

APPENDIX A

Homelessness Strategy consultation 2019-2023

Consultation report

Date of issue: 28 May 2019

Contents

1. OVERVIEW	3
2. INTRODUCTION	3
3. PROMOTIONAL TOOLS AND ENGAGEMENT METHODS.....	4
4. RESPONSE RATE	5
5. HOW EFFECTIVE WAS THE CONSULTATION?	5
6. HEADLINE FIGURES	5
7. QUESTION AND ANALYSIS - CONSULTATION SURVEY	5
8. EMAILS, SOCIAL MEDIA TELEPHONE AND LETTER COMMENTS	9
9. CONCLUSION	9

1. OVERVIEW

Homelessness can have a major impact on a person's and / or their family's life. It can be detrimental to a person's health, employment or education and training opportunities.

There are often misconceptions about homelessness. It is not always about rough sleeping and not just about the availability of accommodation. Statutory homelessness includes people living in unsuitable or temporary accommodation.

Homelessness also has an adverse impact on the economy and increases pressure on public services, including, health, police, education and social services. This is why it is imperative that statutory and non-statutory services, work together to make tackling homelessness a priority.

Housing and support services need to be easily accessible, readily available and designed around and responsive to the needs of the people who use them. The Local Authority needs to work in partnership with citizens to prevent homelessness, empowering people to take steps to resolve their housing issues, to have more choice, make their own decisions and retain control of their lives.

Between July and October 2018 a comprehensive statutory Homelessness review was undertaken for Bridgend County Borough Council. The key messages of this can be found in the Homelessness strategy and in response to this review the council identified what is currently working well and where the council wants to be by 2022. The strategy outlines a number of areas of work that are currently being implemented to accomplish identified aims and objectives by 2022 as well as further work needed to be implemented.

A public consultation outlining the strategy was undertaken over a six week period following the presentation of the strategy to Cabinet on 22 January 2019. Links to complete the consultation was sent to: the Registered Social Landlords that form part of the Common Housing Register which includes Hafod, Linc-Cymru, Wales & West and Valleys to Coast, the housing solutions team including rehousing, the chair of Cwm Taf Health Board and all members of the Supporting People and homelessness forum. The draft strategy was available alongside the consultation document. The consultation received 45 (online) responses. This paper details the analysis associated with the consultation.

2. INTRODUCTION

A public consultation based on Bridgend County Borough Council's Homelessness Strategy was conducted over a six week period between 12 April 2019 and the 24 May 2019. The survey was available to complete online on the consultation page of the council's website and residents could also request a paper copy or another alternative format by telephone or email. The survey was available in Welsh and English as standard and accessible versions.

In total, there were eight questions which required a reply from respondents; all questions in the survey were optional. All survey responses offered the option of anonymity. The council's standard set of equalities monitoring questions were also included with the survey, as is now recommended good practice for all public facing surveys carried out by the council.

The content of the consultation remains available online in closed consultations.

Comments regarding the consultation were also invited via letter, email and phone call.

3. PROMOTIONAL TOOLS AND ENGAGEMENT METHODS

This section details the specific communications and engagement methods used to reach people and encourage them to share their views during the consultation period.

3.1 Social media and online

Facebook and Twitter have been used to promote the consultation.

Information was posted to the council’s corporate Twitter and Facebook accounts throughout the consultation period to raise awareness of the consultation and to encourage citizens to share their views on the proposals. The council currently has 11,375 followers on its corporate Twitter accounts and 12,267 on Facebook. During the period, the authority ‘tweeted’ six times and the information was seen 8,120 times. Two posts were made to the council’s Facebook page, which reached 6,187 people.

3.2 Local press

A press release entitled **New strategy to prevent homelessness** was issued on 5 February 2019, a further press release entitled **Homelessness: Tell us what you think** was issued on 29 April 2019 and **Don’t miss your chance to have your say** was issued on 17 May 2019. These were covered in the local press as follows:

- **1 January 2019** Bridgend Gem
[Council plans a new strategy to tackle problem of homelessness](#)
- **30 April 2019** Oggy Bloggy Ogwr
[Council drafts new homelessness strategy](#)
- **17 May 2019** Glamorgan Gem
[Don't miss these council consultations](#)



4. RESPONSE RATE

In total, there were 47 interactions, representing 0.03 per cent of the Bridgend County Borough population.

- We received 45 survey responses (online);
- During the consultation period, there were two comments on our social media channels.

5. HOW EFFECTIVE WAS THE CONSULTATION?

The Empty Property Strategy consultation was conducted over a six week period during which a range of marketing methods were used to create awareness of the consultation and encourage members of the public to engage with the council.

The social demographic data reflects a good cross section of the county borough’s population.

The data collection methods, which include the online survey, a paper survey and an accessible survey, were all developed using plain English to maximise understanding. These response methods were designed to give a consistency to the survey across multiple platforms.

6. HEADLINE FIGURES

- 45 respondents completed the questionnaire
- 75% of respondents said that the strategy clearly explains why Homelessness is a priority for the council
- 78% of respondents agree with the objectives outlined in the strategy
- 76% of respondents nothing was missing and there was no additional information they would like to see included?

7. QUESTION AND ANALYSIS - CONSULTATION SURVEY

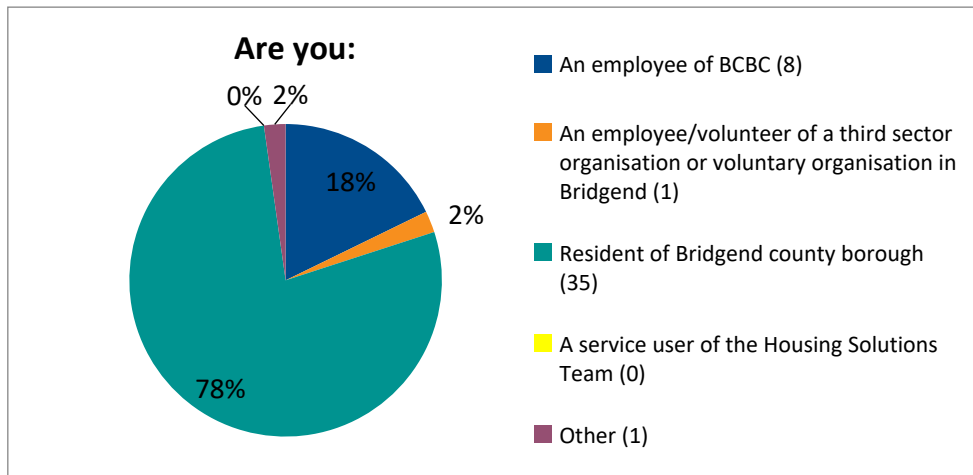
Section seven of the report looks at the questions asked in the consultation survey – with 45 respondents in total.

7.1 Please select a language to begin the survey.

Respondents to the consultation survey were initially asked in which language they would like to complete the survey. 100% of respondents selected English with 0% selecting Welsh.

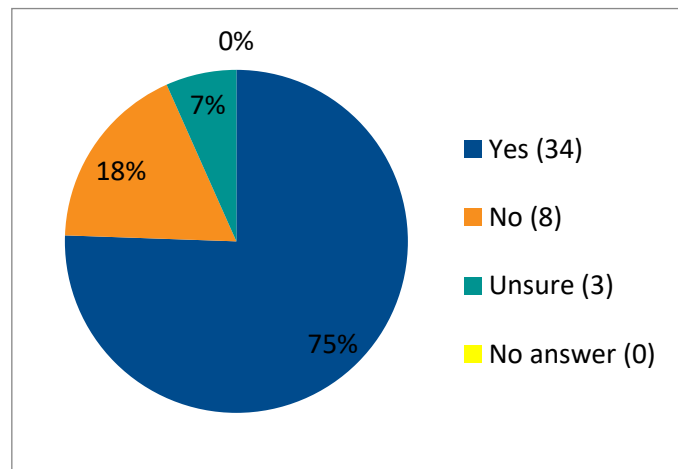
Language	#	%
English	45	100
Welsh	0	0
Total	45	100.0

7.2 Are you responding as:



78% (35) respondents responded as a resident of Bridgend county borough, 18% (8) responded as an employee of BCBC, 2% (1) responded as an employee/volunteer of a third sector organisation in Bridgend and 2% (1) responded as 'other' and identified themselves as an 'Elected Member'. 0 responses came from a service user of the Housing Solutions Team.

7.3 Does the strategy clearly explain why Homelessness is a priority for the council?



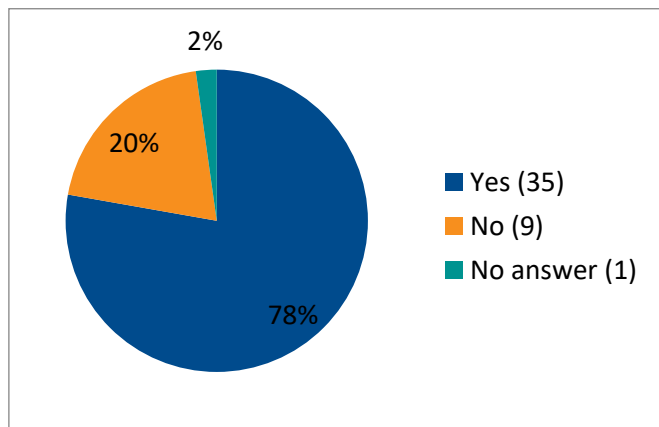
75% (34) of respondents agreed that the strategy explained why homelessness is a priority for the council, 18% (8) disagreed and 7% (3) were unsure.

Of the 11 respondents stated no or unsure, they were able to give details of what they thought should be included. Seven comments were made;

- The wording of the strategy is not user friendly or potentially accessible to all parties reading;
- It doesn't really explain what is being done to get homeless people off the streets permanently;
- To help those who are homeless should be a desire not a begrudged service asked of the council;
- The council says it is a priority, but it has far too many priorities to concentrate on

- Lots of warm words and no detail of actual changes;
- It is jargonised. No smart objectives... just words;
- [One comment was removed due to offensive and derogatory language].

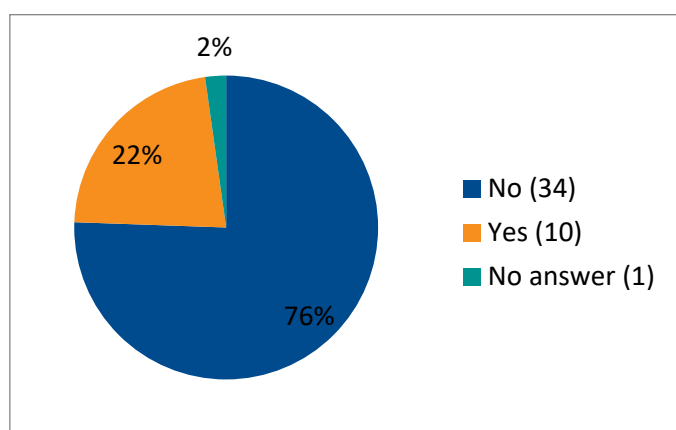
7.4 Do you agree with the objectives?



78% (35) respondents agreed with the objectives in the strategy and 20% (9) respondents disagreed. Where respondents stated no, they were able to give details of what they thought should be included. Of the nine respondents who did not agree the following five comments were made:

- Seems like a misuse of time/funds. Adults are responsible for adult choices;
- Council has other issues to deal with. Anyone made intentionally homeless should not be supported;
- All you're interested in is keeping people happy by making us think you're doing something;
- How will council look to expand housing stock as there is an exodus of landlords... not clear;
- [One comment was removed due to offensive and derogatory language].

7.6 Is there anything missing from the strategy that you would like to see included?



76% (34) respondents said there was nothing missing from the strategy that they would like to see included, 2% (1) respondents did not give an answer and 22% (10) said yes, there are things missing.

Where respondents stated yes, they were able to give details of what they thought should be included. Of the ten respondents who thought something was missing from the strategy, nine comments were made:

- Consideration of drugs and alcohol that often comes hand in hand with homelessness;
- The use of unused or unoccupied buildings to house homeless people;
- More to get homeless people off the streets, into a house and into a job so they can self-sustain;
- Effort to be made with private landlords;
- How homeless is going to be a thing of the past when you convert derelict and abandoned properties;
- Land and unused buildings donated by council to the third sector and others to provide accommodation;
- A detailed plan of actions, and budget increases allocated to the problem;
- Objectives, numbers affected and all packages;
- [One comment was removed due to offensive and derogatory language].

7.7 Please use the space to provide any further comments on this strategy

Respondents were given the opportunity to give any further comments on the strategy.

Eight comments were provided which are outlined below;

- From experience in working with and supporting homeless people. Drugs and alcohol play a HUGE part in this and a solution should be highlighted and incorporated somewhat into the strategy. I was in Bridgend Town Centre last week at 11am to find 3 homeless people clearly drunk and or in drugs. It was so intimidating and frightening, it makes me hate going into Town. I appreciate that this does not include all homeless people, however, the majority that I have seen clearly need support or somewhere to go in the day for support;
- Make sure single people are housed;
- Social housing provides affordable housing but is not always working efficiently. For example, single person occupancies residing in a family size property. Effort should be made to monitor these examples and relocate individuals/families to properties of a more appropriate size;
- Personally, (but you don't think about other people's thoughts, even though you like to say you do) Plenty Of abandoned and derelict places, you can convert these our wages tax is plenty enough to cover these costs. You say you want to beat it by 2020, but I think you can sort it sooner! No excuse. Homeless people are treated poorly, especially our veterans! I think someone needs to have a serious word with themselves and sort this out, this has been going on for years and people just wander by, not giving a second glance, a few pence here and there won't get them far! It's the support and help they need but because their homeless, the job centre plus and government don't want to know;
- Monitoring of town centre homelessness needs to be addressed. People setting up their bedroom in the doorway of New Look is not a desirable presentation of Bridgend and is unfair on traders who pay a lot in business rates. Also street begging needs to be addressed along with littering;
- As a resident of BCB I am very concerned with the growing numbers of homeless individuals living in tents in and around Newbridge Fields. This is turning the area into an unofficial

campsite and spoiling the woodland for local residents. Whilst waking my dogs I have unfortunately come across countless waste products, drug needs and abandoned clothing. Homeless individuals should not feel that the town is a haven for this unacceptable behaviour and should be moved away from our playing fields and public areas;

- It would be good to understand more detail as time goes on as to how the objectives will be achieved. The principles however show a joined up positive approach to collaborative working to achieve the aims;
- [One comment was removed due to offensive and derogatory language].

8. EMAILS, SOCIAL MEDIA TELEPHONE AND LETTER COMMENTS

Additional comments were invited by letter, phone call or email as well as via our corporate social media channels during the consultation period.

8.1 Social media comments

We received two comments over social media during the live period. One of these comments related to accessing the online survey. The other is outlined below;

- There's derelict and abandoned places in Bridgend. Our tax that you take from our hard earned wages is more than enough to convert these places into hostels or 1 bedroom flats for the homeless! I think it's disgusting that this isn't being done!

9. CONCLUSION

A sample of 45 survey completions is subject to a maximum standard error of +1.90% at the 95% confidence level. Therefore, we can be 95% confident that responses are representative of those that would be given by the total adult population, to within $\pm 14.61\%$ of the percentages reported.

This means that if the total adult population of Bridgend had taken part in the survey and a statistic of 50% was observed, we can be 95% confident that the actual figure lies between 35.39% and 64.61%.

9.1 Equality Impact Assessment

The EIA screening informed the development of the consultation questionnaire. This consultation should assist the completion of the Full Equality Impact Assessment and the breakdown of equalities data from those respondents who provided it has been supplied to the service area.

9.2 Homelessness Strategy consultation

Overall the Homelessness Strategy was supported by the survey respondents as follows:

- 75% of respondents said that the strategy clearly explains why Homelessness is a priority for the council
- 78% of respondents agree with the objectives outlined in the strategy
- 76% of respondents nothing was missing from the strategy and there was no additional information they would like to see included?