

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING SUB COMMITTEE

Monday, 9 December 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 4.00 pm

Present

Members:

Eamonn Mullally (Chair)	Deputy Alpa Raja
Deputy Natasha Maria Cabrera Lloyd-Owen (Deputy Chair)	James Breed
Anne Corbett	Patrick Fowler
Helen Fentimen OBE JP (Ex-Officio Member)	Irmani Smallwood

In Attendance:

Judith Pleasance

Officers:

John Barker	- Chamberlain's Department
Sinead Collins	- Community & Children's Services Department
Chief Inspector Nikki Gander	- City of London Police
Kirsty Lowe	- Community & Children's Services Department
Will Norman	- Community & Children's Services Department
Chris Pelham	- Community & Children's Services Department
Blair Stringman	- Town Clerk's Department
Chandni Tanna	- Town Clerk's Department
Ian Tweedie	- Community & Children's Services Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Anne Corbet and Henrika Priest.

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That, Members agree the public and non-public summary of the minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2024.

4. CITY OF LONDON POLICE UPDATE

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Commissioner of the City of London Police concerning an update on rough sleeping and begging in the City.

The following points were noted:

- **Begging and Welfare Approach:** The police continue to issue warning notices to individuals found begging, providing them with details on

where they can get help and outreach support. The goal is to encourage them to seek assistance and not continue begging within the city.

- **Ticketing and Enforcement:** During the reporting period, 20 green tickets, 9 amber tickets, 3 red tickets, and 1 blue ticket were issued. The blue ticket case is under consideration for a full Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO). The individual who received a CBO during the summer has not been seen back in the city.
- **Hub Attendance:** The attendance at the hub, which provides welfare and diversion support, has been mixed. The hub is crucial for offering support before any enforcement action is taken. Proactive days are scheduled to ensure immediate support for those found begging.
- **Rough Sleeping and Tented Encampments:** The police are working with various partners to address rough sleeping and tented encampments at Peninsula House and Castle Baynard St. The approach balances the needs of rough sleepers with the safety and welfare of the local community.
- **Incidents and Safety:** There was a non-fatal stabbing incident between two rough sleepers at Castle Baynard St, and an arson incident at Peninsula House. Both incidents are being closely monitored, and the police are working with partners to reassess risks and provide support.
- **Snow Hill Assessment Centre:** The police continue to engage with the management, staff, and neighbours of the Snow Hill Assessment Centre to address any issues and identify solutions.

5. HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2023–2027 UPDATE REPORT

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning a summary of progress against the aims set out in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023–2027.

The following points were noted:

- **Progress Against Aims:** The report provided a summary of progress against the aims set out in the current strategy. Out of 38 actions, 13 have been completed, which is three more than in the last period. One new action has been added, bringing the total number of actions to 471.
- **Performance Scorecard:** Despite a headline trend indicating rising rough sleeping, there was a slight decrease in rough sleeping in Q2. However, there was an increase in rough sleepers using encampments, possibly due to additional work at Castle Baynard St and Peninsula House. Accommodation outcomes increased slightly by quarter but were significantly higher this year compared to the same period last year.
- **Priority Area 3 - Working Collaboratively:** There was a discussion about the duty to refer, with questions about the predominant sources of referrals and the quality of the details provided. It was noted that probation services, hospitals, and other homelessness support services are the main sources of referrals.
- **SWEP Activation:** The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) was activated once so far, from 19 to 21 November, and extended to 25 November. A total of 40 people were placed in SWEP, with 88 offers made. This was the highest uptake to date, with 50% of offers accepted.

- **Resource Gap:** There was a discussion about the resource gap and the need for a paper outlining what resources would be required to have a more flexible or lower threshold for SWEP activation. It was suggested that understanding the resource implications would help in taking conversations forward in the most appropriate places.

6. **CITY OF LONDON RESPONSE TO THE MINISTERIAL LETTER ON ROUGH SLEEPING**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning the City of London response to the Ministerial Letter on Rough Sleeping.

The following points were noted:

- The City of London Corporation's response to the ministerial letter on rough sleeping was discussed. The report highlighted recommendations regarding safeguarding and rough sleepers, including governance, structure, accountability, strategic plans, and safeguarding adult reviews.
- Officers explained that the City of London has a mature system in place for both internal structure and engagement with the board. Rough sleeping services and adult social care are represented on the board by the assistant director.
- The City of London will include a section on rough sleeping in its annual report, featuring case studies and a new process for reviewing deaths of rough sleepers.
- A Member raised a concern about the process for individuals who die in hospital after being admitted from the street. Officers clarified that the process would still apply, and the local authority would be informed, triggering a follow-up.
- There was a request for a definition of the homelessness fatality review for better understanding, which will be followed up in the next committee meeting.

7. **TACKLING THE DETRIMENTAL IMPACTS OF ROUGH SLEEPING – DRAFT PROPOSALS**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning a draft policy statement and protocol in support of interventions to tackle the detrimental impacts of rough sleeping.

The following points were noted:

- **Draft Policy Statement and Protocol:** The report presented a draft policy statement and protocol to support interventions aimed at tackling the detrimental impacts of rough sleeping. It highlighted the harms to individuals from long-term rough sleeping and the negative impact on communities from behaviours associated with rough sleeping.
- **Specialist Services:** The City of London Corporation is committed to supporting those who sleep rough in the Square Mile by providing tailored routes off the streets that address their specific needs and circumstances. This includes specialist outreach services, hostel accommodations, a dedicated social worker, health and substance misuse services, and a newly established assessment centre offering emergency beds and a secure assessment space away from the streets.

- **Risks and Impacts:** The report noted the significant risks to the health, wellbeing, and safety of those experiencing homelessness. Street homelessness is hazardous, distressing, and isolating, making individuals more susceptible to violence and serious health issues.
- **Community Support:** The City Corporation's services, along with those provided by its partners, prioritise the urgent need to support individuals in transitioning away from street homelessness and mitigating the harms associated with long-term rough sleeping.

8. **POST ROUGH SLEEPING INITIATIVE (RSI) PLANNING UPDATE REPORT**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning an update on our planning and risk mitigation for the period after the current tranche of Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) funding expires on 31 March 2025.

The following points were noted:

- **Planning and Risk Mitigation:** The report provided an update on planning and risk mitigation for the period after the current tranche of RSI funding expires on 31 March 2025. It highlighted the need to continue providing support services to individuals who have experienced rough sleeping, including ongoing access to mental health services, substance misuse support, and housing assistance.
- **Long-term Housing Solutions:** Members were informed about the importance of securing long-term housing solutions for individuals transitioning from rough sleeping. This involves working with housing providers to increase the availability of affordable housing options.
- **Collaboration with Partners:** The success of the initiative relies on collaboration with partner organisations, such as local authorities, health services, and voluntary organisations. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the initiative's implementation are planned to ensure its effectiveness.
- **Community Engagement:** Engaging with the community and raising awareness about the challenges faced by individuals who have experienced rough sleeping are considered essential for the initiative's success. This includes involving local residents, businesses, and other stakeholders in efforts to support these individuals.

9. **STATUTORY HOMELESSNESS - USE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION REPORT**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning a summary of the City of London's legal duty to accommodate households under the Housing Act 1996.

The following points were noted:

- **Legal Duty and Demand:** The report provided a summary of the City of London's legal duty to accommodate households under the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. It described how the demand for temporary accommodation has increased over recent years.
- **Increased Costs:** The report demonstrated the increased cost to the City of London in providing temporary accommodation. This includes the financial implications of meeting the legal requirements to secure accommodation for eligible applicants.

- **Accommodation Duty:** The Housing Act 1996 sets out an interim duty to secure accommodation where enquiries are being made into a homeless application. This duty arises when a local authority has reason to believe that an applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance, and have a priority need.
- **Main Housing Duty:** When a local authority has accepted a main housing duty to an applicant, Section 193 accommodation duty arises. This requires the local authority to ensure that the applicant has access to suitable temporary accommodation until they are rehoused and the Section 193 duty is discharged.

10. **HOMELESSNESS ROUGH SLEEPING COPRODUCTION PROGRAMME – INTRODUCTION REPORT**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning a summary of work carried out by the City of London's (CoL's) Rough Sleeping Team and commissioned specialist advocacy and coproduction services from 2019 to the present.

The following points were noted:

- **Overview:** The report provided an overview of the work done by the rough sleeping team and commissioned services like Groundswell and Mayday over the past five years to design, commission, and deliver services in a participatory way with those who have lived experience.
- **Definition of Co-production:** Co-production was defined as a way of working together to create positive change by involving people who have experienced a problem in identifying and solving it. This includes designing, commissioning, delivering, improving, or evaluating services.
- **Funding:** The Co-production service is fully funded by the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) grant, which is currently secured until March 31, 2025. Future funding is uncertain.
- **Challenges and Successes:** The advisory group, consisting of individuals with lived experience, has had mixed success. The team aims to diversify the group to better reflect the experiences of all clients.
- **Commissioning Strategy:** A Member suggested that the City of London should require organisations receiving income to have their services reviewed and fed back on by users. This idea was acknowledged as beneficial but noted that practical implementation would need careful consideration.
- **Future Plans:** The team plans to continue growing the advisory group and ensuring that future services, such as the city outreach team, are fully co-produced with input from those with lived experience.
- **General Support:** There was general support for the Co-production approach, with recognition of its positive impact on service delivery and the importance of involving those with lived experience in the process.

11. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

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

There was no other business.

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.

14. **NON-PUBLIC APPENDIX**

Members discussed the non-public appendix which was received on conjunction with item 5 on the agenda.

15. **CITY OF LONDON POLICE NON-PUBLIC UPDATE**

There was no non-public update from the City of London Police.

16. **UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING APPROPRIATELY TO THE STEADY RISE IN THE NUMBER OF ROUGH SLEEPERS IN THE CITY OF LONDON**

The Sub-Committee received a verbal update of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services.

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 no other business.

The meeting closed at 6.15 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Blair Stringman
blair.stringman@cityoflondon.gov.uk