

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING SUB COMMITTEE

Monday, 3 February 2025

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 Helen Fentimen OBE JP (Ex-Officio Member)
Deputy Natasha Maria Cabrera Lloyd-Owen (Deputy Chairman)	Judith Pleasance
Deputy Anne Corbett	Irmani Smallwood

Officers:

Simon Cribbens	- 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

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Patrick Fowler.

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That, the public and non-public summary of the meeting held on 9 December 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

4. HOMELESS LINK GUEST

The Sub-Committee received a presentation of the Partnership Manager for London at Homeless Link concerning an overview of the organisation and its mission.

The following points were noted:

- **Mission and Vision:** Homeless Link is a national membership organisation representing over 850 members across various sectors. Their vision is to have a country free from homelessness, ensuring everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.
- **Values:** The organisation is driven by values such as ambition, boldness, curiosity, diversity, and empowerment.

- **Strategic Ambitions:** Homeless Link aims to support the sector, amplify voices and experiences, focus on sector development, influence change, and strengthen local partnerships.
- **Partnerships and Support:** The organisation works with local authorities, commissioned and non-commissioned services, and provides workshops, consultations, bespoke support, and conflict resolution.
- **Challenges and Opportunities:** Members were informed of issues such as workforce vacancies, trauma-informed care, prevention, inclusion of health, and stronger partnerships.
- **Specific Projects:** Examples include the London PRS Forum, which addresses challenges in moving people into private rented sector accommodation, and the London Plus project in partnership with Shelter.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Homeless Link is working on various policy changes, including advocating for exemptions for charities from National Insurance rises and contributing to the NHS long-term plan consultation.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be noted.

5. **CITY OF LONDON POLICE UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee received an update of the Superintendent of the City of London Police concerning an update on an update on begging/rough sleeping.

The following points were noted:

- **Operation Luscombe Overview:** Members noted a three-stage approach addressing begging and assessing the vulnerability of rough sleepers through a support intervention hub. Individuals found begging are referred to the hub, which operates bi-weekly with various support services present.
- **Ticket System and Enforcement:** Between September 1, 2024, and January 18, 2025, tickets issued included 7 Green, 8 Amber, 3 Red, and 1 Blue. One Community Behaviour Order (CBO) application was refused due to the individual's prior convictions.
- **Funding and Future Plans:** Police funding for the intervention hub is set to cease in April 2025, prompting discussions about alternative funding solutions to maintain support for vulnerable individuals.
- **Joint Working Group Formation:** The City of London Joint Working Group (CoLJWG) aims to create a safe environment while focusing on prevention and sustainable solutions for rough sleeping and tented encampments. The first meeting resulted in positive discussions around safety and public health issues.

A Member asked if there were plans to include someone with lived experience of homelessness in the Joint Working Group. Officers responded that there was not currently anyone with lived experience on the group, but it is something they would consider.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. **SEVERE WEATHER EMERGENCY PROTOCOL (SWEP) UPDATE REPORT FEBRUARY 2025**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning a mid-season update and the context for the City of London's provision and outcomes in relation to its Severe Weather Emergency Protocol 2024/2025.

The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol Update Report for February 2025 was presented by the Chairman, who acknowledged Rowan's significant contributions to the team over the past four years and extended best wishes for their future endeavours.

The discussion included a clarification of the terms "abandoned" and "evicted" concerning accommodation. It was noted that the acceptance rate for accommodation remains around 40%, with various reasons discussed for why individuals might decline or not remain in the provided accommodation. The cost implications of different accommodation options and the importance of balancing resources for optimal impact were underscored. Officers highlighted their flexibility and discretion in managing resources and providing support, particularly during severe weather conditions. The process of engaging with rough sleepers and arranging accommodation was outlined, including pre-booking hotel rooms and assisting individuals in reaching their accommodation. In response to a question raised by a Member, assurance was given that the budget for the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is managed prudently and does not constrain the support offered.

Members noted that the current policy of activating SWEP at 0°C was reviewed, with suggestions to reconsider this threshold. The possibility of implementing a mandatory SWEP policy for January and February was raised, although concerns about resource demands were noted. The need for improved coordination with A&E departments and integrated care systems during SWEP activations was emphasised. The importance of ongoing discussions regarding the SWEP policy and its implementation was acknowledged.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. **AN OVERVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS TO SUPPORT AND SAFEGUARD ADULTS WITH CARE AND SUPPORT NEEDS WHO ARE ROUGH SLEEPING OR HOMELESS**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning an overview from an Adult Social Care perspective of the work being done in the City of London to safeguard adults with care and support needs who are experiencing Rough Sleeping and Homelessness.

Members were informed of arrangements to support and safeguard adults with care and support needs who are rough sleepers or homeless. Officers presented an overview from the adult social care perspective, highlighting the

interfaces between homelessness services and adult social care in carrying out legislative duties under the Care Act and the Mental Capacity Act.

Key points included:

- A significant drop in the number of Care Act assessments over the last two years, likely due to the impact of the pandemic.
- The closure of the Carter Lane Assessment Centre and changes in personnel, particularly in the rough sleeping social worker post.
- Differences in the cohort in terms of care and support needs, with some individuals having links to other local authorities.
- Alternative pathways for meeting needs, such as high needs support hostels and prevention work.

Members were informed of the referral process, noting that anyone can make a referral to their service, but most referrals come through the rough sleeping social worker who works with the homelessness team. Referrals can also come from other local authorities, especially around safeguarding.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

8. **ANNUAL ROUGH SLEEPING SNAPSHOT 2024 REPORT**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning local data analysis of the 2024 Rough Sleeping Snapshot that took place from 12:00AM 19 November 2024 to 4:00AM 20 November 2024.

It was noted that there was a typo in the introduction, and the final figure for 2024 was corrected to 86, which represents a 41% increase from the previous year's figure of 601.

One participant shared their positive experience of joining the team working with people on a day-to-day basis and praised the skill and approach of the workers. A significant part of the discussion revolved around the reasons for the increase in numbers. It was mentioned that the activation of the SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol) on the same day was unusual and might have contributed to the higher numbers. Additionally, the methodology for the street count had to be changed at the last minute due to capacity issues, which might have affected the results.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

9. **ROUGH SLEEPING PREVENTION AND RECOVERY GRANT 2025/26 UPDATE REPORT**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning an update on our Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant (RSPRG) spending plans for the period 2025/26.

The following points were noted:

- Members informed that a new grant has been awarded, referred to as the RSPRG and RSI, which is a rollover of last year's funding.

- This grant is section 31 funds, meaning it is not subject to approval or moderation and can be spent freely on whichever supplies are deemed necessary.
- Members were invited to ask questions. One member inquired about the low numbers being referred into substance misuse and whether there had been any further intelligence on why this reduction was being seen.
- Officers indicated that work is progressing on this issue, and the rough sleeping coordinators are currently working on a report to address it.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

10. HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2023-2027 UPDATE REPORT

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

The following points were noted:

- Members noted that the update includes the latest iteration of the scorecard and metrics, as well as an update on the strategy delivery plan.
- Officers noted that the metrics relating to rough sleeping present a challenging picture.
- A Member inquired about the low numbers being referred into substance misuse and whether there had been any further intelligence on why this reduction was being seen.
- Officers indicated that work is progressing on this issue, and the rough sleeping coordinators are currently working on a report to address it.
- Findings from the report will be reviewed and decisions will be made on how to take the issue up with the Commissioners of the Substance use service.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

11. POLICY AND PROTOCOL TO TACKLE THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF ROUGH SLEEPING

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 negative impacts such as anti-social behaviour that can be associated with rough sleeping.

The following points were noted:

- Members noted that the paper had been approved by the Community and Children's Services Committee and would go to the Police Authority board next week.
- Officers noted the feedback received and the balance between sustaining the policy's aim and purpose.

- The Deputy Chair raised concerns about the legal options and the approach to passive begging, emphasising the need for clarity on decision-making and the role of officers.
- The Deputy Chair also discussed concerns about data sharing, particularly with the Home Office, and the need for clarity on what data is shared and with whom.
- Officers stressed the importance of taking action rather than continuously refining the policy, acknowledging the potential for mistakes but highlighting the need to challenge rough sleeping proactively.
- Members suggested the need for a communication strategy to explain actions to the public.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

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

There were no questions.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business.

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Members of the Public were not excluded.

15. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2025 be approved.

16. CITY OF LONDON POLICE NON-PUBLIC UPDATE

There was no update.

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 5.15 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: Blair Stringman

blair.stringman@cityoflondon.gov.uk