

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**ASSETS, CULTURE AND HOUSING
CABINET MEMBER**

HOUSING ADVICE TEAM ANNUAL REPORT 2015

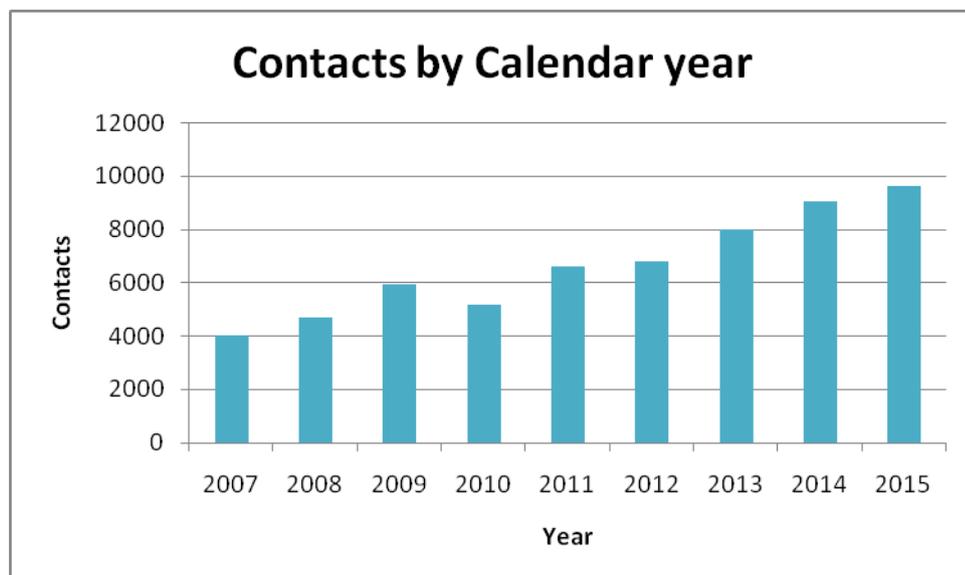
1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the work of the Housing Advice Team during 2015.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

General

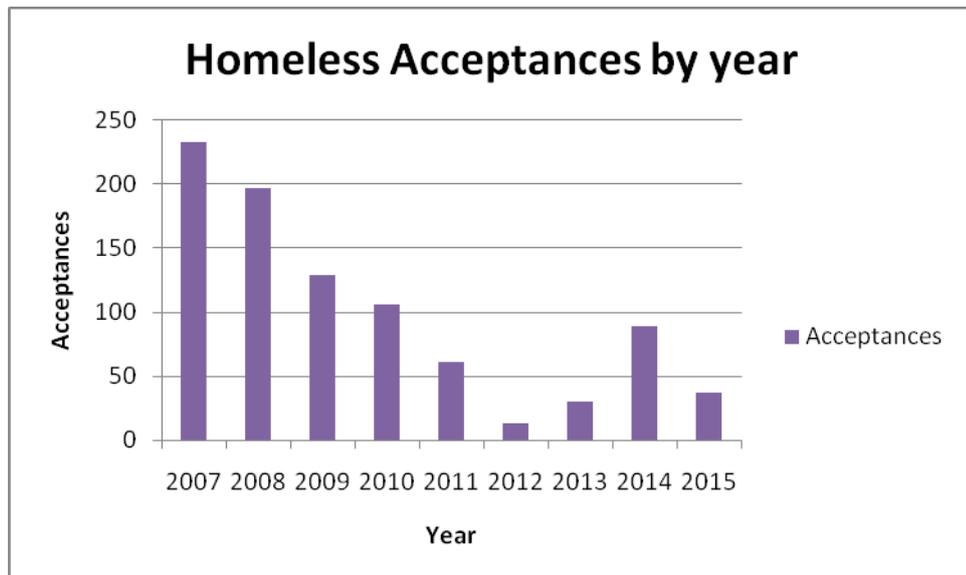
- 2.1 The number of people being helped by the Housing Advice Team continues to increase. In 2015, the team received 9,628 contacts up from 9,054 in 2014.



- 2.2 Part of the increase is likely due to the prevailing current economic situation. It also reflects the increasing awareness of the assistance that the Housing Advice Team can offer.

Homelessness

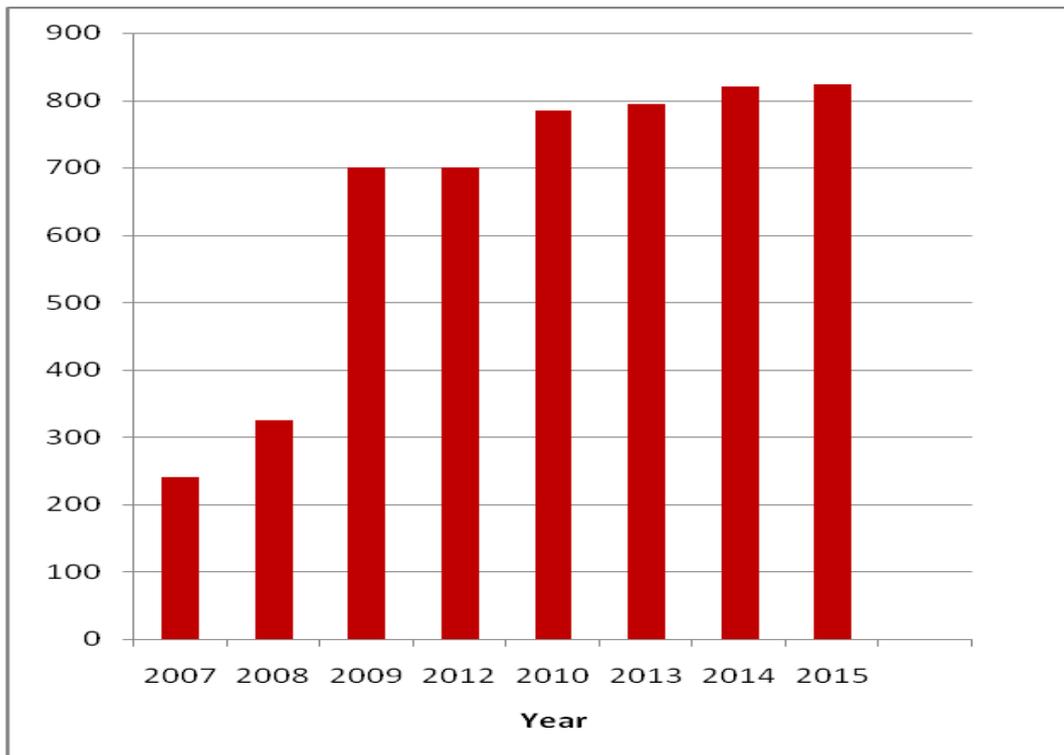
- 2.3 The number of people accepted as statutorily homeless fell in 2015 to 37, a decrease of 52 compared to 89 recorded in 2014. Prior to 2014 homeless acceptances had reduced year on year as a result of robust homeless prevention systems .Whilst regional and national comparative figures are not yet available the North Lincolnshire figure of 37 is believed to be relatively low figure.



- 2.4 In 2004, when our homeless acceptances peaked at 601, 80% of the vacant public sector housing went to homeless people. In 2015, this figure was 10% with the remaining 90% allocated to those on the general waiting list.
- 2.5 We are finding that a significant part of our work now relates to those not covered by statutory legislation, including those who are hard to house because of their past or current behaviour. We work closely with internal and external partners to try to secure suitable homes for this group. Whilst we have had many significant successes, a small number of people still fall through the safety net resulting in them rough sleeping. Our rough sleeper count taken at the end of October 2015 totalled six people.
- 2.6 Our Assertive Outreach Worker who is funded through a grant from central government and currently employed by the Forge, has worked hard to engage with all our rough sleepers and those individuals that are hard to house. As a result, we have seen a number of entrenched rough sleepers engaging with support services and being successfully rehoused.
- 2.7 Our Assertive Outreach Worker has taken responsibility for our severe weather emergency plan that has operated during January with the drop in temperature.

Homeless Prevention Work

2.8 Our annual homeless prevention figures continue to rise. Last year, (2015), the figure was 824 preventions up from 820 in 2014. They reflect the work done to firstly, prevent people losing their homes, and secondly, where people have to leave their present homes, the work necessary to help them find alternative accommodation, particularly in the private rented sector.



2.9 In the current economic climate, there is an increased risk of people losing their homes due to financial difficulty. Households in the past in rented accommodation faced with unemployment and/or reduced incomes, were generally protected by the availability of Housing Benefit. However, welfare changes around under-occupation has lead to an increase in people losing their homes.

2.10 Further planned welfare changes along with the changes likely to be introduced by the Housing and Planning Bill to social housing and private landlords is going to put further pressure on the rental market.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 This report is for information only. .

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 Not applicable.

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

5.1 There are no resource implications to highlights.

5.2 With the funding we have received, we are hoping to create a fixed term post for an Assertive Outreach Worker to provide additional capacity for the team.

6. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

6.1 Not applicable.

7. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

7.1 Not applicable.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That the Cabinet Member notes the latest update relating to the work of the Housing Advice Team during 2015.

8.2 That the Cabinet Member acknowledges the effective work of the Housing Advice Team.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None.