



Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 – 2025

CONSULTATION SUMMARY

A review of the feedback on the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 – 2025, which sets out how we believe we can tackle and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping in our districts

JANUARY 2020



CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| SUMMARY | 1 |
| BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION | 3 |
| CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY | 4 |
| KEY FINDINGS – QUANTITATIVE DATA | 5 |
| KEY FINDINGS – QUALITATIVE DATA | 15 |
| HOW WE HAVE USED RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION | 45 |
| FURTHER INFORMATION | 46 |
| APPENDIX A – BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION | 47 |
| APPENDIX B – CONSULTATION COMMUNICATION | 47 |
| APPENDIX C – SURVEY | 47 |
| APPENDIX D – DEMOGRAPHIC DATA | 47 |
| APPENDIX E – FULL LIST OF COMMENTS RECEIVED | 47 |

SUMMARY

This report has been produced to analyse the comments received to the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020 – 2025 consultation. The strategy sets out how we believe we can prevent and tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

We consulted on our draft aims and objectives, which we believe will increase the support and accommodation available for homeless households and rough sleepers across both districts. By law, we are required to publish a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy every five years and our current strategy lasts until September 2020.

The consultation ran for six weeks between 14 October and 25 November 2019. In total 198 responses were received, specifically 155 online submissions and 43 postal responses. The postal responses were manually inputted into our online consultation system, Smart Survey. Participants were asked a range of questions relating to the draft aims and objectives of the strategy.

The majority of people responding, 176, did so as an individual or member of the public (89%), while six responses were made by a business or organisation and ten as a district, county or town / parish councillor or officer. Six responded as 'other'.

The consultation highlighted that there is strong overall support for the draft aims and objectives in the strategy. The strategy objectives received a variety of comments which will be explored further in this report.

Key findings:

Proposed objective 1: To improve county-wide partnership working to prevent and reduce homelessness

An exceptionally high proportion of respondents to this question (91%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this objective. Only 5% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, and a similar number (3%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the objective. The issue raised most frequently in relation to this objective related to involving all relevant agencies and organisations in partnership working, especially mental health agencies.

Proposed objective 2: To minimise the use of temporary accommodation

More than two-thirds of respondents to this question (68%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this objective. This objective received the lowest support when compared with the other four proposed objectives. A small number of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (10%), while double the number of respondents (20%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the objective. The issue raised most frequently in relation to this objective related to the view that temporary accommodation is occasionally necessary and if well-coordinated and maximised, can reduce the time this type of support is needed.

Proposed objective 3: To further develop our housing needs service to prevent and relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity

A very high proportion of respondents to this question (88%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this objective. Only 4% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, while a slightly higher number (7%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the objective. The most frequently

raised comments about this objective were positive and relate to this being a core objective that should be prioritised.

Proposed objective 4: To improve access to emergency accommodation and increase support for rough sleepers

A very high proportion of respondents to this question (88%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this objective. Only 5% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, while almost the same number (6%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the objective. The issue raised most frequently in relation to this objective concerned working more closely with the voluntary sector and those organisations who are best placed to help coordinate rough sleeping programmes. Respondents also thought that there could be closer working with churches and clergy.

Proposed objective 5: To improve access to sustainable accommodation for households who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless

A very high proportion of respondents to this question (90%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this objective. Only 3% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, while double the number (6%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the objective. The issue raised most frequently in relation to this objective related to building social and sustainable housing as a matter of priority, including the suggestion to increase council taxes to help with delivery.

Overall, how far do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims and objectives in the draft strategy

A high proportion of respondents to this question (83%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this proposal. Only 4% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, while a relatively higher number (9%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the objective. The most frequently raised comments highlighted general agreement with the proposed aims and objectives, though at the same time recognising that homelessness will never be eliminated.

A summary of findings is collated in this report and will be presented to our Cabinets. Following any comments from Cabinet, and final approval, the updated Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 will be published on our [South](#) and [Vale](#) websites, with the new strategy coming into effect from the date of publication.

BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION

Since 2010 homelessness and rough sleeping has risen significantly in England. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse have not witnessed a similar rise, despite the increasing demands placed upon the homelessness service.

The new draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 increases the support and accommodation available for homeless households and rough sleepers in the districts. The strategy has been developed following a review of services that included a series of stakeholder engagement exercises with councillors; service users and partner organisations.

The review considered the councils' achievements during the lifetime of the previous strategy; the current demands on the homelessness service, and the ability to meet these demands in the future. The review findings informed the aims and objectives of the new draft strategy. More information about the review of homelessness services can be found in the strategy.

What's happening now?

The draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025, supported by a detailed action plan, has three **aims**:

- to prevent homelessness wherever possible;
- to end incidents of homelessness at the earliest opportunity;
- to end the need for rough sleeping.

We have identified five strategic **objectives** to help to achieve these aims:

1. to improve county-wide partnership working to prevent and reduce homelessness;
2. to minimise the use of temporary accommodation;
3. to further develop our housing needs service to prevent and relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity;
4. to improve access to emergency accommodation and increase support for rough sleepers;
5. to improve access to sustainable accommodation for households who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless.

More information

The consultation material, including a background summary document setting out why we are proposing the actions, was available to be viewed at Appendix A, during the consultation period.

The detailed actions that are proposed to meet each of the objectives of the strategy are set out on pages 33 to 41 of the draft strategy document that was on the South and Vale websites during the consultation period.

CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY

The consultation methodology consisted of the following:

- an email notification to 69 key stakeholders and interested parties, comprising local registered providers, advice centres, homeless charities, neighbouring local authorities, and town and parish councils in the districts;
- an email notification to the councils' consultee database, to provide a link to a short background document and the draft strategy document along with details of how to comment. The notification was issued through the online consultation system Smart Survey. A total of 1,601 email notifications were sent out. A copy of the email notification can be found at Appendix B;
- a letter to those consultees who opted in for postal correspondence. This included the background information document, the survey, details on to how to obtain a copy of the draft strategy and a letter notification (see the email notification as an example of the text used at Appendix B). A total of 346 letters were issued;
- informing South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councillors through our internal councillor e-newsletter;
- a background information document including the five key strategic objectives proposed for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, for ease of understanding;
- updating the website and publishing the background information document, the draft strategy document and a link to the online survey;
- a focused online survey, offering participants opportunity to indicate their level of agreement to the five objectives and comment on each objective in a free text box. A copy of the survey can be found at Appendix C.
- a press release was issued on the consultation launch date, and social media messages (Twitter and Facebook) posted during the first half of the consultation period (until Purdah began on 6 November and we were unable to promote the consultation) to further publicise and encourage wide participation from the public;
- the consultation was carried out in conformity with our public engagement charter¹.
- a six-week consultation period for submitting responses.

Reporting methodology

- a total of 198 responses were received, made up of 176 completed responses and 22 partial responses (these are where the survey has been partly completed). From the initial 146 partial responses received, where an email address was available (from those who used the save and continue option) responses were checked against completed responses to check for duplicates and 124 were deleted, 22 were put through manually as responses (where the respondent had answered at least one of the three main questions). Three comment forms were received several days after the survey closed and aren't included in this analysis;
- two handwritten comment forms were scanned as the responses were unreadable;
- 338 free text comments were received. A summary of the comments is included in this report. Some spelling, grammatical and punctual errors in the original comments raised were corrected in the main body of this report; a full list of unedited comments can be found at Appendix E.

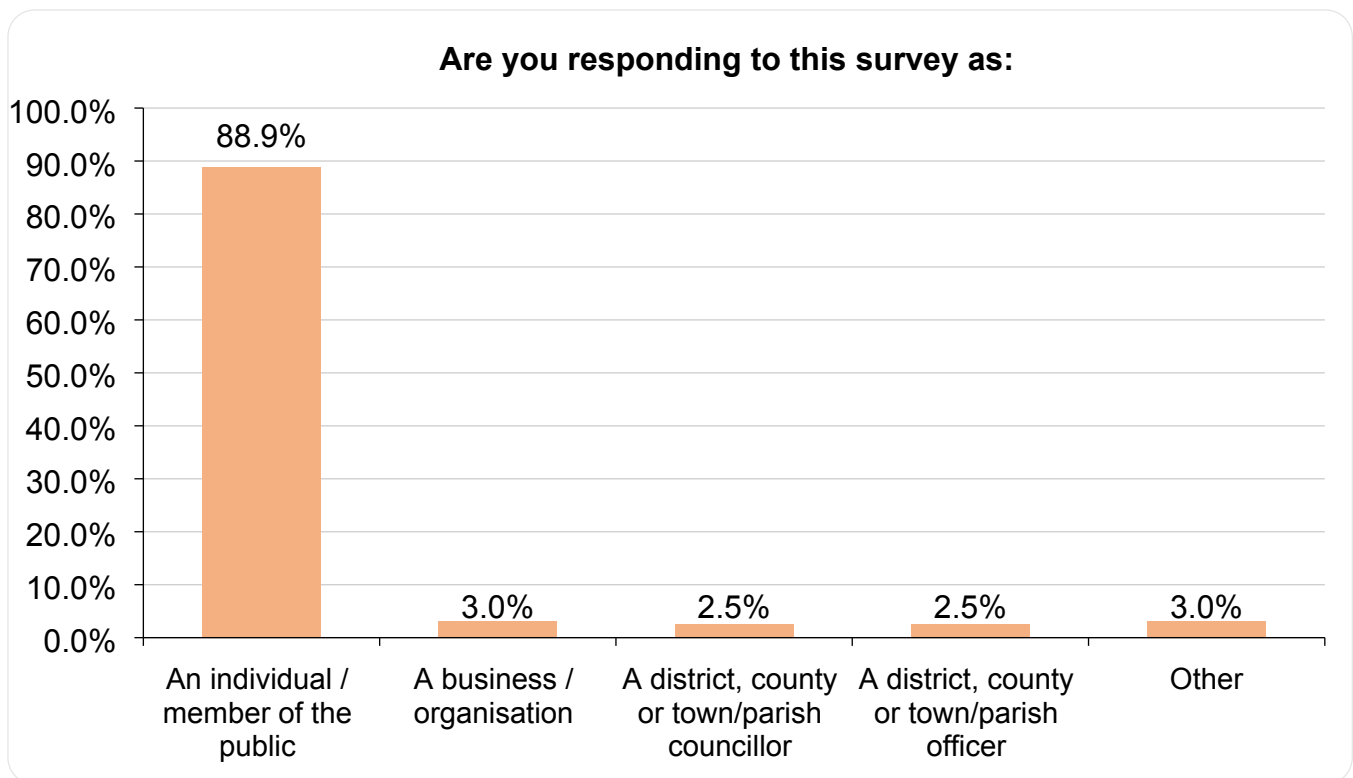
¹ <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/about-us/have-your-say/our-commitments-public-engagement>

KEY FINDINGS – QUANTITATIVE DATA

The key quantitative findings from the consultation are summarised below.

Respondents were not required to answer all of the questions. The few questions that were required to be answered in the online survey had the option of ticking ‘this doesn’t apply to me’ or ‘prefer not to say’. The survey provided an opportunity to make comments or suggestions on each of the objectives and to the overall strategy.

There were 198 responses to the consultation. Nearly all responses were received from individuals (89%), with a further 8% of responses from businesses/organisations, or local district, county or town / parish councillors or officers. Respondents also included six people who ticked the ‘other’ box (3%).



Note: text in italics is added to help with clarity

Other (please specify):

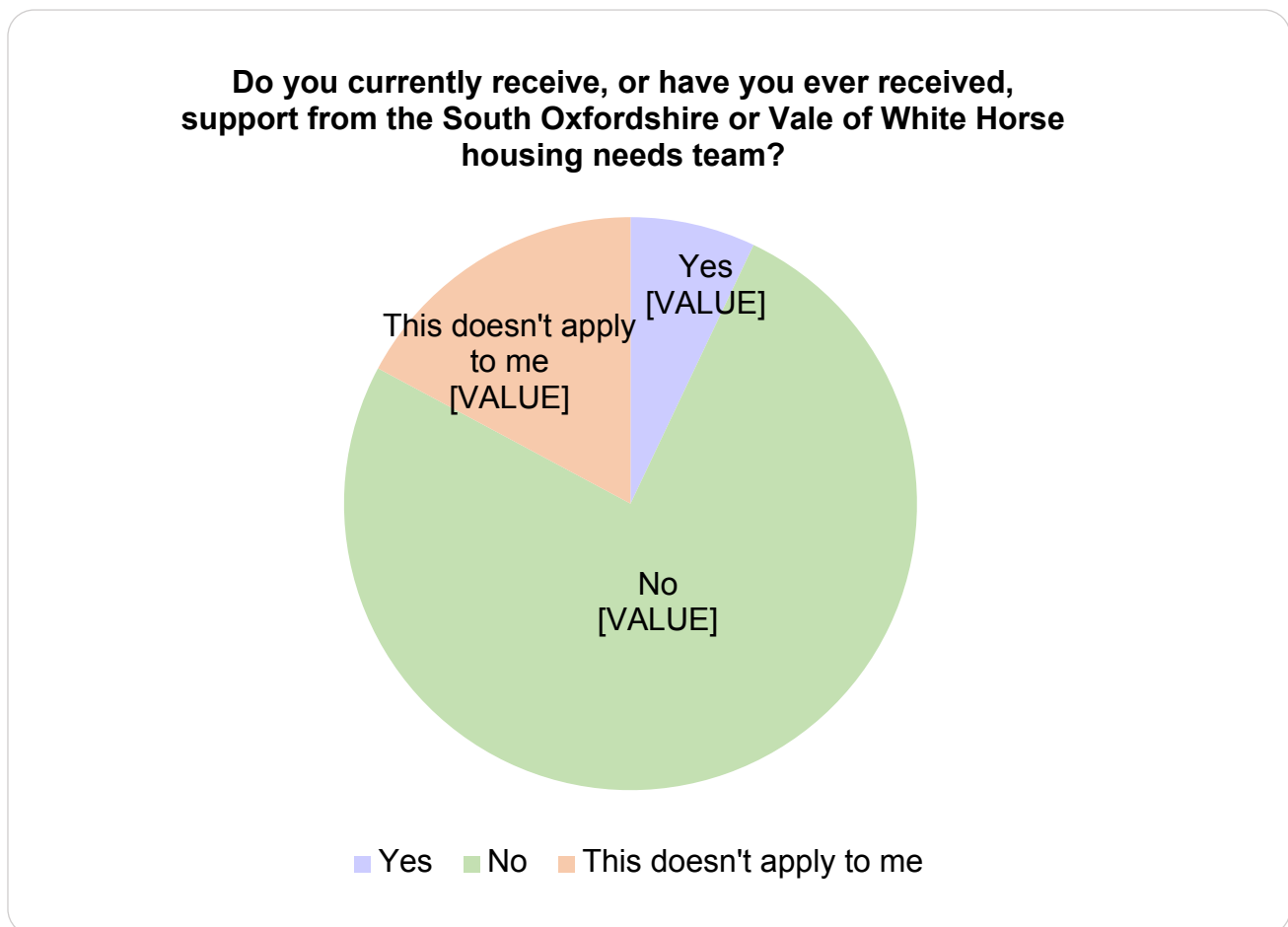
- Landlord
- Academic
- Individual and also a landlord of homes
- No response to this question
- Placement Team OCC (*Oxfordshire County Council*)
- I am also a parish councillor

What is the name of your business / organisation or council?

- Oxfordshire County Council
- Lewknor Parish Council
- Chapel of the Holy Cross Church

SSAFA
 Soha Housing Ltd
 Stoke Row Parish council
 Sandford-on-Thames Parish Council
 NPS (*housing organisation*)
 Science (*answered by 'Academic'*)
 Thame Town Council
 Rotherfield Greys Parish Council
 Oxfordshire CC (*County Council*)
 Abingdon Town Council
 Milton (Abingdon) Parish Council
 Watchfield Parish Council
 Oxford City Council
 Kidmore End
 SODC (*South Oxfordshire District Council*)

A number of questions asked about personal circumstances that relate to the nature of the consultation. Responses highlighted that 14 respondents (7%) currently receive, or have at some time received, support from the South Oxfordshire or Vale of White Horse housing needs team.



Across South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse district councils, there are nearly 200 households currently receiving support from our housing needs team.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

We asked for a range of demographic information to help determine whether the individuals who took part in the survey are representative of the local population and, of those, who could be affected by the proposed objectives.

The demographic data collected showed that for those respondents who answered this question a slightly higher proportion of respondents identified as female (50%) than male (43%), while a few respondents preferred not to say (5%).

Seventeen per cent of respondents who answered the question specified that their day to day activities were limited because of a health problem or disability. Additional demographic data can be found at Appendix D.

PROPOSED OBJECTIVES FOR THE DRAFT HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2020-2025

Respondents were asked to comment on the five proposed objectives that have been identified to support the three aims of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025. Respondents were also asked to comment on the overall proposed aims and objectives of the strategy.

To find out what people think of the five proposed objectives and the overall strategy, we explained the aims of the strategy, the five strategic objectives that we identified to help achieve these aims and the detailed actions that are proposed to meet each of the objectives of the strategy. More information on the proposed aims and objectives was provided to respondents in the background information document and the full draft strategy, these are included at Appendix A.

Respondents were asked how much they agree or disagree with each of the five proposed objectives and the overall draft strategy and were given choices ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, and don't know. There was also an opportunity to provide comments or suggestions to each of the objectives and the overall strategy. These questions were not required to be answered and respondents could skip these questions completely.

Please note: As respondents had a choice of whether or not to answer questions, the percentages used in this report represent the percentage of respondents **who answered the question being discussed**. For all other questions, although respondents were required to respond, they were given an option of 'this doesn't apply to me' or 'prefer not to say'.

The survey results show that the objective of improving county-wide partnership working to prevent and reduce homelessness received the most support (91%) from the percentage of respondents who answered the question, with either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' to the proposed objective.

Based on respondents who answered the other questions, this was very closely followed by the objectives to improve access to sustainable accommodation for households who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless (90% support), further develop our housing needs service to prevent and relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity (88% support) and improve access to emergency accommodation and increasing support for rough sleepers (88% support). Receiving less support was the objective to minimise the use of temporary accommodation (68%), again based on respondents who answered this question.

When asked overall how far respondents agree or disagree with the proposed aims and objectives in the draft strategy, the percentage of respondents who answered either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' was 83%.

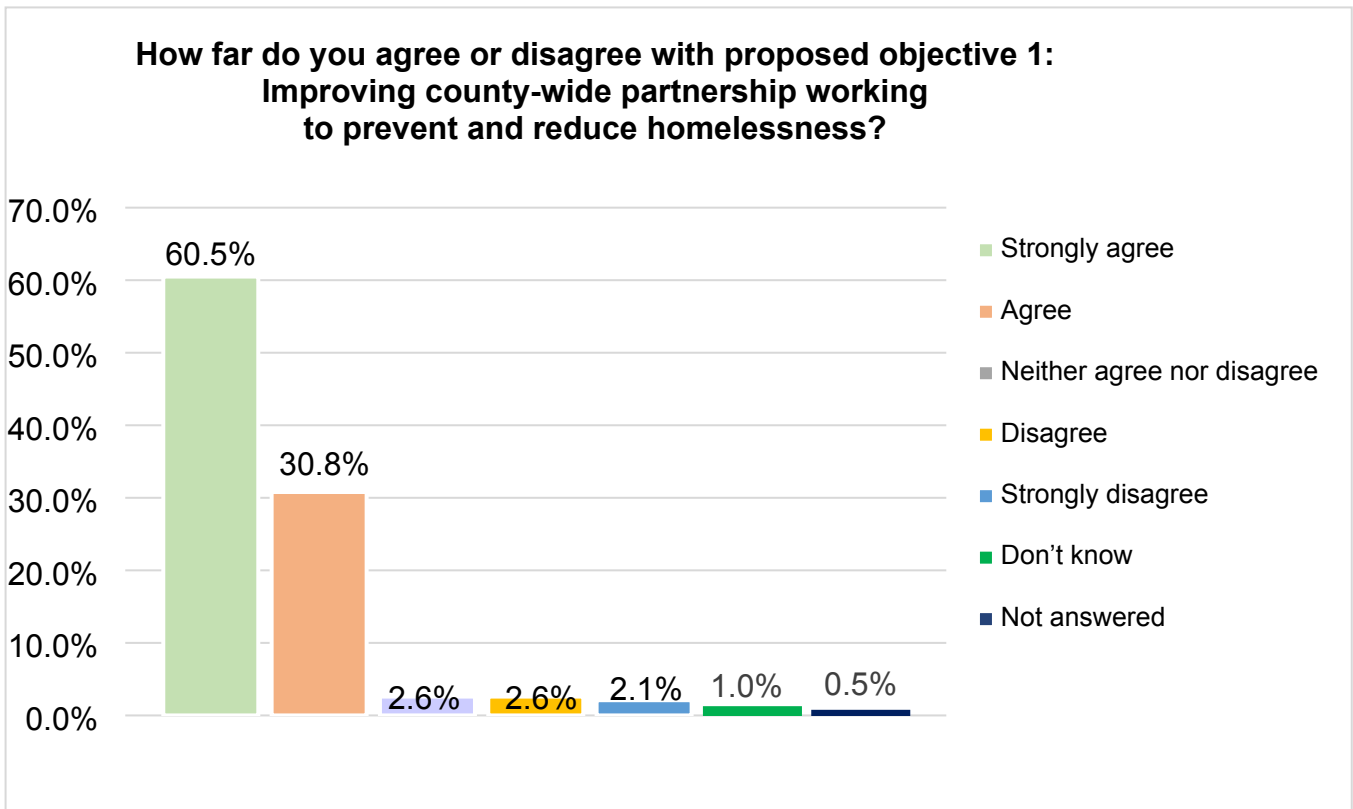
There were a high number of comments made to each of the proposed objectives and to the overall strategy, with 338 individual comments received in total. A full list of the comments can be found at Appendix E.

When we looked at how those who have received support from the councils housing needs team (14 people, 7%) responded to the overall strategy, we noticed that the level of agreement with the overall aims and objectives was slightly higher from this group (86% either 'strongly agree' or 'agree') compared to those who do not receive this support (83%).

PROPOSED OBJECTIVE 1: TO IMPROVE COUNTY-WIDE PARTNERSHIP WORKING TO PREVENT AND REDUCE HOMELESSNESS

We are proposing a strategic objective to improve county-wide partnership working to prevent and reduce homelessness. This is one of the five objectives identified to help achieve the aims of the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025.

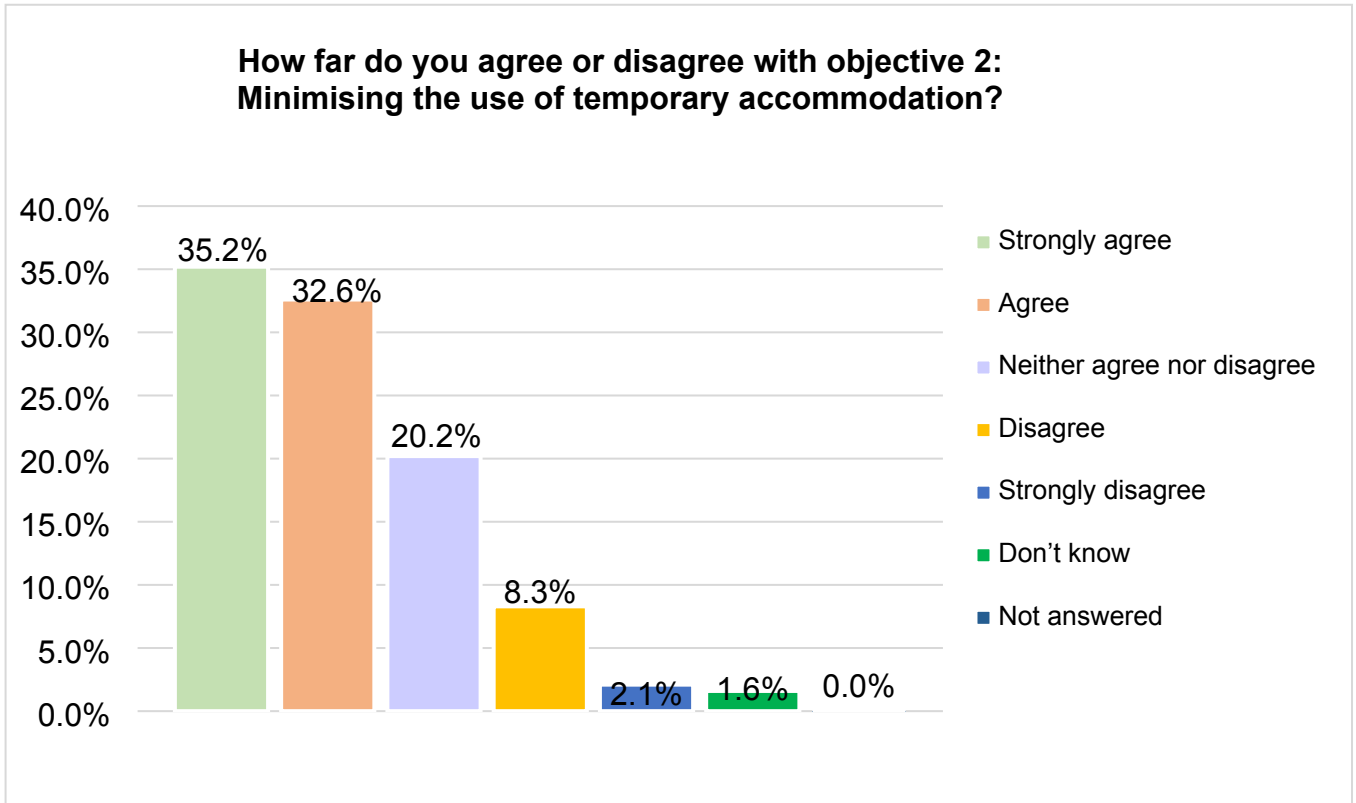
An exceptionally high proportion of respondents to this question (91%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this objective. Only 5% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, and a similar number (3%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the objective. Sixty-seven respondents provided comments, which are discussed later in the report.



PROPOSED OBJECTIVE 2: TO MINIMISE THE USE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

We are proposing a strategic objective to minimise the use of temporary accommodation. This is one of the five objectives identified to help achieve the aims of the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025.

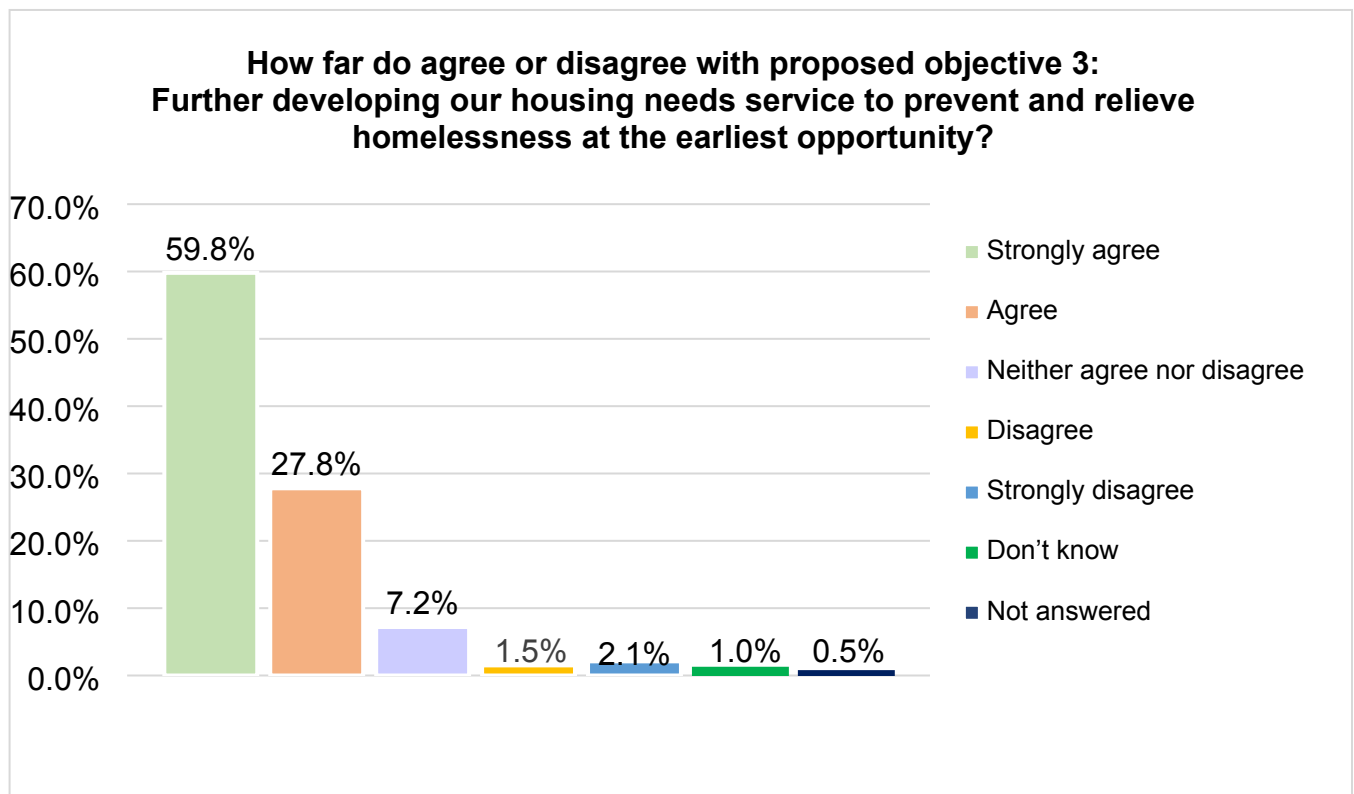
More than two-thirds of respondents to this question (68%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this objective. This objective received the lowest support when compared with the other four proposed objectives. A small number of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (10%), while double the number of respondents (20%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the objective. Fifty-seven respondents provided comments, which are discussed later in the report.



PROPOSED OBJECTIVE 3: TO FURTHER DEVELOP OUR HOUSING NEEDS SERVICE TO PREVENT AND RELIEVE HOMELESSNESS AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY

We are proposing a strategic objective to further develop our housing needs service to prevent and relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity. This is one of the five objectives identified to help achieve the aims of the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025.

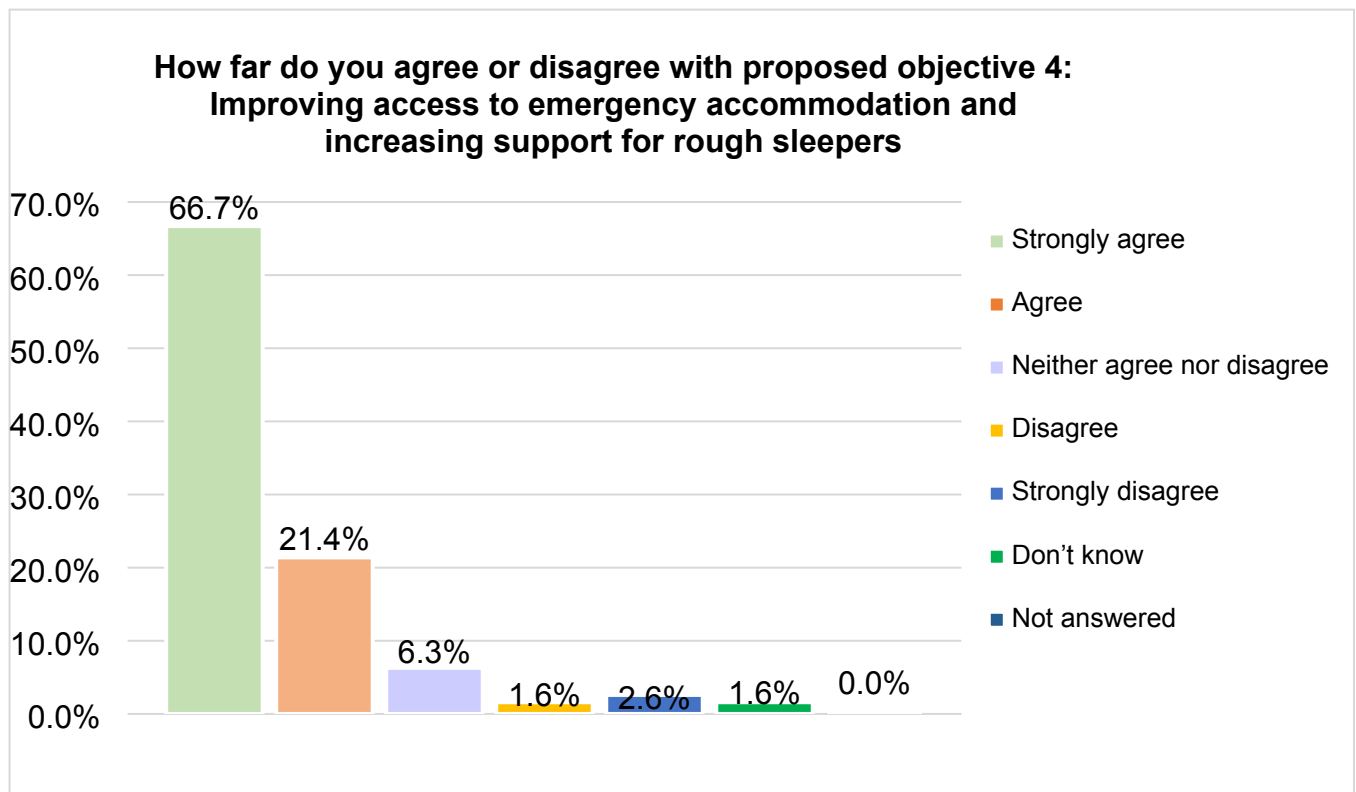
A very high proportion of respondents to this question (88%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this objective. Only 4% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, while a slightly higher number (7%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the objective. Fifty respondents provided comments, which are discussed later in the report.



PROPOSED OBJECTIVE 4: TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION AND INCREASE SUPPORT FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS

We are proposing a strategic objective to improve access to emergency accommodation and increase support for rough sleepers. This is one of the five objectives identified to help achieve the aims of the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025.

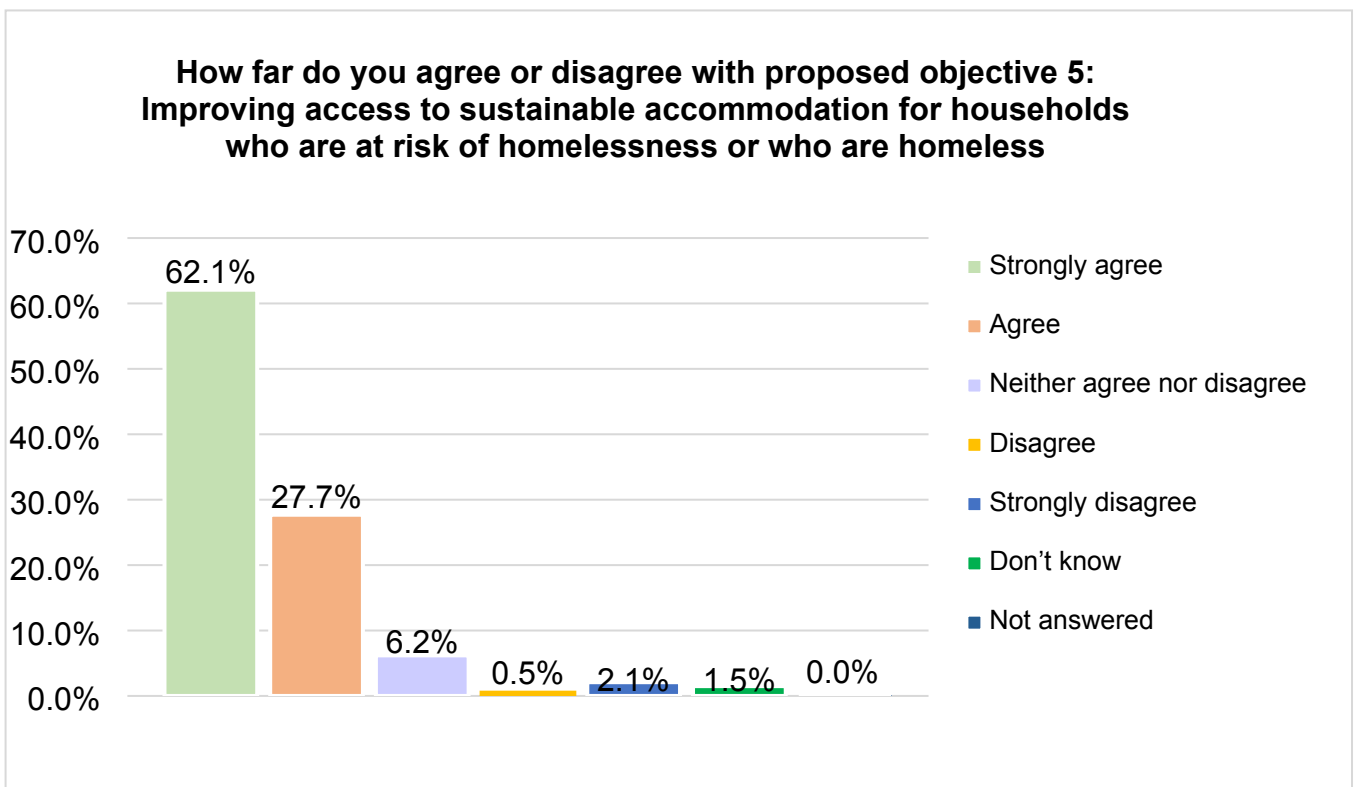
A very high proportion of respondents to this question (88%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this objective. Only 5% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, while almost the same number (6%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the objective. Fifty-two respondents provided comments, which are discussed later in the report.



PROPOSED OBJECTIVE 5: TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE ACCOMMODATION FOR HOUSEHOLDS WHO ARE AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS OR WHO ARE HOMELESS

We are proposing a strategic objective to improve access to sustainable accommodation for households who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless. This is one of the five objectives identified to help achieve the aims of the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025.

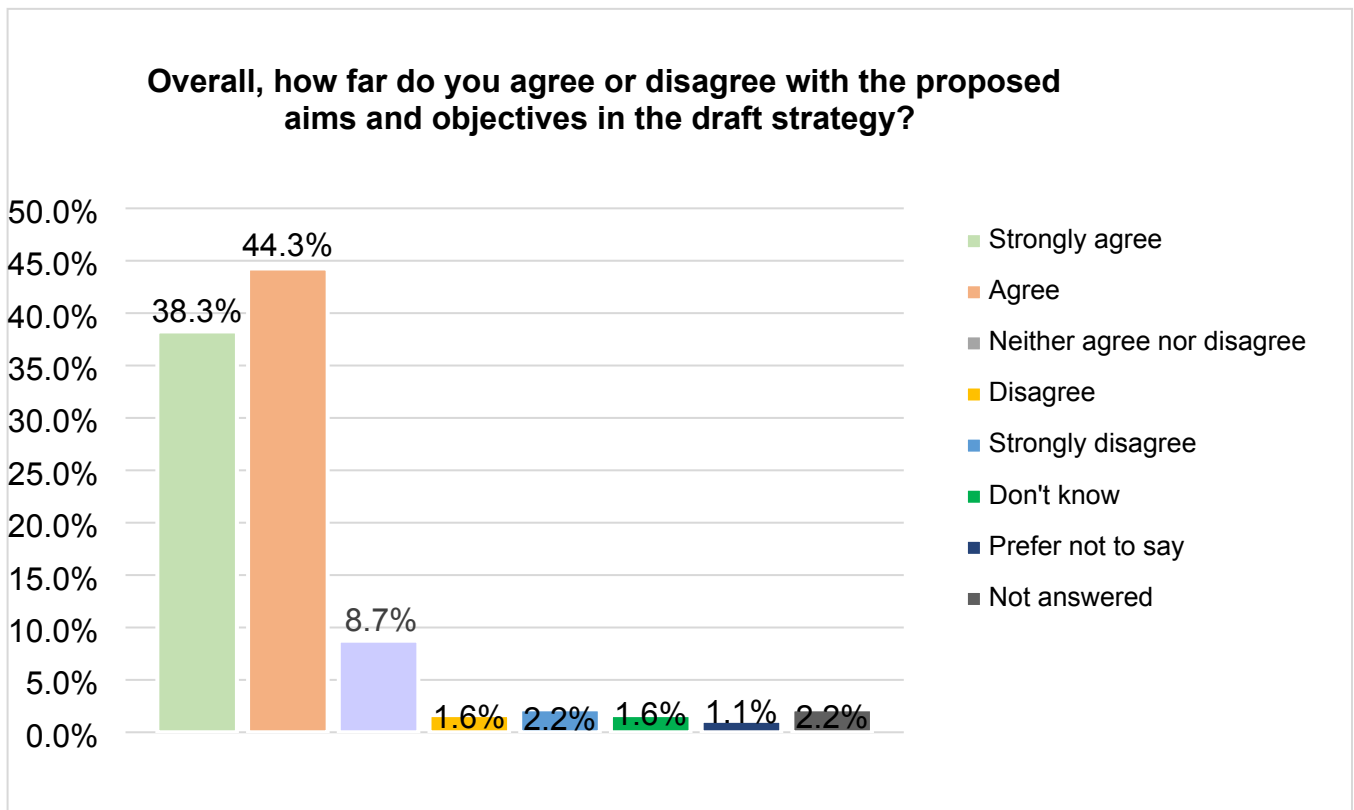
A very high proportion of respondents to this question (90%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this objective. Only 3% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, while double the number (6%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the objective. Fifty-four respondents provided comments, which are discussed later in the report.



OVERALL, HOW FAR DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE PROPOSED AIMS AND OBJECTIVES IN THE DRAFT STRATEGY

The draft Joint Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 has three aims: to prevent homelessness whenever possible; to end incidents of homelessness at the earliest opportunity; and to end the need for rough sleeping. We have identified five strategic objectives to help achieve the aims of the draft strategy, and this is supported by detailed actions to meet each of the objectives.

A high proportion of respondents to this question (83%) either strongly agreed or agreed overall with the proposed aims and objectives. Only 4% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, while a relatively higher number (9%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the objective. Fifty-eight respondents provided comments, which are discussed later in the report.



KEY FINDINGS – QUALITATIVE DATA

The consultation allowed participants to provide free text responses to the five proposed objectives and how they felt about the overall proposed aims and objectives in the strategy. This opportunity allowed respondents to openly indicate reasons behind their answers to the previous tick box questions, which asked them to tell us how far they agreed or disagreed with each proposed objective and the overall strategy.

A range of comments and suggestions were received. A summary of all the comments, along with how frequently they were mentioned, can be found in the tables below. Comments raised more than twice, highlighted in the tables, have been responded to by the housing needs team. Some spelling, grammatical and punctual errors in the original comments raised were corrected in the main body of this report; a full list of unedited comments can be found at Appendix E.

Proposed objective 1: to improve county-wide partnership working to prevent and reduce homelessness

A summary of the key themes emerging from the comments received on the objective to improve county-wide partnership working to prevent and reduce homelessness can be found below.

These comments show that the issue raised most frequently related to involving all relevant agencies and organisations in partnership working, especially mental health agencies.

The next most frequently raised comment related to the importance of addressing the relationship between addictions – particularly alcohol and drugs – to homelessness and comments on early prevention work especially regarding mental health issues.

Comments were also made about working more with local communities, the movement of rough sleepers migrating to Oxford city from the districts and vice versa, and also that homelessness and people being on the streets should not happen, especially in a wealthy country.

Table 1: Frequency of comments raised to improve county-wide partnership working to prevent and reduce homelessness

| Comment type | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| Involve all agencies / organisations | 10 |
| Address relationships: addiction (alcohol / drugs), physical and emotional issues and homelessness | 5 |
| Prevention / early intervention is 'key', especially with mental health issues | 4 |
| Work more with local communities (eg schools, colleges, pubs, volunteers) | 3 |
| Rough sleepers might leave SODC / Vale and migrate to Oxford / vice versa | 3 |
| Homelessness should not happen (eg in a wealthy country), get people off streets is No 1 priority | 3 |
| Keep homeless near friends and family / schools | 2 |
| Have more affordable housing in / near places of work, offer jobs | 2 |
| Vital to find solutions to creating more viable move on options | 2 |
| This objective appears focused on bureaucracy rather than results | 2 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Concerned this strategy will act as magnet / offer accommodation for local people | 2 |
| Engagement with landlords (and property owners) is important and could be more developed | 2 |
| Hostels needed in many localities / more small 'pods' before situation is critical | 2 |
| Work closer with people who have criminal record / imprisoned | 2 |
| All possible problems associated with homelessness to be analysed / solutions sought, taken seriously | 2 |
| Partnership is meaningless statement, not clear enough | 2 |
| Make homeless aware of Personal Housing Plan system | 1 |
| Like idea of a Homelessness Coordinator | 1 |
| Building on Trailblazer network is good | 1 |
| Involve local businesses in issues and help with solutions | 1 |
| You can only support those who want support | 1 |
| Town councils should have emergency funds / process to help 'through sleepers' on way to Oxford | 1 |
| Fear I will be paying for this | 1 |
| Make public aware of how they can give support | 1 |
| Is system flexible / robust enough to share agency information quickly and efficiently | 1 |
| These are good intentions, but 'how' will practical ideas be accomplished | 1 |
| Just work countywide (not nationwide) | 1 |
| Homeless on streets of Oxford are an eyesore and embarrassing | 1 |
| Ensure taxes are not spent in other areas | 1 |
| Encourage homeless to work when possible | 1 |
| Emphasis should not be financial, rather we need to make decision from heart and use our heads | 1 |
| Extra help and support to young people | 1 |
| Housing and help should be given to people that deserve it / given on good behaviour | 1 |
| Admirable proposals, if enough funds to make reality | 1 |
| Use council actions and funds to solve problems, not add to them (eg taking non council tax payers to court / prison) | 1 |

INVOLVE ALL AGENCIES / ORGANISATIONS

The highest frequency of comments from respondents related to working closely with all relevant agencies and organisations to improve county-wide partnership working to prevent and reduce homelessness. Most comments related to working across all relevant organisations especially working with mental health agencies.

Agreed every agency should be involved. (ID 129038408)

Working together across all relevant and contributing organisations has got to be the right approach. This may also include approved voluntary organisations, but because homelessness can have many complex issues such as drug abuse or mental health issues it needs to be tackled collaboratively with expert resources. (ID 129737336)

I strongly agree with organisations working together to tackle homelessness issues. When things are fragmented well-being people step in to help and this is not always a good idea or sustainable. (ID 130200027)

Link up teams from District and Town Councils in order to count numbers of homeless people. (ID 130316359)

One respondent wondered why there isn't already close partnership working.

One wonders why there has not been close cooperation in this matter in the past. (ID 129123371)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The draft strategy recognises the importance of building upon the existing strong partnership arrangements across the county to tackle homelessness. These partnerships include statutory, non-statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure a 'joined-up' approach to addressing both the housing and support needs of homeless households.

ADDRESS RELATIONSHIPS: ADDICTION (ALCOHOL / DRUGS), PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ISSUES AND HOMELESSNESS

There were several views expressed about the relationship between addiction, in particular to alcohol and drugs, and homelessness. Comments also reflected other possible reasons for people being homeless, such as physical or mental issues caused by marital break-up or being ex-forces.

The relationship between addiction (and alcohol / drugs) and homelessness needs to be addressed. (ID 129397780)

I do know some people who are homeless...Most people come to Oxford City to beg for money for drugs or drink. These people need to be helped to get out of their downward spiral. (ID 130191359)

Try and find out why people are homeless. Health? Physical / mental. Ex forces. Marriage break-up etc. (ID 130316359)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

Addressing the underlying support needs of homeless households is essential in order to secure long term housing solutions. Every household at risk of homelessness is provided with a Personal Housing Plan that identifies specific support needs, including substance misuse, and then works with a Housing Needs Officer to help address these needs and secure sustainable accommodation.

PREVENTION / EARLY INTERVENTION IS 'KEY', ESP WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Several comments focused on the importance of prevention and early intervention in reducing homelessness and working with mental health organisations where homeless are suffering from mental health issues.

Prevention is the key. Most data show that early intervention is the primary indicator in reduced homelessness. Especially where that intervention is with those who suffer mental issues. (ID 129029394)

Mental health agencies should be involved as often the inability to cope with 'normal' life leads to opting out which can result in homelessness. (ID 129029923)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The draft strategy is strongly focussed upon early intervention to prevent homelessness occurring in the first place. The housing needs team works closely with statutory and volunteer organisations to support people with mental health issues and also provides supported accommodation for persons with mental health issues.

WORK MORE WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES (EG SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, PUBS, VOLUNTEERS)

Comments were made about working with partners beyond those listed in the strategy to help identify homeless and vulnerable people, for example by working with very local organisations and communities who are often best placed to help.

Work more with the local communities (ID 129035261)

On reading the actions my only concern is that the necessary communication could extend beyond the partners listed - To identify homeless people, potentially vulnerable families / individuals. You could even involve schools, colleges, pubs – i.e. use the community. (ID 129943823)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The partner organisations listed at Appendix 1 of the strategy refers only to the agencies that attended the stakeholder engagement workshops. The housing needs team works with a wide range of community-based volunteer agencies, including advice agencies, food banks and charities that provide housing-related assistance. The draft strategy action plan includes an action to increase public engagement through a communications strategy.

ROUGH SLEEPERS MIGHT LEAVE SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE / VALE AND MIGRATE TO OXFORD / VICE VERSA

A few people are concerned that rough sleepers are migrating between the districts and Oxford city and back again.

Does the fact that there is little rough sleeping in SODC mean that they migrate to Oxford where it is rampant in the city centre? (ID 129054256)

... avoid Oxford City pushing homeless people into VWH! (ID 129470082)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

There is a perception that rough sleepers may migrate from South and Vale into Oxford City. The more recent official rough sleeper count identified only two rough sleepers in Oxford City with a local connection to either South or Vale. The very low levels of rough sleeping in South and Vale illustrates that Oxford City rough sleepers are not migrating to the districts.

HOMELESSNESS SHOULD NOT HAPPEN (EG IN A WEALTHY COUNTRY), GET PEOPLE OFF STREETS IS NO 1 PRIORITY

Some respondents felt that homelessness should not happen in a wealthy country, and that getting people off the street should be a number one priority.

I feel homelessness should not be happening in this country, a wealthy one. (ID 129270403)

Getting people off the streets should be no 1 priority. (ID 130198035)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

A key aim of the draft strategy is to end the need for rough sleeping. There are a number of actions in the strategy designed to achieve this aim by both preventing rough sleeping and to get any rough sleepers into accommodation at the earliest opportunity.

Comments from business, organisations or councils:

Oxfordshire County Council

I like the idea of a Homelessness Coordinator and building on Trailblazer network links is good. I think finding solutions to creating more viable move on options is vital. (ID 129040219)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

South and Vale are co-funding the position of a Homelessness Co-ordinator together with the county council and district councils. Developing a countywide approach, building upon the successful legacy of Trailblazers to prevent homelessness, is a key objective of the draft strategy.

Sandford-on-Thames Parish Council (officer)

Are the links and shared databases between district councils and housing associations robust enough? Are the systems to facilitate housing swaps flexible enough? Neither flexible nor robust is enough if the information is not managed quickly and efficiently eg is there a system for the Friday afternoon crisis? (ID 129211841)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing needs team work closely with Registered Providers and have protocols in place for the early identification of households at risk of homelessness. The joint Housing Allocations Policy enables management moves by Registered Providers to quickly respond to potential homelessness situations.

NPS (housing organisation)

Work closer with people that have a criminal record, still don't like the term intentionally homeless. There is a void still with people who are imprisoned. (ID 129227602)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The Oxfordshire trailblazers project funded an embedded housing worker who supported prison resettlement teams and Probation officers. This initiative successfully reduced the number of prisoners in Oxfordshire who were homeless on release. This countywide work is being continued by a Housing Options Officer based in Oxford City who is a dedicated link worker supporting criminal justice colleagues to further reduce incidents of prisoners becoming homeless on release.

Watchfield Parish Council (councillor)

In section 1, Improve country-wide partnership working to prevent and reduce homelessness, you indicate your wish to work with county-wide partners. However, nowhere is it mentioned that very local organisations, charities and volunteers are

sometimes best placed to identify issues around current and prospective homelessness in their own communities. (ID 131347173)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing needs team works with a wide range of community-based volunteer agencies, including advice agencies, food banks and charities that provide housing-related assistance. The team agrees that local organisations play a key role in tackling homelessness and will continue to work closely with these partner agencies.

Proposed objective 2: to minimise the use of temporary accommodation

A summary of the key themes from the comments received on the objective to minimise the use of temporary accommodation can be found below.

These comments show that the issue raised most frequently related to the view that temporary accommodation (TA) is occasionally necessary and if well-coordinated and maximised, can reduce the time this type of support is needed.

The next most frequently raised comment related to the feeling that this objective is reliant on new and permanent housing being available, as well as suitable, in order to be successful.

There were also comments about temporary accommodation sometimes being the only answer and that it is better to use temporary accommodation than to be on the streets.

Table 2: Frequency of comments raised to minimise the use of temporary accommodation

| Comment type | Frequency |
|---|-----------|
| TA occasionally necessary, reduces time in TA if well-coordinated, maximise for those who need it | 10 |
| Objective dependent on new / permanent housing availability / suitable accommodation | 8 |
| TA sometimes the only answer / better than being on the streets | 5 |
| Turn vacant shops into rented housing, use ex-army barracks and hotels | 3 |
| Need an exit plan in place to avoid being 'dumped' into TA | 2 |
| TA is main focus for early prevention | 2 |
| Fear I / taxpayers will be paying for this | 2 |
| Involve all agencies including charity sector | 2 |
| More small 'pods' to help before situation is critical / blocks of living units | 2 |
| All possible problems associated with homelessness to be analysed / solutions sought, taken seriously | 2 |
| Ensure enough TA available, it's very important | 2 |
| Landlords shouldn't get rich from / run sub-standard temporary accommodation | 2 |
| Temporary accommodation transient and puts people in limbo | 1 |
| Temporary accommodation disruptive and depressing, to be avoided | 1 |
| Don't use cheap B&B's / allow people to stay in B&B during the day | 1 |
| Concerned this objective will act as a magnet | 1 |
| Charge appropriate rent to support bank of spare housing | 1 |
| Right to buy too heavily discounted | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| These are good intentions, but 'how' will practical ideas be accomplished | 1 |
| More accommodation needed for elderly being released from custody | 1 |
| TA means people struggle to get work, credit, schools as don't have regular address | 1 |
| TA okay if doesn't cause more problems | 1 |
| TA should be evenly distributed | 1 |
| Deliver TA support from Community Navigators | 1 |
| TA should include cooking facilities | 1 |
| TA for 24 hours maybe, but for months is unsustainable | 1 |
| Objective should be to 'minimise the need' for TA | 1 |
| Homeless on streets of Oxford are an eyesore and embarrassing | 1 |
| Break up social groups to help people move in right direction / get right help | 1 |
| Relocate single people to other council accommodation (across county) to make room for families | 1 |
| Should be better council inspected / run hostels for very short-term emergency shelter | 1 |
| We should accommodate our local people first | 1 |
| Use TA for very short-term emergencies | 1 |
| TA great if you have the funds | 1 |
| Build more council homes for less well-off / homeless | 1 |
| Spend funds more constructively rather than on courts / imprisonment | 1 |

TA OCCASIONALLY NECESSARY, REDUCES TIME IN TA IF WELL COORDINATED, MAXIMISE FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT

The highest number of comments made about this objective were around temporary accommodation being occasionally necessary and appropriate, but that it should be well coordinated, and maximised for those who actually need it.

Temp accommodation is transient and puts people in limbo but is necessary from time to time. (ID 129034383)

Why minimise the use TA when the need is still there if they move on from the TA was better coordinated than the time in TA would be reduced. (ID 129073067)

Rather than 'minimising the use' the objective should be to 'minimise the NEED'. The use of emergency accommodation should be maximised to ensure that all who need it can have it. (ID 129671775)

Some respondents thought there will always be a need for temporary accommodation.

I cannot understand why there's a need to 'minimise' usage of temporary housing when there's an apparent need for it. (ID 129679426)

Surely there will always be a need for temporary accommodation? (ID 130734175)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The use of temporary accommodation is often disruptive and distressing for homelessness households. The focus of the draft strategy is that whenever possible to avoid the dislocation and cost of temporary accommodation by preventing homelessness in the first place.

There will be an ongoing need to provide temporary accommodation in an emergency, however the incidents and duration of these placements should be minimised through securing better, sustainable housing outcomes.

OBJECTIVE DEPENDENT ON NEW / PERMANENT HOUSING AVAILABILITY / SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION

A high frequency of comments were made about how this objective is highly dependent on the availability of suitable permanent housing – the lack of its availability – and how the ‘housing crisis’ needs to be addressed earlier on at the planning stage.

Idealistic and obviously positive in its intention, but so dependant [sic] on new housing being available. (ID 129033571)

Yes we need more permanent housing to be able to support this problem (ID 129041287)

I do not think this type of accommodation can be ignored, if the availability of long term properties are not present. (ID 130202740)

Build some suitable accommodation. (ID 130200027)

One comment was critical of the planning system and stated that the wrong type of houses are being built, rather they the type actually needed.

The Planning Dept needs attention. The ‘housing crisis’ is not too few ‘houses’ but too many of the wrong type of houses (3 & 4 bed built by developers FOR developers) and too few of the type needed (1 & 2 bed units in places accessible by public transport). Planners seem to be allowing developers to ‘set the rules’. Planners should be working for the community they serve - not the government. (ID 131201818)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing needs team recognises and supports the need for an increase in genuinely affordable housing to help provide long term housing solutions to homelessness and housing need. Effective use of the current housing stock can ensure that use of temporary accommodation is kept to an absolute minimum.

TA SOMETIMES THE ONLY ANSWER / BETTER THAN BEING ON THE STREETS

Some respondents felt that the use of temporary accommodation has its place and was sometimes the only way of helping people who would otherwise end up on the streets.

While I agree with the policy, for those with a chaotic lifestyle or immediate relationship breakdown, temporary accommodation is sometimes the only answer, so this policy should not be a reason for poor provision of temporary accommodation. (ID 129110446)

Why? Anything is better than being on the streets. (ID 129138501)

Temporary housing is better than the streets - as long as it does put more people onto the streets it has a place. Minimise is key word not eliminate. (ID 130198035)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The draft strategy aims to end the need for rough sleeping and minimise the incidents of homelessness. The use of short-term emergency accommodation for rough sleepers or homeless households may be necessary, albeit undesirable, while making rapid arrangements for more sustainable accommodation.

TURN VACANT SHOPS INTO RENTED HOUSING, USE EX ARMY BARRACKS AND HOTELS

A few comments suggested that vacant shops should be purchased and turned into houses that could then be rented out. Another suggestion was to use ex-army barracks and hotels as temporary accommodation.

See item C on question 7: C - Shops are closing due to Amazon (online shopping). Take over these shops (compulsory purchase) for a reasonable price and turn them into houses and collect rent for them. (ID 129698304)

Use ex-army barracks and hotels so there is an incentive to get a job and move on. (ID 129940633)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The change of use from retail outlets to residential properties is a matter for planning policy. We will feedback these comments to our Planning Policy team.

Comments from business, organisations or councils:

Oxfordshire County Council

Early intervention is key, I agree with this as a main focus for prevention (ID 129040219)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

Early intervention and the prevention of homelessness is central to the draft strategy.

Sandford-on-Thames Parish Council (officer)

As this is likely to be more expensive and dislocating for those affected, the only solution is to have some capacity in the housing stock but therein lies the problem. Ideally each area would have one or two homes available for emergency use to avoid temporary accommodation- or a block of 4 living units (ID 129211841)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The draft strategy includes an action to undertake an options appraisal for the provision of council-owned temporary accommodation that will include the location of temporary accommodation in the districts.

NPS (housing organisation)

Temporary accommodation is all well, but if no duty is accepted after that, then they are street homeless. More accommodation is needed for the elderly people being released from custody. (ID 129227602)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The draft strategy aims to prevent or relieve homelessness before a ‘main duty’ homelessness decision is required that may consider a person as ‘non-priority’ need. This preventative approach includes intervening early when people are due to be released from prison.

Proposed objective 3: to further develop our housing needs service to prevent and relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity

A summary of the key themes from the comments received on the objective to further develop our housing needs service to prevent and relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity can be found below.

These comments show that the matters raised most frequently were positive ones relating to this being a core objective that should be prioritised.

The next most frequently raised comment related to whether the objective has enough detail, and how it will be achieved, practically and financially.

There were also comments about working more with mental health charities, taking a proactive approach in identifying who might be at risk of being homeless and looking for solutions for the many and varied reasons people become homeless.

Table 3: Frequency of comments raised to further develop our housing needs service to prevent and relieve homelessness at the earliest opportunity

| Comment type | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| This is core objective / good to do | 6 |
| This objective needs more detail around how it will be achieved / funding problem | 4 |
| Work more with organisations / charities eg mental health charity MIND | 3 |
| Take a proactive approach, identify people at risk before they become homeless | 3 |
| All possible problems around homelessness to be analysed / solutions sought, look at individuals | 3 |
| Need to do what is necessary / homelessness is immediate | 2 |
| Use redundant schools / derelict buildings as hostel | 2 |
| Make best use of existing housing | 2 |
| For those unwilling to work / manage addiction, hostels only in severe weather | 2 |
| Why build homes if people can't afford rent | 2 |
| Objective dependent on new / permanent housing availability / suitable accommodation | 2 |
| Need more long-term secure accommodation for all / private renters | 1 |
| Use Community Navigators, evidence-based approach | 1 |
| Have a longer term and more joined-up strategy to strengthen and support objective | 1 |
| Good projects already in place eg Oxfordshire Trailblazers, Housing First, Gold Rose | 1 |
| Use adapted shipping containers (as seen in Reading) | 1 |
| Easily accessible on-line and phone advice service for tenants | 1 |
| Give short term loans for rent arrears while waiting for UC | 1 |
| Objective should depend on homeless working, paying for damages / repairs, respecting neighbours | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Increased housing needs infrastructure eg schools, GP practice | 1 |
| Don't impinge on housing for locals | 1 |
| Build affordable (no down payment) housing / reasonable rent, prioritise families with children | 1 |
| Turn vacant shops into rented housing | 1 |
| Affordable housing which enables people to 'buy' a stake is important | 1 |
| Housing (for homeless) should be mixed in with private and professional rented property, stop slum area | 1 |
| Work more with local communities (Eg schools, colleges, pubs, volunteers) | 1 |
| Don't know how to access the 'housing needs service' - suggest it's advertised | 1 |
| Not fair for poor taxpayers to foot the bill | 1 |
| Raise council tax to provide fund to build council properties, incentivise local builders | 1 |
| Provide financial planning support | 1 |
| Make public aware of how they can give support | 1 |
| Spend funds more constructively rather than on courts / imprisonment | 1 |

THIS IS CORE OBJECTIVE / GOOD TO DO

The highest frequency of comments were made in support of this objective, stating that its core, close to where the work is and should be prioritised.

This is a core objective (ID 129034759)

...this should be close to where work is (ID 129080682)

Yes to the objective. (ID 130185790)

This is definitely a need and should be prioritised. (ID 130198035)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The further development of our housing needs service to prevent and relieve homelessness is recognised as a key priority in the draft strategy.

THIS OBJECTIVE NEEDS MORE DETAIL AROUND HOW IT WILL BE ACHIEVED / FUNDING PROBLEM

In contrast to the positive comments above, a few respondents felt that this objective needs more qualification and questions how it will actually be achieved and whether funding is needed to achieve the actions.

Clearly there are many good intentions. But what I so far do not see are any practical ideas for how to accomplish those good intentions. The important question is always 'How'. (ID 129226925)

This is a funding problem. I'm not aware if this proposal can ever be met. (ID 130202740)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The practical actions that will achieve the objective are set out in the detailed action plan. The funding streams to implement the action plan have been identified and will be met within existing budgets. The draft strategy will be amended to include further details on funding arrangements.

WORK MORE WITH ORGANISATIONS / CHARITIES EG MENTAL HEALTH CHARITY MIND
Working closely with organisations and charities, especially mental health charities and volunteers was mentioned by a few respondents.

*I believe that working with organisations such as Mind could be effective.
(ID 129070411)*

Yes to the objective. Some creativity might be useful i.e using rundown existing stock / asking charities / volunteers help to get it back to use. (ID 130185790)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing needs team are currently working with MIND to provide supported accommodation to people with low to medium level mental health needs. The team also work closely with mental health support services and housing providers across the county to help people with mental health issues access support and housing.

TAKE A PROACTIVE APPROACH, IDENTIFY PEOPLE AT RISK BEFORE THEY BECOME HOMELESS

Some strong views were expressed by a few respondents about the importance of identifying people in the community who may be at risk of being homeless and taking action to prevent this happening in the first place.

A clear objective to do more and not allow a culture of just doing enough to meet the need of HRA. More proactive, finding people in the community who may have a future housing crisis, before they present at the LA (ID 129073067)

This would be good to avoid homeless e.g. people who pay rent and fall behind are much better looked after before they become homeless. I should imagine it is cheaper to look after them before they become homeless as well. (ID 129254553)

The primary objective should be to identify risk of homelessness and be able to take action to prevent it. This is difficult but would avoid many more difficult situations which arise from homelessness both for families and single people. Financial planning help is badly needed by many with support to manage limited funds. (ID 130729011)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing needs team already intervenes in many potential homeless cases before the statutory 56-day period. The Enhanced Housing Options online housing module helps identify people at risk of homelessness before they approach the councils.

From January 2020, a grant-funded specialist floating support officer will be working with vulnerable individuals and families in their homes and communities to pro-actively provide holistic support to prevent homelessness.

ALL POSSIBLE PROBLEMS AROUND HOMELESSNESS TO BE ANALYSED / SOLUTIONS SOUGHT, LOOK AT INDIVIDUALS

Respondents also felt strongly that just providing accommodation won't necessarily lead to a reduction in homelessness. Comments highlighted that many of the root causes of homelessness can have a greater impact and need to be analysed and tackled, partly by looking at individual cases.

From what I've read the availability of alternative accommodation does not necessarily lead to a reduction in homelessness. Other factors can be more influential - i.e. use of drugs, need for companionship, mental instability - and need to be taken into account. (ID 129671775)

Ditto 6: I would say you have produced 5 objectives but without any analysis of the problems. Are you dealing with age, sex, finances, mentality, education, social or antisocial, hard working or shy of work. Are the clients local or international. Are they different in every case. Do they have physical, mental, sexual, cultural etc problems. You haven't met your solutions with questions rather than defined problems and individuality. (ID 129674194)

Society cannot and must not ignore homelessness. We must tackle and eliminate the roots causes of homelessness. Local and District authorities have a key role to play in both helping provide accommodation and in educating their residents to stop ignoring the homeless. (ID 131299453)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The draft strategy includes analysis of the key cohorts of homeless households in the districts that have distinct housing needs. It is important however to recognise that each incident of homelessness is specific to that household. The needs of individual households are addressed through a Personal Housing Plan and the ongoing support of a dedicated caseworker. This individual, holistic approach addresses both the immediate and any underlying causes of homelessness.

Comments from business, organisations or councils:

Oxfordshire County Council

I think this is a bit thin and needs more qualification around how you intend to achieve this (ID 129040219)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The draft strategy includes a detailed action plan that explains how we intend to achieve this objective.

Sandford-on-Thames Parish Council (officer)

Easily accessible on-line and telephone service to advise tenants of measures they can take when threatened with eviction and possible short-term loans for rent arrear difficulties (eg while waiting for UC). (ID 129211841)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing pages on the councils' websites provide information for tenants, and any tenant threatened with eviction can phone a direct number for advice and assistance from a Housing Needs Officer. Rent loans may be available to potentially homeless households in certain circumstances

Proposed objective 4: to improve access to emergency accommodation and increase support for rough sleepers

A summary of the key themes from the comments received on the objective to improve access to emergency accommodation and increase support for rough sleepers can be found below.

These comments show that the issue raised most frequently related to working more closely with the voluntary sector and those organisations who are best placed to help coordinate rough sleeping programmes. Respondents also thought that there could be closer working with churches and clergy.

The next most frequently raised comment related to the view that no one should sleep rough in winter and the importance of addressing the relationship between homelessness and addictions and unemployment. The same number of respondents also thought that this objective could have the most impact for the least cost.

There were also comments about no one sleeping rough, unless by choice, and that more use could be made of military barracks and houses, out of season student accommodation and converted office blocks as a supply of emergency accommodation.

Table 4: Frequency of comments raised to improve access to emergency accommodation and increase support for rough sleepers

| Comment type | Frequency |
|---|-----------|
| Work more with / closer cooperation with organisations / charities / churches | 5 |
| No rough sleepers especially in winter | 4 |
| Address relationship of homelessness & addiction (alcohol / drugs), unemployment, offer counselling | 4 |
| This is essential / urgent objective, where most impact can be made for least cost | 4 |
| No one should sleep rough (unless by choice) | 3 |
| Use army barracks and military houses / converted office blocks for singles | 3 |
| Use university accommodation out of term time as shelters | 2 |
| Set up proper emergency accommodation | 2 |
| Might encourage people from outside districts to use our (improved) services | 2 |
| All possible problems around homelessness to be analysed / solutions sought, look at individuals | 2 |
| Refer to Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) to access to winter time shelter | 1 |
| Support specialist housing needs officer idea | 1 |
| Create local provision in districts | 1 |
| Set up smaller hostel projects in districts | 1 |
| Make public aware of how they can give support | 1 |
| use adapted shipping containers (as seen in Reading) | 1 |
| More hostels over a wider area to provide address for work applications | 1 |
| These are good intentions, but 'how' will practical ideas be accomplished | 1 |
| Use redundant schools as hostel | 1 |
| Provide separate female only hostels for safety | 1 |
| Look at other factors: drugs, need for companionship, mental instability | 1 |
| Offer mediation for young rough sleepers and their parents | 1 |
| Ensure accommodation is secure / address fears of drugs, theft, violence | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Give homeless community work and pay them in kind (food / drinks not money) | 1 |
| Offer literacy programmes and ways to access to medical care | 1 |
| Open Didcot Civic Hall overnight for people that behave | 1 |
| Address fear of inquiries, police etc if setting up extra accommodation | 1 |
| Long term accommodation and support is the key, but this is needed as interim | 1 |
| Make best use of existing housing | 1 |
| Focus intervention on new rough sleepers | 1 |
| Spend funds more constructively rather than on courts / imprisonment | 1 |

WORK MORE WITH / CLOSER COOPERATION WITH ORGANISATIONS / CHARITIES / CHURCHES

The most frequently mentioned comments were in support of working more closely with the voluntary sector and organisations who can help coordinate rough sleeping programmes. Respondents thought that the churches and clergy could be better utilised.

I agree. This is a context in which the local authority could beneficially co-operate with the St. Dismas charity, which is specifically dedicated to relieving homelessness and rough sleeping. (ID 129033571)

I don't think that working with the voluntary sector was mentioned in this draft statement. With proper coordination, this could be very helpful. (ID 129110446)

Involve churches and clergy in towns. (ID 129698012)

Some rough sleepers may be illiterate. Churches should be used to enable this objective. I believe all rough sleepers programmes should have access to medical care / literacy and know how to access these. (ID 129939310)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing needs team engage with local churches and clergy to help develop improved services for rough sleepers. The potential development of a local winter shelter was also discussed, however due to the geography of the districts it was not possible to develop a similar model to Oxford City. The trial local winter shelter scheduled for January 2020 will be provided and managed by a specialist housing provider, however we will be looking to secure voluntary assistance if the trial shelter is successful.

NO ROUGH SLEEPERS ESPECIALLY IN WINTER

There were several views expressed in support of this objective and in particular ensuring that there is enough emergency accommodation available so that no-one sleeps rough in the winter.

Particularly in winter there should be no rough sleepers. (ID 129254553)

This seems to me the most urgent objective - especially throughout winter when people should not be sleeping rough (ID 130064224)

There are obviously some genuine rough sleepers. It seems strange they gather in the city centre and not in rural areas. I think there should be access to emergency

accommodation if the weather conditions could threaten life. It should not be seen as the norm. Who is paying for this? (ID 130191359)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

A trial local winter shelter for a six-week period is planned to start from January 2020. The shelter is being funded by a Government grant. It will be available only to rough sleepers from South or Vale and has been subject to thorough risk assessments.

ADDRESS RELATIONSHIP OF HOMELESSNESS & ADDICTION (ALCOHOL / DRUGS), UNEMPLOYMENT, OFFER COUNSELLING

A few people had the view that the relationship between homelessness and wider issues like drug and alcohol dependency need to be addressed.

Need to tackle unemployment and drug / alcohol dependency in parallel as these are factors in homelessness. (ID 129398497)

Homeless accommodation should also provide drug counselling for those who need it. (ID 129691837)

Getting rough sleepers out of a cycle has got to be the way forward - temporary accommodation without addressing the wider issue is just papering over the cracks. (ID 129737336)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

Households with support needs, including drug or alcohol issues, are addressed as part of preparing a Personal Housing Plan. A Housing Needs Officer can arrange specialist support from agencies including referrals to Turning Point (health and social care organisation for persons with substance misuse issues).

THIS IS ESSENTIAL / URGENT OBJECTIVE, WHERE MOST IMPACT CAN BE MADE FOR LEAST COST

A few respondents gave strong support to this objective, commenting that it is essential and can have the most impact for the least cost.

This is the front line where the most impact can be made for least cost. (ID 129678633)

Agree - essential - otherwise numbers of homeless and street sleepers will increase. (ID 129679426)

Yes increase support for rough sleepers (ID 130182236)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The draft strategy contains a number of practical measures to increase support for rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping and to increase emergency accommodation.

NO ONE SHOULD SLEEP ROUGH (UNLESS BY CHOICE)

A few comments were made that stated no one should be sleeping rough on the streets, unless they've chosen to do so.

No one should be forced to sleep rough unless they choose to. (ID 129041287)

Most support seems to be given by charity workers and i believe elected councils should provide a 'safety net' for rough sleepers. In the present day, no one should be sleeping on the streets. (ID 129944974)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

A key aim of the draft homelessness and rough sleeping strategy is to end the need for rough sleeping through prevention and emergency accommodation. The action plan sets out how this will be achieved.

USE ARMY BARRACKS AND MILITARY HOUSES / CONVERTED OFFICE BLOCKS FOR SINGLES

Some respondents felt that there were several types of accommodation that could be used or converted for emergency accommodation and rough sleepers including Army barracks and military houses, student accommodation and office blocks.

What sort? Barracks, open a hostel, not housing (ID 129940633)

Are there any Army / Air Force houses that could be used? Older student accommodation in Oxford City during Summer Holidays? Houses such as those 2 in Summerfields Abingdon North which are deserted? (ID 130316359)

Converted office blocks are not suitable for families, but better suited to single people, as long as there is a communal area, so they don't feel isolated. (ID 131480128)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The proposal for a trial local winter shelter, planned to start from January 2020 with grant support from Government, will provide specialist accommodation and support to meet the needs of rough sleepers. This type of accommodation is most suitable for meeting the specific needs of rough sleepers.

Comments from business, organisations or councils:

Oxfordshire County Council

Specialist Housing Needs Officer and Winter Shelter are great ideas (ID 129040219)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The specialist Housing Needs Officer and Winter Shelter are key components to help end the need for rough sleeping in South and Vale.

Sandford-on-Thames Parish Council (officer)

More hostels over a wider area with the status to support those who need an address to apply for work. (ID 129211841)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The Adult Homeless Pathway is responsible for the hostel network that provides over 200 supported hostel beds in Oxfordshire. South and Vale financially contribute to the Adult Homeless Pathway that provides essential housing and support for former rough sleepers.

Proposed objective 5: to improve access to sustainable accommodation for households who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless

A summary of the key themes from the comments received on the objective to improve access to sustainable accommodation for households who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless can be found below.

These comments show that the issue raised most frequently related to building social and sustainable housing as a matter of priority, including the suggestion to increase council taxes to help with delivery.

The next most frequently raised comment offered strong support for this objective, being seen as the ultimate solution to this growing problem.

There were also comments supporting the idea that more could be done to help utilise empty accommodation.

Table 5: Frequency of comments raised to improve access to sustainable accommodation for households who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless

| Comment type | Frequency |
|---|-----------|
| Build social / sustainable housing as a priority (raise Council Tax, encourage builders) | 6 |
| This objective is ultimate solution to growing problem / good aims / absolutely necessary | 4 |
| Do more to use empty property | 3 |
| How will this be funded? | 2 |
| Housing First project is good scheme, we should use this | 2 |
| Housing should be basic human right / not something to get out of | 2 |
| Have more sustainable accommodation close to places of work / school and public transport links | 2 |
| Engagement with landlords is important / work more in partnership | 2 |
| Involve all agencies | 2 |
| These are good intentions, but 'how' will practical ideas be accomplished | 2 |
| Address relationship between addiction (alcohol / drugs) and homelessness | 2 |
| Being homeless / getting accommodation should not be something anyone can claim from public funds | 2 |
| Compulsory purchase of vacant / run down property, provide access to empty properties | 2 |
| What does sustainable mean in this case / if one is homeless? | 2 |
| Early prevention is best | 1 |
| Work with banks and building societies to halt evictions | 1 |
| More understanding of reasons and causes for homelessness | 1 |
| Consider longer term shared accommodation for single (working) homeless people | 1 |
| Prevent worsening mental health and unemployment | 1 |
| Work better with difficult family tenants to reduce threat of eviction | 1 |
| Create charter for families at risk to support them to thrive | 1 |
| Might encourage people to use our (improved) services | 1 |
| use adapted shipping containers (as seen in Reading) | 1 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Make subsidised rentals affordable | 1 |
| Restrict Council Tax reductions except on second / third homes | 1 |
| Need more good, reasonable, safe accommodation for stability | 1 |
| All possible problems around homelessness to be analysed / solutions sought, look at individuals | 1 |
| Let council houses at affordable rent | 1 |
| Access to affordable housing where people can 'buy a stake' rather than renting | 1 |
| Developing a marketing strategy sounds too commercial | 1 |
| Make people aware of options when at risk and provide advice | 1 |
| Build more social and affordable homes / bungalows instead of large expensive houses | 1 |
| Tenants in council owned property should keep communal gardens, clear paths etc | 1 |
| High housing costs challenge people on all incomes | 1 |
| Prevent foreign investors from profiteering from housing stock | 1 |
| Necessary it is suitable (no cubicles in converted buildings) | 1 |
| Spend funds more constructively rather than on courts / imprisonment | 1 |

BUILD SOCIAL / SUSTAINABLE HOUSING AS A PRIORITY (RAISE COUNCIL TAX, ENCOURAGE BUILDERS)

The highest number of comments made on this objective were concerned with the lack of social and sustainable housing at the expense of larger executive style homes and the importance of actually building new social housing as a priority.

Make the building of social housing a priority, even if it implies a rise in Council Tax. (ID 129033165)

Perhaps be more explicit including the term 'building' sustainable accommodation - not just 'improving access' (ID 129139302)

Forget shared ownership, please start building proper council housing available for long term assured tenancies, without right to buy. I do appreciate this is a more national policy issue rather than local. But we need more good, reasonable, safe accommodation in order to provide stability. (ID 129620662)

There were a couple of comments that suggested that the type of accommodation being built should include more social housing and less large 'luxury' detached houses.

Encourage builder to build a % of all accommodation products to be available to these people and first time buyers - rather than...4-5 bedded luxury houses which seem to be being built. (ID 130198035)

It is not great that areas of the greenbelt are being developed for 'executive' housing - what about more social housing? Where I live there are already plenty of nice 4 bedroom detached homes. The huge development down the road has the social housing and 'affordable' homes as the final phase. Will it ever happen? In the meanwhile there are even more large expensive houses. What about bungalows? (ID 130200027)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The increased development of social, genuinely affordable housing is supported by the housing needs team as a key tool for tackling homelessness. The type and level of house building in the district is set out in the Local Plans for South and Vale.

THIS OBJECTIVE IS ULTIMATE SOLUTION TO GROWING PROBLEM / GOOD AIMS / ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY

In slight contrast to the comments above, several respondents told us that these are good aims and are necessary, but accommodation needs to be suitable.

Well this is the ultimate solution to a growing problem. But I wonder if there is adequate funding to enable this laudable aim. (ID 129033571)

Proposed objective 5 is important to improve (ID 130182236)

Good aims, though i am not really sure what the last action is - developing a 'market strategy', sounds too commercial to me. Should I worry? (ID 129943823)

Absolutely necessary. And necessary it is SUITABLE. (No cubicles in converted buildings) (ID 131480128)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

Access to sustainable accommodation is not only limited to social housing. The councils established a social lettings agency, White Horse Lettings, ten years ago to secure affordable tenancies in the private rented sector across both districts. The marketing strategy is to encourage private landlords to offer medium-term tenancies at Local Housing Allowance rates. These tenancies are essential to prevent homelessness against the background of an acute shortage of affordable housing.

DO MORE TO USE EMPTY PROPERTY

A few comments supported the idea to provide incentives to let empty property, as well as doing more to put empty accommodation into use.

I don't think that enough is done to bring empty accommodation into use. (ID 129110446)

...address empty houses quicker. (ID 129254553)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The draft strategy includes specific actions to encourage owners of empty properties to bring them back into use, including offering the property to White Horse Lettings, the councils' social lettings agency.

Comments from business, organisations or councils:

Oxfordshire County Council

Housing First model development good. Also great to see ambition to provide incentives to let empty property (ID 129040219)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The Housing First pilot project with SOHA and Aspire will provide long-term supported tenancies to former rough sleepers in South Oxfordshire. The housing needs team are also in discussions with housing providers to introduce Housing First in Vale of White Horse.

Sandford-on-Thames Parish Council (officer)

Affordability is the main issue so some subsidised rentals. (ID 129211841)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The affordability of housing is a significant challenge to the housing needs team. An increase in Registered Provider accommodation being provided at social rent levels, as opposed to affordable rent levels, would help tackle homelessness in the districts.

Overall, how far do you agree or disagree with the proposed aims and objectives in the draft strategy

A summary of the key themes emerging from the comments received on the overall aims and objectives in the draft strategy can be found below.

These responses show that the comment raised most frequently highlighted strong agreement with the proposed aims and objectives, though at the same time recognising that homelessness will never be eliminated.

The next most frequently raised comment concerned how these good intentions will be achieved and asking about actual targets and the importance of providing evidence to support the strategy.

There were also comments about building on the success of the current strategy, supporting people with substance misuse, maintaining and extending partnerships and tackling the many reasons for homelessness.

Table 6: Frequency of comments raised on the overall proposed aims and objectives in the draft strategy

| Comment type | Frequency |
|---|-----------|
| Agree with the proposal in general / looks thorough (but homelessness will never be eradicated) | 7 |
| These are good intentions, but 'how' will practical ideas be accomplished, what are actual targets | 4 |
| Strategy should include research on proposals to provide evidence, be person-centered | 4 |
| Builds on successes so feel confident it is sound / in total agreement | 3 |
| Not sure strategy is sufficient to support those with substance misuse problems (are they homeless due to behaviour?) | 3 |
| Maintain partnership with agencies and advice centres, neighbouring councils | 3 |
| Reasons people become homeless must be faced - support for jobs, health care, addiction, family | 3 |
| Need positive action, not committees and meetings | 2 |
| Balance offering accommodation for rough sleepers that isn't so attractive it's 'desirable' | 2 |
| Should offer a clear pathway to help homeless get back to life they want / improve, develop | 2 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Support in helping get employment / useful activities to gain self respect, improve conditions | 2 |
| Target so undeserving aren't encouraged to take advantage of 'system' / become dependent | 2 |
| Provide houses but also support people from returning to sleeping on streets | 2 |
| Rough sleeping should be Government policy (supported financially and morally) | 2 |
| Keen for council to meet increasing demand for affordable rented housing esp for low income households, eg though Local Plan | 2 |
| Ensure limited funds are focused on projects proven to make a difference (not contribute to rent / property value inflation) | 2 |
| You can only support those who want support, some choose to sleep rough / victim of circumstance | 1 |
| Rough sleepers might leave SODC and migrate to Oxford | 1 |
| Prevention for private renters who retire as they could be at risk of homelessness | 1 |
| Private landlords don't like renting to those on benefits | 1 |
| Have more affordable housing in / near places of work - use brown field sites | 1 |
| Means test for rent | 1 |
| Offer large hostel type short-term accommodation with basic facilities, health services, job / education support | 1 |
| Strategy needs a financial impact statement (for rent schemes, staffing costs) | 1 |
| Fast track Housing First - proposed timescale is too long | 1 |
| Aims are weak and overlap, need to say which agencies you'll work with, need shorter vision | 1 |
| Homeless should be seen as failure of the welfare state | 1 |
| Addicts / alcoholics should have accommodation if they cooperate / behave | 1 |
| To improve your knowledge about 'homelessness prevention' broaden information to councillors, parish councils, share with schools through e-newsletter | 1 |
| Suggest using the Oxford Street Pastor group in Didcot, Henley etc | 1 |
| Use unused rooms above shops for accommodation | 1 |
| Does giving money to beggars help or hinder the problem? | 1 |
| People using service should help review and improve service | 1 |
| Authorities / police / agencies should be on the streets interacting with street sleepers / homeless to remove them to suitable place | 1 |
| Provide mental health and addiction services | 1 |
| Use empty properties (temporary take over) eg work with CofE on empty rectory | 1 |
| Seems vague, no detail - not clear what you are proposing | 1 |
| Use churches for rough sleepers as long as they behave | 1 |
| This is long overdue - too many homeless needing support | 1 |
| Use collection boxes (eg for stamps) at libraries / town halls | 1 |
| Open community centres and offer food in bad weather | 1 |
| Disagree with selling off council and social housing | 1 |
| Need more joined up thinking eg with developers | 1 |
| Homeless provided with accommodation should help their communities (parks, litter, roadsides) | 1 |
| Clarity sought for definition of 'type of household' mentioned in strategy | 1 |
| Council and Community Safety Partnership to work at very local level with community organisations | 1 |
| Ending rough sleeping requires transformation in approach eg countywide strategic lead for singles | 1 |
| Continue learning from homelessness Trailblazer, further develop links | 1 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Spend money on constructive things like building homes and helping people and spend less on punishing them | 1 |
|--|---|

AGREE WITH THE PROPOSAL IN GENERAL / LOOKS THOROUGH (BUT HOMELESSNESS WILL NEVER BE ERADICATED)

The most comments received to this question were positive ones where respondents agreed in general with the strategy and thought it was thorough and well thought through. It was recognised that homelessness will never be eradicated.

I agree with the proposal in general. I would like to think there is a clear pathway to help homeless individuals get back to a life they would like. I would like to think that anyone using the service is given a chance to review the service for continuous improvement e.g. if I was homeless I would like to feel safe in whatever help was offered (ID 129111678)

A policy must be in place, therefore what is proposed is as good any other. (ID 129255839)

Well meaning, but will never be eradicated. On-street begging and homelessness seems to go together. (ID 129397780)

Looks thorough, well thought through. (ID 129943823)

I think the overall proposed aims and objectives are laudable. (ID 130200027)

There is nothing to disagree with. Ensuring that everyone has a home to live in that is fit for purpose and meets any special needs should be a top priority (ID 131378888)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing needs team notes the strong overall support for the aims and objectives of the draft homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.

THESE ARE GOOD INTENTIONS, BUT 'HOW' WILL PRACTICAL IDEAS BE ACCOMPLISHED, WHAT ARE ACTUAL TARGETS

Several respondents were concerned about how the actions will be achieved in practice, the 'how' of actually accomplishing the targets.

...these are good but how are these going to be achieved? I am not seeing the HOW in these statements (ID 129041287)

Aims and objectives are all very well on paper but we need to see action and implementation, not just words. (ID 129944974)

My concern is that it's all a bit motherhood and apple-pie but there are no actual targets. What does each action hope to achieve in actual numbers, and how? How will more people in need actually be housed? How will their needs be met? Are there safeguards in place to ensure there is no revolving door of homelessness? (ID 131378888)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The detailed action plan sets out how the aims and objectives of the draft strategy will be achieved. The key performance indicators will be challenging targets based upon historically strong performance levels and will be reviewed and published annually.

The Year One KPI targets have been added to the strategy document.

STRATEGY SHOULD INCLUDE RESEARCH ON PROPOSALS TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE, BE PERSON-CENTERED

Several respondents commented that the strategy should be focused on individual circumstances and that there should be more research done to provide evidence about the cause of homelessness.

My only comment would be that this strategy needs to be person-centred and evidence-based. Research should be done on any proposals to ensure that there is evidence that they will improve services. (ID 129117339)

As stated I do not have access to detail. How can you object to such aims. Practicalities of implementation pose many issues of financing and its implications for other services and how to prioritise. It is stated as not a great problem in SODC and VOWH, some practical assessment would be useful and also be categorised e.g. Individual with (mental health, family breakdown, addiction)...families (young / school children) without data it's shadow boxing comment. (ID 129395841)

I think all are necessary, but there could be more research into the cause of homelessness. (ID130202740)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The focus of the draft strategy is to provide practical, timely interventions based around the specific needs of the household. The reasons for homelessness, the support needs of particular groups of people, and the person-centred approach to tackling homelessness are concisely addressed in the strategy.

BUILDS ON SUCCESSES SO FEEL CONFIDENT IT IS SOUND / IN TOTAL AGREEMENT

Strong support for the overall aims and objectives was given by a few respondents who feel confident the strategy is sound.

In many ways you are continuing and building upon successes already achieved so I feel confident the strategy is sound (ID 129034759)

In total agreement with aims and objectives (ID 130185468)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The aim of the draft strategy is to build upon the success of preventing and relieving homelessness in the districts.

NOT SURE STRATEGY IS SUFFICIENT TO SUPPORT THOSE WITH SUBSTANCE MISUSE PROBLEMS (ARE THEY HOMELESS DUE TO BEHAVIOUR?)

A few respondents commented that they weren't sure if the strategy was sufficient to help those with substance misuse problems into suitable accommodation, and question whether homeless people could do more to help themselves.

Not sure there is a sufficient strategy in place to help those with substance misuse problems to find and remain in suitable accommodation. Are not these people the very

*ones who might be said to be intentionally homeless due to their behaviour?
(ID129051685)*

*I do feel that some homeless people do not do enough to help themselves.
(ID 129132465)*

Feedback from the housing needs team:

All households who are either homeless, or at risk of homelessness, complete a detailed Personal Housing Plan that identifies support needs including drug or alcohol issues. A Housing Needs Officer can arrange specialist support from agencies, including referrals to Turning Point and floating support services to help vulnerable households maintain their accommodation.

MAINTAIN PARTNERSHIP WITH AGENCIES AND ADVICE CENTRES, NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS

A few comments were made about encouraging partnership working with agencies like Citizens Advice, neighbouring local authorities and including churches and schools.

Do maintain and develop your partnership working with other housing agencies and advice and guidance agencies such as Citizens Advice. In your draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Policy you talk about improving knowledge about Homelessness Provision. Could you broaden the information you are planning to provide to District Councillors and makes sure that it is also promoted to Town and Parish Councils? Could you also make it available to Schools? Possibly via Head Teachers, but also School Nurses (at Secondary Schools). OCC has a weekly 'Schools News' emailed newsletter that goes out to all state schools in the County. (ID 129257280)

You should be looking at all the empty properties we have in SODC and coming up with a plan to take them over until the owners act responsible. Example there is a five bedroom rectory on our village that has been empty for over a year. I thought the C of E was one of your partners? (ID 129927499)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing needs team work closely with Citizens Advice and have developed a rapid referral protocol for households at risk of homelessness. The action plan includes improving communication with councillors and bringing empty homes back into use.

REASONS PEOPLE BECOME HOMELESS MUST BE FACED - SUPPORT FOR JOBS, HEALTH CARE, ADDICTION, FAMILY

A small number of comments suggested that the reasons people become homeless should be broken down and not seen in isolation.

*Well meaning, but will never be eradicated. On-street begging and homelessness seems to go together. Does giving money to beggars help or hinder the problem? I've often been asked for money to stay in a night-shelter but strongly suspect it is for other reasons. The reasons WHY people have become homeless must be faced.
(ID 129397780)*

Homelessness cannot be seen in isolation. Help may be needed with job applications, literacy, health care access, drug rehabilitation. (ID 129939310)

Break it down to causes: Families, Single people on hard times, Addiction problems with help on site to help with problems (ID 131480128)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The councils' outreach service and Housing Needs Officers take a holistic approach when working with homeless households and rough sleepers to address their wider, individual support needs to help them towards sustainable accommodation.

Comments from business, organisations or councils:

Sandford-on-Thames Parish Council (officer)

Homelessness should be regarded as a failure of the welfare state. Even hardened addicts and alcoholics should have somewhere to stay if they will cooperate with basic standards of behaviour. (ID 129211841)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing needs team attempt to work with all rough sleepers to secure sustainable housing solutions.

Abingdon Town Council (officer)

Members welcomed the strategy. It was understood that the District Council had recently approved Part 2 of the 2031 Local Plan. It was understood that for future Local Plans the District Council would place a higher priority on affordable housing and a higher proportion of affordable housing would be provided in future developments. The Council welcomed this as a key objective for the future planning of the Vale. (ID 130718613)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing needs team note that Abingdon Town Council welcome the draft strategy.

Watchfield Parish Council (councillor)

"In section 1, Improve country-wide partnership working to prevent and reduce homelessness, you indicate your wish to work with county-wide partners. However, nowhere is it mentioned that very local organisations, charities and volunteers are sometimes best placed to identify issues around current and prospective homelessness in their own communities.

As far as I am aware, neither the District or County Councils have bothered to identify the myriad of organisations and networks which work in our communities. Certainly, the Community Safety Partnership has never shown an interest in community or safety at a local level. If you really want to pre-empt homelessness issues, please engage with really local networks and work out a way that they can feed into your strategy. At the moment, this seems to be an office-based exercise to tick the box for a Homelessness Strategy." (ID 131347173)

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing needs team works with a wide range of community-based volunteer agencies, including advice agencies, food banks and charities that provide housing-related assistance. The team agrees that local organisations play a key role in tackling homelessness and will continue to work closely with these partner agencies.

Oxford City Council (officer)

"One of Oxford City Council's key corporate priorities is to meet housing need, both by tackling and preventing homelessness, and by supporting and delivering an increased supply of homes. We recognise that in order to achieve these objectives it depends on us working closely with our neighbouring district authorities.

Many of the housing related problems the city currently faces, including unacceptably high levels of rough sleeping, unaffordability in the housing market, and limited access to the private rented market for those on a low income, are faced by people and communities countywide, and will not be solved in isolation by any one council.

We agree with the objective contained in the draft joint S&V homelessness and rough sleeping strategy to continue with and develop joint working and a partnership approach between Oxfordshire's local authorities. Oxford City Council shares this vision and welcomes its inclusion in the draft strategy.

Ending rough sleeping in Oxfordshire requires a transformation in approach. As part of this partners including South, Vale and Oxford councils have recognised that there is a need to step up collaborative working to tackle rough sleeping across the County and the commitment to the continuation of the joint commissioning arrangements is recognition of that.

A key early step is the appointment of a Countywide Strategic Lead for single homeless and rough sleeping which has been made recently, who will lead work on developing a strategy for rough sleeping and single homelessness in Oxfordshire which is further testament to a 'step-change' in the way we are working together.

We also welcome the strategies action to work with us and other partners to ensure learning from the countywide homelessness trailblazer is maintained and links are further developed with probation and prison services, social care and the hospitals.

We also share many of the same objectives that the draft strategy identifies, in particular around rough sleeping and the prevention of homelessness. It is positive to see the direction of travel the city is moving to with services for our clients, is shared by the neighbouring authorities.

*We share the draft strategies objective to further move to a focus on the prevention of homelessness, in order to allow households to stay in their homes if possible, or if not to move on to different suitable accommodation before they are affected by homelessness. As part of this we are ensuring the prevention of homelessness is embedded in all our services. We are also working to bring empty homes back into use, and developing our offer to ensure continued access to the private rented sector for low income tenants."
(ID 131366720)*

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing needs team note Oxford City Council's support for the aims and objectives of the draft homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.

COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was considered at South Oxfordshire District Council Scrutiny Committee and Vale of White Horse District Council Scrutiny Committee on 26 and 28 November 2019, respectively.

The South Oxfordshire District Council Scrutiny Committee made the following observations:

Councillors should be prepared on how to report incidents of rough sleeping.

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The 29 November 2019 edition of the South and Vale internal councillor e-newsletter included information on how to report incidents of homelessness. A further guide concerning rough sleeping will be circulated shortly to councillors.

The councils' websites should include information on accessing emergency accommodation.

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing pages of the council's websites will be updated with clearer information on accessing emergency accommodation.

The treatment of rough sleepers should be respectful. Rough Sleepers should not be identified in media photographs.

Feedback from the housing needs team:

South and Vale do not photograph or identify any rough sleepers in their media. All homeless households are treated respectfully

The action plan should support victims of Domestic Abuse

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The draft action plan includes an action to participate in the development of the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy and assist in securing accommodation for victims of domestic abuse.

The strategy should address the issue of period poverty for female homeless cases

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing needs team can arrange for free sanitary products for any female homeless person in a financial crisis.

The needs of homeless people with pets should be considered

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing needs team can make short term kennelling arrangements for rough sleepers with dogs to enable them to access emergency accommodation. Their Housing Needs Officer will then seek to secure suitable alternative accommodation that allows dogs.

The section of the draft strategy outlining support for 18-24 years olds should be expanded.

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The draft strategy has been amended to include further additional details on the support available for 18-24 year olds at risk of homelessness.

The Vale of White Horse District Council Scrutiny Committee made the following observations:

Strive for better connections with other agencies to provide fast response for those in need

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The housing needs team has established rapid referral protocols with local advice agencies and Registered Providers to intervene at an early stage to prevent homelessness. South and Vale are also members of the countywide “Alert” system that enables statutory agencies, including prisons, probation and social care, to notify the housing authority of households at risk of homelessness.

Explore best practice on how to establish accurate number of homeless people and rough sleepers.

Feedback from the housing needs team: The number of households approaching the council as either at risk of homelessness or who are homeless are recorded and submitted in quarterly returns to the Government who publish the statistics online. The number of rough sleepers is recorded on a weekly basis.

Refer to how the council could better engage and help people with specialist needs

Feedback from the housing needs team:

New Government statistical returns on homelessness cases, H-CLIC, introduced with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018, provides improved data on the support needs of homeless households. The draft strategy action plan includes an action to use this data to improve services for people with specialist needs.

The draft strategy includes information on the specialist needs of particular cohorts and how these needs are being addressed.

Include a reference to the work of the Community Safety Partnership.

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The draft strategy has been amended to include additional information on the work of the Community Safety Partnership in relation to domestic abuse and homelessness.

Include Key Performance Indicators or state that the aim is to build on current targets

Feedback from the housing needs team:

Key Performance Indicators are identified in the draft strategy. The draft strategy has been amended to include how the baseline figures for the KPIs will be calculated.

Set out the level of resourcing required to deliver the strategy and its action plan.

Feedback from the housing needs team:

The action plan sets out the funding sources available to deliver the strategy and the action plan. All of the costs incurred by proposed actions will be met within existing budgets.

HOW WE HAVE USED RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION

Thank you to everyone that has participated in the consultation.

This report shows the outcome of the public consultation on the draft aims and objectives to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025, which sets out how we believe we can prevent and tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

The consultation highlighted that there is overall support for the draft aims and the five objectives in the strategy. Based on this response, the aims and strategic objectives of the draft strategy and the action plan have not been changed.

There were a variety of considerations, and although only the most frequently mentioned comments are explored further in this report, all comments received are taken into consideration and are included at Appendix E.

Following consideration of the comments received at consultation, the draft strategy has been amended in the following areas:

- further details added on the support available to 18-24 year olds.
- information on the work of the Community Safety Partnership in relation to domestic abuse and homelessness.
- further information added on how performance against the objectives of the strategy will be measured.
- information on the assistance available for homeless households with pets.

A summary of findings is collated in this report and will be presented to our Cabinets. Following any comments from Cabinet, and final approval, the updated Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 will be published on our [South](#) and [Vale](#) websites, with the new strategy coming into effect from the date of publication.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For information about the consultation or the results presented in this report, please contact:

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To enquire about the councils work on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, please contact the Housing Needs Team:

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Appendices

The appendices to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy consultation summary report are in a separate document. The appendices document can be found on the housing policies page of our [South](#) and [Vale](#) websites alongside this consultation summary report and the strategy.

APPENDIX A – BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION

APPENDIX B – CONSULTATION COMMUNICATION

APPENDIX C – SURVEY

APPENDIX D – DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

APPENDIX E – FULL LIST OF COMMENTS RECEIVED