

Homelessness Strategy 2019 Consultation Response Summary Report

Consultation on Mid Sussex District Council's new Homelessness Strategy comprised a web survey and consultation event attended by key stakeholders.

Web Survey Results:

The survey was conducted via the Mid Sussex District Council website during the period 9th August to 4th October 2019. There were 45 responses.

Question 1

Are these priorities the right ones?

93% of respondents agreed that the proposed priorities for the new strategy are the right ones.

Question 2

If you disagree, please tell us why and what you would propose.

There were no alternative priorities proposed, but comments were made about the importance of implementing the priorities and of tackling the root causes of homelessness rather than the symptoms. This includes ensuring the delivery of more affordable housing.

Question 3

Is there anything else we should do to prevent homelessness?

58% thought that there were other things that the Council could do to prevent homelessness.

Question 4

If yes, please explain:

The most popular responses were as follows:

- Early support/prevention (7)
- Help with retention of tenancies (4)
- Private rent access (3)
- More social/affordable housing (3)

Question 5

What contributes the most towards homelessness in Mid Sussex?

The most popular responses were:

- The cost of renting privately (monthly rent levels) – 22
- The upfront costs of renting privately (a deposit, rent in advance) - 15
- The availability of social housing (the number of properties that become available each year) – 15
- The availability of supported housing (for people who need assistance to sustain a tenancy) – 13

- The demand for social housing (the number of people waiting to access social housing)- 13
- The need to have a guarantor for private rented accommodation – 9
- Welfare reform – 8
- Funding for non-statutory support – 8
- The cost of buying a property on the open market – 5
- The security of tenure of renting privately (as most private rented tenancies have 6 month fixed terms) – 5
- Availability/accessing statutory support services – 4
- The need for greater support to help people remain in their own home (regardless of tenure type) – 4
- The availability of affordable properties to buy on the open market (including shared ownership and help to buy) – 4

Question 6

What actions could we include in our Strategy for the next 5 years to maximise affordable housing for local people?

The most popular responses were as follows:

- Build more social/affordable housing (13)
- Ensuring affordable housing requirements are delivered in new development (6)
- Better access to the private rented sector for people on benefits (6)
- Support for private rented sector tenancies and guarantors (5)
- Reduced levels of rents (5)
- Better use of existing housing (3)
- More temporary and supported/hostel accommodation in the District (3)

Question 7

The Government target is to end rough sleeping by 2027. Do you think that this is achievable in Mid Sussex?

Yes	33%
No	44%
Don't know	22%

Question 8

What contribution could be made by partners or other agencies to help Mid Sussex District Council to end rough sleeping in our area?

The most popular responses were:

- Hostel and rough sleeper accommodation (9)
- Mental Health Support and Staff Training (8)
- Multi-Agency Preventative Approach (8)
- More Policing and safe/community houses (4)
- More available affordable housing (4)
- Help for those in crisis and in need of recovery services (3)
- Rough sleeper outreach services (3)
- More Temporary Accommodation (2)

- Support and intervention by Social Landlords (2)

Question 9

How could we help people on low incomes or on benefits to obtain accommodation in the private rented sector?

The most popular responses were:

- Rent Deposit and Guarantor Schemes (6)
- Help with access to Benefits and DHP (4)
- Tenancy Sustainment Support (4)
- Building relationships with private sector landlords and agents (3)
- Build Affordable Housing (3)
- Night Shelter/ Out of Hours Support (2)

Question 10

Do you think that enough support is offered to help people to keep their accommodation and to avoid homelessness?

Yes 13%

No 67%

Don't know 18%

Question 11

What extra types of support could be made available to help people avoid becoming homeless?

The most popular responses were:

- Earlier identification/intervention of people at risk of homelessness (10)
- Tenancy support (9)
- Floating Support (7)
- Support services (6)
- Better knowledge of and accessibility of services for homeless people (6)
- Benefits Support (4)

Question 12

Please choose the 3 most important priorities for the Council to address in preventing and managing homelessness in Mid Sussex over the next 5 years.

- Targeting services to prevent homelessness– 27
- Provide more social housing -22
- Greater access to the private rented sector – 19
- Supporting non-statutory services e.g. YMCA or other voluntary groups. – 17
- Improve the quantity and quality of temporary accommodation in Mid Sussex - 16
- Helping rough sleepers access the right support and get off the streets– 15
- Helping people to access employment that allows them to afford a home - 12
- Building more homes across all tenures – 9

Question 13

Do you have any other comments about the housing or homelessness situation in Mid Sussex, or any suggestions about what could be done to improve things?

Responses were:

- Specific work to support key groups such as victims of domestic abuse.
- Workshops to develop and allow collaborative thinking to further the potential solutions available to us all.
- More joint projects with RP's, charities, district and county councils working smarter to develop a homelessness prevention service.
- Joint working with and keeping informed organisations that work with the hidden and transient homeless.
- More supported housing before being offered secure tenancies would benefit with tenancy sustainment
- Partnership working with housing benefit, job centre and housing provider would greatly help those who are at risk of losing accommodation
- Just do your job properly and help every homeless person.
- Continue to work with services who assist people rough sleeping.
- Allocating efficient temporary housing appropriately.
- Ensure that the survey leads to actions.
- More council run property needed.
- YMCA not cost effective in helping young people.
- Cease using the community wardens to move vulnerable people on and accept that some people do not want to access the support on offer. There have been "gentlemen of the road" in existence for centuries.
- Joined up service delivery, with good support services and adequate levels of temporary and social housing is going to take a long time to fix.
- the supply of shelters and temporary accommodation is needed along with good quality advice and support to help ensure that temporary problems are not turned in to permanent issues for the person to face.

Consultation Event

The consultation event was held on 26th September 2019 and comprised a workshop attended by a number of organisations that work with homeless people and rough sleepers in the District. Organisations represented included WSCC, YMCA, Turning Tides, mental health groups, the Police, Department of Works and Pensions, Probation Service, Housing Associations and Furnihelp.

Many of the organisation attending also responded to the survey and the event provided an opportunity to gain qualitative feedback to inform the development of the Homelessness Strategy. The feedback was consistent with the results of the survey, especially in relation to the proposed priorities of the Homelessness Strategy, identification of the challenges to tackling homelessness in Mid Sussex and partnership working to address rough sleeping in Mid Sussex.