| Committee: | Dated: |
|---|---|
| Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee | 22 February 2021 |
| **Subject:**<br>Rough Sleeping Data Q3 2020/21 | **Public** |
| **Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?** | **1, 2, 3, 4, 11** |
| **Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?** | **No** |
| **If so, how much?** | **N/A** |
| **What is the source of Funding?** | **N/A** |
| **Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?** | **N/A** |
| **Report of:**<br>Andrew Carter**,** Director of Community and Children's Services | **For Information** |
| **Report author:**<br>Simon Young, Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator | |

## Summary

This report presents data and a brief narrative related to rough sleeping within the City of London (CoL) during the Quarter 3 (Q3) period, October to December 2020/21. This report reflects on a slight increase in rough sleeping during the period, rising from the particularly low levels seen during the previous quarter. Context is provided relating to the long-term trend of reduction overall, and the depressed levels within the quarter in relation to previous quarters and financial years. The changes in national response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and its effect on behaviours of individuals, as well as the overall context of delivery during the quarter, are presented in order to offer an understanding of the slight upwards shift in rough sleeping.

## Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report.

## Main Report

### Background

1. A general trend of decline in rough sleeping in the Square Mile has been seen across previous quarters, falling from 172 individuals in Q4 2019/20 (January–March), to 140 in Q1 2020/21 (April–June) and 105 in Q2 (July –September) 2020/21.

2. Accommodation outcomes over the previous six months have been high, with a particularly increased level of emergency short-term accommodation outcomes in Q1.

3. Emergency accommodation outcomes reduced across Q2 2020/21, although there was an elevated level of long-term outcomes across Q2.

4. The change in outcomes across both quarters was representative of the change to presenting accommodation needs of rough sleepers in relation to the progression of the COVID-19 pandemic and action required to safeguard individuals from the virus, as well as reduce its overall spread.

5. While other authorities had begun to present a significant increase in new rough sleepers across Q2CoL reported a continued reduction in new rough sleepers being seen in the authority area.

6. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the CoL has continued to work to ensure that there is an offer of accommodation for all individuals seen within the authority area.

**Current Position**

7. There was an increase of 25% in rough sleepers seen during Q3 2020/21, rising from 105 to 132. This is still a lower level than seen during previous quarters.

8. The main increase noted relates to new rough sleepers being seen in the authority area, increasing by 18 individuals from 21 individuals in Q2 to 39 in Q3. This equates to an 85% increase.

9. The predominant number of new rough sleepers seen within the quarter refused to engage in support, withholding information from the team. This was anecdotally expressed by the Outreach team during the quarter, and was reinforced by the team recording 16 individuals seen for the first time across the quarter as an ‘unknown’ individual. This represents 15% of the total number of rough sleepers seen.

10. It is felt that the increase in the number of new individuals, and the high levels of those refusing to engage, is an outcome of the increases seen elsewhere in London during previous quarters.

11. During the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of new and non-engaging rough sleepers were seen in the authority area. It was reflected that these were likely individuals who had been targeted in other London boroughs with offers of support or accommodation, but had rejected these offers, choosing to move away from an authority area to continue to rough sleep and avoid engagement with services.

12. The rise in new rough sleepers in Q3 is likely to have been mainly driven by individuals with similar motives, evidenced by 14 of the ‘unknown’ new rough sleepers seen in the CoL only being seen once, likely electing to move away from the authority upon offers of support being made.

13. The number of individuals who  are well-known to the team also increased from 40 to 44 and there was an increase of 48 to 52 individuals whose rough sleeping patterns fluctuate. The percentage increases within these cohorts equate to 10% and 8% respectively.

14. The rise within the known cohorts is not attributable to newer rough sleepers remaining in the authority area after initial contact, as no new rough sleepers seen during the quarter were transferred to either of the long-term cohorts.

15. Narrative on Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) suggests that a number of these individuals had to leave self-procured emergency provision (friends and family), had elected to rough sleep elsewhere during the initial wave of the pandemic, or had been evicted/abandoned from pan-London emergency accommodation. The increasing length of national emergency measures, coupled with the relaxation of these measures towards the end of the previous quarter, are both likely reasons for the return of these individuals into the authority area.

16. A total of 72 accommodation outcomes are recorded on CHAIN for the period. This is an increase on the 43 recorded in the previous quarter and correlates with the increase in restrictions seen in November, which likely led to an increase in acceptance rates of accommodation offers.

17. During the quarter, 18 individuals seen as new rough sleepers were accommodated. Combined with the 16 unknown new rough sleepers (34), subtracted from the total of 39 new rough sleepers in Q3 (see paragraph 8 above), suggests that only five individuals who were new to rough sleeping in the authority area, and willing to share some information with the Outreach team, rejected an offer of accommodation.

18. No reconnections are recorded as having taken place for the period.

19. There was an increase in the proportion of UK nationals rough sleeping in the borough during the quarter. While this may be an indication of a reduction in the number of EU nationals rough sleeping, it is important to note that accommodation outcomes for EU nationals have been high due to the COVID-19 response.
20. Support needs noted within the rough sleeping population remain broadly consistent with previous quarters. Mental health continues to remain the most significant support need noted, followed by substance and alcohol misuse. Over half the individuals met across the quarter have a comorbidity, indicating the continuing understanding that the CoL rough sleeping population present in complex ways, often having high levels of street attachment and the need for significant levels of ongoing support.

**Proposals**

21. There are no proposals arising from this paper.

**Options**

22. There are no additional options arising from this paper.

**Key Data**

23. Key data is included in Appendix 1 of this paper, in the form of a reporting dashboard amalgamating data recorded and reported through the pan-London rough sleeping database, Combined Homelessness and Information Database (CHAIN)

**Corporate & Strategic Implications**

24. There are no strategic or financial implications directly related to this report

**Conclusion**

25. There was a demonstrable rise in rough sleeping within the quarter from Q2, which is in opposition to the general trend seen over the past year.

26. Whilst numbers rose, it is important to note that rough sleeping levels were still lower than all other previous quarters from Q1 19/20 onwards.

27. The most significant force behind the rise in rough sleeping within the quarter is in relation to new rough sleepers, a significant proportion of whom were accommodated with immediacy.

28. 41% of all new rough sleepers seen completely refused to engage with support services. The majority of these individuals were only seen on one occasion within the CoL.

29. Accommodation outcomes overall increased from the previous quarter, in line with increasing restrictions nationally. Whilst CoL has continued the 'Everyone In' approach throughout the entire period, it is thought individuals became more likely to accept offers when there was an increase in Covid-19 cases and governmental action to attempt to reduce these.

**Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – CHAIN reporting dashboard.

**Simon Young**
Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator
Community and Children's Services

T: 075 9232 8723
E: simon.young@cityoflondon.gov.uk