

Committee(s): Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee – For Information	Dated: 04/03/2024
Subject: Rough Sleeping Assessment Service Update Report	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1,2,3,4,10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
Report author: Fleur Holley-Moore, Rough Sleeping Services Manager	

Summary

This report presents an update on the City of London’s Rough Sleeping Assessment Centre. Now named Snow Hill Court, it will be a 14-bed assessment centre in the heart of the Square Mile and will be the primary off-the-street accommodation option for individuals sleeping rough in the City of London, and who are in need of assessment.

The planned opening date of 29 January 2024 has been delayed and the new provisional opening date is 13 March 2024. This report will provide an update on the impact of these delays, and detail how City of London and Snow Hill Court’s support provider have addressed and are effectively managing them.

This report references the following priority areas from the 2024-27 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy:

- Priority 1 – Rapid, effective & tailored interventions

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. In recent years, the City of London (CoL) has had two consecutive temporary assessment services. The first was located on Carter Lane within the Square Mile, that was originally mobilised in response to COVID-19 and the 'Everyone In' directive. When the lease on the building expired, a new Assessment Service commenced in City Inn Express, Hackney. This interim arrangement concluded in October 2023, when a new Tri-borough (City of London, London Borough of Hackney and London Borough of Tower Hamlets) service opened on the same site, funded by new sub-regional funding from Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities.
2. While there has been a reduction of CoL beds at City Inn Express, these have been met through an increase in use of discretionary temporary accommodation and better use of existing beds in the rough sleeping pathway.
3. The building work commenced in April 2023 and is nearing completion, marking a transformation of a derelict building into a purposefully designed assessment service.
4. The service will consist of 14 sleeping pods, assessment and key work rooms, communal area with a kitchen and office space. Additionally, the project will include a landscaped garden.
5. The opening of this project will mark the first accommodation-based rough sleeping service in the Square Mile in a decade.
6. The project is now named Snow Hill Court, after the road it is located on.

Current Position

7. Following a competitive tendering process, Thames Reach was awarded the support contract and quickly appointed an Implementation Manager to lead on mobilising the project from their end.
8. Thames Reach will work with other CoL-commissioned services, including City Outreach and City and Tower Hamlets Navigator Service, to provide a seamless transition from street to accommodation-based support.
9. CoL and Thames Reach have been meeting weekly to oversee the mobilisation and implementation of Snow Hill Court. Through these meetings, the key performance indicators are currently being agreed, which focus on:
 - a. occupancy of Beds and Move On
 - b. completion of Risk Assessments and Credible Service Offers

- c. clients' health and wellbeing, including delivery and attendance of workshops/activities.

10. The team at Snow Hill Court will provide 24/7 cover consisting of:

- a. Lead Manager – responsible for leading the team to deliver a successful, fast-paced assessment service through best practice and continuous improvement
- b. Senior Practitioner – responsible for directly managing the staff team and overseeing the day-to-day management of the service
- c. Lead worker – bridges the gap between frontline and management by supporting the support workers to rapidly assess residents and support their liaising with external agencies for wraparound support
- d. Five x Support Workers – to conduct rapid risk and accommodation assessments and liaise with external agencies to ensure that clients are receiving wraparound support
- e. Two x Night Support Workers – as above, but overnight providing a 24/7 service
- f. First Contact Worker – facilitate access to the building, and manage the reception desk and telephone
- g. Concierge – an agency staff member to support with managing the front door of the service overnight
- h. Administration and Facilities Worker – ensuring that the service and building is health and safety compliant and that all Housing Benefit claims are made and monitored for residents.

11. A challenge of the delayed opening of Snow Hill Court has been the retention of staff appointed by Thames Reach. Key posts, including Senior Practitioner and Lead Worker have been inducted and redeployed to other Thames Reach services commissioned by CoL. For other posts, start dates have been delayed. For some posts where the appointed person has found employment elsewhere, Thames Reach have readvertised the roles and are confident they can recruit in time.

12. Snow Hill Court will operate on a 28-day target, with the aim of someone arriving at the service and being assessed, provided with a Credible Service Offer and supported to move onto alternative, longer-term accommodation within that time scale.

13. This will equate to a potential capacity of 84 clients being able to move through the service a quarter, although it realistically will be lower to account for turnover of bedspaces.

14. The aim is to ensure that the move-on accommodation is as diverse and as person-centred as possible. This includes CoL's supported accommodation pathway, Private Rented Sector, reconnection and return to family home, if appropriate.

15. As a 24/7 service, City Outreach will be able to accompany, often by foot, new referrals to an accommodation option during late or early shifts (6am–9am and

11pm–2am respectively). Having an immediate accommodation option in the Square Mile will support City Outreach being able to offer rapid interventions to those sleeping rough.

16. Snow Hill Court's Implementation Manager has been working with other CoL-commissioned services to set up the necessary processes to underpin excellent joint working and smooth handover from one team to another.
17. Snow Hill Court will be a low-threshold service, accessible to anyone rough sleeping in the City of London. There will be no preconditions on someone before they can be referred, except for a risk assessment to be completed with their Outreach worker.
18. When there is a waitlist, the service will prioritise those rough sleeping who have not received an offer of accommodation and/or a Credible Service Offer.
19. Snow Hill Court will manage the waitlist, and City Outreach will be its sole referral agency.
20. As part of the implementation process, several health and wellbeing offers are being linked to Snow Hill Court, including:
 - a. GP and/or nurse practitioner via the weekly deployment of a wellbeing hub to facilitate GP registrations and referrals to relevant screening programmes
 - b. Monthly in-reach services from a community hepatology nurse for liver scans and case management if any risks of liver cancer found
 - c. Sexual and reproductive health in-reach with referral pathways into specialist treatment if required
 - d. Provision of individual wellbeing packs, including vitamins, dental care, etc.
 - e. A substance use drop-in service, Naloxone supply, and needle bins.
21. Thames Reach has also facilitated the provision of food from low-cost food providers and charities, enabling clients to access meals and ingredients. Breakfast will also be provided each day by Thames Reach. This initiative is to encourage group cooking activities aimed at fostering the development of independent living skills among the clients.
22. The CoL Rough Sleeping team are currently working with City Outreach and the Snow Hill Court team to identify and refer the first 14 clients. The aim is for staggered arrivals over the first four days, and to achieve full occupancy by the end of the first week.
23. A follow-up report will be submitted to a future Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee to provide an update on referrals and outcomes once the project is operational.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

- 24. Strategic implications – None
- 25. Financial implications – None
- 26. Resource implications – None
- 27. Legal implications – None
- 28. Risk implications – None
- 29. Equalities implications – None
- 30. Climate implications – None
- 31. Security implications – None

Conclusion

- 32. The opening of Snow Hill Court will mark a significant milestone in the City of London's efforts to support individuals experiencing homelessness within the Square Mile. The service will adopt a low-threshold approach: working quickly and effectively with those placed there to achieve a longer-term accommodation outcome within 28 days; and also undertaking a holistic support approach as underpinned by its key performance indicators.
- 33. Despite some delays, the City of London and Thames Reach have been working dynamically and collaboratively to minimise their impact, redeploying staff where appropriate to support other Thames Reach services commissioned by the City of London. Once the project opens, ongoing monitoring and evaluation will ensure that it has the intended impact and meets the needs of those rough sleeping in the City of London.

Appendices

- None

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