



**Rochford District
Council**

REPORT TITLE:	Overview of Housing and Homelessness across Rochford District Council
REPORT OF:	Lauren Stretch, Director of Housing

REPORT SUMMARY

This report gives a general overview of Housing and Homelessness across Rochford District Council.

The housing need in Rochford continues to be challenging with demand for affordable housing significantly higher than supply. More households continue to approach the Council for housing advice and assistance each year for a variety of reasons including applying to the Housing register, suitability of their existing homes due to both financial circumstances and because of changing medical needs as well as being at threat of homelessness.

Whilst officers will endeavour to try and find innovative ways to assist and particularly to prevent homelessness, the options available to residents and waiting times to obtain Social Housing are becoming increasingly challenging.

Looking to the future, the continued cost of living crises, including high private rental and mortgage costs as well as the changes to legislation around the Private Renters Bill all continue to add pressure to the housing demands in the district. However new build affordable housing continues to provide a level of relief.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the information contained within the appendices of this report.
- (ii) Make any recommendations, in line with the information contained within the report.

SUPPORT ING INFORMATION

1.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 1.1 There are no financial implications directly related to the information within the report, however any recommendations made by the committee may have a financial implication.

2.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 There are no legal implications directly related to the information within the report, however any recommendations made by the committee may have an implication.

3.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

3.1 There are no implications directly related to the information within the report, however any recommendations made by the committee may have implications particularly in relation to resources required.

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APPENDICES

- (i) Information report on Housing and Homelessness across Rochford District Council.



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DATE:	July 2023

1. Housing Association Stock

- 1.1 Most homes across the district are privately owned with 88% of properties classed as owner occupier with or without a mortgage. There is approximately 6% of properties which are privately rented and the remaining 6% is Affordable Housing.
- 1.2 There are 9 Housing Associations operating across the district, who own and are responsible for the affordable housing, at the time of the last report the numbers are approximately as follows:
- 1.3 Sanctuary Housing is the largest stockholder as they took over the Council's properties when the stock was transferred in 2007

Housing Association	Total units
Sanctuary Housing	2000
Genesis	340
Chelmer	250
Moat	90
London and Quadrant	70
Estuary	50
Hannover Housing	21 (Sheltered only)
Care 21	36 (Sheltered only)
Eastlight Housing	2
Total	2859

2. New Housing Developments

- 2.1 One of the key strategic housing issues impacting local residents is the lack of available affordable housing in the Borough. New housing developments have played an important part in meeting housing needs across the district over the last few years. Developments at Rawreth Lane in Rayleigh, Malyons in Hullbridge, Star Lane and Barrow Hall Road in Wakering, Bullwood Hall in Hockley and Hall Road in Rochford have produced 385 new affordable rental units in the last 4 years which equated to over 50% of all nominations made by the Council from the Housing Register during that period.

2.2 Where new developments are built, we need to continue to ensure that adequate provision of affordable units is provided.

3. Housing Register

3.1 To be able to join the housing register, applicants must meet the 3-year residency rule, or have a close family member who has lived in the district for last 5 years or an applicant must work at least 15 hours per week in the district. There are a considerable number of households on the register who do not currently live within the district but qualify to join, due to the latter two criteria.

3.2 The last full review of the Housing Allocations Policy, including consultation was carried out in 2018, due to the changes brought about by the Homeless Reduction Act. Two smaller changes were made in 2021 and 2022 but these were simple policy updates due to changes to the eligibility rules regarding EU nationals and statutory guidance regarding Ukraine national's eligibility.

3.3 The number of people applying to the register is increasing year on year, and whilst not all applications are successful in meeting the criteria, the number of accepted applications has also increased.

3.4 Applications to the Housing register

	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24 to date	Total
Applications	568	589	648	783	199	2787
Accepted cases	312	313	377	496	115	1613

3.5 Number of applicants on the Housing Register

April 2019	April '20	April '21	April '22	June '23
749	776	988	935	1005

3.6 Current applications by bed size and priority banding

Size needed	Band A	Band B	Total
1 Bed	114	260	374
2 Bed	119	208	327
3 Bed	110	93	203
4 Bed	27	15	42
Sheltered	15	44	59
Total	385	620	1005

3.7 As a non-stock holding authority all lettings to those on the housing register come via our Housing Association Partners.

3.8 Number of applicants rehoused from the Housing Register (lettings)

Year	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	Sheltered	total
19/20	68	69	21	2	47	207 (75 new build)
20/21	60	59	19	6	44	188 (53 new build)
21/22	115	87	20	3	55	280 (135 new build)
22/23	113	79	25	2	63	282 (122 new build)
Total	356	294	85	13	209	957 (385 new build)

4. Housing options and Homelessness

4.1 We have a legal duty to provide advice and assistance to those facing homelessness or difficulties with their housing situation. Most approaches to the Council can be dealt with through relevant advice from our Triage Service. However, for those who find themselves at formal threat of homelessness, the Council has a duty to provide assistance. There are several distinct stages to this and not all households who approach the service will require temporary accommodation and we may not always owe a long-term duty to rehouse them.

4.2 **Number of approaches** - The table below shows the approaches to the service in the past 4 years and at what stage within the legislation, assistance was provided to them.

Year	Triage	Prevention	Relief	Decision	Final duty	Total
19/20	1063	142	109	12	39	1365
20/21	858	80	117	6	63	1124
21/22	1068	107	58	8	64	1305
22/23	1106	97	97	11	92	1403
Total	4095	426	381	37	258	5197

4.3 At the prevention stage currently 9% are prevented without the need to leave their existing accommodation and a further 46% through securing alternative accommodation, 11% are closed due to no contact or other outcomes such as withdrawal of an application. 34% of applications progressed to being owed a homeless duty.

4.4 Whilst to date the service has played an amazing role in preventing homelessness, securing alternative accommodation for residents can be costly and with increased approaches we will need to ensure that we continue to maximise the opportunities for keeping people in their existing accommodation. We are also looking at further developing our triage function to make sure that applications where no duty is owed or is owed by another local authority are acted on swiftly and the relevant advice given.

5. Temporary Accommodation

5.1 If homelessness cannot be prevented, then temporary accommodation may be provided. The number of households placed across a year will continuously change and therefore the table below shows a snapshot of the total number of households still within temporary accommodation at the end of each financial year.

5.2 End of year accommodation figures

YEAR	Total Accommodated	RSL	Nightly Lets	B&B
19/20	75	55	14	6
20/21	85	70	10	5
21/22	72	55	10	7
22/23	87	70	10	7

Breakdown of households in temporary accommodation as of end of July 2023

Singles	Families	Total
25	57	82

5.3 Most households remain within the area. There are currently 18 households placed out of the area, with the majority (15) being within neighbouring Southend and the remaining (3) placed within Basildon.

5.4 Depending on what type of homelessness duty is held, will often dictate what type of accommodation is provided. Often households where no long-term duty has yet been determined, may be accommodated in a Bed & Breakfast, whereas households who are owed a full rehousing duty are likely to be accommodated in longer term 'fixed TA' until a permanent home is found.

Accommodation type	Total number accommodated
B&B	4
Nightly Let	12
YMCA	2
Supported Housing	5
Private Leased	31
RSL	24
Other	4

5.5 Temporary accommodation especially nightly lets, and Bed & Breakfast can be costly. As the authority does not hold its own stock, the temporary accommodation portfolio is entirely

reliant on external providers, and with accommodation becoming harder to procure at a competitive rate, it is important that we continue to look at all options regarding this type of accommodation.

5.6 Re-Housing into the Private Sector - The service has received funding via government grant to provide a dedicated officer within the team who is working with private landlords and letting agents to access accommodation in the private sector. In the past 12 months, 56 households have been successfully supported into accommodation and through these negotiations, we have also gained access to 3 new properties which can be used for temporary accommodation.