

Central Bedfordshire Council Homelessness Strategy 2015 – 2020

Response to Formal Consultation 16 Feb 2015

DRAFT

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a legal duty on local authorities to undertake a comprehensive review of homelessness in their area and produce a Homelessness Strategy every 5 years based on the findings of the review.
- 1.2 The Homelessness Review must consider:
- Current and future levels of homelessness,
 - Resources available to the housing authority, the social services authority for the district, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other persons for the above activities
 - Activities which are carried out for any of the following purposes:
 - Preventing homelessness
 - Securing that accommodation is available for homeless people
 - Providing support for people in the district, who are homeless, may become homeless or were formerly homeless.
- 1.3 The Homelessness Strategy must include actions to:
- Prevent homelessness;
 - Ensure there is sufficient accommodation available for people who are, or may become homeless;
 - Ensure there is satisfactory support for people who are, or may become homeless, or need support to prevent them from becoming homeless again.
- 1.4 As a result of this Central Bedfordshire Council undertook a review of Homelessness within the area which included development and use of engagement/feedback questionnaires and two engagement events to gather the views of partners, service providers and colleagues to inform the development of the draft strategy. Copies of the final Review can be accessed by contacting the Housing Solutions Team on 0300 300 8302. (Website ***)
- 1.5 Taking into account the views received regarding the Homelessness Review via the engagement activities, the Council development the Draft Homelessness Strategy 2015 – 2020 for consultation.
- 1.6 A formal consultation of the draft Homelessness Strategy took place for 7 weeks from 19th December 2014 to 6th February 2015.
- 1.7 All Private and Social Landlords were contacted along with Housing support providers and housing and social care colleagues to provide notice of the formal consultation and to provide information about how they could respond to the consultation.

- 1.8 The formal consultation was managed via a formal consultation document. This was available in paper format; downloadable from the CBC website, or was obtainable by telephoning or writing to the contact details provided in the letters to stakeholders.
- 1.9 CBC staff and elected members were informed about the formal consultation and press releases were issued to the media to raise awareness of the consultation with Central Bedfordshire residents.
- 1.10 A further consultation event was also held on 26th January 2015 to explore the experiences and opinions of key partners and stakeholders who support people affected by homelessness. Invitations to this event were sent to voluntary organisations, supported housing providers and health and social care (Children's and Adult's services) professionals, and recognised the potential sharing knowledge and experiences. Feedback from this event has been included within this report (appendix 2).

2. RESULTS OF CONSULTATION: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

- 2.1 In total, 18 people responded to the Draft Homelessness Strategy formal consultation.
- 2.2 50% of respondents were residents of Central Bedfordshire, 23% were from Homelessness Support Providers or Council Partners, 6% were homelessness service users and 22% were recorded as "other".
- 2.3 44% of respondents were male, 39% were female and 17% preferred not to say or did not answer.
- 2.4 39% of respondents were aged 60 years or over.
- 2.5 6% of respondents stated that they had a disability and 17% preferred not to say.
- 2.6 72% of respondents were White: British and 17% of respondents preferred not to state their ethnicity.
- 2.7 Appendix 1 provides a full demographic statistical profile of respondents.

3. RESULTS OF CONSULTATION: QUESTION RESPONSES

The formal consultation was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data from respondents, with results summarised as follows (percentages are rounded up or down as appropriate):

Central Bedfordshire Council has identified the following priorities within the draft strategy:

Priority 1: Improve the provision of a range of housing options and services to effectively prevent and reduce homelessness

Priority 2: Increase Housing Supply to meet the accommodation and support needs of homeless people

Priority 3: Reduce to use of temporary accommodation and bed and breakfasts

Priority 4: Minimise the impact of welfare reform, while assisting homeless people to access opportunities for employment, education and training, and support them to raise and meet their aspirations.

Priority 5: Develop an integrated partnership approach to tackling homelessness

3.1 The Strategy strives to raise the aspirations of our customers, supporting them to access sustainable and affordable housing whilst also assisting them to access education, training and employment. The Strategy's vision is "Homelessness: your opportunity for a new start with our help - helping you to help yourself"

Q1. Do you agree with the vision, and do you believe that the priorities support the Strategy's aim?

| | | |
|------------|----|-----|
| Agree | 15 | 83% |
| Disagree | 1 | 6% |
| Don't Know | 2 | 11% |

15 respondents (83% of respondents) agreed with the Council's vision and that the priorities supported its aims.

4 respondents, (17% of respondents) who did not agree or did not know if they agreed with the vision provided qualitative feedback, stating that they were concerned that the Strategy appears to state that supporting people is policy led and that the Council will only support people in employment.

Central Bedfordshire Council response in blue text

The council is keen to make it absolutely clear that the protection and assistance provided by the homelessness legislation is available to all – not only to those clients who are in employment. The homelessness legislation is very clear about the council's duties towards homeless people. What we are aiming to do is to provide assistance focussed on getting people back on track so they can continue to participate in community life. One aspect of this is helping those who are out of work in

their efforts in seeking employment. This is an important part of the support that will be provided to those facing homelessness.

3.2 Thinking about the identified priorities within the draft Homelessness Strategy:

Priority One: Improve the provision of a range of housing options and services to effectively prevent and reduce homelessness

Q2. How strongly do you agree that the identified objectives and related actions sufficiently support this priority?

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| Strongly Agree | 9 | 50% |
| Agree | 9 | 50% |
| Neither | 0 | 0% |
| Disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Don't know | 0 | 0% |

All respondent either strongly agreed or agreed that the objectives and actions within the draft Strategy supported Priority One. Qualitative feedback was also provided by respondents including that “Prevention is better than cure” and that partnership working and good infrastructures will support this aim.

The council believes that working to prevent homelessness provides significantly better outcomes for clients. We can only ever achieve this by working in partnership with other council departments, statutory and voluntary agencies. This is why Priority Five has been included in this homelessness strategy.

Priority Two: Increase Housing Supply to meet the accommodation and support needs of homeless people

Q3. How strongly do you agree that the identified objectives and related actions sufficiently support this priority?

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| Strongly Agree | 7 | 39% |
| Agree | 7 | 39% |
| Neither | 1 | 6% |
| Disagree | 3 | 17% |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Don't know | 0 | 0% |

14 respondents, (78% of respondents), either strongly agreed or agreed that the objectives and actions within the draft Strategy supported Priority Two; 4 respondents, (23% of respondents), who neither agreed nor

disagreed or did not agree provided qualitative feedback stating that emergency housing had not been identified as a need within the strategy, excluding this would impact on the fundamentals of the Strategy's priorities.

Priority Two focuses on meeting both the accommodation and support needs to homeless people. This includes both long term housing, and short term / emergency accommodation. The first objective set out under this Priority intends to address the need for more private sector accommodation for occupation by homeless households.

Priority Three: Reduce the use of temporary accommodation and bed and breakfasts.

Q4. How strongly do you agree that the identified objectives and related actions sufficiently support this priority?

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| Strongly Agree | 8 | 44% |
| Agree | 6 | 33% |
| Neither | 1 | 6% |
| Disagree | 3 | 17% |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Don't know | 0 | 0% |

14 respondents, (78% of respondents), either strongly agreed or agreed that the objectives and actions within the draft Strategy supported Priority Three; 4 respondents, (23% of respondents), who neither agreed nor disagreed or did not agree provided qualitative feedback including that there are currently no alternatives to Bed & Breakfast accommodation and the costs of any alternative needs to be considered. The option of night shelter provision was also suggested.

The council is committed to reviewing its temporary accommodation portfolio and this will look at how the existing supply can be better used. A leasing scheme was recently commissioned to will bring forward more private sector properties for use by homeless households. This means that the way in which other existing accommodation is used can be reviewed. Existing temporary accommodation could be freed up more quickly as clients move on into the private sector, effectively providing an alternative to bed and breakfast. There are no current plans for night shelter provision although this will be kept under review.

Priority Four: Minimise the impact of welfare reform, while assisting homeless people to access opportunities for employment, education and training, and support them to raise and meet their expectations.

Q5. How strongly do you agree that the identified objectives and related actions sufficiently support this priority?

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| Strongly Agree | 7 | 39% |
| Agree | 7 | 39% |
| Neither | 3 | 17% |
| Disagree | 1 | 6% |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Don't know | 0 | 0% |

14 respondents, (78% of respondents), either strongly agreed or agreed that the objectives and actions within the draft Strategy supported Priority Four; 4 respondents, (23% of respondents), who neither agreed nor disagreed or did not agree provided qualitative feedback including that there are a finite number of jobs available to people and volunteering should be included alongside employment within these objectives.

This Priority is specifically aimed at helping clients to become economically active so that they are not negatively impacted by welfare reform. We appreciate that volunteering may be part of the “training and education” journey, although in itself, it does not serve to lift people out of being impacted by the benefit cap, or remove them from reliance on benefits. For this reason it is not specifically included.

The Council’s allocations policy recognises the value of volunteering and gives additional priority for households who are formally engaged in volunteering.

Priority Five: Develop an integrated partnership approach to tackling homelessness

Q6. How strongly do you agree that the identified objectives and related actions sufficiently support this priority?

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| Strongly Agree | 8 | 44% |
| Agree | 6 | 33% |
| Neither | 4 | 22% |
| Disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Strongly disagree | 0 | 0% |
| Don't know | 0 | 0% |

14 respondents, (78% of respondents), either strongly agreed or agreed that the objectives and actions within the draft Strategy supported Priority Five; 4 respondents, (22% of respondents), who neither agreed nor disagreed unfortunately did not provide qualitative feedback with their response.

3.3 Q7. How confident do you feel that the delivery of the draft Homelessness Strategy will lead to the prevention of the following groups becoming homeless?

Families with Children:

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----|
| Very confident: | 2 | 11% |
| Confident: | 7 | 39% |
| Not too confident: | 5 | 28% |
| Not at all confident: | 2 | 11% |
| Don't know: | 2 | 11% |
| Did not answer: | 0 | 0% |

Single homeless:

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----|
| Very confident: | 0 | 0% |
| Confident: | 4 | 22% |
| Not too confident: | 8 | 44% |
| Not at all confident: | 4 | 22% |
| Don't know: | 1 | 6% |
| Did not answer: | 1 | 6% |

Young people (16-17 year olds and 18-24 year old care leavers):

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----|
| Very confident: | 2 | 11% |
| Confident: | 4 | 22% |
| Not too confident: | 7 | 39% |
| Not at all confident: | 3 | 17% |
| Don't know: | 2 | 11% |
| Did not answer: | 0 | 0% |

People with mental health difficulties:

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----|
| Very confident: | 0 | 0% |
| Confident: | 5 | 28% |
| Not too confident: | 6 | 33% |
| Not at all confident: | 5 | 28% |
| Don't know: | 2 | 11% |
| Did not answer: | 0 | 0% |

People with alcohol and substance misuse problems:

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----|
| Very confident: | 0 | 0% |
| Confident: | 6 | 33% |
| Not too confident: | 4 | 22% |
| Not at all confident: | 5 | 28% |
| Don't know: | 3 | 17% |
| Did not answer: | 0 | 0% |

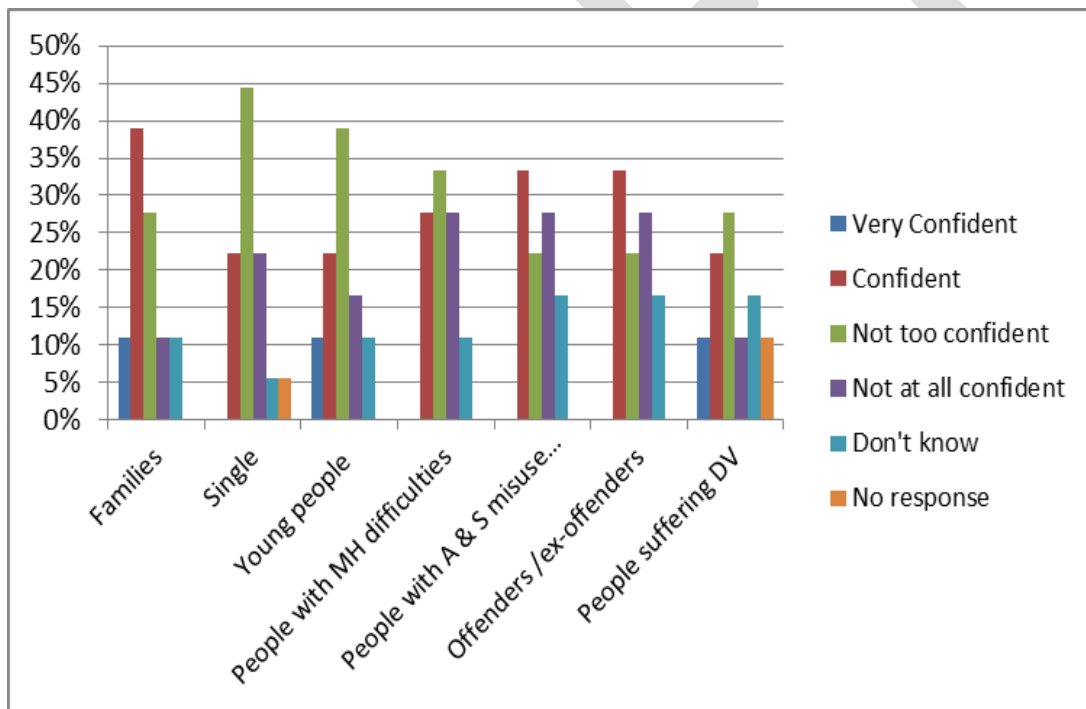
Offenders and ex-offenders:

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----|
| Very confident: | 0 | 0% |
| Confident: | 6 | 33% |
| Not too confident: | 4 | 22% |
| Not at all confident: | 5 | 28% |
| Don't know: | 3 | 17% |
| Did not answer: | 0 | 0% |

People suffering from domestic violence:

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----|
| Very confident: | 2 | 11% |
| Confident: | 4 | 22% |
| Not too confident: | 5 | 28% |
| Not at all confident: | 2 | 11% |
| Don't know: | 3 | 17% |
| Did not answer: | 2 | 11% |

Graphical Breakdown:



Respondents were asked to explain their feedback, qualitative feedback received includes:

The Strategy is “heading in the right direction”; the additional provision of accommodation will support homelessness prevention however respondents also stated that budget implications should be considered.

The Council is aware of the need to deliver this strategy within existing agreed budgets. The actions set out in the delivery plan can all be delivered within existing budgets.

3.4 Q8. How confident do you feel that the delivery of the draft Homelessness Strategy will provide sufficient support to homeless people from the following groups?

Families with Children:

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----|
| Very confident: | 2 | 11% |
| Confident: | 5 | 28% |
| Not too confident: | 7 | 39% |
| Not at all confident: | 1 | 6% |
| Don't know: | 2 | 11% |
| Did not answer: | 1 | 6% |

Single homeless:

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----|
| Very confident: | 1 | 6% |
| Confident: | 4 | 22% |
| Not too confident: | 8 | 44% |
| Not at all confident: | 2 | 11% |
| Don't know: | 2 | 11% |
| Did not answer: | 1 | 6% |

Rough Sleepers

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----|
| Very confident: | 1 | 6% |
| Confident: | 1 | 6% |
| Not too confident: | 9 | 50% |
| Not at all confident: | 3 | 17% |
| Don't know: | 3 | 17% |
| Did not answer: | 1 | 6% |

Young people (16-17 year olds and 18-24 year old care leavers):

| | | |
|-----------------------|----|-----|
| Very confident: | 1 | 6% |
| Confident: | 2 | 11% |
| Not too confident: | 10 | 56% |
| Not at all confident: | 1 | 6% |
| Don't know: | 3 | 17% |
| Did not answer: | 1 | 6% |

People with mental health difficulties:

| | | |
|--------------------|---|-----|
| Very confident: | 1 | 0% |
| Confident: | 5 | 28% |
| Not too confident: | 6 | 33% |

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----|
| Not at all confident: | 3 | 17% |
| Don't know: | 2 | 11% |
| Did not answer: | 1 | 6% |

People with alcohol and substance misuse problems:

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----|
| Very confident: | 0 | 0% |
| Confident: | 5 | 28% |
| Not too confident: | 6 | 33% |
| Not at all confident: | 3 | 17% |
| Don't know: | 2 | 11% |
| Did not answer: | 2 | 11% |

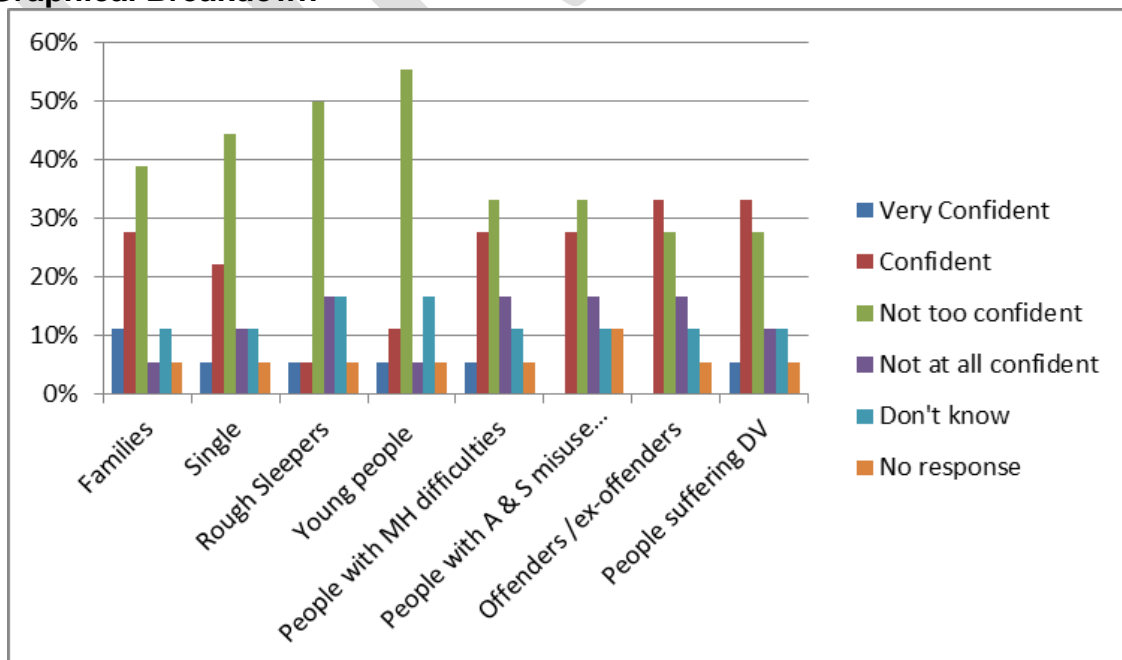
Offenders and ex-offenders:

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----|
| Very confident: | 0 | 0% |
| Confident: | 6 | 33% |
| Not too confident: | 5 | 28% |
| Not at all confident: | 3 | 17% |
| Don't know: | 2 | 11% |
| Did not answer: | 1 | 6% |

People suffering from domestic violence:

| | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----|
| Very confident: | 1 | 6% |
| Confident: | 6 | 33% |
| Not too confident: | 5 | 28% |
| Not at all confident: | 2 | 11% |
| Don't know: | 2 | 11% |
| Did not answer: | 1 | 6% |

Graphical Breakdown



Respondents were asked to explain their feedback, qualitative feedback received includes:

The Strategy is “heading in the right direction”, there is a need for additional provision of accommodation, and respondents also stated that budget implications should be considered.

The Homelessness Strategy seeks to provide additional accommodation for those facing homelessness, by securing properties in the private rented sector. This is covered in Priority Two.

3.5 Q9. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the draft Homelessness Strategy has addressed the needs of the nine protected characteristics, set out below, in relation to homelessness?

Age

| | | |
|-------------------|----|-----|
| Very satisfied | 0 | 0% |
| Satisfied | 10 | 56% |
| Dissatisfied | 1 | 6% |
| Very dissatisfied | 1 | 6% |
| Don't know | 4 | 22% |
| No response | 1 | 6% |

Disability

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| Very satisfied | 0 | 0% |
| Satisfied | 9 | 50% |
| Dissatisfied | 2 | 11% |
| Very dissatisfied | 1 | 6% |
| Don't know | 4 | 22% |
| No response | 1 | 6% |

Gender Re-assignment

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| Very satisfied | 0 | 0% |
| Satisfied | 7 | 39% |
| Dissatisfied | 3 | 17% |
| Very dissatisfied | 1 | 6% |
| Don't know | 5 | 28% |
| No response | 2 | 11% |

Marriage/Civil Partnership

| | | |
|----------------|---|-----|
| Very satisfied | 0 | 0% |
| Satisfied | 7 | 39% |

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| Dissatisfied | 3 | 17% |
| Very dissatisfied | 1 | 6% |
| Don't know | 5 | 28% |
| No response | 2 | 11% |

Pregnancy/New Parent(s)

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| Very satisfied | 0 | 0% |
| Satisfied | 8 | 44% |
| Dissatisfied | 2 | 11% |
| Very dissatisfied | 4 | 22% |
| Don't know | 1 | 6% |
| No response | 3 | 17% |

Race

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| Very satisfied | 0 | 0% |
| Satisfied | 9 | 50% |
| Dissatisfied | 0 | 0% |
| Very dissatisfied | 1 | 6% |
| Don't know | 5 | 28% |
| No response | 3 | 17% |

Religion / Belief

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| Very satisfied | 0 | 0% |
| Satisfied | 8 | 44% |
| Dissatisfied | 1 | 6% |
| Very dissatisfied | 1 | 6% |
| Don't know | 5 | 28% |
| No response | 3 | 17% |

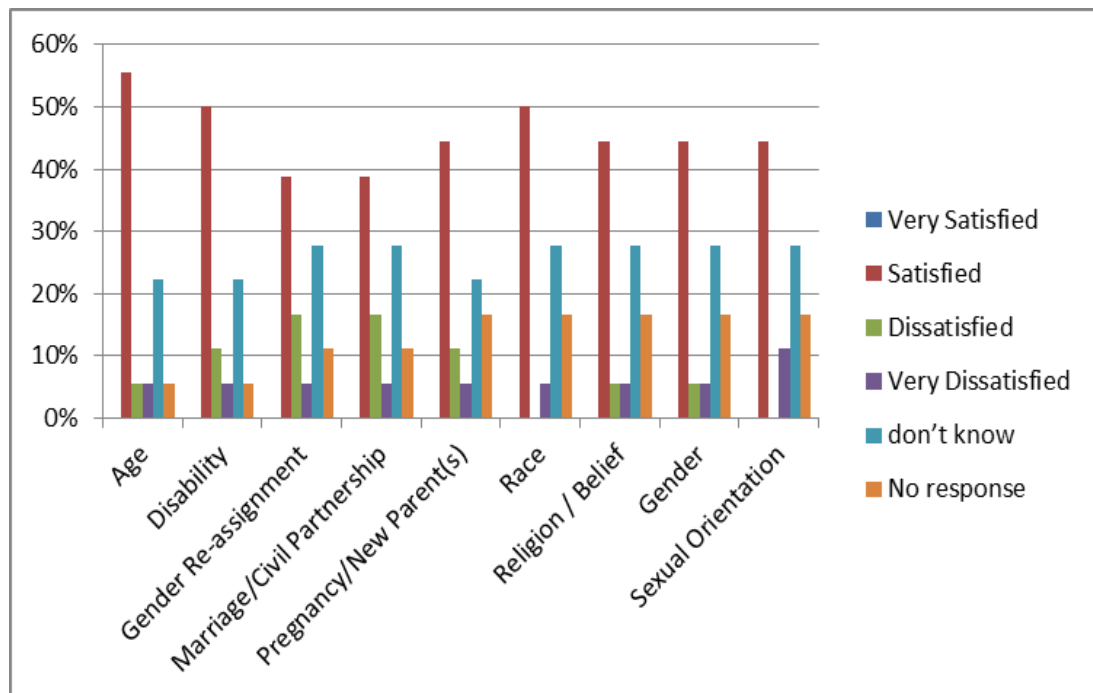
Gender

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| Very satisfied | 0 | 0% |
| Satisfied | 8 | 44% |
| Dissatisfied | 1 | 6% |
| Very dissatisfied | 1 | 6% |
| Don't know | 5 | 28% |
| No response | 3 | 17% |

Sexual Orientation

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-----|
| Very satisfied | 0 | 0% |
| Satisfied | 8 | 44% |
| Dissatisfied | 0 | 0% |
| Very dissatisfied | 2 | 11% |
| Don't know | 5 | 28% |
| No response | 3 | 17% |

Graphical Breakdown:



Respondents were asked to explain their feedback, qualitative feedback received includes:

Areas of protected characteristic are not addressed in depth within the strategy however respondents appear to be satisfied with how the Strategy has addressed each area.

3.6 Q10 Please use this space to provide any other comments:

A summary of themes from respondents is provided below:

- Introduction of a Homelessness Forum, to include more input from homelessness service users
- Support should be preventative and cost effective
- Family groups should receive priority support

There is a commitment in the Homelessness Strategy to partnership working, including the development of a homelessness forum. The need to include service user input is recognised and we will ensure that the Homelessness Forum considers how this is best achieved.

Support, advice and assistance will be provided to all homeless households regardless of their household make-up

- 3.7 Additional consultation feedback following the Consultation Event held on 26th January is documents in appendix 2.
- 3.8 A full account of the formal consultation qualitative feedback is presented in appendix 3; this includes additional comments from Barton le Clay Parish Council.

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 In summary, the majority of the 18 respondents (83% / 15) were in support of the Council's vision to support and prevent homelessness within Central Bedfordshire and 77% / 14 or more of those respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the objectives within the Strategy support the identified priorities. However confidence in how the Strategy will actually support specific groups is low.
- 4.2 Feedback from the Consultation event was successful in prompting discussion and highlighting areas for further consideration within the Strategy including:
- Detailed mapping of current support provision, both commissioned and other
 - Suitable accommodation for mothers i.e. mother and baby units
 - More partnership working between services both within health and social care and external partners.

There was a significant amount of work done during 2014, mapping existing support provision in the area. This work informed the development of the draft Housing Support Services Market Position Statement, which is available on the councils website.

The need for increased partnership working is recognised and included as Priority Five.

Appendix 1:

Results of Consultation: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Q11. Please tell us which type of respondent you are:

| | No. | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-----|------------|
| Homelessness Service User | 1 | 5.6% |
| Central Bedfordshire Resident | 9 | 50.0% |
| Homelessness Support Provider | 3 | 16.7% |
| Registered Social Landlord | 0 | 0.0% |
| Private Sector Landlord | 0 | 0.0% |
| Partner Organisation | 1 | 5.6% |
| CBC Employee | 0 | 0.0% |
| Other: | 4 | 22.22% |
| - NOAH | | |
| - SSAFA | | |
| - Parish Council | | |

Q12. Please tell us your gender

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-------|
| Male | 8 | 44.4% |
| Female | 7 | 38.9% |
| Prefer not to say | 2 | 11.1% |
| No response | 1 | 5.6% |

Q13. Please tell us your age

| | | |
|-------------------|---|-------|
| Under 16 years | 0 | 0.0% |
| 16 – 19 years | 0 | 0.0% |
| 20 – 29 years | 0 | 0.0% |
| 30 – 44 years | 2 | 11.1% |
| 45 – 59 years | 6 | 33.3% |
| 60 – 64 years | 2 | 11.1% |
| 65 – 74 years | 5 | 27.8% |
| 75+ | 0 | 0.0% |
| Prefer not to say | 3 | 16.7% |

Q14. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is considered to have a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a sustained and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

| | | |
|-------------------|----|-------|
| Yes | 1 | 5.6% |
| No | 14 | 77.8% |
| Prefer not to say | 3 | 16.7% |

Q15. Please tell us your ethnicity

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|-------|
| White: British | 13 | 72.2% |
| White: Irish | 1 | 5.6% |
| White: Gypsy or traveller | 0 | 0.0 |
| White: other | 0 | 0.0% |
| Mixed: White and Black Caribbean | 0 | 0.0% |
| Mixed: White and Black African | 0 | 0.0% |
| Mixed: White and Asian | 0 | 0.0% |
| Mixed: other | 0 | 0.0% |
| Asian or Asian British: Indian | 0 | 0.0% |
| Asian or Asian British: Pakistani | 0 | 0.0% |
| Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi | 0 | 0.0% |
| Asian or Asian British: Chinese | 0 | 0.0% |
| Asian or Asian British: other | 0 | 0.0% |
| Black or Black British: Caribbean | 0 | 0.0% |
| Black or Black British: African | 0 | 0.0% |
| Black or Black British: other | 0 | 0.0% |
| Other | 0 | 0.0% |
| Prefer not to say | 3 | 16.7% |
| No response | 1 | 5.6% |

Appendix 2: Consultation Event Feedback:

A Consultation Event was held on Monday 26th January 2015 at The Forest Centre, Marston Mortaine

Aim of the Event:

- Provide an overview of new Homelessness Strategy
- Understand the priorities and objectives
- Seek delegate views on the draft Strategy
- Understand the contribution organisations can make to delivering the strategy and preventing homelessness.

A presentation was given providing an overview of the findings of the Homelessness Review and the Strategy. This was followed by a short exercise where delegates were asked to look at the priorities identified in the Strategy and comment on if they agreed or disagreed with these priorities and their supporting objectives, and also identify any gaps. Delegates were also asked to highlight any areas where they felt they or their organisations could contribute to implementing the Strategy and maintain the Council's vision.

Feedback:

Do you agree or disagree with the identified priorities?

- Priority One – No 4:
No Second Night Out – Standard 5 – who is going to do the reconnection work inside CBC? NOAH can provide this service
- Priority One – No 4:
The public do not know how to alert the service without the publicity of Streetlink
- Priority Five – No 5
Social Enterprise needed. Strongly agree, people need a purpose and a use of time. Also a change to “help themselves”. NOAH Enterprise can help set this up
- Priority One – No 1.3
Mapping the journey
Starting at the earliest point of contact i.e. how does a rough sleeper find out about help before they get to Housing Options i.e. publicity of Streetlink

Any other objectives? / Any other actions?

- How will you support individuals in shared tenancy?
- Facebook page – Hear to Listen Biggleswade – includes photos of homeless individuals grouped in accommodation without support
- Develop a Mother & Baby Unit in Central Bedfordshire
- More accommodation for young mothers
- How do you measure prevention – monthly reviews/quarterly adjustments
- More accommodations for single homeless individuals with enhanced support
- More accommodation for 16/17 year olds
- Actually make use of partnerships that are already in use
- More Domestic Violence Units within Central Bedfordshire (North & South)
- Homelessness Forum should generate allocated tasks to the best suited service which supports that individual. Integrated support plans for people with shared responsibility (Priority 5, No 3)
- Homelessness Forum needs to also be a way for individual carer and their barriers to be highlighted to evidence where the problems for resolution lay. (Priority 5, No 3)
- Standardise training for all (agency) for child protection. Bromford trains own staff but good to ensure it is inline with CBC (P.1, 1.11)
- Need easy access to health services for physical and mental health e.g. drop in services and local hubs. Access via voluntary sector and not just local GP, travelling nurses (Priority 2, No 5)
- 'No Second Night' Out will not be met without creation of emergency accommodation. We cannot get a rough sleeper off the street the next night. NOAH can set this up (Priority 1, No 4)
- Review all mediation services, address care reasons and place support to assist customers (P 2, 1.9)
- Yes on contract to floating support (P3, 3.2), 3.4 Support in place (independent living)
- Action needed: study examples of successful UK social enterprises and how they can link into rough sleeping services (Priority 4, objective5)
- Need work with voluntary sector to sub let PRS properties to generate shared homes which can be paid for by HB? NOAH can help (Priority 2, objective3)
- Need information and support services are not known to or accessible by homeless migrant workers with no recourse to public funds (Priority 5, objective4).
- Cross board gaining (agency) – p1 (1.6)

- Priority 4 – 2. What is the Housing Landlords Tenants Incentive Scheme?, 4.2 Who are “registered providers”, 4.6 ALL services to provide advice and identify needs,
- Priority 4 – 4.8 Is there suitable manpower to provide this – contracted out may be? 4.13 – through apprenticeship schemes? What levels?
- Priority 2 – 2.11 Clear objectives and monitored outcomes, 2.13 £ contracted vs CBC, 2.19 – Bromford currently work with Penrose to pick up potentially homeless leaving psychiatric ward.

Feedback from NOAH Enterprise:

NOAH Proposal:

Constructive potential option to address street homelessness in Central Bedfordshire wider geographic area through introduction of services to enable sustainable living.

- Create 3 hubs across County, not including Luton or Bedford
- Staff with flexible multi-skilled outreach team
- Services from hub:
 - o Immediate - drop in to include:
 - Accommodation search
 - Benefits advice
 - Signposting to specialists
 - o Introduce Training:
 - Life skills
 - English
 - Digital learning
 - Pre-employment preparation
 - o Introduce social enterprise

The council will be keen to explore this idea further with NOAH through the proposed Homelessness forum, which can also explore the other feedback received (above).

Feedback from Children in Care Council:

Priority 1:

Improve the provision of a range of housing options and services to effectively prevent and reduce homelessness

Comments on Objectives:

Objective 1:

Feedback should be taken into account – who's going through the system

Objective 2:

Shouldn't be all the same for different background / age appropriate / language used

Objective 3:

As corporate parents all services need to work together to ensure they meet this objective

Objective 4:

Maybe more information on what this service is.

Are people aware that they are entitled to this service?

Comments on identified actions:

Staff have good knowledge of charter for care leavers and legislations.

Develop independent living skills training for young people as part of tenancy agreement

What contribution do you feel your organisation can make to delivering any of the actions?

Link with adult services engagement team and the CICC

Priority 2:

Increase housing supply to meet the accommodation and support needs of homeless people

What contribution do you feel your organisation can make to delivering any of the actions?

Having more options such as shared housing/mother and baby units in Central Bedfordshire. Supporting housing for all YP/Care Leavers within different areas such as Sandy, Flitwick, Biggleswade town, Leighton Buzzard

**Priority 3:
Reduce the use of temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast**

Comments on identified actions:

Use service users more effectively to gain feedback

As council we have stated we will not put any young people – care leavers in B&Bs

How will you ensure there is enough accommodation provision (at the moment there isn't many options)

What contribution do you feel your organisation can make to delivering any of the actions?

Speak more and involve young people, especially care leavers in consultations.

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Appendix 3: Results of Consultation: Qualitative Feedback

The Strategy strives to raise the aspirations of our customers, supporting them to access sustainable and affordable housing whilst also assisting them to access education, training and employment. The Strategy's vision is *"Homelessness: your opportunity for a new start with our help - helping you to help yourself"*

Q1. Do you agree with the vision, and do you believe that the priorities support the Strategy's aim?

- It is a good strategy providing that an adequate level of support is provided, not merely aspired to!
- By the reduction of temporary accommodation i.e. B&B which is not a cost effective way to aid the homeless, an increase in supported accommodation would provide value for money and a significant saving as supported accommodation incorporates support to enable individuals to work towards independence and ability to sustain a tenancy. This is a proposed action highlighted within the initiative in the strategic priorities (4).
- I think if teenagers come homeless at 17 should be entitled to be on housing register for at least a one bed flat and not rushed into a hostel it is not fair there are teenagers and adults growing independent they should be able to have a life at 17 and be able to have a peppery...I think the council are WRONG parents with children should have a really high band to be placed in a home they should not have to wait the council should be there for families what ever the circumstances are if they are homeless or intentionally homeless it is wrong for the council to chuck families with children on to streets and social services should help get housed NOT by taking there children away it would make them commit suicide it is.
- what's very upsetting is when people have been given notice the council should step in straight away and not say its policy you need to be evicted first this would then reduce the need for temporary and homeless accommodation as the council can act then and not put a stressful situation on the family
- No 4 is not that easy as to obtain work you often need an address and the jobs to go to. Very lofty wording that could easily puts peoples backs up. Makes it sound as though you will only help those who work.
- I agree that this is important. There needs to be more ways for people to work themselves out of homelessness and attend training, education and employment. NOAH can help by developing its successful social enterprise model to provide vital work experience and a supportive environment for those who have experienced homelessness to excel in.
- Homelessness is a blight on our society. A society should be judged on how it looks after the less fortunate. People may be made homeless through no fault of their own. i.e. Government benefit reforms

- The Council should be providing support to help people if their circumstances have made them homeless so they can get back on their feet.
- Much more needs to be in place for rough sleepers, single homeless and those at risk of being so. This should include day care provision complemented by accommodation search, advisory support and signposting. To this can be added training provision as part of the pathway to independent living and employment.

There are a number of personal views expressed here, which are noted. In terms of specific actions, it would be helpful to share the detailed action plan which sets out the specific steps we will take in meeting the objectives set out in the strategy. This will be made available on the councils website, along with this response to consultation.

Thinking about the identified priorities within the draft Homelessness Strategy:

Priority One: Improve the provision of a range of housing options and services to effectively prevent and reduce homelessness

Q2. How strongly do you agree that the identified objectives and related actions sufficiently support this priority?

- Services are currently fragmented and need to have more working partnerships. Partners need to be aware of services that are available.
- Homeless people should be entitled to have a property if they are intentionally homeless or just homeless it is wrong they're deserve a another chance your telling me that you should see families' with children on streets or social services taking those children away from there parents and you wounded why parents commit suicide because they have no home IT IS WRONG.
- Yes this is crucial. Pushing everyone to the PRS is risky because housing benefit is declined by most landlords. Generating further affordable HMO's and shared living would seem one was to achieve this.
- Prevention is better than cure. If potential problems are identified before they happen it is usually more cost effective and less stressful to the homeless person.
- Objectives need to properly funded otherwise they will not succeed.
- Single room availability is very limited so the consequence of statutory change to single room housing benefit is homelessness. Organisations are prepared to provide that service providing some help can be given to provide the infrastructure.

The council clearly has to deliver its housing solutions service within the constraints of the relevant homelessness legislation and economic reality. Focussing on prevention solutions delivers better outcomes for clients and is much more cost effective. The Homelessness Strategy is underpinned by these concepts.

Priority Two: Increase Housing Supply to meet the accommodation and support needs of homeless people

Q3. How strongly do you agree that the identified objectives and related actions sufficiently support this priority?

- Again a good objective but there is a need to ensure that the planning department and developers stick to the rules
- More 'Move On' accommodation is needed, one and two bedroom.
- People who are 17 working or non working on benefits should be able to join housing register and get a chance to get a flat they are independent not all teenagers are the same there are people out their who pay there RENT, families' with children should be able to become bigger priority if they are intentionally homeless or just homeless the Council should help them and not bring social services involved it is dirty how the council treat people they Jude people just like that.IT IS WRONG FOR Families' WITH CHILDREN TO NOT BE HOMELESS.
- The housing opportunities are concentrated in areas and not spread across the district. They do not reflect needs and do not reflect the type needed by size or affordability.
- Emergency housing is not widespread available and has not been identified as a need. Without this is will not be possible to tackle some of the fundamentals of NSNO and help people off the streets quickly. The health needs of homeless people are not met without support to prevent them from dropping out of services and without barriers to accessing health services removed. Some of these barriers are the distance to visit services, the waiting times and the lack of co-ordination. Travelling homelessness nurses or mental health workers could make a difference to this. Particularly if based inside accessible 'hubs'
- There needs to be more 1 & 2 bedroom social accommodation available for the increasing demand by younger & single people.
- Accommodation that facilitates the transition from homelessness to independent living is vital. The infrastructure is missing. Identifying houses of multiple occupancy and facilitating purchase/lease by voluntary agencies would be a strategic step in the right direction.

The council is aware that it requires a portfolio of accommodation that suits the needs of a range of different clients. A comprehensive review of what we have and how it is used is the first objective within this priority. Providing support for people within this accommodation is also key.

People under the age of 18 cannot legally hold a tenancy and require a different type of accommodation. There is a requirement for the housing service to work closely with social services where under 18s become homeless.

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Priority Three: Reduce the use of temporary accommodation and bed and breakfasts.

Q4. How strongly do you agree that the identified objectives and related actions sufficiently support this priority?

- B & B's only help mask the problem and allow suppliers to exploit the council.
- The use of temporary accommodation only addresses roof over head and not underlying causes of homelessness.
- Everyone deserves a house what ever the circumstances are why the hell would council pay loads of money for temporary accommodation when they could just be paying rent for their house but like I said council judge to quickly on people who are in urgent need and not being funny here but if people coming from abroad or something they will be straight to the council. Asking for accommodation and they will get it THIS Council needs TO HAVE A CONSIDERATION for families' with children with no home I disagree
- If you reduce the use of temporary homeless accommodation you are helping that family or person in question well before this is needed this will then save the taxpayer a lot of money on unnecessary repairs to homeless accommodation and bed and breakfast bills
- What is in its place nothing? Therefore we are not helping. Although I do see that there has to be a proper budget set for B&B and this can easily get out of control. Explain properly and in writing the implications of taking such accommodation and do not pitch it too high as there are hidden added costs to being in this type of property. This needs far more work than the council has done at the moment particularly on the impact of this strategy on mental health.
- A night shelter service could reduce this if it had capacity to respond quickly as a need arose.
- The reduction of temporary accommodation is a must. The cost of temporary accommodation is effectively "Dead Money". This cost is usually lining the pockets of Private landlords and the council has no tangible asset, this cost should be used to provide more social housing.
- Temporary accommodation can have a negative impact on the mental health of people having to use the accommodation.
- It does appear to be a matter of providing more housing stock and of preventing people arriving at a situation where the only remedy is B&B

Living in bed and breakfast is a wholly unsatisfactory experience and the council is committed to eliminating its use, except in absolute emergency. We intend to make better use of tenancies in the private rented sector, where people have better quality accommodation.

Priority Four: Minimise the impact of welfare reform, while assisting homeless people to access opportunities for employment, education and training, and support them to raise and meet their expectations.

Q5. How strongly do you agree that the identified objectives and related actions sufficiently support this priority?

- But the requirement to attend courses must be monitored as some just sign in to get their benefits but do not stay all day/term.
- Support is all important
- Teenagers who are aged 17 who are working or in education should be able to at least get a council flat who's in urgent need the council systems are just not fair, teenagers at 17 are independent and able to have accommodation also families' with children have the higher priority and should get a property before anyone.
- Good objective but everyone is doing it - finite number of jobs, need to make sure no penalisation for using time volunteering according to ability if work is not an option etc. Again mental health is never seen as a main player. Everyone is a number - a stat - and not an individual.
- Welfare reform has most effect on migrant workers. Their needs are perhaps not as obvious in CBC but it is likely that this effect is not being fully mitigated against
- Welfare reform is ideological and should be scraped. Anyone involved with these Draconian measures need help. Employment, education and training are all necessary for someone to get on in society so investing in all three can only help society.
- The welfare reforms imposed by central government have had a greater impact on the less well-off members of our community. It will save money in the longer term if the council help people get back into employment or training.
- Have a process that begins with engagement of people on the streets, finds them accommodation, links them into day care and specialist services, encourages them into training and volunteering opportunities and prepares them for employment.

The action plan will be shared which sets out how we intend to link in with existing employment and training agencies.

Priority Five: Develop an integrated partnership approach to tackling homelessness

Q6. How strongly do you agree that the identified objectives and related actions sufficiently support this priority?

- Councils have been a soft touch for landlords to charge more than the going rate for rent. Private landlords have a guaranteed income so should be paid the lower rate but to compensate be paid direct.
- As long as it is activated and not just a paper exercise
- Join up working - Forum/s
- There needs to be more social housing because it is not fair on families or teenagers you need to understand circumstance it is unreal HOW the council can put families' with children on the STREETS.
- Partnerships properly do not keep pushing the same things as others. i.e... Volunteering, job search, moving away from support network. There is enough to do with the housing opportunities without spreading the department too thinly on partnership opportunities.
- A homeless forum is a good idea as long as it doesn't replicate existing groups or cross over too much. It must have teeth and representatives from CBC housing services attending. I am not sure if quarterly is a sufficient timescale unless it is purely information sharing/networking. Entrenched rough sleepers and individual cases will need to be discussed far more regularly.
- Joined up approach is necessary both for cost and helping the client. Integrated approach would stop any duplication of work
- A rounded whole society approach is likely to be more successful but will need to be properly funded.
- Create 3 hubs throughout the Central Beds area. Introduce drop-in to provide accommodation search and signposting services. Once established complement with training provision.

There appears to be overall support for this approach. The action plan will be shared which sets out how we intend to link in with existing employment and training agencies.

Q7. How confident do you feel that the delivery of the draft Homelessness Strategy will lead to the prevention of the following groups becoming homeless?

- **Families with children**
 - **Single homeless**
 - **Young people (16-17 year olds and 18-24 year old care leavers)**
 - **People with mental health difficulties**
 - **People with alcohol and substance misuse problems**
 - **Offenders and ex-offenders**
 - **People suffering from domestic violence**
-
- More work needs to be done for 16-21yr old homeless people across the board not only care leavers. There is a growing problem of young people finding themselves homeless with no support or specialist housing provision for this age group, they are put in adult hostels and can be affected by drugs/alcohol in this shared type of facility.
 - Only reason confident is that the current strategy witnessed recently of one council telling tenants to stay put when council could not find new accommodation and let the landlord evict you covers problem! However, not very clever as Tenant gets poor reference for the future.
 - Strategy is good but could be limited by budget restrictions
 - By the introduction of further supported accommodations and ensuring that the strategy is implemented. Savings can be made on temporary accommodation which will enable you to provide more supported accommodation to prevent the homelessness cycle.
 - Lack of funding to provide suitable accommodation without recourse to taking money from other budgets
 - Everyone should be able to get rehouse if you are intentionally homeless or just homeless families' with children get the properties first
 - you have to stop the problem that makes the individual becoming homeless, you need support there and deal with the issues before their arise
 - As usual it is a question of wait and see. The strategy appears a good step in the right direction. As usual there many calls on the Councils finances and unless there is enough in the budget these laudable ideas will not come to fruition
 - I don't really know. The Homeless Strategy seems to be going in the right direction but substantial amounts of money will be needed to implement it. With the Council Tax freeze over the last few years and the cut of money from Central Government I think it would be difficult to implement.

- I suspect that the availability of funding will limit both the extent and responsiveness of the Strategy's response to the above groups' needs
- The objectives if achieved would realise this. The approach needs to adopt the proactive approach explained variously in the responses to this survey.

Q8. How confident do you feel that the delivery of the draft Homelessness Strategy will provide sufficient support to homeless people from the following groups?

- **Families with children**
 - **Single homeless**
 - **Rough Sleepers**
 - **Young people (16-17 year olds and 18-24 year old care leavers)**
 - **People with mental health difficulties**
 - **People with alcohol and substance misuse problems**
 - **Offenders and ex-offenders**
 - **People suffering from domestic violence**
- Confident key groups will get support but agree priorities are needed.
 - A good strategy but actions speak louder than words
 - Confident if an integrated partnership approach can be implemented.
 - As before, availability of funding
 - They need housing which you do not have.
 - I don't really know. The Homeless Strategy seems to be going in the right direction but substantial amounts of money will be needed to implement it. With the Council Tax freeze over the last few years and the cut of money from Central Government I think it would be difficult to implement
 - I think the council as a whole has good intentions towards the disadvantaged members of our community.
 - Adoption of the proposals put forward in various responses here would make me more confident particularly re single homeless people

The above views will be captured for exploring within the proposed homelessness forum.

Q9. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the draft Homelessness Strategy has addressed the needs of the nine protected characteristics, set out below, in relation to homelessness?

- **Age**
 - **Disability**
 - **Gender Re-assignment**
 - **Marriage/Civil Partnership**
 - **Pregnancy/New Parent(s)**
 - **Race**
 - **Religion / Belief**
 - **Gender**
 - **Sexual Orientation**
-
- Satisfied but not difficult listing all categories.
 - As previous
 - Gender Re-assignment - not mention! In addition no clear guidelines on gender re-assignment, i.e. is it pre-op or post-op?
 - Plenty of words written. But proof is in the building finding suitable accommodation
 - We would have expected that no-one would be discriminated against and therefore can only hope that your own house is in order.
 - These areas are not addressed in particular depth in the strategy nor would I expect them to be.
 - I believe the council does its best to ensure that it helps people regardless of their situation.

Feedback from Barton le Clay Parish Council

Barton-le-Clay Parish Council would like to express its view that the length of the supporting documents made it somewhat difficult for the information to be fully digested, and thus commented on. In terms of future consultations, Barton-le-Clay would welcome an Executive Summary to enable the key issues to be more easily understood.

This is noted and we will endeavour to provide a summary document in future consultations.

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