

Appendix B.



HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

2017- 2022



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1. RUTLAND'S HOUSING MARKET AND ECONOMY

The purpose of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy fulfils the Council's legal duty to produce a strategy showing how we prevent and address homelessness. It provides an evidence base to support funding bids and investment in Rutland's sustainable growth. It shows how we support vulnerable people and how we help to make the best use of existing housing. It is linked to the Statutory Development Plan and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which examine the need for additional housing and employment.

Rutland and the people who live here

Rutland is the most rural unitary authority in England and the most beautiful. Its area is approximately 390 km². Rutland's population was 38,000 in 2016, which is projected to rise to 40,900 by 2036. Over the same period, the number of over-75s will increase from 4,200 to 7,800 (source: ONS 2014-based population projections). Our two towns of Oakham and Uppingham have a population of 11,295 and 4,693 respectively (ONS Mid 2013 estimate). Rutland has 52 villages of varying sizes and facilities.

There are currently 16,846 dwellings in Rutland (source: Housing Flows Reconciliation Return 2016). Rutland is part of a Housing Market Area (HMA) which also consists of South Holland, South Kesteven and Peterborough councils' areas. A new SHMA was carried out in 2014, with the overall figures for market and affordable housing updated in 2015. The SHMA 2014 (Figure 5, from Census 2011) found that 70% of properties were owner-occupied, 11% were social rented and 16% private rented. We will ensure the SHMA takes account of the population and household projections published in 2016.

	Number of properties with 1 bedroom	Number of properties with 2 bedrooms	Number of properties with 3 bedrooms	Number of properties with 4 or more bedrooms
East Midlands	8%	27%	45%	19%
Housing Market Area	8%	25%	44%	23%
Rutland 1/8/12	5.6%	20.3%	46.4%	27.7%
Rutland 31/3/15	5.7%	20.4%	46.0%	27.9%
<i>Rutland change in units 1/8/12 to 31/3/15</i>	40	70	90	130
Rutland: presumed new build 1/8/12 to 31/3/15	12.1%	21.2%	27.3%	39.4%

Source: Rutland - calculated from VOA data from HI4EM; East Midlands & HMA data from Table 6 SHMA 2014 from Census 2011

The Government's new rules on right to buy have not yet had a significant impact on social housing properties in Rutland, but this is monitored closely.

Affording somewhere to live here

The average house price in Rutland was £228,858 at November 2015, compared with £136,893 in the East Midlands and £186,325 in England &

Wales (source: 'Land Registry – House Price Index Report' in Rutland Key Statistical Data February 2016). However, a quarter of households in Rutland have an income of £24,727 or less which means that housing options can be limited once someone loses their accommodation. (Source for income data: Experian Ltd, Household Income Model, 2015, from HI4EM.)

The table below, from the SHMA Update 2015, shows private rental levels in Rutland. There were insufficient 'room only' and 'studio' accommodation to provide a sample. This contributes to many young people leaving the area because they cannot afford accommodation locally. The Government's White Paper on Housing (published 7 February 2017) encourages the provision of more private rented sector tenancies of at least three years long.

Table 30: Lower Quartile Private Rents by Size (Year to March 2015) – Per Month

	Room only	Studio	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4+ bedrooms	All dwellings
Peterborough	£299	£350	£410	£515	£575	£725	£490
Rutland	-	-	£415	£525	£595	£883	£550
South Holland	£303	£275	£375	£495	£550	£675	£477
South Kesteven	£303	£303	£335	£465	£550	£750	£475

Source: Valuation Office Agency

Under national rules, maximum rent levels for Housing Benefit / Universal Credit were set in line with the lowest 30% of private sector rents and then increased below the rate of inflation. Single people under 35 who are entitled to benefits cannot normally receive more than £256 per month for housing; this is also being phased in for housing association tenancies, which is making it very hard for single people under 35 to access social housing even if they have high needs. The 'bedroom tax' reduces benefit payments for social housing for working age people where their number of bedrooms is more than is required by a very strict interpretation of need.

Universal Credit is being phased in to replace Housing Benefit and a number other benefits for people of working age. Rent payments will be made direct to the tenant unless there are exceptional circumstances. It has become increasingly common for housing associations to ask new tenants to provide rent in advance.

Working here

An estimated 2.8% of people in Rutland are unemployed, compared with an average of 4.4% for our Greater Peterborough Greater Cambridgeshire Local Enterprise Partnership area and 5% for the East Midlands (source: ONS – Employment and Unemployment published January 2016). Key sectors in terms of work based employment are education, manufacturing, accommodation and food services, minerals, wholesale and retail and public administration. The Council supports economic growth through owning the large, innovative Oakham Enterprise Park. There are also large private schools at Oakham and Uppingham and a prison at Stocken. The two Ministry of Defence (MoD) bases (Kendrew Barracks in Cottesmore and St George's Barracks in North Luffenham) are also significant local employers. The latter base is expected to close towards the end of the strategy period and future options for the site and its community will need to be considered.

2. THE HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY AND OTHER STRATEGIC POLICIES

Developing the Housing and Homelessness Strategy

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires the Council to produce a Homelessness Strategy at least every five years. This must include prevention initiatives and measures to address homelessness where it cannot be prevented. The Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 replaces the separate Housing Strategy 2012-17 and Homelessness Strategy 2012-17.

As required by law, the Strategy is informed by a Homelessness Review of the resources, diverse needs, trends and partnerships in Rutland regarding homelessness. It is also informed by the Rutland Housing Conference held in late 2015. We have followed the legal requirements regarding homelessness duties, including having regard to the statutory Homelessness Code of Guidance.

The vision of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2017-22:

- **fair access to suitable and sustainable housing for everyone in Rutland, particularly those whose needs are not readily met through the open market.**

The Strategy has four Aims, which lead to the specific Objectives and Targets in the Action Plan. These Aims are listed in the order they appear in the Strategy and not necessarily in their order of importance.

- **Aim 1 – Preventing homelessness and promoting housing options**
 - *Effective housing advice and assistance.*
- **Aim 2 – Provide targeted support for vulnerable households**
 - *Working with partner organisations to see that people get the help or advice they need to remain safe and independent.*
- **Aim 3 – Sustainable Growth**
 - *Delivering the housing growth needed in all sectors under the Local Plan, including at least 40 affordable homes per year.*
- **Aim 4 – Ensure existing homes are fit-for-purpose**
 - *Safe, warm, occupied homes with the adaptations people need.*

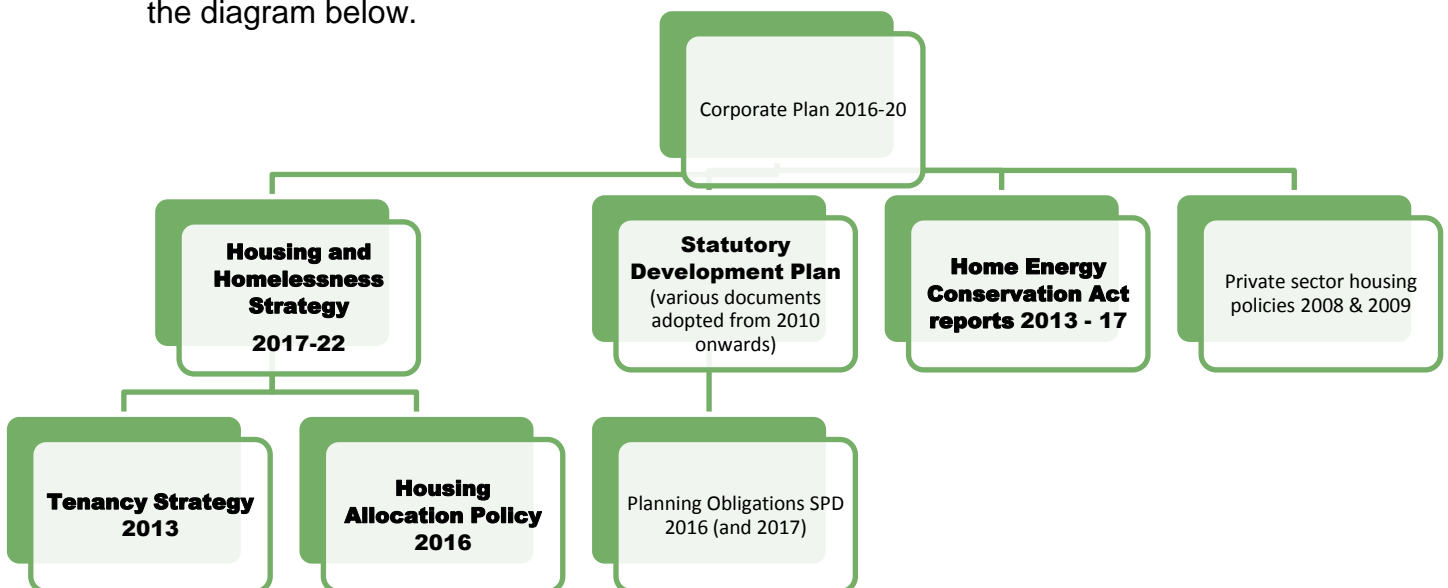
In the Strategy below, we outline in turn how each Aim is addressed. An Action Plan is included in Appendix 1.

There are four cross-cutting themes that underpin how the Strategy's Aims are delivered:

- a good quality service which is within available resources
- promoting independence, through where possible, prevention and early intervention
- safeguarding adults at risk, children and young people in line with Council policy, including those of the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Adults Board and the Leicestershire & Rutland Safeguarding Children Board.
- partnership working.

Other policies relevant to housing

There are a number of other strategic Council documents which particularly complement the Housing and Homelessness Strategy. These are shown in the diagram below.



(Bold documents are statutory requirements)

Where a policy is focused on a particular part of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy, it is referred to in more detail under the relevant Aim. Other policies which are more cross-cutting are outlined below.

Corporate Plan 2016-2020

This covers the four year period of 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2020. The Strategic Aims, Objectives and Targets most relevant to the Housing and Homelessness Strategy are:

- **Sustainable Growth** - Delivering sustainable growth in our County supported by appropriate – housing, employment, learning opportunities & supporting infrastructure (including other Public Services):
 - Sustainable growth of a population increase of between 1,680 & 2,160 by 2020
 - 700 – 900 new homes
 - 160 Affordable homes
 - 200 jobs created per annum
 - Explore the right strategic partnerships to increase the sustainability of the Council
 - Complete the improvement of broadband, developing and implementing a strategy for 2020 connectivity for the County.
- **Safeguarding** - Safeguard vulnerable adults, children and young people and support the health & well-being needs of our community. (In relation to housing, this includes being alert to neglect due to living conditions and the potential for material abuse if property is misused or misappropriated.)

Adult Social Care Strategy – the Future of Adult Social Care in Rutland

This covers 2016-20 and sits alongside other complementary strategies, notably the Better Care Together programme and Rutland’s Better Care Fund plan. These programmes are integrating social care with health services, to extend the range and reach of provision in the community. This helps to keep people well, so they can maintain full lives in their own homes for as long as possible. Disabled Facilities Grants fund home adaptations where these help people with disabilities to remain at home. Reablement also helps people to adapt to their home environment as their abilities change.

Housing Allocation Policy (adopted 2016)

Our Housing Allocation Policy (HAP) sets out how the Council’s Housing Options team prioritises and nominates applicants from the housing register to housing associations and other providers of affordable housing. A points based system is used and is reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains responsive to the need of the local community and promotes fairness. When preparing the HAP, we had regard to the Council’s Homelessness Strategy and Tenancy Strategy. We have ensured that these strategies and the HAP complement each other and will work well together. This is also the case for the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2017-22.

3. AIM 1 - PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS AND PROMOTING HOUSING OPTIONS

The Council places a heavy emphasis on the prevention of homelessness. However, it is useful first to set out the Council's formal assessment duties – and the number of people accessing these. This shows the reasons and trends behind homelessness, which then leads into how the various types of homelessness can be addressed, through prevention where possible.

Statutory homelessness assessments and the duty to accommodate

The Housing Act 1996 Part 7 (as amended by subsequent legislation) sets out the duties of local authorities towards people who are homeless, or about to be made homeless. If someone is homeless or threatened with homelessness, the Council encourages them to seek advice and assistance as soon as possible to seek to prevent homelessness. Where necessary, the Council will carry out a homelessness investigation to see whether the Council has a duty to secure accommodation. The stages are set out in law and the Council also has regard to the Government's statutory Code of Guidance on Homelessness.

A Housing Options Officer will be assigned to the investigation and will be the point of contact. In brief, the Council has a duty to accommodate the household temporarily during the investigation if they have nowhere to live and Council believes they are likely to be in priority need. The statutory stages to the investigation are outlined below:

- whether the applicant is eligible for assistance – this is not the case if the applicant is from abroad & subject to immigration control, or is from abroad & not habitually resident in the UK, or is a British Citizen and not habitually resident in the UK
- whether the applicant's household is homeless, or threatened with homelessness in the next 28 days (the Homelessness Reduction Bill might change this to 56 days)
- whether a member of the household is in a statutory priority need group (in brief, the main categories are pregnant women and families with children, 16/17 year olds and care leavers, people vulnerable for health reasons and people fleeing violence)
- whether the applicant became homeless intentionally (for instance, through giving up accommodation when they did not have to or through not paying their rent when they were capable of doing so)
- whether the applicant has a local connection with Rutland (or there are special circumstances, such as being a member of the Armed Services, not having a local connection anywhere, or fleeing violence).

Once the investigation is complete, a senior Officer will make a decision on the application. Where a household is in priority need, is unintentionally homeless and has a local connection, the 'full' homelessness duty applies. This requires the Council to arrange to secure accommodation for the household. This may involve the use of temporary accommodation until the household may be rehoused through the housing register. The housing

register gives a high priority to many homeless households. Alternatively, the household may be made an offer of suitable 'qualifying' private rented accommodation for a minimum of one year, which they would be required to accept. Further information on temporary accommodation is provided under Aim 2 (section 4) below.

Information and advice

The Council has a legal duty to ensure that there is a free advice and information service about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness in the County. The first step is to consider whether they can work with the household to resolve whatever the issue may be and try and help them stay in their current home. This could be by:

- negotiating with family and friends, including use of mediation
- negotiating with private landlords and agents
- negotiating with mortgage lenders
- assisting with maximising their income, for example help with applying for benefits.

The Council's Housing Options team currently provides the following homelessness prevention measures:

- Rent Deposit Scheme
- Homelessness Prevention fund
- access to mediation services
- home visits where necessary, by the Council or its advice and support partners
- Pre-Eviction Protocol with housing associations
- Housing Allocation Policy.

In October 2016, the Government announced it would support the Homelessness Reduction Bill. If passed, this would augment the Council's efforts at preventing homelessness. We would be expected to agree a plan with many individual households threatened with homelessness, or who are homeless, to seek to retain or obtain accommodation. This will increase our duties to some households, but we may have a reduced duty to some other households if they do not co-operate after receiving a warning notice.

With rent levels particularly high in Rutland, landlords are concerned about future cuts and the impact on potential tenants that may be on benefits.¹

Citizens Advice Rutland recorded 1,866 housing enquiries in January to September 2016. Timely advice and advocacy plays a major role in homelessness prevention.

The statistics below relate to people contacting the Council.

¹ This is evidenced by the SHMA 2014 (Chapter 7 and Appendices) and research into local rental markets by Ecorys, 2011 (Table 3.8).

Rutland County Council Housing Options Delivery Data

Housing Options Service Overview 2015/16

Data Period	Homelessness Preventions			Homelessness Acceptances			Temporary Accommodation			Housing Register		
	14/15	15/16	Trend	14/15	15/16	Trend	14/15	15/16	Trend	14/15	15/16	Trend
Quarter 1	10	10		3	8		6	6		226	280	
Quarter 2	17	19		2	6		5	5		246	304	
Quarter 3	9	13		11	9		5	8		246	326	
Quarter 4	22	19		7	11		3	5		270	334	
YTD Total	58	67		22	34							

Coding:
Red: Decrease
Green: Increase
No Change: Purple

Homelessness Activity

Data Period	Enquiries Pending			Preventions			Not Prevented			Enquiry Outcome 15/16			
	14/15	15/16	Trend	14/15	15/16	Trend	14/15	15/16	Trend	Private Sector	Social Landlord	Mediation	Housing Benefit
Quarter 1	3	3		10	10		1	2		1	7	0	0
Quarter 2	7	7		17	19		4	1		0	16	0	0
Quarter 3	3	10		9	13		4	1		2	0	0	1
Quarter 4	6	4		22	19		6	2		1	14	0	0
YTD Total	19	24		58	67		15	6		4	37	0	1

Homelessness Decisions

Quarter	Unintentionally homeless & In Priority Need			Intentionally homeless & In Priority Need			Households inc Children		Eligible not priority			Eligible not homeless			Ineligible (on statutory immigration grounds)		
	14/15	15/16	Trend	14/15	15/16	Trend	14/15	15/16	13/14	15/16	Trend	14/15	15/16	Trend	14/15	15/16	Trend
Quarter 1	3	8		1	0		6	5	0	0		1	6		0	0	
Quarter 2	2	6		3	0		6	6	1	1		6	4		0	0	
Quarter 3	11	9		3	0		9	8	1	4		3	5		0	0	
Quarter 4	7	11		1	1		5	7	1	3		1	4		0	0	
YTD Total	23	34		8	1		26	26	3	8		11	19		0	0	

Reasons for Presenting Homeless (Main Reasons)

Quarter	Domestic Abuse			Ministry of Defence (e.g. Kendrew or St George's Barracks)			Section 21 (termination of assured shorthold tenancy at the end of its fixed term)			16-17 Year Olds			Parents Not Willing to Accommodate		
	14/15	15/16	Trend	14/15	15/16	DOT	14/15	15/16	DOT	14/15	15/16	DOT	14/15	15/16	DOT
Quarter 1	2	1		1	2		1	1		0	0		1	0	
Quarter 2	0	5		1	0		1	0		0	0		1	1	
Quarter 3	1	2		1	1		4	2		0	0		3	1	
Quarter 4	2	2		0	1		1	0		0	0		1	1	
YTD Total	5	10		3	4		7	3		0	0		6	3	

Coding:

Red: Decrease

Green: Increase

No Change: Purple

Housing Register

Quarter	Applications			Nominations			Live Applications		
	14/15	15/16	DOT	14/15	15/16	DOT	14/15	15/16	DOT
Quarter 1	103	116		62	66		70	101	
Quarter 2	75	99		67	56		69	85	
Quarter 3	65	75		77	43		55	60	
Quarter 4	102	86		114	40		95	80	
YTD Total	345	376		320	205		289	326	

The Council and its partners make strenuous efforts to prevent homelessness, but unfortunately the rate of households owed the main homelessness duty is increasing, from 23 in 2014/15 to 34 in 2015/16. Homelessness-related domestic abuse has also increased since the last Homelessness Strategy.

The impact of welfare reform and the launch of Kendrew Barracks has not yet had as great an impact on housing need as some had predicted. However, these aspects, coupled with the shortage of housing at reasonable prices locally (particularly for single people), are helping to contribute towards a steady rise in homelessness which is expected to continue for some time. For example, from October 2017 most under 21s will not be able to claim housing costs in new Universal Benefit claims. However, the Government states that vulnerable people, such as those single people to whom the Council might have had the 'full' homelessness duty, will be exempt.

4. AIM 2 – PROVIDE TARGETED SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS

Temporary accommodation

The Council has a duty to provide certain homeless households with temporary housing, whilst it attempts to help them to resolve their housing problems. With relatively low numbers needing accommodation, the amount of temporary accommodation available is also small. The stock of properties is managed by Spire Homes and is changed according to operational needs.

There is no accommodation for single non-priority homeless households within Rutland with people having to go to Peterborough, Leicester or Grantham to find places in direct-access hostel accommodation. It is sometimes necessary to use bed and breakfast accommodation. Unfortunately, we can usually only obtain this in Leicester or Peterborough, which can cause many practical problems for homeless households. The use of this accommodation has increased since 2015 and this needs to be carefully monitored over coming months.

Even with the small numbers involved, there is still concern for those households waiting in temporary accommodation of various types for long periods until a long term home becomes available.

A number of households have issues such as former tenant arrears with a housing association, or a support issue where a support package needs to be put in place for them to live independently. Households in these circumstances are worked with to make sure that their needs are met, in order that social landlords are willing to consider them for an offer of permanent housing.

Housing, health and wellbeing

Housing is one of the 'Wider Determinants of Health' and is an integral part of the Council's social care assessment and support planning responsibilities under the Care Act 2014. The Council has responsibility for public health, which is administered through the Rutland Health and Wellbeing Board.

Homelessness can have significant health implications. This is not just the risk of rooflessness (which is most likely to affect single people), but also through the potential stress and upheaval of losing a home, living in temporary accommodation and accessing services such as schools from a different address. This can be exacerbated if the loss of accommodation was particularly traumatic (such as fleeing violence) or if the household has someone who has vulnerabilities. This Housing and Homelessness Strategy aims to address these issues through partnership working where possible.

People with chronic long term conditions may have physical needs which require major adaptation of existing properties, extra care or other housing with support, or in some cases residential care. Further information on housing, health and wellbeing is under 'Aim 4 – Ensure existing homes are fit-for-purpose'.

There were 600 claimants of Employment & Support Allowance through the whole of Rutland at February 2016, which was the main 'sickness' benefit for people of working age (source: DWP via HI4EM).

Community Safety

There are a number of professional groups promoting community safety in Rutland which are particularly relevant to the Housing and Homelessness Strategy. They work to prevent crime, harm and anti-social behaviour and to prevent reoffending:

- the Joint Action Group - this is a multi-agency approach to addressing crime and disorder;
- the Domestic Abuse Group works with United Against Violence and Abuse (UAVA) to provide advice and resettlement / safety support to both male and female survivors; this also includes where appropriate access to women's refuges in nearby areas;
- the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), which meets in Rutland and assesses high risk domestic abuse cases;
- the Multi Agency Public Protection Panel (MAPPA);
- the Hoarding Group addressing the challenging issue of hoarding possessions.

Although Stocken Prison is within Rutland, prisoners released from there do not generally seek to access housing services in Rutland. Most return to their home areas in other parts of the country. In any case, time spent in prison does not count towards a local connection. When prisoners do seek assistance in Rutland, they have generally been detained at prisons in other areas such as Leicester or Peterborough. If prisoners are released on 'licence' they will be eligible for support from the National Offender Management Service who will advise on options available.

Rutland Foodbank

One of the major changes in the local partnership arrangements since the adoption of the previous Homelessness Strategy in 2012 is the establishment of the Rutland Foodbank. This is run by local volunteers under the auspices of the Trussell Trust, the largest provider of food banks in the UK. In 2015/16, the Rutland Food Bank fed an average of 51 people a month, generally for short periods. Around 5 tonnes of food were distributed. Clients are referred to the Foodbank through a voucher scheme by a wide range of referral agencies.

Prevention and support

The Council has commissioned a new range of Community Prevention and Wellness Services. This will be delivered by the Rutland Access Partnership (RAP), which is a partnership between The Bridge, Citizens Advice Rutland and Spire Homes. This includes housing support which is provided to those people at risk of homelessness and other vulnerable households. Other services include information and advice (including housing and

homelessness), sensory impairment services, older people's services, volunteering and promotion of healthy lifestyles. This helps to maximise the individual's independence, community participation, health and wellbeing through living in their own home sustainably and safely. The redesigned services commence from 1 April 2017.

The long term future of realistic levels of funding Housing Benefit funding for supported housing is also uncertain. This will be protected from the Local Housing Allowance cap until 2019/20 and will be exempted from the shared accommodation rate for under 35s. From 2019/20 a new funding model will protect supported housing from the cap through a ring-fenced top-up fund. This cash limited fund will be administered by councils, who will be expected to work to commissioning objectives in partnership with other agencies.

The Council also operates a crisis fund for households with urgent and severe material needs. This dealt with 205 applications and reviews in 2015/16, of which 142 were awarded. The total value of awards was £12,400, with an average value of £87.32. The awards are often in the form of vouchers or essential goods rather than cash. The Council leads a multi-agency Welfare Reform Working Group to address these issues. The Council contributes towards the cost of the Melton Furniture Project.

Households including children, young people or expectant mothers

The Housing Options team work closely with children's social care to support families in crisis and to help safeguard children where necessary. This includes supporting the Council's Changing Lives programme for families with complex needs, working to resolve housing issues affecting children with additional needs and participating in multi-agency professionals meetings. The Council is committed to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation and all staff have undergone training regarding this.

Families with children & expectant mothers are priority need groups under the homelessness legislation. The numbers of families with dependent children who are classed as intentionally homeless is fortunately low. Where this does occur, partnership working can usually identify a constructive solution.

The Council's Housing Options service and housing associations work closely to support the Leaving Care team and other services for families and young people, to enable positive outcomes through early intervention. This includes a Joint Protocol for working with 16 and 17 year olds, with joint interviews including Housing Options staff and children's social care.

The Council is working with partners in Leicestershire to welcome 12 Syrian refugees (envisaged to be three households) to Rutland over the next 4 years. This is facilitated by Home Office funding and a Syrian Vulnerable Persons Re-settlement Co-ordinator employed by Charnwood Borough Council, who covers Rutland and participating councils in Leicestershire. A support agency has been commissioned to provide intensive support whilst the families integrate, supported by the multi-agency partnership.

Military of Defence personnel, civilian base workers and their families

There are nearly 1,500 serving Army personnel in Rutland, as well as 1,000 other family members and around 4,000 known veterans. There are also many families with an RAF background due to the former air bases at Cottesmore and North Luffenham. We will continue to work closely with the MoD to ensure that rotations of personnel in and out of bases in Rutland run smoothly.

The Council, in line with legislation and our Armed Forces Community Covenant, does not require Armed Forces personnel to have a local connection to fully access homelessness and housing allocation services. Further details are in the Council's Housing Allocation Policy. In some cases, their other family members may wish to settle in Rutland on their own. Where the family member does not have a local connection, the Council will have regard to the Armed Forces Community Covenant which highlights the respect, support and fair treatment deserved by their families.

The statutory Homelessness Code of Guidance highlights serious health problems (for instance, post-traumatic stress disorder) as one example of how single MoD personnel can be in a priority need group for homelessness.

The Council works closely with MoD families in housing need who may require support from the Council, as well as with the MoD itself. Civilian base workers can also have housing needs, although in many cases they will already have a local connection.

Single homeless people

It is unusual for people to sleep rough in Rutland, but it is not unknown. The Rough Sleepers Programme will be delivered by a multi-agency partnership co-led by The Bridge and covering Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. It is funded by CLG and will enable rough sleepers, or those at risk of rough sleeping, to receive intensive support. The programme will also work with hospitals and prisons.

There are other people who have nowhere settled to live. Options include sharing with friends, trying to access the private sector through the rent deposit scheme or trying to access one of the few one-bedroomed rented affordable flats. We have prioritised this need. Since 2014, 14 new one-bedroomed general needs properties have been built by housing associations in Rutland. This may become more challenging in the future due to the impact of welfare reform on Housing Benefit, such as the forthcoming restriction on under-35s being restricted to the equivalent of a single room rent, but new one-bedroomed flats remain a priority for the Council where appropriate.

People with learning disabilities or mental health needs

The Council promotes independent living for people with learning disabilities or who have experienced mental ill health. The Council works with partners to

promote independent living for people with learning disabilities (including autism and Asperger's Syndrome) in a range of settings, including self-contained accommodation wherever possible.

The housing needs of older people

We will develop a Market Position Statement for Older People's Accommodation. This will support our Adult Social Care Strategy in helping to address the needs of an ageing population. This will seek to ensure that people can get the right level and type of accommodation support, at the right time. This should enable more people to live safely and independently in their home of choice, with an improved quality of life in their later years. The Council can assist older people with home adaptations (see 'Aim 4 – Ensure existing homes are fit-for-purpose' for more details).

The number of older people becoming homeless is very low as applicants can generally be rehoused through the housing register beforehand.

5. AIM 3 – SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

The Council's Statutory Development Plan sets out our approach to sustainable growth in general, including all types of housing. In brief, the adopted Local Plan requires an average of 150 dwellings per year over the period 2006-2026. We are reviewing the Local Plan, which we envisage will be adopted following an Examination in Public with an independent Inspector in 2018. We proposed in our Issues and Options consultation that an average of 173 dwellings per year be completed between 2015 and 2036, in line with the SHMA Update 2015.

We will consider the types of market housing needed in Rutland as part of the review, including the need for a small amount of one bedroomed accommodation particularly suitable for rental to people of working age. We will also have regard to the need for serviced plots for custom-build housing, in accordance with legislation. The Council requires a local connection for applicants to join Part 1 of the register (for whom the Council will ensure a supply of plots), which is detailed at Appendix 2. At 15/11/16, there were 20 people on the Council's custom build register, of which six lived in Rutland. The register is used primarily to monitor demand against the number of custom build plots granted planning consent and to assist with plan-making. However, those on the register do not have any personal right to be provided with a plot. SI 2016/950 Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016 (Regulation 3) defines 'serviced plot' very broadly. This means that the supply monitoring requirements of Section 2A of Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 can be met by many single dwelling developments and have little relationship to individuals using the register.

Under the Housing Act 1985 (as amended) the Council is expected to consider the need for places on inland waterways where houseboats can be moored. There is no demand for houseboats in Rutland given the absence of any existing market locally, nor are there any suitable locations.

Under the same legislation, the Council is expected to consider the need for sites on which caravans can be stationed. The need for caravan accommodation is being considered through the Local Plan Review. Rutland County Council commissioned, jointly with South Kesteven District Council, the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation Assessment 2016. The report concludes that there is an overall shortfall in Rutland over the next twenty years of some 13 residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and 10 plots for Travelling Showpeople. The assessment is not a policy document, but is an evidence base document which will help to inform the Council's planning decision-making. Since the report was published, the Council granted planning consent for an additional four pitches within the boundaries of an existing Gypsy and Traveller site in Langham.

In line with the Homelessness Code of Guidance, the Council has no plans to use caravans for temporary accommodation for homeless people.

The need for affordable housing

The section above on 'Rutland's Economy and Housing Market' shows the high cost of housing in Rutland compared with incomes.

Homelessness - and the allocation of housing to households in need - is directly affected by the number of new affordable homes being developed within the Rutland area. These help both to prevent homelessness and to provide opportunities for people to be rehoused.

Rutland is in a Housing Market Area which also consists of South Kesteven, Peterborough and South Holland (in southern Lincolnshire). The SHMA Update 2015 found a need for 35 additional new affordable homes per year in Rutland for the period 2014-36, on top of new affordable housing that was already in the short-term pipeline. These SHMA calculations did not include the need for Starter Homes. The Council's affordable housing target is for 40 additional affordable homes per year of all types. At least 20 of these should be rented affordable homes (including 'rent to buy').

The table below shows our housing register (waiting list) at 1 April 2016:

	Number of households
Households requiring 1 bedroom	160
Households requiring 2 bedrooms	114
Households requiring 3 bedrooms	40
Households requiring 4 or more bedrooms	20
Total households on register	334

The Government has phased out the provision of new 'social rented' homes (set according to an historic rent formula) to concentrate any remaining general needs provision on 'affordable rented' properties at 80% of market rents. The latter generally have a fixed term of five years before the tenancy is reviewed to see if it is still needed to address the household's needs. The introduction of fixed term rented affordable tenancies was too recent for their expiry to be a reason for homelessness by the time the Housing and Homelessness Strategy was being developed. The Council's statutory Tenancy Strategy 2013 makes clear that housing associations are expected to work very closely with tenants to address any issues that may arise constructively and in good time.

The SHMA 2014 provided information on affordable housing mix, both through the numerical table below and by highlighting that these decisions need to be taken in a broader socio-economic context.

Table 64: Guidance on Affordable Housing Mix

AFFORDABLE	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Peterborough	35-40%	25-30%	25-30%	5-10%
Rutland	40-45%	30-35%	15-20%	5-10%
South Holland	20-25%	35-40%	30-35%	5-10%
South Kesteven	20-25%	40-45%	25-30%	5-10%
HMA	30-35%	30-35%	25-30%	5-10%

Providing affordable housing

The Council's planning policies require 30% affordable housing to be provided on sites of 11 or more homes (6 or more in villages), subject to viability. As an exception, small sites entirely or predominantly consisting of affordable housing may also be permitted within or adjoining villages (as opposed to being within the Planned Limits of Development). Where a developer or a housing association is required to provide affordable housing through the planning system, this is generally required through a section 106 agreement.

The Council's planning policies aim for 80% of affordable housing to be rented in line with the SHMA, but this is subject to viability and the national economic situation. The Council will update its Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document in 2017 to take account of Starter Homes and other changes regarding the provision of affordable housing. This will also be taken into account in the Local Plan Review and the Council's work with communities developing Neighbourhood Plans, which are part of the Statutory Development Plan. We will continue to liaise with Neighbourhood Plan groups regarding the type of housing needed locally, including the specific types of affordable housing needed.

The Government's Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) has historically provided funding to assist registered providers (in Rutland, essentially housing associations) to provide affordable housing, provided that the association's bid was successful and the development was beyond what had to be provided as a minimum through the planning system.

Some further funding for rented housing was announced in the 2016 Autumn Statement. In addition, a small amount of general needs rented housing had already been allocated funding through the HCA's previous programme (for 2015-18), such as the rented housing on the two Council-owned garage site at Beech Road and Westfield Avenue, Oakham.

In recent years, we have worked successfully with Accent (formerly Accent Nene), Cross Keys Homes, NCHA, Spire Homes (Longhurst Group) and Waterloo (De Montfort Housing Society) to deliver new affordable homes.

Since 2014 fourteen new one-bedroomed general needs properties have been built by housing associations in Rutland. The development of 7 further such properties is in the pipeline.

The table below shows affordable housing delivery in the period covered by the previous Housing Strategy (2012-17) and this Housing and Homelessness Strategy for 2017-22.

	Rented	Affordable purchase (Government definition at the time)	Total (target 40)
2012/13	14	12	26
2013/14	12	6	18
2014/15	47	15	62
2015/16	28	22	50
2016/17 (forecast)	6	0	6
Average for 2012-17 Housing Strategy period	21	11	32
2017/18 (target)	20*	20	40
2018/19 (target)	20*	20	40
2019/20 (target)	20*	20	40
2020/21 (target)	20*	20	40
2021/22 (target)	20*	20	40

* Includes Rent to Buy.

The Housing White Paper states the Government's intention to relaunch the HCA as Homes England "to make a home within reach for everyone." The White Paper proposes moving national policy back towards providing a wide range of affordable homes, with starter homes as part of a broader part of a minimum requirement of 10% of development being affordable home ownership. Affordable rented housing would be provided as well, with the Government also continuing to stimulate the commercial market. This would be through changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, regulations covering the delivery of starter homes and Ministers revising the funding priorities.

Making the best use of assets held by the Council

The Council makes proactive use of its assets to enable development, as well as other funding opportunities in Rutland.

In Oakham, in the Catmose Campus project, the opportunity was taken to replace the outdated school buildings and to build a new school on a different part of the site. This has also enabled the development of 125 homes, including 25 affordable homes.

The Council sold the former Parks School site in Oakham, which is surplus following the relocation of the school to another part of Oakham. The Council undertook a bidding process, which disposed of the site for potential residential use. This led to the development of 61 homes, including 21 affordable homes.

The Council also owns a former Highways depot at Ashwell, near Oakham. It has been working with partners to seek to develop housing on the site, including a substantial proportion of affordable housing. This is subject to planning and the resolution of certain technical issues regarding the site.

The Council prefers affordable housing to be developed on site to facilitate the development of affordable housing, but there are exceptional circumstances (particularly where the overall development is of five homes or less) where the payment of a financial contribution to enable off-site provision may be acceptable under planning policy. At 30 September 2016, the Council held £272,155 in commuted sums for the development of affordable housing. We expect to hold £1 million in the near future, including other agreements which are currently signed or pending. This includes £601,000 which we have successfully negotiated from the McCarthy and Stone older person's housing development on the former Lonsdale House site in Oakham. We will shortly develop a prioritised programme for spending of commuted sums for affordable housing. We will have a key role in enabling its delivery.

Decisions regarding affordable housing expenditure need to be made which provide good value for money, are appropriate for the local community and which are sufficiently timely to take advantage of opportunities.

The Council charges Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on most new planning permissions that are not affordable housing, starter homes, sheltered housing, self-build, nor conversions with no additional floorspace. This is used to support new infrastructure, which must be included in the Council's "section 123" list, which incorporates items for education, health, social care, economic development and a range of other local services to support growth.²

Making home ownership more accessible

The Council encourages the development of a wide range of housing types, including smaller market homes, housing for older people and affordable housing (including shared ownership housing). Government initiatives such as Help to Buy and Starter Homes will also make an important contribution to the supply of low cost home ownership and homes for first time buyers.

In the three year period April 2013 to March 2016, 140 Help to Buy Equity Loans were made in Rutland (source: CLG official statistics). These were not classed as affordable housing but assisted with access to the market. They are funded by the Government and developers.

Starter Homes were not traditionally an affordable housing product but, according to the Government's definition:

- are sold at 80% of the cost of the same home on the open market; and
- do not have a sale price of more than £250,000; and
- are sold to first time buyers, where at least one of the purchasers is under 40; and
- cannot be sold without the discount – nor rented out – within the first 5 to 8 years from the initial purchase.

² Further information is on the Community Infrastructure Levy section of www.rutland.gov.uk

6. AIM 4 – ENSURE EXISTING HOMES ARE FIT-FOR-PURPOSE

Housing condition: affordable homes

The Council transferred its housing stock of 1,242 dwellings to Spire Homes on 9 November 2009, following an evaluation of options for bringing the dwellings up to the Decent Homes Standard. The sale price Spire had to pay for the homes took into account the future income from their continued use as social rented housing and the amount of work which needed to be carried out to the properties. By 2015, Spire had:

- spent £21 million on improvements
- replaced 956 kitchens & 920 bathrooms
- upgraded 745 heating systems
- replaced 176 roofs
- carried out environmental improvements
- regenerated two run-down garage sites and a low demand sheltered housing scheme at Branston Road, Uppingham and replaced them with 38 homes (36 of which were affordable)
- had plans well advanced to regenerate a low demand sheltered housing scheme at Beckworth Court, Empingham and refurbish or replace outdated concrete housing at a range of locations.

The vast majority of the other housing association properties in Rutland are new builds constructed from 1980 onwards and are generally in good condition.

Housing condition: private sector housing

The Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2009 provides more details on the Council's private sector housing policy for existing development. The Council's private sector housing service is delivered in partnership with Peterborough City Council. The Council responds to complaints about poor quality housing and works with landlords to improve conditions in line with the Enforcement Concordat. Enforcement Action is taken when necessary.

The Empty Homes Officer, employed by Peterborough City Council in a shared service arrangement, works actively with owners and partners to bring empty properties back into use.

Accessible and safe housing for vulnerable people

NHS England and the Government will allocate the Better Care Fund to local areas based on a framework agreed with Ministers. This is a locally-held budget to improve the ways health services and social care services work together, starting with services for older people and people with long term conditions. Disabled Facilities Grants are now a component within the Better

Care Fund, with a budget of £195,000 in 2016/17.

Spire Homes Care and Repair Service provides a range of aids and adaptations to repair, improve and adapt service users' homes including the provision of Assistive Technology which has the potential to reduce injuries caused by falls. Their service users can be owner-occupiers or tenants of any landlord. Projects are also supporting falls prevention through awareness-raising about hazards and accessible design in the home, which may in turn influence people's own housing choices.

Rutland County Council continues to seek to implement innovative ways of supporting people to remain independent for as long as possible and to reduce the risk of non-elective admissions to acute settings. As a result we have embedded a fully integrated and multi-disciplinary hospital and reablement team to support the hospital discharge process. The team works closely with health partners both in our local health area and across borders. Its assessments and the delivery of care are therapy led which seeks to improve wellbeing and maximise independence and continues to support people in the community after discharge for a maximum of six weeks.

We are also looking at flexibilities within the Better Care Fund to see if Disabled Facilities Grant funding can be used in a more flexible way, to maximise the benefits for service users.

Fuel poverty

The Council recognises the threat cold or damp homes can pose to vulnerable people, through depression, stroke, heart disease and pneumonia. These can contribute to excess winter deaths. Fuel poverty can also affect the health and educational attainment of children. The Council promotes the reduction of energy consumption, to help residents save money and reduce carbon emissions. It is also a priority for the Council's Child Poverty Strategy, Housing Strategy and Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy.

Through the Energy Act 2013, the Government changed the definition of fuel poverty in England to the Low Income High Costs Indicator (LIHC). Using LIHC, a household is considered to be fuel poor if:

- they have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level)
- were they to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

The table immediately below shows the proportion of fuel poor households in Rutland against the LIHC target.

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rutland	13.6%	11.9%	9.3%	10.6%
East Midlands	13.3%	13.2%	10.4%	10.1%
England	11.1%	10.8%	10.4%	10.6%

There was a slight increase in fuel poverty according to the Government's model between 2013 and 2014, which was also the case with the Council's four rural neighbouring councils which have broadly similar housing stocks.

When a property is sold or rented, it has to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) which is recorded ('lodged') on a national database. These are placed into bands, with 'A' having the best performance and 'G' the poorest. The table below shows a significant improvement in domestic property ratings in Rutland lodged since 2010.

Assessments during	A	B	C	A to C	D	A to D	E	F	G
2010	0%	6%	24%	30%	36%	66%	21%	10%	3%
2012	0%	12%	24%	36%	38%	74%	18%	6%	1%
1/7/13 to 30/6/14	0%	14%	21%	35%	42%	77%	17%	5%	1%
1/7/15 to 30/6/16	0%	22%	20%	42%	32%	74%	18%	6%	3%

Calculated from Government Live Table D1

Figures provided by Spire Homes show that 92% of EPCs completed since 2012 were in Band D or above.

The Council works with a range of partners to promote awareness and action on fuel poverty and energy efficiency issues. Around 450 home energy audits were carried out between September 2012 and June 2015, to facilitate energy saving practices and measures and to encourage switching fuel suppliers to save money.

There were 149 ECO (Energy Company Obligation) measures installed in Rutland homes in 2015. The Council will submit its second progress report under the Home Energy Conservation Act in March 2017, setting out the measures we intended to take in future years. This includes how we intend to progress the national target of ensuring that as many fuel poor homes as reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of Band E by 2020, Band D by 2025 and Band C by 2030. It also includes the Council's initiatives to encourage people to change suppliers.

APPENDIX 1

Action Plan 2017-22

Aim 1 – Preventing homelessness and promoting housing options						
Action	Action Owner	Action Start Date/ Milestone	Action End Date	Progress	Initiative Status & resources	Further Actions needed?
Access to Information and Advice						
Review public information (leaflets, website, etc.) and update and disseminate in community and with agencies as appropriate.	RCC	Jan 2017	Summer 2017	Information updated during lifetime of 2012-17 Homelessness Strategy but on-going work required.	Within existing resources, or covered by the development of the new Council website.	Information will be kept under review. Information will be made available to the Accessible Information Standard where appropriate.
Continue to work with schools to hold sessions to help prevent homelessness (e.g. theatre workshop).	RCC	Feb 2017	Feb 2017	Successful sessions (e.g. Zest Theatre Workshop) held during 2012-17 Strategy Period.	Within existing resources (booked and paid for).	To continue work.

Aim 1 – Preventing homelessness and promoting housing options

Action	Action Owner	Action Start Date/ Milestone	Action End Date	Progress	Initiative Status & resources	Further Actions needed?
<i>To provide robust customer services and ensure the service meets need</i>						
Develop and carry out customer feedback surveys of applicants for housing and homelessness services. Include Housing Options information in the Customer Services Team (CST) 'How have we done?' feedback system.	RCC	April 2016	April 2017	Existing operational experience will help to inform the review.	Within existing resources.	This will depend on the outcome of the review.
Deliver training within the CST to enable them to deliver more front line housing support.	RCC	July 2016	Summer 2017	Some work complete. Review of training needs on-going.	Within existing resources. Envisage CST access to housing system.	Service Level Agreement adopted July 2017. Includes training and quarterly meetings with manager.
Examine the scope and scale of the rent deposit scheme.	RCC	June 2017	Summer 2018	N/A.	To be scoped.	This will depend on the outcome of the review.
Continue to work closely with housing associations regarding tenancy access and sustainment for those with limited financial resources.	RCC / associations	On-going.	On-going	Through Homelessness Forum.	On-going.	These will depend on the issues identified and future changes to resources and benefits.

Aim 1 – Preventing homelessness and promoting housing options

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action Owner</i>	<i>Action Start Date/ Milestone</i>	<i>Action End Date</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Initiative Status & resources</i>	<i>Further Actions needed?</i>
<i>To provide robust customer services and ensure the service meets need</i>						
Examine whether other measures are needed to support homeowners in difficulty.	RCC	June 2017	Spring 2019	N/A.	To be scoped.	This will depend on the outcome of the review.
If the Homelessness Reduction Bill is passed, put measures in place to implement it having regard to any relevant statutory guidance.	RCC	TBC	TBC	Dependent upon passage of Bill and its implementation date.	Some Govt. funding in 2017/18 and 2018/19 – amount TBC.	This will depend upon any final legislation, guidance and Government funding.

Aim 2 – Provide targeted support for vulnerable households.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action Owner</i>	<i>Action Start Date/ Milestone</i>	<i>Action End Date</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Initiative Status & resources</i>	<i>Further Actions needed?</i>
Work with partners to welcome 12 Syrian refugees to Rutland over the next 4 years.	RCC	April 2016	March 2021	SLA drafted Summer 2016. First arrivals November 2016.	Govt. grant available.	Operational action plan in place.

Aim 2 – Provide targeted support for vulnerable households.

Action	Action Owner	Action Start Date/ Milestone	Action End Date	Progress	Initiative Status & resources	Further Actions needed?
Work with relevant stakeholders to look further at preventative work with members of the Armed Forces community and build on existing staff awareness.	RCC	30/9/17	30/3/19	Not yet started	Within existing resources.	To be scoped.
Review information sharing protocols with statutory agencies to ensure the needs of vulnerable clients are met (for instance, regarding young people, safeguarding, anti-social behaviour and prevention of evictions/homelessness).	RCC	April 2017	September 2019	The Joint Protocol for Homeless 16 and 17 year olds, the Joint Action Group and the Homelessness Forum will help to provide the framework for the review.	Within existing resources.	The detail regarding the number and scope of protocols required will be determined.
Launch a new range of Preventative and Community Support Services, including housing floating support, through a co-design process.	Head of Commissioning	Spring 2016 (tendering)	On-going	Tendering process underway in 2016/17.	New service to commence from 1 April 2017.	Not yet known.
Consider support and options for older people to move to smaller and more sustainable accommodation.	Deputy Director for People	Summer 2015	March 2018	Market Position Statement for Older People's Accommodation to be completed March 2018.	Planning Policy team to consider implications in Local Plan Review.	These will be determined in the light of the Market Position Statement, emerging needs and good practice, taking account of available resources.

Aim 3 – Sustainable Growth

Action	Action Owner	Action Start Date/ Milestone	Action End Date	Progress	Initiative Status & resources	Further Actions needed?
Adopt a revised Local Plan to help meet a wide range of local housing needs and to promote economic growth.	Planning Policy Manager	Summer 2015	Late 2018.	Issues & Options consultation completed.	Preparing for Preferred Options consultation in mid 2017.	Local Development Scheme (timetable) being revised and budget requirements under consideration.
Continue to provide advice to Neighbourhood Plan groups for the need of different types of housing, including affordable housing.	Planning Policy Manager	On-going	On-going	Advice on affordable housing needs provided to a number of groups.	Housing Strategy team provides advice to NP groups.	Ensure this approach is embedded.
To consider our approach to custom build housing.	Planning Policy Manager	October 2016	Late 2018	Register in place.	New regulations from 31/10/16.	Approach for bringing serviced plots forward & implementation of local connection.
To update the evidence base regarding viability, dwelling mix and accessibility standards.	Planning Policy Manager	Summer 2015	31/12/17	Whole Plan Viability Study.	Resources available to produce evidence.	Include older people's housing & 1 bed homes for people of working age. Test market deliverability through Whole Plan Viability Study. Consider outcome of the Preferred Options consultation.

Aim 3 – Sustainable Growth

Action	Action Owner	Action Start Date/ Milestone	Action End Date	Progress	Initiative Status & resources	Further Actions needed?
Create at least 40 more affordable homes per annum, to include all forms of affordable housing. At least 20 of these should be rented affordable homes (including 'rent to buy').	Director of Places (D&E)	On-going	On-going	Average of 32 affordable homes per year 2012-17, of which two-thirds rented.	Developer contributions & HCA funding. Reduced resources for rented going forward.	Whole Plan Viability Study commissioned. Local Plan Review due to be adopted in 2018.
To develop priorities and a programme for the spending of commuted sums for affordable housing.	Director of Places (D&E)	Spring 2016	Autumn 2017	Planning Obligations SPD 2012 sets out broad criteria.	Committed sums through section 106 agreements.	Consideration of detailed priorities and the Council's role in enabling its delivery.

Aim 4 – Ensure existing homes are fit-for-purpose

Action	Action Owner	Action Start Date/ Milestone	Action End Date	Progress	Initiative Status & resources	Further Actions needed?
Completion of the targeted investment programme in concrete dwellings following the housing stock transfer in 2009.	Spire Homes	2009 (stock transfer)	31/3/18	A number of sites have been refurbished.	Spire Homes is putting funding in place.	Some refurbishment work is linked to planning applications for adjacent areas.
Update the Council's private sector housing policies.	Director of Places (P&T)	13/2/17	31/12/19	Private Sector Renewal Policy (including DFGs) to be considered by Cabinet 18/4/17.	To be scoped.	To be scoped.
Reduce the number of properties vacant in Rutland for more than 6 months by 15% (from a 31 March 2016 baseline).	Director of Places (P&T)	31/3/16	31/3/19	A year by year comparison will be available after 31 March 2017.	Support is provided by a specialist Empty Homes Officer through a shared service.	To be determined.
Produce and submit the Council's second Home Energy Conservation Act Progress Report on 31/3/17, 31/3/19 and 31/3/21, including targets to combat fuel poverty.	Director of Places (D&E)	1/8/16	31/3/19	First Progress Report has been submitted. Second Progress Report under preparation.	Resources in place to produce document and deliver Council's actions.	Finalisation of second Progress Report. Submission of Progress Reports by the target dates.

APPENDIX 2

Criteria for the self-build and custom housebuilding register

The Council has a register for people who are seeking to buy a serviced plot of land for custom or self-build housing in Rutland (“the custom build register”), as required by the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015.

A person or association is eligible for entry under Government regulations if the person / association’s membership:

- is aged 18 or over AND
- is (or consists of people who are) a British citizen, a national of an EEA State, or a national of Switzerland AND
- pays any fee required to join and remain on the custom build register AND
- passes any relevant test of financial resources which the Council may have imposed AND
- is seeking (either alone or with others) to acquire a serviced plot of land in Rutland to build a house to occupy as that individual’s sole or main residence.

Additional local connection criteria, which have to be met for applicants to be placed on Part 1 of the custom build register

New regulations in October 2016 permitted a local connection criterion for the custom build register, which the Council is introducing through its Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2017-22. Applicants who meet the criteria in the bullet points above are eligible for Part 2 of the custom build register. Those who also meet the local connection criteria below are eligible instead for Part 1;

- They have lived and/or to have been in paid employment in Rutland for the preceding year, or for a total of three years out of the preceding five years OR
- They have an immediate family member who has lived in Rutland for the past three years. (Immediate family means a parent, child or sibling. Step and half relatives count as full relatives.) OR
- They (or another household member, to include cases of bereavement but not lodgers) are in the service of the regular or reserve armed forces of the Crown or where their application was made within five years of discharge.

These criteria are a simplified version of those used for entry to the Council’s housing register for affordable housing. ‘Paid employment’ is defined as having been in paid employment (not necessarily permanent) in Rutland for the relevant period, for at least 16 hours per week on average, with a common sense approach taken regarding brief periods of unemployment. For avoidance of doubt, in the unlikely event that the Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2017-22 is not replaced in a timely way, these criteria will remain in force unless specifically revoked or amended.