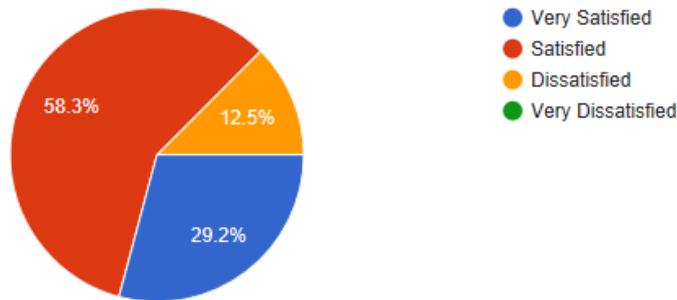


Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy – Summary of Consultation Responses

Format of Strategy

How satisfied are you with the format of the draft strategy?

24 responses



COMMENTS: Comments received in support of the format were:

“It is a clear and easy to digest strategy document”.

“Well formatted and easy to read”.

“Clear and concise with specific actions.”

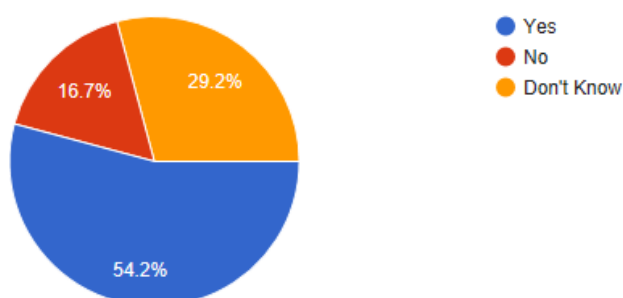
Whilst there were no negative comments received about the format the following comment was received:

“The question is not clear. We ...found the draft strategy document easy to access online but wonder if has been made available to those who will be or have been affected by homelessness. What methods is the Council using to ensure those who will benefit or be disadvantaged by the strategy are able to respond?”

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE: In formulating the strategy the Council has listened and responded to hundreds of views and experiences, both positive and negative, of homeless applicants over the last 12 months. These include statutory reviews and corporate complaints. The Key Priorities are a reflection of the areas where the Council wishes to improve in order to provide a fully comprehensive service to homeless people. The Council understands there is much work to do and annual reviews of the strategy will monitor progress and ensure further consultation takes place. On this occasion the Council has consulted with all service providers delivering services to vulnerable people and given them every opportunity to respond on their service users’ behalf and promote the consultation.

The strategy contains a summary overview section on the local homelessness situation in the New Forest District. Do you think this section accurately summarises the local situation?

24 responses



COMMENTS: Comments received in support of this section were:

“This section does accurately reflect the local situation and having the statistics listed really helps to give a picture of why there are significant housing issues with 60% of households earning less than the UK average and the accommodation not being as affordable. The district is unique in it being spread over a wider area and it was good to have the homeless applications identified by area in the pie chart.”

Other views highlighted the needs of the hidden homeless who don't present themselves to the Council:

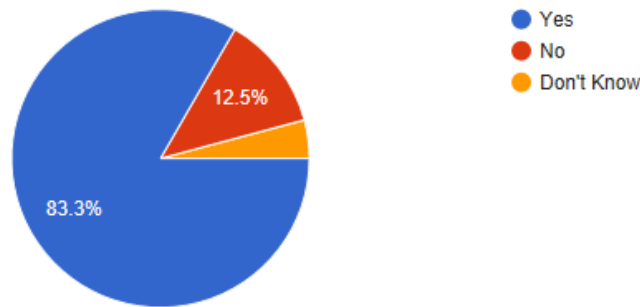
“...this section records well the situation of people that 'come through the system ' and will consent to their details being recorded and referred through the portal to the NFDC team. There are people outside the system who are very unwilling, for a range of reasons to engage with statutory services. We need to acknowledge that these people exist and any strategy has to include provision / services for people unwilling to engage initially with statutory services (there needs to be alternative routes to help)”.

COUNCIL'S RESPONSE: The Council is receiving an increased number of approaches for homelessness assistance, particularly from single people who make up 37% of all approaches. The Council believes this is a reflection of more and more hidden homeless households approaching for assistance. Whilst we recognise there are still hidden homeless households not accessing our assistance we are committed, through the Strategy, to raising the profile of our service with partner agencies and the wider public to break down any barriers that exist. We are also committed to working with voluntary agencies to create pathways of assistance to those who would not normally approach the Council. Strategic Priority 2 has been amended to include a provision for exploring pathways of support for the 'hidden homeless'.

Strategic Priority 1: Invest in and improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of front line services to prevent homelessness

Do you agree that the Council should prioritise improving its front line services in order to prevent homelessness?

24 responses



COMMENTS: Comments received in support of this priority were:

"We agree that the Council should prioritise improving front line services to prevent homelessness."

"New changes in NFDC staff having tablets etc. to be able to go out to clients is a positive and productive move."

Other views queried how actions within the priority will be delivered:

"...There still needs to be adequate funding for services, such as Nightstop, that support people when they actually experience homelessness".

"...We would like to know how the Council intends to discharge its duty of prevention to people who are being assessed or who are identified as vulnerable, with regard to the provision of emergency accommodation

"...In terms of homelessness services and increase access to them how is this going to put into effect and what services is this referring to?"

COUNCIL'S RESPONSE: The Council is investing significant funds in sourcing suitable, and furnished, emergency accommodation in order to end the use of B&B accommodation and to respond effectively to emergency homeless presentations. The Council already has plans in place to locate this accommodation in the main population centres around the district and for it to be made available to crisis presentations. The accommodation will have both self-contained and shared facilities and applicants will be provided with bedding, which they keep, and a home starter pack. We have already acquired our first 6 units of accommodation which will see its first occupants housed from 1st April 2019.

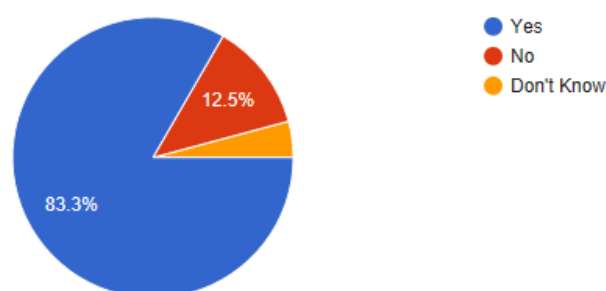
Our proposed action in Strategic Priority 1 commits to ensuring our service is fully accessible giving applicants the flexibility of options to contact the team by phone, in person and online,

but also to provide them useful information which may mean they can resolve the situation themselves. Our service is contactable 24 hours a day with our emergency out of hours service available at weekends and during the night. We will offer appointments in our local offices and seek to explore co-location opportunities with other services around the district. The Council now has a Homeless and Housing Advice Officer present at Inclusion drop in sessions once a fortnight to allow service users an opportunity to access both services at the same time. We will seek to replicate such sessions with other services where appropriate.

Strategic Priority 2: Work with partners and stakeholders to identify issues early on and prevent homelessness by working together

Do you agree with the approach to work with partners and stakeholders to prevent homelessness in the District?

24 responses



COMMENTS: Comments received in support of this priority were:

“As a member of the district homelessness Multi Agency Forum we believe it is essential for partners and stakeholders to work together to prevent homelessness and to support homeless people”.

“The relationship building mentioned to bring in more private landlords is vital to ensure housing availability in the New Forest and is a priority.”

Other views queried how actions within the priority will be delivered:

“...to do this effectively it is important that all partners are aware of current legislation and eligibility”.

“...The council is limited to the amount of support it can provide with everything else that is a priority so it is vital other services work alongside the council to put in place the preventative measures.”

“With Two Saints scaling back their support services there will be a shortfall in homelessness support for anyone who isn't Single and Complex, is it NFDC or HCC who will pay for this? And what will they be offering for anyone that doesn't fit new criteria?”

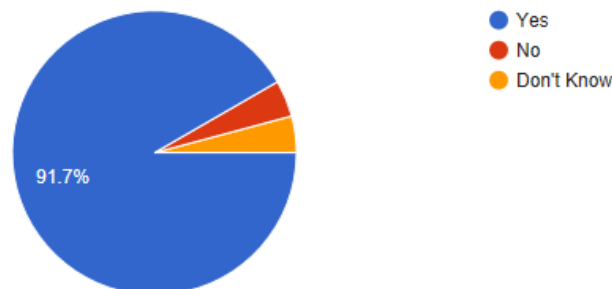
COUNCIL'S RESPONSE: The Council is committed to providing briefings and training to external agencies. Strategic Priority 2 has been amended to reflect this. The Service Manager for Housing Options has already attended several external agency team meetings and provided legislative training. This will be further provided where identified and required. The Multi- Agency Forum will also be used as a platform for updates and training.

In Strategic Priority 1 of the Strategy the Council has committed to review the resources required to further support applicants in order to both prevent and relieve homelessness. The impending reduction of the Hampshire County Council Social Inclusion contract will be a factor in this review. Many of the actions within the Strategy support a multi-agency approach and also recognise that volunteer organisations have expressed their desire to be part of a localised support offering. The Council will therefore explore these opportunities in the coming months.

Strategic Priority 3: Ending the use of B&B accommodation through investing in and facilitating the development and use of good quality affordable housing and temporary accommodation

Do you agree with the Council's approach to ending the use of B&B accommodation through the provision of its own temporary accommodation and increasing access to affordable homes?

24 responses



COMMENTS: Comments received in support of this priority were:

"... agrees with an approach to keep emergency provision within the communities of the New Forest so help and support for individuals can be connected into existing support networks."

"It is vital B&B use is minimised if not completely stopped as it is not financially sustainable for the Council. B&B's are often not suitable for clients and given the limitation on their budget it is difficult to be able to afford to eat without cooking facilities."

"We agree that B&B accommodation is unsuitable for many of our vulnerable clients and would welcome this approach ending as it does not provide any wrap around support."

“The strategy features sensible and well thought ideas but there has to be a guarantee of resource to support all scenarios and emergency situations.”

Other views queried how actions within the priority will be delivered:

“Is there a guarantee that by not considering B&B accommodation at all we are at risk of not resolving an issue and supporting a rough sleeper in a suitable time frame? Any homes that are affordable must be spread around the District and support given by the council working with fellow stakeholders to support these Individuals in to long term housing. Finance is crucial so more detail and figures would be helpful.”

“We would like the council to provide details of what alternative accommodation and support will be available and whether this will be for primarily for families or will it include emergency accommodation for individuals. What other facilities will be available for those whose situation will become more complex if they are placed in Night shelters, where repeat attendance is common or B&B, which is usually long term.”

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE: Through implementing the Strategy the Council is placing a focus on early intervention to prevent homelessness in the first place. This would result in less households requiring emergency accommodation.

However, where homelessness does occur the Council is committed to having a range of suitable emergency accommodations options available. The Council is investing significant funds in sourcing suitable emergency accommodation in order to end the use of B&B accommodation and to respond effectively to emergency homeless presentations. We already have advanced plans in place to locate this accommodation in the main population centres around the district. The accommodation will cater for both single people and families and will have both self-contained and shared facilities. We have already acquired our first 6 units of accommodation which will see its first occupants housed from 1st April 2019.

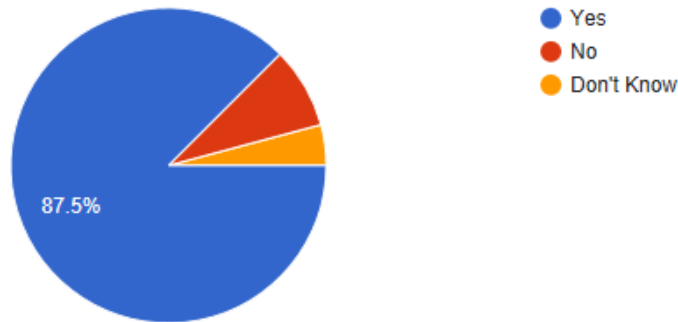
In Strategic Priority 4 the Council recognises that the response for rough sleepers and those with complex needs will require effective and practical support and this will go hand in hand with sustaining this new provision of accommodation and moving applicants on to more permanent accommodation. The Council is to review the resources required to achieve this in due course.

The newly adopted Housing Strategy has made a commitment to building more Council housing, at least 600 for the period up to 2026. Through 2018/19 the Council has also increased its portfolio of private sector lease properties (PSLs) and has struck up partnerships with private landlords to secure more properties in 2019/20. The latter will provide further move on options to support pathways out of emergency accommodation.

Strategy Priority 4: Bring rough sleeping to an end

Do you agree with the Council's approach to placing a greater focus on ending rough sleeping?

24 responses



COMMENTS: Comments received in support of this priority were:

"It mentions the option of looking into using a housing first model which is known and proven to be successful and prevents repeat homeless. This will be very suitable to The New Forest because there is a lot of hidden homelessness where rough sleepers are spread out over a wider area."

Other views queried how actions within the priority will be delivered:

"As stated in the strategy the number of rough sleepers in the district is relatively low. However, there is also a number of "hidden homeless" - sofa surfing, sleeping in outbuildings, cars, public toilets, tents - who do not appear to be recognised under this approach. They are often young, at risk and need follow up advice and care. We would like the Council to clarify how it plans to meet the needs of these vulnerable individuals who are often the most difficult to accommodate."

"Unfortunately, not everybody wants to give up rough sleeping. What does the council do then?"

"The council is not a one stop fix all place - it still needs to work closely with local charities who have the experience and local knowledge of hidden and homeless people (some are not all rough sleepers)."

COUNCIL'S RESPONSE: Through the actions in the Strategy the Council aims to foster effective partnership relationships with organisations, including charities that work with the 'hidden homeless', where housing support can still be provided through a partnership approach. Continuing to raise awareness of the homelessness service and Streetlink reporting has seen the Council receive increased reports of those rough sleeping and high numbers of applications from single people. The Duty to Refer placed upon Public Bodies to

report homelessness has also seen the Council receive additional reports that ordinarily would have gone unreported.

The Council recognises that some rough sleepers make a choice to continue to sleep rough despite efforts to offer accommodation. The combined actions within Strategic Priority 4 propose to demonstrate a long term pathway of accommodation and support for rough sleepers to see a sustainable way off the streets should they choose to do so. The review of support required will include such scenarios to ensure welfare of those continuing to sleep rough is taken in to account.

Final Comments

“This has to be properly funded and support gained from expert organisations who understand the complexities of why individuals are homeless.”

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE:

Through delivery of the strategy the Council aims to enhance its relationships with agencies providing specialist assistance to tackle complex issues in a joined up approach. Recent examples of joint work have led to a number of successful outcomes for complex individuals. The Council seeks to repeat these successes through enhanced relationships with the Multi-Agency Forum and external agencies.

“Tenant Representatives would like NFDC to consider the feasibility of using the following as temporary accommodation for rough sleepers; Shipping containers & Homes made out of recycled plastic (bricks / panels)”.

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE:

The Council is open to exploring innovative accommodation solutions through the provision of both temporary accommodation and the building of new general needs accommodation. Through delivery of the Housing Strategy the Council is exploring such options which would be subject to a feasibility study and planning consent.

Due to the current pressures on emergency accommodation the advanced plans to provide such accommodation include acquiring existing buildings, largely which have been used for similar provision in the past and thus support a quick turnaround.

“What is planned about the lack of a homeless hostel in the New Forest area?”

COUNCIL’S RESPONSE:

The Council is investing significant funds in sourcing suitable emergency accommodation in order to end the use of B&B accommodation and to respond effectively to emergency homeless presentations. We already have advanced plans in place to locate this accommodation in the main population centres around the district. The accommodation will cater for both single people and families and will have both self-contained and shared facilities. We have already acquired our first 6 units of accommodation which will see its first occupants housed from 1st April 2019.

The Council has no plans to provide a night shelter hostel as the numbers rough sleeping at any one time do not warrant the resources and expenditure required. The Council would prefer to work with rough sleepers to access suitable accommodation and support.

“We fully support the homeless strategy and see the council’s commitment to supporting those in need. There is mention of providing better emergency accommodation not using B&B’s however there is not detailed information about what that looks like.”

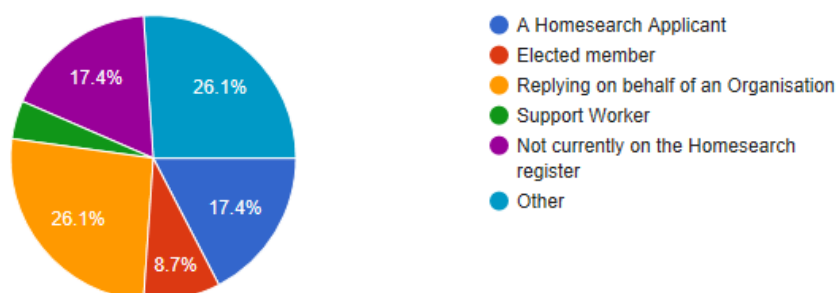
COUNCIL’S RESPONSE:

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Information About You

Are you?

23 responses



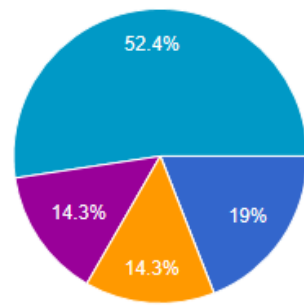
If from an Organisation or other, please state below which one

9 responses

- NHS
- The You Trust
- The Handy Trust Charity (Youth Service)
- Acts 4 Sharing
- Tenant Involvement Group
- Citizens Advice New Forest
- Two Saints Limited
- Community First New Forest

Are you?

21 responses



- A tenant of New Forest District Council
- A tenant of another social housing landlord
- Private rented tenant
- Of no fixed abode
- Living with friends/family
- Other