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The City of London Corporation Homelessness Strategy

2014–2019

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1. Introduction

Homelessness presents most obviously in the City of London among those seen sleeping rough on the streets or in the doorways of the Square Mile. However, homelessness is wider than rough sleeping, and includes those hidden from view who may sleep on a friend's sofa or in a squat. It can also include those who have a roof over their head, but one under which it is not safe to remain, or those who occupy a home that is unsuitable due to severe overcrowding.

Homelessness is experienced by single people, couples and families with children. It can be a consequence of personal circumstances such as ill health and family breakdown, or wider issues such as unemployment and housing shortage.

Being without a home can have significant negative impacts on employment, education, health and wellbeing. In its worst manifestation – rough sleeping – homelessness can result in lasting damage to physical and mental health, and premature death. Homelessness can also have significant costs to society and the public purse.

The City of London Corporation ('the City') is committed to tackling homelessness. This commitment is articulated below in the five strategic priorities that will drive our response and services over the coming years. These are:

- preventing homelessness
- ending rough sleeping
- increasing supply of and access to accommodation
- delivering outstanding integrated services, and
- improving the health and wellbeing of homeless people.

In pursuing these priorities the City will continue to find innovative and practical ways to help those who are at risk of homelessness or find themselves without a home. Integral to this approach is the strength of the partnerships within the City itself, and with our statutory and voluntary sector partners. This Homelessness Strategy sets out a framework within which those partnerships can continue to thrive in order to deliver better outcomes for individuals, and more efficient and effective services.

The City's Homelessness Strategy will govern our approach for five years. However, in a period of emerging policies and economic change, it is vital that it remains responsive. For that reason it will be underpinned by a separate action plan that will be refreshed annually.

2. Strategic context

National context

The current Government has set out a clear commitment to tackling homelessness. In its housing strategy, *Laying the foundations: A housing strategy for England* (November 2011), the Government states:

...tackling homelessness is a key priority for the Government. We recognise that this will be a demanding task over the next few years, as the legacy of the recession continues to bite. We know that statutory homelessness

acceptances are rising and there are signs that rough sleeping is increasing in key areas such as London.

The pressure recognised in this strategy underpinned the publication of the first report of the ministerial working group on preventing and tackling homelessness – *Vision to end rough sleeping* – and the follow-up policy paper – *Making every contact count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness*.¹ The latter sets out ten local challenges to local authorities and their partners to:

- adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy-in across all local authority services
- actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs
- offer a housing options prevention service to all clients, including written advice
- adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative
- have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that include appropriate accommodation and support
- develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both client and landlord
- actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions, including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme
- have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs
- not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in bed and breakfast accommodation, and
- not place any families in bed and breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and for no longer than six weeks.

In meeting these challenges it is the Government's intention that local authorities should deliver 'Gold Standard' services to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The Government's policy ambitions are set out in a context of legislative change and significant financial pressure in the public sector. The Localism Act 2011 introduced a number of freedoms and flexibilities with the potential to significantly change local approaches to tackling homelessness and meeting housing need. These include the power for local authorities to fully discharge their duty to secure accommodation for homeless households through an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector. It also introduced the freedom for an authority to decide whether to continue operating an open housing register or introduce local eligibility criteria to determine who qualifies for social housing.

Alongside these reforms, the Government is also undertaking a radical reform of the welfare system. The reforms, aimed at creating a fairer system that better incentivises work, have – among other changes – introduced caps on the total amount of benefit payable to households. In London this change may restrict access to the private rented sector for larger households in housing need.

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-every-contact-count-a-joint-approach-to-preventing-homelessness

Regional context

The Mayor of London's *London Housing Strategy* (February 2010) sets out his regional priorities and policies for housing in the capital.² The housing policies and strategies for local authorities in London are required to be in 'general conformity' with the Mayor's strategy. The Mayor has since published a revised draft, *Homes for London: The Draft London Housing Strategy 2013*, for consultation with the public.³ Both documents set out clearly the Mayor's commitments to tackling homelessness and ending rough sleeping in the capital.

The Mayor has set out his support for the Government's social housing reform agenda. He recognises that the reform will give local authorities far more say over how and to whom their social housing is allocated and will give greater flexibility in how they prevent and deal with homelessness. His strategy also recognises the importance of the private rented sector in providing for households in housing need, including those who are homeless. However, his draft strategy expects a balanced approach, which provides opportunity for homeless households in both the private and the social sector. He is also committed to increasing the number of affordable homes to buy and to rent, in order to tackle growing waiting lists, homelessness and overcrowding.

In his first term, the Mayor committed to end rough sleeping by the end of 2012. Significant progress was made towards this target, including within the City. However, his ambition that no one should live on the streets, and that no one arriving new to the streets should spend more than one night out, has not been fully met. Despite this, the Mayor has made clear that his commitment to end rough sleeping remains. This was supported by the establishment of the Mayor's Rough Sleeping Group in 2013, a strategic grouping of mainly central London authorities, of which the City is a core member.

City context

The City's Corporate Strategy seeks a world class City which supports our communities through the appropriate provision of housing, and supports a safer and stronger City through supporting community cohesion. This strategy supports the delivery of that vision, the delivery of the Corporate Plan that underpins it, and the City's drive to deliver high-quality, accessible and responsive services benefiting its communities, neighbours, London and the nation.

The City's Homelessness Strategy sits alongside the Housing Strategy and Housing Allocations Policy. The Housing Strategy includes within its strategic aims a commitment to:

- increase the supply of homes
- make better use of existing homes
- prevent homelessness
- address the impact of welfare reform
- improve access to support, and
- reduce rough sleeping.

² www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/archives/uploads-Housing_Strategy_Final_Feb10.pdf

³ www.london.gov.uk/priorities/housing-land/consultations/draft-london-housing-strategy

As such, the Housing Strategy is critical to the delivery of the priorities set out within this strategy. However, the nature of homelessness and rough sleeping in the City means that this strategy cannot be delivered in isolation of the City's wider role and strategic priorities. Therefore it integrates with, and supports the delivery of, a number of the City's strategies and policies, including:

- **City Together Strategy: The heart of a world class city 2008–2014**, which identifies the challenge of supporting our communities, including those experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping
- **Corporate Plan 2013-17**, in which responding to the implications of welfare reform, the Localism Act, and NHS and public health reforms is a key priority
- **Department of Community and Children's Services Business Plan**, in which protecting and safeguarding vulnerable people through better prevention and early intervention is a priority
- **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy**, in which improving the health and wellbeing of those who are homeless and sleeping rough is identified as a priority, and which sets out plans to reduce health inequalities between local communities, and
- **Safer City Partnership Plan 2013-16**, which sets out the City's response to domestic abuse, a significant cause of homelessness, and anti-social behaviour.

In addition to ensuring that the cross-cutting approach to preventing and tackling homelessness and rough sleeping is reflected in its key strategic documents, the City has also established a Rough Sleeping Strategy Group to ensure the delivery and responsiveness of these commitments. The group brings together key internal and external partners including Adult Social Care, the City's outreach provider, the City of London Police, local clergy and health partners. The People Division of the Department of Community and Children's Services uses its Senior Management Team meetings to provide a multidisciplinary approach to tackle specific complex cases. Oversight of this work and the wider approach to homelessness is provided by the City's Community and Children's Services Grand Committee.

3. Background, housing need and homelessness in the City

Place and population

The City of London is both the historical and the geographical heart of the capital, bordered by seven central London boroughs. At just one square mile in size it is the world's leading international financial centre, with more than 6,000 businesses, and is also an important visitor destination and transport hub.

The number of people usually resident in the City is around 7,400, with an additional 1,400 people who have a second home in the City but live elsewhere. Over the last decade, population growth has been slow, but it is projected to accelerate and reach 9,190 by 2021.

The City has 4,390 households and large numbers of people of working age. Compared with Greater London there is a greater proportion of people aged between 25 and 69 and fewer young people aged below 18 years. Only 10 per cent of households have children, compared with around 30 per cent for London and the

rest of the country. Average household size is small, and many people (56 per cent) live alone.

The City's population is predominantly white (79 per cent), with the second largest ethnic group being Asian (13 per cent). This group – which includes Indian, Bangladeshi and Chinese populations – has grown over the past decade. The City has a relatively small black population compared with the London-wide population and England and Wales.

This resident population is dwarfed by the City's daytime working population which, at more than 383,000, is some 50 times larger than the resident one. This is projected to grow to 428,000 by 2026.

Housing need

The housing market within the City reflects its unique size and economy and the mobility of some sectors of the population. A large private rented sector provides homes to about 34 per cent of City households; around 19 per cent of households live in social rented housing, and 42 per cent of homes are owner-occupied. As with much of central London and beyond, demand for housing in all tenures outstrips supply. Prices are among the highest in the capital and are increasing faster than wage growth. Private sector rent levels in the City are beyond the reach of any households on benefits.

Demand for the City's social housing is high, with more than 1,000 households on the housing register (waiting list). Overcrowding is a challenge for the City, with around one in three of all households within its boundaries living in accommodation lacking one or more rooms. Of those households on the City's housing register, 326 are overcrowded. In addition to the impacts that overcrowding can have on health and child development, it can also trigger homelessness. It is an issue that also has a disproportionate impact on black and minority ethnic households.

Homelessness

Its location, size, population and boundaries inform the nature of the City's homelessness challenge. Homelessness and housing needs arise among the City's resident population and its working population. Many who are already homeless, particularly those who sleep rough, come to the City's streets drawn by the busy transport hubs or quieter nighttime environment of the non-residential areas.

The most harmful and most obvious manifestation of homelessness is rough sleeping. However, local authorities also assist households who are homeless (but not street homeless) or who are threatened with homelessness. Some may apply for assistance and in certain circumstances a local authority will have a legal duty to secure accommodation for them. Others at risk of homelessness, or dealing with issues that can easily lead to homelessness, will often seek housing advice from independent agencies as well as the City's services.

Homeless households

The City's Housing Needs and Homelessness services provide advice and assistance to those in housing need, and undertake formal assessments of homelessness

applications to determine whether the City must provide assistance under current legislation.

In 2012/13 the City took 37 applications from households who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. The number of applications has increased in the last two years and is set to continue at this level in 2013/14. The majority of those who approach the City for assistance have a local connection based on employment rather than residency. Of those who applied for assistance in 2012/13, 20 were both homeless and in priority need, and the City accepted a duty to secure settled accommodation.

The City also provided temporary accommodation to 25 households who were either homeless applicants pending a decision on their case, or those whom the City had a duty to house and who were awaiting an offer of settled accommodation. The City is rarely able to provide temporary accommodation within its boundaries, but the majority of temporary accommodation stays are less than six months in duration.

Advice services commissioned by the City provided assistance to 19 people at risk of homelessness in 2012/13. The most common issue they dealt with was rent arrears in both social and private rented sector housing. In addition, the City's Housing Needs and Homelessness teams provided advice and assistance to prevent or end the homelessness of a further 51 households.

Rough sleeping

The rough sleeping population is often very transient, and therefore levels of rough sleeping in the City cannot be separated from trends and issues experienced in London as a whole.

In the last four years, the number of rough sleepers seen in the capital has increased dramatically, from 3,472 in 2008/09 to 6,473 in 2012/13.⁴ During this period both the number and proportion of rough sleepers from Central and Eastern Europe have increased dramatically, and Central and Eastern European nationals now account for more than a quarter of those seen on the streets.

Over the course of 2012/13, outreach teams recorded a total of 284 people sleeping rough in the City – the sixth highest total in the capital.⁵ Of these people, 112 (39 per cent) were new to the streets of London, another 112 (39 per cent) were longer-term rough sleepers who had been seen both in the reported year and in the year before, and 60 (21 per cent) were those who had returned to the streets after a period away. Of those who were new to the streets, 50 per cent were seen just once. The vast majority of those met were male (94 per cent), and 85 per cent were aged between 25 and 55 years. In line with the regional trend, the City has experienced a growth in rough sleepers from European countries (other than the UK), with Central and Eastern European nationals accounting for 28 per cent of those seen on the streets.

4. Progress since the last strategy

⁴ www.broadwaylondon.org/CHAIN/Reports/S2h2013/Street-to-Home-report-2012_20132.pdf

⁵ www.broadwaylondon.org/CHAIN/Reports/S2h2013/Street-to-Home-report-2012_20132.pdf

Much has been achieved since the publication of the City's last homelessness strategy, including:

- enhanced private rented sector opportunities for families and single people through the City Rent Deposit Scheme, Real Lettings⁶ and the East London Housing Partnership's Single Homelessness Project⁷
- the development and expansion (in partnership with Broadway) of the Personalised Budget project, which has succeeded in bringing 20 of the City's most entrenched long-term rough sleepers off the streets
- the development (in partnership with St Mungo's) of The Lodge – an innovative accommodation scheme designed to meet the needs of London's most entrenched rough sleepers
- accommodating 657 people who slept rough in the City and reconnecting a further 267 to advice and services in their home area over the last five years
- moving from having London's third highest annual rough sleeping count in 2007/08 to the sixth highest in 2012/13
- supporting Broadway to deliver an innovative programme of week-long 'pop-up hubs' to provide rapid intervention and support for those sleeping rough in the City which have succeeded in accommodating 25 people
- joint work to design out rough sleeping hotspots and areas that are inaccessible to support workers
- delivery of a Troubled Families project to support households in need of support, including those at risk of eviction
- development of processes and guidance to support care leavers establishing a tenancy
- meeting the City's duty to provide temporary accommodation without placing any young people into bed and breakfast accommodation, and ensuring that no family placed in bed and breakfast accommodation spends more than six weeks in this emergency accommodation
- recommissioning independent advice services for City residents and workers, and
- expanding tenancy support provision to vulnerable households in City of London housing.

5. Developing this strategy

This strategy has been developed through consultation with key stakeholders, including those who have experienced homelessness and those who remain homeless in the City. Others consulted include the following.

Internal:

- Members of the Court of Common Council of the City of London Corporation
- Adult Social Care
- Built Environment
- Children's Social Care
- City of London Police
- Community Safety Partnership
- Early Years and Education
- Housing
- Public Health

⁶ For information on Real Lettings, see www.reallettings.com/

⁷ For information on the Single Homelessness Project, see www.lbbd.gov.uk/elhp/pdf/SHP-Plan.pdf

- Substance Misuse Partnership

External:

- Broadway
- East London NHS Foundation Trust
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- London Probation Trust
- Pathway Homeless Team, Royal London Hospital
- Providence Row
- Providence Row Housing Association
- Toynbee Hall
- Westminster City Council

The strategy also draws on the successes, learning and changing environment that have been experienced within and beyond the City since the last strategy was produced.

This process has identified five key priorities, set out in the section below. For each priority, we set out the issues and challenges the City experiences, what the implementation of this strategy will achieve in addressing that priority, and what will be done to secure those achievements.

No homelessness strategy can be delivered by one organisation. Where under each priority the strategy states 'we will', the 'we' does not refer to the City alone. It is instead a reference to the broad range of partners – City services, outreach services, health services, the City of London Police, businesses and others – who have a role in delivering better outcomes for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Where the City is responsible, it will lead on the delivery of actions, and where partners are responsible, the City will work to co-ordinate and support delivery where necessary. The City will lead on monitoring the implementation of this strategy and reporting its progress (see section 7).

6. Priorities

Priority 1: Preventing homelessness

Why this is a priority:

Homelessness has significant social and financial costs. For families and individuals, homelessness impacts on health, wellbeing, education and employment – impacts that can have lasting consequences for individuals and society. The cost of homelessness to the public purse is also considerable. For the City, providing temporary accommodation and support to homeless families dislocated from their community and support networks can be very costly. Where those who have been helped off the City's streets return to rough sleeping, this places further burdens on outreach services and the resources of partners such as mental health services and the police. Therefore preventing homelessness is a key priority.

Homelessness prevention ranges from early identification and intervention to crisis responses. Identifying those at risk can be challenging, as they may not approach specialist services or recognise the potential to lose their home. For that reason it is

imperative that services across the City are able to identify risk and respond or signpost appropriately as early as possible.

Key challenges:

- In 2012/13, 110 people approached the City for housing advice and support.
- The most common reason for loss of last settled address for households making homeless applications to the City is that family or friends are no longer willing or able to accommodate.
- Some 21 per cent of rough sleepers met in the City in 2012/13 had returned to the streets after a period away.
- A total of 65 City tenants were affected by changes that reduced their welfare benefits – changes that may also impact on some low income workers in the Square Mile.

What we will achieve:

The City will maximise the potential to prevent homelessness by:

- delivering accessible services
- providing effective housing advice and information, and
- supporting people to stay in their homes.

What we will do:

Accessible services

We will:

- review access routes and referral mechanisms to the City's Housing Needs and Homelessness services to ensure that they are clear and customer focused
- provide a free, confidential and independent advice and information service for residents, workers and students in the City who need support with issues such as employment, relationships, benefits and housing, and
- offer phone-based, internet-based and face-to-face housing options advice and homelessness prevention services.

Effective housing advice and information

We will:

- review and improve information on the City's website relating to housing need, housing options and homelessness
- offer tailored support and information to tenants affected by changes to welfare benefits in order to mitigate any negative impacts
- improve recording and data monitoring of housing waiting list and homelessness applicants, and housing advice needs, to inform the design and delivery of services, and
- provide signposting and written advice and assistance to homeless people whom the City does not have a duty to house.

Supporting people to stay in their homes

We will:

- identify vulnerable City tenants at risk of homelessness through joint working between Housing and Adult and Children's Social Care services
- use our Tenancy Support Team to co-ordinate the input and support of services to help to sustain tenancies at risk
- expand the scope of the Tenancy Support Team across landlords and tenures
- develop and promote our Good Neighbour Scheme to provide informal support and earlier opportunities for intervention for City tenants who may be vulnerable
- develop and promote the Befriending Scheme for clients of the City's Adult Social Care services in all tenures to provide informal support and earlier opportunities for intervention
- promote skills and employment as a means to prevent homelessness, sustain housing and increase housing options
- review our protocol for housing management services to ensure that we trigger appropriate interventions and support at the earliest stage for those at risk of eviction
- work with the City's Housing and Adult Social Care Group and Adult Wellbeing Partnership Board to drive continuing integration of services to support vulnerable adults to prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies
- prevent family breakdown and tackle other issues that may result in homelessness through the work of our Children and Families service
- develop a financial inclusion approach for tenants to ensure that they minimise the risk of financial difficulties
- develop a domestic abuse policy to improve multi-agency working and strengthen awareness, responses and support across City services encountering those experiencing domestic abuse
- revise the City's approach to managing anti-social behaviour in its housing to ensure effective intervention to prevent eviction, and
- ensure that there is support for former rough sleepers to help sustain their life away from the streets.

Case study - tenancy sustainment

P fled his home country and arrived in Britain without a legal guardian. P was allocated to the City of London as an unaccompanied minor in need of support. The City was unable to arrange a secure family placement for P, but did arrange specialist accommodation including a two year stay at a foyer for young people.

At the end of this period of care, P was given a tenancy in a City of London property, and provided with support to help establish independence. Support was reduced and finally ended when P appeared fully independent.

P was referred to the City's Tenancy Sustainment Team when rent arrears threatened eviction. The worker supporting P discovered that P's benefits had been stopped and this had led to rent arrears and triggered severe self-neglect. The worker suspected P had underlying mental health issues, which were subsequently diagnosed. Adult Social Care services provided advice and emergency funding.

P engages well with the Tenancy Sustainment Team. They helped P claim benefits for those unable to work and have appealed the sanctions that saw Job Seekers Allowance stopped. They have helped reduce other debts and agreed a payment plan to repay rent arrears and end the risk of eviction. P is engaging with mental health services and now wants to find work.

Priority 2: Ending rough sleeping

Why this is a priority:

Rough sleeping is the most acute and visible form of homelessness, and an issue that remains a challenge within the City of London and beyond. Those who find themselves homeless on the streets are intensely vulnerable to crime, drugs and alcohol and at high risk of physical and mental illness, and premature death. Many people will come to the streets with complex personal issues; some have limited entitlement to services, or a connection to areas far from where they are sleeping rough; and some are resistant to and refuse the support that is available to them. For those who continue to sleep rough, the aim of returning to a stable life in their own home becomes harder to achieve the longer they call the streets their home.

In addition to the impact on individuals, rough sleeping can also have negative impacts on the wider community. The presence of rough sleepers can act to draw others – often the vulnerable – to the streets. For those who live, work or learn in the City, the presence of rough sleepers, beggars and street drinkers can be intimidating, and may undermine their confidence in local support services and the police. Rough sleeping can also impact negatively on specific areas, and may damage business and tourism.

For these reasons the City shares the Mayor of London's ambition to end rough sleeping. It is imperative that a night on the streets does not lead to a lifetime of rough sleeping, and no one should call the streets of the City their home. Ending rough sleeping will require continued partnership and effective collaboration with neighbouring boroughs, voluntary sector providers, health services, the City of

London Police, adult social care services and others. Tackling rough sleeping, especially among those who are entrenched, chaotic or stuck in substance misuse requires more than offering support. Active enforcement, coupled with assertive outreach, is a key factor in reducing numbers by encouraging the take-up of services and accommodation. Within the City there are examples of how such an approach has positively transformed the lives of individuals who had previously spent years sleeping rough.

Key challenges:

- The number of new rough sleepers coming to the streets of London increased by 14 per cent in the last year.
- The success of the City's work with entrenched, older rough sleepers has seen the profile of the rough sleeping population change over recent years to one that is younger.
- Transiency, lack of local connection, accommodation pressures and mainstream models of service delivery make tackling complex and multiple health needs challenging and potentially very costly.
- In the last year, ten people sleeping rough in the City required a Mental Health Act assessment due to concerns about their mental ill health.

What we will achieve:

The City will work in partnership to provide a range of services that:

- deliver a rapid response to those who are new to the streets, to prevent them from spending a second night out
- prevent the return to rough sleeping of those who have been helped to leave the streets
- ensure that no one calls the streets of the Square Mile their home, and
- develop approaches that cut across services, policies and partners to support our vision to end rough sleeping.

What we will do:

No second night out for new rough sleepers

We will:

- provide outreach coverage in the City with the capacity to respond every day of the week
- deliver local responses to prevent new rough sleepers spending a second night on the streets and work proactively and co-operatively with the pan-London No Second Night Out service
- monitor and set targets to increase the proportion of new rough sleepers prevented from spending a second night out
- develop a clear service offer and approach focused on voluntary reconnection for those from European countries, and
- promote the No Second Night Out helpline and StreetLink online reporting tool to provide an opportunity for the public and business to report concerns about rough sleepers.

Preventing return to the streets

We will:

- work with the London-wide rough sleeping Social Impact Bond targeted at those who return frequently to the streets, to secure more sustainable outcomes for that group in the City
- examine the scope of the City's outreach team to provide transitional support to those placed in accommodation who are at risk of eviction or abandonment
- provide tenancy support to rough sleepers housed independently in the City's housing stock, and
- work with our partner services, including local day centres, to ensure that those who have slept rough develop the skills, such as those focused on employment, to sustain life away from the streets.

Ensuring that no one lives on the streets

We will:

- deliver specialist accommodation targeted at the most entrenched rough sleepers
- continue to use personalisation as an approach to help the most entrenched engage with services
- ensure that none of those identified within the 'Rough Sleeping 205' for whom the City is responsible are sleeping rough by the end of 2014, and
- partner with the Home Office and City of London Police to work with those who are not UK nationals who may need regularisation or Home Office enforcement action to resolve their rough sleeping.

Cross-cutting actions

We will:

- undertake a review of the accommodation pathway, including move-on options, available to meet the varying and sometimes complex needs of rough sleepers in the City
- maintain an assertive and consistent approach to outreach working
- review the needs of former rough sleepers in supported living accommodation to ensure that their needs are being met most appropriately
- work with the City's clergy to develop the contribution of churches to tackling rough sleeping and strengthen their links with services
- adopt and develop best practice in police liaison and joint working with City mental health services
- review with the Safer City Partnership the role of, approaches to and use of enforcement action to tackle rough sleeping
- review and develop integrated approaches for rough sleepers needing intervention from substance misuse, mental health or other adult social care services to ensure clarity of processes, responsibilities and roles
- foster and support further innovation in service provision
- discourage and disrupt begging and other behaviours that may sustain people on the streets, and those that cause nuisance

- work with the business and resident community to improve their knowledge of services, provide opportunities to support services, and develop shared solutions to rough sleeping issues, and
- work with the City Health and Wellbeing Board to improve the health of rough sleepers (see priority 5).

Case study - rough sleeping

J first slept rough in the City in 2008. Like many who sleep rough, J's life history is complex and troubled – involving periods of care, self-harm and domestic abuse. J was, and remains, a user of heroin and crack cocaine – begging to provide the £200 a day spent on drugs. J's history of drug use has resulted in serious physical illness including lasting liver damage.

J has been accommodated a number of times. The City provided a home, but arrears, refusal to engage with support, and problematic behaviour led to eviction. J was subsequently provided with specialist accommodation, but refused to live there. J later settled into a hostel for two years, but arrears, refusal to engage with support, and finally an assault led to another eviction

A number of specialist agencies are working in the City and Tower Hamlets to provide support. J is once again in temporary accommodation, is claiming benefits and has been prescribed methadone – all of which has resulted in much reduced drug use and begging. J is awaiting a more settled home.

Priority 3: Increasing supply of and access to accommodation

Why this is a priority:

Accessing accommodation is crucial to both preventing and resolving homelessness, whether through providing a long-term home, or through providing interim or specialist accommodation from where a more lasting solution can be achieved. However, accessing accommodation in the capital can be very difficult, as demand is high, and in many parts of London house prices and private rents are beyond the reach of those on low incomes. Within the City the supply of housing of any tenure is scarce and the ability to increase supply is extremely limited.

To meet its legal duty to house certain homeless households, the City makes use of homes that become available in its stock of affordable social housing. However, the number of vacant properties each year is limited, and those that become available cater for a range of housing needs groups. Where the City is required to provide interim temporary accommodation for a prolonged period pending an offer of a long-term home, this can be costly to the authority and detrimental to the household.

For those seeking move-on from hostels to independent living, or households seeking advice on housing options, the private rented sector (PRS) is the primary offer. For

City services, this inevitably means supporting access to the PRS outside its boundaries.

The localisation of revenue funding for hostels and supported housing to local authorities, and the current funding constraints faced, have resulted in a loss of accommodation available to those with little or no local connection. This impacts particularly on rough sleepers, who are often transient and gravitate to central London areas where they have little connection.

Trends across London would suggest that demand from homeless households for accommodation – whether temporary accommodation, specialist provision (such as hostels and supported housing) or longer-term homes – is rising: latest figures show a 13 per cent rise in the number of households accepted as homeless by local authorities in the capital.⁸ While the City has not experienced the dramatic increases in homelessness that some London boroughs have faced, demand has not diminished and is likely to increase in the future.

Key challenges:

- In 2012/13 the City had 117 properties become available for allocation (of which five were new build).
- The City's size means that there are very limited opportunities to develop additional affordable housing.
- Increasing private sector rents and limits to the Local Housing Allowance payable have resulted in many areas becoming unaffordable to those on benefits.
- Competition for housing in London is great across all tenures and areas.

What we will achieve:

The City will increase the supply of, and access to, accommodation by:

- developing more affordable homes within and outside its boundaries
- making greater use of the PRS to meet housing needs
- investing in specialist provision for rough sleepers, and
- improving access to and increasing the range of suitable temporary accommodation options.

What we will do:

More affordable homes

We will:

- use the City's Section 106 receipts to build additional affordable housing on land available on estates within the Square Mile, and on the City's estates in neighbouring boroughs
- acquire or seek partnership to access land in other boroughs to develop affordable housing schemes, and
- tackle unlawful occupancy within the City's social housing stock to maximise the number of properties available to let.

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-homelessness-in-england-july-to-september-2013

Greater use of the PRS

We will:

- review the City's Rent Deposit Scheme to explore its potential to support more private sector tenancies
- use the flexibilities granted through the Localism Act 2011 to make greater use of the PRS to meet the City's duty to house some homeless households and develop a protocol to underpin this use, and
- work with partners to increase the PRS opportunities for those in need.

Invest in specialist provision for rough sleepers

We will:

- invest in specialist move-on accommodation targeted at former long-term rough sleepers accommodated in the Lodge project, and
- undertake a review of the accommodation pathway, including move-on options, available to meet the varying needs of rough sleepers in the City.

Access to and range of temporary accommodation

We will:

- undertake a review of temporary accommodation options available and where necessary increase the options available to the City, and
- review procurement processes to ensure timely access to temporary accommodation.

Priority 4: Delivering outstanding integrated services

Why this is a priority:

The risk of or experience of homelessness is traumatic, and can impact on the wellbeing of individuals and families, often dislocating people from support and stability. Many of those whom the City helps have complex needs – whether in terms of their housing, health, lifestyle or personal circumstances. Help for individuals and families may require input from specialist advice agencies, social care teams and outreach workers in addition to the work of the City's homelessness services.

Many of those who approach the City for help will be guided to help themselves, while others will need more intensive support. Given the limited housing supply in the City and the limited local connection of many who are homeless in the Square Mile (particularly those who sleep rough), resolving homelessness will usually require help to access housing outside the City's boundaries or to reconnect to areas where there is entitlement to services.

Preventing homelessness is a priority. To achieve this, it is imperative to identify those at risk of homelessness at the earliest stage in order to provide appropriate support and advice services. This requires professionals across disciplines and organisations to be able to identify the risk of homelessness, and know how best to respond.

Key challenges:

- Those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness may seek help from a range of services and organisations both inside and outside the City.
- Homelessness is not just about accommodation, but frequently takes in a range of complex personal factors and/or wider structural factors such as the economy or service provision.

What we will achieve:

The City will deliver outstanding integrated services by:

- striving for continuous improvement in frontline housing services
- integrating services through improved processes, protocols, communications and information sharing, and
- developing and strengthening effective partnerships within and beyond the City of London.

What we will do:

Continuous improvement

We will:

- review the systems and processes of the Housing Needs and Homelessness team to identify opportunities to improve delivery
- commit to become a Gold Standard⁹ authority and use the resources and tools made available through this scheme to ensure that the City continues to offer excellent housing advice and information to those at risk of homelessness in all tenures
- ensure that the views, experience and suggestions of service users help to shape the services commissioned and delivered by the City
- report the progress of this strategy and issues that emerge to the City of London Adult Wellbeing Board
- use new technology and social media to improve the effectiveness and reach of, and to further develop, City services, and
- learn from the achievements and success of other agencies and local authorities, and share the learning from the City's successes.

Integrating services

We will:

- review and agree the processes and protocols providing access to services delivered to homeless people by City of London partners such as Adult Social Care, the Substance Misuse Partnership and the Safer City Partnership
- make better use of information technology to support service integration and efficiency
- provide a link worker within the Housing Needs team to work with our Children and Families Service to support care leavers housed by the City
- ensure that services working with rough sleepers, people suffering domestic abuse, young people and other risk groups signpost people appropriately to

⁹ www.goldstandard.practitionersupport.org/display/PUBLIC/Public+space+Home

agencies that can help with housing problems or with other issues that put them at risk of homelessness

- promote closer working with health, prison and probation services to prevent homelessness on discharge or release, and
- improve referral processes and information sharing when working with the City of London Police.

Effective partnerships

We will:

- work in partnership with neighbouring boroughs, sub-regional partnerships and the Mayor of London's Rough Sleeping Group to deliver consistent approaches to rough sleeping across borough boundaries and learn from best practice
- actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support, education, employment and training needs to help prevent homelessness
- work with partners in the criminal justice sector through MARAC and MAPPA arrangements to provide appropriate support, including housing, to victims and offenders
- ensure consistent, transparent policies and protocols to foster improved co-operation with partners, and
- maintain the multi-agency Rough Sleeping Strategy Group.

Case study – homeless family

MV and her child approached the City of London for help after fleeing domestic abuse from her home in the homes counties. Originally from Asia, MV had little knowledge of where to get help, but came to the City as she had worked in the Square Mile as a shop worker.

The City's housing needs team recognised the severity of her situation and took a homelessness application. Having placed her and her child in temporary accommodation, the team helped MV sort out problems with her benefits and referred her for support from Asian Women's Aid – a specialist London based agency.

The City assessed MV's homelessness application and accepted a duty to rehouse her. Through their work with a partner organisation, the housing needs team secured MV a home for herself and her child in a private rented sector flat in west London. She has now secured permanent work in the City.

Priority 5: Improving the health and wellbeing of homeless people

Why this is a priority:

All forms of homelessness can lead to poor physical and mental health. However, those who sleep rough are at greatest risk of ill health and premature death. Physical illnesses such as chronic chest conditions, tuberculosis and hepatitis C are more prevalent among rough sleepers, and commonly combine with mental ill health and substance misuse. The experience of central London hospitals is that rough sleepers are more likely to attend emergency services, are more likely to be admitted and will have more health needs. Beyond the disastrous health implications for the individual, rough sleeping costs health services millions of pounds – much of which is preventable.

Despite this, rough sleepers can face barriers to accessing services due to provider attitudes, service models, inability to register with a GP, a lack of knowledge of services, eligibility issues, a lack of continuity of care, and potential cost implications to local health and care services.

Homelessness can also dislocate individuals and families from support networks and services. Placements into temporary accommodation in other local authority areas also risk recipient services such as education or social services being unaware of new households in their area.

Key challenges:

- Rough sleepers access A&E seven times more than the general population.¹⁰
- In 2012/13, 46 per cent of rough sleepers in contact with services in the City had alcohol problems, 30 per cent had drug problems and 45 per cent had mental health problems (with many having more than one of these problems).
- Life expectancy of long-term rough sleepers is just over 40 years.¹¹
- Given its size and local housing costs, the City can only place households into temporary accommodation in other local authority areas, which are often distant from existing support services.

What we will achieve:

The City will improve the health and wellbeing of homeless people by:

- improving access to and delivery of health services, and
- improving communication with local authorities in which temporary accommodation placements are made.

What we will do:

Access and delivery

We will:

- work with partner services for rough sleepers such as Street Med and the mobile 'Find&Treat' tuberculosis service to provide better access to healthcare for City homeless clients

¹⁰ www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/Rough%20Sleepers%20Health%20and%20Healthcare%20Summary.pdf

¹¹ www.londonpathway.org.uk/uploads/BMJ_2012345-e5999.pdf

- include the needs of rough sleepers in the Health and Wellbeing Board's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and strategy
- improve the integration of services (see priority 4)
- improve the knowledge and practice of frontline services to enable them to identify need and to signpost to specialist health and substance misuse services, and
- use existing services and initiatives to offer public health services such as vaccinations and smoking cessation to rough sleepers.

Communication

We will:

- implement NOTIFY to ensure that people placed out of the City are linked into the appropriate services they require, and
- ensure processes to prevent any hospital discharge to the streets.

Case study - City Bridge Trust

City Bridge Trust is the grant-making arm of Bridge House Estates. It was established to make use of funds surplus to bridge requirements and provides grants totalling around £15m per year towards charitable activity benefitting Greater London. The Trust aims to address disadvantage by supporting charitable activity across Greater London through quality grant-making and related activities.

Through its various programmes the Trust is currently supporting 25 projects working with homeless people with grants totalling over £2.1 million. Projects being supported include:

- *a number of initiatives focussed on supporting those who are homeless and experience mental ill health*
- *support for "Choir with No Name" – which runs choirs for homeless and formerly homeless men and women*
- *structured vocational training and support for young people(16-25) with mental health issues, facing homelessness, to increase their employability*
- *help for homeless families to integrate with each other and the local community through English and advocacy courses and cross-cultural events, and*
- *a horticulture based volunteering programme in the Queen Elizabeth Hall Roof Garden, to promote improved mental health and well-being among homeless people.*

7. Costs and resources

Homelessness can have a lasting negative impact on the wellbeing of individuals and families. There are also a range of financial and societal costs arising from homelessness through:

- failed tenancies
- health and substance misuse problems and increased contact with A&E departments

- involvement with the police and criminal justice system (as both victims and perpetrators of crime)
- prolonged unemployment and costs of welfare benefits and economic inactivity
- disruption to education.

A Government review of evidence of the cost of homelessness estimates of the annual costs to government ranging from £24,000 - £30,000 (gross) per person¹².

Providing services to homeless people carries an economic cost to the City of London. Direct costs incurred from responding to homelessness include staffing to deliver advice and assessments, provision of outreach services, temporary and specialist accommodation, rent deposit payments and police support for targeted operations. For the City of London these amount to £XXX(circa £950k [tbc]). Almost half of this cost is met through Government grants and housing benefit receipts.

Investment in services to prevent homelessness and to support those who are homeless can stem escalating need which could require more costly public services. Research undertaken for the Government on the net financial benefits of the Supporting People programme (housing related support to vulnerable adults) estimated net financial benefits of £3.41 bn per annum for the client groups considered (including homeless families and individuals) against an overall investment of £1.61bn.¹³

The City of London will continue to invest in services over the lifetime of this strategy that deliver lasting outcomes for homeless people. In doing so it will seek to minimise the cost burden to the City and the wider public purse.

8. Implementation and delivery

Each of the priorities of this strategy sets out what we will do to achieve its delivery. As set out in section 5, the 'we' in this context are the range of partners, including the City, key to this delivery.

The City will develop the action plan that supports this strategy and that delivers the commitments made under each priority. Many of the actions will replicate the commitments set out above but will provide greater detail of the lead, timescales and measurable outcomes. Further detailed actions will be a product of initial actions to review process and services. Others will respond to emerging trends or changes in resources or legislation.

The action plan will be refreshed annually. Its delivery will be monitored by the leadership team of the City's Department of Community and Children's Services, and reported to its Grand Committee.

¹² www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7596/2200485.pdf

¹³ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/16136/1274439.pdf

Glossary of terms

Broadway	Voluntary sector organisation providing services to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness including street outreach, supported housing and hostels.
Central and Eastern European	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria
Lodge	Specialist accommodation project for long-term rough sleepers that uses the appearance and approach of a hotel operation to overcome resistance to more traditional hostels
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements that require the police, probation and prison services to work together to protect the public from violent and sexual offenders, and with which local authorities are required to co-operate.
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences that enable organisations such as the police, probation, local authorities, prison services, housing and health services to work together to provide a coordinated and effective safety plan for those individuals at the highest risk of domestic abuse.
No Second Night Out	London-wide project aimed at ensuring that those sleeping rough in London for the first time need not spend a second night on the streets.
NOTIFY	Web-based information and notification system, the primary role of which is to notify relevant services of the placement and movement of statutorily homeless households accommodated by London boroughs in temporary accommodation under homelessness legislation
Outreach	Street-based service commissioned by the City to work with those sleeping rough
Rough Sleeping 205	An initiative that originally identified and sought to end the rough sleeping of the 205 most entrenched and prolific rough sleepers in London through the provision of targeted and enhanced services; this cohort has twice been refreshed, but retains the original '205' name
Section 106	Planning obligations placed on new developments which can, in some circumstances, include the provision of financial contributions to invest in affordable housing
Social Impact Bond	A funding model that attracts investment in public services by offering returns to investors linked to the outcomes achieved

by the service

Statutory homelessness

Homelessness defined within the terms of the homelessness legislation and which determines when local authorities will have a duty to offer accommodation

StreetLink

Internet-based tool to allow the public to alert any local authority in England about a rough sleeper

Street Med

Nurse-led outreach and case management service working to improve access to healthcare for homeless people

Temporary accommodation

Interim accommodation provided by local authorities to homeless households awaiting a decision on their homelessness application, or to those awaiting the allocation of housing

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