

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council's Joint Homelessness Reduction & Rough Sleeping Strategy Consultation: Feedback Report and Analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils ran a consultation on the draft Joint Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy to:

- Ensure that the vision and the priorities of the Strategy were supported by residents
- To gather feedback to inform any necessary amendments to the draft Strategy and Delivery Plan
- To hear specifically from people with lived experience of homelessness/rough sleeping or being threatened with homelessness/rough sleeping

Respondents were encouraged to read the draft Strategy and draft Delivery Plan before responding to an online survey. Respondents also had the opportunity to make comments to be taken into consideration before the Strategy was finalised and presented to full Councils for adoption, in March 2024.

2. THE CONSULTATION

An Online Consultation Survey was 'live' from Monday 4th December 2023 to Sunday 14th January 2024.

The Consultation survey was hosted on CitizenLab: an online Community Participation Platform.

The Consultation Survey was promoted via:

- X (Formerly Twitter)
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- My Home Bulletin (BMSDC Communication with tenants)
- Working Together (Internal BMSDC communication with Staff)
- Babergh DC Website
- Mid Suffolk DC Website
- Email to residents who had signed up to be alerted to new BMSDC resident engagement activity through CitizenLab
- Email to Partners and Stakeholders of Housing Solutions and Homelessness Services

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- Email to households registered for housing on Gateway to Homechoice.

In addition to the online survey:

- All member-briefing sessions were held to present the Strategy and Delivery plan to members and to answer any questions. (See Section 8)
- The draft Strategy and Delivery Plan were presented to the BMSDC Tenant Board (See Section 9)
- A session was held with representatives of Citizen Advice Bureau to discuss their specific feedback on the Strategy & Delivery Plan (See Section 10)

3. THE SURVEY

The Consultation Survey consisted of 12 questions and was a mixture of multiple-choice questions and questions with the opportunity to provide further comments.

Respondents were asked separately about:

- The Vision
- The Priorities
- The Strategy Document

The Consultation Survey was completed by 118 people.

The breakdown of respondents was:

	Number	Percentage
Member of the Public	54	45.8%
Local Authority Employee or Member	30	25.4%
Member of the public with experience of Homelessness/Rough Sleeping	18	15.3%
Other Voluntary Sector Organisation	7	5.9%
Other Statutory Organisation	6	5.1%
Provider of Homelessness Services	3	2.5%
Total:	118	100%

4. THE VISION

Respondents were asked if they agreed with our Vision that ‘Rough Sleeping is rare, brief and non-recurring and that homelessness is routinely prevented through early and upstream prevention’.

The results show:

Our Vision: ‘Rough Sleeping is rare, brief and non-recurring and that homelessness is routinely prevented through early and upstream prevention’	Agree Fully	Agree Partially	Don’t agree at all
	66.9%	27.1%	5.9%

Respondents were asked if they had any further comments on the proposed vision.

25 respondents had further comments about the proposed vision. These have been categorised:

Category of Comment:	Number:
Positive/ Supportive Comment	5
Negative/Critical Comment	6
Comment highlighting need for more Support for Homeless Households	4
Response not relevant to question asked or Beyond the scope of this strategy	10
No Comment	93
TOTAL:	118

Sample Comments:

I think we need to be more creative, using everything we have available to house those that need it rather than traditional routes.

Great vision & I agree that it is idealistic but there are entrenched rough sleepers that need wrap around support to get out of the cycle.

It will be difficult for homelessness to be rare, as few choose to be homeless. It can be reduced but not rare. Early Intervention starts a long way before becoming homeless and needs to be joined up with professionals working together.

Commentary:

The Vision is overwhelmingly supported by respondents to the Survey. Only 5.9% of respondents don't agree at all with the vision. However, we are taking on board feedback that the vision is not aligned with the vision of the cross-county work undertaken by Campbell Tickell and will be amending the vision to mirror the Suffolk wide vision. The sentiment of the two visions is the same, just worded slightly differently.

There were 4 comments highlighting the need for wrap-a-round support for homeless households. We feel that this need is already addressed in the Delivery Plan, which supports the need for joined up working with other agencies who are the providers of support services.

5. THE PRIORITIES

Respondents were asked if they agreed fully, partially or not at all with the 5 priorities identified in the draft strategy.

The results show:

Do you agree that we need to focus on:	Agree Fully	Agree Partially	Don't Agree at all
Early, Upstream Prevention and Intervention	88.1%	11.9%	0%
Making Rough Sleeping rare, brief and non-recurring	91.5%	8.5%	0%
Ensuring that the health and wellbeing needs of households are met whilst in temporary accommodation.	91.5%	8.5%	0%
Continuing to improve access to the private rented sector by expanding and future proofing the Central Suffolk Lettings Service.	66.9%	28.8%	4.2%
Mitigating against the impacts of the cost of living.	75.4%	22.1%	2.5%

Respondents were asked if they thought there should be any other priorities in the strategy.

35 respondents answered this question with further comments. The comments have been categorized:

Category of Comment	Number
Comment addressed in BMSDC's Joint Homes and Housing Strategy	2
Comment addressed in the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Plan	8
Comment beyond the scope of this Strategy	7
Comment is misinformed (See Section 7)	8

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Comment is not relevant to the question asked	4
Comment is already happening in the work of Housing Solutions	6
No comment	83
Total:	118

Sample Comments:

Safety. Protection. Showing homeless people someone cares about them.

I think we need to include strategic alignment to other services, we need to make best use of the skills and experience of partners.

Understanding the wider determinants that can impact a person's housing situation e.g.: debts, and other finance issues, poor housing conditions, etc.

Commentary:

The survey results show that the 5 priorities of the draft Strategy are widely supported by respondents. Therefore, we are not making any changes to the 5 priorities. Any changes as a result of comments left, can be seen in Section 7: Comments, Questions and Myths.

6. THE STRATEGY DOCUMENT

Respondents were asked if they thought the draft Strategy was easy to understand & provides enough information.

The results show:

	Agree Fully	Agree Partially	Don't Agree at all
The Draft Strategy is easy to Understand	58.5%	37.3%	4.2%
The Draft Strategy provides enough information	55.9%	38.1%	5.9%

Respondents were asked if they had any other comments about the draft Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

27 Respondents provided further comments. These have been categorized:

Category of Comment	Number
Positive/ Supportive Comment	4
Negative/ Critical Comment	1
Comment querying use of Jargon/ Definitions	6
Comment addressed in the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Delivery Plan	4
Question or Query (See Section 7)	6
Comment is not relevant to the question asked	6
No comment	91
Total:	118

Sample Comments:

Commentary:

I like the way the action plan very simply reflects the strategy.

Absolutely agree that the intentions of the strategy are the right ones, but I think the language needs some work to make sure it's accessible to all (early upstream prevention means nothing to anyone outside of the council) and I think the success of the delivery of the strategy will hinge on your willingness to work with other organisations in the districts.

I would like to stress the importance of supporting people with mental health problems, and also the people who support and care for them, as a key preventative measure. It is so easy for those who are unsupported to become homeless. This is aggravated by shortages in services for mental health needs in the community. This needs to be addressed urgently and effectively or else the vision will not be achieved.

Notably there were 6 comments stating that there was too much jargon in the Strategy document. As a result, we have ensured there is no jargon in the document, any acronyms have been removed and simplified definitions have been added. Other changes/ amendments as a result of comments left, can be seen in Section 7: Comments, Questions and Myths.

7. COMMENTS, QUESTIONS & MYTHS

There were various questions asked in the 3 free text questions in the survey. There were also many statements about Homelessness and Housing Solutions that were not true. The following is a selection of comments, questions and myths and our response to these:

CONSULTATION COMMENT/QUESTION:	RESPONSE:
What does "upstream intervention" mean?	Upstream prevention focusses on high-risk groups, such as vulnerable young people and high-risk transitions, such as leaving prison, care, and hospital discharge.
More support needs to be put in place when people are facing homelessness - waiting until the date of homelessness is too late. Early cries for help need to be addressed faster to avoid worse and more costly situations.	We agree and this is why we formed the Early Intervention Team in June 2023; under statutory homelessness legislation we do not have to assist households at risk of homelessness until they are within 56 days of becoming homeless. At Babergh and Mid Suffolk we assist and advise anyone who contacts us with a view to preventing their homelessness prior to our statutory duty. We completed 25 preventions in April 2023 which went up to 46 at the end of June 2023 after the Early Intervention Team started working at this earlier stage in an applicant's homelessness journey.
There should be absolutely no reason for anyone to sleep rough and the local authorities need to provide adequate temporary accommodation and food for anyone who find themselves in this unfortunate position. This needs to be widely advertised so that anyone found in this position can be directed or taken to the provided facility.	Any individual contacting us who is rough sleeping in our districts will be accommodated regardless of meeting priority need under homelessness legislation, they will then be assessed under homelessness legislation and a decision made regarding which pathway is best to support them into settled accommodation. This will be our main housing pathway or a discretionary rough sleeper pathway. Referrals can be made into the rough sleeper service by using StreetLink - Connecting people sleeping rough to local services (thestreetlink.org.uk)
Our preference would be a uniform Suffolk wide Vision as set out in the Campbell Tickell work – ‘That homelessness and rough sleeping in Suffolk is prevented wherever possible and, where it cannot be prevented, it is rare, brief and non-recurring.’ The priorities don’t appear to be fully aligned with aims/objectives of	We agree with the vision as set out in the Campbell Tickell report and will align our vision.

<p>Suffolk Housing Board or recent Campbell Tickell report.</p>	
<p>Look at the bidding system and where people need to be for their mental health and life reasons. For example, moving people from Ipswich to Stowmarket who don't want to move away from Ipswich because they HAVE to take the house isn't supporting the family. Either source more accommodation in the area or stop moving people from out of the area in. Have Temporary housing in areas that are close to support.</p>	<p>We always try to place households in temporary accommodation that is suitable for their needs, we would not move anyone from Ipswich as that household should be presenting to Ipswich Borough Council however, we are mindful that our districts border four neighbouring local authorities and at times we expect households to move areas according to where we have our temporary accommodation available at that time. We will always endeavour to move that household back to their area if possible.</p> <p>Babergh and Mid Suffolk have been tracking which areas our households present from and are completing forecasting work for the future, this will inform a temporary accommodation review later this year.</p>
<p>Identify underlying health or other issues that contribute towards individuals becoming homeless or rough sleeping and refer to or work with appropriate support organisations to try to address this.</p>	<p>All households will be referred to supporting agencies following an initial assessment and we always work with these agencies to ensure we offer a wraparound service of support to all applicants. We are aware that we can always do more and will complete a piece of work as identified in this strategy to strengthen working relationships with other agencies including third sector and voluntary agencies.</p>
<p>Residents in privately rented homes, struggling to meet increased rental payments, should be helped too. Especially if in a property too big for their needs, because this would free up properties for those who can afford them</p>	<p>Our homelessness service is tenure neutral which means that it does not matter what the tenure is in your home.</p> <p>Tenure describes who lives in the home and your relationship to the home.</p> <p>For instance,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you own the home, you live in you're an 'owner occupier' • If you own the home but rent it out to someone else, you're a 'Landlord' • If you rent the home from someone else, you're a 'tenant' <p>Our Financial Inclusion team are experts at maximising household incomes, budgeting advice and referring households for debt advice with our local Citizens Advice partners.</p>
<p>The draft strategy is all well and good, but it's not costed. It appears clear that other departments within the council who have a role to play may not have been consulted. This is more of a vision rather than a strategy.</p>	<p>The service is costed, and the budget already set from central government funding. Other council departments feed into our service:</p> <p>Communities – Assistance with our BEAM project through funding from UK Shared Prosperity Fund</p> <p>HR Incomes Team – Referrals into our Financial Inclusion Team to maximise income and avoid rent arrears.</p>

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	<p>Tenancy Management – Joint working with households who may face homelessness due to tenancy breaches and fleeing violence or domestic abuse.</p> <p>Private Sector Housing – Referrals of unlawful evictions and prohibition orders</p> <p>Building Services – Decants while improvement work and adaptations are completed.</p> <p>Empty Homes – Working with Central Suffolk Lettings to assist landlords and homeowners let properties.</p> <p>This is not an exhaustive list, and we work alongside Strategic Housing and other internal teams which is presented in our Homes and Housing Strategy.</p>
<p>There is no priority where the allocation of housing is addressed. This should include affordability and access to hardship support. It should involve partners as part of the Customer Journey.</p>	<p>The Allocations Team complete affordability reports for each letting, if affordability is considered an issue, they will refer into our Financial Inclusion team for support.</p> <p>As part of the Gateway allocation of property is assessed under ‘Reasonable Preference’ and ‘Additional Preference’ – please see section 2.1 and 2.2 in our Allocations Policy Allocations Policy - July 2022 - HomeChoice (gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk)</p>
<p>There is no clear identification of partners who would need to be involved in the customer journey particularly the voluntary sector.</p>	<p>Agreed, we will amend this in the Delivery Plan.</p>
<p>How will these hubs work? Mobile service? We are aware of other council departments already looking into the same so is this joined up?</p>	<p>We are working to establish how a ‘hub’ will work and what it will look like, this will be identified on the delivery plan. We have discussed a joined-up approach with other services.</p>
<p>You want to introduce a minimum standard of temporary accommodation for children but not adults?</p>	<p>We do not have children in temporary accommodation without parents so any minimum standard would extend to the whole household however we wish to improve the journey through temporary accommodation for children in the form of multi-agency working and supporting access to education, health, and socialisation.</p>
<p>Where will vulnerability be included as part of any decision making. Do you have Vulnerable Customer policy?</p>	<p>We complete vulnerability questionnaires for every individual presenting as homeless and their household, these are used to assess need, inform signposting, complete personal housing plans and used to consider suitable accommodation.</p>
<p>You mention 2 x 5 new HMOs in Needham Market, but have you consulted on this with the community? There were previous issues at that location, and this is sensitive which you should be aware of.</p>	<p>A planning application was submitted on 05/12/2022 and went through the correct consultation process that allowed for comments and objections from the public, the application was passed on 30/01/2023 following all comments taken into consideration by the case officer.</p>

<p>The lack of acknowledgement of the role of the voluntary sector in the customer journey is a concern as that consultation should have taken place before the draft strategy was produced.</p>	<p>An on-line survey with Stakeholders and Partners was completed as part of the Homelessness Review, and the findings from that Consultation Survey have fed into the development of this Strategy.</p>
<p>I've seen residents struggle to access support that is out there because it is very dispersed i.e. it comes from multiple different agencies, charities, community groups etc. Might it be helpful to have some simple, regularly updated info (online and in leaflets) about the key places to get support e.g. CAB, Warm Homes Suffolk, local food banks/community fridges, info on how to get travel to hospital reimbursed if you can't afford it - etc.</p>	<p>We recognise that access to timely information and advice is essential to helping our residents navigate the cost-of-living crisis. With many organisations offering different types of support, finding the help people need when they need it can be challenging.</p> <p>Our cost-of-living webpages contain a breakdown of the support available locally and nationally for housing costs, food and essentials, fuel and utilities, and to boost income, these pages are updated regularly to reflect changes in support.</p> <p>We are conscious that for people not online, accessing up to date information can be particularly difficult. We have worked with a number of partners to ensure information is available in non-digital formats, including cost of living leaflets for both Babergh and Mid Suffolk, as well as 'worrying about money' leaflets produced with the Independent Food Aid Network, which help residents to identify solutions to money problems and promote the organisations best placed to support. We have also worked with parish publications to share information about the support available in local newsletters and noticeboards, in order to reach people at a local level.</p>

8. ALL -MEMBER BRIEFING SESSIONS

During the Consultation period 4 All-Member Briefing sessions were held, to formerly present the Strategy to Members and to answer questions.

The following details the questions that were asked and our responses:

QUESTION:	RESPONSE:
<p>How Different is the new Strategy to the old Strategy?</p>	<p>The new Strategy puts ‘Early Intervention’ at the start and is the foundation that supports the strategy and the ethos that runs throughout the strategy. We want to support residents before they get to crisis point by encouraging them to contact us at the earliest stage. We don’t want to wait for a ‘statutory trigger’ to apply before we can offer assistance.</p> <p>The new strategy will be a ‘live’ document, meaning that it can respond to change quickly if it needs to. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains reflective of current challenges.</p>
<p>Have the reasons for homelessness changed since the last strategy?</p>	<p>The main reasons for homelessness continue to be Section 21 Notices and being asked to leave accommodation by friends or family.</p>
<p>What percentage of homelessness presentations are from ex-service personnel?</p>	<p>We have very few homelessness presentations from those who are serving or have served in HM Forces: between 1st April 2019 – 31st January 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Babergh – 13 (0.4% of all homeless applications taken during this period) • Mid Suffolk – 18 (0.6% of all homeless applications taken during this period)
<p>Are we identifying those at risk of homelessness or are we waiting for them to contact us?</p>	<p>An initial contact from a household triggers assistance. We are waiting for the Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) to assist with being more proactive.</p>
<p>What is the split in homelessness presentations between Council, Private and Housing Association tenants?</p>	<p>We have very low level of evictions from BMSDC tenancies, as we work closely with the in-house Financial Inclusion Officers to ensure that tenants with rent arrears are assisted. Private Registered Providers have a ‘duty to refer’ to us when tenants are at risk of homelessness. It is harder to work with tenants of private landlords as there is no ‘duty to refer.’</p> <p>Between the 1st April 2019 and 31st January 2024, there were 3222 homeless applications in Babergh; of these only 1904 provide a reason for homelessness: 26% of these were recorded as due to the end of a Private Tenancy; 8% due to the end of a Council Tenancy and 2% for the end of a Registered Provider Tenancy.</p>

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	For the same period of time in Mid Suffolk, there were 2884 homeless applications, of these 1661 gave a reason for homelessness: 25% of these were recorded as due to the end of a Private Tenancy; 5% due to the end of a Council Tenancy and 3% for the end of a Registered Provider Tenancy.
What can Councillors do to help and support this work?	Help to communicate the services that we offer. Refer people to us who are in need of assistance, at the earliest opportunity. Highlight that our advice service is 'tenure neutral'
How do we manage Rough Sleepers that don't want to accept the help that is on offer?	We will keep working with rough sleepers and offering them assistance until they chose to accept assistance. Building relationship and trust is key when working with rough sleepers.
What are we doing to help residents who are struggling with their mortgage repayments?	Housing Advice provided by BMSDC is free and tenure neutral. The early intervention team can offer housing advice and make referrals to CAB and third sector partners. We would ensure that they are taking to their mortgage providers.
What are we doing to help those that are under occupying to move to more suitable accommodation?	There is additional priority in the allocation policy for tenants who are wishing to downsize to more suitable accommodation. We are considering how we can best support residents through the process and are considering getting feedback from those that have already been through the process. We do have a budget to offer an incentive for downsizing but we are also going to consider what else we can offer as an incentive.
Does most of the demand come from market towns or from other areas?	Yes, most of the demand for our services is coming from our market towns.
How often will the Strategy be reviewed?	The Strategy and Delivery Plan will be reviewed once a quarter but can be reviewed sooner if something urgent occurs.
Are any of those currently in temporary accommodation housed by Central Suffolk Lettings?	No, all temporary accommodation is our own stock, or the Cedars Hotel or run by Sanctuary Housing (1 unit)
Do we need more temporary accommodation?	We don't necessarily need more temporary accommodation, we need to look more closely at what we have, where it is, is it suitable and then compare that to our statistics over the last couple of years of households in TA to try and forecast need for the future.
How aware are we of people who are 'sofa surfing' and at risk of homelessness?	Tenancy Support Officers in the Rough Sleeping Team are aware of and assist previous rough sleepers who are known to be at risk of homelessness. Financial Inclusion Officers can also assist once an individual has been identified as at risk of homelessness.
What has been the cost of using The Cedars Hotel for the past 12 months?	This information has been provided to members.
Is there on-going work re: County-wide Homelessness Strategy for Suffolk?	Yes, districts and boroughs are working together to consider an over-arching homelessness strategy for Suffolk.

How has this consultation been promoted?

Sessions have also taken place with CAB and the Tenant Board. The Survey has been sent direct to Partners and Stakeholders, all households registered for housing on Gateway to Homechoice, All BMSDC tenants registered for the 'My Home Bulletin' and is on both the Babergh and Mid Suffolk websites. It has also been promoted through X (formerly Twitter), Facebook and LinkedIn.

9. TENANT BOARD MEETING

During the Consultation Period, the Strategy was formerly presented to BMSDC’s Tenant Board.

The following details the questions that were raised and our responses:

QUESTION:	RESPONSE:
<p>How do rough sleepers get a referral for help? Is it more chance or accident? How would they know about it?</p>	<p>There is a service called Street Link, StreetLink - Connecting people sleeping rough to local services (thestreetlink.org.uk) if anybody sees a rough sleeper, they can report this, and they will forward it to the relevant local Council.</p> <p>There are also Rough Sleeper workers, who walk around our districts and find rough sleepers in areas that we know they usually are. e.g. places they can find warmth.</p> <p>We also can be contacted by Community Wardens.</p> <p>We accommodate people at any time all year round, not just in severe weather.</p> <p>There is also the rough sleeper inbox which is advertised on our website along with street link and Advice Aid. Advice Aid gives a lot of help and advice, and links into our service so if you can’t find a resolution you can come through to us.</p>
<p>Do you have any negative cases, and how do we learn from this?</p>	<p>We do occasionally have some “negative cases”, for example we have people who panic in accommodation having had a period of rough sleeping. It is about trying to work with people to get over those barriers. We will always use these cases as a learning opportunity on how we can do better so can we really call them negative.</p>
<p>Because of the government funding, do you feel that you have a challenge on taking on the full responsibility to tackle homelessness?</p>	<p>We are working with the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing on their road shows next year. We have an advisor who spends the day with us every quarter and gives us a lot of positive feedback about our service. There has been a recent homelessness summit organised by Eastbourne DC and many D’s and Bs sent an open letter to central government regarding the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, and we were asked to send our statistics in with the letter to showcase the challenges we face. Yes, we do have challenges, but we are not alone and also receive the praise we deserve.</p>
<p>Do we advertise the Anglian water Social Tariff?</p>	<p>Theres a lot of Cost-of-Living Support information that we should be advertising better.</p>

10. MEETING WITH CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

As a key partner, and at the request of Mid Suffolk CAB, a separate session was held with 2 representatives, so that they could provide more in-depth feedback on the Strategy and Delivery Plan. The following is the key points raised and discussed and our response:

QUESTION/COMMENT:	RESPONSE:
<p>When you are establishing the team processes and the links to other in-house teams, we would like CAB to be included in that conversation in order to be able to make the best contribution we can to playing our part in supporting early intervention.</p>	<p>We will amend the Delivery Plan, to ensure that CAB are named specifically in the action around establishing team processes and links to in-house teams.</p>
<p>“Setting up Protocols with other agencies to formalise early-intervention multi agency arrangements with Probation, Prisons, Hospitals, Adult Care Services and Childrens and Young Peoples services to work collaboratively and prevent homelessness for our most vulnerable residents.” We think this should recognise that the VCSFE sector has a role and suggest including VCSFE partners in the list of agencies that you will work with collaboratively to prevent homelessness.</p>	<p>We will not be including VCSFE partners In this action as this is regarding statutory duties.</p>
<p>We recognise that the idea for Early Intervention Hubs and a mobile customer access point is at an early stage. We suggest these will be most effective where they are integrated with other services where those services are best placed to meet client needs. As a local Citizens Advice, we believe we could play a useful role in early intervention and if we can be involved in the development of the</p>	<p>We are in the early stages of this piece of work and need to look at the viability of the project first. Initially the Early Intervention Hubs and a mobile customer access point will be to administer our statutory duties, as the strategy evolves, we may look at key partner involvement. We will not be making any changes to this action, at this point.</p>

<p>proposals, we can best work out how we can help.</p>	
<p>There is an action about improving the use of testimonials from people in Temporary Accommodation. We suggest that this should be a two-stage process, where the first stage is adding the testimonials and virtual tours and there is a second stage where the team could look at next steps for using testimonials and lived experience for business improvement.</p>	<p>We already use client feedback and exit surveys to inform our service, ensure best practice and underpin business improvement. This action would be requesting permissions from those clients to use their testimonials and virtual tours on our website and information for households facing homelessness.</p>
<p>Your page on “what we have already achieved” for health and wellbeing could include the fact that the council has joined the Suffolk Information Partnership to improve referral routes into community support that improves health and wellbeing. Under “what we will be doing next” we suggest that the strategy mentions that you are “engaging with the Suffolk Information Partnership and other referral routes to continue to improve access to community support for health and wellbeing.”</p>	<p>We will add reference to the Suffolk Information Partnership in the ‘what we have already achieved’ section but we will not be including it in the ‘what we will be doing next’ section, as we consider this work to have become ‘business as usual.’</p>
<p>Under Priority 5 – Mitigating against the impacts of the cost of living you mention food security. As a local Citizens Advice, we think there’s a risk that going forward food banks may not be able to meet demand following the end of the Household Support Fund in 2024. The Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Council Homelessness Review: 2023 recognises that the council regularly refers to food banks as part of its operations. Your current plan includes the long-term action of “Taking part</p>	<p>We are confident that this work is taking place elsewhere within the Council and does not sit within the remit of the Homeless Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Therefore, we will not be making any changes to the original action.</p>

<p>in the development of a Food security plan for Suffolk alongside Community Action Suffolk. “ We recommend adding a short-term action that would make it clear who was responsible for initiating or co-ordinating a response should any of the food banks reduce their operations or close, in addition to the action on the food sustainability project. We would suggest this action be revised to read as follows: “Liaising with the food sustainability project to ensure that Housing Teams are able to respond to short term issues in emergency food provision. Taking part in the development of a Food security plan for Suffolk alongside Community Action Suffolk”.</p>	
<p>The survey of Stakeholders and Partners as part of the Homelessness Review asked whether there was an appetite to be part of a Homelessness Forum; 100% of respondents stated that they would be happy to proactively be part of such a forum with concerns raised over data sharing agreements that would need to be managed. The forum is not in the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy or the Delivery plan. We suggest that it should be explicitly mentioned in the strategy and the delivery plan should indicate who is going to plan and deliver it.</p>	<p>An action has been added to the Delivery Plan and has been referenced in the Strategy Document.</p>
<p>We recommend that the council should consider piloting furnished tenancies. There’s a lot of evidence from End Furniture Poverty that it benefits both the landlord and the tenants, and we believe that the Housing Transformation Manager is reviewing the</p>	<p>This suggestion is beyond the scope and remit of the Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Resettlement Officers currently assist households moving on from Temporary Accommodation with sourcing furniture and white goods by utilising the Local Welfare Assistance Service (LWAS), Furniture Projects and Charities, etc. Due to budgetary constraints it will be difficult to progress with a pilot at this time.</p>

<p>evidence. This would involve introducing a service charge to cover the cost of the furniture, void loss, cost of replacement furniture for theft or wear and tear, any miscellaneous work and administration costs of the scheme.</p> <p>Since this work is in progress already, we would recommend putting an action under Priority 5 – Mitigate against the impact of the cost of living. The action could read “review the potential for piloting furnished tenancies to prevent tenants going into debt to furnish their properties and improve tenancy sustainment.”</p>	
<p>What options do households in temporary accommodation have for washing their clothes?</p>	<p>The Temporary Accommodation manager will ensure that all households going through TA are made aware of their nearest laundry facilities.</p>
<p>Is there a ‘moving checklist’ or similar to ensure that households are aware of the potential cost of moving?</p>	<p>Households in Temporary Accommodation are assisted by Resettlement Officers when they are rehoused from Temporary Accommodation. We could consider introducing something to help those moving via general allocations and lettings from the Housing Register.</p>

11. RESPONSES FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF HOMELESSNESS/ ROUGH SLEEPING OR EXPERIENCE OF BEING THREATENED WITH HOMELESSNESS/ ROUGH SLEEPING

One of the key aspects of this consultation exercise was to capture the voice and the views of people with experience of homelessness/rough sleeping and experience of being threatened with homelessness/rough sleeping.

The survey was completed by 18 people with this experience. That equates to 15.3% of all respondents to the survey.

We have analysed responses from this cohort separately. This shows:

The Vision:

Our Vision: 'Rough Sleeping is rare, brief and non-recurring and that homelessness is routinely prevented through early and upstream prevention'	Agree Fully	Agree Partially	Don't agree at all
	50% (9 people)	16.6% (3 people)	33.3% (6 people)

There is a high percentage of people who don't agree with the vision of the Strategy. Of the 6 people who don't agree with the vision, 5 left a further comment:

Comment:	Response:
<p>Mental health must be taken into consideration especially for people with PTSD. Council staff needs to be much more aware & trained in dealing with PTSD & provisions must be made for people who are being made homeless who have animals with them. Currently single people with no children who have animals are treated appallingly with no care or compassion. More support needs to be put in place when people are facing homelessness - waiting until the date they're homeless is too late.</p>	<p>For every household that presents as homeless we complete an assessment of need for all household members, and we will signpost and refer to the appropriate agency or support group if a need is identified.</p> <p>Housing Solutions staff are not trained in dealing with individuals with mental health issues or suffering with PTSD and will always refer to the correct agency, however we are trained in how to identify these issues and work with supporting agencies to manage any issues.</p> <p>We provide temporary accommodation for those single and family households who present as homeless with animals.</p> <p>We assess need at prevention stage of the homelessness journey and aim to sign post and refer to appropriate agencies before households become homeless.</p>

Appendix E

A lot of young people who don't have the best relationships with their parents sleep rough.	We work with young people and parents who have asked them to leave home at an early stage and can offer support and advice around a more planned approach to rehousing. We try to reconnect rough sleepers with family and friends as well as accommodating them in our specialist units.
Males are forced to sofa surf because they are not priority and don't have children with them.	All single males are assessed in line with homelessness legislation regarding priority need.
The vision was created prior to covid 19 lockdowns and the cost-of-living crisis. It needs updating or changing completely. The world as we know it is collapsing, hence a new vision must be imagined as a matter of urgency. The vision simply no longer applies and therefore will not prevent homelessness.	The last strategy was written in 2019 and ends this March 2024, the new strategy April 2024 has a new vision and takes into consideration the cost-of-living crisis and recovery from the pandemic.
You don't help the vulnerable.	We class everyone approaching us as homeless as being vulnerable due to their housing crisis, we then assess and consider how we can support that individual to be rehoused.

The Priorities:

Do you agree that we need to focus on:	Agree Fully	Agree Partially	Don't Agree at all
Early, Upstream Prevention and Intervention	94% (17 people)	6% (1 person)	0%
Making Rough Sleeping rare, brief and non-recurring	100% (18 people)	0%	0%
Ensuring that the health and wellbeing needs of households are met whilst in temporary accommodation.	94% (17 people)	6% (1 person)	0%
Continuing to improve access to the private rented sector by expanding and future proofing the Central Suffolk Lettings Service.	61% (11 people)	28% (5 people)	11% (2 people)

Appendix E

Mitigating against the impacts of the cost of living?	66% (12 people)	28% (5 people)	6% (1 person)
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These results show that there is overwhelming support for the 5 priorities identified in the draft Strategy. These results are very similar to the results when looking at *all* responses to the survey. We are not making any amendments to the 5 priorities.

The Strategy:

	Agree Fully	Agree Partially	Don't Agree at all
The Draft Strategy is easy to Understand	33% (6 people)	66% (12 people)	0%
The Draft Strategy provides enough information	28% (5 people)	61% (11 people)	11% (2 people)

We have removed all jargon, acronyms and added definitions to the Strategy Document.

12. SUMMARY OF CHANGES MADE TO THE STRATEGY AND DELIVERY PLAN AS A RESULT OF CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

You said:	We have:
<p>The BMSDC Vision is “Rough sleeping is rare, brief and non-recurring and homelessness is routinely prevented through early and upstream intervention”. Our preference would be a uniform Suffolk wide Vision as set out by the work in the Campbell Tickell work – ‘That homelessness and rough sleeping in Suffolk is prevented wherever possible and, where it cannot be prevented, it is rare, brief and non-recurring.’</p>	<p>We have changed the vision to the Suffolk Wide vision as set out in the Campbel Tickell Report, this is so we are more closely aligned with any future Suffolk Wide Homelessness Strategy.</p> <p>“Homelessness and rough sleeping is prevented wherever possible and, where it cannot be prevented, it is rare, brief and non-recurring.”</p>
<p>There were several comments that the Strategy was full of jargon and difficult to understand.</p>	<p>We have ensured that there is no jargon in the document, we have added definitions and explanations to technical terms and we have ensured that there are no acronyms in the Strategy.</p>
<p>CAB would like to be included in the conversation re: establishing team processes and links to in-house teams; in order to be able to contribute to supporting early intervention work.</p>	<p>We have amended an action in the Delivery Plan to specifically name CAB. The action is now, ‘Establish team processes and links to in house teams especially the Financial Inclusion Team and Central Suffolk Lettings, statutory and third sector agencies particularly <i>Citizens Advice</i> to complement service delivery’</p>
<p>There is no reference to the Suffolk Information Partnership.</p>	<p>We have added reference to the Suffolk Information Partnership in the ‘what we have already achieved section’ of Priority 3: Ensuring the health and wellbeing needs of households are met whilst in temporary accommodation: Joined the Suffolk Information Partnership to improve referral routes into community support to contribute to improving health and wellbeing.</p>

Appendix E

<p>The survey of partners and stakeholders as part of the Homelessness Review showed 100% of respondents would like to be part of a BMSDC Homelessness Forum but this is not in the Strategy or Delivery Plan.</p>	<p>We have added an action to the Delivery Plan and have referenced this in the Strategy Document. The action is, 'Establish a Housing Forum to promote co-ordination and co-operation with partners.'</p>
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