

Appendix B: Results and analysis of the public consultation (04/02/20 – 03/03/20)



Appendix B: Results of the Public Consultation

A 28-day public consultation was held between 4th February and 3rd March 2020. People were able to submit a response to a survey asking their views on the Draft Strategy. The consultation period was announced to all the partners who participated in the strategy workshops, and members of the homelessness forums.

In total 18 people submitted a response. The questions and responses are below:

Question 1:

Please select which of the following applies to you:

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Northampton Borough Council resident	66.67% 12
Someone who has approached Northampton Borough Council as homeless or threatened with homelessness	0.00% 0
Homelessness support service, charity, or trust	5.56% 1
Registered Provider of housing	0.00% 0
Other landlord	0.00% 0
Public body/organisation	22.22% 4
Other (please specify)	Responses 5.56% 1
TOTAL	18

All 18 responses answered what their status was. 12 people (67%) answered as residents of Northampton Borough Council, the largest group. 6 people answered from the perspective of public bodies or other organisations. These organisations are named in the table below, as the answers to question 2.

The other two Councils that will form West Northamptonshire (South Northants and Daventry) responded, as did Public Health Northamptonshire and adult social services from Northamptonshire County Council. Eve (a Domestic violence and abuse organisation) also responded.



Q2 Name your organisation (if applicable)

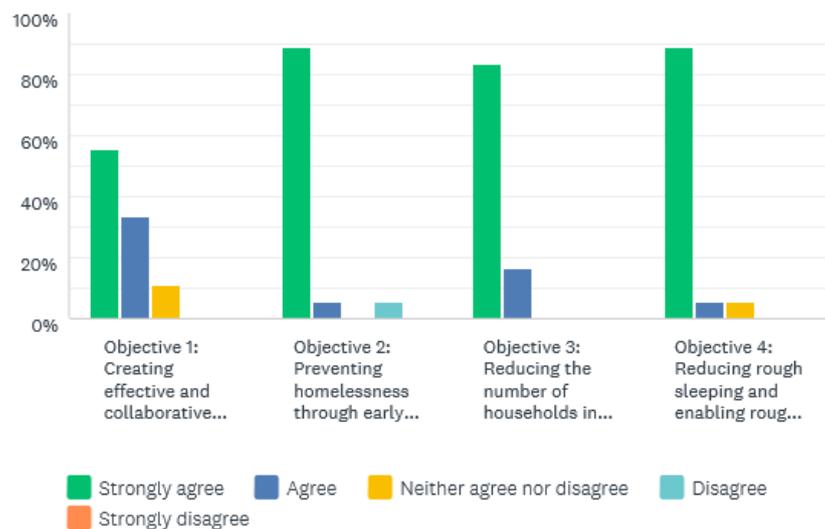
Answered: 7 Skipped: 11

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Public Health Northamptonshire	3/3/2020 5:46 PM
2	South Northants Council	3/3/2020 3:30 PM
3	Daventry District Council	3/3/2020 8:58 AM
4	NCC NASS	2/28/2020 12:16 PM
5	N/A	2/19/2020 8:23 AM
6	Danelaw Real Estate	2/17/2020 3:52 PM
7	eve	2/6/2020 3:22 PM

Question 3:

Do you agree with the four main objectives in the Strategy?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



Question 3 asked for their overall view on the four main objectives and to what extent they agreed with them.

Objective 1: 89% of people either agreed or strongly agreed, none disagreed.

Objective 2: 94% of people either agreed or strongly agreed, 1 person disagreed.

Objective 3: 100% of people either agreed or strongly agreed.

Objective 4: 94% of people either agreed or strongly agreed, none disagreed.

Full results are in the table below. Overall, there was very strong support for all four objectives from the responses, with strongly agree being the most common response for each.



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL
▼ Objective 1: Creating effective and collaborative partnerships	55.56% 10	33.33% 6	11.11% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18
▼ Objective 2: Preventing homelessness through early and targeted intervention	88.89% 16	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	18
▼ Objective 3: Reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation and ensuring a sufficient supply of suitable accommodation for homeless households	83.33% 15	16.67% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18
▼ Objective 4: Reducing rough sleeping and enabling rough sleepers to thrive	88.89% 16	5.56% 1	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18

Q4 Are there other main strategic objectives you think should be added to the Strategy? If yes, briefly describe them

Only 6 responses suggested additional main objectives. 11 did not answer and 1 simply said 'no comment'.

The themes that emerged from these responses were:

- The importance of not focusing solely on homelessness prevention and dedicating resources to help people who are already homeless, in particular expanding hostel provision and specialist accommodation for those with high needs.
- Provision of free debt advice
- Developing stronger links with health organisations to address the lack of joined up mental health support.
- Reduce the level of temporary accommodation being procured from private landlords as it an expensive use of Council resources.



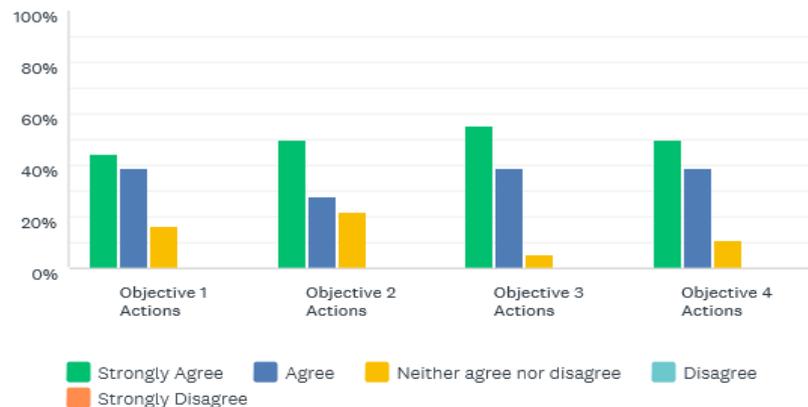
These suggestions are mostly already included within sub-objectives and the action plan:

- Objective 4 contains actions relating to relieving homelessness for those in the greatest need
- Free debt advice is already available through Money Advisers employed by the Council and other external agencies, including national charities
- Objective 1 focuses on partnership and health organisations including mental health agencies are certainly a part of that objectives and relevant actions.
- Reducing the reliance on expensive nightly let temporary accommodation is already a part of the Council's Temporary Accommodation Reduction Plan.

Question 5:

Overall, do you agree that the actions in each section of the action plan will help us to achieve that objective?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	TOTAL
Objective 1 Actions	44.44% 8	38.89% 7	16.67% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18
Objective 2 Actions	50.00% 9	27.78% 5	22.22% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18
Objective 3 Actions	55.56% 10	38.89% 7	5.56% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18
Objective 4 Actions	50.00% 9	38.89% 7	11.11% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	18

Overall, there was overwhelmingly agreement or strong agreement that the actions in each section of the action plan would help us to achieve the relevant objective. No responses disagreed that they would help us to achieve them. All 18 responses answered this question.

Q6 Are there other specific actions you think should be included in each section of the action plan? If yes, please briefly describe them.

8 responses suggested specific actions for one or more of the main objectives. 10 people did not answer.

OBJECTIVE ONE

- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Longer term charity sector funding commitments
- Include ALL the voluntary groups that are trying to help, not just the ones who do as they are told.
- Be sure to contact that person back.
- Improving access to mental health services and communications between health services
- Build more social housing
- Prioritise local Northampton born homeless families

OBJECTIVE TWO

- Mental health issues
- We would welcome continued collaborative working with PH NCC on homelessness prevention – particularly where we have a role in prevention of some of the risk factors associated with homelessness and rough sleeping
- Outcomes [*sic*] based/ Social Impact Bonds projects e.g. for the Bridges coaching model
- Interventions must always be appropriate, and devoid of coercion [*sic*]
- Be clear on the options presented to them
- Increase in homeless shelters/hostel for short term intervention. Help with benefits, for example providing a residential address.
- Ensure empty houses are turned round quickly and re-let

OBJECTIVE THREE

- There is a huge problem with unregulated HiMO landlords that needs to be addressed
- Remember you have a persons [sic] life in your hands.
- Quicker transitions from temporary to permanent residency to free up emergency accommodation for homeless individuals/families
- Persons with mental problems are given the correct help

OBJECTIVE FOUR

- Reducing rough sleeping and enabling rough sleepers to thrive will also need strong collaboration with healthcare commissioners (Northants CCG) and providers as well as public health commissioners – both in terms of specific mental health and drug and alcohol service delivery as well as wider health and wellbeing services.
- There is an immediate and urgent need to provide much greater night-shelter capacity, especially for women, children and vulnerable people.
- Have some compassion and be relatable.
- More support for homeless people to access employment/education/healthcare
- Training programmes to get people back into work

These suggested actions are again mostly already adopted within the strategy or are slight variations of existing actions in the plan. For example, with Objective Four expanding work and training access programmes and increasing night shelter provision are already included.

Several of the suggestions relate more to the way we approach our work and engage with service users, something we have also addressed in the person-centred approach we want to apply. Where there are specific suggestions that are not covered in the action plan (e.g. social impact bonds), these are options that can be explored by the Homelessness Forums in future if they want to try new initiatives.

Q7 Do you have any other comments on the Strategy or action plan?

(7 answered 11 Skipped)

- We welcome this important strategy and action plan – particularly the focus it has on partnerships and a person-centred, strength-based approach. We feel that the final action plan could include a greater emphasis on collaboration with health service commissioners (Northants CCG), as well as PH NCC. Better integration of health and wellbeing services with housing/homelessness services will be important for partnerships to be truly effective in reducing rough sleeping and improving the health and wellbeing of rough sleepers.
- We welcome the commitment to effective partnerships and forums and to enabling collaboration and harnessing the energy and commitment of a wide range of partners to tackle homelessness. We welcome the commitment to adopting a person-centred and strengths-based approach and have found this to be effective in developing and delivering our own prevention services. We look forward to working collaborative and proactively as part of Future Northants’.
- Objective 1: Although the creation of effective and collaborative partnerships is very important, it would be useful for it to be a reoccurring theme that runs through other objectives rather than being a theme itself. 1.10 on the action plan details a commitment to develop, consult and approve a West Northants Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy by April 2021. This time frame is ideal however it should be noted that this could happen before the April 2021 vesting day, or, (according to legislation) it could also be following this date. Text could be amended to state that operation of the strategy is intended until a WN strategy is adopted rather than placing a specific date. Having the strategy dated 2020 – 2023 also adds some confusion if you are committing to the April 2021 date, and makes the final paragraph on p3 seem illogical.

Objective 2: Certain processes seem to be targeted at only one cohort. Namely a home visiting officer that only visits those being asked to leave family or friends. Should targeted prevention in this way be used more liberally for other groups threatened with homelessness?

Objective 2: The customer journey seems complex with the new structure, with many different officers playing into the outcome of any one homeless case. It would be beneficial to set out why it has been structured this way e.g. is it the result of the review, is this from feedback, as it is a new design for the service, should a featuring action be the implementation and monitoring of the new structure to see if it delivers what’s expected. 3.3 within the action plan could do with a little more explanation. The action may be seen to provide incorrect information. ‘Include people with lived experience in the design and delivery of homelessness services’, this sounds like they have experience in the design and delivery. This is the same with 4.8.

Objective 4: To ‘thrive’ in the context as written within this title portrays a picture that the wish is for rough sleepers to develop positively, however it doesn’t necessarily encourage them away from rough sleeping. Is this the intention? Do we want those currently street homeless to remain street homeless? 4.11 would be useful to provide further information e.g. Is it primarily for homeless households or for rough sleepers, or both. I.e. donations for those on the streets. General: There is much text about the stakeholder events within the body of the strategy, it would be useful to understand how the homelessness review played into all of the objectives as well as any stakeholder engagement activities. There is little about situations about where homelessness prevention fails. Potentially there are actions that can help with relief e.g. housing advice, housing delivery, financial assistance. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to comment on your proposed strategy.

- A good strategy. I look forward to seeing good implementation.
- I was homeless/rough sleeping for 2 and a half years. I presented myself to the council from the beginning. I found your lack of compassion, non-existent sense of urgency and lack of resources unbelievable. There isn't enough contact between the council and homeless/potentially homeless. You are left weeks and sometimes months in the dark, despite chasing it up every day. Your current strategy is not working. You are tackling homelessness like an infestation upon the town as opposed to a real issue involving real people. A couple clicks on your computer [sic] screen decides if I get to sleep under a roof or in a bush/tent/bus stop etc not fit for human habitation and the lack of responsibility for the situation after is completely astounding. My suggestion for the strategy would be to bring in homeless/previously homeless people for effect of the study. Allow them to express their input because you won't find the current homeless (or many of them) on an online survey. There are no better people to point out flaws in the system than those that have experienced it, so appeal to that audience instead of people so lucky to be online in their own homes.
- None.
- I strongly disagree that large burdens of homelessness fall on the private sector. For the first instance, in a purely pragmatic approach, it sees vast sums of public fund re-directed into private hands, adding to the council's financial burdens. It also ignores the opportunity for the council to establish a purpose designed charitable property trust in which to either build or purchase suitable properties for temporary accommodation purposes which could be guaranteed to be available for those at risk of homelessness. Rather than adding to the financial liabilities of the council, this approach would create a fixed asset of increasing value that also means council funds paid out for the rental costs would remain in council hands. It would also significantly reduce admin costs due to removing multiple layers of communication required to negotiate with a private landlord and their managing agents. As the property value grows annually and the rent would be paid tax free to a charitable trust, it would create a system that reduces the amount of tax payer funds spent on housing the at risk as it would be at least partially self-sustaining financially (and protected from right to buy as they would not be directly owned by the council). It may even be possible to pursue this idea through alternative funding, such as lottery grants as was the case for a similar strategy in Finland that saw a homelessness reduction in Helsinki in the high 90% 's

Seven people provided some considered and detailed critique of the strategy and specific parts that lack clarity or could be expanded. These comments have been taken and amendments made where appropriate.

In addition, it should be noted that several of the comments are complimentary about the strategy and eager to begin implementation. Overall, responses were very positive with strong agreement for the main objectives and corresponding actions. Where useful additions or amendments have been raised these are evident in the final draft of the strategy.