

# Teignbridge District Council Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027 Consultation Report

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## 1. Background

Consultation on our draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-2027 was undertaken in December of 2021 and January and February of 2022 in order to help Teignbridge District Council to shape our strategic aspirations in relation to tackling homelessness and develop our plans for delivering services over the next five years.

The Council is required to consult such public or local authorities, voluntary organisations or other persons as they consider appropriate before adopting or modifying a homelessness strategy. This can include service users or specialist agencies that provide support to homeless people in the district.

## 2. Methodology

Consultation on our draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was undertaken using the following 5 methods:

- A workshop conducted with local representatives of the community and voluntary sector in Teignbridge
- An open formal consultation undertaken between 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 and 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022.
- Feedback provided by staff working in the field of Housing and Homelessness at Teignbridge Council
- Focused interviews with the leads of key agencies including those supporting young people and commissioners of substance misuse services.
- Interviews with people with lived experience of homelessness in Teignbridge.

## 3. Community and Voluntary Sector Engagement

On 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021, a consultation workshop was held with service leads from Teignbridge Council and members of the community and voluntary sector who work with homeless clients within the district. Representatives from the following organisations were present at the workshop:

- Young Devon

- Citizens Advice Teignbridge
- Homemaker Southwest
- Teignbridge CVS
- Sanctuary Supported Living

NB Representatives from a wide range of other local community and voluntary sector groups (14 in total) were invited to attend but were unable to. They instead agreed to provide feedback via the open consultation.

Throughout the course of the workshop, we discussed the core principles and strategic priorities underlying our draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, and what these would mean in practical terms for local services.

## Core Principles

### Working in Partnership

We said:

- We are proposing to establish a strategic homelessness forum to monitor progress against the strategy and agreed actions.
- Projects will run on an 18 month life cycle through 3 delivery plans to allow for changes in demand and emerging needs
- We proposed to meet twice a year to review progress, share information and feedback/ advice from VS, linking with best practice and overcoming blockages.
- Frequency could be adjusted if necessary, and written updates could be shared between meetings

Community and Voluntary Sector Partners said:

- *Partners agreed with the format in principle and confirmed interest in involvement*
- *Noted that projects which overlap would need involvement with partners from consultation and engagement stage.*
- *Meetings should include a combination of developing projects and sharing of relevant information from all parties (the previous homelessness forum was not structured in this way and attendance tailed off)*

### Using Data Effectively

We said:

- We are planning on creating a dashboard of homelessness data collated by Teignbridge Council, Citizen's Advice Teignbridge & Devon County Council broken down by ward area to create a heat map of service need. We will use this to predict future demands, target outreach and share with Councillors and partners.

Community and Voluntary Sector Partners said:

- *All agreed that this is a valuable project and that voluntary sector datasets could be added/combined*
- *Areas of vulnerability were identified as Dawlish, Teignmouth, Buckfastleigh and Moretonhampstead*
- *All agreed to review the initial project plan and provide feedback*

### Putting the Client First

We said:

- Homelessness services tend to work reactively and engagement with feedback has been low historically
- We aim to capture the voice people with lived experience of homelessness to develop services focussed on the person rather than the process.

Community and Voluntary Sector Partners said:

- *Young Devon approaches include a Mentoring system which focusses on peer support rather than parenting, and Co-designing services with young people via schemes such as the Wellbeing Café and Youth Council. Requests for general feedback focus on what worked and didn't work about the service, and how to change language/ approach.*
- *Consensus was that time is needed to build a relationship in order to gain engagement.*

## **Strategic Priorities**

### Prevention

We said:

- Financial advice services were discussed, Money Advice and Pension Service recommissioning is underway nationally which may impact the services available to the most vulnerable clients.
- This should be discussed further with CAB and Homemaker via a focused meeting in the New Year.

Community and Voluntary Sector Partners said:

- *We should add into the strategy more specific reference to Mental Health services and the new Community Mental Health Framework.*

- *Mediation has become more difficult due to pressure on Social Care services – harm minimisation process – recognising that more serious intervention might be needed.*
- *We should add into the Strategy specific reference to awareness raising, for example outreach/ visiting schools and undertaking workshops around housing options*

### Intervention

We said:

- Housing related debt can be a barrier to being offered a home.
- Housing prices and rental rates have increased, incentives for landlords to rent to families on benefits to be considered.
- There is a mismatch between local rents in the private sector and housing allowances
- There is a gap in accommodation options for young people

Community and Voluntary Sector Partners said:

- *Add into the strategy a commitment to looking at the relationship between mental health crisis and debt.*
- *It is important that people are aware of options that are available to them, and that awareness raising targets the right people.*
- *Consider using national homeless week to collaborate with partners and promote services across Teignbridge.*

### Sustainment & Recovery

We said:

- Demands on the service have meant that there has not been resource to look at meaningful occupation, available budgets have not been taken up for education and training.
- Spending to save, access to education and routes into employment reduce costs associated with homelessness and are key to recovery from a life of street attachment.

Community and Voluntary Sector Partners said:

- *Showcase good news stories to attract landlords for supported move on.*
- *Revisit Homelessness Week annually.*
- *Promote and utilise befriending services – meaningful occupation and reducing isolation.*
- *Links to volunteering/charity work.*
- *Link in with Community Mental Health framework.*

- *Look into the “I can do that” organisation helping to get under 25’s into work.*
- *Utilise and promote Apprenticeship schemes such as ‘Kickstart’.*
- *Ensuring awareness of entitlements and maximising income.*
- *Mapping of services and referral routes for professionals and users.*

## 4. Open Formal Consultation

An open consultation was undertaken between 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021 and 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Through the consultation, a copy of the Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Draft Homelessness Review were made available to members of the public, who were also asked to complete an on-line survey.

The consultation widely was promoted including via the Resident’s Newsletter, the Members Newsletter, our staff Newsletter, and the Teignbridge Council Website. The survey was also promoted via a local press release used by local news outlets, and the Executive Member for Housing was interviewed in relation to the Strategy on the BBC Devon breakfast show.

A link to the consultation was also directly emailed to key service leads and representatives of a wide range of statutory and community and voluntary sector agencies both locally and nationally. A link was also emailed directly to representatives of agencies representing marginalised groups and people with protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, in Teignbridge and Devon.

The results of the online survey are listed below. Also listed are the comments made by respondents to the survey, together with officer responses to each comment.

### **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Survey Results**

Total Responses: 84.

Q1. Do you agree that partnership working should be a core principle?

Yes: 98.1%

No: 1.19%

Q2: Do you agree that effective use of data should be a core principle?

Yes: 95%

No: 4.76%

Q3: Do you agree that putting the client first should be a core principle?

Yes: 97.62%

No: 2.38%

Q4: Do you agree that prevention should be a strategic priority?

Yes: 93%

No: 6.10%

Q5: Do you agree that intervention should be a strategic priority?

Yes: 97.53%

No 2.47%

Q6: Do you agree that Sustainment and Recovery should be a Strategic Priority?

Yes: 97.56%

No: 2.44%

## Comments and Responses from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Consultation

Comments on Key issues	Officer Response
<b>Partnership working</b>	
My experience (currently in temporary accommodation) is that different agencies struggle to communicate effectively, and/or acknowledge other agencies' recommendations	Yes, we agree that Silo working has been a barrier to effective communication in the past and we are committed to improving effective communication between key agencies in order to prevent and relieve homelessness.
It is very important that these agencies should be included - it's crucial that they should work together. However, what's needed is an overarching body whose sole objective is to help people who are going off the rails, drawing on the expertise and if possible detailed information from social services etc.	As the Local Housing Authority, responsibility for addressing and reducing levels of homelessness lies with Teignbridge District Council. We do however participate in a number of key partnerships which operate at a County-wide level.
Needs to be recognised that all these services are massively underfunded and it is not the job of the voluntary and community sector to patch holes in statutory provision. Voluntary and community sector can make a difference to people's lives but cannot counteract the core elements which contribute toward homelessness like a lack of safe homes, low wages and unnecessary criminalisation of homelessness. It also needs to be recognise that the criminal justice system seeks to penalise and further criminalise homelessness. As a person working within the Voluntary and community sector I am reluctant to collaborate with this agency because of the detrimental effect they have on people's lives.	In relation to Homelessness Services, Government has committed in core funding by 60% over the next three financial years. The criminalisation of homelessness under the Vagrancy Act of 1824 will also be repealed. We welcome this change in legislation.
Care should be taken to ensure that members of the 'partnership' belonging to the 'criminal justice system' [however attached] are seen to take a 'low key' approach to these meetings. The majority of 'rough sleepers' have over the years bad experiences with 'law enforcement' in general [both perceived and otherwise] such that any such contact could be seen in a bad light and frighten the rough sleeper away from further contact - to their detriment.	Representation of the criminal justice system is and will continue to be a key component of our partnership work. Police and probation officers attend our multidisciplinary team meetings and representatives of those agencies are also involved in the wider Devon and Cornwall Housing Options Partnership. We recognise that distrust of statutory services can be a barrier to engagement amongst the rough sleeping cohort and our Rough Sleeper Navigators work hard to build relationships and break down those barriers.



Partnership working should not negate Teignbridge from increasing its own stock of additional accommodation.	Noted and agreed
The statutory agencies are hard-pressed already, both funds and folks. Charities have inadequate funds and cannot add another set of worthy recipients of their money. Why not be partners with those who do have money? Banks, landowners, big business. With those who can institute changes for the individuals - banks, colleges, hairdressers, clothes sales, churches.	Thank you and noted. We will further explore the potential for including organisations within the private and social enterprise sectors into our wider homelessness partnership. We agree that this could have a positive financial and social impact and could benefit those experiencing homelessness.
The partnership should also be with voluntary groups and charities who currently support the homeless.	Agreed. The community and Voluntary Sector will be included in our partnership work via a Homelessness Forum which will meet on a quarterly basis. We are also in regular contact with key C&V sector agencies via our daily operational work.
Core principle should be to eliminate homelessness. Work with whoever you need to in order to achieve this. Why assume that existing partners are the best choice?	That is certainly our ambition through this strategy. We will continue to ensure that we reach out to a wide range of partners, from both existing and emerging organisations.
It is vital that a preventative approach is taken towards the causes of homelessness as clearly it is better to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place than to react only after someone becomes (or is about to become) homeless.	Agreed. Prevention is a key strategic priority within our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
Fundamental. Strengthens synergies and reduces overlaps. In theory should be more cost-effective overall. The partnership should include a lived experience element and take a holistic approach to address those experiencing multiple needs rather than just homelessness.	Agreed and noted.
I feel the lived experience on parents and families who are facing homeless and eviction must be heard as with the levels of private landlords selling while property prices are high, families are facing court evictions through no fault of their own. There is just not enough affordable rental properties for the level of landlords selling. This is also escalated by letting agents encouraging sales through promotions to make the best of the Selling boom.	Agreed- The lack of affordable accommodation is a key challenge as outlined within our strategy. We are also committed to continuing to capture the voices and views of people with a lived experience of homelessness in order to shape and refine our approach and service provision.
<b>Use of Data</b>	

Spending resources on better data when there is limited resources/political will to implement the solutions that are already known to be needed (as seems to be the current state of affairs) is just a waste of resources.	There is a very clear political will to address homelessness, both locally and nationally. Collecting and analysing data is a fundamental requirement of homelessness services as we are statutorily mandated to complete statistical returns. Our aim is to reach beyond our statutory obligations and intelligently collate and combine data sets so that we can direct resources towards those areas and people who most need our support. Using data in this way will have a positive financial impact as it will enable us to prevent homelessness more effectively.
I think data quickly becomes outdated, unless you use already limited resources to continuously update. Therefore it needs to be informed by experience of service users, potential & actual as well as staff.	Agreed and noted. We appreciate the need to utilise real-time up to date data sets. We are also committed to continuing to capture the voices and views of people with a lived experience of homelessness in order to shape and refine our approach and service provision.
Obviously. But you also very much need 'people skills'. Have a look at 'Nightmare tenants - slum landlords' on My5. Lots of these cases are resolved by landlords/letting agents persuading tenants to shape up - quite a skill!	Having strong interpersonal skills is a fundamental requirement of any front-line officer working in the sphere of homelessness. We also support staff to develop these skills through person centred, person –focus training and development.
However it should be remembered that every individual is an unique member of society and often what fits one will not fit another [the "One Man's Meat is another Man's Poison" principal], as such whilst data is an important indication of 'trends' the observer must ensure they 'tread lightly' when using this data.	Agreed and noted.
Only if some high degree of urgency is involved not endless data collection for years, Just go outside of the cosy office and trudge the streets in night time.	Agreed, however street homeless outreach work is a core element of our service. All of our staff have experience of this work, although it is predominantly conducted by our Rough Sleeper Team. Outreach is conducted in the early hours of the morning, in all weather conditions.
If being effective means doing the right thing, then you also need to be efficient, meaning doing the thing right, This relates to the choice of and management of the right data.	Agreed and noted.
Surely statistically you need to analyse past trends in order to predict future trends	Yes, analysis of past trends is key to informing and developing our service provision.
But some rough sleepers and homeless people do not appear on data as they are below the radar or their homelessness is not officially	Agreed and noted, however we do our best to keep up to date records of all of the rough sleepers what we encounter through our outreach work. It is difficult to capture data

known. They may just be on the streets or sofa surfing.	relating to 'hidden homelessness' such as sofa surfing, unless individuals contact our homelessness service, or apply for housing through Devon Home Choice. We therefore recognise the importance of working with our partners to widely promote the services and support we offer. Collating data from advisory services such as Citizens Advice Teignbridge also helps us to better understand the extent of 'hidden homelessness' within the district.
Record "what matters to me" voiced by homeless	We are also committed to continuing to capture the voices and views of people with a lived experience of homelessness in order to shape and refine our approach and service provision.
Do not confuse data with information. The data may need "interrogation" to give information that is useful.	Agreed and noted.
So long as it protects the individual	Agreed and noted.
<b>Putting the Client First</b>	
The term 'Improving our digital offer' makes no sense, you're meant to be using plain ** English!! Forums are good but only if those with homelessness experience can access them.	Noted. We will ensure that we adapt the language used to ensure it is more accessible.
My experience of the housing departments (both Teignbridge and Torridge council) is that they are rewarded/encouraged to not help people in need, and to find every reason not to help people. Reading up on the official council guidance available also suggests this to be the case, and in some cases the guidance given (for example regarding children) seems to contradict guidance given to other agencies. How much money is being used on avoiding helping people, and avoiding implementing long term strategies?	Sorry that you have had a negative experience however it is not our intention to avoid helping people. We are committed to providing assistance and support to anyone who is threatened with homelessness or homeless.
Absolutely, also need to improve engagement in terms of the organisation being proactive.	Agreed.
Good to see this principle being put forward. Forum participants need to be properly paid for their time and the system also needs to recognise that the statutory sector, including the council, are often not trusted because they are part of the state apparatus which includes law informant. E.g. a displaced person who is not a legal immigrant in this country would not	Thanks. We recognise that distrust of statutory services can be a barrier to engagement amongst the rough sleeping cohort and our Rough Sleeper Navigators work hard to build relationships and break down those barriers. We also recognise that non-statutory agencies are sometimes best placed to provide advocacy

take part in this forum because of fear of being found out.	and support to those experiencing homelessness.
Putting to one side the difficulties that Covid has placed on face to face contact clients need face to face support, guidance and assistance.	Agreed and noted. We do recognise the importance of offering face to face support, particularly in relation to service users who are vulnerable and require enhanced levels of care.
Partners will need to recognise importance of going out into community to access clients	Outreach work is and will continue to be a key element of our work.
I assume the client is the homeless person, who will probably have neither means nor skill to make use of a digital offer.	The vast majority of those accessing homelessness services are not street homeless and do have access to either a laptop or smartphone.
Services need to take on board feedback from the homeless/ex-homeless people in order to ensure that services remain responsive, proactive and learn from past mistakes.	We are also committed to continuing to capture the voices and views of people with a lived experience of homelessness in order to shape and refine our approach and service provision.
<b>Prevention</b>	
I feel like this could encourage councils to force tenants to stay in accommodation that is unsuitable (either due to health and safety, or abuse from family/partner/landlords/neighbours) due to minor technicalities housing departments will find in order to avoid helping people. For example, domestic abuse is difficult to prove, and excepting in extreme circumstances, councils can avoid helping people as there is no evidence.	Under Homelessness Legislation, we are statutorily obliged to assist people who are occupying unsuitable accommodation and it is not our intention to use prevention as a means of avoiding helping people. Please also note that under both Homelessness Legislation and the Domestic Abuse Act, evidence is not required in order to prove a case of domestic abuse. The legislation recognises that it is not always possible for victims of domestic abuse to report incidents to the Police or other statutory agencies.
The concept of 'remaining in your existing home' is to me flawed. Before going that way the reasons of homelessness needs to be closely studied - is remaining in their present home actually a reason to want to leave? A bad experience or experiences within that home or with neighbours could so easily lead to a feeling of lack of ability to cope with the present situation - a case of fight or flight? With flight being the easy [possibly only] avenue of escape	<i>As above- Under Homelessness Legislation, we are statutorily obliged to assist people who are occupying unsuitable accommodation and it is not our intention to use prevention as a means of avoiding helping people.</i>  Assisting people to remain at home should only be the focus of our homelessness officers when it is safe and suitable to do so.
Whilst I cannot disagree that prevention should be a priority how does Teignbridge propose to actually deal with the chronic shortage of affordable rented property	Increasing the supply of affordable accommodation within the district is a fundamental priority of our Housing Strategy.
But not to remain in their home if it is safer on the street, or if the bailiffs are at the door now	Assisting people to remain at home should only be the focus of our homelessness officers when

and it's outside office hours and to only intervene when a crisis occurs because no-one has seen the underlying cause.	it is safe and suitable to do so. Please also note that people can access support out of normal office hours through our 'out of hours service'. This is a statutory requirement of all homelessness services.
A huge priority that has so many interlinking reasons. Communication with clients can help with prioritising these reasons	Agreed and noted.
Social workers must be at the heart of spotting who is liable to become homeless. The chances of success of this priority would be improved by increasing their numbers, as well as their special training for this task and their suitably improved pay levels and promotion prospects.	Agreed. The 'Duty to Refer' mechanism, introduced through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 <sup>7</sup> ensures that statutory agencies such as social services are legally obliged to refer clients to local housing authorities when they are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
Prevention where possible will reduce or eliminate demands on the service in the future.	Agreed. Thank you.
Absolutely - prevention is better than cure as the saying goes	Agreed. Thank you.
The preponderance of those with mental health challenges needs careful evaluation and diagnosis. How can enough capacity for talking therapies be developed?	Agreed. We will investigate how we can further promote therapies through our links with Mental Health Services under the new Community Mental Health Framework.
Helping someone stay in their home should be top priority	Agreed.
However one of the main problems of homelessness is young people fed up with living with their parents and having an obligation to rules of the house. A lot of young people leave home because they feel it is better and they can live on their own. They are incorrect. The main aim is to keep teenagers at home	We are committed to continuing to support mediation between family members as a means of preventing homelessness, provided that it is safe and suitable for people to remain at home. Mediation is a core function of our contracted Youth Homelessness Prevention Service, Young Devon.
Working closely with Citizens Advice in Devon which is often an agency called on at early stages of crisis	We work closely with Citizens Advice Teignbridge, and also provide annual funding to them (£52,130 pa).
If the sale of rental properties by Landlords is the number 1 cause of homelessness then surely there should be some sort of incentive for these Landlords to keep their properties in the long term rental sector and avoid a sale or going into the holiday trade.	We will work with our Private Sector Housing Team to investigate what incentives may encourage landlords to continue to let their properties at affordable rents.

Prevention is always better and saves a lot of money and time and also helps people's health if they can be helped sooner rather than later	Agreed. Thank you
The Homelessness Forum is a great idea but will only be effective if there is a clear action plan with deliverables in specific timeframes. The whole strategy as laid out is excellent but next to useless if there isn't a plan of deliverables that everyone will be judged against. Where the plan doesn't meet the need this has to be identified so that more resources can be identified.	It is our intention to develop a SMART action plan which will be attached to this strategy.
<b>Intervention</b>	
lacking a semi-permanent address and reasonable cooking facilities prevents people getting back on their feet/working - relying convenience food makes it difficult to save and uncertainty around where one is located makes it difficult to focus on job related activities (I've been signed on to 4 different job centres and had to leave two jobs due to relocation). Judging from the people rough sleeping, there needs to be more things for people to do to help themselves (other than begging and selling big issue).	Agreed. Access to safe, suitable accommodation is crucial to enabling people to live healthy and productive lives and is a fundamental human right.
Intervention needs to be moved away from law informant agencies and toward properly funded community organisations.	The focus of our intervention is on person centred engagement and support. Enforcement is the responsibility of the Police and anti-social behaviour teams. We do however recognise that certain circumstances require a combined approach of enforcement and support including offers of suitable accommodation.
Guidance and suggestion would be a better term than direct intervention. Any form of 'seen intervention' can be seen in a bad light - why do they want me to go THERE? What will happen to me if I do? Will I be forced to do something I don't want to do?	Thank you, however we feel that the term intervention embodies the principle and priority of proactive engagement in order to address homelessness.
if this means B&B at least make sure accommodation is fit for purpose not some down and out doss house	One of our priorities is to reduce the use of bed and breakfast placements and invest in alternative emergency accommodation options. We do however ensure that all bed and breakfast accommodation is inspected and meets regulatory standards.
Far more bricks and mortar resources need to be provided to meet the need. In my experience in the NHS strategies and pathways	Improving the availability of affordable accommodation is a key priority of our Housing Strategy,

can sometimes get in the way of actually meeting needs	
Robust partners are key in this - no use leaning on a partner if their support is wafer-thin. No-one wins.	Agreed. Please see our section on partnership working.
Sufficient purpose-built accommodation must be created for single occupation within a sheltered environment.	Agreed and noted.
as long as it has enough flexibility to be workable for individuals	Agreed and noted.
Although people need to be supported to be able to support themselves. For example, support to get employment or access to the right medical intervention.	Agreed. Enabling people to become and self-sufficient as far as possible, and as much as circumstances allow, is critically important and explored further through our key strategic priority of 'Sustainment'.
But you don't need to develop better pathways, they already exist. You need to implement pathways that others have already developed, saving time and money	We do utilise existing pathways, however we feel that there is more work to do, for example through the development of improved pathways for people experiencing homelessness and mental health issues.
Teignbridge should licence ALL private letting and there should be a register of ALL landlords operating within Teignbridge and the register should be open to the public to view. Any actions taken by TDC should be noted on the register.	We will pass this comment on to our Private Sector Housing Team.
Proactive, targeted intervention can significantly reduce the emotional and financial costs of homeless by getting people back on their feet as quickly as possible.	Thank you, we agree.
Would homeless persons access a mobile phone access to urgent help when needed if one were available?	We do provide mobile phones to people who are rough sleeping when required as a means of maintaining contact so that we can arrange placements into accommodation, and facilitate support.
Having worked for Shelter many years ago, can I commend this paper? Teignbridge seem to be doing their best in difficult National circumstances and year-on-year cuts. I fully support the efforts to provide single person / 1 bedroom accommodation to enable persons to get back on their feet.	Thank you.
Yes. However we must always prioritise UK citizens BEFORE illegal migrants. Illegal migrants	Illegal immigration is the responsibility of the Home Office. People without recourse to public

have made themselves stateless and their needs must not supersede those of UK homeless people	funds are not eligible for assistance under Homelessness Legislation.
Consider a Housing First approach	We do use Housing First. We have a Housing First project comprising of 12 self-contained properties where bespoke support is provided to tenants. Teignbridge has been using Housing First since 2012.
Only as and when it is a need - focus more on prevention. Intervention will reduce and although it needs to be there intervention is when you have ineffective prevention - and if you do intervene - working in partnership may mean a better and more bespoke intervention rather than fuddled - end if the line - not fit for purpose service serving intervention	Thank you. We feel that prevention and intervention are both crucially important, as is working in partnership.
Drug and dependency support and treatment services need to be improved. There are a lot of people with mental health issues who need basic support to manage their finances.	We have invested in providing specialist drug and alcohol recovery support to rough sleepers and those with a recent history of rough sleeping, however we recognise that there is more work to do. We will continue to work closely with drug and alcohol support services and seek to improve pathways and support for those experiencing mental health issues.
There needs to be a lot more resources aimed at helping peoples' mental health as many/most reasons for homelessness will have a mental health component that if not addressed with only continue the cycle	Agreed. Please see above.
It's important to be able to intervene but the person being helped also needs to be listened to and their worries taken into account, There is not a one size fits all!!	Agreed and noted. Thank you.
<b>Sustainment &amp; Recovery</b>	
Having brought the persons problem out into the open and 'housed' them must not be the end of the situation, follow up meetings are essential to ensure that the 'former' homeless person is happy with the new situation or a rapid return to the former situation could easily occur - back to square one so to speak. A lot of work and expense for nothing so to speak, however this does not mean a continual series of meetings and visits to be carried out - a gradual phasing out initially of meetings and finally visits need to be carried out - with the	Thank you. Agreed.



reminder that any further problems no matter where, when or why can be dealt with	
you do need to provide sufficient resources in both funding and staff not as is now with say social worker starting with 5 clients /day ending up with 50 + and not coping and failing the system	Agreed. We try to ensure that staffing levels enable manageable caseloads within every element of the homelessness service. We will continue to ensure that this is a priority moving forward and use every opportunity to bring in additional resource through grant funding opportunities aimed at addressing levels of homelessness.
They are simple sentences, but a huge programme to set up, to staff, to administer, to maintain and to make resilient against the unforeseen circumstances that hit us all - as well as those who don't want to be helped as they fear change or cannot be helped as they fear exposure to their abusers.	We have the staff and programme in place to support this approach and we will continue to endeavour to work with those people who initially refuse to engage. We are used to rejection but we are nothing if not persistent!
No one should sleep on the streets	We agree and we are committed to offering all verified rough sleepers accommodation and support.
If people have mental health issues, they need to receive ongoing support	Agreed, however people do not always meet the threshold for ongoing support through mental health services. The new Community Mental Health Framework should support a more preventative approach however, and provide community based support to those who have not met the threshold in the past.
The long term needs of vulnerable people is sometimes overlooked. Individuals whose life is unstructured or affected by substance dependency may need second or third chances. Also criminal activity should not bar people for being offered a second chance.	Agreed. Thank you.
Mental health specialists should have an important role to play where there is a cycle of repeated homelessness.	Agreed.
It is important that people are supported against falling back into homelessness thereby ensuring that resources are deployed on as many homeless people as possible rather than continually assisting the same people again and again.	We agree. For us, a model of supporting sustainment and preventing the cycle of repeat homelessness is critically important.
Again I agree but ensure these people take up employment to support themselves	We are committed to working closely with the job centre in order to help people into employment. We also have funds provided

	under the Rough Sleeper Intervention funding stream for people who have experienced rough sleeping for vocational training and education attainment.
Education and particularly financial management of personal budgets must be in capable hands	We recognise that financial management and debt advice is crucially important. To this end we are committed to continuing to provide guidance and support through our contracted money advice service.
Very important	Thank you.
Current legislation for people in private rented property allows the landlord / agent to delay returning some / all of the deposit. Then it is not available to the tenant to put on a new rental. Agents / landlords write in to contracts clauses that make it impossible for the tenant to receive all the deposit back, they are required to pay (high charges) for professional cleaning on vacating the property. Seems unfair to require the tenant to clean the property and then have to pay for professional cleaning too. Even less then available for them to put towards the deposit on the next property.	Landlords are legally obliged to register tenants' deposits through one of three recognised Tenancy Deposit Protection Schemes. These schemes offer a dispute resolution service which requires evidence to be provided by tenants and landlords in the case of a dispute. An independent assessor then makes a final decision on whether as deposit should be returned.
The key to successful housing placement should be support. Currently too many homeless persons are just put into accommodation and left without help and support to sustain their new home.	Agreed. Bespoke, person centred support is key and will continue to form a key element of our service offer to those experiencing homelessness.

## 5. Internal Staff Feedback

Front-line officers and managers working for the Housing department at Teignbridge Council were consulted on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and Homelessness Review in December 2021 and January of 2022. They provided the following feedback and suggestions which will help to refine our final version of the strategy:

- More explicit reference to the Teignbridge 100 development project should be included to emphasise our efforts to bring into existence more affordable housing for local residents.

- Include more data to show the increased demand year on year for the Rough Sleeping Service.
- Include a heavier emphasis on our approach to reducing levels of rough sleeping within the district.

## 6. Focused Interviews with Service Leads

As detailed above a link to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy consultation was emailed directly to the leads of key statutory and community and voluntary sector agencies who work with people experiencing homelessness. Service leads from those agencies were given the opportunity to book a focused meeting with our Housing Needs Lead in order to discuss the aims and objectives of our strategy in more detail. Two focused meetings were held in January of 2021. The first was dedicated to discussing the needs of young people experiencing homelessness, and was attended by a Lead Commissioner for Services for Young People and by the local Service Lead for Young Devon. The second meeting was dedicated to discussing the needs of people experiencing issues with substance misuse and was attended by the Lead Commissioner for Substance Misuse Services, and by the Regional Service Lead for Together Drug and Alcohol services.

### Summary of the discussion around the needs of young people experiencing homelessness

- It would be helpful to investigate the feasibility of a Housing 1<sup>st</sup> project for young people and care leavers.
- We know that move on from supported accommodation is an issue for young people locally, however we need to better understand what the wider unmet needs are of young people experiencing homelessness in terms of the provision of accommodation.
- It would be helpful to investigate the feasibility of an emergency accommodation and assessment centre in Teignbridge.
- We need closer collaboration between Social care and Housing for cases of 'intentional homelessness'.

## Summary of the discussion around the needs of people experiencing issues with substance misuse

- It would be helpful to include something along the lines of an integrated workforce that supports people living with multiple adversity (which can include Substance addiction, DSVAs, mental health needs). The Drug Strategy and Rough Sleeping funding should enable us to co-commission and better integrate service provision.
- Please link your strategy to the new Drugs Strategy which has just been released.
- Moves between units of accommodation can be disruptive for people engaged with treatment services. It would be helpful for this to be acknowledged within the strategy.
- Housing and substance misuse services should work collaboratively to investigate the potential for rapid prescribing for people experiencing street homelessness, and for those people recently accommodated from a position of street homelessness.
- An approach based on harm reduction and harm minimisation should be adopted prior to services users being fully engaged in drug and alcohol treatments.

## 7. Interviews with Service Users

In January and February of 2022, interviews were conducted with people with a recent lived experience of homelessness in Teignbridge. Interviewees were asked whether they were supportive of the core principles and strategic priorities contained within our draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. Interviewees were supportive of our stated approach. Interviewees were also invited to provide further comment in relation to our homelessness service provision. Below is a summary of the insights provided by respondents:

### Working in Partnership:

- More help needs to be centred around mental health, especially for those in temporary accommodation. Children's mental health is ignored, as social services say that housing is not their responsibility.

### Using data effectively

- Health conditions are disregarded while people are in temporary accommodation. By all means collect data, but use it in a proactive way.

### Putting the client first

- Updating anything takes forever. Weekly meetings in person should be introduced so that grievances can be personally accounted for.
- A forum to improve services for clients would be good. It would be good to feedback to others and share experiences with people who have been through the process.

### Prevention

- It is important so people can keep a roof over their head and so they can focus on living.
- In some cases prevention is important, however in other cases this prolongs the stress of facing homelessness. Children should be the priority and the effects on them if evicted or if circumstances are unpredictable and unsettling. Living out of suitcases, waiting to be homeless is too much for children.

### Intervention

- It is important as finding housing is really difficult especially when you have additional support needs. Finding private properties is impossible if you have no guarantor or are on benefits.
- Access to housing for people on benefits needs to be addressed.

### Sustainment and Recovery

- It is hard to break the cycle you have been in when you are struggling with addiction and mental health. If you are homeless you cannot focus on recovery.

### Suggested improvements to housing and support services

- Weekly meetings with your housing officer and support worker
- Mental health checks for residents of temporary accommodation
- More help with forms and emails
- Explain to schools about clients' housing situation
- Somewhere to play for children in temporary accommodation
- Use a human touch and attitude when working with service users.

## 8. Summary of planned amendments to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy based on consultation feedback

- In relation to the establishment of a Homelessness Forum, meetings should include a combination of developing projects and sharing of relevant information from all parties.
- Developing mechanisms for capturing the voices of people with lived experience of homelessness should draw on local best practice examples such as the co-designing of services by Young Devon.
- We will include more specific reference to mental health services and the new Community Mental Health Framework.
- We will include a commitment to looking at the relationship between mental health crisis' and debt.
- We will include specific reference to awareness raising in relation to homelessness and homelessness prevention, for example outreach/ visiting schools and undertaking workshops around housing options.
- We will commit to the promotion and utilisation of befriending services.
- We will commit to promoting and utilising apprenticeship schemes as a route into employment, particularly for young people.
- We will further explore the potential for including organisations within the private and social enterprise sectors into our wider homelessness partnership. We agree that this could have a positive financial and social impact and could benefit those experiencing homelessness.

- We will commit to investigating the unmet needs are of young people experiencing homelessness in terms of the provision of accommodation.
- We will commit to investigating the feasibility of an emergency accommodation and assessment centre in Teignbridge for young people.
- We will promote closer collaboration between Social care and Housing for cases of 'intentional homelessness'.
- We will commit to Housing and substance misuse services working collaboratively to investigate the potential for rapid prescribing for people experiencing street homelessness, and for those people recently accommodated from a position of street homelessness.
- Housing and substance misuse services should work collaboratively to investigate the potential for rapid prescribing for people experiencing street homelessness, and for those people recently accommodated from a position of street homelessness.
- An approach based on harm reduction and harm minimisation should be adopted prior to services users being fully engaged in drug and alcohol treatments.