

Homelessness Strategy 2019

Consultation Output Report

South Gloucestershire Council

Author: Corporate Research & Consultation Team
Date: April 2019

Contents

Section	Page
1. Key Findings	3
2. Consultation purpose, methodology, sample and response	4
3.0 Survey Analysis	7
3.1 Vision	7
3.2 Main Priorities	8
3.3 Action Plan	12
3.4 Equalities	13
3.5 About the Respondents	14
Appendices:	17
A Copy of consultation survey	17

1.0 Key Findings

- Overall 18 respondents agreed with the **vision** in the strategy and 2 respondents disagreed.
- A general theme was that the strategy overall was considered to be basic and not go far enough to tackle the issues of preventing homelessness. The question of how the vision will be achieved was also raised.
- Overall 18 respondents agreed with the **main priorities** in the strategy and only 1 respondent disagreed.
- The issue of prevention and early intervention was mentioned by respondents. How the main priorities will be achieved was questioned and that more detail was required for this to be achievable. . The wider problems of being able to provide affordable housing was also raised by a number of respondents.
- Some of the popular themes mentioned for suggestions for the **action plan** include joint working with other agencies such as Bristol city council and WECA. Providing more support for the causes of homelessness (prevention) such as help with universal credit claims, debt management and employment and training.

2.0 Consultation purpose, methodology and response

Research Objectives

The purpose of this consultation was to seek views and gather opinions from groups and organisations on South Gloucestershire's draft version of their Homelessness Strategy which sets out the strategic direction and specific priorities to prevent and tackle homelessness in South Gloucestershire.

Methodology

Process

The consultation process was supported by a dedicated consultation webpage which hosted all consultation documents, an online survey and a paper survey to download. The online consultation system sent out a notification to registered users informing them of the consultation and providing links to this information:

https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/consult.ti/HS_19/consultationHome

As part of the consultation we also welcomed comments made online and by letter, email, fax and over the phone and these contact methods were promoted on consultation literature.

Consultation information was sent to Town and Parish Councils, South Gloucestershire councillors and local voluntary and community organisations. Notifications were also sent to a range of other stakeholders and interested parties. All libraries and One-Stop Shops were also notified of the consultation details and asked to cascade the information to any interested parties.

Methods

Survey

The survey was open from 22nd February 2019 until 23rd March 2019

Sample and Response

There was a total of 24 online responses to the consultation.

General Caveats

The results of this consultation are not statistically representative of the views of South Gloucestershire residents due to the nature of the consultation methodology used. The level of response, information gathered and views obtained still provide a useful indicator of wider opinion and any important issues that will need to be considered.

Due to the software used and the different response options open to respondents, it was possible for people to submit more than one response. This has been monitored during the consultation period and analysis and it does not appear to have been abused or be a significant issue affecting the response.

Any obvious duplicate comments, personal information and comments that can identify individuals, have been removed from the comments analysis.

Percentages used in this report have been rounded and may not add up to exactly 100%. For some survey questions, respondents could select more than one response which also means that percentages or number of responses, if added together, can total more than 100% or more than the number of responses received.

We have included all responses received direct to us as part of this consultation report.

Further Information

This report was produced by South Gloucestershire Council's Corporate Research & Consultation Team.

Further information about this report is available from the Corporate Consultation Officer:

📞 01454 863297

✉️ consultation@southglos.gov.uk

💻 www.southglos.gov.uk

✉️ South Gloucestershire Council, Corporate Research and Consultation Team, Council offices, Badminton Road, Yate, Bristol, BS37 5AF

3.0 Survey Analysis

3.1 Vision

Q1. To what extent do you agree with the vision in the strategy?

Table 1. Q1 To what extent do you agree with the vision in the strategy?

Strongly agree	10	44%
Slightly agree	8	35%
Neither agree nor disagree	3	13%
Slightly disagree	1	4%
Strongly disagree	1	4%
Total	23	100%

Base size n= 23

Overall 18 respondents agreed with the vision in the strategy and 2 respondents disagreed. 3 respondents were neutral. Some of the reasons for this were given in the table below.

Q2. Please give reasons for your answer

A total of 16 comments were made in response to this question

Table 2. Q2 Please give reasons for your answer

The strategy does appear limited in terms of resources and ambition. The actual strategy part (pages 7-9) looks like it could have been thrown together in a day. It doesn't look like much effort has gone into developing the strategy.
I believe early prevention and identification of any problem will make it easier to solve.
can't see what you hope to achieve
The aims are good but will it provide joined up action?
Working in partnership with other organisations and departments to tackle and prevent homelessness
Can't see how you can help people who don't want to try and improve their lives
The fact that the council wants to treat individuals holistically and to put in place the ability to recognise people that need help.

Some areas don't seem to reflect the actual areas of homelessness and the issues

THE MAIN CAUSE OF THE LACK OF SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION IS THE DEMISE OF THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

It's arguably a little basic and perhaps states a very obvious goal, rather than a new aspiration to explore different ideas and, in particular, acknowledge that recent direction of travel with homelessness has been in the wrong direction.

I have experience of working with homeless young people as a volunteer host with Bristol Nightstop, and I also see the rough sleepers every day in the city.

Far too many people are facing homelessness with the implementation of UC

Its a vision of the status quo. The vision should be more ambitious, for example, reduce the number of people at risk of homelessness. I understand its difficult to measure and that SGC doesn't control all the levers, but a more ambitious vision may create more ambitious plans

Good in principle but people are homeless for a range of reasons so not sure exactly "how" you will work with partners or even which partners. Good statement but not much detail as to how this will be done.

The vision does not really address the real need for truly affordable accommodation

The vision strategy is clearly stating the three pathways in which homelessness can be prevented/supported, identified and met. The engagement with all organisations around a duty to refer should have always been considered as essential, therefore it is positive this has been stated within the strategy. Identification of those with complex needs is welcomed as is an understanding from the council of how personal, social and cultural barriers for people trapped in homelessness affects their ability to gain and maintain housing and tenancy. The strategy does certainly make it appear that they will indeed be considered and supported as individuals with their own situations rather than possibly judged as a group (e.g. those released from prison, drug and alcohol users). Very often at present it is felt that those in crisis are not given or introduced to the resources they need to help overcome homelessness. It has also been the case that they have not been given priority even when their own circumstances place them in great danger (we have experience with those at risk of modern day slavery and domestic violence not receiving adequate help and support from the council). The statement 'All pathways to have the person at the centre of the response to their situation with particular emphasis on entrenched issues' is therefore a fantastic and welcomed element of the strategy. When discussing the input from different agencies in South Glos and the achievements which are possible when agencies work together again is a welcomed element to the strategy; one example may be forming some type of 'case review' meeting where responsibilities can be shared out between agencies ensuring that all possible advice and support is in place for the individual. This will also help reduce the amount of work which is often duplicated by agencies for individuals. From previous examples of this working practice the individual feels supported

with their needs met. It is also crucial for ensuring the safeguarding of individuals. Where the strategy states about 'being on top of what's happening locally and nationally that could give rise to homelessness'; one suggestion could be having a local forum. The low numbers identified in South Glos as homeless is due to both how these numbers are counted; and the criteria involved at identifying someone as 'street homeless'. In South Glos there are many hidden homeless individuals also. This suggestion within the strategy could be seen as positive in having potential for the council to have a more realistic view of homelessness in its community.

A general theme was that the strategy was considered to be basic and not go far enough to tackle the issues of preventing homelessness. The question of how the vision will be achieved was also raised.

3.2 Main Priorities

Q3. To what extent do you agree with the main priorities in the strategy?

Table 3. Q3. To what extent do you agree with the main priorities in the strategy?

Strongly agree	12	52%
Slightly agree	6	26%
Neither agree nor disagree	4	17%
Slightly disagree	1	4%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Total	23	100%

Base size n= 23

Overall 18 respondents agreed with the main priorities in the strategy and only 1 respondent disagreed. 4 respondents were neutral. The reasons for this are listed in the table below.

Q4. Please give reasons for your answer

A total of 15 comments were made in response to this question

Table 4. Q4. Please give reasons for your answer

The priorities are reasonable.
Homelessness regardless of the cause can lead to more crime and people with addiction habits. People who feel unwanted and ignored will lose self respect. We must ensure it is clear what the first contact is and that the people handling the call are trained in these matters.
no concrete suggestions - just waffle.
The aims are obviously necessary in the 21st century in a wealthy country
Being able to provide help that an individual needs as situations vary from person to person.
Strongly agree BUT this is too focused on the What We Will Do, rather than the How. This is altogether more a statement of policy, rather than a strategy and I can't see new initiatives (new strategies!) on homelessness.
It all matters
I agree with "prevention and response" but the description of what is meant by that is weak on prevention. The strategy already identified many of the increasing pressures (causes) of homelessness, but the "prevention and response" is more quick reaction rather than prevention.
Unless tackled early the issue will only get worse.
Again the right statements but no detail as to how this will be done.
The priorities do not really address the real need for truly affordable accommodation
I'm unclear what the Council would be doing? would they be actively visiting people in the community to fully assess situations? will staff be given the training needed? as someone who is renting privately a unsafe property I've found the council staff in the role to help don't have a clue about the regulations they should be using- its not difficult when they only need to know a few regulations- most of us work with loads of regulations day to day and can manage
Please see response to Q1 where this is also covered. If the main priorities are kept from the vision strategy and are put into place individuals in South Glos will have a good support network. It however is important to emphasise the need for all workers/professionals involved to uphold the vision strategy with all those individuals presenting as homeless. This should not simply become a strategy in writing and not upheld in working practices.
Homelessness is a very complex issue caused by a variety of reasons. You need to prioritise an individual approach that helps address the individuals issues and provides and helps them keep a new home.
The key is to identifying the issues early and helping prevent homelessness.

The issue of prevention and early intervention was mentioned by respondents. Again how the main priorities will be achieved was questioned and that more detail was required for this to be achievable. . The wider problems of being able to provide affordable housing was also raised by a number of respondents.

Q5. Do you have any suggestions for different or additional priorities?

A total of 13 comments were made in response to this question

Table 5. Q5. Do you have any suggestions for different or additional priorities?

Rather than build yet more "affordable" homes that speculators buy cheap and then sell for a profit, thus depriving the needy of a real affordable home, I'd like to see more "council" homes built and owned by the council rather than using 3rd party companies.
try allowing for more low cost housing in villages - Green Belt rules too strict and far too many NIMBYs in local villages. say permission for about 5-10 houses in all villages would help enormously.
Needs more teeth to achieve a more coherent solution
Make it easy for people to access the help and make it easy to understand.
STOP THE LOSS OF PRIVATE RENTED PROPERTY BY REMOVING UNNECESSARY LEGISLATION INTRODUCED DURING THE LAST 10 YEARS
It seems this is all about face - the Homeless Forum, and other joint working, should have the aim of creating a strategy. As it stands, this document does not give strategic direction but more a pretty straightforward statement of policy and aspiration. My professional view is this is something that needs to be paused until something new can be stated, something that brings together services and addressed homelessness in a new way, or a more joined up way, otherwise I can't see this document having a genuine impact on service users, on homelessness. "Address affordability issues", for example, is an aspiration and there's nothing here to give strategic steer on achieving this - I could repeat this view on many points listed, hence my suggestion to pause....your additional priority should really be to make this a real strategy, a real driver for a new framework, a new approach - doesn't have to be radical but does need to be a more costed, more strategic set of aims with planning and realistic targets/aims behind them.
Assist people who are battling high rental in the private sector alot more than you do now
Its part of prevention really, but to be a convincing strategy that will impact homelessness, there has to be a specific strategies to increase the supply of affordable housing, whether private or social housing. If the root causes are not addressed, its just a coping strategy.

I would suggest that one of the priorities in this strategy should be to work in closer partnership with Bristol City Council. There is no mention in the document of the enormous amount of work already underway in Bristol especially in the City Centre And which already involves folk who live in South Gloucs

Truly affordable social housing

more linked to quality house building in the area. all housing should meet a min standard i.e see the Wales Housing Quality Standards for social housing requirements that are very clearly explained.

You need to prioritise precisely how you are going to build and maintain cost effective high quality homes and precisely what services you are going to provide to help people keep them. You have 4000 people on the housing register how precisely are you going to rehouse them without making a priority of new homes.

Not so much an additional priority - but something that could be considered under both the priority of Prevention and Resources. By working with the private sector and private landlords to see if they can help with the housing shortage, by offering them incentives to take a reduced rent from tenants. This could help in 2 ways - it could prevent homelessness becoming an issue (as the rental gap between private and social sector is often what creates difficulty in payments in the private sector and this then leads to homelessness)...This sort of intervention could help save council money and save a lot of stress for people. It could also help as there aren't enough social houses to rent....and surely by getting some private landlords on board and offering incentives this could be quicker / easier / and more cost effective than trying to build new 'affordable' homes - for social rent. Work with developers to - in order to build the right type of house and ensure that any empty houses aren't left empty.

Low cost- affordable housing was mentioned by a number of respondents both in the private and social housing sector as being a cause of homelessness. The national issue of there being a housing shortage was also mentioned. Joint working with other organisations such as Bristol City Council and the Homeless forum was put forward as a suggestion for working to help support the homeless.

3.3 Action Plan

Q7. Once we have adopted the new strategy, we will set out an action plan to help us meet our priorities. Are there any particular actions that you think we should include?

A total of 17 comments were made in response to this question

Table 6. Q7. Once we have adopted the new strategy, we will set out an action plan to help us meet our priorities. Are there any particular actions that you think we should include?

Not at the moment
try doing something rather than talking about it.
Helping people bridge the gap between claiming universal credit and receiving it so they don't fall into arrears or are threatened with eviction
Appropriate delegation and use of resources, ensuring regular and routine meeting of the Homelessness Forum; assess most urgent need, ie training, employment, family conciliation in relation to young people at risk of leaving home, accommodation.
Interagency co-operation so people don't get missed.
Grater partnership working with Bristol City Council and WECA
MAKE IT COST EFFECTIVE FOR LANDLORDS TO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION AS RECENT LICENCING AND OTHER LEIGISLATION HAS RESULTED IN MANY PEOPLE SELLING UP
The strategy doesn't feel sufficiently formed to lead to a strategy. Setting out an action plan should involve working with partner and, being frank, this if not the place for me to give detail on what I feel needs to be in the action plan - this needs to be formed by more meaningful engagement with stakeholders, and through a more thorough assessment of resources, targets, funding etc.
Young people are especially vulnerable. I hope the action plan will provide special focus on 16-24 year olds
none yet
I don;t know what actions are required to increase the stock of affordable houses, and I'm sure many are outside SGC control, but not all are. What are the best practices across the UK where similar challenges exist?
There is a need for clear signposting to enable people at risk to be able to access help. As South Gloucs is a spread-out area this would need multiple access points. Also worth involving the churches who have a lot of experience of dealing with the dis-possessed. Consider creation of middle-term accommodation with managed oversight for those attempting to come away from homelessness. Provide incentives for landlords to accommodate those at risk of homelessness.

identify why people are becoming homeless. You mention private landlords being a reason for eviction but this is more likely to be because of non payment of rent, drug or antisocial behaviour. Most people become homeless because of unemployment and debt So within the action plan provide debt help, training, help to get employment. Consider Crowdfunding, see https://beam.org
links to actual house building, without homes the problem will get worse.
To include individuals from relevant organisations to be involved with the action plans.
You need to show how you are going to provide more cost effective high quality homes to meet the needs of the existing homeless and growing population. You need to compare and contrasts your effectiveness and cost to those of other projects such as Help Bristol's Homeless Charity modular homes and peer support system.
As above.

Some of the popular themes mentioned include joint working with other agencies such as Bristol City Council and WECA. Providing more support for the causes of homelessness (prevention) such as help with universal credit claims, debt management and employment and training. Providing more affordable housing was also mentioned.

3.4 Equalities

Q8. The Initial Equality Impact assessment and Analysis (EQIAA) sets out a range of issues and these are summarised in Section3 of the EQIAA. Are there any issues relating to equality and any specific or protected characteristic groups in society that you feel the Strategy should address?

A total of 9 comments were made in response to this question

Table 7. Q8. The Initial Equality Impact assessment and Analysis (EQIAA) sets out a range of issues and these are summarised in Section3 of the EQIAA. Are there any issues relating to equality and any specific or protected characteristic groups in society that you feel the Strategy should address?

Sorry, that document could not be accessed: (You can read the Initial EQIAA here). I received a "You are not authorised" message.
house local young families first
Include people with mental health issues.
(No comment - have not reviewed the EQIAA)
n/a

Vulnerable adults do not appear to be mentioned and I would assume this group of people would have high priority on housing. With regard to disability I don't know how the question is presented to applicants but maybe many consider only physical disabilities are considered rather than maybe mental health issues. Section 3 only seems to discuss white and black percentages but in section 2 there are details of other ethnic origins which would appear to cover all.

Those with mental health and addiction issues.

It appears to offer equality

It is interesting that most of the enquiries come from women - and yet it is often men that you will find sleeping rough. This stigma for asking for help needs to be addressed....

3.5 About the Respondents

Q9. Are you answering as?

A member of the public	16	70%
As a professional	1	4%
A Councillor or MP	1	4%
On behalf of an organisation	5	22%
Other (please state)	0	0%
Total	23	100%

Base size n= 23

The largest number of respondents (16) were members of the public.

Q10. Gender

Female	13	59%
Male	7	32%
Other	0	0%

Prefer not to say	2	9%
Total	22	100%

Base size n= 22

There were 13 females and 7 males that responded to the survey. 2 respondents preferred not to say.

Q11. Age

Under 16	0	0%
16-24	0	0%
25-35	3	14%
36-45	3	14%
46-55	2	9%
56-65	5	23%
66-75	7	32%
Over 75	1	5%
Prefer not to say	1	5%
Total	22	100%

Base size n= 22

Q12. Disability

No	19	86%
Prefer not to say	1	5%

Yes- Physical impairment	1	5%
Yes- Sensory impairment	1	5%
Yes- Learning difficulty or disability or cognitive impairment	0	0%
Yes- Mental health condition	0	0%
Yes- Long standing illness or health condition	0	0%
Yes- Other (please state)	0	0%
Total	22	100%

Base size n= 22

Q13. Ethnicity

White/ English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	17	77%
White Irish	1	5%
White Other	1	5%
Other	0	0%
Prefer not to say	3	14%
Total	22	100%

Base size n= 22

4.0 Appendix

A copy of the survey



Draft Homelessness Strategy 2019-2024

The draft version of South Gloucestershire's Homelessness Strategy (2019-2024) sets out the council's strategic direction and specific priorities to prevent and tackle homelessness in South Gloucestershire. We are seeking feedback on our draft strategy and we are keen to hear from a wide range of stakeholders.

The survey will take around five minutes to complete. Please submit your response by **Thursday 21st March 2019**

Q1 To what extent do you agree with the **vision** in the strategy?

- Strongly agree
- Slightly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Slightly disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q2 Please give reasons for your answer

Q3 To what extent do you agree with the **main priorities** in the strategy?

- Strongly agree
- Slightly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Slightly disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q4 Please give reasons for your answer

Q5 Do you have any suggestions for different or additional priorities?

- Yes
- No

Q6 If yes, please provide further details below

Q7 Once we have adopted the new Strategy, we will set out an **action plan** to help us meet our priorities. Are there any particular actions that you think we should include? Please provide further details below

Q8 The Initial Equality Impact Assessment and Analysis (EQIAA) sets out a range of issues and these are summarised in Section 3 of the EQIAA. Are there any issues relating to equality and any specific or protected characteristic groups in society that you feel the Strategy should address? Please provide further details below.

About You

This section is really important as it helps us to understand more about the people may be affected by any changes to the council's strategy. Any responses to these questions will remain confidential, individuals will not be identified and personal details will not be published

Q9 Are you answering as?

- A member of the public
- As a professional
- A Councillor or MP
- On behalf of an organisation
- Other (please state)

If you are answering on behalf of an organisation or 'other' please state.

Q10 Are you?

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Q11 Your age?

- Under 16
- 16-24
- 25-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- 66-75
- Over 75
- Prefer not to say

Q12 Do you consider yourself disabled?

- No
- Prefer not to say
- Yes- Physical impairment
- Yes- Sensory impairment
- Yes- Learning difficulty or disability or cognitive impairment
- Yes- Mental health condition
- Yes- Long standing illness or health condition
- Yes- Other (please state)

Other

Q13 Your ethnicity?

- Arab/Arab British
- Asian/Asian British- Bangladeshi
- Asian/Asian British- Chinese
- Asian/Asian British-Indian
- Asian/Asian British- Other
- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British- African
- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British- Caribbean
- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British- Other
- Gypsy or Traveller of Irish Heritage
- Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups- White and Asian
- Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups- White and Black African
- Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups- White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups- Other
- White/ English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
- White Irish
- White Other
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Thank you for taking the time to tell us your views.

Please send us your completed survey by Thursday 21st March 2019 to South Gloucestershire Council, Corporate Research and Consultation Team, Council Offices, Badminton Road, Yate, BS37 5AF

Any personal information that you have supplied will be held by South Gloucestershire Council in accordance with the Data Protection Act. This information will only be used as part of this exercise and personal information will not be published or passed onto any other organisation.

4.0 Analysis of other Representations