

# **Daventry District Council Strategic Housing Plan 2014-2019**

**Adopted February 2014**

**Revised December 2018**



## Schedule of changes December 2018

From time to time it may be necessary to amend the policy in line with new guidance and changing operational procedures.

Changes made to the February 2014 version of the policy:

Date of change	Page number – February version 2014	Section	Amendment
September 2018	31	9.0 Homelessness and Vulnerable People - Prevention Methods	Tenancy Support - Deletion of first paragraph. Addition – Some providers also offer more specialist support where it is required to help those with specific needs.
September 2018	32	9.0 Homelessness and Vulnerable People - Prevention Methods	Deletion – Mortgage Rescue
September 2018	32	9.0 Homelessness and Vulnerable People - Prevention Methods	Adjustment – Daventry Homelessness Prevention Scheme: eligible applicants that are homeless or threatened with homelessness, the scheme provides loans or small grants for a range of purposes including but not limited to rent deposits, rent or mortgage arrears.
September 2018	32	9.0 Homelessness and Vulnerable People - Prevention Methods	Deletion – School Visits
February 2019	38	10.0 Empty Homes	Deletion - Loans Scheme – For empty properties

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**\*Please note: that from February 2020 Daventry District Council adopted the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which replaces the Homelessness Strategy parts of this document.**

## 1.0 Introduction

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Daventry District Council's Strategic Housing Plan covers the period 2014-2019.

The plan brings together the Housing Strategy, the Homelessness Review, the Homelessness Strategy and the Empty Homes strategy to provide a comprehensive document addressing housing needs across Daventry District.

The plan addresses housing issues that will affect the district over the next five years allowing the Council and its partners to respond appropriately to existing and new challenges. The major challenges facing housing in the District has been identified as:

- The aging population.
- Delivery of housing in general, and particularly affordable housing, to meet housing needs.
- Responding to changing benefit arrangements which affect housing.
- Securing suitable sites for accommodation for groups with specialist needs such as Gypsies and travellers.

The Plan comes at a time when the Government has introduced a number of policies around housing, planning and welfare which have all had an impact on how services are delivered. Working in partnership with all our stakeholders and service users, nine objectives have been developed for the plan:

- **Objective 1**  
Promote a variety of tenures and mix of properties in urban and rural locations for both market and affordable housing that meet identified need
- **Objective 2**  
Respond to the needs of an aging population.
- **Objective 3**  
Consider use of surplus public land and brownfield sites for housing development subject to national and local policies and sustainability criteria.
- **Objective 4**  
Continue working in partnership to deliver quality affordable housing.
- **Objective 5**  
Continue to work with owners of empty homes to bring them back into use.
- **Objective 6**  
Continue to improve intelligence held by the Council on housing conditions and needs.
- **Objective 7**  
Develop sustainable and cohesive communities.

- **Objective 8**  
Regeneration of deprived areas.
- **Objective 9**  
Provision of suitable housing for vulnerable people.

## 2.0 Demographics

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### **An Overview of Daventry District**

Daventry District is situated in the county of Northamptonshire. The district is largely rural, made up of one market town (Daventry) and 74 parishes containing 78 villages.

Daventry District along with Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire District makes up the West Northamptonshire housing market area. All three local authorities work in partnership to understand the drivers and dynamics of the housing market to help support development and growth and other local and national policies as outlined in Section 3 'Strategic Context'.

Daventry District is in the centre of the national transport network. Plans for the town mean it will grow significantly over the next few years and the population of the District will be 92,610 by 2026 according to the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 'Population. Households and Labour Force Technical Paper' Update July 2012.

### **Daventry District Residents**

There are 77,843 residents living in the district according to the 2011 Census data.

These residents form 31,647 households which is an increase of 10% since the last census in 2001. The fastest growing age bracket is those aged 60-64 which has increased by 64.4% since the 2001 census.

90% of households in Daventry District live in detached, semi-detached or terraced houses with the rest in flats, maisonettes or apartment blocks. Less than 1% reside in a caravan or mobile structure.

Nearly three quarters (74%) of homes in Daventry District are owned, 14% are social housing and a further 12% are privately rented.

The 2011 census reported that 3.5% (1,121) of all households within the District had an occupancy rating of minus one meaning they did not have enough rooms to live in and were therefore living in overcrowded conditions.

## Population Growth and Household Projections

Table 1 below shows key figures for population in Daventry District as produced by the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

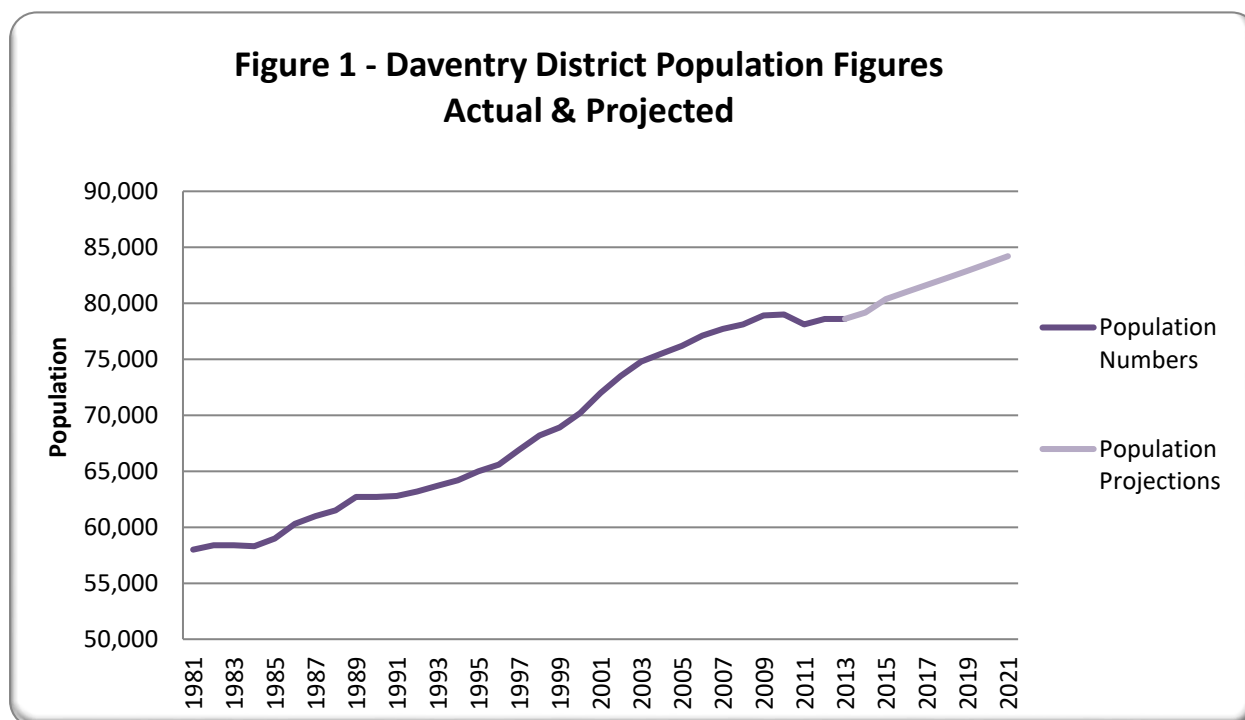
**Table 1 – Population Figures in Daventry District**

Category	Daventry District		East Midlands		England	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
All persons; All ages	77,843	100.00	4,533,222	100.00	53,012,456	100.00
Males: All ages	38,399	49.97	2,234,493	49.29	26,069,148	49.18
Females: All ages	38,944	50.03	2,298,729	50.71	26,943,308	50.82
All Persons; Aged 0-15	14,812	19.02	838,455	18.50	10,022,836	19.00
All Persons; Aged 16-24	7,609	9.77	547,411	12.08	6,284,760	11.86
All Persons; Aged 25-49	25,655	32.96	1,514,351	33.41	18,474,967	34.85
All Persons; Aged 50-64	16,590	21.31	860,057	18.97	9,569,364	18.05
All Persons; Aged 65 +	13,177	16.93	772,948	17.05	8,660,529	16.34

Source – Office of National Statistics

As can be seen from Table 1 the split between males and females is fairly even with 33% of residents aged 25-49, which is slightly below the national average. The percentage of people in the 50-64 and 65+ brackets is slightly higher than the national average.

The District's population has increased by 8.4% during 2001-2011 and an increase of 7.9% is expected over the period 2011-2021.



Source – WNJPU and ONS Interim 2011- based subnational population projections

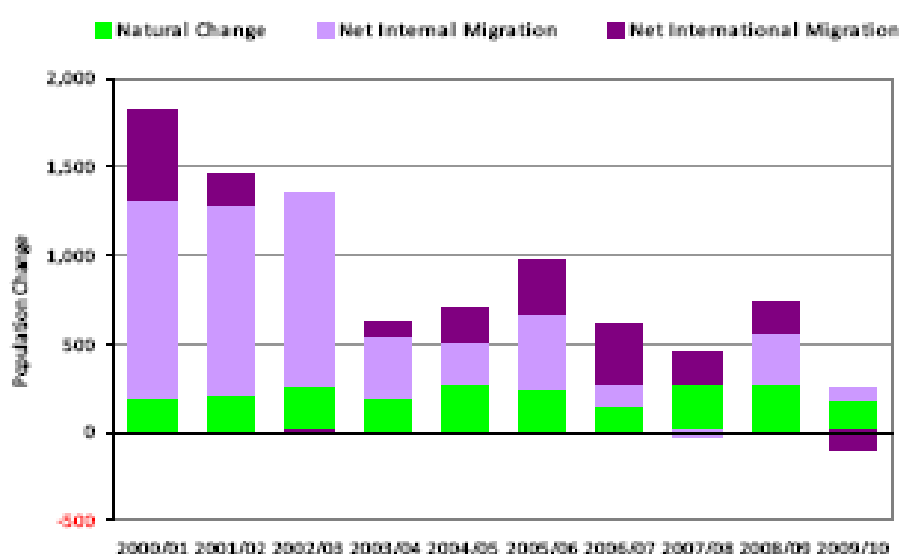
Projection figures also show that the population of Daventry District is expected to rise more rapidly

than the national average. The District has experienced a sharp continued growth in its population throughout the whole period since 1981; Daventry District's population now sits 36.3% higher than the 1981 base.

ONS figures show that the number of households in the United Kingdom has increased more rapidly than housing supply. Until the mid-90's natural change was the main driver for population growth however, more recent population growth has been predominantly based upon international migration.

The West Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit commissioned Edge Analytics to undertake a Population & Household forecast methodology review in November 2011. It showed that although internal migration contributed to the population in Daventry District, international migration has had less of an impact on population growth.

### Daventry



Alongside an increase in population there has also been a reduction in the size of households consequently leading to an increase in the actual number of households. In 1981 the size of an average household in England was 2.67; this figure is predicted to be 2.15 in 2021 (source West Northants SHMA 2010).

Reasons for this change may include the following.

- Improvements in health care thus reducing child mortality and allowing individuals to live longer.
- More older individuals choosing to live alone and independently as a result of help available to them.
- Young adults moving out of parental homes.
- An increase in the number of relationships breaking down.
- International migration.



## The Older Population

Older persons are described by the Audit Commission as anyone over the age of 50.

The Social Exclusion taskforce and DEFRA have undertaken a National study on Older People in Rural Areas in which it has identified Daventry District as being one of the top three local authorities with the greatest expected increases in the over 65 population. The other two authorities are South Northamptonshire and East Northamptonshire.

From Table 1 above it can be seen that there is a higher percentage of older persons in the District than the national average.

The Council has made a commitment to older persons and produced an Older Persons Strategy to help identify and implement the vision for older people's services throughout the District. The strategy places an emphasis on ensuring that all services are accessible to older people as well as ensuring the provision of specific services

## Disabilities

The Northamptonshire Analysis website shows the following disability and mental health figures for 2011/12 within the District.

	Age 18-64	Age 65+
Learning Disability	98	1
Physical Disability	106	664
Mental Health	141	279

Source – Northamptonshire Analysis

Daventry District Council has a number of initiatives to help those who are vulnerable to be able to either access housing within the District or be able to access funds to improve their existing living conditions.

Help available could include housing which has level access entry to the property, level access showers, wet rooms, grab rails, stair lifts etc.

The Provision of Housing Assistance Policy 2012 outlines how the Council administers grants and loans including information on

- Disabled Facilities Grant- A grant towards the cost of providing adaptations and facilities to enable the disabled person to continue to live at the property
- Home Repairs Assistance Grant – usually available for small-scale works, repairs, improvements or adaptations to a dwelling

For home owners, The Care and Repair Service advise on any repairs or improvements to their property. They help with minor works and repairs to the property. The Service can help to find reliable contractors to complete works and advise on welfare benefits and any grants that may be available to fund the work.

Applicants who are in unsuitable accommodation due to their disability and may find it beneficial to move e.g. into a bungalow or sheltered accommodation can apply to be on the housing register. Further details of this can be found within the Daventry District Council Allocations Scheme.

## 3.0 Strategic Context

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A number of strategies have been used to inform and help to identify the future aims and objectives of this Housing Plan. These are listed below.

### National Policy

National legislation and strategies taken into consideration whilst producing this document are listed below:

- **Local Government Act 2003**  
Stipulates the need for all local authorities to have a housing strategy
- **Homelessness Act 2002**  
Stipulates the need for all local authorities to carry out a Homelessness Review and to have a Homelessness Strategy
- **Laying the foundations, 'a housing strategy for England' (November 2011)**  
Sets out the Governments aims to address the housing market situation by
  - Supporting the delivery of new homes and support aspiration
  - Supporting choice and quality for tenants
  - Tackling empty homes
  - Enabling better quality homes, places and housing support
- **Localism Act 2011**  
The Localism Act 2011 sets out a series of measures the Government stated are intended to shift power away from central government and towards local people including:
  - New freedoms and flexibilities for local government including:
    - General power of competence whereby local authorities are no longer restricted to act in accordance with specific laws but are free to do anything provided no other laws are broken.
  - New rights and powers for communities and individuals including:
    - Neighbourhood planning allows communities to come together to plan their areas e.g. houses, shops, schools etc.
    - Community right to build allows a local community to authorise development they want in their area.
  - Reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally including:
    - Social housing allocations reform which enables local authorities to adapt their allocations policies to local priorities (within reason)
    - Social housing tenure reform which enables social landlords to adapt tenancies to fit the situation of the household rather than a one size fits all lifetime tenancy
    - Reform of homelessness legislation which enables local authorities to discharge their homeless duty into the private sector without the consent of the applicant where it is appropriate to do so.

Under the amendments to the law made by the Localism Act, the Council has re-introduced a

requirement for a 'local connection' (with some exceptions) for entering its housing list.

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The NPPF was published in March 2012 and is a key part of Government's reforms which aim to make the planning system less complex and more accessible and promote sustainable growth.

The NPPF replaced over 1,000 pages of previous planning policy with around fifty. This included all Planning Policy Statements and Guidelines as well as some circulars. However, the fundamental basis of all planning decisions is still Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which requires that planning decisions are taken in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The main impact of the NPPF in Daventry District to date has been to provide a policy context more supportive of speculative housing schemes, typically in larger villages.

- **Welfare Reform**

The Government believes that the current system of benefits is too complex and there are insufficient incentives to encourage people on benefits to start paid work or increase their hours. The Government is therefore engaged in a programme of reform including the following elements.

*Welfare Reform Act 2012*

The stated aim of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 is to make the benefit system fairer and more affordable to help reduce poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency and to reduce levels of fraud and error. Key areas of the act include Universal Credit which replaces a range of existing means-tested benefits and tax credits for people of working age. The Government's aims are to:

- Encourage people on benefits to start paid work or increase their hours by making sure work pays.
- Smooth transitions into and out of work.
- Simplify the system, making it easier for people to understand and easier and cheaper to administer.
- Reduce the number of people who are in work but still living in poverty.
- Reduce fraud and error.

Measures the Act contains include:

- Personal independence Payment which will replace Disability Living Allowance
- Introduction of a cap on the total amounts of benefits people of working age can receive to ensure those on benefits cannot receive more than the average wage for a working family
- Introduction of new rules relating to the size of accommodation that Housing Benefit (leading on to universal Credit) will cover for working age tenants in the social sector

*Spare room subsidy / bedroom tax*

The spare room subsidy (also known as the 'bedroom tax') is a provision within The Welfare

Reform Act 2012. If a home rented from a social landlord is deemed to be under-occupied i.e. contains more bedrooms than required by the tenant, the Housing Benefit payment will be paid proportionately to reflect this.

Arrangements exist for those people who may be facing hardship following the introduction of Welfare Reform. A discretionary housing payment could be made to help people top up their rent. The Council has made 191 payments from its discretionary housing payment fund (DHPF), totalling £58,242 up to 30th September 2013. This compares to £9,761 in total for the previous financial year. The Council does not have its own policy on the use of the DHPF, but uses the 2013 Department of Work and Pensions Guidance Manual which includes an LA Good Practice Guide, with each case being considered individually. The availability of DHPF payments is made known by a letter to the claimants and is shown on the DDC website. The impact of the use of the new guidance has been that DDC has been able to ensure that extra funding for 2013/14 has been targeted, as intended, for those affected by welfare reforms, in particular those affected by the 'bedroom tax', which accounts for 169 of the 191 cases so far

A number of potential implications arise following the introduction of spare room subsidy including

- Increased requirement for accommodation with less bedrooms in both social and private rented sectors.
- Strain on resources due to moving people out of specially adapted homes too large for their need to a smaller unsuitable home which will need to be adapted.
- Households may have to move away from families and support networks if no suitable accommodation is available.
- Increase in housing waiting lists.

These implications will need to be weighed in the balance with other considerations when considering proposals for housing. For example, in villages where limited amounts of development take place, properties that are flexible to allocate are typically sought, and this may outweigh the pressure for properties with less bedrooms,

#### *Direct housing payments*

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 stipulates that from October 2013, claimants of Housing Benefit and Universal Credit will receive personally the money for their rental payments, rather than it going to their landlord directly. This change is intended to help people take responsibility for their own affairs and thus with the transition to managing money when in employment. However, some landlords are concerned this change will, particularly for vulnerable people, make it less likely they will pay their rents and thus be able to sustain their tenancies.

## **Sub-Regional Policy and Research**

- **West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (WNJCS)**

The WNJCS sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the administrative areas of Daventry District, Northampton Borough and South Northamptonshire Councils for the plan period up to 2029. It is a key part of the Local Development Framework. It identifies specific locations for strategic new housing and employment and changes to transport infrastructure and other supporting community facilities, as well as defining areas where development will be limited.

The Plan is currently at Submission stage. An examination into the Plan opened in April 2013. The inspector identified the need for additional work on objectively assessed housing needs (as set out in the NPPF) and sustainability appraisal of options of site for major housing development. This work has now been undertaken prior to a resumption of the examination in March 2014 following a further consultation in January February 2014. The Plan is expected to be adopted later in 2014

- **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2010)**

The SHMA is an evidence base helping to inform both planning and housing policies including the Core Strategy.

- **Objectively assessed housing need (2013)**

Work is being carried out by Peter Brett Associates and by Cambridge Economics to assess the requirements for housing in the period up to 2026, 2029 or 2031, as mentioned above. The two studies have produced different results. The Cambridge Economics study is considered to produce more robust results and indicates that:

- In Daventry District there is a need for 383 dwellings per annum
- In the Northampton related development area there is a need for 1,416 dwellings per annum

## Local Policy and Research

- **Daventry District Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2026**

The strategy is an overarching long-term vision for Daventry District. It contains priorities for improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area. These are as follows.

- Health and Well being
- Safe & Strong Communities
- Improve our Business Economy
- Protect and Enhance our Environment

In May 2014, subject to adoption by Full Council, this strategy will be replaced by the Daventry District Community Strategy 2014-2018. The consultation version of this document continues similar themes.

- **Daventry District Council Corporate Strategic Plan 2011-2014**

The plan sets out the Councils priorities for the period 2011 to 2014 under the vision '*Build a Better District*'. It sets out how the Council sees its contribution to national, regional and local priorities under the objectives set out below (largely drawn from the Sustainable Community Strategy).

- Improve Our Business Economy
- Protect and enhance our environment
- Healthy, safe and strong Communities and Individuals
- Effective and Efficient Council

- **Daventry District Council Older Person's Strategy 2012-2015**

The Older Person's Strategy aims for high standards of older people's services throughout the District. It builds on the 'Seven dimensions of Independence' identified by the Audit Commission in 2004. These are as follows.

- Housing and Home
  - Neighbourhood
  - Social activities, social networks and keeping busy
  - Getting out and about
  - Income
  - Information
  - Health and healthy living
- **Daventry District Council Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (December 2012)**  
The AHSPD provides detail and enlarges on saved policies in the Daventry District Local Plan 1997 and brings together relevant Council Strategies, housing market intelligence and other relevant housing guidance. It covers the following.
    - Definition of affordable housing
    - Mix and type of affordable housing
    - Funding arrangements
    - Financial viability assessments
    - Exception Sites
    - Integration of tenure blind design
  - **District wide Housing Needs Surveys**  
The Housing needs Programme was developed to identify the need within each parish across the district. The parishes have now all been surveyed and results are being written up for each area.
  - **Provision of Housing Assistance Policy**  
The policy sets out how Daventry District Council will assist with the condition and suitability of housing in the District. It contains information about the way in which The Council provides grants and loans.

## Housing Delivery

Over the period 2011 to 2012, 145 homes were delivered in Daventry District, against a then identified need for 540 (in the now revoked Regional Strategy) according to the West Northamptonshire Authorities Monitoring Report 2011/2012. In the same period 25 affordable homes were delivered,

The recently produced OAHN identifies a need for 383 dwellings per annum, when the plan period requirement is annualised. The submission version of the Core Strategy includes a phased approach to housing delivery which takes account of the lead in time for major development schemes.

## 4.0 House Prices

### Daventry District House Prices Statistics

According to the Zoopla website, over the last five years (2008-2013) there have been 2,311 sales across the district with an average price paid of £186,973.

There are currently 293 properties for sale in the district with an average asking price of £264,215. The most expensive home was bought for £1,212,500 and the cheapest home was bought for £23,737, for a leasehold flat.

As can be seen from Table 2 the average price paid for properties in Daventry District is higher than the regional average but, with the exception of the detached properties, lower than the United Kingdom average.

Within Northamptonshire, Daventry District has the second highest house prices after South Northamptonshire. This is highlighted in Table 3.

The majority of sales in Daventry town last year were terraced properties selling for an average of £119,787. Detached properties sold for an average of £218,406 with semi-detached properties fetching £139,750.

Overall sold prices in Daventry over the last year (2012/13) were 7% up on the previous year and 6% down on the 2007 level of £165,203.

**Table 2 - Average House Prices January – March 2013 (Land Registry)**

House Type	Average Price (£) Daventry District	Average Price (£) East Midlands	Average Price United Kingdom
Detached	331,727	228,028	330,292
Semi-detached	173,670	134,204	200,053
Terrace	149,970	116,210	198,814
Flat	97,158	96,006	245,262

Source – Land registry

**Table 3 - Average House Prices by Northamptonshire District January- March 2013 (Land Registry)**

Authority	Detached	Semi-detached	Terrace	Flat
South Northants	339,007	197,045	193,209	121,125
Daventry District	331,727	173,670	149,970	97,158
East Northants	254,240	145,459	127,726	74,340
Wellingborough	255,518	149,230	124,104	95,332
Northampton	240,811	148,109	136,760	94,212
Kettering	222,073	131,954	113,369	80,871
Corby	182,422	129,301	97,990	67,850

Source – Land registry



Prices in rural parts of Daventry District are much higher than within Daventry Town.

## Volume of Sales

High property prices can make it hard for first time buyers to enter the property market in their area. This is particularly an issue for those who live in rural areas of the District. However, it is also important to consider the volume of sales across Daventry District, which show that the majority of sales are at considerably lower prices. Table 4 shows the number of sales from August 2010 until May 2013 was 1,398 of which nearly half of the property sales were £130,001 to £230,000 with 32.8% of sales being £30,000 to £130,000

**Table 4 - Number of Sales August 2010-May 2013**

House Price Band	No of Sales	Overall Percentage
£1,030,001 to 1,130,000	1	0.07%
£930,001 to 1,030,000	1	0.07%
£830,001 to 930,000	1	0.07%
£730,001 to 830,000	4	0.3%
£630,001 to 730,000	4	0.3%
£530,001 to 630,000	11	0.8%
£430,001 to £530,000	27	1.9%
£330,001 to £430,000	65	4.6%
£230,001 to £330,000	137	9.8%
£130,001 to £230,000	689	49.3%
£30,000 to £130,000	458	32.8%

Source - Zoopla

## Tenure Breakdown

According to the 2011 census, 74% of residents are owner occupiers and 13% live in accommodation owned by a social landlord. These figures are shown in Table 5.

Both these figures have decreased from the 2001 census which showed 78% of residents were in owner occupation tenures and 14% lived in social rented housing.

However, the biggest tenure change over the census period was in Privately Rented Accommodation which more than doubled to 11%.

**Table 5 - Breakdown of residents by tenure**

Tenure Type	Number of Residents	Owner Occupier	Shared Ownership	Privately Renting	Social Rented	Rent Free
Number	75,886	55,867	554	8,623	10,055	787
Percentage	100%	74%	0.7%	11.3%	13%	1%

Source – Census 2011

## 5.0 Employment

### Economically Active Population

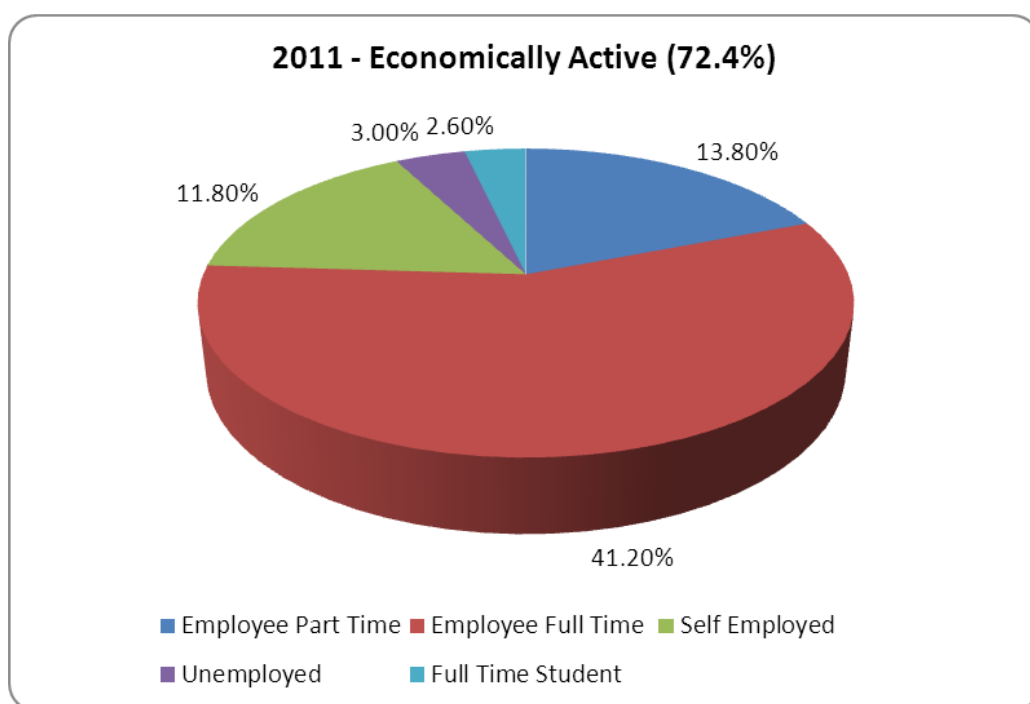
In 2011, 72% of the population of the District aged 16-74 were economically active. Nearly a third of the same population were economically inactive; half of these were people who were retired. This can be seen in Table 6.

Between 2001 and 2011 one of the biggest changes was a 39% decrease in the number of people who were self-employed. There was also a 42% increase in the number of people who were unemployed rising from 1,216 in 2001 to 1,731 in 2011. This is reflective of the economic climate.

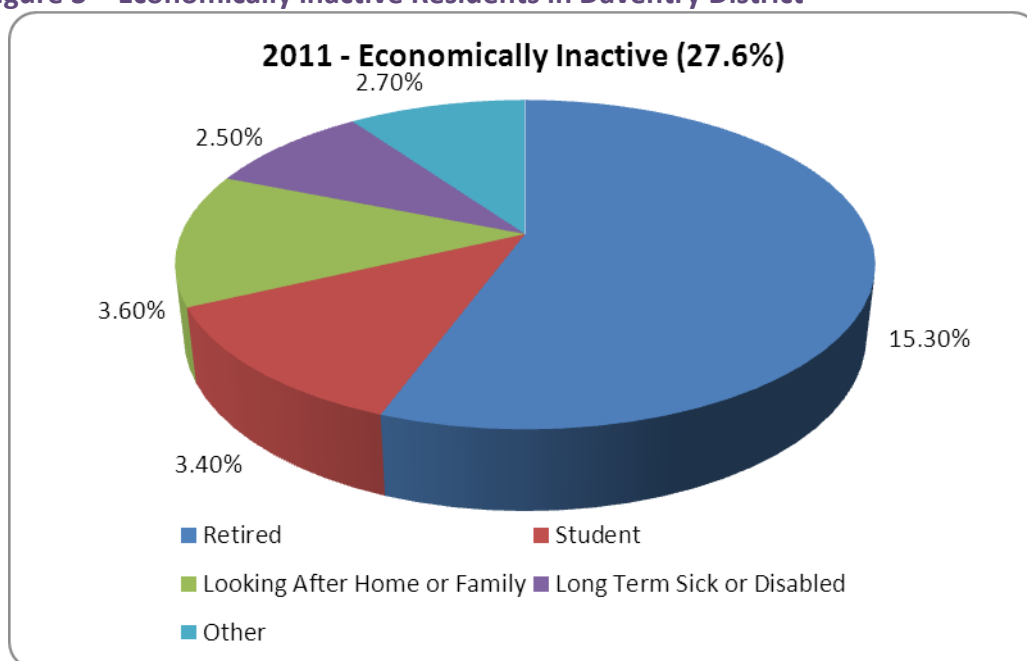
**Table 6 - Breakdown of economically active and inactive residents in Daventry District**

	2001 Count	2001 %	2011 Count	2011 %	% Change
All usual residents aged 16-74	52,089		57,379		
<b>Economically Active – total</b>	38,170	73.3%	<b>41,546</b>	<b>72.4%</b>	8.8%
Employee Part Time	6,543	12.6%	7,904	13.8%	20.8%
Employee Full Time	23,751	45.6%	23,617	41.2%	-0.6%
Self Employed	11,126	21.4%	6,755	11.8%	-39.3%
Unemployed	1,216	2.3%	1,731	3.0%	42.4%
Full Time Student	1,097	2.1%	1,519	2.6%	38.5%
<b>Economically Inactive – Total</b>	13,919	26.7%	<b>15,833</b>	<b>27.6%</b>	13.8%
Retired	6,591	12.7%	8,777	15.3%	33.2%
Student	1,446	2.8%	1,978	3.4%	36.8%
Looking After Home or Family	3,036	5.8%	2,079	3.6%	-31.5%
Long Term Sick or Disabled	1,511	2.9%	1,456	2.5%	-3.6%
Other	1,335	2.6%	1,543	2.7%	15.6%

**Figure 2 – Economically Active Residents in Daventry District**



**Figure 3 – Economically inactive Residents in Daventry District**



**Table 7 - Annual Survey of weekly earnings – 2012**

	<b>Daventry</b>	<b>Northamptonshire</b>	<b>East Midlands</b>	<b>England</b>
<b>Full Time Workers</b>	£531.80	£544.00	£547.70	£616.40
<b>Part Time Workers</b>	£213.20	£179.30	£182.40	£200.60

Table 7 shows in 2012, average weekly pay (gross) for full time workers in Daventry District was third in Northamptonshire behind Northampton and South Northamptonshire. Part time workers in Daventry District received the highest weekly earnings across Northamptonshire.

In 2012, average annual pay in Daventry District was £24,167 (gross) second in Northamptonshire behind Northampton (£26,588).

### **Employment by Industry**

Table 8 indicates the industries that the local population are employed in, whether or not they work within the District, and therefore does not infer the employment sector makeup within Daventry District.

**Table 8 – Employment of Daventry District residents**

	<b>2011 Count</b>	<b>2011 %</b>
<b>All people in employment (16-74)</b>	39,536	
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motor Cycles	7,084	17.9%
Manufacturing	4,900	12.4%
Education	3,845	9.7%
Human Health and Social Work Activities	3,833	9.7%
Construction	2,847	7.2%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	2,672	6.8%
Transport and Storage	2,527	6.4%
Accommodation and Food Service Activities	1,882	4.8%
Administrative and Support Service Activities	1,859	4.7%
Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security	1,810	4.6%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; Other Service Activities	1,787	4.5%
Information and Communication	1,360	3.4%
Financial and Insurance Activities	1,334	3.4%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	661	1.7%
Real Estate Activities	573	1.4%
Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply	484	1.2%
Mining and Quarrying	23	0.1%
Activities of Households as Employers; undifferentiated goods – and services - Producing Activities of Households for Own Use	41	0.1%
Activities of Extraterritorial Organisations and Bodies	14	0.0%

**Table 9 - Employment of Daventry District Residents by Occupation**

	<b>2011 Count</b>	<b>2011 %</b>
<b>All people in employment (16-74)</b>	39,536	
<b>Professional Occupations</b>	6,612	16.7%
Managers, Directors and Senior Officials	5,700	14.4%
Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	4,982	12.6%
<b>Elementary Occupations</b>	4,713	11.9%
Administrative and Secretarial Occupations	4,621	11.7%
Skilled Trade Occupations	4,587	11.6%
Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations	3,231	8.2%
<b>Process, Plant and Machine Operatives</b>	2,761	7.0%
Sales and Customer Service Occupations	2,329	5.9%

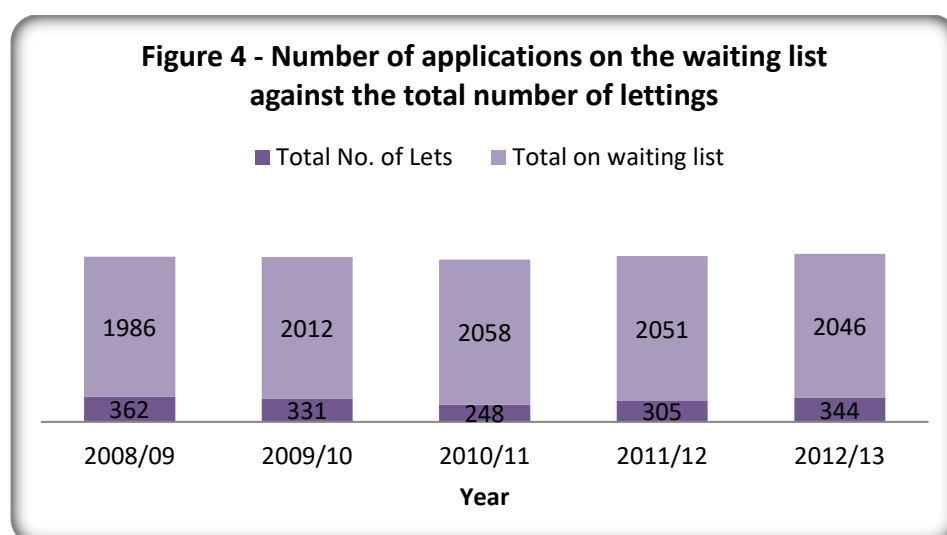
## 6.0 The Housing Register

Over the past 5 years the number of people on the housing register remained fairly static as can be seen at Table 10 and illustrated in Figure 4 which also shows the number of lettings that took place over the same period.

**Table 10 - Housing Register Figures 2008-2013**

Period	Total applications on the Housing Register	Total number of lets	Number of lets as a percentage of the Housing Register
2008/09	1986	362	18%
2009/10	2012	331	16%
2010/11	2058	248	12%
2011/12	2051	305	15%
2012/13	2046	344	17%

Source - Daventry District Council Housing Statistics



Source - Daventry District Council Housing Statistics

In 2010 Daventry District Council implemented a Choice Based Lettings System. This meant that applicants were for the first time making choices as to where they wanted to live. Properties are advertised on the Homechoice website and applicants can choose to 'bid' for properties they may be eligible for.

A sub-regional partnership has also been formed with Northampton Borough Council to allow cross boundary nominations to take place.

Due to a change in legislation via the Localism Act 2011, Local authorities have the power to design their allocations scheme around local priorities whilst still taking into considerations those falling within the reasonable preference categories (please see section on homelessness for a definition of these).

In April 2013 Daventry District Council adopted a new Allocations Scheme which restricted those applying for housing on the waiting list. This meant that applications would only be considered on

the waiting list from those who were eligible to apply for housing, had a genuine housing need and had a local connection to the district by either living in the district, working in the district or having close family in the district.

Implementation of the new policy, has led to a reduction in the waiting list from 2,489 to 704 (as of October 2013), more than halving the number of applicants on the list. A reduction is normal when applicants are required to re-register, but some of the reduction must have arisen from changes in the criteria such as the addition of the local connection requirement and the exclusion of people with significant means. Between April and October 2014 (before and after the change in the Allocation Scheme) changes by priority bands were as follows:

- Emergency band – 9 to 7 (this is within normal fluctuations).
- Band A – 185 to 82
- Band B – 1,267 to 205
- Band C – 270 to 111
- Band D – 758 to 299

## 7.0 Affordable Housing

Daventry District Council does not have any of its own social housing stock (apart from a few shared ownership properties in Daventry town) since transferring it to a then newly-formed Registered Provider called Daventry and District Housing. The Council therefore works in close partnership with its partner Registered Providers, housing developers and funding bodies to provide new affordable housing across the district.

A further commitment to delivery was made by the Council by adopting the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document in December 2012. It provides clear guidance on the provision of affordable housing. This is particularly relevant in the period prior to adoption of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, but the document will continue to apply until replaced.

The number of affordable homes delivered across the District over the past five years is shown below along with the number of homes sold under Right to Buy.

**Table 11 – Number of affordable homes developed in Daventry District against those sold under right to buy for the same period**

Period	Total number of units built	Total number of units sold under Right to Buy
2008/09	46	0 <sup>1</sup>
2009/10	69	0 <sup>1</sup>
2010/11	19	8 <sup>1</sup>
2011/12	25	1 <sup>2</sup>
2012/13	16	19 <sup>2</sup>

1 - <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120419011320/http://www.tenantservicesauthority.org/server/show/nav.15039>

2 - <http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/> Statistical Returns Data

There has been a big decline in the number of units built over the years. This is partly due to the recession but also due to the Government reducing national investment into affordable housing. This means that providers have to be more innovative in the ways in which they finance new homes.

The number of people buying their homes under the right to buy scheme has also increased during the past year. One reason for this could be due to the Government increasing the caps on right to buy discounts. In March 2013 the maximum discount for a house was increased to 70% of its value with a cap at either £75,000 or £100,000 if based in London.

A number of initiatives have been introduced by the Government to kick start this including

- Affordable rent – Registered Providers are able to charge higher rents (up to 80% of market rents). The difference in rents (i.e. between social and affordable rents) is then put back into their business plans to help fund other schemes
- Cross Subsidy – Exception site housing schemes were 100% affordable built only for identified need within a village. The NPPF allows for some market housing to be built on the sites to make the schemes viable.

Affordable housing is also secured through developer contributions secured through planning conditions or obligations on market housing sites; these are commonly known as Section 106 sites. When major development is taking place this is likely to be the largest means of delivering affordable housing.



Currently the affordable housing target across the District is 29% split into one third shared ownership products and two thirds rented accommodation. This is likely to change when the Joint Core Strategy is adopted; this proposed 25% in Daventry town and urban extensions to it, 35% in urban extensions to Northampton and 40% in rural areas.

Viability is a major issue in the delivery of housing and needs to be considered in plan and decision making. The Council therefore, looks at the viability of each scheme on a site by site basis and if necessary adjusts the affordable housing requirement to allow development to take place.

## **Rural House Prices**

Village property prices are still higher than the towns and still above the national average. The average household wage has not increased and as a consequence, decreased affordability for households especially for first time buyers has resulted.

Renting in rural locations also comes with high rental values and many of these households are forced to relocate to cheaper areas including Daventry Town.

Problems faced by the rural community other than high prices and a shortage of affordable housing include limited access to transport and other services.

The Matthew Taylor Report: Living Working Countryside (July 2008) made a number of recommendations about how to nurture a healthy rural economy and ensure an adequate supply of affordable rural housing. These include looking at the village aspirations for affordable housing and working in partnership to bring forward 'exception site' housing.

Local rural housing needs are provided through an 'exception sites' policy in the Local Plan which permits residential development to occur on sites that are not allocated within the plan and would not otherwise be acceptable for such purposes. Development on these sites was purely affordable but the introduction of the NPPF has allowed for cross subsidy schemes on these sites in order to kick start the housing market and make the schemes viable. The policy change may provide new opportunities for the delivery of affordable housing across the District but delivery of market dwellings on these sites will need to be carefully assessed and controlled.

Development in rural areas can be challenging due to a number of factors including the following.

- Suitable sites
- Willing landowners
- Opposition
- Viability
- Funding
- Planning constraints

However, despite the challenges, Daventry District Council is fully committed to identifying and promoting the delivery of affordable housing and has a number of initiatives in place to achieve this including the following.

- Affordable Housing Panel
- Affordable Housing Officer Working Group
- Housing Needs Surveys
- Affordable Housing Communication and Marketing Strategy
- Affordable Housing SPD

- Signed up to the East Midlands Declaration on Affordable Housing

Daventry District Council has also developed an innovative scheme on its own land at Middlemore, Daventry. 45 new homes have been built as a mixture of private rent and affordable housing, consistent with its policy requirements. The Council is exploring a further such scheme.

## **Funding and Resources**

The Homes and Communities Agency is the national housing and regeneration agency for England, with a capital investment budget of around £4bn for the period 2012-2015. This money is used for the investment of new affordable housing and to improve existing social housing as well as for regenerating land and enabling development.

The HCA also regulate Social Housing Providers across England via a statutory committee.

The HCA are responsible for a number of initiatives currently including the following.

- Affordable Homes Programme
- Get Britain Building
- Community Led Project Support
- Empty Homes Programme

The HCA programmes will doubtless change over time but it seems reasonable to judge that it, or another body, will continue to be charged by Government with securing housing, regeneration and development outcomes which are current national priorities. It seems unavoidable this will include further delivery of housing to meet people's needs.

Daventry District Council has a small amount of commuted sums which have arisen when it was not practical or desirable for affordable housing to be delivered on market housing sites. This will be used to deliver affordable housing.

## 8.0 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people

The Housing Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers (including Travelling Show People) and identify suitable land to accommodate sites for them.

In January 2007 Fordham Research carried out a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) on behalf of the seven Northamptonshire local authorities. The document made various recommendations and also outlined need within each authority of residential and transit pitches.

In 2012 RRR consultancy were recruited by the West Northants Joint Planning Unit to update the evidence for the three authorities of West Northants as all Local Authorities will have to justify their policies for traveller site provision using robust evidence that will be tested at the Local Plan examination.

The Traveller Accommodation Needs Survey (April 2013) showed the pitch requirements for Daventry District given in Table 12.

**Table 12 – Daventry District Gypsy & Traveller Pitch Requirement 2012-2029**

<b>2012-2017</b>	<b>2017-22</b>	<b>2022-27</b>	<b>2027-29</b>
8	5	5	2

To enable the CTU to effectively control the number of unauthorised encampments and be able to exercise their full enforcement powers it is important that the Council identifies, and where appropriate, supplies pitches to satisfy the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers within the Daventry District.

The Council produced a Gypsy Traveller and Travelling Show people Site Location and Design Criteria document in 2009. This is to be used as a tool to measure the suitability of land for potential site provision.

## 9.0 Homelessness & Vulnerable People

Please note: that from February 2020 Daventry District Council adopted the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, based on a current review of homelessness and therefore replaces the Homelessness Review and Homelessness Strategy parts within this document.

### Homelessness Review

#### Current levels of homelessness within Daventry District

The reasons for homelessness are many and vary significantly between household type, which is why the DDC Strategic Housing Plan must consider a wide range of issues in order to ensure accessible and sustainable housing for all vulnerable people.

Homelessness in Daventry District is an ongoing, albeit reducing, problem that requires careful consideration when outlining DDC's strategic priorities regarding housing. It is important that we carefully plan ahead while at the same time remain ready to react to the rapidly changing circumstances that cause homelessness.

The Government has stated in '*Laying the foundations: a housing strategy for England*' that it has made tackling homelessness a priority and as such has invested £400m of funding over the 2011-2015 spending review period and a further £70m of investment during 2011/2012.

The Government's stated number one priority in relation to homelessness is tackling rough sleepers and to help those at risk of homelessness to stay off the streets

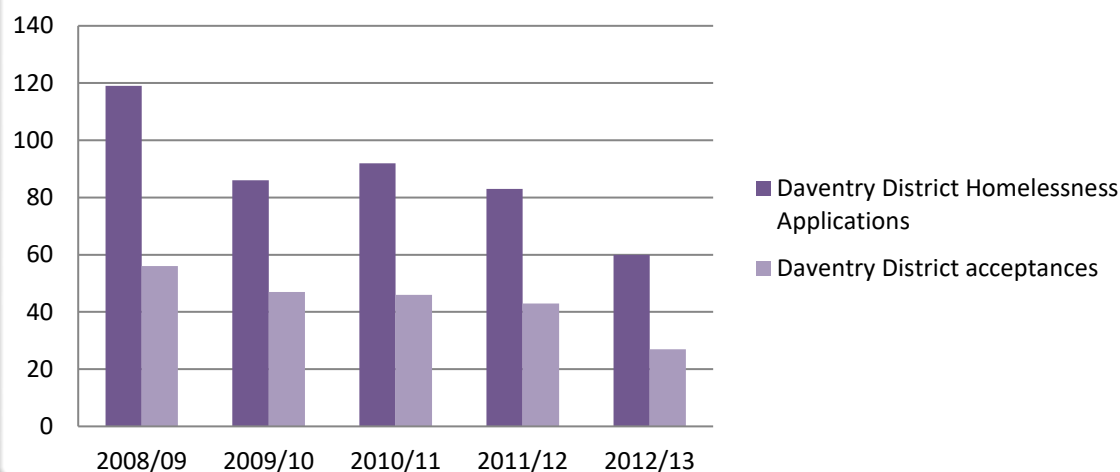
Whilst nationally homelessness figures are rising, Daventry District has seen a reduction in homeless acceptances since 2008/09 in fact by the year 2012/2013, the number of households accepted as homeless had nearly halved. This is despite the fact that the percentage of cases received which are accepted as homeless has not materially changed over the period. These figures can be seen in Table 13 and Figure 5.

**Table 13 – Number of Homelessness applications received against number of acceptances**

Year	National Figure	Daventry District		
		Homelessness Applications	Number of Acceptances	Percentage of acceptances
2008/09	53,430	119	56	47
2009/10	40,020	86	47	54
2010/11	44,160	92	46	50
2011/12	50,290	83	43	52
2012/13	53,540	60	27	45

(Source DCLG live table on homelessness)

**Figure 5 - Number of homeless applications against number of acceptances**



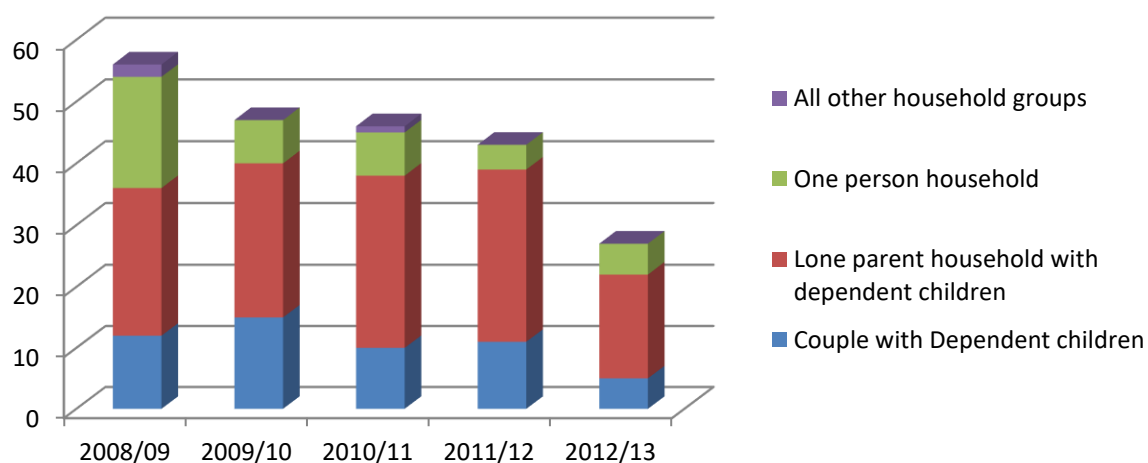
As can be seen from Table 14 and Figure 6 below, applications from the *'lone parent household with dependent children'* category made up the highest percentage of acceptances every year.

**Table 14 – Household make-up of those found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need**

Year	Couple with Dependent children	Lone parent household with dependent children	One person household	All other household groups
2008/09	12	24	18	2
2009/10	15	25	7	0
2010/11	10	28	7	1
2011/12	11	28	4	0
2012/13	5	17	5	0

Source: Daventry District Council data

**Figure 6 - Households found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need (acceptances)**



From Table 15 and Figure 7 below, it can be seen that the majority of homelessness applications accepted were from those aged 16-24 followed by 25-44.

**Table 15 – Age of those found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need**

Age	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
16-24	29	23	21	21	14
25-44	18	21	18	18	11
45-59	7	3	7	4	2
60-64	0	0	0	0	0
65-74	1	0	0	0	0
75 and over	1	0	0	0	0

Source Daventry District Council P1E data

**Figure 7 - Age of applicant (unintentionally homeless and in priority need)**

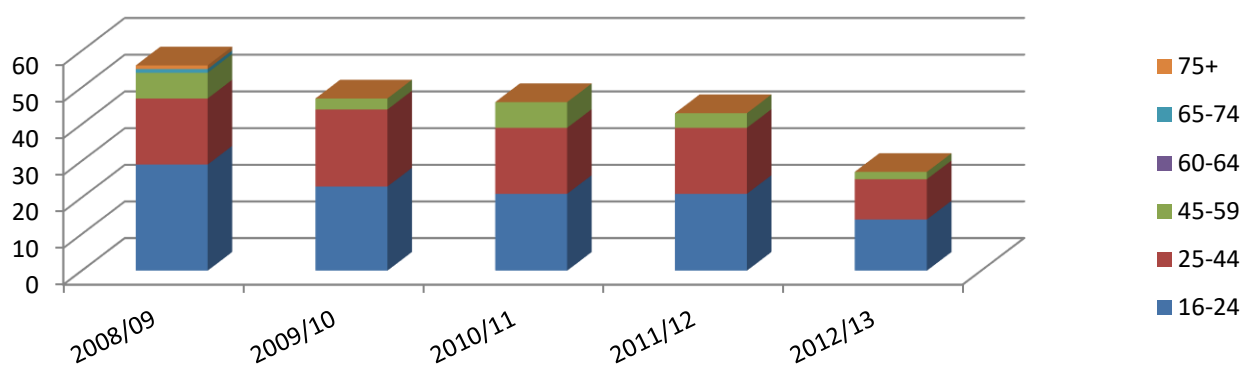
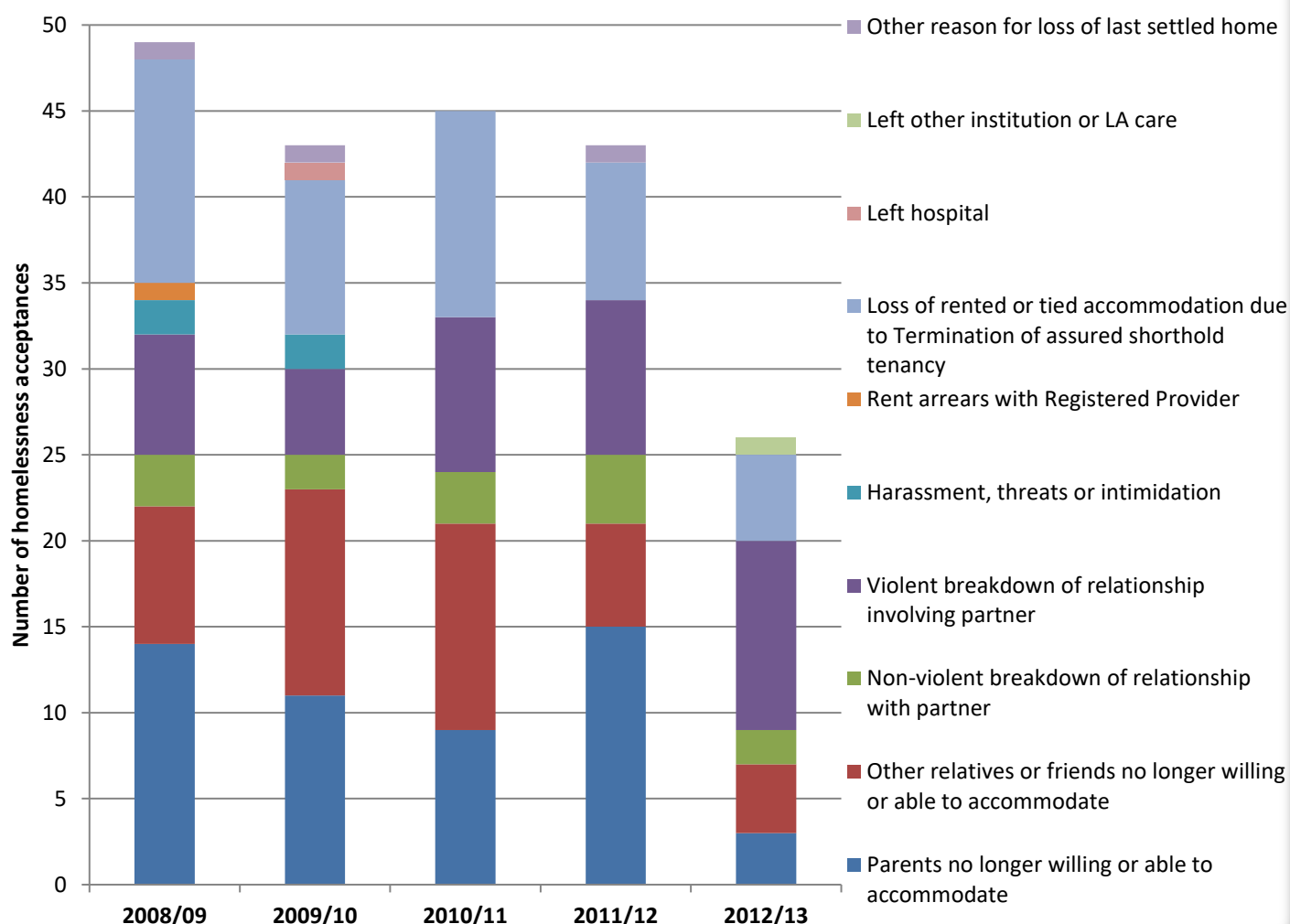


Table 16 and Figure 8 below show the reason applicants were found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need. As can be seen the majority of applicants either had dependent children residing with them or were pregnant.

**Table 16 – Reasons given for homelessness by Applicants found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need 2008/09 – 2012/13**

Reason for Homelessness	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate	14	11	9	15	3	52
Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	8	12	12	6	4	42
Non-violent breakdown of relationship with partner	3	2	3	4	2	14
Violent breakdown of relationship	7	5	9	9	11	41
Harassment, threats or intimidation	2	2	0	0	0	4
Rent arrears with Registered Provider	1	0	0	0	0	1
Loss of rented or tied accommodation due to termination of assured shorthold tenancy	13	9	12	8	5	47
Left hospital	0	1	0	0	0	1
Left other institution or LA care	0	0	0	0	1	1
Other reason for loss of last settled home	1	1	0	1	0	3
<b>Total applicant</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>219</b>

**Figure 8- Reasons given for homelessness**

From the results it can be seen that the main reason for homelessness over the past five years is 'parents no longer willing to accommodate'. This is followed by 'Loss of rented or tied accommodation due to termination of assured shorthold tenancy'. However, by 2012/13 these had been overtaken by 'Violent breakdown of relationship involving a partner'; it is not yet clear if this is a fluctuation or represents a new pattern.

### Future Levels of Homelessness within Daventry District

Significant changes have taken place both nationally and locally in the way homelessness is addressed since the Homelessness Act 2002 was implemented.

Prevention is seen as the key driver in reducing homelessness and is expected to compliment other wider aims such as improving opportunities to access work or training. Proactive work helps reduce reactive and crisis driven responses.

It can be difficult to predict future needs, but the current socio-economic and demographic context suggests that there will be further difficulties for many households trying to access good quality affordable housing, which may lead to increased homelessness due to reasons including the following.

- Natural population growth
- Immigration
- Affordability issues
- Welfare reform leading to higher demand for housing with less bedrooms
- Reduced public sector funding to carry out homelessness prevention initiatives

A short survey was sent to both those who have used the homelessness service and providers of homelessness services to help analyse the current service and highlight any gaps within it. Five service users questionnaires were received back all of whom had used homelessness service in the past 3 years.

All five service users sought advice from the Housing Options Service with two also seeking advice from the Benefits Service and Citizens Advice. They found out about the service using a range of methods including family, registered providers, DDC's Housing Options Service and other local authorities. All service users felt the service they had been given was extremely helpful. One felt it was helpful once a homelessness application was made but not prior to this. Another felt more information should be provided on the support available.

As a result of this consultation an action has been added within the action plan to produce a document mapping the services within the district and county.

## Prevention methods

Preventing and addressing homelessness is complex and requires a myriad of tools to ensure positive outcomes are achieved. The following are examples of how Daventry District Council is preventing homelessness

- **Housing Advice**

The Housing Options Service offers advice and support to anyone with a housing query, homeowners, landlords, tenants, anyone looking for accommodation including those who are homeless. Housing Benefits officers will advise people on the amount of either Housing Benefit or Local Housing Allowance they would receive.

- **Home Visits & Mediation**

A number of applications are made when a relationship between parties has broken down e.g. parental eviction. Mediation can be used as an initial solution and help either resolve the situation or help one party to move out in a more controlled and planned way.

- **Tenancy Support**

Most Registered Providers have a plan in place to create sustainable tenancies once an applicant has been successful in securing a tenancy. This helps those who are either managing a home for the first time or struggling to maintain a tenancy. Some providers also offer more specialist support where it is required to help those with specific needs.

- **Sanctuary Project**

This service provides funding for and undertakes the work to increase the security of the properties of victims of domestic violence. This can range from better locking systems to the creation of a full 'panic room' – a secure area within a house which can be sealed off in case of emergency. The service is countywide and provided by the Daventry & South



## Northamptonshire Community Safety Partnership

- **Daventry District Council's Homelessness Prevention Scheme**

The scheme helps eligible applicants that are homeless or threatened with homelessness, the scheme provides loans or small grants for a range of purposes including but not limited to rent deposits, rent or mortgage arrears.

## Vulnerable People

There are a number of other individuals who may need to be supported, including the following.

- **Rough Sleepers**

Rough Sleepers are defined as

*'People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (Such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations), or "bashes" (which are shelters constructed from materials found on the street e.g. newspaper cardboard, plastic etc.)*

Rough sleeper counts and estimates are a single night snapshot of the number of people sleeping rough in a local authority area. It is up to each authority as to whether to base their submission on a count or an estimate based upon their assessment of whether the local rough sleeping problem justifies counting

In August 2012, in correlation with other service providers, Daventry District Council's estimate of the number of rough sleepers within the district was zero within the district.

A severe weather protocol (Swep) has been established by the Council. This protocol ensures that any person who becomes homeless, regardless of whether the Council has a duty to house them or not, has a safe place to go when the weather is below zero.

Mayday Trust in Daventry town is a hostel primarily for single people although it may be possible for them to accommodate single parent families and couples (in separate rooms). The scheme has an eight bedroom house and three other properties for a further ten clients.

- **Prison leavers/ex-offenders**

A number of groups exist to help prison leavers to settle back into their communities as easily as possible. These are the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement and the Prolific and Priority Offenders (PPO) group.

Access to housing can often mean the difference between whether the offender re-offends or not. It is therefore essential to provide the right services.

A protocol has been in place between Daventry District Council, the Northamptonshire Probation Service and Regional Offender Manager since 2006. The protocol outlines ways for working together to prevent homelessness among offenders who are due for release from prison.

Daventry District also has a protocol with the Northamptonshire County Council Youth

Offending Team to ensure that young offenders are offered suitable accommodation in a planned way, before the end of their sentence. The Youth Offending Team can act as guarantors to enable young people to take up tenancies and also offer a rent deposit scheme.

- **Care leavers**

Young people leaving care can be especially vulnerable. They do not have the support mechanisms that other young people often have and have to become more independent at an earlier age.

A statutory duty applies to all young people leaving care. A care worker is assigned to the person by Northamptonshire County Council as a point of contact to help them settle into tenancies and live independently

- **16/17 year olds**

The “education participation” age has been increased to 17 as of 2013 and will raise again, to 18 as of 2015. This means that young people must either be in:

- full time education;
- an apprenticeship; or
- full time employment (over 20 hours a week) combined with part time education or training.

Child benefit will continue to be paid to their families and this should see a decrease in the number of 16/17 year olds becoming homeless as it will reduce the financial burden on the families for young people of those ages. A significant number of 16/17 year olds who become homeless are in that situation because their families cannot afford for them to live at home when the child benefit stops and are asked to leave the family home.

There could however, be a downside to this in that if the same young people simply become homeless at 18 instead then the numbers of homeless adults (18 and above) would increase and as they may not be classed as in priority need.

- **Mental Health**

The assessment of patients is undertaken by the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) based at Danetre Hospital. The team offers support to clients with severe and enduring mental health issues and takes referrals from GPs and psychiatric hospitals.

- **Hospital Discharge**

If a patient is in hospital and needs to be discharged into housing suitable for their needs, the Council’s Medical Officer will be informed. An assessment of the individual’s home is then carried out and the Medical Officer will then make a decision as to whether the person’s home could be adapted to their needs or whether a new home will have to be found.

Examples of adaptations include levelling the threshold to the property, fitting a ramp, installing sensory impairment equipment, installing a key safe box, installing a walk in bathroom etc.

If the person has been in hospital for a number of years within Daventry district but was initially from outside the area, a local connection with the district cannot be established. In this instance DDC does not have a duty to house. The hospital would have to put into place a

discharge plan which would include help and advice from the local authority and referring them back to their original local authority.

- **Domestic Violence**

There are a number of Women's Aid hostels across the county which can be accessed by residents of Daventry District who are suffering from Domestic Violence.

Victims of domestic violence may be removed from the situation and placed in safe accommodation while other housing options are pursued with them. If required the Council's Housing Options Service will work closely with other organisations to ensure a victim of domestic violence is moved away from the local area in a planned way. If the victim can continue to live in their existing accommodation, safety measures may be put in place for security.

- **Older people**

There are very few recorded cases of homelessness amongst older people in Daventry District. Over the past 5 years there have only been 2 recorded incidents of older people becoming homeless 60-75+ age range

- **Drug & Alcohol Dependency**

It is difficult to know how many people at any one time are living with a substance misuse problem. Some people can manage their dependency relatively well whereas others it can be a massive impact on their lives often leading to them struggling to cope on a day to day basis or even becoming at risk of losing their homes.

The Local Strategic Partnership, through the 'Healthy safe and strong communities and individuals' theme group have done some work into this issue including a road show event targeted at the over 50's to educate and raise awareness of the effects of alcohol

## Homelessness Accommodation

Daventry District Council uses temporary accommodation whilst either assessing an application or when looking for permanent accommodation for a household who has been accepted as homeless. The accommodation is usually let on a 'license' which means it is not a permanent tenancy and does not come with the same tenancy conditions as those in a full tenancy.

This type of accommodation could be bed and breakfast or temporary accommodation provided by Daventry District Council. The Council has also acquired 3 homes within Daventry town which are used for the sole purposes of temporary accommodation.

In cases where there has been an irreparable relationship breakdown resulting in one party to the relationship becoming homeless, the council may try to negotiate a planned move into general needs accommodation without the applicant going into temporary accommodation first.

## Housing related support

Housing related support can be provided in a number of ways. Floating support is available to those who need it. This is an arrangement whereby someone will visit the household. Another form of support is sheltered or independent living units which in Daventry District are owned and managed by the registered providers of affordable housing, mainly Daventry & District Housing.

## 10.0 Empty Homes

Empty homes are increasingly attracting publicity, particularly as housing waiting lists are growing nationally and the number of empty properties is rising.

The latest empty homes statistics (November 2012), show that 710,000 homes are currently empty in England. Of these 259,000 have been empty for longer than 6 months.

Table 17 below identifies the number of empty homes recorded by the Department of Communities and Local Government. These figures include properties which are going through the normal sales process (which generally take longer in a difficult market) and properties which are subject to probate etc.

**Table 17 – Numbers of empty homes**

Year	Total Empty Homes in England (October)	Total Empty Homes in Daventry (October)	Long-term Empty Homes in Daventry	Total Housing Stock in Daventry District	Percentage of Long Term Empty Properties
2007	763,319	682	244	31,878	0.8
2008	783,119	708	258	32,154	0.8
2009	770,496	646	228	32,442	0.7
2010	737,147	686	231	32,615	0.7
2011	720,317	627	221	32,791	0.7
2012	709,426	658	202		

Source – DCLG

As can be seen from the table the number of Empty Homes within the District has remained fairly constant and always below 1% of the overall housing stock.

Empty homes represent a wasted resource for owners who could otherwise make financial gains by letting or selling them to households in desperate need of housing. Empty homes can also become unsightly and the community at large may be adversely affected by the physical decline of the empty properties. The Council is committed to making the best use of resources to meet local housing need and tackling empty homes forms an important part of our strategic approach to housing.

The national context also needs to be examined in the light of definitions over emptiness. It is essential to understand and appreciate the difference between transactional and non-transactional vacant dwellings. It is necessary for some properties to be vacant for short periods of time, whilst they are being sold or let.

These vacancies (“transactional”) are essential in ensuring that the housing market functions effectively. Non-transactional vacancies are those properties which are not being actively marketed for sale or rent it is these that need further investigation as to why they are empty.

In addition to empty homes restricting the housing supply they can, if not maintained, become unsightly and be detrimental to neighbours and the local area. Properties remaining empty for a considerable period of time tend to be broken into. The metal, wiring and plumbing may be stripped out leading to the property becoming dangerous. Empty properties may also become an area for

drug-taking and drinking leading to anti-social behaviour and neighbour complaints.

Daventry District Council uses Council Tax data to determine the number of empty homes within the district. Whilst it may not be ideal as some derelict and abandoned properties may not be assessed for Council Tax it is the only property database that differentiates between empty and occupied properties. In addition it also holds information as to why some properties are empty through exemptions that can be applied to empty properties.

The Council resolved that with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 empty properties would have a 100% discount for one month, whereas previously there was an exemption for a six month period. Similarly, for properties undergoing repair, the previous one year exemption was replaced with a one year discount of 25%. These changes could have the effect of reducing the number of empty properties further.

The majority of empty properties are spread evenly throughout Daventry Town.

Daventry District Council has taken a positive approach in tackling empty homes within the District and has a number of methods to try and bring homes back into use including the following.

- Empty Homes Surveys – Those identified on the Council Tax list as having no exemption are sent a questionnaire asking why their property is empty and their intentions for bringing it back into use. This process usually takes place around the fifth month of the property becoming empty to try and avoid it becoming a long term empty.
- Homematch – Owners of empty properties are encouraged to rent to persons on the Housing Register.
- Provision of advice and assistance.
- Enforcement Action – The Council has the power to use Empty Dwelling Management Orders. This is a last resort tool for the Council and will only be used if owners fail to work with the Council to bring the property back into use.

## 11.0 Achievements & Future Aims

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### Housing Strategy

- **What we have achieved 2010-2013**
  - **Aim 1 – Housing which is affordable & accessible**
    - Developed and implemented a programme of Housing Needs Surveys across the District to identify areas of need to ensure housing built across the district is need led
    - Strengthened partnership working with all our stakeholders including Registered Providers, developers, the Homes and Communities Agency, etc.
    - Produced and adopted an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
    - Contributed to the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy
    - Contributed to the Traveller Accommodation Needs Survey
    - Developing 45 homes for rent on Council Owned land of which 13 are affordable homes
    - Worked with developers and Registered Providers to ensure a mixed tenure and unit type is provided on each scheme
    - Acting as a point of contact for all affordable housing issues to aid delivery and promote good working practice
    - Continued quarterly meetings of the member led Affordable Housing Panel which is attended by Registered Providers
    - Maintained a low level of empty homes within the District
    - Introduced a loan scheme for owners of empty properties to bring their properties back into use.
    - Supported a successful bid with a Registered Provider to bring six empty properties back into use.
    - Continued the promotion of Homematch introducing applicants from the Councils waiting list to landlords with properties in the District.
    - Through Housing Needs Surveys, an evidence base is being built up for the district including house prices and housing need.
    - Continuous monitoring of various funding streams including the Homes and Communities Agency.
    - Collaborative working with the West Northamptonshire local authorities to update the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and other documents.
  - **Aim 2 – Homes that are sustainable & of a high design**
    - Produces and adopted the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
    - Adopted Village Design Statements
    - Remained committed to Quality Design Standards
  - **Aim 3 – Sustainable & Cohesive Communities**
    - Developed high quality mixed tenure housing schemes with partner organisations.
    - Continued to promote investment in Daventry town centre
    - Helping to secure the construction of the iCon Sustainability Centre and the University Technical College for New Technologies at Daventry.
    - Daventry District Council's Civic Offices are now shared with NCC Children and Young People Services and in November 2013 Jobcentre Plus will be moving into the offices as well.
  - **Aim 4 – Housing for Vulnerable People**

- Produced a Sustainable Community Strategy
- Reviewed the Older Persons Strategy
- Reduced the level of Homelessness across the District
- Strengthened homelessness prevention work

- **What we propose to achieve 2014-19**

- **Objective 1**
  - Promote a variety of tenures and mix of properties in urban and rural locations for both market and affordable housing that meet identified need.
- **Objective 2**
  - Respond to the needs of the ageing population.
- **Objective 3**
  - Consider use of surplus public land for housing development subject to regional/local and sustainability criteria.
- **Objective 4**
  - Continue working in partnership to deliver quality affordable housing.
- **Objective 6**
  - Continue to improve intelligence held by the Council on housing conditions and needs.
- **Objective 7**
  - Develop sustainable and cohesive communities.
- **Objective 8**
  - Regeneration of deprived areas and brownfield sites.
- **Objective 9**
  - Provision of suitable housing for vulnerable people.

## Homelessness Strategy–

- **What we have achieved 2008-2013**

- **Aim 1: Prevention of Homelessness**
  - Developed and Implemented a Rough Sleepers Protocol
  - Recruited three County Homelessness Outreach Workers
  - Started to map homelessness services across the district
  - Registered Providers managing stock within the district signed up to a Choice Based Lettings Service Level Agreement outlining roles and timescales of both the Registered Providers and the Local Authority in letting properties.
  - Established a Daventry District & South Northants Homelessness Steering Group
  - Published a support services directory to ensure agencies know where to signpost
  - Gained a better understanding of the constraints and duties of other agencies by attending Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) meetings and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) amongst others
  - Delivered homelessness prevention talks in secondary schools/colleges
  - Established a Service Users Focus Group to gain greater understanding of issues
  - Introduced a countywide Eviction Protocol
  - Provided more advice and assistance by Housing Options Service. Housing Options Officers are now multi-skilled and promote other options such as Disabled Facilities Grants, Mortgage rescue etc.
  - Provided housing benefit advice with useful information regarding debt management.
  - Helped to develop a county protocol for risk assessments and information sharing to ensure correct level of support when tenancy starts.
  - Contributed to the development of Oasis House in Northampton – a homelessness



housing facility.

▪ **Aim 2: Provide sufficient accommodation**

- Strengthened registered provider partnerships to house homeless applicants
- Ensured there is a range of temporary accommodation across the District including three units of accommodation owned by Daventry District Council for homeless use only.
- Monitored the levels of all homelessness in Daventry district through Government statistics and local data
- Continued to provide some accommodation or practical assistance for non-priority need homeless people by either giving them priority to move on the waiting list or helping them look at their options such as privately rented accommodation.
- Virtually eliminated the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families for longer than six weeks.
- Ended the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for 16/17 year olds by 2010.
- Reduced the use of temporary accommodation by half by 2010.
- Developed a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system.
- Developed an access strategy to ensure those who are vulnerable are not disadvantaged by the CBL system.
- Reviewed the Allocations Policy to take into account local connection.
- Encouraged and supported Registered Providers to help families out of overcrowded or under occupied properties by allowing them to carry out transfers and moves within their own stock.
- Gave priority on the Housing Register to those in hostels such as the Mayday Trust.
- Built an evidence base for Gypsy and Traveller need.
- Continued to develop links with letting agencies and private landlords.
- Monitored levels of rough sleepers.
- Established whether there is a need for specific housing for people with disabilities including learning difficulties.
- Probation and Housing Options Service continued to work together in partnership when housing ex-offenders and followed the MAPPA protocol and Public Service Agreement 16 which supports vulnerable adults who are in danger of social exclusion.

▪ **Aim 3: Provide Support Services**

- Housing Options Officers & the County Homelessness coordinator provided outreach to clients who could not access the service.
- Ensured vulnerable and disadvantaged groups received all services and information they required.

• **What we propose to achieve 2014-2019**

▪ **Objective 9**

- Provision of suitable housing for vulnerable people.

## Empty Homes

• **What we have achieved 2009 - 2013**

- Reduction of 951 empty properties from April 2009 - May 2012.
- Returned 97 empty properties to use with advice and assistance from campaign.
- 0.6% long term empty homes in Daventry District.
- A £15,000 Council loan enabled a family to renovate and occupy their property, which they had purchased at auction in a poor state of repair. Without the loan, the



renovations would have taken a lot longer to complete as the owner did not have the funds for all the repairs.

- With our advice and assistance, a landlord renovated a property in Daventry and returned it to use within a short period of time and now has a family living there.

- **What we propose to achieve 2014-2019**

- **Objective 5**

- Continue to work with owners of Empty Homes to bring them back into use.

## 12.0 Action Plan

	OBJECTIVES	ACTION	TIMESCALES	MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY
1	Promote a variety of tenures and mix of properties in urban and rural locations for both market and affordable housing that meet identified need	A. Update the affordable housing leaflet	Completion March 2014	Updated Affordable Housing Leaflet	Affordable Housing Officer
		B. Carry out targeted Housing Needs Surveys	As required over the next 5 years	New Forms designed. Standard presentation drafted	Affordable Housing Officer Senior Policy Officer (Housing)
		C. Review and implement the Affordable Housing Communications Strategy	Completion March 2014	Updated Strategy	Affordable Housing Officer
		D. Encourage developers to build schemes to benefit the needs of niche groups including those with learning difficulties, the elderly and first time buyers	2014-2019	Schemes built	Affordable Housing Officer
		E. Maximise the amount of affordable housing developed over the 5 year period	2014-2019	21% of all annual completions to be affordable	Affordable Housing Officer
2	Respond to the needs of the ageing population.	A. Build closer working relationships with NCC as social care authority to mutually understand the needs of this part of the community	2014-2019	Improved intelligence	Senior Policy Officer (Housing)
		B. Promote the development of housing, including housing with care, which meets the needs and aspirations of older people	2014-2019	Delivery of at least 300 units (including those below).	Affordable Housing Officer Senior Policy Officer (Housing)

	OBJECTIVES	ACTION	TIMESCALES	MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY
		C. Explore opportunities to include housing for older people in schemes promoted by the Council or on its land	2014-19	Delivery of at least 100 units.	Construction & Development Manager
3	Consider use of surplus public land and brownfield sites for housing development subject to national and local policies and sustainability criteria.	A. Seek opportunities to bring forward public land for development where possible	2014-2019	Amount of public land brought back into use	Local Strategy Manager / Construction & Development Manager
		B. Deliver New Homes to Rent 2 scheme (circa 45 new homes) on brownfield or public sector land	2014-2017	Scheme delivered	Construction & Development Manager
4	Continue working in partnership to deliver quality affordable housing	A. Continue facilitation of the Affordable Housing Panel and increase membership	2014-2019	Meetings held on a quarterly basis. Number of members and RPs attending	Affordable Housing Officer
		B. Continue to offer a balanced and flexible approach regarding tenure and unit type on a scheme by scheme basis	2014-2019	Number of schemes assessed	Affordable Housing Officer
		C. Strengthen partnerships with developers and Registered Provider to expand delivery of good quality homes	2014-2019	New partnerships	Affordable Housing Officer
		D Engage the skills and experience of partners to assist with specific strategy objectives	2014-2019	Engagement with partners	Affordable Housing Officer
5	Continue to work with owners of empty homes to bring them back into use.	A. Identify long term empty homes within the district and using available tools, take appropriate action against those with no genuine reason	2014-2019	Number of empty homes brought back into use split into direct and indirect action	Housing Options Manager

	OBJECTIVES	ACTION	TIMESCALES	MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY
		B. Co-ordinate Council activities with a view to encouraging, facilitating and where necessary enforcing the re-use of empty dwellings within the district	2014-2019	Number of empty homes brought back into use	Housing Options Manager
		C. Research further funding streams to bring empty homes back into use.	2014-2019	Funding Streams identified	Senior Policy Officer (Housing) External Funding Officer
		D. Continue to promote the Council Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system to owners of empty properties	2014-2019	Number of empty homes advertised on CBL	Housing Options Manager
6	Continue to improve intelligence held by the Council on housing conditions and needs.	A. Continue to regularly monitor data for the district in respect of house prices, incomes, needs etc. to enable understanding of and appropriate response to local housing needs including special needs housing and the needs of first time buyers	2014-2019	Up to date data sources	Senior Policy Officer (Housing)
		B. Continue to monitor funding streams from various sources including the Homes and Communities agency	2014-2019	Funding streams identified	Senior Policy Officer (Housing) External Funding Officer
		C. Work in partnership with the other West Northamptonshire local authorities, and others if appropriate, to carry out research into the sub-regional housing market	2014-2019	Data on local housing market(s) sufficiently up to date and reliable	Local Strategy Manager Senior Policy Officer (Housing)

	OBJECTIVES	ACTION	TIMESCALES	MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY
		D. Carry out research and collate information in relation to the needs of niche groups including those with learning difficulties , the elderly and first time buyers	2014-2019	Data on niche groups sufficiently up to date and reliable	Senior Policy Officer (Housing)
7	Develop sustainable and cohesive communities	A. Ensure planning policies are in place to ensure that the right mix of housing (including an increase in the provision of affordable housing)and community facilities are available in Daventry and the villages to enable them to be sustainable thriving places	2014-2019	Policies reflect local housing need	Local Strategy Manager
		B. Develop housing schemes for general and special needs with partner organisations where need is identified	2014-2019	Schemes that reflect local need	Local Strategy Manager Senior Policy Officer (Housing)
		C. Continue to contribute to the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan development	2015	Local Plan produced and adopted	Local Strategy Manager
		D. Identify sites for Gypsies, travellers and travelling show people to meet identified need and secure their development	2014-2019	Gypsy & Traveller sites identified and delivered	Senior Policy Officer (Housing) Estate Surveyor
8	Regeneration of deprived areas	A. Regeneration of Southbrook, Daventry in partnership with Daventry & District Housing	2014-2019	Inclusion of appropriate policies within the Joint Core Strategy and Countryside and Settlements DPD	Local Strategy Manager

	OBJECTIVES	ACTION	TIMESCALES	MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY
		B. Regeneration and development of Daventry town centre, including the Waterspace (Site 3 & 6), and new retail development to the rear of High Street (Site 1) and the west of the town centre (Site 5)	2014-2019	Floorspace delivered	Construction & Development Manager
		C. Ensure policies enables both new and existing communities to benefit from growth	2014-2019	Suitable policy provision secured	Local Strategy Manager
9	Provision of suitable housing for vulnerable people.	A. Implement a service questionnaire to gather feedback from all persons using the homelessness service.	Completion March 2014	Questionnaire designed and implemented as part of the homeless process	Housing Options Manager
		B. Implement a system to capture all homelessness including those who are not in priority need but have been given advice/assistance. Ensure records are kept up to date from where person has applied as homeless to where they have been housed	Completion March 2014	Systems implemented as part of the homeless process	Housing Options Manager
		C. Continue to work with partner agencies in developing new ways to prevent homelessness to enable us to adapt, change and accommodate newly arising issues in homelessness.	2014-2019	New homeless prevention ideas discussed and implemented with partners	Housing Options Manager Senior Policy Officer (Housing)
		D. Identify funding streams by working with agencies to put forward bids for funding	2014-2019	Funding Streams identified	Housing Options Manager Senior Policy Officer (Housing)

	OBJECTIVES	ACTION	TIMESCALES	MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY
		E. Reduce bed and breakfast usage over the Strategy period	2014-2019	Percentage of homeless households in bed & breakfast per week	Housing Options Manager
		F. Develop stronger links with letting agencies and private landlords and encourage the use of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme as a mechanism for letting their properties	2014-2019	Number of letting agents and private landlords on CBL	Housing Options Manager
		G. Implement a link between DDC Choice based lettings and the Registered Provider shared ownership teams to advertise a wider range of properties	2014-2019	Link between the websites established	Housing Options Manager
		H. Continue monitoring levels of Rough Sleeping	2014-2019	Number of Rough Sleepers	Housing Options Manager
		I. Review the Severe Weather Protocol to ensure it is still fit for purpose	2014-2019	SWEP reviewed	Senior Policy Officer (Housing) Housing Options Manager
		J. Identify numbers of people within the District with a learning or other disabilities and their needs for specialist housing	2014-2019	Numbers identified	Senior Policy Officer (Housing)
		K. Securing the provision of housing identified as required in J.	2014-2019	Specialist housing delivered	Affordable Housing Officer
		L. Ensure joined up working between DDC and relevant organisations to avoid unnecessary delay in hospital discharges	2014-2019	Number of days in hospital following referral	Housing Options Manager Customer Services Manager (Care & Repair)

	OBJECTIVES	ACTION	TIMESCALES	MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY
		M. Map and document all homelessness services available within or benefiting residents of the District	Completion March 2014	Homelessness Services document produced	Housing Options Manager
		N. Provide advice/assistance to vulnerable people (including older people) to allow them to remain in their own homes where this is the best choice for them	2014-2019	Advice and assistance given	Housing Options Manager



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