

You Said	We said	Action
<p>It is important that people have easy access to the services and support they require. This can be a challenge given the rural nature of our communities and relatively poor (and expensive) public transport system and I believe this needs to be taken into consideration.</p>	<p>We agree that delivering services to vulnerable people is a challenge that cannot be ignored. We will use the Council's new operating model to work with our teams in the locality, and maximise partnership opportunities to prevent people slipping through the net</p>	<p>This challenge will be addressed by Actions HSU1, HSU4, HSS1, HSS3, HSS4, HSW1, and HSW2.</p>
<p>I'm particularly interested in the HSW3 point about educating school children in year 11 about the issue of housing and homelessness.</p>	<p>This is proven best practice, and locally we have experience of this from work</p>	<p>HSW3</p>

	<p>previously completed at Tavistock College which resulted in reductions of youth homelessness.</p>	
<p>The affordability aspect is glossed over.</p>	<p>We would acknowledge that affordability of private rented accommodation, and the lack of affordable housing remains a concern. By creating opportunities through different models of housing, offering good money advice, ensuring wherever possible their homes are of good quality and maximising peoples take up of benefit</p>	<p>HSU1, HSU2, HSU3, HSU4, HSS2, HSS7, HSH5</p>

	<p>they are entitled to we hope this will go some way to address some of the issues of affordability</p>	
<p>I have worked in middle management for homeless people for 5years and learning disabilities for 15 years. I have a deep interest in your strategies and planned to comment. However I am declining to do so because I find your questions regarding my race, sexual orientation and particularly whether I have the same gender as was assigned at birth, totally irrelevant, intrusive and offensive on this questionnaire.</p>	<p>It was important for us to ensure that the opportunity of responding to this consultation was afforded to everyone, and we wanted to ensure our local demographics were reflected in our responses.</p>	
<p>These are obviously the right themes, but are of no practical use whatever without sufficient funding. Our councillors of ALL parties should have the courage to point out the effect that this government's funding cuts are having on local councils. Most South Hams councillors are conspicuously silent about this.</p>	<p>It is a statutory duty to advise and assist people who are threatened with homelessness, both Councils have recognised the importance of early</p>	

	intervention and prevention.	
Re access to 'services', what services exactly? Access to housing, there is no affordable housing available and all you waffle and tick boxing isn't making any difference	Through improving access and working with landlords to encourage different models of housing we believe that people who struggle to find affordable housing may find alternative opportunities	HSH2, HSH3, HSH5.
Can't churches open their doors to the homeless at night	Churches can, and do open there churches at night elsewhere in the County. If there was sufficient demand for these services we could assist churches obtain the correct planning permissions for these uses. However this option	

	<p>may not be possible for many churches due to a lack of funding or willing volunteers. We are happy to talk to any church or community group about this option</p>	
<p>It would be good to see some greater emphasis on the issue of circles of support/networks and relationships. Evidence clearly shows that pulling someone from the street and placing them into accommodation often fails because of the issue of loneliness.</p>	<p>Partnerships and support work are very much part of ending the cycle of homelessness, and one that delivery of this strategy is reliant on</p>	<p>HSU1, HSU4, HSS1, HSS3, HSS4, HSS5HSH4, HSH5, HSW1, HSW2,</p>
<p>I would emphasise the need for on-going social support and advice for people once they have been found suitable accommodation so they do not slip back into homelessness.</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>I feel the theme "Understanding the true cost of homelessness" is ambiguous. It implies homelessness is a monetary problem to SHDC. It may well be but the theme should be "Understanding the true plight of Homelessness". Homelessness is a vicious and sometimes inescapable circle of rejection. No</p>	<p>Understanding the true costs of homelessness is not just about monetary values, as</p>	

<p>home? No job. No job? No home. The circle can be broken by access to simple temporary accommodation and an input by Services.</p>	<p>demonstrated on p16 of the homeless strategy. However the reality is that with budget pressures on all public sector services there is a need to make sure people get access to the best help possible and that we are able to help as many people as we can.</p>	
<p>I would like to see the Council giving top priority to certain categories of homeless people. First, the particularly vulnerable individuals who sleep rough on the streets. We need some form of hostel providing beds in a warm dry environment with access to toilet and bathroom facilities. This should be available 24/7/365 of the year and if the accommodation could be provided by the council it could no doubt be manned voluntarily by responsible agencies such as The Churches, Salvation Army and other volunteers. I would be willing to provide some of my free time every week of the year. Second, those families who cannot get onto the Housing ladder due to the high cost of purchasing property locally or getting onto the Private Rental Sector which requires substantial outlay and high rent. These families need affordable housing such</p>	<p>The needs of rough sleepers and bringing people indoors is addressed in this strategy. A hostel is not part of the Councils plans at this current time, and we wish to work with people to</p>	<p>HSH1, HSH3, HSH6, HSW4</p>

<p>as the cheap echo construction housing that can be quickly assembled recently shown on Spotlight.</p>	<p>offer and support them into long term accommodation rather than sustaining a street lifestyle. Affordability of accommodation remains a challenge and some other opportunities to improve and change housing options are highlighted in the strategy.</p>	
<p>All local authorities, including West Devon / South Hams, need to take a good hard look at the distribution of support and care funding allocated via central government. During the period when the Supporting Programme was in operation (2002-2010), there was a significant decrease in homelessness nationally and locally. Now that money has largely been reallocated to the general care budget by local authorities, support services aimed at housing support have been significantly reduced with skilled support staff moving to other professions. This is clearly leading to an increase in service need, with consequent increases homelessness and housing need.</p>	<p>Devon County Council invest in Countywide homeless prevention contracts. As part of our emphasis on partnership working, we will continue to make</p>	

	best uses of the existing contract.	
Funding skilled support workers has a proven impact on the ability of vulnerable people to avoid homelessness.	As above	
<p>I agree that the above are all important priorities in tackling homelessness. That said I would suggest that some consideration and possible prioritisation is also given to the following issues: -</p> <p>1. Adverse impact on children and young adults caused by homelessness and how this reduces their future life chances. Suggest much closer working with schools, colleges, mental health services and children's social services to explore every possible way to minimise these adverse impacts and the long term harms to children and young people. How this multi-agency cross working might actually work in practice to be carefully considered and included in the Homeless Strategy.</p> <p>2. Recognition in the Homeless Strategy that many homeless people are suffering from mental health problems that may have either contributed to their homelessness or have arisen since becoming homeless. Suggest Strategy includes a commitment to much closer working with community mental health services, GP's and mental health charities to explore the best ways of helping people with mental health problems in respect of any housing difficulties they are experiencing. Recognition to be given in the Strategy that early help with mental health problems may prevent homelessness further down the line. Homelessness may also lead to self-harm and suicide - better support and care of homeless people may possibly help reduce the shockingly large numbers of people who take their own lives, which is especially high amongst young single men.</p> <p>3. Employment. A local low wage economy, increase in zero hour contracts, unemployment and job</p>	<p>We are planning to restart our schools project as we recognise the importance of this early intervention. By re-establishing our homelessness forum , which previously was the information exchange for partner organisations, we believe we have the best opportunity to bring a multitude of likeminded agencies to the table who can help us tackle homelessness</p>	HSW3

<p>insecurity may all contribute to homelessness. Economic development plans and other relevant policies and strategies produced by DCC and WDBC should be asked to carefully consider and clearly detail how these development plans, policies and strategies can improve employment prospects of the local population and help to reduce homelessness and improve poor quality housing. 4. Impact of homelessness and/or living in sub optimal conditions on health (physical and mental) and life expectancy. There is scope for better collaboration between health services including mental health services, Directors of Public Health, Council Services and voluntary sector to help maintain and improve the health of homeless people. Better health may reduce the future risk of homelessness e.g. better choice of work, employment or the physical ability to access educational opportunities. Can the Homeless Strategy please detail working relationships with health services, Public Health services, Councils and voluntary sector and how such collaborations can help improve the health and life expectancy of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness? 5. Significantly improve local employers and general public's perception of homeless people - to reduce the stigma of being homeless and the sense of humiliation and failure that may accompany this. This might encourage some local employers to consider employing and/or assist in other ways a homeless person in need of a job. There is possibly some scope to very sensitively share some of the life stories of local homeless people, to help employers and general public better understand how individuals and families can become homeless - to help dismiss the rhetoric that anyone who is homeless must be lazy or a shirker to become homeless. Homelessness need a bit of a PR and public education campaign showing the life stories, achievements and lived</p>	<p>We also agree that coaching and mentoring would be beneficial for people and seek to address this through tenancy education.</p>	
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<p>experiences of homeless people. This could help educate the public how easily it is for anyone to fall on hard times, and/or a personal change of circumstances/relationships that could eventually result in homelessness. Would provide a media platform to inform local residents what they can do to minimise the risk of this happening to them and what they should do/where they can go for help if they are heading towards or have become homeless. Perhaps the Council communications team could do some valuable work with local press, media and social media on the above and these kinds of stories. 6. Recognition in the Strategy of the roles played by and clear signposting to non-council organisations such as Samaritans, Citizens Advice Bureau, Food banks etc. that people can contact if they need help with the issues described above related to homelessness. These organisations might just help some individuals from becoming homeless and/or help them if they are already homeless... 7.The Homeless Strategy should attempt to consider what the impact of Brexit might be on homelessness in West Devon and South Hams and have some plans in place to help mitigate as far as possible against any increase in homelessness that might arise before and after Brexit? 8. Role of education services - schools, colleges and adult education can help some people avoid homelessness by improving their self-confidence, educational attainments and life chances through access to education. In rural areas access to education can be very difficult, especially if individuals are dependent upon limited public transport and/or either don't have access to broadband or live in area with poor broadband. Can the council possibly do more in this strategy to help people better access education opportunities? Alongside education - coaching and mentoring can be a very powerful tool in assisting individuals tackle many</p>		
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<p>complex life issues and challenges and to improve their life chances. Is there any way coaching and mentoring could be facilitated by the Council - perhaps in collaboration with local businesses and charities to provide coaching and mentoring support to individuals at risk of homelessness or who are already homeless.</p>		
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COMMENTS IN DETAIL; ARE THE 4 THEMES WE HAVE IDENTIFIED AS PRIORITIES FOR SOUTH HAMS & WEST DEVON THE RIGHT ONES?