

Business Impact Assessment



Exeter
City Council



Homelessness Strategy

Working better together

Exeter City Council

Teignbridge District Council

2016 to 2021



Proposal: Homelessness Strategy 2016 to 2021

Business Impact Assessment ¹

Conducted by: Housing services

Date: April 2016

1. Aims of the proposal

Whilst there are some differences between Exeter and Teignbridge in the experience of homelessness, the causes and available solutions are the same. The strategy combines both councils' five year plan to prevent homelessness and improve the experience of those who become homeless locally. It is a call to action to partners and stakeholders to help us deliver, and develop, a more joined-up service to address homelessness in the area.

The aims of the strategy are to:

1. Increase access to good, safe and affordable accommodation
2. End the use of bed and breakfast for families and young people
3. Bring rough sleeping to an end
4. Work together to put customers first
5. Offer help at times and places where clients need them most
6. Make sure help is accessible for everyone
7. Improve the health and wellbeing of homeless people
8. Help protect the vulnerable from violence and abuse
9. Support people who are released from prison, hospital, or leaving the armed forces
10. Help people manage household finances when faced with homelessness
11. Target investment to reduce homelessness
12. Maximise opportunities with partners and provide better value for money

2. Methodology

This Equalities Impact Assessment uses the methodology and approach set out in Exeter and Teignbridge's engagement toolkits. Every new, or revised, strategy requires an assessment to make sure that the proposals within the strategy address both Council's equality policies and statutory requirements.

Overall, the actions detailed within the strategy to tackle homelessness are positive and are aimed to proactively address issues faced by some of the most vulnerable people living in our communities. The assessment has considered the strategy's proposals and has highlighted the actions within the strategy that are likely to have an impact for each demographic. Whilst there are no actions that intentionally disadvantage certain groups, we must be mindful about any unintentional outcomes when implementing the strategy.

Consultation 12 Feb to 28 Mar 2016

The draft strategy was made available on both Council's websites for over six weeks, with a brief survey to encourage responses. There was an option to email more comprehensive replies. The consultation was promoted in the local press and on the whole the comments were positive. In addition to the online public consultation, both Councils held events to consult with partners and the public, as well as holding targeted team meetings to consult with staff.

We have carefully considered the responses and refreshed the strategy to reflect any improvements that fall under the remit of the strategy. All comments can be viewed, along with our response to them, in the 'You said' we did' consultation document, which highlights how we included stakeholders' suggestions.

¹ Guidance notes are available to help fill in this form at www.teignbridge.gov.uk/bia.

3. Environment impacts

The proposal indicates the following impacts on the environment.	<i>Please score</i>
	+3 ← 0 → -3
a. Natural environment (wildlife, landscape, trees)	0
b. Built environment (townscape, design, archaeology, conservation)	0
c. Climate change (adaptation, mitigation)	0
d. Resource use (land, energy, water, minerals)	0

4. Value and financial impacts

The proposal indicates the following financial impacts.	<i>Please score</i>
	+3 ← 0 → -3
a. Jobs, or training opportunities	+1
b. Business investment within the area	0
c. Tourism	0
d. The supply, or quality of housing	+3
e. Access to services and benefits	+3
f. Reduce cost, or increase income	+2
g. Increase capital receipts/funding	0

Please note: Actions and reference numbers below refer to 2016/17 projects in each theme of the strategy

4a. Jobs, or training opportunities +1

The strategy will positively impact on jobs, or training by undertaking the following action:

1. Investigate funding sources to develop money advice and budgeting services for homeless clients [HM01]

Although this action does not directly 'positively impact on jobs, or training' the advice and support given to clients does help them learn about prioritising a tenancy and household budgeting. Advice will also include securing regular income, which will include work.

4d. The supply, or quality of housing +3

The strategy will positively the supply, or quality of housing by undertaking the following actions:

1. Launch a referral service for private landlords to highlight when tenancies are at risk of failing to enable early intervention to save tenancies [HP01]
2. Investigate role of a social lettings agency as a tool in accessing private rented accommodation for homeless people and complete an options appraisal to present to the steering group [HP02]
3. Increase access to affordable shared accommodation through direct leasing, or landlord support by 10 units across the local area [HP03]
4. Develop an options appraisal report with registered partners to provide accommodation options to homeless people [HP04]
5. Provide 4 crash pad units to be used as an alternative to Bed and Breakfast for families by both authorities [HP05]
6. Develop emergency access accommodation options specifically for 16-17 year olds and care leavers [HP06]
7. Produce a homelessness housing needs assessment to determine extent of gaps in current provision and report findings to steering group [HP07]
8. Develop a business case for a 'Housing First' model of accommodation for entrenched rough sleepers who refuse to access current provision [HP08]
9. Review the impact of 'Safe Sleep' winter provision and determine whether a night shelter model is a viable option in the local area to provide emergency accommodation [HP09]

4e. Access to services and benefits +3

The strategy will positively impact access to services and benefits by undertaking the following actions:

1. Offering 2 combined training events for housing options staff in mediation and negotiation skills to help maintain existing accommodation [HP11]
2. Develop credit card sized promotional material to distribute to agencies such as letting agents, hospitals, with outline of services on offer and key contact information [HA01]
3. Produce self help guides for clients to help with basic advice needs and facilitate searches for accommodation [HA02]
4. Produce a cross boundary directory of housing and support resources in the Exeter and Teignbridge area [HA03]
5. Pilot the completion of housing assessments in locations outside of the council offices where clients are more likely to engage [HA04]
6. Develop staff specialism to provide links with key partner agencies, to attend operational meetings and provide referral contacts [HA05]
7. Develop data sharing agreements with partners agencies where appropriate [HA06]
8. Complete 2 customer satisfaction exercises a year and review service provision as appropriate - for example mystery shopping, surveys, focus groups [HA07]
9. Set up 2 annual events for front line staff to network and build relationships across statutory and voluntary organisations [HA08]
10. Hold 2 training events for housing staff in motivational interviewing skills to provide positive advice that engages clients to take an active role to resolve their housing difficulties [HA09]
11. Champion housing options inclusion in multi agency hubs to provide holistic services to vulnerable people [HH01]
12. Develop closer links with voluntary and community agencies, such as soup kitchens, food banks, minority groups and faith based organisations to promote consistency in tackling homelessness [HH06]
13. Increase awareness of welfare reforms with clients through the development of literature and self help guides to improve financial planning in setting up their new homes [HM06]

4f. Reduce cost, or increase income +2

The strategy will positively reduce cost, or increase income by undertaking the following actions:

1. Investigate funding sources to develop money advice and budgeting services for homeless clients [HM01]
2. Map current contracts relating to homelessness and their funding sources to define overlap and potential opportunities for combined commissioning [HM02]
3. Review viability of the current models of temporary accommodation and complete an options appraisal to outline proposed mitigations [HM04]
4. Explore ways of delivering services differently to improve value for money, including integrated services with partners [HM05]

5. Social impacts and duties

The proposal indicates the following social impacts	<i>Exeter</i>	<i>Teignbridge</i>	3 ← 0 → -3
a. Age Children (Under 16)	15.9%	16.3%	0
Young (16-24)	19.1%	9%	+2
Working age (25-59)	44.3%	42.8%	+1
Older (60+)	20.7%	32%	0
b. Women	51.4%	48.4%	+2
c. Men	48.6%	51.6%	+2
d. Transgender		0.01%	0
e. BAME (Black, Asian, minority ethnic)	7%	3%	+1
f. LGB (lesbian, gay, bisexual) Devon	2% (Devon)	2% (Devon)	0
g. Marriage and Civil Partnership	48% (UK)	52%	0
h. Religion and belief (or none)			+1
i. Disability	17%	21%	0
j. Pregnancy and Maternity			0
k. Rural	0%	27%	0
l. Economic Deprivation (earns less than £7ph)	20.3%	22.5%	+2

* **Bold** = 'Protected characteristics'

5a. Age

The majority of households accepted as homeless are between the ages of 16 to 44, with 82% in Exeter and 74% in Teignbridge. Only 17% of 45 to 59 year olds are accepted in both authorities, but for people over 60, 9% are accepted as homeless in Teignbridge and 2% in Exeter, which reflects the age demographic of the district.

The strategy will positively contribute to this characteristic by undertaking the following actions:

Young +2

1. Develop emergency access accommodation options specifically for 16-17 year olds and care leavers [HP06]
2. Deliver 2 specialist safeguarding training event to housing staff to improve understanding and interaction with social care [HH07]

Working age +1

1. Provide 4 crash pad units to be used as an alternative to Bed and Breakfast for families by both authorities [HP05]

5b. Women (predominantly) +2

Although we recognise that men are also negatively affected by domestic violence, research shows that it disproportionately affects women in nature, severity and consequence from the violence experience by men. The strategy will positively contribute to this characteristic by undertaking the following actions:

1. Extend provision of security measures (Sanctuary Scheme) for all clients at risk of domestic violence [HH02]

5c. Men (predominantly) +2

Although we recognise that women also resort to sleeping rough, research shows that males are over 6.5 times more likely to sleep rough than females, with some research suggesting that 9 out of 10 people sleeping rough are male. However, charities are reporting an increase in the number of female rough sleepers and we are mindful to undertake risk assessments for all those placed in emergency accommodation. The strategy will positively contribute to this characteristic by undertaking the following actions:

1. Developing a business case for a 'Housing First' model of accommodation for entrenched rough sleepers who refuse to access current provision [HP08]
2. Review the impact of 'Safe Sleep' winter provision and determine whether a night shelter model is a viable option in the local area to provide emergency accommodation [HP09]

5e. Ethnicity +1

Both Exeter and Teignbridge councils' homelessness acceptances figures, in relation to BME households, are proportional to the percentage of their local BME population, with the exception of Teignbridge from 2014, where no BME households have been accepted. However, it should be noted that this measure only counts households where officers were unable to prevent homelessness. Currently, the government does not require councils to record which households they prevent becoming homeless. In 2016/17 Options officers in both authorities intend to 'spot check' this figure.

Good practice suggests a pro-active approach towards communicating with people in Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, the adoption of a holistic, culturally sensitive service delivery and effective joint working with BME agencies to increase the expertise and experience available to these communities. The strategy will positively contribute to this characteristic by undertaking the following actions:

1. Developing closer links with voluntary and community agencies, such as soup kitchens, food banks, minority groups and faith based organisations to promote consistency in tackling homelessness [HH06]

5h. Religion and belief (or none) +1

The strategy will positively contribute to this characteristic by undertaking the following actions:

1. Developing closer links with voluntary and community agencies, such as soup kitchens, food banks, minority groups and faith based organisations to promote consistency in tackling homelessness [HH06]

5i. Disability +2

The strategy will positively contribute to this characteristic by linking tenants and customers to financial assistance, education, children and young people services, health services, as well as employment related agencies.

5k. Rural Communities +2

The strategy will positively contribute to this characteristic by offering targeted coverage at a local level, from urban rough sleeping encampments in Exeter, to the more isolated families facing homelessness in a rural setting in Teignbridge's smaller villages.

5l. Economic deprivation +2

The strategy will positively contribute to this characteristic because the themes and actions within the strategy reflect the broad range of work that both Exeter and Teignbridge councils do to prevent and relieve homelessness for the most vulnerable in our communities.

6. Summarise potential impacts and planned mitigations:

1. Have representatives of those likely to be affected by the proposal been consulted ?	Yes
2. Are there ongoing plans to monitor the impact of the proposals	Yes
3. Are there any relevant Human Rights considerations?	Yes

1. Yes. Please see Section 2, under the 'consultation' heading
2. Yes. We will be carrying out annual project reviews and monitoring them on a quarterly basis to respond to the changing political and financial climate and to anticipate changes to welfare reform. We plan to hold an annual event work with members and partners to give an update on projects and prioritise work for 2017/18, as well as continue with the joint members group to review progress and emerging issues..
3. Yes. The strategy corresponds to the following articles under the Human Rights Act:
 - Article 8 Respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence
 - Protocol 1, Article 1 Right to peaceful enjoyment of your property

The homelessness strategy broadens the social housing offer and identifies the need to create a comprehensive suite of housing options tailored to all local residents, taking into account their circumstances. By linking tenants and customers to financial assistance, education, children and young

people services, health services, as well as employment related agencies, this strategy promotes equal opportunities and overall has a positive impact.

In relation to equalities the strategy is focused on providing services to residents that are accessible and designed to meet the needs of those communities being served. An important aim of the strategy is for Exeter and Teignbridge Councils to ‘work better together’ and to work with partners across the area to provide advocacy and early intervention for clients.

We are striving to improve communications with all members of the community to better inform people about homelessness, the root causes of homelessness and offer a joined up approach to the problem.

7. Duties

Under the Equality Act 2010 s.149 the Council must annually publish what actions we have taken in response to our three equality duties. This proposal contributes to the duties in the following ways:

a) The elimination of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct

1. People experiencing domestic abuse, or harassment, remain in priority need under the Housing Act

b) The advancement of equality of opportunity by:

1. Ensuring all those in housing need have the best opportunity to access appropriate accommodation

c) The fostering of good relations between people by:

The strategy will positively contribute to this duty by undertaking the following actions:

1. Develop staff specialism to provide links with key partner agencies, to attend operational meetings and provide referral contacts [HA05]
2. Set up 2 annual events for front line staff to network and build relationships across statutory and voluntary organisations [HA08]
3. Champion housing options inclusion in multi agency hubs to provide holistic services to vulnerable people [HH01]
4. Deliver 2 specialist safeguarding training event to housing staff to improve understanding and interaction with social care [HH07]

Service information here: www.teignbridge.gov.uk/equalityduties

8. Managers' evaluation

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No major change required
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Adjustments have been made to better advance equality
NA	Continue despite having identified some potential for adverse impacts.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cease the proposal. It shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination.

9. Recommended Actions

That the homelessness strategy is adopted and that Housing remains a priority for the Council under the ‘Roof over our heads’ aim in the Council Strategy 2016-21

10. Sign off

	Manager		Manager
	Nicola Forsdyke		
Signed		Signed	
Date		Date	
Review date		Review date	

Contact details

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File location:
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