remained low since as the focus is now on prevention and avoiding taking a homeless application were it is unlikely to result in full housing acceptance.

Acceptances reduced by 37% between 2003/04 and 2004/05 and then a further 22% in 2004/05 and 2005/06 and a further 43% 2006/07 and finally a further 40% in 2007/08.

Demonstrates improved service rather than take application from every household better to provide advice and only take an application once confident their housing position cannot be resolved and will ultimately result in homelessness.

Number of households in temporary accommodation

Year	Quarter	No. of households placed in temporary accommodation	No. of households in temporary accommodation at the end of the quarter
2009/10	1	4	4
	2	2	1
	3	1	1
	4	1	1
2010/2011	1	4	4
	2	2	4
	3	2	4
	4	2	5
2011/12	1	2	3
	2	5	4
	3	4	4
	4	4	3
2012/13	1	4	5
	2	3	5
	3	5	5
	4	5	5

Year	Average length of stay	Target
9/10	14wks	7
10/11	10wks	7
11/12	14wks	7
12/13	20 wks	7

The average length of stay has increased in the 2 past year. Despite all the initiatives introduced to assist moving on the limited social stock and low turnover make finding secure accommodation a difficult task. The proposed change to Homeless Legislation which will enable housing authorities to offer private rented accommodation to households as a reasonable offer may assist in reducing the length of time in temporary.

Temporary Accommodation – The Current Situation in Ribble Valley

Over 5 years ago Ribble Valley reduced its provision of temporary accommodation from 11 units down to 8 to improve the standard of accommodation. Previously Beacon Villas at Longridge provided four units of temporary accommodation. However the building was not energy efficient and therefore not appropriate for households on a low income. This accommodation was transferred to Adactus Housing Association in 2007 and renovated to provide affordable accommodation. One Council owned self-contained general needs flats now provides temporary accommodation in Longridge.

At the Joiners Arms, the temporary accommodation in Clitheroe, there are 7 units of accommodation, four are fully self-contained units, three units have toilet and wash hand basins, and share bathroom facilities.

The facilities have been continually improved since 2008, and are of a good standard, the accommodation now has on-site laundry facilities, a communal meeting room, access to IT facilities and a garden and play area. The aim is to make further improvements to the communal space to create food preparation space.

There is an on-site warden service every weekday.



Support is provided by Places for people and they support clients in the hostel on a daily basis .

Appendix 1 lists the main areas of improvement service users have identified.

Prevention of Homelessness Against the Main Causes

Current Situation in Ribble Valley

The housing needs service is completely focused on prevention and has been for 5 years now. This is reflected in the steady reduction in the number of decisions made. For each cause of homelessness there is a preventative tool available. For the two main causes in the borough relationship breakdown and parental / family eviction there is a limited amount of intervention.

Whilst this is a huge achievement, the homelessness strategy seeks to build upon this achievement. The homeless review has identified a number of weaknesses in the existing services and identified potential increases in homelessness in certain areas. The strategy seeks to ensure that these gaps are responded to through an effective action plan. It will also be important to safeguard the existing prevention budgets particularly the tenancy protection scheme to ensure we can respond to the ongoing demand. It will also be a key priority to ensure that housing advice is available to all the homeless households or those threatened with homelessness throughout Ribble Valley regardless of priority need.

One of the most successful preventative initiatives is the tenancy protection scheme, which has enabled 261 households into private rented accommodation since being established in 2005. It is essential to ensure that these households have access to support and advice and do not become homeless either as a result of the end of their assured shorthold tenancy or due to arrears.



The Calico Floating Support Service is crucial in ensuring that these households within the private rented sector maintain their tenancy. This is a new provision from October 2007; prior to this there was no provision to tenancy support outside the temporary accommodation. The provider is based in the Council offices one day per week and this has improved utilisation of the service.

The homelessness review identified that the main causes of homelessness in Ribble Valley is family and friends evicting. This area needs to be addressed. It will be necessary to identify the real reasons for these evictions in order to be able to respond effectively with a range of prevention mechanisms. Whilst home visits are available to establish the real reason and mediation is always offered, we identified a need to develop a prevention package in partnership with a range of services specifically targeted at young people this is delivered by YNOT. The package includes early intervention signposting and referrals to floating support, mediation, supported accommodation and identified planned moves from the family home. This early intervention may help young people to return to the family home after a cooling off period. All this will improve relations resulting in family support where this is not possible.

Non violent relationship breakdown is the second highest cause of homelessness in the Ribble Valley. Our preventative input is somewhat limited in personal relationships. However, a new information leaflet has been produced which provides legal advice and general guidance on this matter and mediation is offered where appropriate. Loss of assured shorthold tenancy is the third highest cause of homelessness. This cause again has seen a significant reduction .The repossession prevention scheme offers financial assistance for households facing repossession where there are dependants and the reason is ill health or loss of income. There has been considerable resources introduced to initiate this reduction. The strategic housing through many different engagements with landlords providing a comprehensive private sector liaison. The grant initiatives available are a powerful communication mechanism for engaging landlords. The nomination rights attached to grants ensures we remain in regular contact with landlords and the condition that the landlords accept the tenancy protection scheme.

The availability of affordable private rented properties through the landlord grant scheme is another invaluable resource. Through this scheme homelessness can often be prevented removing the use of temporary accommodation for many households. The 3 house share properties made available through partnership with Castlegate, YMCA and RVH Home visits are another valuable preventative measure particularly in family relationship breakdowns again reducing the use of temporary accommodation.

PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE ACCOMMODATION

Meeting the housing needs of people in the Ribble Valley is a corporate objective of the Council. This objective has been identified as one of the four key ambitions of the Authority. The importance of this cannot be over emphasised. Some key statistics for the Borough with regard to affordability include:

- Affordability has improved over the past four years with the ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings to being 9.8 in 2010 and now 8.4 in 2012;
- Ribble Valley has the lowest proportion of social dwellings in the northwest with 7.5% a total of 1748 units in 2010. The area is projected to experience the largest increase in population in the northwest. The average house price for the whole district in 2012 was £215,712.
- Current government guidance on assessing affordability recommends using the ratio of house price to income. A ratio of between 3 and 4 to 1 is deemed to be the upper limit of affordability. In Ribble Valley only 1 ward falls into this range .In 2012 the average ratio is 5.5 .Se appendix



This affordability issue has a massive impact on all aspects of the homelessness service and is at the root of all obstacles in homelessness prevention. Affordability has always been a key barrier in Ribble Valley.

The actions taken to address the problem have been wide spread and many have been achieved corporately:

- Housing strategy delivery plan: the main focus is delivering affordable housing;
- The Council set a target of delivering 50 affordable homes per year and this has been achieved annually.
- The Council approved a Addressing Housing Needs Policy to secure 30% affordable housing on all developments and 15% to be for older people.
- There is a Ribble Valley affordable housing development protocol, which assists developers at every stage in the process to encourage applications.
- The Council invests over £100,000 of capital funding every year for development of private rented sector properties;
- The Council has undertaken housing needs surveys across over 90% of the Borough to clearly identify the type, tenure and size of housing required;
- In 2005 a Tenancy Protection Scheme was established with a bond covering up to £800 to ensure landlords will accept the proposal;

The landlord/tenant grants available to landlords to renovate private rented property to a high standard is an initiative that has been fundamental in achieving a reduction in the length of time families stay in temporary accommodation. The scheme has gradually evolved into the initiative we have today but has existed for over ten years.

Landlords are offered grant aid of up to £10,000 per flat and £15,000 for a house. This is a 50% contribution towards renovation costs and is, therefore, match funded. In exchange for the grant the conditions are that the property must be let for up to five years, that the landlord must accept nominations and the rent level is set in line with local housing allowance.

As of April 2012 there are 46 private rented properties that the Local Authority has nomination rights to through the scheme. As properties become available householders in temporary accommodation are first to be considered for these properties.

The reduction of the local housing allowance has become another serious hurdle in tackling affordability. Under the scheme Ribble Valley is the third most affected Local Authority nationally. Almost 60% of all claimants of housing benefits in the Ribble Valley saw a reduction in their entitlements with the introduction of a local housing allowance. This is a disincentive for landlords to accept tenants in receipt of benefits or to invest in rental properties in the Borough, coupled with the removal of direct payments to landlords.

To counter balance the effects of this the grant available for each unit through the landlord/tenant grant was increased and no longer available in Longridge where the local housing allowance has been increased. Ribble Valley is split into four areas under the local housing allowance and the central Lancashire allowance, which incorporates Longridge, has seen an increase.

Strategic Housing Market assessment 2013

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment carried out in 2013 established that there is a need for 404 affordable dwellings per year in Ribble Valley, however this figure does not equal the number of new affordable units to be built. The need will be met through a wide range of sources – but particularly by making better use of vacant stock, by making better use of the existing stock and through the private rented sector.

- ii) One bedroom and four bedroom affordable homes are particularly required.
- iii) Relatively few households in housing need could afford Affordable Rent at 80% of the median market rent. The most practical level to set Affordable Rent to meet substantial need is at 70%.
- iv) Factoring higher affordability thresholds households in the private rented sector pay in current market conditions and the supply of private rented accommodation (via LHA) to house those requiring

affordable housing, the need for new affordable units reduces notably – however changes to the administration of LHA mean that it is unlikely to continue.

Cost and affordability of housing

According to data from the Land Registry, the mean house price in Ribble Valley in the third quarter of 2012 was £246,519, higher than the average for the North West region and England as a whole. Data shows that whilst prices have remained largely static since the economic downturn, the number of property sales has fallen dramatically.

ii) The cost of housing by size was assessed for all tenures across the Borough. Entry-level prices in Ribble Valley range from £90,300 for a one bedroom home in the Clitheroe price market up to £304,000 for a four bedroom property in the Rural price market. Entry-level rents in Ribble Valley range from £400 per month for a one bedroom home up to £1,000 per month for a four bedroom property.

iii) Housing market gaps analysis shows the nature of the housing ladder in a particular locality. An analysis of the gaps between each tenure shows that there is a large income gap between the social rented sector and market entry. This indicates that intermediate housing priced within this gap could potentially be useful for a number of households in Ribble Valley.

iv) Flexible Tenancies are being introduced as a new tenure. They will allow Affordable Rent to be charged. Affordable Rent will be based on the open market value of each property. Within Ribble Valley, as bedroom size increases the range of Affordable Rents possible increases.

v) Although affordability has theoretically improved since the start of the economic downturn, there remains a large proportion of households in Ribble Valley that are unable to afford to buy.

Future Timetable for homelessness strategy

The strategy will remain an active document and guide for the housing needs service. The regular meeting of the homeless prevention forum ensures progress is monitored and the action plan is a measure of performance.

Reporting to the Housing Forum annually and Health and Housing Committee will ensure actions and expenditure for the service remains accountable.

HOUSING ADVICE, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Improve documentation/written advice given at initial interview	All households seeking accommodation should leave with written advice.	New leaflet developed of all affordable properties in the borough. New interview sheet used Jan 2013	Within existing resources	HLN Steering Group Housing Needs Officer
Develop good communication with all relevant organisations	Review HLN forum attendees, ensure all agencies are represented	Updated March 2014	Within existing resources	HLN Steering Group Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership
Maintain accurate HLN database to track all homeless households	Utilise database ensure continual update	Monitored quarterly	Within existing resources	Housing Strategy Officer IT Section Housing Needs Officer Peter Lally database support
Collate information on all relevant HLN services in Ribble Valley and neighbouring authorities	Produce service directory for Ribble Valley	Jan 2015 Information contained within new leaflet	Within existing resources	Housing Needs Officer Housing Strategy Officers
Ensure up to date and relevant HLN information is accessible	Update and maintain housing section information on the Ribble Valley website and front line staff have basic housing rights knowledge	Monitored quarterly	Within existing resources	Housing Strategy Officer Housing Admin Officer
Provide support to all households where housing is insecure	Refer all potential homelessness households to the most appropriate support provider	Monitored quarterly	Supporting People funding	Calico Supporting People RV Housing Needs YNOT
Improve communication with clients	Use text messages/email where client prefers		Within existing resources	Housing Needs Officer Housing Admin Officer

Advice available to all households on request during working hours	Ensure an officer is available at all times	Ongoing	Training costs for staff	Housing Needs Officer Housing Officer Housing Admin Officer
Ensure staffs keep upto date with homelessness case law.	Provide annual case law training for housing needs staff.	To organise.	Training costs for staff.	Housing Strategy Officer
Raise awareness of all housing services across the borough	Develop general housing advice sheet and utilise mobile unit Stan the Van	On going	Within existing resources	Housing Strategy Officer Mobile Unit RSL's Stan the Van
Identify HLN champion with each RSL in the borough	Contact each RSL RSL at the Housing Forum	March 2015	Within existing resources	Housing Strategy Officer RSL's
Establish a baseline of satisfaction and identify where improvements can be developed	Undertake customer satisfaction research	annually	Within existing resources	Housing Strategy Officer Places for people Ribble Valley Homes
Improve out of hours service	Direct access to B&B in the event temporary accom not appropriate.	April 2014	Within existing resources	Out of hours call centre On duty officer
Improve accessibility of service outside of Clitheroe	Demonstrate use of service from households outside of Clitheroe.	Jan16	Within existing resources	YNOT, Places for People, Housing Needs

PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS

<u>INITIATIVE</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>DATE TO BE IMPLEMENTED</u>	<u>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</u>	<u>PARTNERS</u>
Utilise discretionary housing benefit (DHB) payments to prevent homelessness.	Advise and support households to make discretionary housing payment claims	Monitored annually	Utilise DHP monies annually	Housing Benefits Housing Strategy Officer
Maximise the use of 'Spend to Save' Policy across the homelessness service	Consider all available funding streams which may prevent homelessness at each interview	To be monitored	Homelessness directorate funding. Grant budget.	Housing Committee Housing Strategy Officer
	Improve communications link with housing benefits section and improve flexibility when dealing with vulnerable households	Ongoing	Within existing resources.	Housing Strategy Officer Housing Benefits Manager
Raise awareness of the importance of early intervention	Ensure all private landlords are aware of availability of floating support.	Jan15	Within existing resources	Landlords Forum Group Housing Needs Officer Calico Communication Officer
Prevent homelessness through loss of RSL tenancy	Ensure early warning system in place with each RSL in the borough	Jan 2015	Within existing resources	RSL's Housing Strategy Officer
Ensure service users are satisfied with current level of service	Consult with service users as to the standard of service received-through completion of a survey	ongoing	Within existing resources	Carr Gomm Housing Strategy Officer Hostel Manager
Update list of all temporary and permanent housing providers in the borough	Produce a leaflet and distribute to all service providers	May 2014	Within existing resources	Housing Strategy Officer Housing Needs Officer
Annually undertake a full review of the homeless strategy	Utilise HLN forum to consult with all service providers	May 15	Within existing resources	Housing Strategy Officer HLN Steering Group

<u>INITIATIVE</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>DATE TO BE IMPLEMENTED</u>	<u>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</u>	<u>PARTNERS</u>
Maintain steering group to regularly monitor performance of initiatives	Meet twice a year to review progress and update the action plan	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Steering Group
Prevent homelessness precipitated by health issues	Develop joint working protocols for hospital discharge.	Jan 2015	Public Health fund	Health & Wellbeing Group Health & Housing Committee
	Improve referral pathways between agencies to enable access to supported accommodation	July 2015		

PROVISION OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

<u>INITIATIVE</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>DATE TO BE IMPLEMENTED</u>	<u>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</u>	<u>PARTNERS</u>
Improve links with Child Action North West and M3 nightstop scheme	Invite scheme managers into Council	January 2015	Within existing resources	Child Action Northwest Housing Strategy Officer
Utilise specialised schemes outside borough	Improve communications with out of borough schemes	January 2012 - achieved through working with East Lancs HLN group	Within existing resources	Housing Strategy Officer Housing Needs Officer
Maintain close working relationship with RVH	Organise monthly meeting with a standard agenda item of temporary accommodation	January 2012 – meetings maintained since transfer	Within existing resources	RVH Housing Needs Officer Housing Officer Strategic Housing Officer
Improve access to work for households in temporary accommodation	Provide IT access at the hostel in Clitheroe	Completed	Using ODPM monies	IT Section Housing Strategy Officer
	Work with Job Centre and Connexions to provide IT support for completion of job applications on line	Completed	Within existing resources	Job Centre Connexions Housing Strategy Officer
Reduce length of time spent in temporary accommodation	Convert 2 units of temporary accommodation into self contained	March 2012	Utilising ODPM funding	RVH Housing Strategy Officer
Reduce the length of time spent in temporary accommodation	Ensure all housing options considered and maximised for every household. Weekly updates on each household with support worker.	March 2012	Within existing resources	Carr Gomm Housing Officer
Ensure that all children from homeless households receive necessary health check	Refer all children from homeless households to a Health Visitor	January 2006-achieved	PCT funding.	Housing Strategy Officer Health Centre Ribble Valley PCT
Improve and utilise garden room at hostel	Ensure room is kept clean and there is access for all	April 2014	Within existing resources	Homestart LCC Adult Education Carr Gomm Inward House

<u>INITIATIVE</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>DATE TO BE IMPLEMENTED</u>	<u>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</u>	<u>PARTNERS</u>
Improve services for households with mental health needs	Provide housing and mental health officer across East Lancs	In post April 2014	Funded by all East Lancs Authorities	Mental Team Manager Housing Strategy Officer East Lancs Authorities
		January 2007-achieved 10 units of supported accommodation to be occupied Feb 2007	Housing Corp funding Housing Association investment	
Consult service users of there experience in temporary accommodation	Carry out an exit questionnaire with each user. Present the feedback to the homelessness forum .	May 2014 and twice per yr.	Dependant on homeless budget and grant availability.	Homeless forum Places for people
Make improvements to the communal space at 90 Whalley Rd.	Investigate external grant availability.	Ongoing	Dependant on grant application success	Places for People RVH Clitheroe Christians in Partnership RVBC

ACCESS TO PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION

<u>INITIATIVE</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>DATE TO BE IMPLEMENTED</u>	<u>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</u>	<u>PARTNERS</u>
Prevent the loss of any social housing available for homeless households	Secure the maximum amount of social rent through Section 106 Agreements Prevention conversions of social rent where possible	Ongoing through regular market engagement	Development dependent	Housing Strategy Officer Registered Social Landlords
Increase the amount of private rented affordable housing available for homeless households	Work with private developers to encourage affordable developments	Ongoing Budget approved for 2011-2012	Landlord/tenant grant funded	Private Developers Planning Strategic housing
Set affordable secure rent levels and nomination rights	Increase grant available to encourage landlords to invest in private rented sector	Budget approved 2011-2012	Private sector grant budget	Housing Strategy Officer Health & Housing Committee
	Identify the need for affordable housing in rural areas by carrying out housing needs surveys	90% achieved but ongoing problem	Within existing resources	Housing Officer Parish Councils
Maintain Tenancy Protection Scheme	Annually top up the scheme and ensure maximum number of households benefit and can access the private rented sector	Total number of TPs released 166		Housing Needs Manager Housing Strategy Officer
Maintain the number of affordable private rented properties available for homeless households.	Maintain the funding available for landlord tenant grants in 2013-2018		Annual budget of 100k transferred into landlord tenant budget	Housing Strategy Officer Health & Housing Committee

<u>INITIATIVE</u>	<u>ACTION</u>	<u>DATE TO BE IMPLEMENTED</u>	<u>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</u>	<u>PARTNERS</u>
Negotiate the min % of social housing to be allocated to homeless households	Establish the current nominations levels to homelessness. Engage with all RSL's and agree % of nominations	January 2012	Within existing resources	Housing Strategy Officer RP's
Ensure all partners aware of level of need in borough and kept fully informed of demand	Arrange regular RSL forums	Agreed with RP's to meet twice a year – Jan 2014	Within existing resources	Chair of Health & Housing Housing Strategy Officer RP's
Improve single persons access to affordable housing	Develop single homeless initiative across East Lancs.	Sept 14	Within CLG allocation	Pennine Lancs Housing Group
Agree one bed accommodation is developed as a priority.	Encourage private landlords to consider one bed accommodation.	April 2014	Within current landlord tenant budget.	Housing Strategy Officer Housing Officer

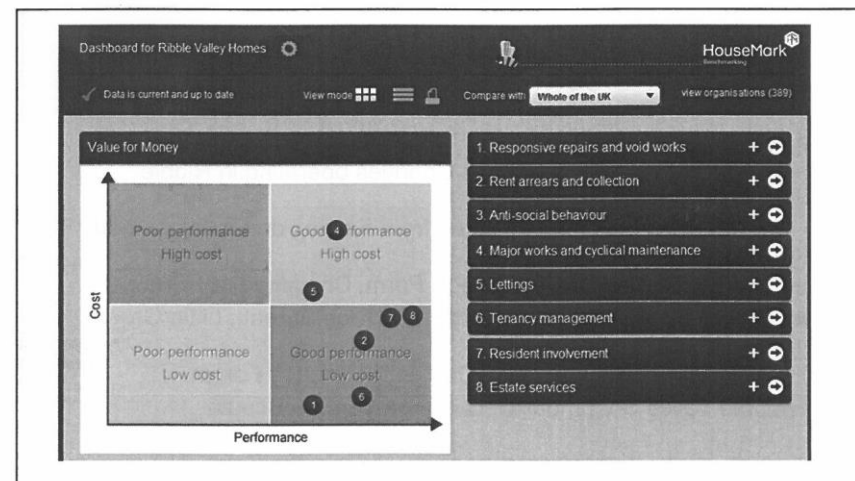
↑ All RVH tenants Satisfaction with	2007	2009	2012	Trend
The overall services provided by RVH	85%	92%	95%	↑
The overall quality of your home	86%	87%	93%	↑
Your neighbourhood as a place to live	94%	95%	95%	↔
Your rent as value for money	87%	89%	94%	↑
Your service charges as value for money	-	-	89%	
The repairs and maintenance service	85%	81%	90%	↑
RVH listening to your views and acting upon them	74%	80%	82%	↑

Performance

- RVH only has its rental income on which to run its business, this income is used to facilitate loans. At the point of transfer RVH entered into a funding deal with Barclays which is still current.
- It is essential that in order to maintain our current services to tenants that we perform at the highest level in relation to rent collection, repairs, voids and lettings.
- In order to ensure we are maintaining high standards we regularly survey our tenants and benchmark our performance against our peers.

RVH and the Community

- RVH have for the last 3 years made £20k per annum available to support Community Groups/Charities operating in Ribble Valley.
- The following have all benefitted from funding during this period of time
 - Clitheroe Youth Forum, Gazegill Farm, Chipping Play Group
 - Ribble Valley Home Start, Citizens Advice Bureau, Little Green Bus
 - Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Domestic Violence Forum
 - Ribble Valley Shopmobility, Clitheroe Venture Scouts



Development Continued

- 8 x 1 bed apartments at Carlton Place Clitheroe due for completion July 2014
- 7 x 1 and 2 bed apartments for rent in conjunction with the Chipping Community Land Trust due on site May 2014
- Parker Avenue Clitheroe 3 x 3 bed houses available on shared ownership due for completion December 2014
- Whins Lane Simonstone 2 x 3 bed houses and 3 x 2 bed houses for sale and rent

Development Continued

- In addition to the stock that we own we have also been instrumental in bringing 12 new rental properties to the market in Dunsop Bridge through a successful partnership with the Duke of Lancaster Housing Trust (20 Children)
- Management of 25 properties in Clitheroe on behalf of Contour Homes
- Management of 2 properties in Longridge on behalf of private owners let at Local Housing Allowance rates.

Appendix 2

Service User consultation April 2014

Suggested improvements to the service

New furniture in the flats.

Access to Wi-Fi in the hostel.

New blinds/ curtains

Double-glazing

Improve heating

Nowhere to meet other residents.

Somewhere to cook food.

Appendix 3¹

Affordability Ratio of House price to income ratio

Ward	Mean Household Income (£)	Mean Price	Mean Price Ratio 2012	Mean Price Ratio 2007
Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley	43,000	331,346	7.7	8.1
Alston & Hothersall	38,000	184,763	4.9	5.1
Billington & Old Langho	49,500	334,074	6.7	7
Bowland, Newton & Slaidburn	41,000	302,701	7.4	12.7
Chatburn	35,000	184,250	5.3	6.7
Chipping	42,000	282,770	6.7	8.1
Clayton-le-Dale with Ramsgreave	43,000	208,858	4.9	6.7
Derby & Thornley	31,500	131,624	4.2	5.5
Dilworth	38,500	171,540	4.5	5.5
Edisford & Low Moor	32,500	133,572	4.1	4.7
Gisburn, Rimington	40,500	257,006	6.3	9
Langho	44,500	220,083	4.9	5.4
Littlemoor	29,000	158,816	5.5	6.6
Mellor	42,500	215,193	5.1	7
Primrose	32,500	125,602	3.9	4.6
Read & Simonstone	44,000	246,447	5.6	6.1
Ribchester	40,500	272,089	6.7	6.2
Sabden	38,000	165,884	4.4	4.4
Salthill	37,000	156,593	4.2	6.3
St Mary's	37,000	191,762	5.2	4.7
Waddington & West Bradford	39,500	332,644	8.4	7.9
Whalley	44,000	278,176	6.3	7.8
Wilpshire	48,500	228,288	4.7	5.7
Wiswell & Pendleton	43,000	191,800	4.5	8.2
Ribble Valley	39,500	215,712	5.5	
Lancashire (12 Districts)	34,400	103,471	3.0	
Lancashire (14 Districts)	33,700			
North West	33,900	107,184	3.2	
Great Britain	36,000	161,458	4.5	