

2015-2020 Guildford Housing Strategy - Statistical Update full year 2016-17

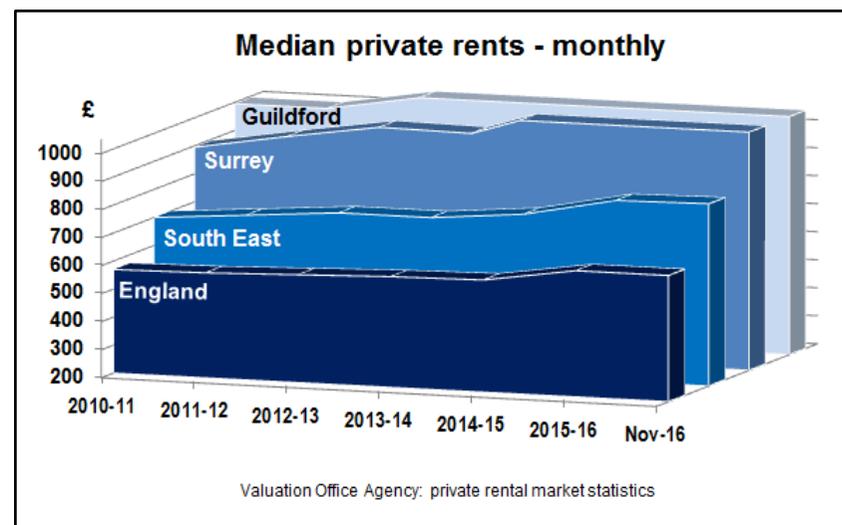
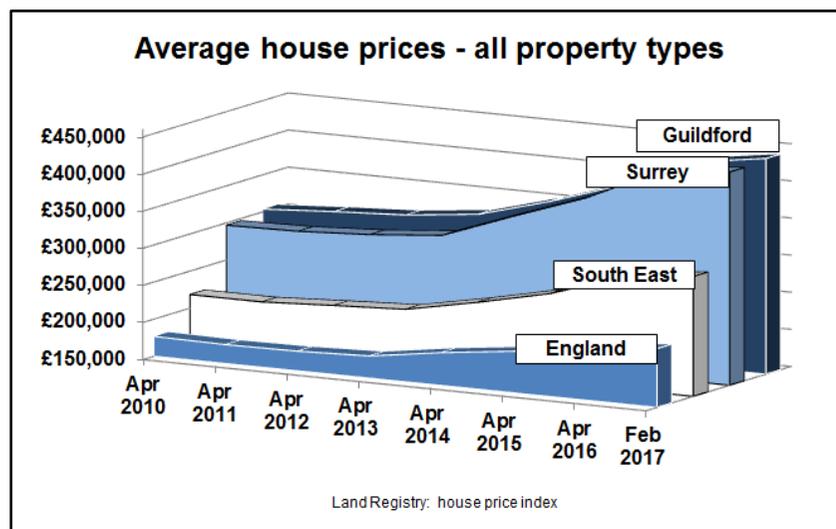
Guildford is the second highest populated district in Surrey with 143,000 residents. Current estimates suggest this may rise past 150,000 by 2020. It is the second largest borough in the county and 89 per cent is land designated as Green Belt. The need for new housing development and associated infrastructure is a particularly sensitive issue for local people, with preservation of the high quality natural landscape, including the green belt, being a high priority.

Key facts about the Borough

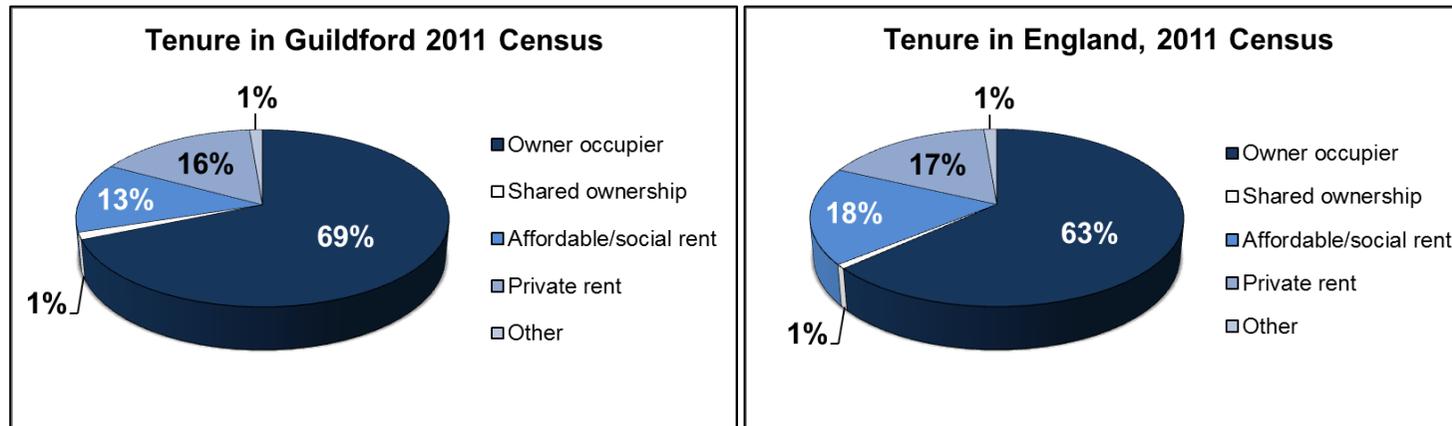
- Covers 104 square miles and comprises urban areas in central Guildford and to the west in Ash with several surrounding rural villages
- 54,500 households and 6,850 affordable homes in the borough
- The main housing tenure is owner occupation, representing 69% of homes (for England the average is 63%). Private renting has increased by 9% since 2001 and now represents 16% of homes
- Low levels of unemployment below 5%. National average is 8%. Median workplace earnings £31,883, Median resident earnings £35,635
- Minority ethnic groups comprise 9 per cent of the population, up from 3.2 per cent in 2001
- Levels of homelessness are low but in 2016/17, 114 single people slept rough in the borough

1. House and rental costs and tenure profile

The high cost of housing in Guildford is apparent in both the owner-occupied and private rented sectors. In 2017, house prices are double the average for England & Wales and one third higher than for the South East. Private rents are around twice the England average. There is an ongoing shortage of affordable housing, particularly for first time buyers and a shortage of suitable accommodation for people wishing to downsize.

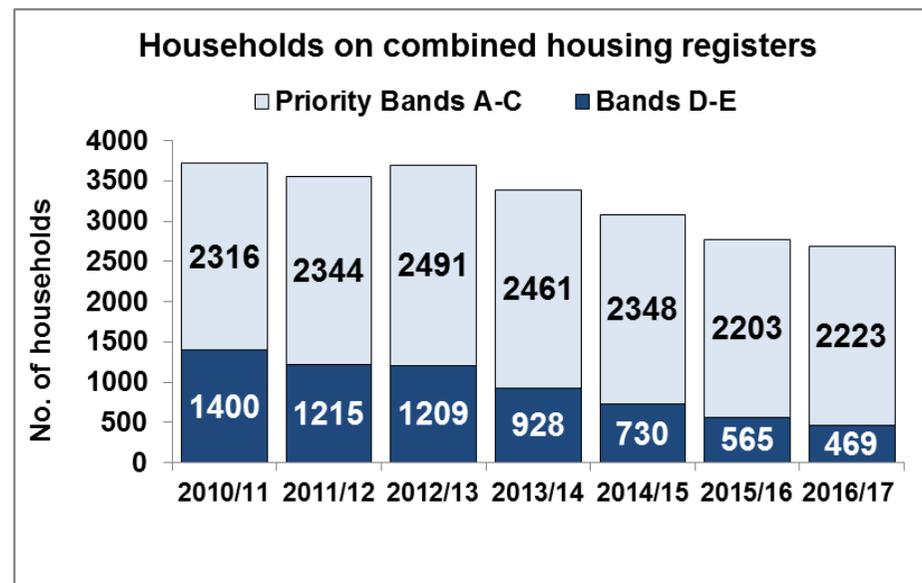


The charts below compare the housing tenure breakdown for Guildford with that of England, from the 2011 census. This illustrates the higher percentage of owner-occupation and lower level of Affordable/social rental in Guildford.

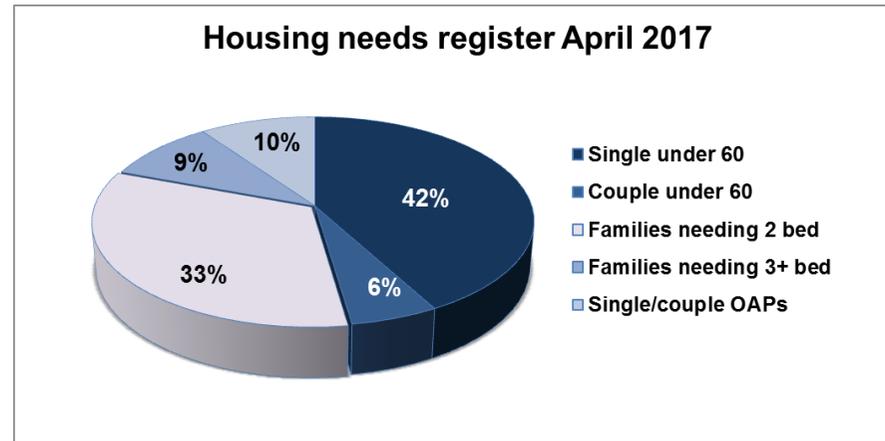
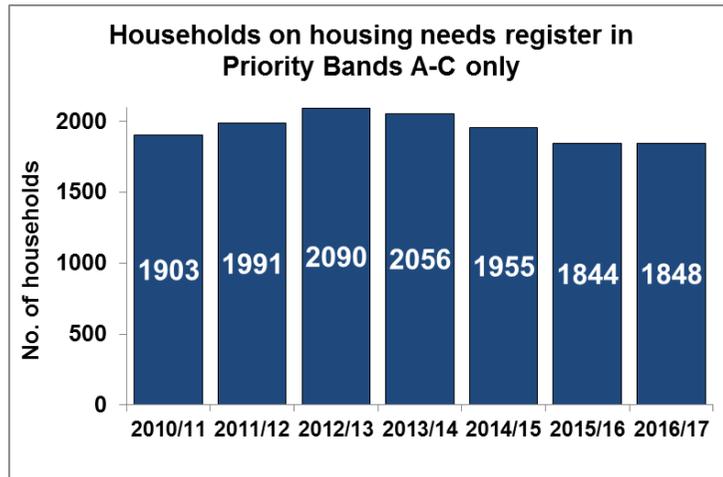


2. Housing supply and demand

The Housing Register - there were 2,692 households on the housing register in Guildford on 1 April 2017 of which 2,223 were in Bands A-C. These are classed as 'reasonable preference' bands where applicants are likely to be allocated social housing. In Bands A-C households have a substantive local connection with the Borough through residence, employment or family connections. The graph below shows the change in the number of households on the combined housing registers since 2010.



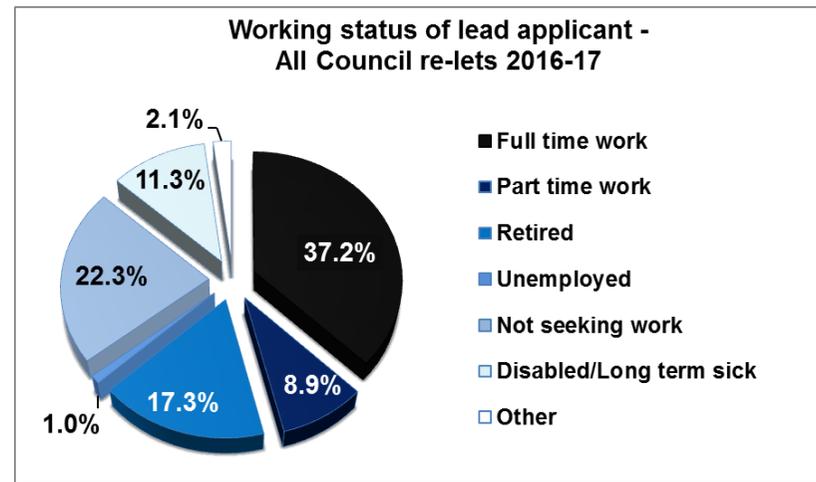
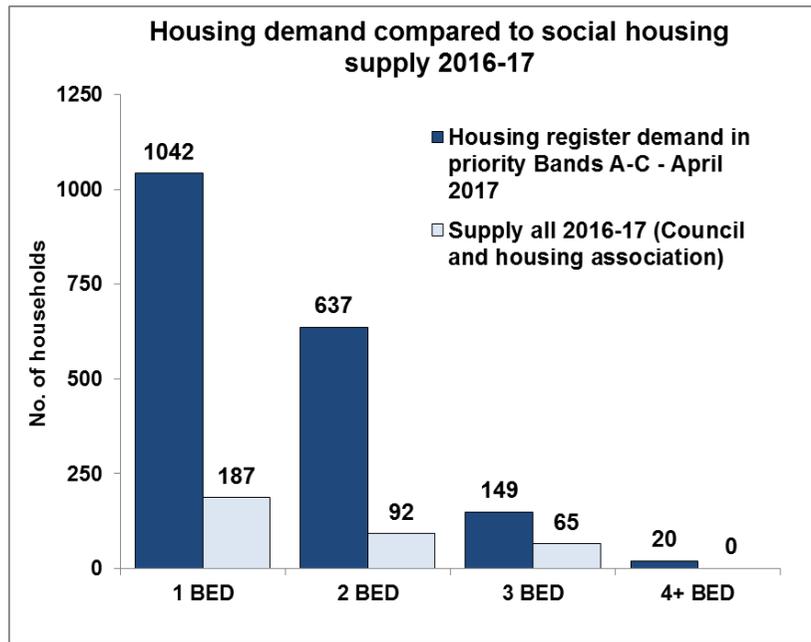
The overall number of households on the housing register remained consistent at around 3500 up to 2013/14 when there was a drop in Band D-E applicants. This was largely due to a policy change whereby reminders to renew applications were discontinued. Further changes to the allocations scheme in 2014 and 2015 tightened requirements to have a long and substantial local connection to Guildford and Band D/E applicants continue to fall. However the numbers in the priority bands remain similar to 2009. This is still the case with those seeking a transfer (and therefore already in social housing) removed from the totals:



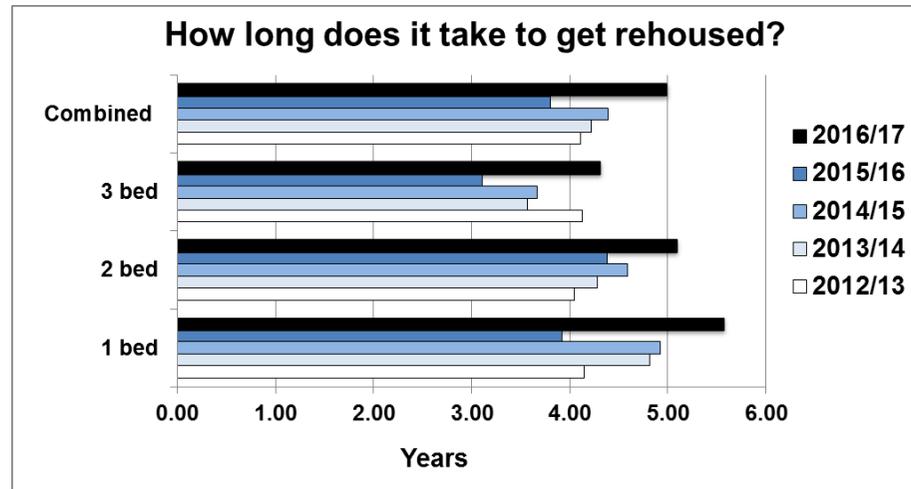
The age profile of those seeking new social housing shows singles under age 60 form the biggest group, but also that families needing two-bed properties are 33% of the register. The pressure on social housing from those in housing need and with a strong local connection remains very high. With fewer than 400 vacancies in the social housing stock per year, applicants must look at all options when considering their housing situation.

Year	Council stock	Housing Association	Shared Ownership	Homes 4U	Total	% change from 2009/10
2009/10	290	130	30	168	618	
2010/11	301	108	13	125	547	-11.5%
2011/12	219	115	37	97	468	-24.3%
2012/13	274	85	23	102	484	- 21.7%
2013/14	282	72	7	103	464	- 24.9%
2014/15	269	106	29	89	493	- 20.2%
2015/16	325	103	23	69	520	-15.9%
2016/17	242	102	32	72	448	-27.5%

Type	Council stock	Housing Association	Shared Ownership	Homes 4U	Total
1 bedroom	135	52	6	24	217
2 bedroom	62	30	23	38	153
3+ bedroom	45	20	3	10	78
Total	242	102	32	72	448



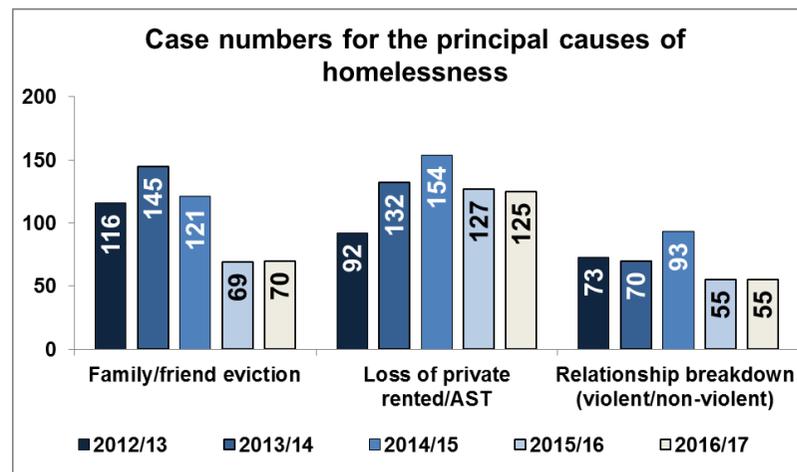
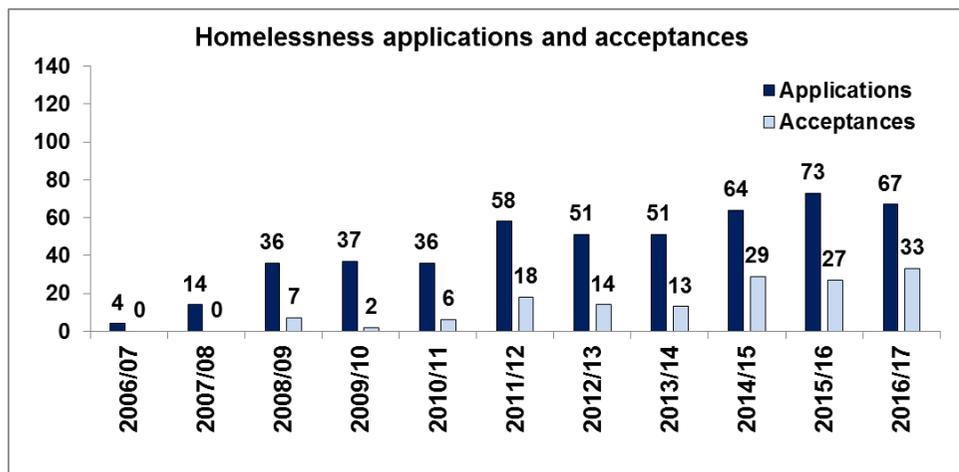
The graph below shows how long applicants wait on average on the housing register, for different sized properties.



3. Homelessness prevention casework

From early 2004-05, we changed the way we provided services following the implementation of our first homelessness strategy. This resulted in a dramatic reduction in statutory homeless applications. There has also been a big reduction in the overall number of homeless households where a full housing duty was accepted. However, this number has been higher in the last four years. We use a 'housing options' approach which, rather than dealing with homelessness as it arises, follows a four stage plan:

- increasing awareness and information about housing and the risk of homelessness
- providing general or specific housing advice for those with housing needs to prevent homelessness
- offering a range of housing options, direct support and intervention for those facing homelessness
- providing a safety net for those who do become homeless.



The main reasons for homelessness follow national trends. Principally, it is due to the loss of private rented accommodation, relationship breakdown, or eviction by family or friends. These may fluctuate but consistently remain the primary causes of homelessness.

Year	Total homelessness preventions (Council, Citizens Advice, HOST)
2009/10	425
2010/11	484
2011/12	592
2012/13	466
2013/14	513
2014/15	504
2015/16	469
2016/17	393

4. Use of temporary and bed and breakfast accommodation

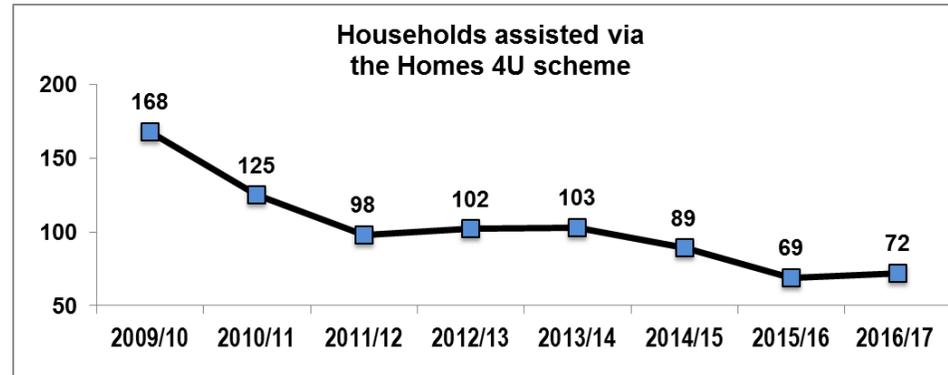
Where we accept a full housing duty until we can offer long-term housing, households will be housed temporarily. Normally this is in some accommodation provided by housing associations but in some instances we also have to use our own stock. While we have kept Bed & Breakfast placements under control, the numbers in temporary accommodation are increasing and families can be in temporary accommodation for in excess of 2 years.

Temporary Accommodation	March 2011	March 2012	March 2013	March 2014	March 2015	March 2016	March 2017
Numbers in temporary accommodation	9	27	25	27	34	46	61
Numbers in temporary in Council general needs accommodation	6	18	16	17	21	32	45

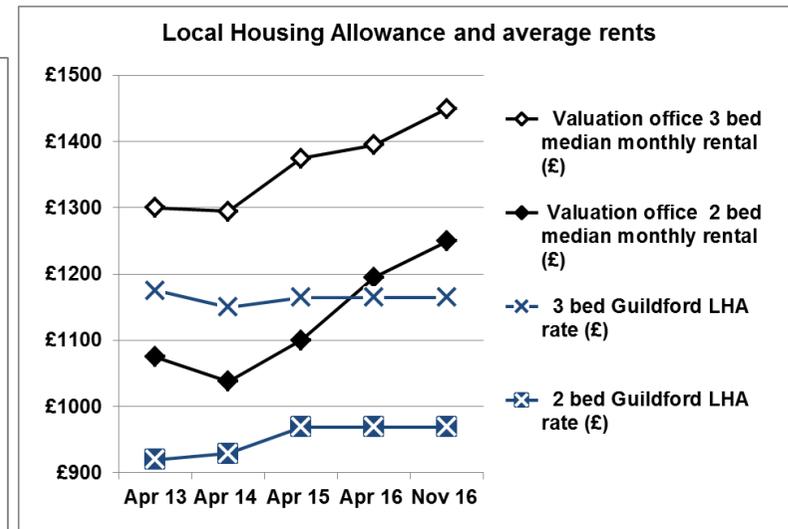
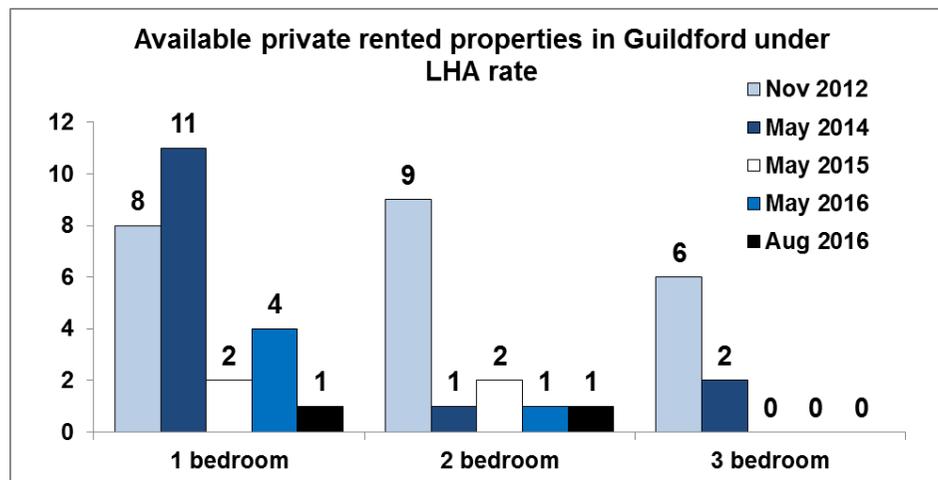
Bed & Breakfast	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2016-17
Number of placements	47	35	53	49	30

5. Use of private rented sector – Homes4U

The private rented sector plays an important and increasing role in the provision of housing accommodation. This sector has seen a growth of 30 per cent between census 2001 and 2011 and now exceeds the public sector stock. Property is seen as a reliable investment and it is likely, therefore, that the sector will continue to grow. In Guildford, 16 per cent of homes are now owned by private landlords which is approximately 9000 properties.



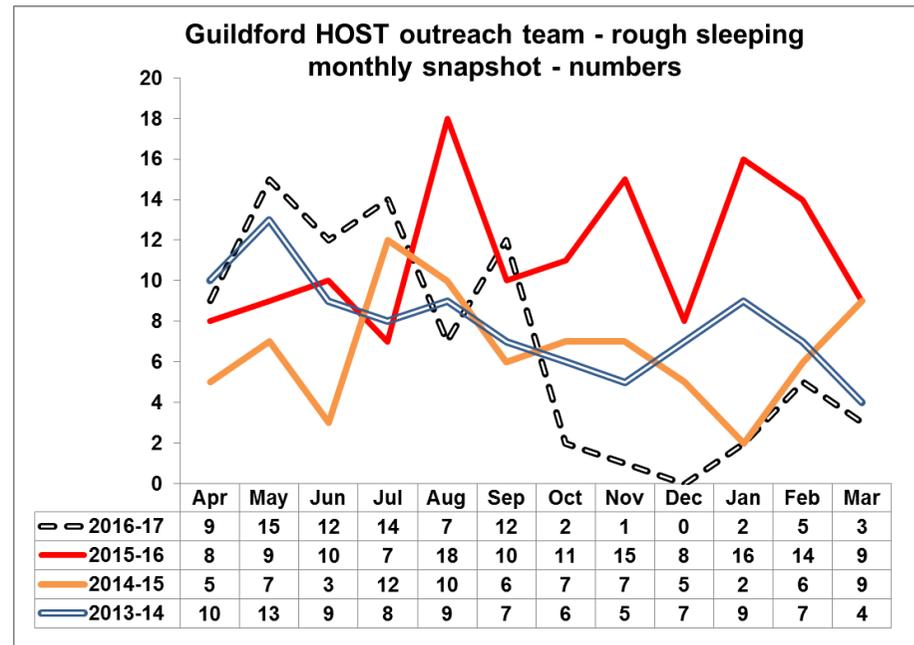
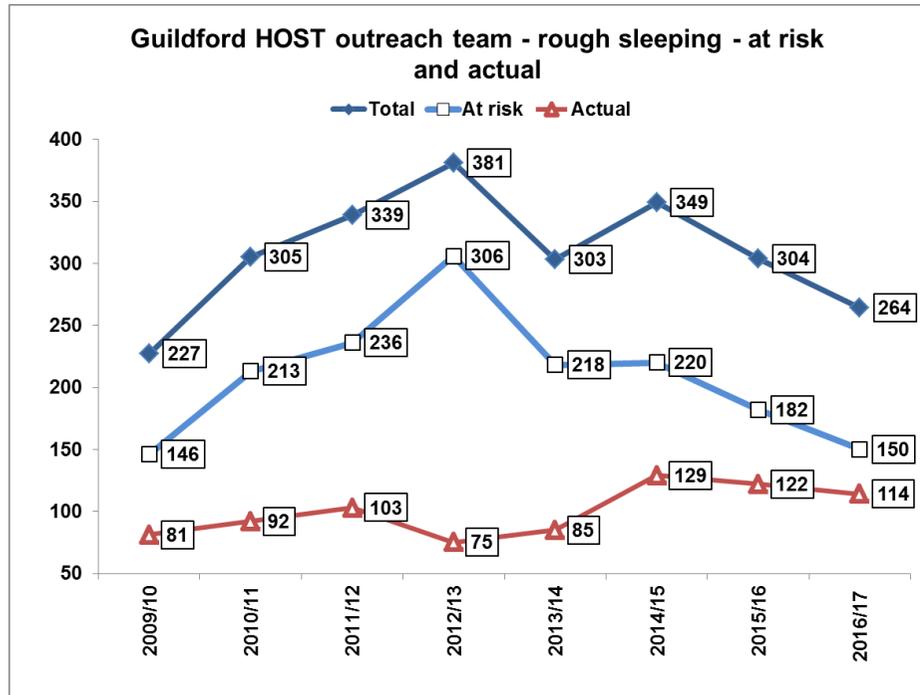
The Homes 4U Scheme remains one of the main sources of help for households facing homelessness and is normally only available to households the Council would otherwise have a statutory duty to secure a home for. In 2009/10 a peak of 168 households were assisted via Homes 4 U. But by 2014/15 this had fallen to 85, and in 2015/16 to a low of 69, reflecting high costs, rising demand and major issues around the rates of Local Housing Allowance available.



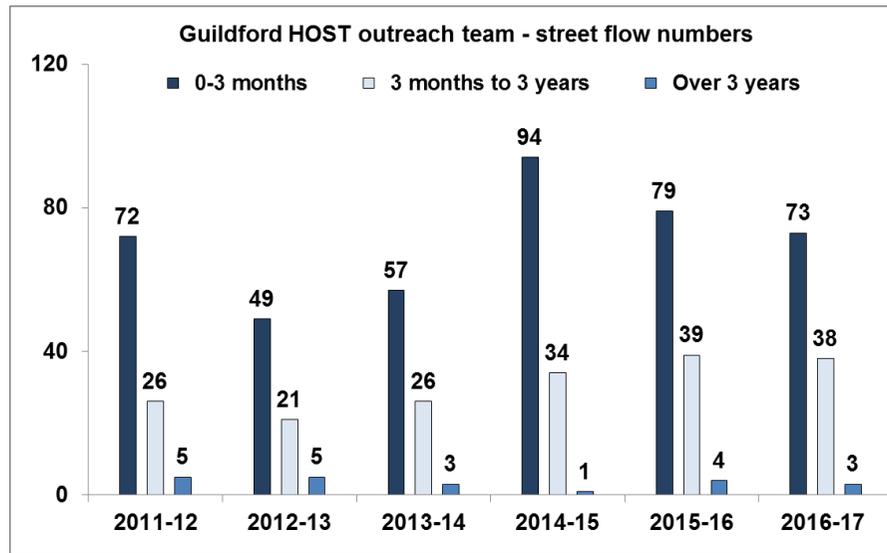
6. Rough sleeping

We have invested in rough sleeping services for a number of years and this remains a priority area of our work. Our Homeless Outreach Support Team (HOST) service is very successful in helping to prevent rough sleeping and joint work with the town centre hostels and Guildford Action drop-in centre contributes to this success. There are many challenges in working with rough sleepers, in Guildford particular issues arise with:

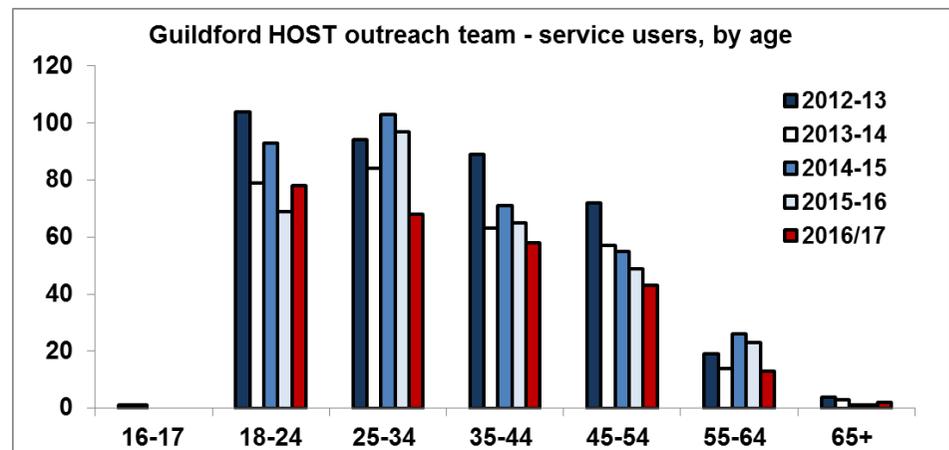
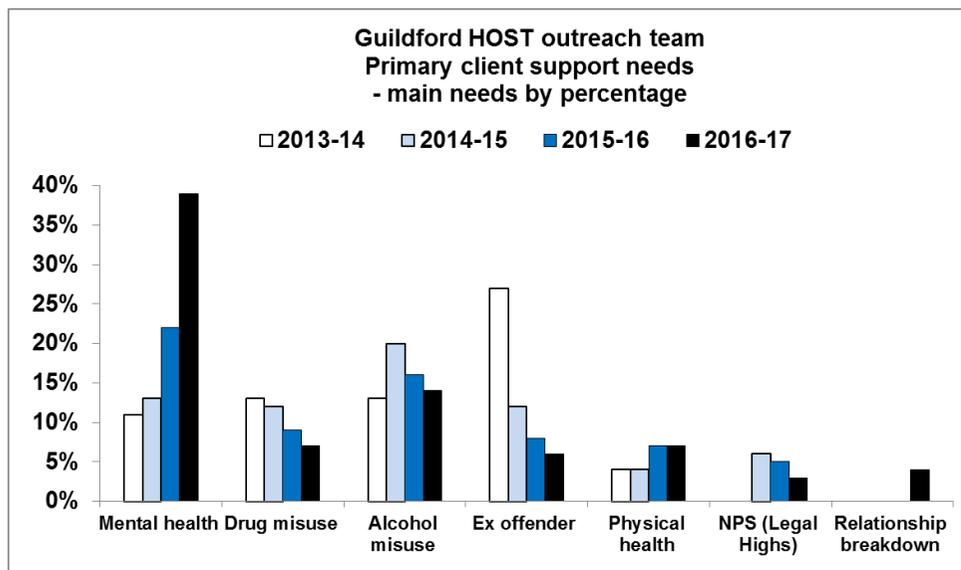
- Access to hostel accommodation
- A shortage of assessment beds in the borough
- A regular influx of homeless people from outside the borough



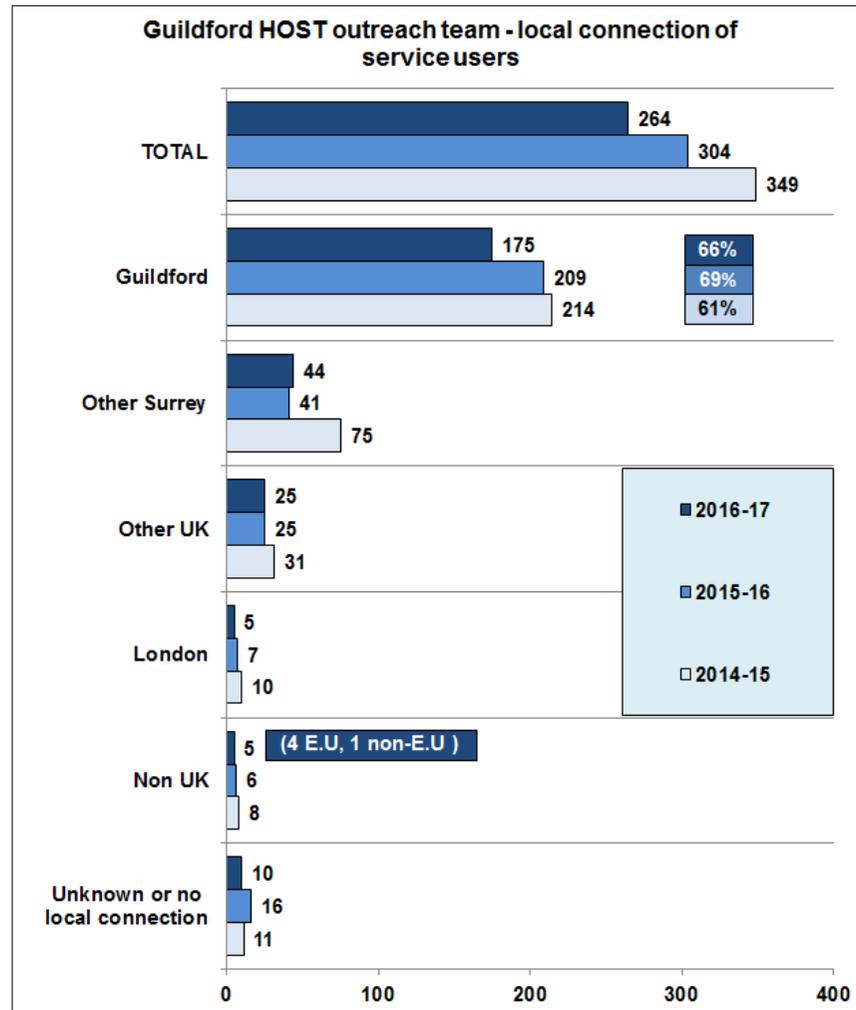
With effect from 2008/09 Guildford began monitoring rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping to determine the area's Streetflow profile. Street flow defines service users by how long they have been a rough sleeper: short stay service users, repeat or revolving door service users, and entrenched or long stay service users. This monitoring allows the agencies working to prevent and resolve rough sleeping in Guildford to target their services more effectively.



In terms of support needs, the top four categories are consistently alcohol/drug misuse, mental health issues and ex-offenders. It is noticeable that new psychoactive substances (NPS) or 'legal highs' have become a top-six category since 2015. The rapid rise in mental health issues is a concerning development, and may reflect pressures on increasingly stretched mental health services locally. The other chart below shows that the age profile of HOST service users has remained similar since 2011. There has however been a drop in 18-24s from a peak in 2012-13.

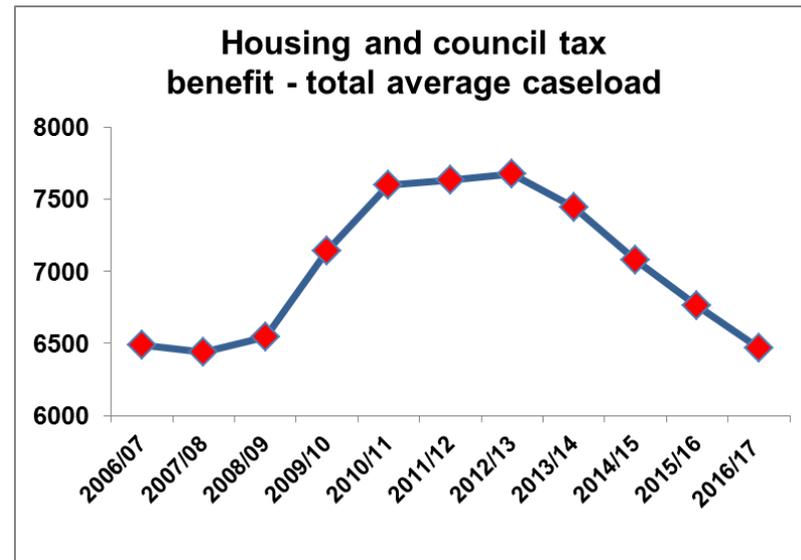
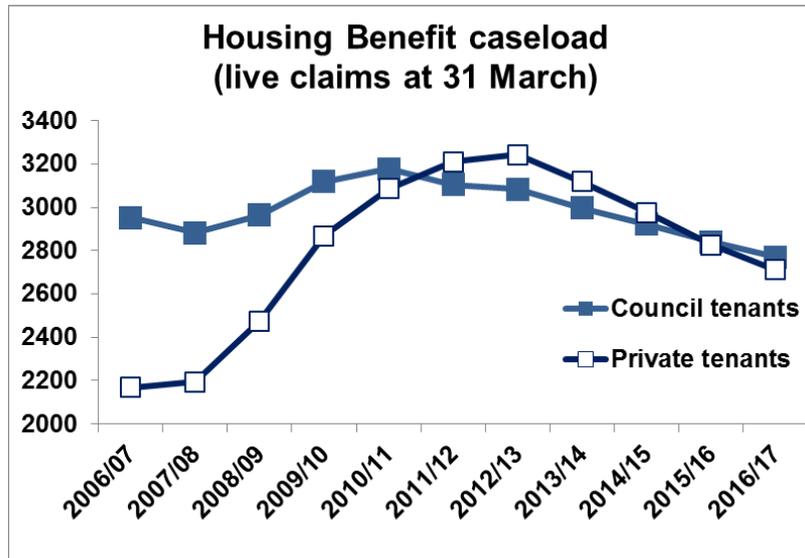


The local connection statistics show Guildford residents consistently make up around 2/3rds of service users in recent years. There has however been a drop in those from other Surrey areas using the service. Non-UK constitute around 5% of users.

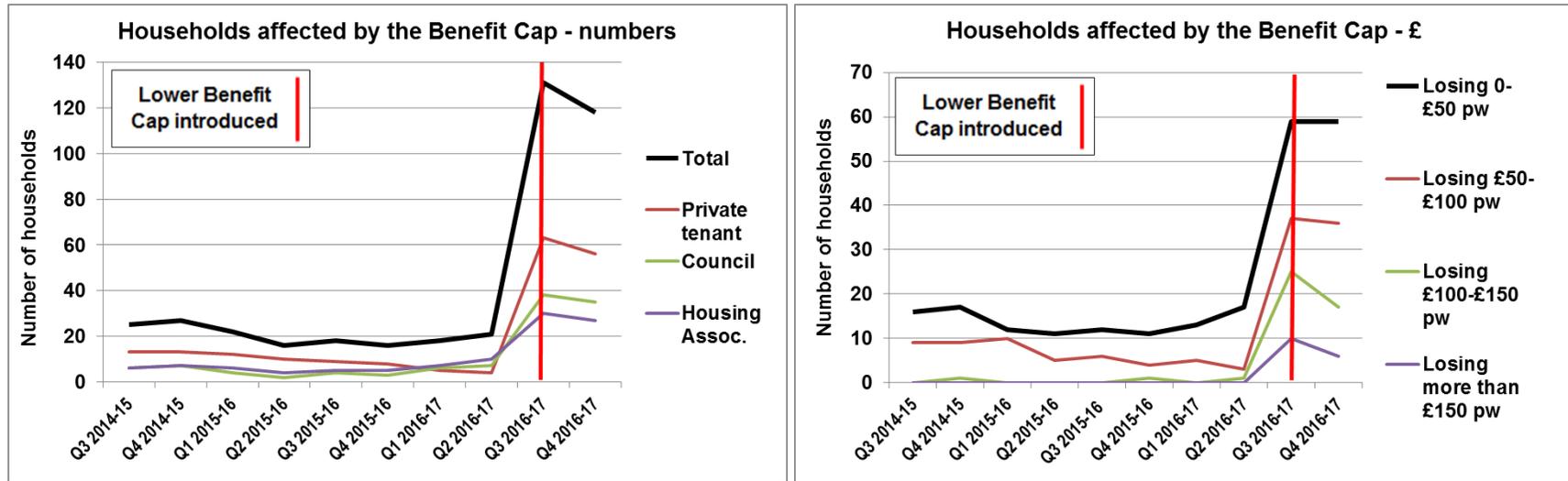


7. Welfare Reform

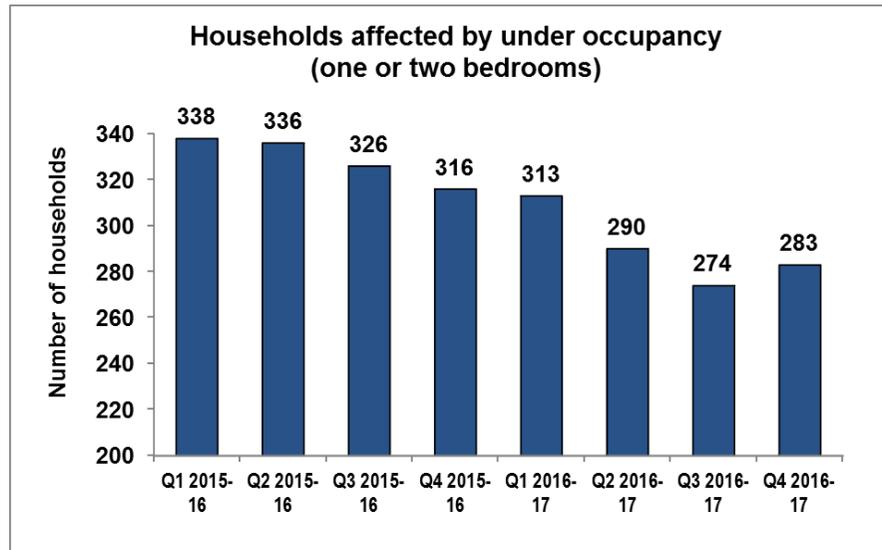
The Government's commitment to reform the welfare system has significant implications for both tenants and landlords in the private and social housing sector. A range of benefit changes have been introduced over the last four years, to housing benefit regulations and through the Welfare Reform Act. The Act provides for a radical overhaul of the benefit system through the introduction of Universal Credit, a single benefit for people of working age, which will replace existing benefits such as Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance and Housing Benefit. The implementation of Universal Credit was delayed but rolled out in Guildford in early 2016. A number of other changes have taken place since 2011 that affect local residents. This includes the introduction of Local Council Tax Support and new regulations on Housing Benefit. These restrict and reduce the level of funding many households are able to claim, such as lower rates of local housing allowance for private tenants, a cap on the level of benefit for families and size criteria for the homes of social housing tenants.



The drop in the benefit cap to £20,000 for families in November 2016 has put a number of households at risk of homelessness. Mitigation measures and a programme of raising awareness among those likely to be affected were implemented in autumn 2016. The cap particularly affects larger families, both those in social housing and private rental.

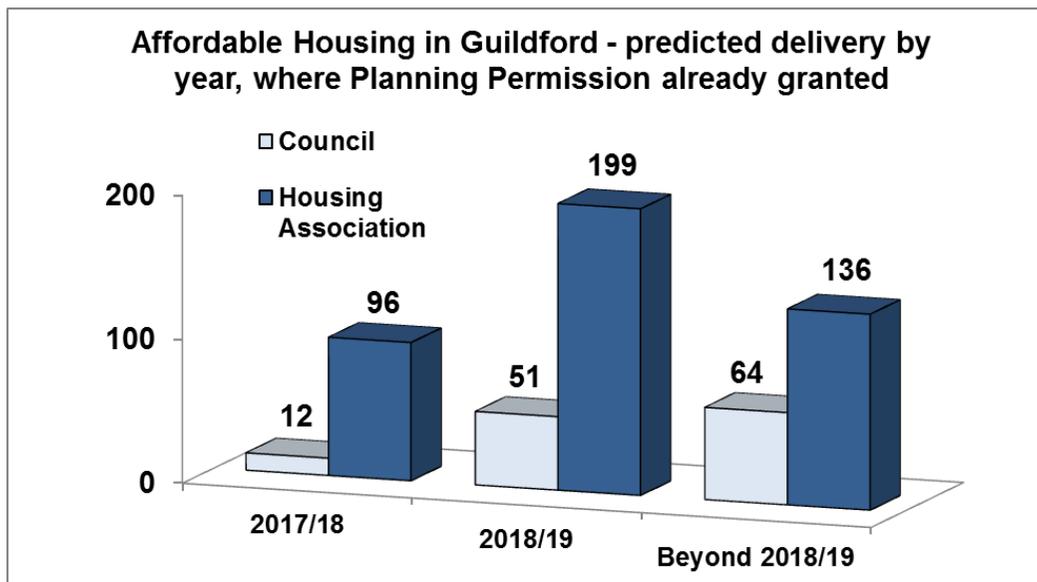


The charts below show steady progress in reducing the numbers of households affected by under-occupancy since 2015-16, although there was a slight rise at the end of 2016-17. The numbers of Council tenants doing this by downsizing has reduced overall, but through erratic progress.



8. Affordable Housing Development

Despite an increase in population and in the number of people waiting for social housing, the number of affordable homes is at a similar level to 2002. This is because the supply of new build rented homes has barely kept up with the loss of social rented homes under the Right to Buy. Although the number of affordable homes in the borough is the same as it was ten years ago, the profile of the stock has changed, and the proportion of social rented properties has decreased in favour of shared ownership, intermediate rent and Affordable Rent.



The chart above shows delivery of affordable homes in the near future where planning permission has already been secured, so is a conservative estimate. Beyond 2019 there are a number of major schemes that may deliver significant new stock but still with significant hurdles to negotiate.

Delivery of affordable housing has been particularly difficult over the last five years due to the economic situation, the limited land available, changes in affordable housing finance, fewer Section 106 sites coming forward and delays in making progress on agreed sites. In 2012 the Council benefited from new financial freedoms, which enabled the bringing forward of council-owned sites for direct development. In addition, the upturn in the economy increased confidence in the housing market and more sites were under development.

However, uncertainties in the national political situation during 2016 and into 2017 and a number of reforms to social housing in the Housing and Planning Act (May 2016) have put future provision of affordable housing once more in doubt.