

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING SUB COMMITTEE

Thursday, 10 July 2025

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

Present

Members:

Mark Wheatley (Chairman)	Helen Ladele
Deputy Helen Fentimen OBE JP	David Williams
Steve Goodman OBE	James Breed
Shravan Joshi MBE	Irmani Smallwood

Online

Members:

Deborah Oliver (Deputy Chairman)
Patrick Fowler

Officers:

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 for absence were received from Dawn Frampton, Sophia Mooney, Deborah Oliver and Patrick Fowler.

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That, the public minutes be approved as a correct record.

4. MHCLG AND SUBREGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The Sub-Committee received a presentation from a representative of the MHCLG.

The following points were noted:

The presentation, delivered by a representative from MHCLG, focused on homelessness and rough sleeping, particularly in the City of London. It aimed to provide updates on government strategy, funding changes, and sub-regional collaboration.

Government Strategy and Funding

- The government is moving towards a simplified, single funding pot for homelessness and rough sleeping, encouraging local flexibility.
- A new national strategy is expected in autumn, continuing existing goals: building homes, reducing temporary accommodation, and ending rough sleeping within 10 years.
- Emphasis is shifting from rough sleeping as a subset to a broader single homelessness pathway approach, with early intervention and prevention at its core.

Local Government Outcomes Framework

- A new framework includes 13 priority outcomes, with homelessness and rough sleeping ranked highest.
- Key metrics include numbers in temporary accommodation, long-term rough sleepers, and prevention success rates.

Challenges and Priorities

- Despite funding, local pressures may divert resources from rough sleeping to broader homelessness needs.
- The Target Priority Group (TPG) identifies entrenched rough sleepers needing intensive, wraparound support. City of London has identified 27 such individuals.
- Sub-regional data shows 956 TPG clients across London, with 220 classified as “Wanderers” who move between boroughs.

Asylum Seekers and Prevention

- Some asylum seekers with positive determinations end up rough sleeping due to unsuitable housing offers or misinformation.
- The government is piloting a Rough Sleeping Assessment Tool to better identify those truly at risk.

Multi-Agency and Community Collaboration

- Success depends on partnerships across statutory services, commissioned providers, and the voluntary, community, and faith sectors.
- The City’s unique challenge is its imported rough sleeping population, requiring strong sub-regional cooperation.

Enforcement and Public Confidence

- Enforcement should be a last resort, used alongside support when individuals reject help or pose risks to public safety.

Cross-Government and Legislative Context

- The upcoming strategy will involve cross-departmental accountability, including NHS and Ministry of Justice.
- The Vagrancy Act has been repealed, reflecting a shift away from criminalising rough sleeping.

City of London's Role and Next Steps

- The City is seen as a barometer for change and a potential convenor for a London-wide conversation on homelessness.
- There's an opportunity to leverage the Lord Mayor's interest and convene stakeholders before the end of the mayoral term.
- Internal coordination across departments (e.g. housing, health, enforcement) remains a priority.

RESOLVED – That, the presentation be noted.

5. CITY OF LONDON POLICE UPDATE

The Sub-Committee received an update of the Chief Inspector of the City of London Police, and the following points were made:

Over the past year, the police response to rough sleeping and begging has shifted from a reactive, enforcement-led model to a more collaborative and supportive approach. Previously, enforcement was the primary tool, but now a partnership model is in place, focusing on early intervention and support.

Operation Luscombe, the main policing framework, is currently paused while improvements are made to how support is offered. This includes more immediate help and redesigned "information tickets" with QR codes and accessibility features. A new Community Support Officer will lead targeted interventions for individuals who have not engaged with support.

Efforts are also underway to reduce rough sleeping at high-impact sites through environmental changes and one-to-one engagement. Daily coordination between police, outreach teams, and local services ensures swift responses to new cases. Positive outcomes include increased voluntary compliance, removal of fire hazards, and stronger community engagement.

Looking ahead, the team plans to expand the partnership to include mental health services and other stakeholders, building on the progress made and aiming for more strategic, long-term impact.

RESOLVED – That, the update be noted.

6. INTRODUCTION TO HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING SERVICES REPORT

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023–2027 Update Report.

A summary report was presented outlining the three service areas: statutory homelessness, rough sleeping, and the supported accommodation pathway. Demand has increased across the board, with the supported pathway operating near capacity. The 2025–26 budget is £5.8 million, with £1.5 million annually from MHCLG grants.

Concerns were raised about the £0.7 million annual spend on temporary accommodation. It was noted that while statutory placements are necessary, discretionary use—particularly for rough sleeping—offers flexibility but may be substituting for more sustainable supported housing. Opportunities to review allocations policy and local lettings plans are being explored.

Members discussed the need for strategic thinking around temporary accommodation, including shorter stays and better use of housing stock. A review of the local lettings plan is underway, and cross-departmental actions are being taken forward. The lack of “staging post” accommodation was highlighted as a gap in provision.

Temporary accommodation costs are partly offset by housing benefit, but a funding gap remains due to rising rents. The group agreed on the need to explore whether funds could be used more effectively to improve outcomes. A workshop in Greenwich was referenced, where better use of the private rented sector had yielded positive results. This will be followed up by the team.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

7. HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 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 report, presented in two parts, outlined the delivery plan and performance scorecard. Of the 50 actions in the plan, 44 have commenced and 23 are now complete—one more than the previous period—with one new action added. A summary of completed actions is available in Appendix 3. The performance scorecard highlighted a 33% year-on-year increase in rough sleeping in the City of London, totalling 878 individuals, compared to an 11% rise across Greater London. The late submission of the report was noted and attributed to the early meeting date and the timing of data availability. Members acknowledged the update and, despite the concerning rise in demand, expressed contentment with the report and the service’s progress.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

8. CO-PRODUCTION PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children’s Services concerning a progress report follows on from the previous co-production paper submitted to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee in December 2024.

Officers presented an update on the Co-Production Service delivered by Groundswell and Mayday, funded until March 2026. The service supports embedding lived experience in service design and delivery, with progress made through advisory groups, champions, and leadership workshops. It builds on the City Voices research and now works alongside other commissioned services.

The Deputy Chair raised a question on the impact of the service. Officers noted that while change has been gradual, co-production is now embedded in strategic commissioning, with recent work extending to women's services in North East London. A Member highlighted the need for more direct service user involvement, especially for complex cases. Officers clarified that while the service supports providers to build this capacity, direct engagement sits with commissioned services.

A Member also raised concerns about the focus on move-on accommodation. Officers responded that while aspirations are important, the challenge lies in creating the right conditions for change.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

9. **STATUTORY HOMELESSNESS SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning an overview of the new Statutory Homelessness Service Delivery Plan (SDP).

Members noted the report detailing the statutory homelessness diagnostic visit conducted by MHCLG's HAST team in January, which, although not part of a mandatory inspection framework, was requested to assess service effectiveness amid rising demand. Feedback received in March informed a service development plan comprising 14 actions, many of which are cross-cutting with Housing. While most recommendations were adopted, some were not pursued due to resource constraints or limited relevance, following discussions with MHCLG. Members raised a query regarding the operational management of service delivery and the low number of rough sleepers in the statutory service, which, although not explicitly addressed in the action plan, remains a key area of internal focus, particularly in relation to funding uncertainties.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

10. **MEETING THE HEALTH NEEDS FOR PEOPLE ROUGH SLEEPING IN THE CITY OF LONDON**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning an overview of support offered across the City of London to address the health needs of the rough sleeping population, both in the context of local services and wider policy developments at the North East London level.

Members received a report on public health and homelessness, highlighting housing as a key determinant of health. Officers outlined the severe health impacts of rough sleeping and barriers to accessing services, stressing the importance of outreach and the need for improved data and strategic focus.

Members noted that the North East London Strategy had been approved, though implementation planning is pending. It was emphasised the role of local partnerships and neighbourhood-level work in shaping future services.

Members raised concerns about NHS restructuring, access to primary and dental care, and the need for targeted outreach. Suggestions included mobile clinical units and leveraging planning gain from developments to support health infrastructure.

The sub-committee discussed the importance of integrating health priorities into Section 106 negotiations and proposed engaging the negotiating team to ensure health outcomes are considered.

RESOLVED – That, the report be noted.

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

The public were not excluded.

14. CITY OF LONDON POLICE NON-PUBLIC UPDATE

There was no non-public City of London Police Update.

15. QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE WHILE THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED

There were no non-public questions.

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

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 12.55 pm

Chairman

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