

---

# **Executive Update**

## **Who Gets Social Housing?**

Draft to Lead Member Briefing: 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020  
Housing Scrutiny Commission: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Elly Cutkelvin  
Lead Director: Chris Burgin

---

## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report authors: Justin Haywood, Service Manager – Housing Solutions & Partnerships
- Author contact details: justin.haywood@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report provides an update to Members of the 'headline' Housing Register and Lettings data, relating to Leicester City Council's Housing Register.

### 2. COVID-19

- 2.1. From the end of March to the end of July, 4 months in total, the Housing Register and Leicester HomeChoice was closed.
- 2.2. During this period, and especially at the beginning of the period, the availability of properties for allocation was minimal, as businesses worked on COVID-safe ways to continue with tenancy terminations, voids work, and other aspects of the property process.
- 2.3. The Government advised local authorities to progress limited allocations through a direct match & let process in order to ensure, insofar as possible, that those in critical housing need retain some access to social housing. Leicester adopted this approach, and it included a focus on;
  - Homeless applicants
  - Applicants at imminent risk of homelessness
  - Applicants at risk or harassment or domestic abuse
  - Priority referrals from Adult Social Care and Children's Services
  - Any other critical exceptional circumstance
- 2.4. The result of this was an increase in the proportion of lettings done via Direct Let during the period – 40% of all lettings.
- 2.5. From July to the present day, there has been a gradual return to 'normal'.
- 2.6. A secondary effect of the combined issues; i.e.: -
  - closure of Leicester HomeChoice
  - reduced number of lets during the period (36% reduction from the corresponding period last year)
  - matching by exception rather than through normal means

- means that the statistics drawn from the Housing Register now have to be viewed with caution as they do not represent a continuation of 'normal' Allocations processes, and are difficult to compare retrospectively as a result, and are expected to recover in time.
- 2.7. With caution in place, Part 3 of this report now sets out the headline data.

### 3. **Headline data from the Housing Register**

#### 3.1. Overall number of households on the Housing Register

- The number of households on the Housing Register has increased by 3% over the last 12 months; from 6131 on 01/10/2019 to 6342 on 01/10/2020. This is a slowing down of growth compared to normal trends, but is likely an anomaly that can be attributed to the Register being closed for 4 months recently.

#### 3.2. Banding proportions

- Band 1 applicants account for 14% (876) of all households on the Housing Register. Last update this was 14%.
- Band 2 applicants account for 35% (2239) of all households on the Housing Register. Last update this was 39%.
- Band 3 applicants account for 51% (3227) of all households on the Housing Register. Last update this was 47%.

#### 3.3. Primary reasons for joining the Register

- Overcrowding remains the biggest reason for joining the Housing Register and currently accounts for 63% (4019) of the register.

Following a Summer 2019 Policy change, there are now three Overcrowding priorities, rather than the original two. This allows for overcrowding needs on the Housing Register to be better separated dependent on level of need, which in turn allows for those in the most critical housing need to be elevated and prioritised appropriately.

The following information summarises the differences between priorities:

- Band 1 Overcrowding priority is awarded to those whose overcrowding meets the most critical need – either meeting the statutory overcrowding definition within the Housing Act 198, or otherwise exceeding the property's maximum occupancy levels.
- Band 2 Overcrowding priority is awarded to those whose overcrowding falls short of Band 1 criteria, but is acknowledged within LCC's Allocations Policy as severe – generally those lacking 2 bedrooms or more.
- Band 3 Overcrowding priority is awarded to those whose overcrowding is not severe, but is acknowledged within LCC's Allocations Policy as causing potential houses difficulties – generally those lacking just one bedroom.

It's important to note that the number of critically/statutorily overcrowded households has decreased from 193 to 146 (24% decrease) in the last 12 months.

This is mainly due to the higher banding priority (Band 1) awarded to those households with the severest overcrowding which has enabled them to secure more suitable housing.

- People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness accounts for 17% (1084) of all households on the Housing Register. The number of cases has decreased by 15% in the last 12 months and is mainly due to the higher banding priority (Band 1) awarded to some homeless households and the increased use of direct allocation of properties whilst Leicester HomeChoice was closed during the pandemic.

#### 3.4. Primary demand

- Demand across all types of accommodation is high, and outstrips supply.
- The highest demand is for 2-bedroom accommodation which accounts for 33% (2109) of total demand.
- Another primarily area of demand is for adapted accommodation. Work is ongoing to analyse this and determine how we can increase supply and make demand more equitable.

#### 3.5. Other observations

- Social Housing tenants (Leicester) account for 24% (LCC tenants 1032, 16% & RSL tenants 487, 8%) of all households on the Housing Register.
- Applications from some wards are significantly higher than others, especially in wards where it is known that overcrowding is a major factor in housing need. Applications by Ward can be seen at Appendix 1.

### 4. Lettings Headline data

#### 4.1. Overall number of lettings

- 439 lettings during 6-month period.
- The number of lettings in the last 6 months has decreased by 236 (35%) since last 6-month period, and 245 (36%) from the corresponding period last year. This is primarily due to the closure of Leicester HomeChoice for approximately 4 months and properties having to be allocated directly during the pandemic.

#### 4.2. Which applicants are getting the lettings?

- Bands 1 and 2 accounts for 97% (418) of all lettings in the last 6 months.

- 238 (55%) of all lettings were for households who became homeless or were at threat of homelessness. This was a 13% proportionate increase from the corresponding period last year and is primarily due to the priority given for allocations to homeless households whilst Leicester HomeChoice was closed.

#### 4.3. Waiting times

- For properties that were not directly allocated, the current average waiting times for Band 1 households are:

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed
Band 1	5 months	8 months	9 months

This has increased by 1 months, 4 months and 6 months respectively compared to 12 months ago. This is primarily due to;

- Closure of Leicester HomeChoice for 4 months, adding that amount to the waiting times
  - Direct allocation processes to those in critical need may have left some in less critical need waiting for a longer-than-normal period
  - Reduction in number of lettings available this period
  - 50% of lets were 1-bed accommodation
- For properties that were not directly allocated, the current average waiting times for Band 2 households are:

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed
Band 1	14 months	26 months	53 months

This has increased by 6 months, 8 months and 31 months respectively compared to 12 months ago. This is primarily due to;

- the change in policy implemented in August 2019 which resulted in more households being awarded a higher Band 1 priority.
- Closure of Leicester HomeChoice for 4 months, adding that amount to the waiting times
- Reduction in number of lettings available this period
- 50% of lets were 1-bed accommodation
- Very small number of 3-bed lets during the period resulted in 80% going to those in Band 1, and just 16 3-bed lets for Band 2.

#### 4.4. Waiting times adjusted to take the above into account

- Work has been completed to estimate how the waiting times may have looked this period had COVID-19 not been a factor:

- Band 1 households:

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed
<b>Band 1 – Actual</b>	5 months	8 months	9 months
<b>Band 1 – Est. without COVID-19 impacts</b>	4 months	4 months	5 months

- Band 2 households:

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed
<b>Band 1 – Actual</b>	14 months	26 months	53 months
<b>Band 1 – Est. without COVID-19 impacts</b>	12 months	24 months	26 months

#### 4.5. Housing Association & HomeCome Lettings

- Lettings to Housing Associations and HomeCome accounted for 82 (19%) of all lettings in the last 6 months (01/04/2020 – 30/09/2020). This compared to 190 (28%) of all lettings for the corresponding period last year. This is primarily due to the close of Leicester HomeChoice during the pandemic.
- Midland Heart was the largest provider with 28 (34%) of the lets with Riverside Housing the next highest provider with 19 lettings (23%).
- HomeCome lets accounted for 9 (11%) of the lettings.
- There were 57 lettings to private landlords via the Housing Options Private Rented Sector Team. This was a decrease of 10 (15%) from the corresponding period last year. This is mainly due to a reduction in the number properties becoming available due to the pandemic lockdown.

#### 4.6. Direct Lettings

- The number of direct lettings accounts for 40% of all lettings for the 6-month period (01/04/2010 – 30/09/2020). All allocations of new voids were directly allocated whilst Leicester HomeChoice was closed for 4 months during the pandemic.

#### 4.7. Other observations

- There were a total of 214 lettings of 1-bedroom accommodation in the last 6 months. This accounts for 50% of all lettings.
- New Parks had the most lettings (57) in the last 6 months followed by Beaumont Leys (40).

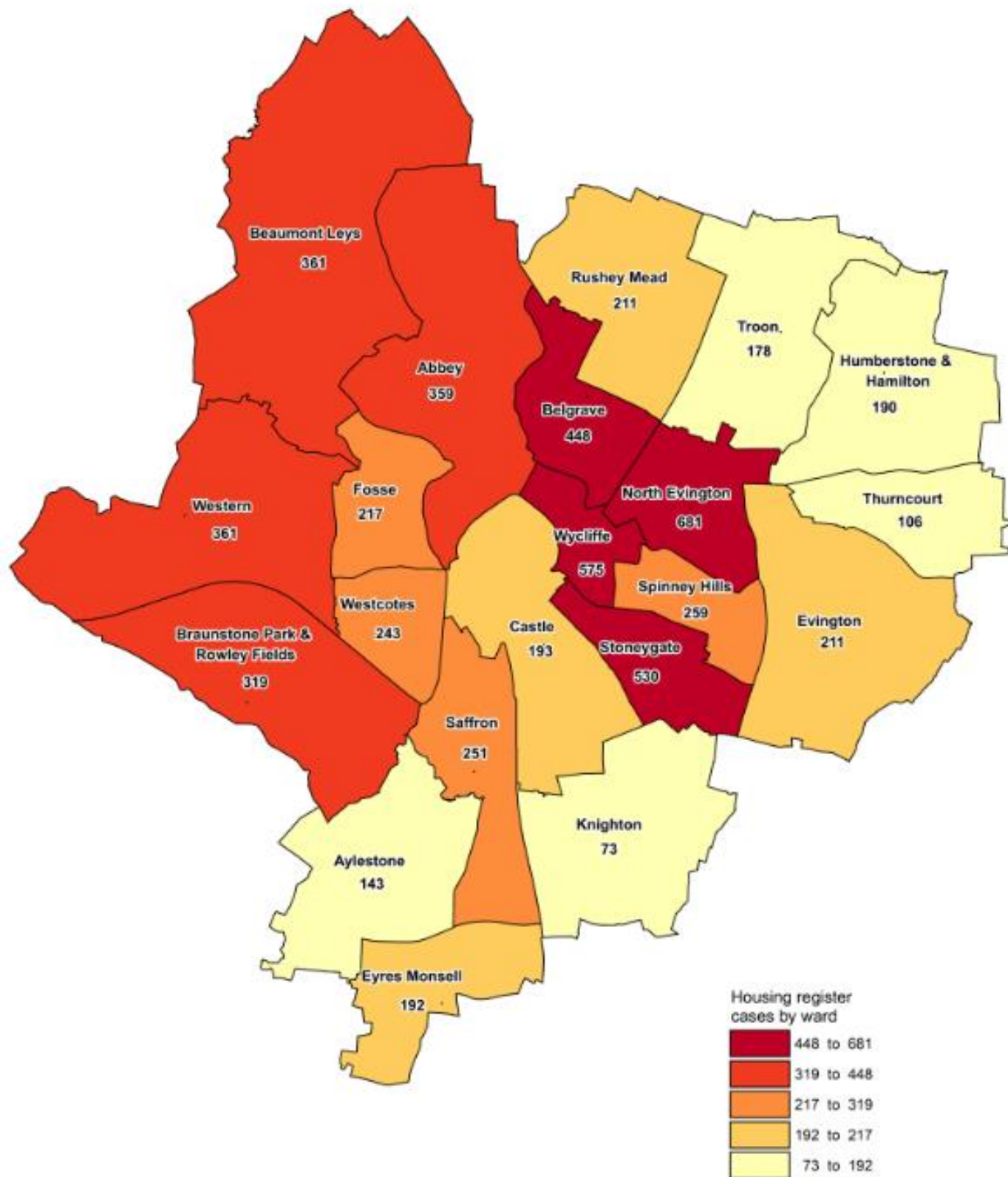
**5. Summary of appendices:**

- Appendix 1 – Map - Number of Applicants on the Housing Register by Ward (01/10/2020)
- Appendix 2 – Dashboard – Customer Dashboard
- Appendix 3 – Dashboard – Management/Staff Dashboard

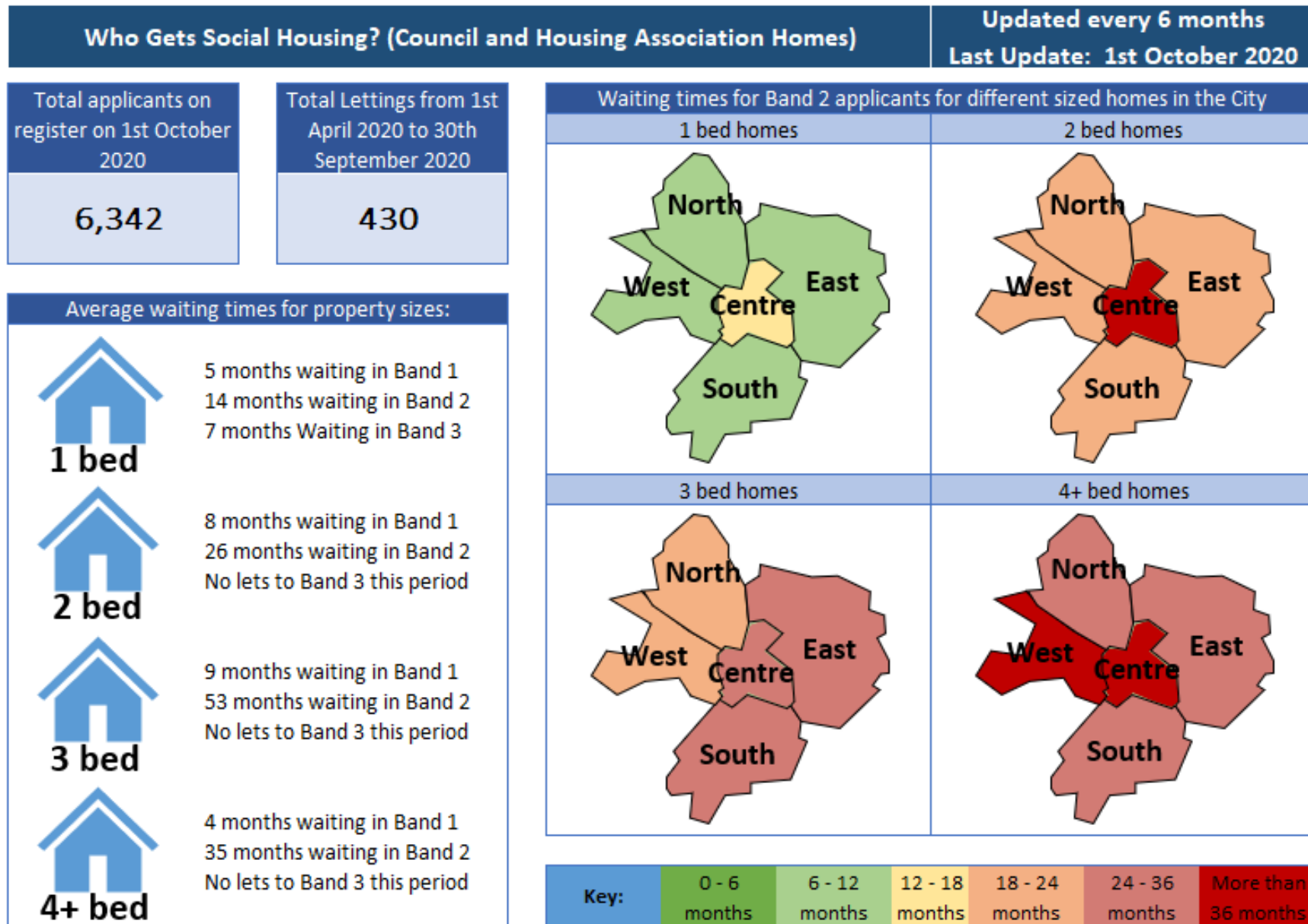
**6. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?** No

**7. Is this a “key decision”?** If so, why? No – update only.

Number of Applicants on the Housing Register by Ward (01/10/2020)







For further information visit our website at [www.leicester.gov.uk/housingapplications](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/housingapplications)

# Management Dashboard

# Appendix 3

## Who Gets Social Housing? (Council and Housing Association Homes) 2020 - 2021

### Housing Register Build Data

Total Applicants	
Period last year	As at 1st October
6,131	6,342
% Increase / Decrease	
3%	

Band Breakdown		
Band 1	Band 2	Band 3
876	2,239	3,227

Need (size of home) breakdown				
1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed +
2,016	2,109	1,474	568	175

Top 10 reasons for appearing on Register		
Priority Reason	Number of Applicants	As a % of all Applicants
Overcrowding	3041	48%
Homeless or threatened with	796	13%
Severe Overcrowding	832	13%
Medium Medical	426	7%
High Medical	291	5%
Temporary Accommodation	252	4%
Priority Under-occupation	111	2%
Sheltered Accommodation Need	130	2%
Insecure Accommodation	98	2%
Under-occupation	38	1%

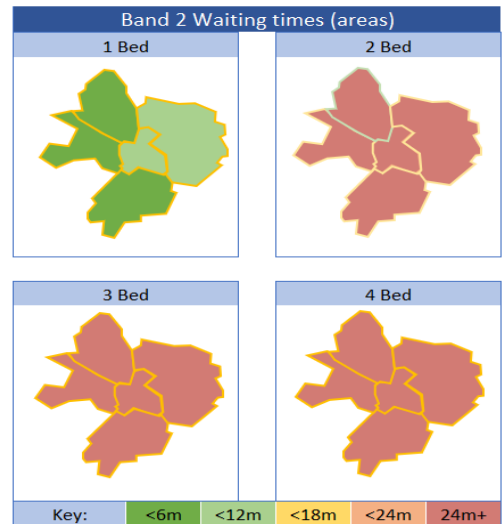
### Lettings Data

Total Lettings	
Period last year	April - Sept 2020
675	430
% Increase / Decrease	
-36%	

Band Breakdown		
Band 1	Band 2	Band 3
278	140	12

Lettings breakdown by size of home				
1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed +
214	107	97	9	3

Waiting times (months)					
	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed
BAND 1	5	8	9	9	8
BAND 2	14	26	53	35	87
BAND 3	7	-	-	-	-



Which priorities are getting the housing?			
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homeless</li> <li>Temp Accom</li> <li>Overcrowding</li> </ol>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overcrowding</li> <li>Homeless</li> <li>Medical</li> </ol>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overcrowding</li> <li>Medical</li> <li>Homeless</li> </ol>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overcrowding</li> <li>Homeless</li> <li>Harassment</li> </ol>