

Maggie Mooney
Chief Executive
Carlisle City Council
Civic Centre
CARLISLE CA3 8QG

1 November 2007

Dear Maggie

It has become increasingly apparent to me that there is an increasing problem of people sleeping rough on the streets of Carlisle. Many of these people have behavioural problems, often caused by alcohol/drugs or other mental illness.

Recently, I have spoken with groups of these vulnerable people who believe that the situation has deteriorated due to the closure of the Impact Hostel at Bridge Lane, the demolition of Willowholme Gardens and the decision to redevelop Barras Close.

I have also raised this matter with senior members of your staff in the Homeless Persons Section who also believe that there is an increase in rough sleepers which will be exacerbated by the temporary closure of Impact's Lindisfarne Street Hostel, during renovation.

Obviously, there is a need for a long-term solution to this problem but the more pressing issue is for urgent action this winter. My fear is that if nothing is done there may be avoidable deaths due to the cold weather.

The consensus of those I've spoken to, including the homeless, is that there is an urgent need for an emergency night shelter.

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As the City Council has a responsibility for homelessness, I should be grateful if you would take the lead in providing this facility.

Obviously, there are other agencies that need or would want to be involved, including housing associations, Social Services, the police and the churches. I, too, should be happy to assist in any way you deem appropriate.

In view of the urgency, I look forward to an early response.

Yours sincerely



ERIC MARTLEW MP
Member of Parliament for Carlisle

cc: Patrick Leonard, Managing Director, Carlisle Housing Association
Mike Muir, Chief Executive, Impact Housing
Stephanie Murphy, Chief Executive, Two Castles
Chief Superintendent Davidson, Cumbria Constabulary
Jill Stannard, Corporate Director, Adult Social Care
Colin Laxon, Social Responsibility Officer, Carlisle Diocese
Peter Canham, Mind