

## **Appendix A: Homelessness Strategy Stakeholder**

### **Consultation Event**

**Monday 27 July 2009**

### **Question and Answer Session**

(TK) Tony Keaveney (HK) Hamid Khan (SG) Sarah Gallacher (MU) Marianne Upton

**Q. It is important that there are tenancy sustainment and support packages for vulnerable people i.e. those leaving the armed forces where the suicide rate is 20%. What pathways are in place, and are they the right ones?**

A. (TK) We have a Pathways Manager, Patricia Coker, in place to map any blockages in service and determine the best pathways for vulnerable people. We also need to look strategically at this area of work.

(SG) Operationally, the blockages are a lack of supported housing, some work being done with protocols i.e. crime/offenders.

(HK) It is not simply a case of bricks and mortar, it is about having a proper support and care needs assessment done. An example of this is the new Lets Rent scheme and Bromford Support who will be working in partnership together.

(TK) Support should last until the person achieves independence, but resources are finite so we need to ensure proper success outcomes and timescales for each case.

**Q. Some clients have high support needs or complex needs – what provision is there, especially for rough sleepers?**

A. (TK) Central Bedfordshire is now a larger geographical area and this presents challenges as there remain small pockets/settlements with their own pressure points. Sofa surfing is an issue.

(HK) It is true that services are not always local and clients can be signposted out of area i.e. Luton. There is a varying perception of rough sleeping in Central Beds, and we need to do more to identify the true picture. Work is already underway with our rough sleeping partners to map this picture.

Comment from delegate: The YMCA picks up younger people, but there are a lot of over 25's and there is no similar resource for them. Youth projects also do not account for older client groups. Young single males in their 20's and 30's may appear to be intentionally homeless but officers need to dig deeper into the circumstances behind that.

(TK) A very good point, we will certainly take that on board.

Q. I work with youth and we need early intervention. There is a big difference in age groups too, as to how to deal with them effectively. Family breakdowns occur and 16/17 year olds are really still minors and may not suit foyers or a hostel environment.

A.

(TK) We look forward to working stakeholders like you to decide the best housing solutions for these young people.

Q. Support for clients needs to be flexible, offer different models, and perhaps not all floating support, is this possible?

A.

(TK) The challenge is about using SP funding effectively, especially following the realignment of spending this year. There are a number of competing priorities for this money. For example, to set up a sheltered scheme for people with mental health needs, would we remove money from another existing support provider? There are lots of priorities and we need to make smart decisions how we do this.

Q. What is the CAA? What will it do?

A.

(TK) The Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) is an evolution from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, which was more about evaluating an individual agency's performance and processes. The CAA will ask local residents what it is like to live in that area, and look at how well partners work with one another. It will be much harder to evidence, as agencies are used to showing

processes, but this will be to evidence how things actually are on the ground and how they are perceived by the local community.

Q. I am a private landlord, and I am apprehensive about dealing with 'council tenants'. One example I have is of Luton where the council were motivated to just get properties, tick their yellow form to say the client had been vetted and move them in. How will CBC control or vet the quality of the clients coming through?

A.

(TK) We have already been moving from a crisis point to a strategic response with homelessness clients, and we are in a strong position with low numbers in temporary accommodation, so we have time to manage sustainable letting in the private rented sector.

(HK) The Lets Rent scheme will have early intervention; we will know these clients and they will have gone through the proper processes first. Most families will have a package of support prior to referral to the private rented sector. We will also constantly review the situation, with officers keeping the case throughout the tenancy to monitor it effectively.

(TK) We would also assume that landlords themselves will alert the council to any problems if they occur.

Comment from delegate: Please could you build into the strategy, some sort of performance monitoring of landlords, as well as your clients?

(TK) We already have two indicators around tenant involvement and ASB; we need to ensure that we are not just shifting problems from the social housing sector into the private rented sector. We will certainly put a lot of thought around how we manage any problems with homeless clients in privately rented accommodation, and also ensure that rental property standards are maintained and tenancies are properly supported.

Q. I think CBC has the right strategic direction for now, but I'm worried about the national picture in the next few years. Housing funding is a race to try and build before 2011, and realistically there are a lot of sites that won't be ready in time so that money will be lost. The Right to Buy losses also won't be resolved any time soon. I think we need a Plan B, so we can prepare for the wider consequences and implications if and when they hit us.

A.

(TK) Our strategic approach has worked well over the last five years, but I think Graham is absolutely right that it wouldn't necessarily be adequate if the national picture continues, Vauxhall plant being a major example of potential impact on the council.

Q. In terms of CBC's other strategies, is there an overlap with the Homelessness Strategy i.e. is mental health represented within it?

A.

(TK) Yes, we certainly do align our strategies, such as the Older Person's Strategy (? What was the example here?) We must align strategies in order to use our resources effectively, and show interlinking right across. Any strategy that does not show this would be passed back for further drafting before being approved by the relevant committee/Cabinet.