

Strategy Development
Homeless Review 2013

Community & Stakeholder Engagement Plan:

Development of the Homelessness Strategy 2013

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1. About this Plan

This plan outlines how we intend to engage with the city's communities and stakeholders to ensure their views help shape the development of the Brighton & Hove Homelessness Strategy 2014 – 2019.

The strategy is being developed in 2 key stages. The first stage will involve reviewing all forms of homelessness in the area and this will form the basis for consulting with customers, residents and partner agencies. This consultation will last for three months, although it is recognised that to effectively engage some stakeholders our consultation is likely to occur throughout the development process:

- Stage 1: Homelessness Review & Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan - December 2013
- Stage 2: Consultation Report and Draft Strategy March 2014

2. Who are our stakeholders?

Our engagement needs to be appropriate and sensitive to the needs of our different stakeholders:

- **The Wider Community**

The Council has an obligation to ensure that there is community cohesion within its area. This is to ensure that communities and different groups get on well together. Allocation of social housing is often a cause of discontent within communities often as a result of misconception and misinformation surrounding social housing. Affordable housing can become an issue at any time for any member of the community as ill health, unemployment and the contraction of the welfare state over the next few years will see previously unseen groups of residents in potential housing difficulties.

- **Existing Social Housing Tenants – Council and other Registered Social Landlord’s Tenants**

There are 12,500 Council Tenants and 6,300 Registered Social Landlord tenancies in the City. Although a high proportion of Social Housing Tenants will not face the prospect of homelessness, some undoubtedly will. Those facing homelessness will do so because of rent arrears, anti social behaviours or a living in a property that is no longer suitable to meet their needs. Continued changes in the area of welfare reform may also impact tenants that under occupy or are caught in the welfare cap. It is important that the views of all social renting tenants are heard during this consultation.

- **Gypsy and Travellers on transit and permanent sites & in Social Rented Housing**

The Council provides a transit site for gypsy and travellers passing through the City and is developing a permanent site for gypsy and travelling communities that need to cease travelling for health, education or other reasons. It is important that gypsy and travellers are consulted on the Homeless Strategy Development. One of the key areas of concern for this community is the availability of permanent traveller sites across the country and therefore the inability to be able to settle if required. There are also issues for the travelling community with offer of “bricks and mortar” as a solution to their housing issues.

- **The Voluntary & Community Sector** – Organisations that provide advice and advocacy services and support to the homeless, those in housing needs and to the wider community are key stakeholders as they have a wealth of knowledge and experience in this area.
- **Service Users** – People currently using services relating to Homelessness, Housing Needs provided by the Council and its contracted partners.
- **Partners** – Other service providers providing services relating to tenants and people in housing need.
- **Politicians** – Members of Parliament and elected Councillors representing the city’s residents.
- **Staff** – People employed by the Council and its contracted partners who provide services relating to existing and future tenants.

See Appendices for details of our main stakeholders.

3. Joining-up our Plan

The Community & Stakeholder Engagement Plan is supported by 3 pieces of work:

1. Homelessness Communications Plan

Lead: BHCC Communications Team

The Communications Strategy is designed to co-ordinate our media relations around three key issues:

- Development of the Strategy
- Community Engagement
- Supporting Consultation

2. Community Engagement Framework

Lead: BHCC Communities & Equality Team

The Communities & Equality Team will support community engagement around the strategy development. Many people are involved within their communities in advice or advocacy projects and most of these groups can help in the development of the Homelessness Strategy. Engagement with diverse groups will help in understanding the needs of differing groups across the City and informing the final Strategy.

3. Community & Voluntary Sector Involvement

The City has a large community & voluntary sector that provide services to the city's residents. Housing and homelessness issues are often quoted as one of the major issues that are dealt with in the City with increasing issues of affordability and people seeking settled housing solutions for themselves and or their families. Engagement with the sector is seen as vital in terms of this engagement strategy especially

with groups that can be hard to reach or are unable to access the internet.

Links to other Strategies, Plans or Policies

The Homelessness Strategy will also be a key document for the development of other Strategies and Policies of the Council and its partners in the Social Housing Sector. These include The Tenancy Strategy, The Gypsy and Travellers Strategy, Allocation of Social Housing Policy and Extra Care Housing Strategy.

4. Stage 1: Homelessness Review & Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to carry out a review of homelessness and homelessness services in their area, and to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on this review.

The Local Authority is required to keep the strategy under review and to consult with other local or public authorities and voluntary organisations before adopting or modifying the strategy. The Act also requires Local Authorities to renew their homelessness strategy every 5 years. The strategy cannot be amended without prior consultation with the relevant stakeholders. The Council has to have regard to statutory guidance issued by the Secretary of State (Homeless Code of Guidance 2006) when carrying out activities under Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002.

This Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan is therefore considered important and sets out who and how we will consult in the development of the Homelessness Strategy.

The consultation will be via a range of mechanisms:

- **Homelessness Strategy Consultation Event**

The Council has conducted a review of all forms of homelessness in the area and has produced a number of documents as a result.

1. Homeless Review 2008 to 2012
2. Housing and Support for young people aged 16 – 25
3. Rough Sleeper and Single Homeless Needs Assessment

To test if we have correctly analysed and reached the correct conclusions on the extent of homelessness and the things that are driving homelessness in the City, we now wish to consult on the review and also to look at the vision, objectives and guiding principles for the new strategy.

The Consultation period will start with a consultation event in early December, where we will aim to invite organisations who work in this area to engage in the development of the new strategy.

A Conference report will be produced with the results of this event to help in the development of the strategy.

- **Brighton & Hove City Council Consultation Portal**

The Consultation Paper will be posted on the Brighton & Hove City Council's Consultation Portal for the duration of the consultation period. This will enable everyone the opportunity to read the Homelessness Review and make comments by responding questions on each of the identified issues. (December 2013)

- **Brighton and Hove City Council Housing Register**

The Council operates an open Housing Register for people seeking access to Social Housing in the City. This register contains approximately 17,000 applications. The Council uses the register to consult with applicants and tenants wishing to transfer to alternative social housing tenancy when formulating changes to its allocation policy. A sample of around 10% of applicants and 10% of transferring tenants will be contacted and invited to respond to the consultation.

- **Brighton and Hove Council and Registered Social Landlord Tenants**

The City Council provides accommodation for 12,500 council tenants and 6,300 other social tenants. Although existing tenants are less likely to be affected by homelessness the issues can affect households when there is a relationship breakdown or family members are looking to start a household of their own. It is important therefore to consider the views of existing tenants and the views of Tenants and Residents Associations. In addition to this the Council has a Housing Management Consultative Sub Committee, comprising representatives from across the City who are consulted by the Council's discharging of its housing management function.

- **Registered Social Landlords**

Likewise there are a number of registered social landlords providing 6,300 tenancies in the city. It is a key requirement that we consult with registered social landlords as a stakeholder, as they provide solutions to permanent housing in our area and wish them to take account of this strategy when formulating their long term plans to increase their housing stock.

- **Community and Voluntary Sector Representatives**

Organisations representing the homeless, those in housing need, Gypsy & Travellers, disability, BME, trans, sexuality and gender will have the opportunity to comment on the strategy. They will be invited to respond to the draft strategy and will also be invited to publish details of the draft strategy and the consultation on their websites to encourage wider participation from all the communities.

We recognise that the consultation portal approach may not be appropriate for some groups so we are looking at more appropriate means of engaging them with individual meeting

with officer to ensure their views are incorporated into this process.

At the close of the consultation on the Strategy the responses will be collated. The responses will be reviewed and used to help shape the Homelessness Strategy.

- **Partnerships and Working Groups**

The Council has a number of well developed working groups that were established as a mechanism to progress the homelessness agenda in the city. These are:

Day and Street Services Working Group

Integrated Support Pathway Working Group

Work and Learning Working Groups

Homeless Prevention Working Group

Youth Homelessness Working Group

These groups contain the majority of organisations that make up the partnerships working within the area of homelessness. There is a great deal of expertise in these groups who have good local and national knowledge and who also have access to service user groups who will be vital to consult with.

In addition there are a number of other partnership working groups who can help inform the development of this strategy. These include:

Strategic Housing Partnership

Reducing Re-offending Board

LGBT Domestic Violence and Abuse Working Group

The Safe in the City Partnership Board

Domestic Violence Forum

Advice Services Network

The consultation will need to key into these groups which will again, inform the development of the Strategy.

- **Private Sector Landlords**

The Private Rented Sector has an important role to play in providing accommodation in the City. Two out of every seven homes are now provided in this sector, which has increased in size by 37% in the past decade. Affordability will be a major factor in tenants ability to pay for their housing. With the migration from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit over the next five years and a continued rise in the numbers of private tenants that are claiming welfare support reaching over 40% of households in the sector it will be vital that Private Landlords are consulted in how they can continue to provide accommodation to those in need across the City.

5. Stage 2: Consultation Report and Draft Strategy

Consultation on the Statutory Homelessness Review & Development of the Draft Homelessness Strategy 2014 is expected to begin in December 2013 and run for 12 weeks ending in February 2014.

What is the aim of the Consultation?

The aim of the consultation is to present the Homelessness Review along with needs assessments for young people's housing and support needs and a needs assessment for rough sleeping and single homelessness.

There are considerable challenges to formulating a strategy for some of the most vulnerable people in the city at a time of austerity and a challenging financial environment.

We need to ensure that we have the correct vision and aims for the strategy so that we can align service delivery to those aims and also enable our partners to use the final strategy to identify gaps in service provision and to use the document to bring in any additional financial or other resources to the City that will help us meet our strategic aims.

We recognise that the consultation portal approach may not be appropriate for some groups so we are looking at more appropriate means of engaging them with individual meetings to ensure that these groups are heard.

To launch the consultation phase the Council will be holding a one day event with key note speakers and a range of workshops in key areas of homelessness. These include rough sleeping, mental health, domestic violence and for the first time military veterans.

A conference report will be produced on what we have learnt from our partners at this event. At the close of the consultation, responses will also be collated into a final report and used to help shape the Draft Homelessness Strategy.

6. Ongoing Engagement

We recognise that website consultation and defined timetable is not an appropriate format to engage some stakeholders so we are looking at alternative mechanisms.

We recognise that engagement with tenants and those in Housing Need is sometimes difficult to achieve. To support us in this, we want to work with Community & Voluntary Sector groups that have experience in housing issues and community engagements to work with both the Tenants and the wider community to ensure people across the city are consulted on their views. Special attention will be given to groups representing BME, Disability, Older People and LGBT communities in the consultation phase to ensure that their views are sought.

This work is in the process of being scoped in partnership with the Communities & Equality Team however, we hope to be able to provide a range of options which may include:

- **Members Sessions**
Sessions to raise Member awareness and help them provide the opportunity to respond on behalf of their constituents if requested.
- **Staff & Partner Sessions**
Sessions to raise awareness and help them provide the opportunity to respond.

We are happy to receive feedback if there are other areas of Engagement to develop this strategy, that are required. Please contact James Crane, Service Improvement Manager at James.crane@brighton-hove.gcsx.gov.uk or housing.strategy@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Staff & Partner Organisations

Brighton & Hove City Council

- Leader of the Council
- Chair of Housing and Housing Committee
- Lead Members
- Strategic Director for Place
- Traveller Liaison Team
- Housing Strategy Team
- Commissioning Team (Supporting People)
- Housing & Social Inclusion
- Communities & Equality Team
- Legal Services
- Communications Team
- Adult Social Care
- Children and Families Services
- Community Development Workers

- **Sussex Police**

Health

- Public Health - Brighton & Hove City Council and NHS Brighton and Hove. CCG
- Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- Health Visitor - Sussex Community NHS Trust
- Specialist Midwife, Substance Misuse, Homeless and Travellers – Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals NHS

Partnerships

- Partnership Community Safety Team
- Southern Landlords Association

- Registered Social Landlord Forum

Education and Children & Families Service

City Leadership & Scrutiny

- Local Strategic Partnership
- Public Service Board

Appendix 2: Community Stakeholders

- Advice Services Network
- Friends, Families and Travellers
- Brighton & Hove Community and Voluntary Sector Forum
- Stronger Communities Partnership (linked to CVSF)
- Brighton & Hove Environment Action Group
- Sussex University
- University of Brighton
- Private Sector Landlords
- Brighton & Hove Business Forum Ltd
- Shelter
- Local Press

Appendix 3 Registered Social Landlords in Brighton and Hove

A2 Dominion Spelthorne House, Thames Street, Staines, TW18 4TA info@a2dominion.co.uk
Abbeyfield Brighton & Hove Society Ltd 19 Aymer Road Hove, BN3 4GB
Affinity Sutton Group Maple House 157-159 Masons Hill Bromley Kent, BR2 9HY
AmicusHorizon Ltd PO Box 322 Sittingbourne Kent, ME9 8PQ contactus@amicushorizon.org.uk
Anchor Retirement Housing Milestone Place 100 Bolton Road Bradford, BD1 4DH
Brighton & Hove Almshouse Charity Lanes End House c/o Woolley Bevis & Diplock LLP 15 Prince Albert Street Brighton, BN1 1HY
Brighton & Hove Jewish H.A. Ltd 61 Furze Croft Furze Hill Hove, BN3 1PD
Brighton Lions Housing Society Ltd Lions Gate 95 Rowan Avenue, Hove, BN3 7JZ
Sussex Central YMCA Sussex Central YMCA, Reed House, 47 Church Road, Hove, BN3 2BE email: reed.house@sussexcentralymca.org.uk
Carr-Gomm (Sanctuary)
Chisel Ltd 188a Brockley Rd London, SE4 2RN email cto@chisel.org.uk
Hanover Housing Association Hanover House 1 Bridge Close Staines, TW18 4TB

Email general.enquiries@hanover.org.uk
Home Group 3 Cantelupe Mews Cantelupe Road East Grinstead, RH19 3BG
Hyde Group 113-119 Davigdor Road Hove, BN3 1RE Email: info@hydemarket.co.uk
Moat Sevenoaks District Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 1ZW Email: customer@moat.co.uk
Orbit South 1-3 The Oaks Little Ridge Avenue St Leonards on Sea, TN37 7UW
Pilgrim Homes 35-36 Egremont Place, Brighton, BN2 0GB
Places for People 3rd Floor, Ivy House, 3 Ivy Terrace, Eastbourne, BN21 4QU Email: contactcentre@placesforpeople.co.uk
Porthove Housing Association Ltd c/o Austin Rees Ltd 135-137 Dyke Road Hove, BN3 1TJ Email: Contact.Porthove.Housing.Association.Ltd .
Raglan Housing Association Ground Floor, Imperial Buildings 68 Victoria Road Horley RH6 7PZ Email: hsc@raglan.org
Rotary Club of Hove Housing Society 135 Dyke Road Hove, BN3 1TJ
Sanctuary Housing Association 45 Church Road Hove, BN3 2BE Email: contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk
Saxon Weald Saxon Weald House 38-42 Worthing Road Horsham, RH12 1DT Email: info@saxonweald.com
Southdown Housing Association 18 Preston Park Avenue Brighton East Sussex BN1 6HL Email: info@southdownhousing.org
Southern Housing Group

2nd Floor, Cornelius House, 178-180 Church Road, Hove, BN3 2D
Sussex Housing and Care Ronald Simson House, 24 Sutton Avenue, Seaford, BN25 4LG
Sussex Overseas Housing Society Limited Bishop Hannington Church Office Nevill Avenue Hove, BN3 7NH
Teachers' Housing Association Rugby Chambers, 2 Rugby Road, London, WC1N 3QN email: enquiries@teachershousing.org.uk
Guinness South 3rd Floor, Beluah Court, Albert Road, Horley, RH6 7HP Email: gs.mail@guinness.org.uk
Two Piers Housing Co-operative Limited 14 Oriental Place Brighton BN1 2LJ
Worthing Homes Limited Davison House North Street Worthing, BN11 1ER

e: housing.strategy@brighton-hove.gov.uk
w: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housingstrategy