

Committee: Health and Wellbeing Board	Date: 28.02.2020
Subject: New Interventions and Approaches for Rough Sleepers: Final Report Summary	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter – Director, Department of Community and Children’s Services	For information
Report author: Will Norman – Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping	

Summary

This report summarises the key findings and recommendations from the ‘New Interventions and Approaches for Rough Sleepers’ report commissioned from Homeless Link in March 2019.

Recommendation

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The City Corporation has several unique characteristics that render many traditional responses to rough sleeping problematic to deliver. Solutions are therefore required to respond to a local context that is quite different from neighbouring boroughs for example the high level of business activity, low levels of residential accommodation, together with the fact that the majority of rough sleepers do not have a local connection to the area, means that the CoL has limited resources to dealing with the challenges that rough sleepers present.
2. Therefore, making the most of existing resources through partnership working and innovative practice is key to achieving the desired outcomes for local businesses, the public, plus the appropriate support for rough sleepers in the City in helping to reduce the levels of rough sleeping in the square mile.
3. The report has been commissioned to support the City of London progress its strategic response to rough sleeping as a follow up to the Options Appraisal report presented to the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee held on 18 February 2018.

4. An interim report summarising the progress of the report was provided to this sub-committee In July.
5. The report focuses on the efficacy of the following four key services:
 - A rapid Assessment Hub
 - Day Centre /service provision (welfare-based approaches)
 - Increased and/or specialist Outreach capacity
 - Additional or Enhanced Accommodation provision
6. The report details Homeless Link's findings from extensive research and their knowledge base of services for rough sleepers, an assessment of supply and demand within the City of London and consultation with all key stakeholders including people with lived experience. The analysis makes recommendations for service improvements and potential additions in order to better meet identified needs.
7. Homeless Link carried out an initial scoping exercise to determine the most appropriate comparator areas to consult using the following criteria:
 - Rough sleeper street count
 - Similar cohort of rough sleepers
 - Business Areas
 - Neighbouring boroughs
8. As a result of our scoping the following comparator areas were agreed:
 - Westminster City Council
 - Southwark Council
 - Tower Hamlets Council
 - Liverpool City Council
 - Lambeth Council
9. This work entailed a desk top review of strategies followed by in-depth conversations and or meetings with the key rough sleeper leads in each area.

Current Position

10. Like other London boroughs rough sleeping numbers in the City of London have increased significantly in recent years. The number of long-term rough sleepers in City of London is consistently higher than in comparator boroughs.
11. Most people living on the streets in the City of London have support needs and at least a third have multiple support needs, most commonly in relation to drugs and mental health.
12. An estimated 15 - 25 rough sleepers with a local connection to the City of London are likely to have an eligible social care need. However, many are not engaging

with Adult Social Care services and those that do, are being referred to expensive out of area placements.

13. Data and stakeholder feedback also indicate there are a significant number of non-UK nationals on the streets who do not have access to UK public funds and therefore are not able to access the full range of homelessness services in the City of London.

Options reviewed

Assessment Hubs

14. CoL lacks emergency accommodation for a range of rough sleepers, including new rough sleepers and people returning to streets. Some of these are highly vulnerable due to mental health or other support needs.
15. The current assessment hub and outreach services are only available for five days a week, which means there is nowhere for people to go or access support at the weekends and at other times of the month.
16. Many clients refuse to enter the existing monthly Pop Up Hub or drop out part way during the week.
17. Five days a week per month isn't enough time to find most people accessing the Assessment Hub suitable move-on accommodation. Access to NSNO hubs is very limited.
18. Comparator boroughs have evidenced the requirement for a permanent assessment centre allowing a longer time to assess and support people to find appropriate accommodation.

Day Centres

19. Day centres can be a lifeline for people living on the streets by supplying them with basic daily living amenities, food, social networks and immediate help and support they may need for both physical and mental health needs plus opportunities for engaging in meaningful activities and developing skills to help with gaining employment.
20. The level and type of support will very much depend on the resources available i.e. a mixture of local authority grant funding and charitable donations.
21. Day centres are expensive and there is very little research on outcomes which demonstrate their effectiveness in relation to moving people off the streets.
22. In addition, four out of five of the comparator areas fed back that day centres can attract people from out of area and it is very difficult to assess the value for money. Three are not commissioning day centres for this reason.

Outreach Services

23. The level of Outreach resource in the City of London should be enough to meet the needs of people sleeping rough. In terms of cost and size this resource is comparable to neighbouring boroughs.
24. Some of the most entrenched rough sleepers refuse to engage with the City of London outreach team.
25. A greater focus on reconnection and access to the private rented sector would help to reduce blockages within the pathway for people sleeping rough.
26. Outreach services in other areas have evidenced increasing success where the service is configured to provide more specialist interventions and lead worker roles. In addition, co-locating a social worker within the team would help to assess social care needs more effectively, resulting in early care intervention, preventing the need for more costlier provision in the longer term.

Accommodation

27. There is a significant shortfall in enhanced accommodation provision. The City of London's accommodation provision is also significantly lower than comparator boroughs.
28. Over half of the commissioned hostel placements are for low support needs and there is a long waiting list for the only hostel that currently provides the 6 high support bed spaces (Great Guildford Street).
29. There is low throughput within the CoL accommodation pathway. This means a significant number of rough sleepers with high/complex needs are remaining on the streets. An analysis of demand data indicates that the shortfall of enhanced accommodation for people with complex needs is approximately 30 bed spaces.

Proposals

30. City of London to commission a permanent 7 day a week Assessment Hub with a capacity of 10 bed spaces, whether this be in single rooms, partitioned rooms or small pods. We also recommend that the selected venue has enough space for communal areas, private office spaces and catering facilities which can be used during the daytime by non-assessment centre residents.
31. That the City of London does not commission a day centre and that resources are better targeted on services that have a greater impact on directing and supporting people off the streets, in order to achieve a longer-term vision of reducing rough sleeping.
32. There is no recommendation to increase the size of the current team, but it is recommended to reconfigure the service with specialist lead worker roles, sub-teams working with flow and long-term rough sleepers and a co-located social worker.

33. The City of London should commission an additional 30 bed spaces of high support accommodation and that this is provided within a standalone unit. This would help to address the immediate shortfall in units plus ensure the success of other commissioning proposals above. Whilst accommodating this number of people within a single project may have some disadvantages in terms of hostel management and delivering personalised support to all residents, the consultants consider this option as preferable to any likely alternative options such as 3 x 10 units' schemes. These are neither practical nor feasible for the City of London, not least because they are likely to be significantly more expensive.
34. Consideration should also be given to providing an element of domiciliary care funding to meet the needs for people who are at or approach the care threshold.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

35. The options reviewed and subsequent proposals meet the following Corporate Plan outcomes;
- Contribute to a flourishing society;
 - People are safe and feel safe.
 - People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
 - People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.
36. The options reviewed and subsequent proposals meet the following Homelessness Strategy outcomes;
- Everyone has route away from the streets
 - The impact of homelessness is reduced
 - Nobody needs to return to homelessness

Conclusion

37. There are currently service gaps as well as opportunities in the current service provision for rough sleepers.
38. Assessment hubs/centres, enhanced outreach, supported accommodation and day services all offer benefits, as well as some disadvantages.
39. Most new or adapted interventions will have some co-dependence upon other service areas in order to be successful.
40. All the recommendations in the final report can be expected to positively impact rough sleeping numbers in the Square Mile.

Background Papers

- New Interventions and Approaches for Rough Sleepers: Interim Report (Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-committee, July 2019)

- What Do We Need? – A Service Options Appraisal (Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-committee, February 2019)

Will Norman

Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping

T: 020 7332 1994

E: will.norman@cityoflondon.gov.uk