

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING SUB COMMITTEE

Monday, 18 February 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Marianne Fredericks (Chairman)
Randall Anderson
Mary Durcan
Benjamin Murphy
William Pimlott
Paul Kennedy – Co-optee

Officers:

Simon Cribbens	- Community and Children's Services
Chris Pelham	- Community and Children's Services
Will Norman	- Community and Children's Services
Sofia Sadiq	- Community and Children's Services
Tinu Williamson-Taylor	- Community and Children's Services
Jesse Wynne	- City of London Police
Russell Pengelly	- City of London Police
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk's

In attendance:

Jenny Travassos – Head of Homelessness Prevention, Westminster City Council
Kathleen Sims – Head of Outreach, St Mungo's

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Tijs Broeke (Deputy Chairman), Alderman Ian Luder, Dhruv Patel and Mark Wheatley.

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 14 December 2018 were approved, subject to an amendment showing Mark Wheatley as having been present on 14th December 2018.

Matters arising

Members noted that the British Transport Police (BTP) had been running Operation Luscombe for the past 3-4 months and the City of London Police were due to give them a presentation. The BTP were also authorised to issue enforcement tickets.

4. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS LIST

Members received the Sub Committee's outstanding actions list and noted the items contained therein, which would be closed on today's agenda.

Presentation from Westminster City Council – in response to an action from the previous meeting

Before commencing the main business on the agenda, Members received a presentation from Westminster City Council's Head of Homelessness Prevention, setting out their experience of day centre provision.

Members noted Westminster's data sets; i.e. between 290 and 310 rough sleepers every night; an increase on previous years. Members noted that there had been considerable expenditure in this area but many of those sleeping rough had very complex needs, and finding pathways for foreign nationals was challenging, particularly for the relatively high number with no recourse to public funds. Furthermore, a number of foreign nationals were able to obtain casual or zero contract work and were happy to sleep rough in order to send all of their earnings back to their families.

Members noted that Westminster City Council's 7 day centres had been subject to budget cuts but, despite being solely dependent on donations and Christmas appeals, they were still providing services. The Centres had been established to comply with statute and cover humanitarian needs, whilst offering pathways and discouraging rough sleeping as a sustained lifestyle. It was noted that some beggars were not actually homeless and travelled into Westminster, as was often the case in the City.

The officer advised that day centre provision in the City should be structured and encouraged working with churches and training volunteers; the Chairman and Members agreed with this approach. The officer also suggested that a business case for a day centre in the City should be drafted in consultation with the outreach service provider. Members also noted that Westminster had found morning opening hours to be the most effective, as appointments could be arranged for that day in respect of employment, education, healthcare and housing needs.

There was some discussion about homeless health services, which provided more intervention and follow up than day centres. Members noted the services offered by Groundswell; who accompanied rough sleepers to medical appointments.

Members asked for a report to a future meeting on the work with the City's neighbouring boroughs, including how success was measured and use of shared technologies. The Chairman and officers thanked the officer from Westminster for sharing their experiences, noting that the City's demographic was very different to Westminster's, with a different cohort of foreign nationals,

5. **ROUGH SLEEPING WINTER CAMPAIGN ALTERNATIVE GIVING AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGN**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of the winter and alternative giving campaigns. Officers agreed to provide the method for reaching the calculations set out in the report.

Whilst there was more benefit to on-line readership in determining the audiences reached, it was accepted that the use of all kinds of media was necessary and the Chairman encouraged the use of Ward and Church notice boards, in addition to other venues offering free advertising space.

A Member had noticed a contactless giving point in Hackney Town Hall and officers advised that the GLA had carried out a discrete pilot and were awaiting feedback. Members were very supportive of this, given that a lot of people no longer carried cash and it would also provide information as to where funds were being directed. Officers agreed to bring back a clearer plan for delivery of a City Corporation campaign, which would include feedback from the GLA Pilot.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

6. **HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided performance data on homelessness and rough sleeping activity within the 3rd quarter (Q3) of 2018/19.

In response to questions, Members noted that the number of people being helped into accommodation had doubled and this work was funded by Government workstreams and local risk budgets. The City Corporation had received Cold Weather Funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and 'No Second Night Out' funding. In respect of new rough sleepers, it was noted that those recorded as previously unknown raised the numbers. Members also noted the data from the November 2018 Street Count and the process for merging data with the outreach team.

There was further discussion in respect of the rough sleeping 'hot spots' in the City; facilitated by the availability of cheap alcohol and places where it was relatively warm and safe to sleep. Members noted that solutions were explored in the final, non-public report on the agenda. Members also noted the work underway by the Integrated Commissioning Board to improve homeless healthcare.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

7. **ROUGH SLEEPER PATHWAY UPDATE REPORT**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided a summary of the current performance of the City Corporation's accommodation pathway and related support services.

The Chairman suggested a briefing note for Members ahead of this year's Ward Motes, given that homelessness and rough sleeping had been a key issue at resident meetings and during bi-election campaigns.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

8. **STREET COUNT NOVEMBER 2018 - ANALYSIS AND LEARNING**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services, following the November 2108 Street Count and welcomed the Head of Outreach from St Mungo's. The Chairman commended the work of St Mungo's; particularly the resilience of outreach workers and staff in Community and Children's services for their commitment and extra hours worked during the Count. Officers agreed to provide Members with maps of the count patches.

During the discussion and questions on the report, Members noted that not everyone left the hub successfully, as they may not have pathways into accommodation. Furthermore, CHAIN (Combined Homelessness Information Network), which informed outreach workers on a day-to-day basis, might give a different profile. There was also a group of between 26 and 32 individuals with no connection to a specific borough. Members asked if this data, with narratives, could be highlighted in future reports.

There was some discussion on the various funding streams; i.e. Street Impact London, funded by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, which was aimed at individuals for whom traditional pathways had not worked. Members also noted the availability of the City Bridge Trust's 'Stepping Stones' Grant. Officers advised that the report on the non-public agenda set out the pressure points within the pathway where expansion/expenditure should be focussed.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

9. **POLICE UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Chief Inspector, City of London Police, which set out the Police operations linked to homelessness within the City of London and specifically begging and associated anti-social behaviour. Members noted the work of Operation Luscombe, since its inception in May 2018, and the insight it had gained into a large proportion of beggars who were not rough sleeping.

The officer advised that the associated policing operations had now entered a second stage, which would involve intelligence gathering around the potential organised begging taking place in the City of London. Members agreed that the outcome of this work would assist them at Ward Motes and in dealing with resident enquiries. It was suggested that this information should outline

Operation Luscombe, and the different stages, and how this has been incorporated into everyday Policing, and their work with St Mungos and others, including the British Transport Police.

Members also noted that both the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub and Police Committees would receive a report on the outcomes of the second stage work. Members also noted the requirement for detailed impact statements (including the process and why they are important) and how both they and the public can assist. Members also noted that criminal behaviour orders would always be a last resort. The Police reminded Members that there were interventions at each stage, even following a Court appearance. Members suggested that mapping of areas where begging had been identified, with supporting data would be very helpful, noting that this information would need to be in a non-public appendix.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

10. ROUGH SLEEPING LEGISLATION

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which provided an update on the position of a range of stakeholders in respect of rough sleeping legislation. Members noted that, following objection at the first reading, a Bill for the Reform of the Vagrancy Act was awaiting a second reading.

Members also noted that there was no collective local authority stance in relation to the Vagrancy Act or the use of enforcement due to differing politics, resourcing and levels of rough sleeping. Currently, there was no clear call for additional legislation but the homelessness sector had called for reforms, including changes in welfare provision. Members asked if the Remembrancer could be invited to the sub committee, once a further update was available.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

11. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no items.

13. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that – under Section 100 (a) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

ITEM NO

14

PARA NO

3

14. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

The non-public minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2018 were approved.

15. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS (NON-PUBLIC)**

Members received the Sub Committee's non-public outstanding actions list and noted the items contained therein, which would be closed on today's agenda.

16. **WHAT DO WE NEED? A SERVICE OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

Members received a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services

17. **QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB COMMITTEE WHILE THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There were no questions

18. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There were 2 items considered whilst the public were excluded.

The meeting closed at 12.50 pm

Chairman

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