

Committee	Date
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee	14/12/2018
Subject: Winter Planning Report 2018–19	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter – Director, Department of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
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Summary

This report articulates the preparations made and work currently underway to ensure that the City of London protects the wellbeing of rough sleepers through the forthcoming winter months. The report covers the period November 2018 to March 2019.

Recommendation

- Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. In previous winters, the City of London has provided support for rough sleepers through a Pan-London Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP). The Greater London Authority (GLA) provides guidance on how this provision should be delivered, although local authorities may tailor procedures locally. GLA guidelines offer a ‘minimum expectations’ approach.
2. Last year the City of London piloted a local SWEP protocol which used the GLA guidelines as a reference point. The main additions to provision from previous years included local SWEP spaces in supported settings already commissioned by the City of London. Supplementary to this, the outreach team implemented a SWEP shift rota to ensure greater coverage and quicker response.
3. Winter 2017–18 included more than 30 SWEP nights (zero degrees or below), the most for many years. This resulted in the exhaustion of SWEP resources, –locally and on a Pan-London level – and the implementation of a hastily arranged SWEP Hub at the Church of St Mary Aldermary.
4. In 2018 the GLA consulted on revised SWEP guidelines, in part due to the extended cold weather in the previous year. As a result, the City of London developed a new SWEP protocol which incorporates the learning from this review. This revised protocol is in place for winter 2018–19.

Current Position

5. This coming winter will see the City of London mobilise its most comprehensive winter planning arrangements to date. There are four principle areas of activity outlined below: Local SWEP; Cold Weather Fund arrangements; extra night shelter provision; and a winter communications plan.
6. **Local SWEP:** An updated version of the pilot document from 2017/18 was presented to the sub-committee in September. Since then the GLA have confirmed the final draft of their review document. The City of London SWEP protocol has incorporated two new amendments as a result:
 - 'In for good' principle, which sets the expectation that any rough sleeper accessing a SWEP space should be given a long-term alternative to returning to the street. This aspiration already existed in the City SWEP plan for 2017/18 and has been rolled into the plan for 2018/19.
 - Pan-London activation. The GLA will now activate a SWEP period based on the weather forecast indicating a zero or below temperature for any London local authority. The main implication for the City of London is the discrepancy between temperatures in outer London and warmer inner London. This could see more SWEP activations than would be required if retained under our own control. No local authority has opted out of this amendment so we continue to watch for implications.
7. A provider and stakeholder SWEP meeting was held at Guildhall on 12 October 2018. Both tier 1 and tier 2 arrangements have been ready for use since this date.
8. Throughout the winter, and irrespective of SWEP activation, the outreach team maintains a list of vulnerable rough sleepers, including older clients or those with health complaints.
9. **Cold Weather Fund arrangements:** To ease the burden on local authorities delivering SWEP arrangements, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) granted funding to the councils with the highest levels of rough sleeping in England. The grant is tariff based and linked to a combination of Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) data and pre-qualification through the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) criteria. The City of London was awarded up to £35,000. MHCLG invited proposals for how to spend this money, with emphasis on rapid mobilisation, sustainability and high impact on rough sleeping numbers.
10. The City of London proposal to the fund is for extra capacity in our accommodation pathway. We aim to use three bed spaces at Caritas Anchor House in London Borough of Newham. Two beds will be targeted for rough sleepers with medium to high support needs and one bed will be ring-fenced for rough sleepers with no recourse to public funds.
11. The three beds will work along rapid assessment lines, in a similar way to No Second Night Out. Access will be via the St Mungo's outreach team only and stays

will be for up to two weeks per individual. Clients engaging with a Route Away from the Streets plan will be accommodated while this plan is delivered. We aim to work with 18 people across both categories; no recourse to public funds clients and med-high support needs. Every attendee will receive a full and comprehensive assessment carried out by the Anchor House team. The aim will be to identify a credible route off the streets.

12. Operating this model over a fixed period allows us to pilot ideas without committing to new commissioning arrangements.
13. **Extra night shelter provision:** Housing Justice has been commissioned by the GLA to develop and expand night shelter provision across London. They have a wide-ranging remit – from giving advice, guidance and training to new shelter systems, to providing full night shelter services on behalf of local authorities.
14. This winter City of London will share a pilot project with London Borough of Tower Hamlets and Housing Justice. The specialist night shelter will cater solely for female rough sleepers in Tower Hamlets or City of London. As with most night shelters, the level of support needed will be capped at low to medium to manage risk.
15. **Winter communications campaign:** This winter will see the City share a communications campaign with the Mayor's office at the GLA. Media sites have been purchased at railway stations, on roadsides and in bus shelters and phone boxes across the Square Mile. A combination of printed and digital images will be used between mid-December and the end of January. Digital sites make use of high-resolution colour LCD screens. The campaign is being supported by a number of other local authorities.
16. For the whole campaign, we are expecting 7.1 million digital impressions (people seeing the message) during the period 17 December 2018 to 10 February 2019.
17. This approach helps to develop a single clear message for raising awareness of rough sleeping during winter. The artwork will focus on how the public can act when they see someone sleeping rough. The central communications team at City of London will push the message through social media channels and the campaign will have its own hashtag to encourage public engagement.

Conclusion

18. Expanded SWEP provision, additional funding from the MHCLG ring-fenced for winter planning, and new, specialist provision for female rough sleepers equates to the most comprehensive cold weather arrangements yet provided. This will be supported by a new regional message and call to action for members of the public through the shared media campaign with the Mayor's office.

Appendices

- None

Background Papers

- Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) Provision 2018/19 presented to Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-committee on 6 September 2018 as an Appendix to Rough Sleeping Update Report.
- Rough Sleeping Update Report presented to Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-committee on 6 September 2018

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