

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING SUB COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 1 December 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub Committee held via Microsoft Teams at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Marianne Fredericks (Chairman)	Alderman Alison Gowman
Tijs Broeke (Deputy Chairman)	Alderman Broniek Masojada
Randall Anderson	Benjamin Murphy
Mary Durcan	William Pimlott
Helen Fentimen	Jillian Reid, Safer City Strategic Partnership

Officers:

Simon Cribbens	- Community and Children's Services Department
Kirsty Lowe	- Community and Children's Services Department
Will Norman	- Community and Children's Services Department
Chris Pelham	- Community and Children's Services Department
Lauren Walker	- Community and Children's Services Department
Simon Young	- Community and Children's Services Department
Ellen Wentworth	- Chamberlain's Department
Kerry Nicholls	- Town Clerk's Department
Chloe Rew	- Town Clerk's Department
Chandni Tanna	- Town Clerk's Department
Chief Inspector Ray Maskell	- City of London Police
Inspector Marvin Bruno	- British Transport Police

Also Present:

Rikke Albert	- Nurse Consultant, Rough Sleeping Adult Mental Health Project (RAMHP)
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1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Alderman Vincent Keaveny, Natasha Lloyd-Owen, Henrika Priest and Ruby Sayed.

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 1 October 2020 be approved.

4. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Members received the Sub Committee's outstanding actions list and the following updates were noted:

- It was planned to hold an Away Day in late February/early March 2021 to set goals for the forthcoming municipal year and consider the existing skills available to the Sub-Committee and whether there was a need for an external Member with relevant experience to join the Sub-Committee.
- A number of outstanding actions would be discussed during the course of the meeting. Others had been completed and would be removed from the Outstanding Actions list.

RESOLVED, that outstanding actions be noted.

5. **MENTAL HEALTH AND ROUGH SLEEPING**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of mental health and rough sleeping and heard a presentation of the Nurse Consultant of the Rough Sleeping Adult Mental Health Project (RAMHP) and the following points were made:

- The RAMHP formed part of the Mayor for London's action plan for reducing homelessness in London and operated across the City of London and London Boroughs of Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets. The project aimed to improve the mental health of people who slept rough and worked directly with Street Outreach Teams to raise mental health awareness and response. Targeted assessments were undertaken for individuals who were referred to appropriate health and social care services. The majority of assessments were completed by Senior and Mental Health practitioners, although a Consultant Psychiatrist worked within the team one day a week and provided expert medical treatment and support for the most complex cases. The RAMHP Team accessed mental services across the Boroughs in which it operated and was able to refer individuals to the Mental Health Crisis Pathway.
- During 2020, the RAMHP Team had led the mental health COVID-19 response for homeless hotels in the City and the London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Newham, and had participated in Task and Action, London-wide Challenge Groups and High-Risk Panels Groups. The RAMHP Project had been established as a two-year project which aimed to develop an effective model of care across the wider system but conversations were underway with local health providers around funding the project beyond its current end date of 31 March 2022.

The Chairman thanked the Nurse Consultant of the Rough Sleeping Adult Mental Health Project (RAMHP) for her excellent presentation.

RESOLVED, that the report and presentation be noted.

6. **ROUGH SLEEPING DATA Q2 2020/21**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of rough sleeper data for Quarter 2 2020/21 and the following points were made:

- The total number of rough sleepers in the City of London was 140 in Quarter 1 2020/21 which had fallen to 105 in Quarter 2 2020/21, representing a significant reduction on Quarter 2 2019/20 when 181 individuals had been counted. There had been a decrease in the number of accommodation outcomes in Quarter 2 which reflected the reducing number of people entering the City of London in need of accommodation, as well as a number of individuals with longer-term street attachments who had rejected offers.
- A Member noted that the level of intermittent rough sleepers (Returners) had decreased from 71 to 48 between Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 2020/21 and queried why Westminster had seen an increase during the same period. The Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping suggested this could be linked to the connection between rough sleeping and footfall as the City of London remained very quiet. Another Member drew attention to the increased visibility of rough sleeping in some parts of the City including Bishopsgate and Tower wards and the Chairman suggested it might be useful to map pockets of higher incidence of rough sleeping.
- The Chairman was concerned to note the increase in female rough sleeping to 16 individuals which represented 15% of the total recorded as at Quarter 2 2020/21. The Rough Sleeping Coordinator explained that a number of these individuals had come into the City of London from other areas after rejecting service offers and that the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Team would continue to work with all rough sleepers to support them into long term accommodation.
- A Member noted that COVID-19 was likely to increase the number of evictions/house repossessions and queried whether support was in place. The Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping emphasised that prevention of homelessness was a key priority for the City of London. People were advised to approach the Housing Service at their Local Authority where they were at risk of homelessness in the first instance, and there had been no increased incidence of City of London residents approaching the Housing Service as yet.

RESOLVED, that the update be noted.

7. **SEVERE WEATHER EMERGENCY PROTOCOL PLANNING 2020-21**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services outlining planning for the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol 2020/21 and the following point was made:

- The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol for 2020/21 took account of Government, Public Health England and City and Hackney Public Health guidance on the provision of emergency accommodation and shared air spaces. As in previous years, existing supported provision would be used and this would be supplemented by hotel rooms. The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol would be activated whenever the forecast temperature was expected to drop below zero centigrade in any London local authority area. Activation rested with the Greater London Authority which instructed homelessness leads in each local authority but local authorities retained the right to activate the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol at their own discretion.

RESOLVED, that the update be noted.

8. **SUPPORTING EUROPEAN UNION (EU) NATIONALS WITH NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDS**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services on supporting European Union nationals with no recourse to public funds and the following points were made:

- There would be a number of legislative changes in relation to the UK's exit from the European Union on 1 January 2021. New arrivals to the UK after 31 December 2020 would no longer have access to the EU Settlement Scheme or recourse to public funds. For those who arrived in the UK prior to 31 December 2020, the deadline to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme was 30 June 2021, after which those who failed to register successfully for the EU Settlement Scheme would also have no recourse to public funds. In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping advised that in 2019/20, 134 rough sleepers met by Outreach Services were recorded as European Economic Area (EEA) nationals.
- Outreach Teams were supporting eligible rough sleepers to apply for settled status but this could be difficult as some rough sleepers were reluctant to engage with the EU Settlement Scheme process or unable to provide necessary documentation. There was currently a lack of detailed guidance over what support could be offered to EEA nationals who were unable or unwilling to apply for settled status; however, there might be scope to meet critical needs within the Care Act 2014 and Human Rights Act 1998, and external counsel had been approached for guidance on this issue. It would be possible to provide accommodation for most rough sleepers who had applied for EU Settled Status in the short-term whilst they awaited the outcome of their application. The Chairman underlined the importance of supporting all eligible rough sleepers to apply for settled status by the deadline.
- Members were advised that it was proposed that the City of London Corporation's current approach to supported reconnection should continue supporting EEA nationals without recourse to public funds, with the expectation that 25% of applicable clients would take up the offer,

delivering approximately 30 reconnections per annum. A Member noted that a consistent approach across London was needed and the Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping confirmed that the City of London Corporation engaged on a pan-London basis including with the Greater London Authority's Rough Sleepers Leads Group. A Member suggested that work be undertaken with the charities sector to identify what support might be provided to rough sleepers with no recourse to public funds, such as the City Bridge Trust. The Deputy Chair proposed that consideration be given to offering support to affected individuals on a permanent rather than an emergency basis, although this would have significant cost implications and was likely to incentivise more rough sleepers to travel to the City of London.

- The Chairman suggested that the Government should consider extending the deadline to apply for EU Settled Status due to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly as this had been a difficult time for the charities sector, and that it might also be beneficial to identify the worst-case scenario caused by the changes to legislation. A Member observed that a number of UK citizens currently rough sleeping in European Union countries would be affected by the UK's exit from the European Union and queried whether there was anything in place to assist these people. The Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping reported that specialist voluntary sector organisations would have a role in supporting affected individuals living in the EEA.

RESOLVED, that the Community and Children's Services Committee be recommended to agree the suggested course of action which focused on extending the Corporation's current approach to supported reconnection.

UPDATE: This report was subsequently discussed at the meeting of the Community and Children's Services Committee on 11 December 2020 as Item 6: Supporting European Union Nationals with no Recourse to Public Funds. The printed draft minutes of this discussion can be viewed at: <http://democracy.cityoflondon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=120&MId=20528&Ver=4>.

9. **CITY OF LONDON POLICE UPDATE**

Members received an update of the Chief Inspector of the City of London Police and the following points were made:

- The City of London continued to experience low footfall with the busiest area being the east of the City. There had been a noticeable reduction in the number of homeless and rough sleeping individuals and fewer reports of rough sleeping from the public.
- Operation Luscombe which aimed to identify issues and support those who were living on the streets had restarted on 18 October 2020 and 12 individuals had been referred to support services to date. The Inspector of the British Transport Police confirmed that British Transport Police were linking in with the City of London Police on Operation Luscombe

and also worked closely with Network Rail. The level of begging at Liverpool Street Station had been significantly lower than normal during the COVID-19 period. In response to a question from the Deputy Chair, the Chief Inspector explained that there had been a funding change for Operation Luscombe but that work to target rough sleeping was a key workstream and would continue with no change to the existing model. Another Member highlighted the need to deliver a coordinated approach across other transport hubs and local churches.

RESOLVED, that the update be noted.

10. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

There was one question.

A Member noted that upcoming design changes were planned for City gardens and queried whether rough sleeping should be considered in relation to this, such as clear signposting to support services. The Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping confirmed that he would be happy to contribute to any consultation on the design of public spaces.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were two items of other business.

The Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping reported that the annual street count had been undertaken using an abbreviated methodology combining a spotlight count with a multi-agency meeting, which had allowed an informed estimate to be agreed and submitted in line with Government requirements.

The Chairman thanked Officers for a recent Briefing Session for Members on local issues arising from drugs and alcohol misuse which had been helpful in identifying the support needs of some homeless and rough sleeping individuals.

12. **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	Para no
13	3
14	3
15	3
16	3
17	3
18	3

13. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**
RESOLVED, that the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2020 be approved.
14. **CARTER LANE - TRANSITIONAL PLANNING**
The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services on transition planning for the emergency rough sleeper assessment service at Carter Lane.
15. **GROWTH PROGRAMME UPDATE**
The Sub-Committee heard an update of the Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping on the Growth Programme.
16. **CITY OF LONDON POLICE NON-PUBLIC UPDATE**
Members received a non-public update of the Chief Inspector of the City of London Police.
17. **QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE WHILE THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**
There were no non-public questions.
18. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**
There was one item of other business.

The meeting closed at 3.36 pm

Chairman

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