



Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

DATE: MONDAY, 22 AUGUST 2016

TIME: 6:15 pm

PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Members of the Scrutiny Commission

Councillor Newcombe (Chair)
Councillor Alfonso (Vice Chair)

Councillors Aqbany, Byrne, Cank, Dawood and Joshi
1 Un-allocated Non-Group Place

Members of the Scrutiny Commission are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

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Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact Angie Smith, **Democratic Support on (0116) 454 6354** or email Angie.Smith@leicester.gov.uk or call in at City Hall, 115 Charles Street.

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PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

FIRE/EMERGENCY EVACUATION

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Appendix A

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission held on 4 July 2016 are attached, and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures.

5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS OR STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any questions, representations or statements of case received in accordance with Council procedures.

6. MONITORING THE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

Appendix B

The Director of Housing submits a report to the Housing Scrutiny Commission for comment on the first 24 months since the Homelessness Strategy was fully implemented.

7. TOWER BLOCK REFURBISHMENT UPDATE

Appendix C

The Director of Housing submits a report to the Housing Scrutiny Commission to update Members on the St Peters tower blocks refurbishments.

8. VOIDS TASK GROUP

The Scrutiny Policy Officer will give a verbal update on the work of the Voids Task Group.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

Appendix D

The work programme is attached. The Commission is asked to comment and/or amend as it considers necessary.

10. ANY URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: MONDAY, 4 JULY 2016 at 6:15 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Newcombe (Chair)
Councillor Alfonso (Vice Chair)

Councillor Joshi

Councillor Cank

In Attendance

Councillor Connelly – Assistant City Mayor Housing

* * * * *

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Aqbany and Byrne.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they might have in the business to be discussed.

Councillor Joshi declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the general business of the meeting in that family members were council tenants.

Councillor Cank declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the general business of the meeting in that family members were council tenants.

Councillor Newcombe declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the general business of the meeting in that family members were council tenants.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the interests were not considered so significant that they were likely to prejudice the Councillors' judgement of the public interest. Councillors were not therefore required to withdraw from the meeting during consideration and discussion of the agenda items.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

that the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission held 18 April 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

AGREED:

that the terms of reference for the Housing Scrutiny Commission be noted.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION 2016/17

AGREED:

that the membership of the Housing Scrutiny Commission for 2016/17 be noted.

6. DATES OF COMMISSION MEETINGS 2016/17

AGREED:

that the dates for meetings for the Housing Scrutiny Commission for 2016/17 be noted.

7. PETITIONS

In accordance with the Council procedures, it was reported that no petitions had been received by the Monitoring Officer.

8. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS OR STATEMENTS OF CASE

In accordance with the Council procedures, it was reported that no questions, representations or statements of case had been received by the Monitoring Officer.

9. COMMITTEE PROCESSES - PRESENTATION

The Democratic Support Officer delivered a presentation which outlined some of the procedural aspects of how the Commission worked. A copy of the presentation is attached at the back of these minutes.

10. HOUSING DIVISION STRUCTURE

The Director of Housing presented a report which provided details of the senior management structure within the Housing Division. He advised that this was the same structure chart that had been brought to the previous meeting of the Commission, but he had been asked to provide a brief overview at the first meeting of the Commission in the new municipal year, for the benefit of new Members.

Members heard that there had been changes to the management structure which had enabled some responsibilities to be re-allocated. The Director explained that a number of issues presented the division with significant challenges; for example:

- The one percent rent reduction would result in a loss of income to the Council of £27m over the next four years.
- Universal Credit placed pressures on tenants and their ability to pay their rent.
- The benefit cap meant that people who received housing benefit may no longer be eligible.
- 'Right to Buy' – the Council were selling approximately 250 – 300 properties per year, a figure that was likely to increase significantly and affect the Council's income.
- High Value Vacant Homes Levy – this was likely to affect three bed semi-detached house and above.
- The setting of rental levels according to tenant's income – this would result in increased administration costs because of the checks that staff would need to carry out.

The Chair referred to the staffing structure and asked the Director to send him details of the number of staff in each of the different service areas.

In response to a question, the Director confirmed that officers in the Housing Division networked with housing associations and other local authorities to share ideas and practice. This was something that Vijay Desor, one of the Heads of Service, was involved in.

A Member questioned whether any closures in housing offices were anticipated. The Director advised that the Transforming Neighbourhood Services project looked at combining buildings to deliver services, as had happened for example at the Pork Pie Library. It was a question as to whether it was preferable to have buildings or service provision and savings could be made by combining buildings.

A Member questioned whether, with the reduction of housing income, the Council would be able to maintain the high level of services it currently provided. The Director responded that there needed to be a planned approach but it had been shown that with the changes that had been made over the past two years, changing structures and a staffing review, savings could be achieved. Councillor Connelly, Assistant City Mayor for Housing added that in view of the savings that needed to be made, there was a significant challenge to face and it would be remiss not to look at housing offices in attempts to make savings.

A Member questioned in relation to the anticipated increase in 'Right to Buy',

whether it would it be possible to restrict tenants' qualifying period so that they had to wait longer before they could apply to purchase the property. The Director explained that the two year qualifying period had been set by the government and could not be changed. The Assistant City Mayor added that any attempt by a local authority to set up an 'Arms Length Management Organisation' (ALMO) with a view to avoid the 'Right to Buy' legislation, would be blocked by the government.

AGREED:

that the information on the structure of the Housing Division be noted.

Action to be taken	By
In relation to the Housing Division Structure, for information on the members of staff in each of the different services area to be sent to the Commission.	Director of Housing.

11. RENT ARREARS PROGRESS REPORT - APRIL 2015 TO MARCH 2016

The Commission considered a report which provided an update on progress made in relation to rent arrears for 2015/16.

Vijay Desor, Head of Service, summarised the report and stated that evictions were down nearly 50 % compared to the previous year. Officers were working to reduce these; they were a last resort and there was a robust scheme to ensure that every step was taken to prevent evictions taking place. Members were pleased to hear that most tenants worked closely with Housing to avoid such measures being taken. In response to a question, the Head of Service stated that couples and families were more likely to engage with the Service than single people who tended to be more transient.

Members heard that there were continuing challenges because of Universal Credit which continued to be rolled out in Leicester. The Service worked closely with the Revenue and Benefits team to engage with people who were likely to be included in the next stage of the roll out, to help prepare them for the changes.

One change related to the system for paying rent. Tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit, had their rent paid by the council, but with Universal Credit, the tenant had the responsibility for paying their own rent. They needed to include housing costs when they claimed for Universal Credit, but some people were omitting to do this. The benefit agency did not backdate housing costs where the claimant made an error, and the claimant would need to submit a new claim. Members were urged, where possible, to tell people that if they were currently claiming Housing Benefit, they needed to claim for housing costs when they submitted their Universal Credit claim. A Member suggested

that there should be a publicity campaign to raise awareness. The Head of Service explained that they tried to use a combination of methodologies and found it most effective to reach out to the target group that was being affected. Officers tried hard to educate people so that they understood what was happening. In response to a suggestion, Members heard that the council could not add any information to the Universal Credit webpage because that was owned by the government, but officers would check with Revenue and Benefits to see whether there was a clear message on their webpage.

The Chair queried whether there were comparative figures for how Leicester compared with other Local Authorities and was advised that recent information showed that for rent arrears, Leicester performed very well, coming second to Wolverhampton and in the top quartile of performing authorities.

The Chair asked for details of the total rent arrears that were written off and asked for this information to be sent to Commission Members.

AGREED:

- 1) that the report be noted; and
- 2) that In respect of the Rent Arrears Progress Report for 2015/16, the figure relating to written off rent arrears be circulated to Members of the Commission.

Action	By
In respect of the Rent Arrears Progress Report, 2015/16, the figure relating to written off arrears to be circulated to Members of the Commission.	Vijay Desor, Head of Service

12. EMPTY HOMES 2016

The Director of Housing submitted a report which provided information on empty homes in Leicester. Simon Nicholls, Head of Service presented the report and stated that there was a 20 stage, clearly defined process for bringing an empty home back into use. The issuing of a compulsory purchase order was always a last resort.

The Housing Division had an Empty Homes Strategy that targeted homes that had been empty in excess of 18 months. However, with the recruitment of additional Empty Homes Officers, there was an aim to reduce this to approximately 13 or 14 months.

The Chair referred to two properties on Humberstone Road that had been empty for approximately 15 years, which he said were an eyesore. The Head of Service confirmed that they were subject to highway improvement; officers

were aware and were looking into this.

The Chair questioned how other Local Authorities dealt with empty homes and whether there was any benchmarking information to compare Leicester with other areas. The Head of Service agreed to look into this and bring information back to the Commission.

It was noted that some areas of the city appeared to have a high concentration of empty homes and Members questioned whether there was an area based strategy. Officers responded that they did not have a high concentration strategy at the moment; there was a very small team of officers to deal with Empty Homes.

Members noted that some properties had been empty for 10 years or more, and questioned why it was taking so long to bring them back into use. The Head of Service responded that there were approximately 95 properties that had been vacant for up to 10 years; this was an improvement on previous statistics, but there were a number of properties that were very difficult to bring back into use. In response to a question, the Commission heard that the owners of empty homes were liable for council tax and the council took steps to recover any amounts that were outstanding. A common reason outlined for such properties was the selling on of the empty home. If the Council commenced action against the owner, and the owner then sold the property, the Council's action would need to start again.

A Member asked that figures for under-occupied properties for each area in the city, be brought to the next meeting of the Commission. She added that she was aware of one particular road, where there were several three and four bedroom houses, each of which had only occupant. The Director advised that the Housing Division did not necessarily know how many people were living in a property and they would need to pull figures from Council Tax and Revenues and Benefits to try to find this information. The Chair asked officers, to send Members what information they had, instead of a report, so that Members could consider further.

A concern was raised relating to under occupancy and the Director advised that it was a matter of choice for people as to whether they chose to remain in their homes or look for something smaller.

AGREED

- 1) that the report be noted; and
- 2) that officers send Members, available information relating to under occupancy.

Action	By
For officers to send to Members, any information available relating to under occupancy in the city.	Simon Nicholls, Head of Service

13. HOMELESSNESS, STREET BEGGING AND ROUGH SLEEPING

The Director of Housing submitted a report that set out the policy on homelessness, rough sleeping and street begging, and the support services available in the city. Caroline Carpendale, Head of Service presented the report and stated that Leicester's approach to Rough Sleeping was that no one needed to sleep rough in the city. It explained that beggars were a distinct group, often with homes or accommodation to live in and usually different from those that rough sleep. Case examples highlighted in the report showed details of the differing groups. Figures of rough sleepers in the report related to the city centre and the neighbourhoods; individuals who moved away from the city centre into the outer areas, were still on the council's radar. There were concerns that numbers would rise following the introduction of Universal Credit, particularly with people under 35 years of age.

Members considered the report and raised comments and queries which included the following:

The Chair questioned the number of times that all the emergency beds had been in use. The Head of service replied that they had the statistics for the past six months, and these would be sent to Members.

In response to a query, the Assistant City Mayor explained that if anyone had concerns about an individual being homeless, they should contact Housing Options with this information. The team available both in day and out of hours would then work to help, support and address this position.

A member questioned who paid the costs where an individual was settled into another city. Members heard that the council paid the costs of repatriation; apart from the financial savings, there were humanitarian issues to take into account. The Vice Chair requested details of costs incurred in the repatriation of homeless people.

Concerns were expressed relating to a growing number of street beggars on Gallowtree Gate and Humberstone Gate. Members heard that this area was a 'hotspot' but an action plan and a multi-agency approach was in place to tackle the issue. This was now a national problem, with organised rings of beggar moving from city to city.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and asked for a further update at a future meeting.

AGREED:

- 1) that the report be noted; and
- 2) that an update be brought to a future meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Commission.

Action	By
For details to be sent to the Commission on how many times during the past six months, all the emergency beds had been in use.	Caroline Carpendale, Head of Service
For details to be sent to the Commission on the costs of repatriating the homeless.	Caroline Carpendale, Head of Service

14. VOIDS TASK GROUP UPDATE

The Chair reminded the Commission that the first meeting of the Voids Task Group would be held on Thursday 7 July at 12.30pm. Further meetings of the Task Group would follow on 14 July and 21 July. So far, Councillors Aqbany and Alfonso had indicated that they would join the Chair on the Task Group and other Members were welcome.

15. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair drew Members attention to the Housing Scrutiny Commission Work Programme and stated that this might be subject to change.

AGREED:

that the Housing Scrutiny Commission Work Programme be noted.

16. TENANT FORUM - MEETING NOTES

AGREED:

that the notes from the Tenant Forum Meeting held 31 March 2016 be noted.

17. MAYOR'S DELIVERY PLAN (HOUSING ISSUES)

AGREED:

that the relevant sections from the Mayor's Delivery Plan relating to the Housing Scrutiny Commission be noted.

18. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Committee Processes

Scrutiny

In the Constitution

- article 8, Scrutiny Committees – Part 2
- Terms of reference at Part 3
- Access to Information Procedure Rules - 4B
- City Mayor & Executive Procedure Rules - 4D
- Scrutiny Procedure Rules 4E
- Political Conventions Part 5
- Code of Conduct Part 5

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Leicester
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Openness 1

- Agenda published 5 clear days in advance
- Specific procedure for reports to be taken as urgent and reasons must be recorded.
- ⇒• Task groups and their conclusions do not have a formal status without acceptance by the Commission.
- Public are allowed to attend meetings and film without prior permission
- Standard items

Openness 2

- Declaration of Interest – if on register don't need to declare.
- Code of Conduct
- ↷ • Making sure what is proposed and agreed is clearly understood
- Exempt items

Further information and advice

Housing Scrutiny Commission

Meeting 22nd August 2016

Monitoring the Homelessness Strategy (24 months)

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Cllr Andy Connelly

Lead Director: Chris Burgin



Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: ALL
- Report author: Caroline Carpendale, (Head of Service)
- Author contact details: 0116 454 (37) 1701
- Report version number: V5

1. Summary

1.1 Executive seeks the comments of the Housing Scrutiny Commission on the first 24 months of the Homelessness Strategy being fully implemented.

1.2 This report considers

1.2.1 Operational data for the full 24 months since the implementation of the Single Access and Referral Service in April 2014. All data is now directly comparable with the previous year to enable us to monitor and compare trends and any emerging needs.

1.2.2 Lessons learnt from the first 24 months since the implementation of the Single Access and Referral Service.

1.2.3 The overall demand for services from people facing homelessness has increased, however successful prevention work has increased in line with the additional demand. (see Appendices 1A & 1B)

1.2.4 In England, the biggest single recorded reason for homelessness is now the loss of an assured shorthold tenancy (AST) – the type of tenancy most commonly held by private renters. The combination of more evictions within the Private Sector, less private sector accommodation being available as an alternative housing option and a reduced number of council lets against a rise in the numbers on the housing register is a cause for concern. (see paragraph 2.7)

1.2.5 The numbers on the Housing Register continue to increase. More than a third of the Register have little or no real prospect of receiving an offer of accommodation as they have little/no need for housing (see paragraph 2.4)

1.2.6 The integration of the Housing Options calls now being handled by Customer Services, has meant better access for customers due to longer opening hours and a more dedicated call centre approach. However more work is required, by way of a further channel shift approach, for the basic enquires which accounted for 68% of the calls to manage customer expectations and resource issues that account for long call waiting times. (see paragraph 2.9)

1.2.7 The need to use bed and breakfast for families peaked in Quarter 1 of 2015/16, but have now fallen to nearer the 2014/15 levels and continues to fall with the aim and objective to have no families needing to be

accommodated in Bed and Breakfast. The first quarter of 2016/17 has again seen a significant reduction in the use of Bed and Breakfast.

- 1.2.8 For the 24 month period 2847 single people or couples (1189 in 2014/15 and 1658 in 2015/16 – 39% increase) sought assistance when facing homelessness (see Appendix 1B). The number of placements into temporary accommodation in the 24 month period has remained consistent, (in 2014/15 the total placement figure for singles and couples was 745 and in 2015/16 this was 758). This illustrates that despite the 39% increase in the numbers presenting for assistance and prevention, those needing to access temporary accommodation has remained consistent, with an average of 188 individuals being placed per quarter.
- 1.2.9 Measuring our success with those that we have most concern about, **The Repeat Homeless list** is used to target multi-agency work with those with the most entrenched homelessness lifestyle. It lists as a snapshot, those people receiving Council funded homelessness services that have been in hostels four or more times in the last two years or who repeatedly sleep rough. When this initiative was introduced in 2012 there were 118 individuals on this list. At the end of 2014/15 this had reduced to 52 individuals on the list which has further reduced to 38 at the end of 2015/16, (27% reduction from previous year).
- 1.2.10 The numbers that have met Category J, who were considered to be in immediate or a high risk of rough sleeping had increased by 24% from 248 in 2014/15 to 308 in 2015/16 respectively, of our hostel placements.
- 1.2.11 Nationally as well as locally there has been a rise in rough sleeping. In Leicester a total of 124 individuals were identified in 2014/15. This rose to 159 individuals in 2015/16 (28% increase). The rise in rough sleeping and begging has led to a more targeted approach, with a community based action plan to manage this. Work continues in conjunction with the Police to manage the people who the public view as rough sleepers, but are actually beggars who do have somewhere to live or who have refused all offers of assistance (see paragraph 2.37)
- 1.2.12 Housing First continues to be an excellent initiative in dealing with the prevention of homelessness with 43 families and 31 singles being helped into accommodation, who would have otherwise needed to access temporary accommodation. (see paragraph 2.39) We need to build on the success of the Housing First initiative and review and focus provision going forward to provide permanent housing solutions and make best use of floating support to help those who are vulnerable and require housing related support to sustain their accommodation.
- 1.2.13 Legislative changes set out in the Housing & Planning Act that are likely to impact on the Supported Housing provision by imposing the Local Housing Allowance Cap to the rents charged.

Conclusion

- 1.3 The overall conclusion is that the report illustrates that, despite the increase in demand from those who seek advice and assistance, we continue to meet the fundamental aim and objectives of the homelessness strategy, which are to focus on prevention, and provide temporary and move on accommodation; to apply the 'No Second Night Out' initiative for rough sleepers and ensure that homeless people are able to access the services they need.
- 1.4 Homelessness services in Leicester need to continue to be shaped and developed and focussed to meet the needs of those most in need.
- 1.5 Government legislative changes and Welfare reform pose a significant challenge to the people of Leicester and will require the business to change service provision, especially in the areas of Supported Housing and the proposed Local Housing Allowance Cap on rents for supported housing.
- 1.6 There is an ongoing need for hostel bed spaces to be procured however this provision must be more focussed to ensure that it meets the needs of those who are homeless and have complex needs that would benefit from a period of time in accommodation based support. .

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 1.7 There is a review of the current strategy, including the eligibility criteria for those wanting to access temporary accommodation. (see appendix 9)
- 1.8 To consult with stakeholders on the proposed reconfiguration in services.
- 1.9 To report on the results of the consultation to the Executive for a decision on the proposed reconfiguration in services.
- 1.10 To review and challenge the effectiveness of the Housing Register by considering modification to bandings, eligibility and criteria to make it more fit for purpose.

2. Report

Housing Advice and Homelessness Prevention

- 2.1 Housing Options have two main functions. They manage and maintain the Housing Register and provide housing advice and assistance to anyone who may be facing homelessness with the aim of prevention.
- 2.2 As at 1st April 2016 there were 11165 applicants on the Housing Register (9461 as at 1 April 2015), which means there has been an 18% increase in the numbers on the Register. 847 families joined the Housing Register (total number 5280 to 6127) over the past 12 months and 689 families were rehoused compared to 1159 families who were rehoused in 2014-2015. (40% decrease in the number of families rehoused).
- 2.3 857 single people joined the Register 4181 to 5038 (20% increase). The number of singles rehoused in 2015-2016 was 790 compared to 1020 singles rehoused in 2014-2015. (23% decrease).
- 2.4 It is proposed that during this financial year there will be a full review of the Housing Register with the aim and objective to significantly reduce the numbers on the Register. With the rise in numbers on the Register coupled with the projection that we are going to have fewer properties to let we now need to manage customer expectations in relation to applications to the Register. This would also relieve the administrative burden of managing the 11,000 applications, when in reality only 1479 applicants achieved a letting last year. This would also achieve efficiency savings.
- 2.5 In not providing appropriate and honest housing advice at the first point of contact about an individual's housing options including their relative position on the Register can delay independent action to seek or obtain alternative forms of housing resolutions.
- 2.6 There have been 700 fewer lettings (32% decrease) in the past 12 months from 2179 to 1479. This was in part due to the number of new builds that came through last year (254) compared to 2015-16 (48). The average number of lettings over the last 10 years has been 1974 and the expectation is that the falling stock levels of up to 800 pa due to Right to Buy sales over the next 3 years will continue to impact upon the lettings figures going forward. (Appendix 3)
- 2.7 A total of 481 (33%) of all lettings for 2015-2016 were for the prevention of homelessness or to households who became homeless compared to 584, (27%) lets for 2014-2015.
- 2.8 The Housing Options Service is now fully established in Customer Services, York House and also provides a drop in service at the Dawn Centre to meet with the most chaotic service users to provide homelessness, housing advice and assistance. Customers who are homeless as a result of an emergency are seen for immediate, specialist advice and assistance at York House. Customer Services will also refer anyone who may be facing homelessness for early intervention and the more complex issues arising from Housing Register enquiries. Further work is in progress to improve access to housing option

services online for customers.

- 2.9 The number of calls handled from the 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 for the Housing Options Service was 54,044. 36,832 (68%) were basic housing register enquiries, with a further 17,212 (32%) calls relating to homelessness and urgent advice enquiries out of which 7,298 (42% of 17212) calls needed to be transferred to the Emergency On-Call Team in Housing Options as the callers needed urgent specialist advice on the day. In line with the channel shift approach we are looking at initiatives to reduce basic housing register enquires and make this information available to customers online.
- 2.10 The merging of Housing Options into Customer Services has seen the streamlining of processes and has enabled the team to concentrate on the cases that require specialist advice to prevent homelessness. With Customer Services now providing the basic advice to customers and by channel shift initiatives it is proposed that in this financial year 2 Homelessness Prevention Officer posts will be deleted, taking the number of posts from 16 to 14. The 2 posts have been vacant for the last 12 months and it is therefore it is not anticipated that this will affect the performance of the team.
- 2.11 The demand for the homelessness services provided by Housing Options saw a 33% increase from 2163 households in 2014/15 to 2876 households in 2015/16. This is a total of 5039 households in the 24 month period. (974 families in 2014/15 and 1218 families in 2015/16 (25% increase), 1189 singles and couples in 2014/15 and 1658 singles and couples in 2015/16 (39% increase)). The monthly average for the 24 month period is 210 households with 91 families and 119 singles and couples respectively. Despite the increase in the numbers presenting, the number of families and singles needing to access temporary accommodation has remained consistent showing that prevention initiatives are meeting the objectives of the Homeless Strategy. (See Appendices 1A and 1B)
- 2.12 The main reason for the increase in demand has been due to more evictions within the Private Sector. More notices are being served upon tenants in the private sector due to two main issues, some landlords are choosing to sell their properties due to additional legislative requirements that are being imposed or the landlord wants to increase rental charges and this is achieved in the main by ending the contract with the existing tenant. Landlords can achieve higher rental income than what is covered by the local housing allowance rates (housing benefit). The housing allowance rates have been frozen since 2014 and therefore they do no longer meet the market rents that Landlords can potentially achieve for their properties.
- 2.13 Housing Options provide both Landlord and Tenants with advice to ensure that there is compliance and to protect against unlawful eviction. The emphasis is to provide housing resolutions in the notice period. Where this is not achievable, Housing Options will pay for any costs incurred by the eviction process to prevent families from having to go into hostels and any disruption to family life, and to provide more time for alternative housing solutions.
- 2.14 The reduced number of council lets against a rise in the numbers on the housing

register is however forcing more households into homelessness and placing increased pressure on homelessness services. Going forward we need to start to discharge the duty owed to homeless households into the private sector to relieve some of the pressure and demand on the Housing Register. This can only happen when we are confident that we can source enough suitable private accommodation to meet the demand. (Appendix 3)

2.15 The prevention of homelessness remains the main aim and objective for the Service and despite the increase in numbers presenting for help the success rate for prevention has risen in 2015/16. The success rate for prevention 2014/15 was 79%, and the success rate for 2015/16 rose to 85% (Appendix 1A and 1B). We prevent homelessness by either sustaining the present accommodation (see Appendix 6), or by providing an alternative housing option (see Appendix 7). The reasons for customers seeking assistance remain consistent. They include termination of assured shorthold tenancies, fleeing domestic violence, required to leave National Asylum Support Service accommodation following a positive decision on their asylum application, and asked to leave by friends and relatives.

2.16 The most successful means of prevention remain:

- Resolving Housing Benefit problems
- Resolving rent or service charge arrears in the social or private rented sector
- Providing initial advice and assistance to enable someone to remain in accommodation in the private or social rented sector
- Negotiation or legal advocacy to ensure that someone can remain in accommodation in the private rented sector
- Mediation using external or internal family mediators
- Conciliation including home visits for family/friend threatened exclusions
- Debt Advice

Family homelessness

2.17 For the 24 month period there were 2192 families who sought assistance from facing homelessness, 974 families in 2014/15 and 1218 families in 2015/16 – 25% increase. (see Appendix 1A)

2.18 For the 24 month period 502 families needed to go into temporary accommodation (through the Single Access and Referral Service, in Housing Options). In the first 12 months the total number of families placed in temporary accommodation was 246, compared to 256 families for 2015/16, this was a 4% increase. Despite the increase in the number of families who sought assistance, the number of families needing to go into temporary accommodation has only risen by 4% year on year. This shows the emphasis on prevention of family homelessness continues with admissions to a hostel or bed and breakfast being a last resort. (see Appendix 4)

2.19 Unfortunately the prevention of homelessness is not possible in all cases due to the presenting problem and the Housing Options Service is the safety net for cases such as those fleeing domestic violence or other forms of harassment and unlawful evictions. Early interventions are the key in managing this process and reduce the need for families having to enter temporary accommodation.

2.20 Despite the rise in families presenting for assistance, the number of families who

have had to be accommodated in Bed and Breakfast has fallen. In the past 6 months (October 2015 – March 2016) the number has fallen from 63 to 23 families, 63% decrease. For the 24 month period bed and breakfast was used for 149 families (6 families per month on average), however most families have only had to spend one night in Bed and Breakfast before being moved on to more suitable temporary accommodation. Nationally, the government target is that families should spend no longer than 6 weeks in Bed and Breakfast. We continue to closely monitor the use of bed and breakfast with an aim to minimise the use for families. The average cost per night of placing a family in Bed And Breakfast is £67.11. The total spend on Bed and Breakfast (all households) in 2014/15 was £48,891, compared to £33,634 spent in 2015/16.

- 2.21 There are no immediate proposals to reduce the number of temporary accommodation units for families at this present time until we are confident that we have minimised the use of bed and breakfast for families to a minimum with the aim and objective to have no families in bed and breakfast.
- 2.22 Our aim is to place families who have no support needs and are homeless through no fault of their own directly into accommodation either in the private sector or a social housing let. This helps the family return to a settled lifestyle without the need to enter temporary accommodation.
- 2.23 The uncertainty of whether or not supported accommodation will be subject to the Local Housing Cap going forward will impact on how we support those households that do need to access temporary accommodation. Further government guidance is awaited which will set out the rules that will be applied to supported housing costs going forward. This, coupled with the severe financial position that the Council already face may mean that further reduction in services will be inevitable.
- 2.24 There is no repeat family homelessness as all who are rehoused as a result of being homeless are offered floating support to help them sustain their new accommodation, and the Family Support Service continues to work with those most in need.
- 2.25 It is proposed that in this financial year, we reduce the internal provision of supported housing for single people by 60 units. The units that have been identified are for those cases who are assessed as requiring low-medium support, usually after a period in the Dawn Centre before moving on to independent accommodation. The pathway for these individuals would be protected by offering independent accommodation and providing floating support services to help the individuals settle and sustain their accommodation.
- 2.26 The proposal would mitigate some of the risks of the potential capping of rents going forward, whilst we await further guidance from the government on the definition(s) of supported housing. It is likely that the 60 units identified may not meet the definition and therefore it would not be financially viable to continue with these schemes. The 60 units would be returned to general housing stock.

Working with repeat single homeless and rough sleepers

- 2.27 For the 24 month period 2847 single people or couples (1189 in 2014/15 and 1658 in 2015/16 – 39% increase) sought assistance when facing homelessness. The average for the first 12 months was 99, for the 24 month period this increased to 119, and for the last 6 months 155. The trend in the last 6 months suggests a considerable increase in the average number of singles and couples seeking assistance. (See Appendix 1B).
- 2.28 There were 1503 placements for singles or couples into temporary accommodation in the 24 month period. In 2014/15 the total placement figure for singles and couples was 745 and in 2015/16 this was 758, 2% increase.
- 2.29 The number of unique individuals that requested temporary accommodation for the 24 month period was 1781 (See Appendix 5A), out of which 432 (28%) of them had experienced at least two previous stays in hostel accommodation in this period, out of which 88 had been in hostels 4 or more times. In contrast the Council sees no repeat family homelessness.
- 2.30 Due to the concerns in relation to repeat presentations we began to monitor council evictions from April 2015. There have been 51 evictions, 41 singles and 10 families. Out of the 51, 2 singles and 1 family had been in hostels prior to securing their council tenancies, and 2 single customers approached for further help after eviction. Therefore, this monitoring shows that those who are repeat presentations are not the cases that the council have no other option than to evict due to continuous breach of tenancy conditions

Measuring our success with those that we have most concern about

- 2.31 **The Repeat Homeless list** is used to target multi-agency work with those with the most entrenched homelessness lifestyle. It lists as a snapshot, those people receiving Council funded homelessness services that have been in hostels four or more times in the last two years or who repeatedly sleep rough. At the end of 2014/15 there was 52 individuals on the list which has reduced to 38 at the end on 2015/16, 27% reduction.
- 2.32 As part of the work to manage the most complex cases the City Council Revolving Door Team also works with people who have been in temporary accommodation for more than 12 months. The number of those cases has reduced by 63% from 8 at the end of 2014/15 to 3 at the end of 2015/16.
- 2.33 Support is focused on trying to ensure no further returns to hostel accommodation and trying to secure long term sustainable housing for these individuals.
- 2.34 Work continues to reduce those that have repeat stays in hostels by looking at alternative solutions and providing the intensive support to a wider number of individuals who represent to services.
- 2.35 As the numbers on the Repeat Homeless List have reduced by 63%, it is proposed in this financial year to reduce the number of Revolving Door Support Officer posts from 13 to 10. These posts have been vacant for some considerable time and it is not anticipated that this will affect the performance of the team. In 2015/16, the Outreach Team recorded 159 (28% increase) individuals as rough sleeping, compared with 124 in 2014/15. In 2015/16 the range in numbers on the street in any one year was a minimum of 7 in December 2015 and maximum of 26

in August 2015.

- 2.36 Leicester City Council works to the no second night out agenda and the majority of cases who seek our help only slept rough for 1-night. We believe that there is no one who rough sleeps because we do not have a bed space to offer, with the exception of those persons from abroad that are ineligible for housing assistance of which 54 accepted the offer to be reconnected to their country of origin over the 24 month period (28 and 26 in 2015/16 and 2014/15 respectively).
- 2.37 Recent work with the police has highlighted again that many people who the public view as rough sleepers are actually beggars who do have somewhere to live. This can also include people who are staying in our hostels. The Rough Sleepers Outreach Team shares information with the Street Drinking Team and the City Centre police. A profile of those begging on the streets revealed that there were 12 prolific beggars, of which one was accommodated in a hostel and one rough sleeping. The others either had tenancies (7) or were living with family and friends (3).
- 2.38 The Police have served 4 Community Protection Notices and 1 Criminal Behaviour Order since April, (these replaced ABSO's and CRASBOs ;). It's too early to know the outcome of these orders; however the Police have welcomed our joint agency approach and information sharing on whether the beggars are actually homeless. This approach gives the Police more confidence that the Courts will support any actions that they may take against persistent beggars.

Adopting new ways of working within the current Strategy

- 2.39 The implementation of some of the principles of the 'Housing First' model as described in the previous report are already proving to be an effective tool to prevent homelessness for those cases who are facing homelessness but their only need is accommodation (no support needs identified) or to provide other alternative solutions for the most entrenched cases where the hostel environment is not conducive with addressing lifestyle issues to break the cycle of homelessness. The core philosophy is:
- Offer permanent housing with security of tenure
 - Enable real choice for service users over all aspects of their lives, using a personalisation framework or an equivalent client led approach.
 - A clear focus on long term and recurrently homeless people with high support needs.
 - Using a harm reduction framework
 - Offer open ended, not time restricted, access to intensive support with no expectation that support needs will necessarily fall steadily, or that any individual using Housing First might cease to require support.
 - Separation of housing and care i.e. access to and retention of, housing is not conditional on treatment compliance.
 - To date 43 families have been assisted using this model and 31 singles. All of these cases would have been placed in temporary accommodation if this initiative had not been used.
 - Vulnerable households are offered referrals to floating support services to try and help them settle and sustain the accommodation offered.

- The success of this pilot continues to be a major contributory factor to the significant reduction in the use of bed and breakfast for family cases, considering the 25% increase in number that have presented for assistance.

2.40 In the last 24 months, 723 (45%) of single people who come into hostels did not resolve their underlying housing problem. We continue to look for new initiatives of how we keep in touch with those most likely to have multiple stays and encourage people not to leave hostels abruptly with no clear plan. Research shows that for the homeless population it is not merely a question of housing. Joint working with mental health, drug and alcohol services with the Directors of Public Health & Adult Social Care and working collaboratively with partners across the city to implement and embrace the theme of 'Making Every Adult Matter' is being embedded to address those who have repeat stays in hostels to avoid institutionalisation.

2.41 The joint assessments between Housing and Children's Services provide protection for any 16/17 year old facing homelessness to ensure that this vulnerable group are given a holistic approach to the issues leading to their homelessness.

2.42 In order to provide more efficient and effective services it is proposed to review the eligibility criteria to ensure that those most in need can still access temporary accommodation, whilst considering other housing options for those who may no longer meet the new criteria.

2.43 With the division of the offender management services, it is further proposed to reduce the provision for offenders from 30 units to 15. Referrals to the units are currently managed by The National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Company. We would continue to support the service users by offering tenancies with floating support to the most high risk cases under the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, as these cases are in the main, not suitable for hostel accommodation. The reduction could mean that potentially more offenders may be referred through to the remaining accommodation based support. The Single Access and Referral Service would take back the management of the remaining 15 units to ensure that in cooperation with both services the units are used as efficiently and effectively as possible.

2.44 It is also proposed in this financial year to end the contract for the floating support services for Offenders. (NACRO). The contract value is £116K. The contract is small and we feel that it would better to manage floating support services in a consistent model that can be applied to all service users.

2.45 The successful pilot of providing housing expertise to enable those who are in hospital and are ready for discharge, but have no accommodation to return to has now been mainstreamed and it is offered at both the Leicester Royal Infirmary and the Bradgate Mental Health Unit to prevent any delayed transfer of care which could result in bed blocking hospital beds due to the 'patient' not having any suitable accommodation to be discharged to.

Supply and demand for temporary accommodation for single people and childless couples

- 2.46 The 24 months data shows that 1295 (83%) of individuals were placed when requesting temporary accommodation. Under the eligibility criteria the supply is still felt to be broadly sufficient to meet demand. Move on from accommodation based support into independent accommodation can be longer than the target of an average of 4 months due to average waiting time for a 1 bedroom flat on the housing register being 3 months. There has been a reduction in the number of available 1 bedroom properties from the 1010 in 2014/15 to 802 in 2015/16 (21% decrease).(See Appendix 4)
- 2.47 In order to look to improve the move on from accommodation based support it is proposed to consider separating out the landlord functions of the Dawn Centre and Border House. By targeting the support and separating out this role it is anticipated that this could lead to more effective services to reduce the average length of stay and provide a greater turnaround of hostel vacancies going forward. We feel that there are also efficiency savings to be made by changing the way that support is provided and by whom, with the clarification of roles in relation to the landlord functions and support services. This proposal, if agreed, would not be implemented until 2017/18.
- 2.48 Families with dependent children are a prescriptive group and therefore the council are under specific duties to accommodate any homeless family where prevention has failed. Currently the supply of temporary accommodation for families is sufficient due to the success of prevention work for this group.
- 2.49 Due to the severe financial pressures the Council are facing, consideration needs to be given to ensure that any potential reduction in provision for cases where the Council has a duty to the person (all families, some singles) is still adequate to mitigate the risk of more bed and breakfast use for families and the risk of more rough sleeping for single people.
- 2.50 Category J is for those “rough sleeping or considered to be in immediate and high risk of rough sleeping (see Appendices 2A, 2B and 2C). This is the most difficult category for Housing Option Officers to assess at the point of request. The numbers that have met Category J in the 12 months period had increased by 24% from 248 in 2014/15 to 308 in 2015/16 of our hostel placements.
- 2.51 Out of the 308 people assessed as at risk of rough sleeping in the 2015/16 only 8 went on to appear on the rough sleepers list. 3 of the 8 did not meet the eligibility criteria. Another one rough slept after refusing the offer of temporary accommodation. Going forward the high number of people being assessed as rough sleeping or at a high risk of rough sleeping would indicate that this needs to be redefined to remove the subjective element of the assessment. (Appendix 2).

Day Centres (The Y Support Service and Centre Project)

- 2.52 The Y Support Service which is based within the Dawn Centre is grant funded to see up to 60 clients a day on a drop in basis. For those people identified as being in need of support, but not receiving this from other agencies, the service will produce personal development plans with them. During 2015/16 the Y Support Service worked with 67 people to develop such plans of which 67 cases resulted in greater independence for the client. The Y Support Service submits regular monitoring returns and is achieving good outputs. They are able to provide support to help maximise income, manage debt, and working in conjunction with

Leicestershire Cares to help service users achieve paid work. They can also establish contact with external groups and services, family and friends on behalf of the service user.

2.53 The Centre Project is less formal, but is felt to be a useful project for working with those at risk of homelessness. During 2015/16 the service registered 109 individuals who used the project as a drop in or for some form of advice and help, many on a regular, if not weekly basis.

Employment Project (Leicestershire Cares)

2.54 Leicestershire Care is grant funded to deliver a support programme to 40 people per year which aims to strengthen employment opportunities for those who are in temporary accommodation or those in the process of resettlement with a history of, or at greater risk of homelessness.

2.55 During 2015/16 the service worked with 64 clients, of which 49 (76%) new referrals were made to the project, of these 7 people failed to engage with the support offered. Of 57 clients receiving support, these were assisted with completing CVs, job applications, employment advice, interview techniques, as well as personal support. Over the course of the year 21 completed their programme and at the end of the year 36 continued to receive support. Of the 21 who completed their programme, 13 went in to either paid employment or work placements. The other 8 have been assisted with completing CVs, job applications and employment advice.

Befriending Project

2.56 This is a new voluntary sector project created in recognition of the need to address loneliness and isolation as a factor that can affect those who are homeless. One Roof, Leicester, which is a consortium of faith groups from across the City is the provider of the service in Leicester. This initiative was supported by a one off grant subsidy of £15,000 to enable the implementation of the befriending project.

2.57 Contracts are due for renewal in the early part of 2017. We are proposing to review and change the way that we look to provide support to clients by the provision of 'wrap around' inclusive services to include independent living skills, education and employment. We will retain the Day Centre at the Dawn Centre and cease the other two schemes, namely The Centre Project, and Leicestershire Cares. This would achieve savings of £59k. The proposal to reconfigure and procure targeted support services is made with full consideration of the likely impact and what in the main is preferable to remain in place, given the outcomes that we need to achieve and the savings that need to be made.

4. Financial, legal and other implications

4.1 Financial implications – Peter Coles - Principal Accountant - Ext 374077

4.1.2 The Homelessness Services Spending Review has an indicative annual savings

guideline of £1.5m; that £0.7m has already been achieved by focussing on prevention as approved by the Executive in December 2014; and that the proposals set out in this report are expected to deliver a further £0.8m.

4.2 Legal implications – Jeremy Rainbow – Principal Lawyer (Litigation) – Ext 371435

4.2.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

4.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

4.3.1 None at present

4.4 Equalities Implications

4.4.1 Our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires us to have consideration of the equalities implications of any of our proposals throughout the decision making process. Although the report does not present a final decision, it does set the context for reviewing current provision. On that basis, it would be timely for the report to include some trend information on the profile, by protected characteristic, of the service users of the homelessness services referred to, so that decision makers are aware of the protected characteristics affected, and how they are affected – key considerations required in paying ‘due regard’ to our PSED. This equality analysis of service users would complement the excellent evidence of outcomes achieved by the homelessness services described in the report, and would enhance our ability to demonstrate that we are meeting the general aims of our PSED: eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations between different groups.

5. Background information and other papers:

Monitoring Homeless Strategy (18 months) Report to Executive –
8th February 2016

Monitoring Homeless Strategy (12 months) Report to Executive –
13th August 2015

Monitoring Homeless Strategy (9 months) Report to Executive –
10th March 2015

University of York, Centre for Housing Policy – Housing First in England :
An evaluation of nine services. February 2015.

Homeless Spending Review Report to Executive 30 September 2014

6. Summary of appendices:

- Appendix 1A: Numbers of Families requesting Assistance and numbers where homelessness prevented 01/04/14 – 31/03/16 – 24 months
- Appendix 1B: Numbers of Singles and Couples requesting Assistance and numbers where homelessness prevented Homelessness 01/04/14 – 31/03/16 – 24 months.
- Appendix 2A: Supply and demand for temporary accommodation for single people 01/04/14 – 31/03/15 (12 months)
- Appendix 2B: Supply and demand for temporary accommodation for single people 01/04/15 – 31/03/16 (12 months)
- Appendix 2C: Supply and demand for temporary accommodation for single people 01/04/14 – 31/03/16 (24 months)
- Appendix 3: Who Gets Social Housing
- Appendix 4: Homeless Family Households needing Temporary Accommodation 01/10/15 – 31/03/16 – by quarter
- Appendix 5A: Homelessness: Singles & Couples 01/04/14 – 31/03/16 - flowchart
- Appendix 5B: Homelessness: Singles & Couples 01/04/14 – 31/03/16 – by quarter
- Appendix 6: Prevention (ALL households) by Sustainment.
- Appendix 7: Prevention (ALL households) by Rehousing.
- Appendix 8: Current eligibility criteria for offer of emergency or temporary accommodation
- Appendix 9: Proposals for a Review of the Eligibility Criteria and a Reduction in Accommodation Based Support.

7. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

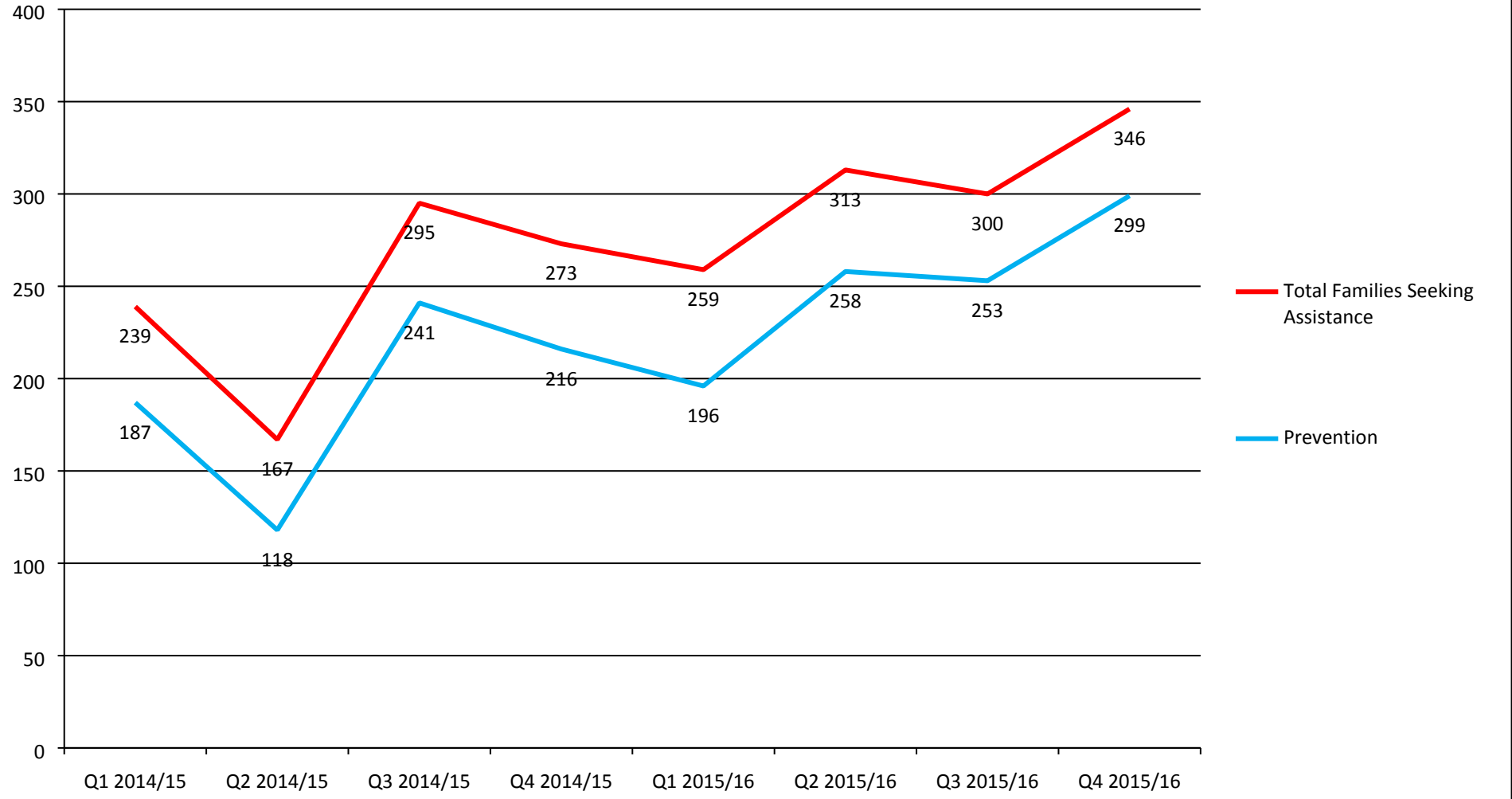
No

8. Is this a “key decision”?

No

Appendix 1A: The number of Families who came to Housing Options saying they faced homelessness

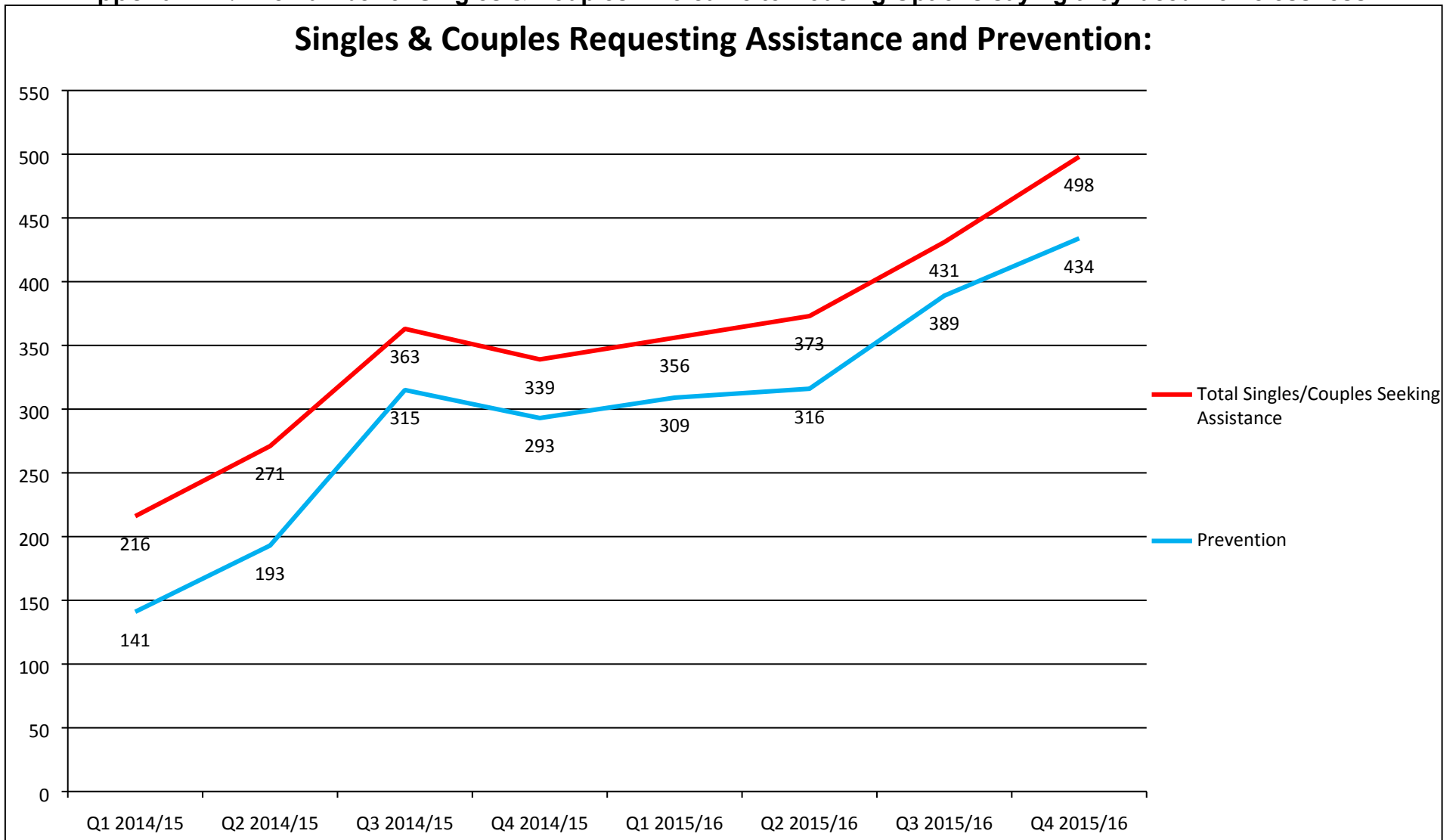
Families Requesting Assistance and Prevention:



28

Appendix 1B: The number of Singles & Couples who came to Housing Options saying they faced homelessness

Singles & Couples Requesting Assistance and Prevention:

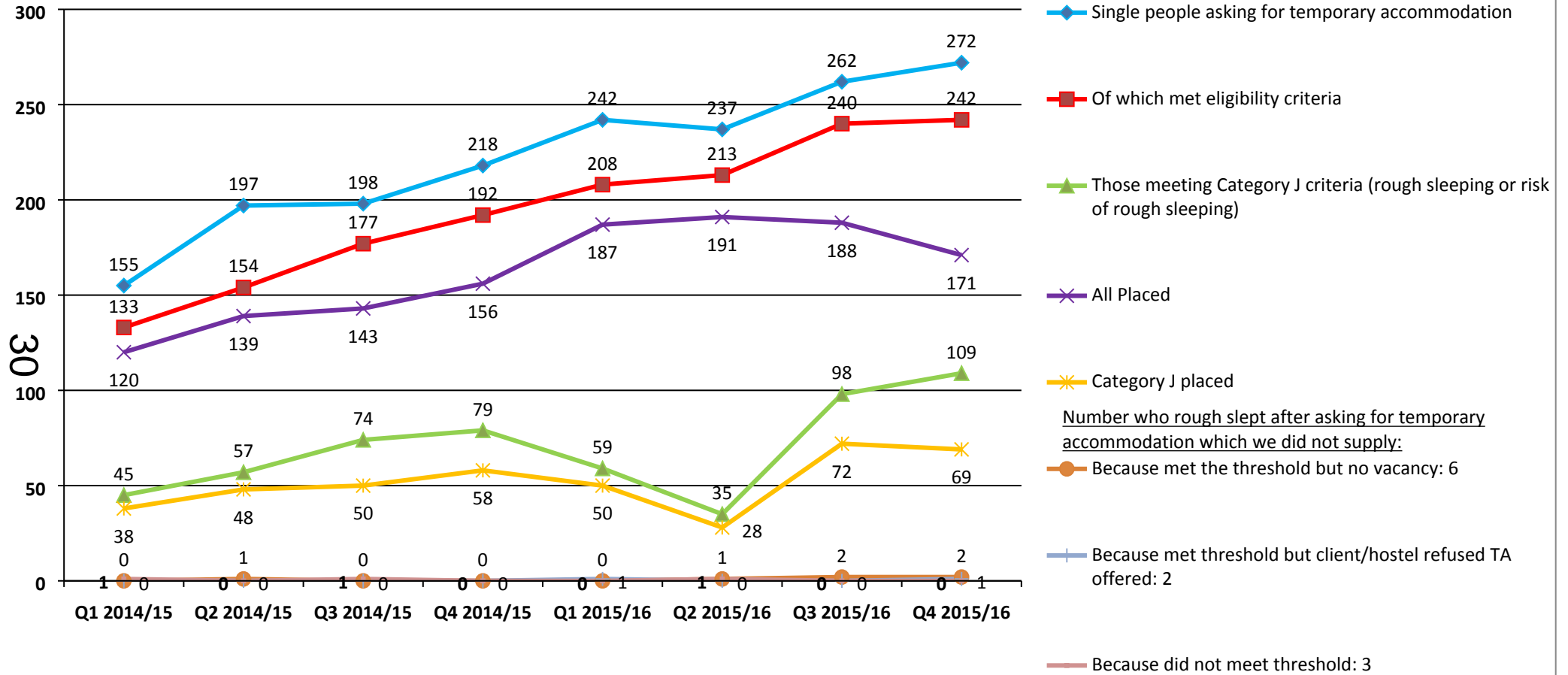


29

Appendix 2

**Supply and demand for temporary accommodation for single people:
1st April 2014- 31st March 2016**

Source: Single Access and Referral Team, Leicester City Council, Housing Options Service

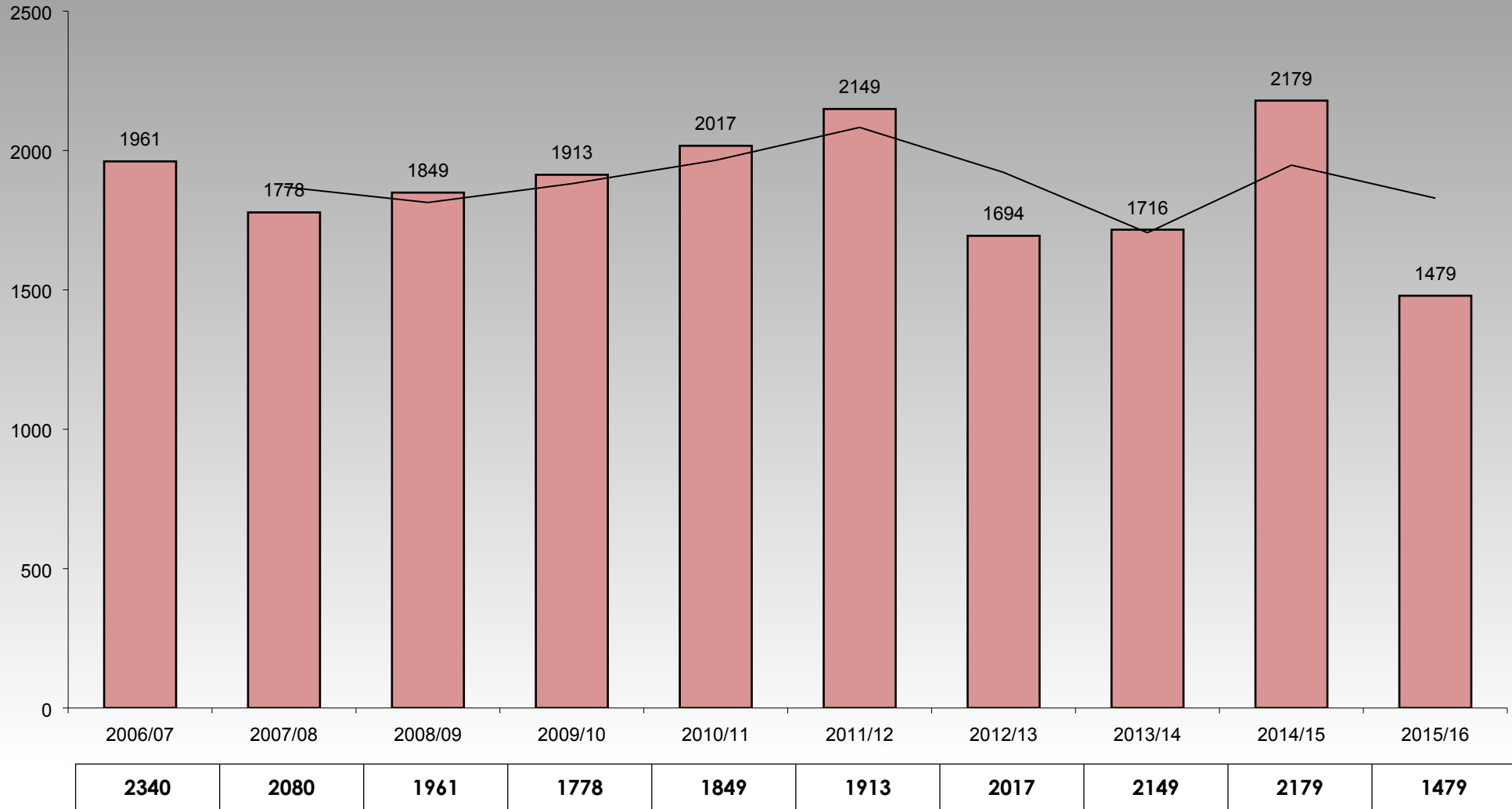


Please note that this graph does not include people who presented in multiple Quarters. As a result the total will not match Appendix 5B, but will match flowchart (Appendix 5A).

Appendix 3 – ‘Who Gets Social Housing’

Lettings from the Housing Register 2006 - 2016

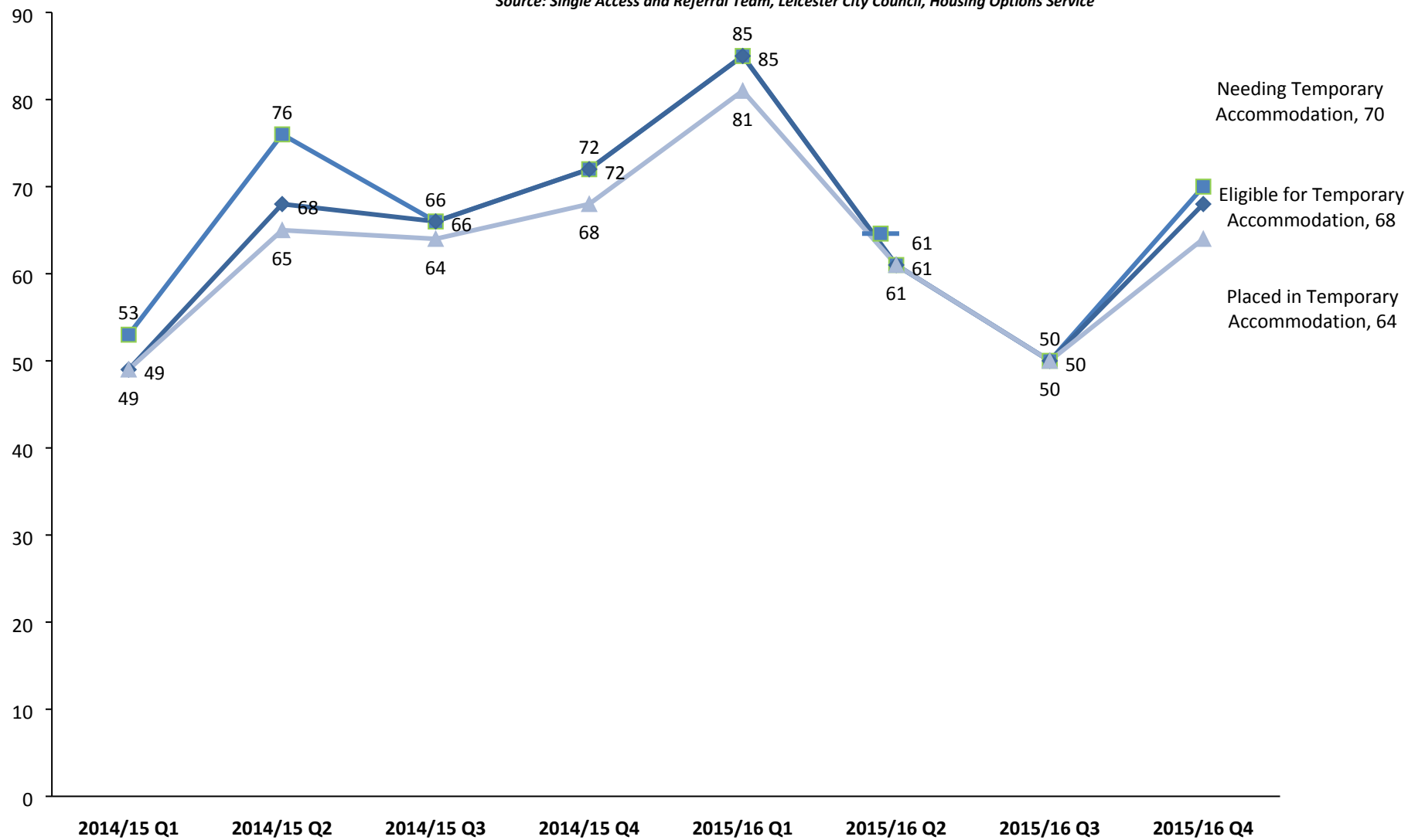
31



Appendix 4: Homelessness: Family Households

1st April 2014- 31 March 2016

Source: Single Access and Referral Team, Leicester City Council, Housing Options Service

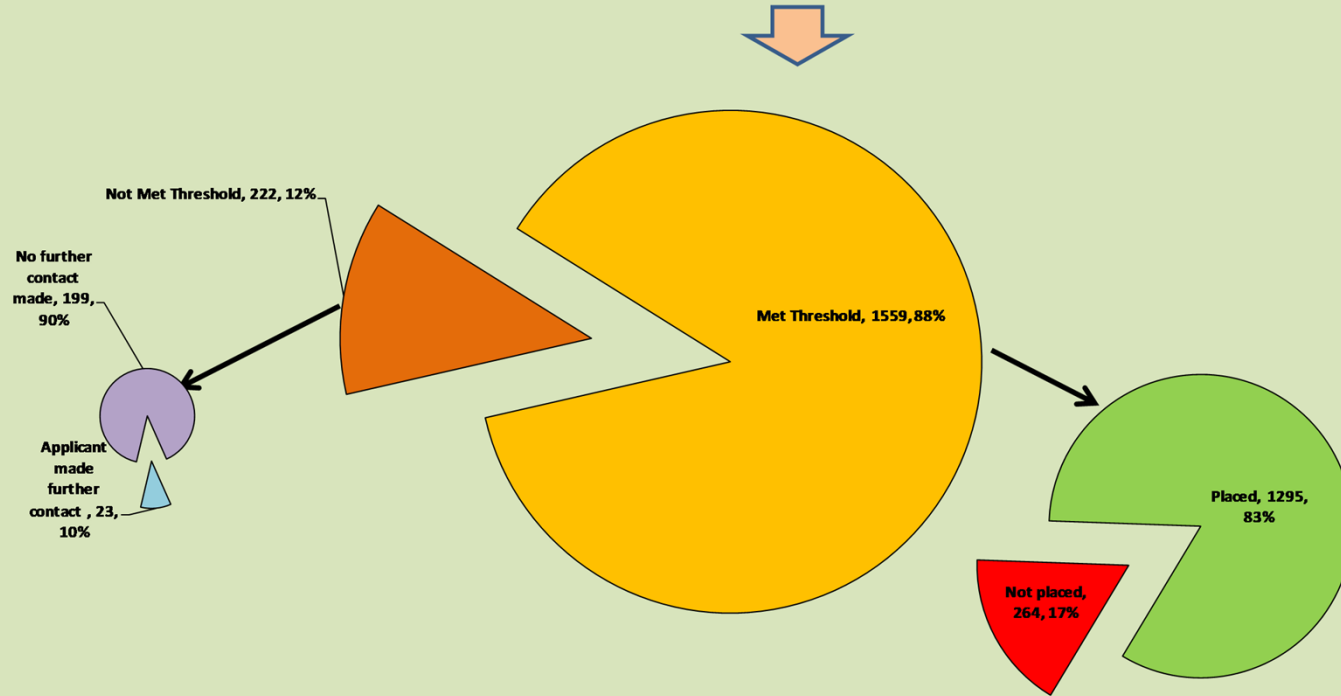


32

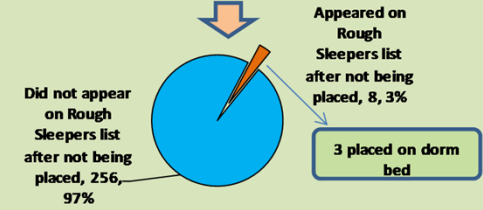
Singles, Couples & Others Requesting Temporary Accommodation From 01/04/2014 to 31/03/2016

Version 1: 18/05/16, Author: MN, Source: LCC Housing Options.

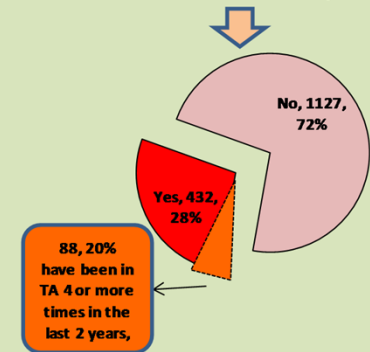
Total: 1781 Unique People Requesting Temporary Accommodation :



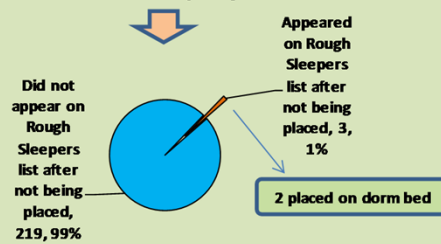
Information On Those That Met Threshold & Were Not Placed (264):



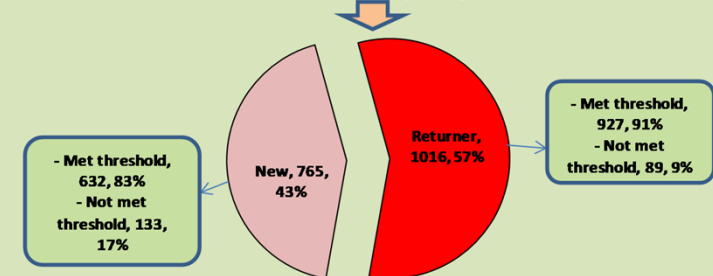
Those That Met Threshold & Were Previously In Temporary Accommodation Within Last Two Years (1559):



Information On Those That Did Not Meet Threshold (222):



All Unique People That Are New Presentations or Returners: (1781):

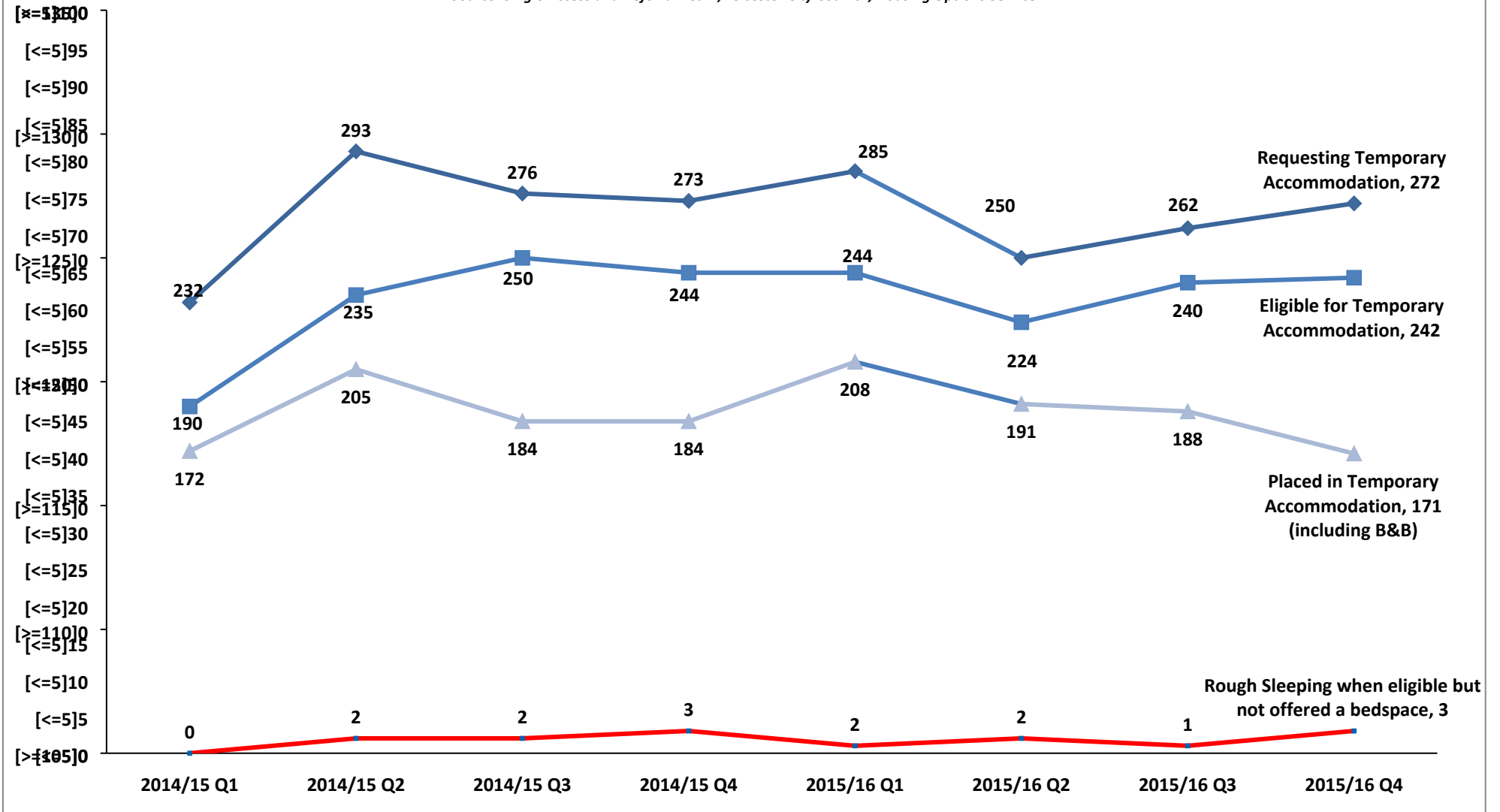


33

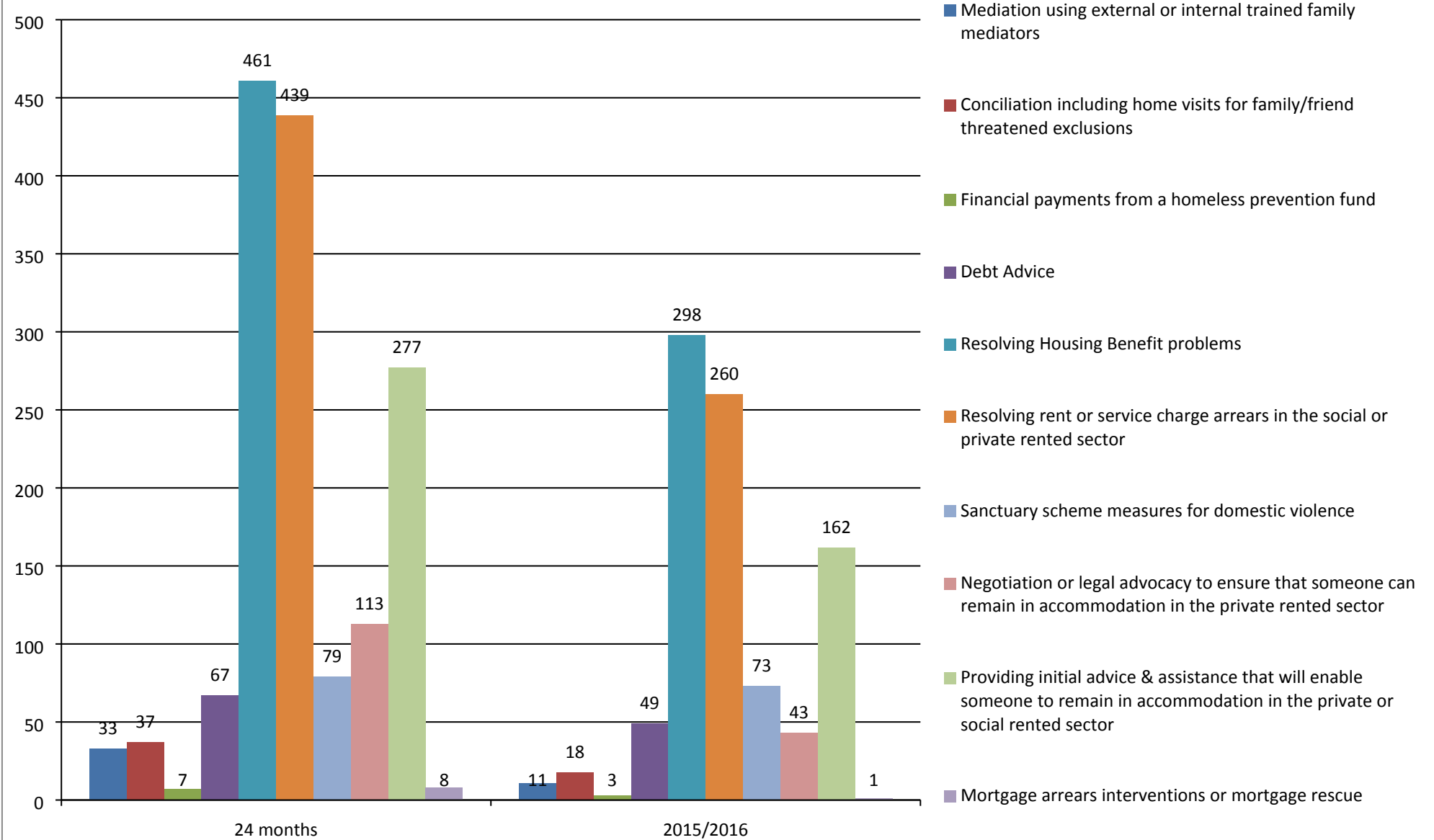
Appendix 5B: Homelessness: Singles and Couples 1st April 2014- 31 March 2016

Source: Single Access and Referral Team, Leicester City Council, Housing Options Service

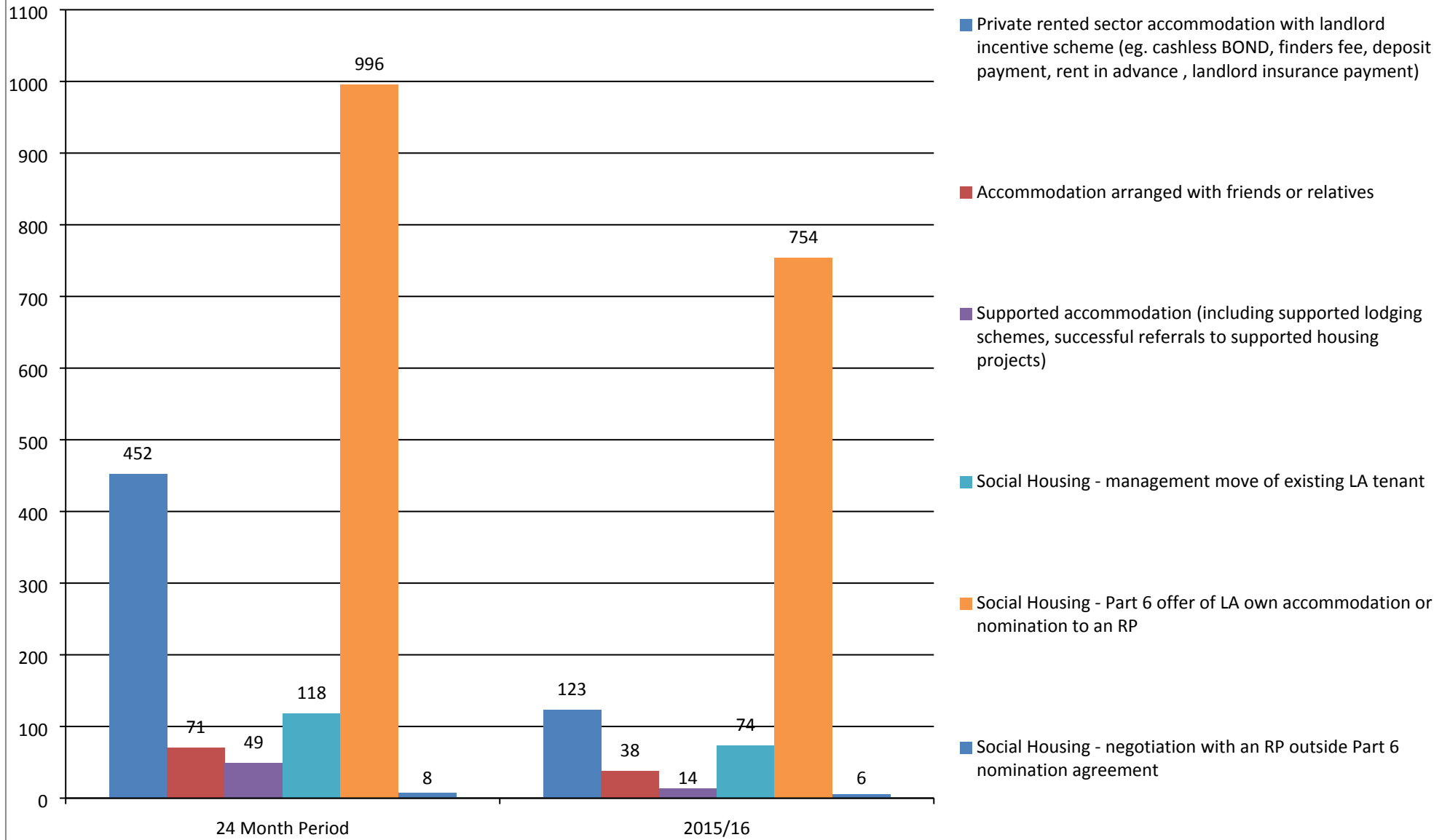
34



Appendix 6: Prevention (ALL households) by Sustainment



Appendix 7: Prevention (ALL households) by Rehousing



Appendix 8: - Current eligibility criteria for offer of emergency or temporary accommodation

Category	Duty arises from
<u>Statutory duty (these are the cases that the Council must provide/offer temporary accommodation)</u>	<u>Legislation</u>
a) Family, pregnant woman	Housing Act 1996
b) Vulnerable Adult	Housing Act 1996
<u>Duty to cooperate with other Statutory Agencies</u>	<u>Referrals for assistance in the provision of temporary accommodation from other statutory agencies. Placements can be subject to vacancies</u>
c) Children leaving care	Children Act 1989 Referrals from Children's Division and Housing Act 1986.
d) High risk offenders	Criminal Justice Act 2003 Duty to co-operate with Police, Probation and Prison Services under Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
e) Ex-offenders leaving approved premises.	Criminal Justice Act 2003 Referrals from Probation Service.
f) Vulnerable adults and families	National Assistance Act 1948 Referrals from Adult Social Care Division.
g) Young offenders and ex-offenders	Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 referrals from Youth Offending Service.
<u>The Council do not have to/have no obligation to provide/offer temporary accommodation</u>	<u>Referrals through the Single Access and Referral Service, Housing Options. Placements subject to vacancies. All will receive housing advice</u>
h) Council tenants in an emergency.	Identified within Housing Division (payment made by HRA, most council tenants would be rehoused within council house stock).
i) People over 60.	Who do not fall within one of the statutory categories, identified by Housing Division.
j) People found rough sleeping or considered to be of immediate and high risk of rough sleeping.	Who do not fall within any other categories, identified by Housing Division and in support of No Second Night Out principles. Dormitory accommodation may be offered to people who are in this category, particularly in an emergency or where the person is not connected to Leicester(see note 3) or is ineligible for public funds
k) Other ex-offenders	Crime and Disorder Act 1998 General duty to prevent Crime and Disorder. Usually people approaching us within one year of leaving custodial sentence who do not fall within above categories a to i. Identified by Housing Division with Probation Service
l) People on identified drug and alcohol programmes or eligible for them and on waiting list	Who do not fall within categories a to i. Referrals from agencies identified by ASC Drug and Alcohol Services

Notes

1. Categories a: and b: are homelessness duties.
Categories c: to g: may be regarded as arising directly from other council statutory duties.
Categories h: to l: support other high council priorities.
2. Access to emergency or temporary single homeless accommodation is primarily for those applicants that have had a settled address in the City of Leicester for the last 6 out of 12 months immediately prior to presentation (rough sleeping will not count towards this connection) or if the applicant has always been connected to Leicester but has been in prison/institution away from the City and is now homeless immediately post release/discharge.(exceptions to this policy will apply where there is a statutory homeless duty.)
3. The Council may refuse to provide a bed space when there are no vacancies and there is no statutory duty to do so. Advice will be given. Where there is a duty and there are no suitable hostel bed spaces, other temporary accommodation will be offered.
4. The Council imposes sanctions on homelessness service users who fail to comply with accommodation and other agreements (e.g. failure to comply with rent payments or arrears agreements, threatening behaviour etc.) These sanctions can include the need to meet specified requirements to gain re-entry to hostels.

Appendix 9

Proposals for a Review of the Eligibility Criteria and a Reduction in Accommodation Based Support.

Homelessness Services are paid for through the General Fund. The Revenue Support Grant which is the money that the government gives to the Council to help support services have seen cuts of £100m per year since 2010 and projected cuts of £55m per year over the next four years.

The current budget for the Homelessness, Prevention and Support division is £4.6 million. £3.4m for Homelessness Services, and £1.2m for Housing Options.

The Housing Spending Review Phase 2 achieved efficiencies of £865k included Organisational reviews in Hostels, Options, and Provider Contracts.

The current provision of Accommodation Based Support is met by internal provision and procured contracts in the Voluntary Sector. There are currently 290 available bed spaces across the provision.

The procured contracts all expire in early 2017 with the option to renew for a further year after a 'mini competition' exercise. It is good practice that if we are to end the contracts that we give the Providers at least 3 months notice.

Due to the Council's exceptionally severe financial position, as part of the Housing Spending Review Phase 3, Executive are asked to consider the following options.

There are two options/models to achieve savings.

Option 1

- To only offer accommodation based support to those cases that are owed specific duties under the homelessness legislation, the Housing Act 1996 Part VII (amended 2002).
- Based upon the management information that has been collated over the last two years we would require 84 bed spaces to meet the statutory obligations with a cost of commissioning based upon the current annual contract value of £350k.

Option 2

1. To review the thresholds for the Eligibility criteria for Accommodation Based Support which would mean a reduction in bed spaces from 290 bed spaces to 215 bed spaces.
2. Retain the Landlord function for the Dawn Centre and Border House and carry out a review of how support is provided to the service users.
3. End the grant subsidised schemes, specifically the employment services with a potential saving of £59,500.

Housing Spending Review Phase 3 - potential efficiency savings based upon Option 2

Reduction in Bed spaces from 290 -215.

- The reduction in bed spaces would be achieved by cutting the internal provision by 60 units. These properties would be returned to general stock to be re-let generating income for the HRA. Floating support can be provided for any vulnerable tenants. Some efficiencies would be achieved through salary savings, however income would also be lost in relation to revenue from housing benefit. The future viability of supported housing remains dependent upon the government's intention to impose the LHA cap upon supported housing.
- To reduce the offender provision from 30 units to 15. The units were originally procured for high risk offenders and referrals are currently managed by the National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Company. Under a duty to cooperate, the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPAs) would still continue and could be extended under MAPPAs by offering tenancies with floating support to the most high risk cases as these cases are in the main, not suitable for hostel accommodation. The reduction could mean that potentially we may see more offenders referred through to the other remaining units of accommodation based support.

End the grant subsidy funded schemes

- Currently the general fund supports 3 schemes, the proposal is to retain the Day Centre at the Dawn Centre which provides support and education opportunities to homeless service users and end the other two schemes that are employment services. The schemes deliver support programmes to strengthen employment opportunities for those who are homeless. This work can be redirected to the job centres who offer similar opportunities.

Retain the Landlord function for the Dawn Centre and Border House and review the Support Services provided to Service Users.

- Review the way that support is provided to the Service Users at Border House & Dawn Centre. The aim of the review is to provide more effective services to reduce the average length of stay and provide a greater turnaround of hostel vacancies going forward. We feel that there are also efficiency savings to be made by reviewing the way that support is provided. The review will seek to clarify the roles in relation to the landlord functions and support services.

Savings Options	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Total Savings
Realisable savings				
Staffing Efficiencies (Prevention officers, Housing Registration officers). With Customer Services now providing the basic advice to customers and by channel shift initiatives to stream line processes and make services more interactive and accessible to customers that this will also realise staffing efficiencies. Some of the posts are currently vacant therefore it is not anticipated that this will affect the performance of the team.	93,000	114,000	114,000	114,000
Staffing Efficiencies - Revolving Door. As the numbers on the Repeat Homeless List have reduced by 63%, it is proposed in this financial year to reduce the number of Revolving Door posts by 3 FTEs. These posts have been vacant for some considerable time and it is not anticipated that this will affect the performance of the team.	125,000	125,000	125,000	125,000
Development of Former Hostel sites (remove the current revenue building spend)		21,000	21,000	21,000
Review and reconfigure the accommodation based support for offenders. Referrals to the current provision are currently managed by The National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Company. We would continue to support the service users by offering tenancies with floating support to the most high risk cases under the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, as these cases are in the main, not suitable for hostel accommodation. In cooperation with both services the remaining 15 units will be managed as effectively as possible to ensure that those offenders who require housing advice including accommodation based support can access this with the aim to prevent homelessness upon release from prison and reduce reoffending.		125,000	125,000	125,000
End the grant subsidy schemes, specifically the employment. Contracts are due for renewal in the early part of 2017. We are proposing to review and change the way that we look to provide support to clients by the provision of 'wrap around' inclusive services to include independent living skills, education and employment. We will retain the Day Centre at the Dawn Centre and cease the other two schemes, namely The Centre Project, and Leicestershire Cares.		59,500	59,500	59,500
Reduction in Floating Support (NACRO). As part of the review of support services, it is proposed to end the contract for the floating support services for Offenders. (NACRO). The aim is to provide inclusive services that aim to support the most vulnerable in the sustainment of tenancies. The contract is small and we feel that it would better to manage floating support services in a consistent model that can be applied to all service users.		116,000	116,000	116,000

Reduction in Expenditure (resulting in a reduction in rent charges)				
<p>The proposal to reduce the supported housing stock would mitigate some of the risks of the potential capping of rents going forward, whilst we await further guidance from the government on the definition(s) of supported housing. It is likely that the 60 units identified may not meet the definition and therefore it would not be financially viable to continue with these schemes. The 60 units would be returned to general housing stock. The 60 units that have been identified are for those cases who are assessed as requiring low-medium support, usually after a period in the Dawn Centre before moving on to independent accommodation. The pathway for these individuals would be protected by offering independent accommodation and providing floating support services to help the individuals settle and sustain their accommodation.</p>				
<p>Review the way that support is provided to the Service Users at Border House & Dawn Centre. The aim of the review is to provide more effective services to reduce the average length of stay and provide a greater turnaround of hostel vacancies going forward. We feel that there are also efficiency savings to be made by reviewing the way that support is provided. The review will seek to clarify the roles in relation to the landlord functions and support services.</p>				
<p>Staffing Efficiencies in Hostels (Hostels & Admin Team leader & 1,5 x ABSO posts). Amalgamation of the Admin & Business support services for Homelessness to be absorbed by the proposal to now remove the supported housing units and previous hostel closures.</p>				

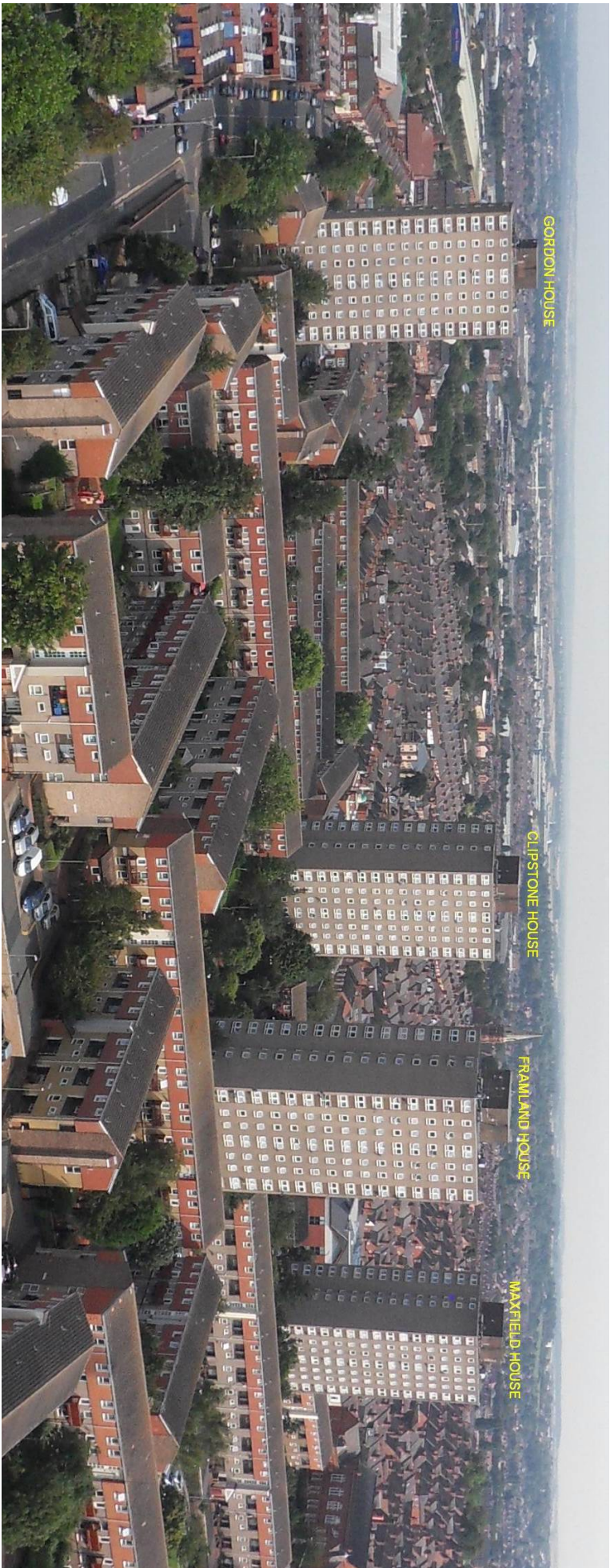
Housing Scrutiny Commission

Tower Block Refurbishment Update

Assistant Mayor for Housing: Councillor Andy Connelly

Lead director: Chris Burgin

Date: 22nd August 2016



Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Castle
- Report author: Simon Nicholls
- Author contact details: simon.nicholls@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: V.2

1. Summary

- 1.1 Refurbishing all four tower blocks on St Peters estates using existing staffing resources was always going to be ambitious and challenging. To date we have successfully refurbished two blocks and a third is in progress.
- 1.2 The refurbishments have been extensive, covering all aspects of the block from the rewiring, heating, hot/cold water and the lifts as well as items not easily noticed such as upgrading the fire safety of the building. The only remaining items to refurbish are the communal floors and decorating which we will do at the very end of the programme.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the content of the report

3. Supporting information including options considered:

Scope of the project.

- 3.1 The four tower blocks on St Peters Estate, Gordon, Framland, Clipston and Maxfield House were constructed in the early 1970's and form an integral part of St Peters Estate. All four blocks have the same basic layout and have 85 one bed roomed flats, Clipstone and Gordon also have a two bed roomed flat on the ground floor, see appendix B for standard layout.
- 3.2 The refurbishment was specified by officers in Housing and incorporated several technical aspects, the same officers are also project managing the refurbishments which also covers all aspects of health and safety and statutory notifications and approvals.
- 3.3 The lift refurbishment have been managed by colleagues in Estates and Property Services
- 3.4 The project does not include Goscote House, We have appointed consultants who are currently preparing a report on its condition and options for its future. A separate report will be bought to the Assistant Mayor for Housing for consideration.

Why the need to refurbish

- 3.5 The existing heating and hot water risers to all four blocks were in poor condition and had been repaired several times; there were regular pipe bursts and loss of heating and hot water to tenants. An independent report was commissioned which recommended the pipework be replaced and consideration be given to delivering heating and hot water in a more domestic scale to help future maintenance.(this was incorporated in the specification)
- 3.6 The Fire Service had also contacted us because a recent audit had raised concerns about all four blocks and their current level of fire protection. The Fire Service did not want to serve us with a statutory notice but sought assurance that we would act on their recommendations. The main areas for concern related to the condition of the communal fire doors, the flat front doors, a suitable fire alarm system was fitted to the block and a fire policy that was communicate to tenants so that they knew what to do in the event of an emergency. We gave an undertaking that these issues would be addressed by April 2017.
- 3.7 The cupboards in the flats that contained the water tanks and cylinders also had asbestos in them; this had become friable over time and posed a danger to operatives that may have to work in these areas. The removal of this asbestos would have to be notified to the HSE and would mean that the tenants would need to be moved out to enable a 3 stage enclosure to be erected.

Progress so far:

Framland House:

- 3.8 This was the first block that we refurbished and was completed in two halves. We refurbished the top eight floors first, moved the tenants back in and then refurbished the lower floors. We did this in the hope that it would make for a speedier refurbishment but in reality this did not happen because of the logistics of moving so many tenants in and out of the block had been underestimated and any economies of scale we hoped for were lost.
- 3.9 The refurbishment was well received by the tenants who appreciated their newly fully refurbished homes.
- 3.10 The refurbishment of the lifts then followed, which resulted in one lift being out of action for several months, meaning that at times you would have to either walk up or down a flight of stairs to access your flat. For example if you lived on the 15th. floor you would could get the lift to either the 17th. or 13th. floor and walk up or down.

Clipstone House

- 3.11 As a result of the difficulties we faced at Framland with the moves in and out of the block and the fact that it didn't save anytime and the obvious issues with having contractors working in the same block that tenants were living in it was decide that the whole block would be emptied, refurbished and re occupied. This worked well and enabled us to programme the contractors work more efficiently.

It also meant that more work could be done whilst all of the tenants were out such as the installation of the lifts and the complete replacement of all the fire doors. (one of the issues at Framland was that we had to maintain fire safety standards because tenants were still living in the block)

3.12 Again the reoccupation of the block took some time, dealing with 85 people moving back into the block was a big task that was carried out in conjunction with the emptying of Gordon House. It did help in one way because it meant that some tenants moving from Gordon House could be offered permanent moves to flats in Clipstone House, there is always a reasonably high percentage churn of tenancies in 1 bedroom accommodation and this still happened during the refurbishment process.

Gordon House.

3.13 Is now vacant and currently being worked on. New front doors and communal fire doors had been completed in advance of the main refurbishment and one lift replaced to try and ensure that the block is refurbished as quickly as possible. The works to install the new heating riser has also already begun. The site was formally handed over to the main contractor on the 1st August where the programmed list of individual works that forms the total refurbishment will begin. (Appendix A).

Maxfield House.

3.14 Work has started to replace the lifts and new front doors have been fitted to the flats as well as the renewal of the communal fire doors. The process of moving out the tenants will begin as soon as Gordon House is complete.

Cost of the works:

3.15 Each tower block will cost in excess of £2m each to refurbish, up to £1m of this is to replace the heating and hot water systems and replacing two lifts in each block will cost up to £250k.

4. Details of Scrutiny

Report prepared at the request of the Housing Scrutiny Commission

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

5.1.1 Total budget for the Tower Block Refurbishment scheme is £9.543m which consists of £5.387m to Project C301089 to cover Structural Surveys, Enabling Works, Asbestos Removal, Installation of new lifts plus miscellaneous costs e.g. removal and disturbance allowances. The remaining £4.156m is to be funded from existing other capital schemes i.e. Bathrooms & Kitchens, Rewiring, Fire

Risks & Door Replacement.

5.1.2 The refurbishment programme commenced in 2012-13 and was planned to be completed in 2016-17. To date £3,6m has been spent against the £5.387 budget in C301089 and £2.1m from the other capital programmes. It is currently envisaged the scheme will be completed in 2017-18 due to reprogramming the installation of the new lifts plus it taking longer to move tenants from and back decant tenants from their flats prior/after work has been carried out. However, it is currently forecasted that the overall scheme will be completed within the existing budget.

Geoffrey Bates (Accountant Housing)

5.2 Legal implications

None sought

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

None sought

5.4 Equalities Implications

None sought

5.5 Tenancy Management implications

5.5.1 Temporarily, re-housing elderly and vulnerable tenants to enable the refurbishments to happen has been a challenging experience. In some instances they are moving to Goscote House, albeit on a temporary basis, which is unpopular, when they have lived in their flats for a number of years and this is difficult for them to understand. Many have language difficulties and sorting out all the utilities and removals and mail etc. has proved very time consuming.

5.5.2 Once the refurbishments have been completed they have been very well received and the returning tenants have been pleased with their refurbished homes.

Jay Rughani.
Tower Block Team Leader

6. Background information and other papers:

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A- list of works

Appendix B- layout plan

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a “key decision”?

No

Work inside each flat:

Asbestos removal to service cupboards and spray decorative coating to flat ceilings

Bathroom refurbishment

Kitchen refurbishment

New extractor system

Fire stopping (to prevent a fire spreading between flats)

New front doors

New heating system, including radiators and controls/programmer

Decorating

All flat Internal doors

Fire and smoke detectors

Fire doors to all rooms where necessary

Jack lock to windows (for security)

Re wiring, to include increasing the number of socket outlets.

New floor covering to all rooms

Replacing all internal walls complete

All new hot and cold water services to each flat

All required window repairs, seals and latched etc.

All new timberwork skirting boards, window sills and architraves etc.

Removal of all redundant old services such as redifusion TV etc.

Installation of new digital TV, BT and internet cabling

Communal areas

New lifts

New communal fire doors

New LED corridor lighting

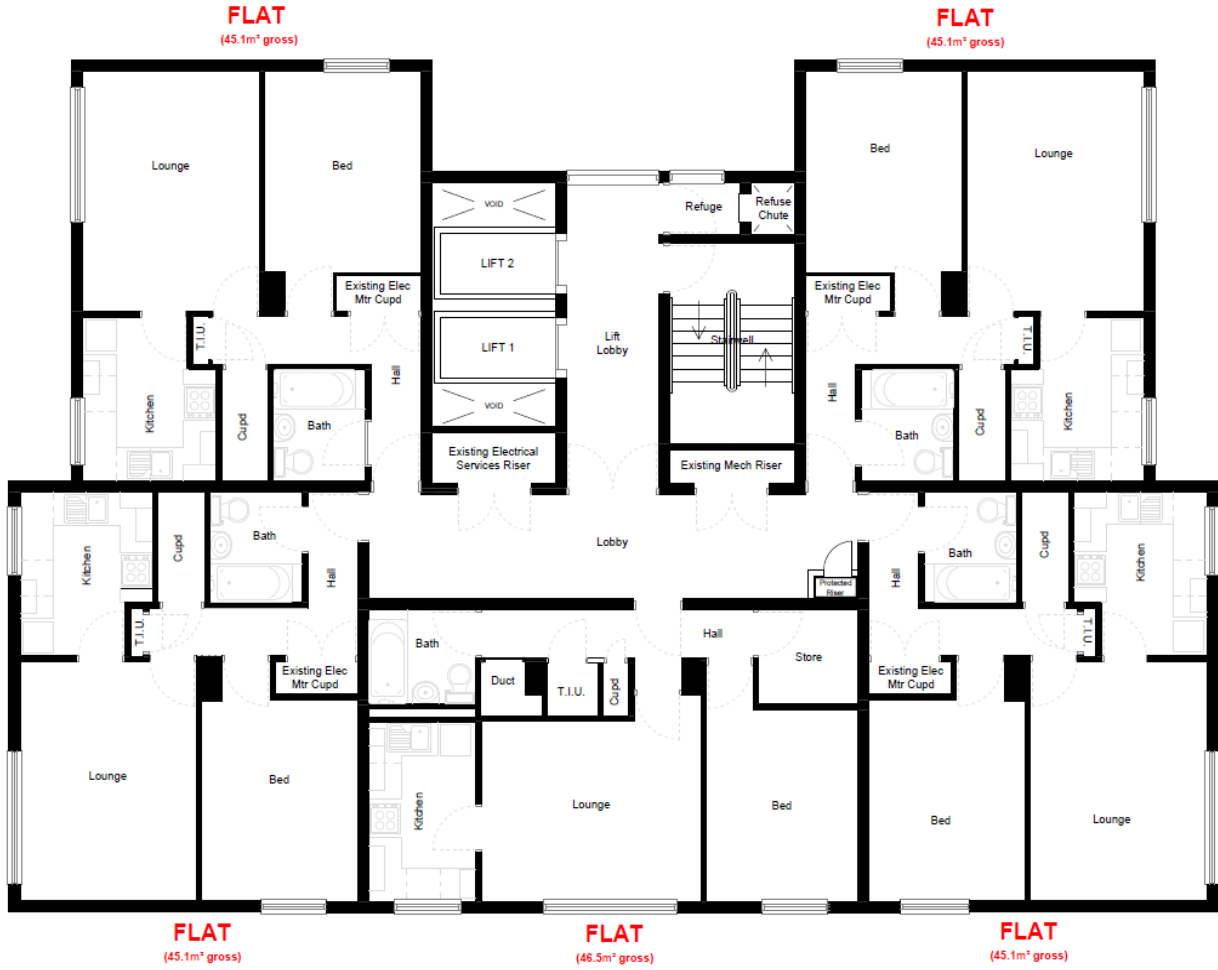
New fire alarm

Upgraded fire stopping between floors

New heating distribution pipework to all flats

Decoration, including the rear escape stairs

New floor coverings



TYPICAL LAYOUT PLAN FLOORS 1-17

Not to Scale

HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

KEY DATES 2016/17

Email notification of items for Agenda Meeting discussion	Agenda Meeting Dates (all 12.00pm in Room 3.12, City Hall unless stated)	Deadline for Final Agenda Papers (Wednesday unless stated)	Despatch of Final Agenda (Friday unless stated)	MEETING DATES (Monday at 6.15pm unless stated)
3 June 2016	8 June 2016	22 June 2016	24 June 2016	4 JULY 2016 (room G.01)
22 July 2016	27 July 2016	10 August 2016	12 August 2016	22 AUGUST 2016 (room G.01)
9 September 2016	14 September 2016	28 September 2016	30 September 2016	10 OCTOBER 2016 (room G.02)
		7 November 2016	9 November 2016	17 NOVEMBER 2016 (room G.01) - SPECIAL
28 October 2016	2 November 2016	16 November 2016	18 November 2016	28 NOVEMBER 2016 (room G.01)
30 December 2016	4 January 2017	18 January 2017	20 January 2017	30 JANUARY 2017 (room G.01)
17 February 2017	22 February 2017	8 March 2017	10 March 2017	20 MARCH 2017 (room G.01)

PROVISIONAL