

Committee:	Dated:
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee	22 February 2021
Subject: COVID-19 Update Report	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1, 2, 3, 4
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	NA
What is the source of Funding?	NA
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	NA
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Summary

This report provides an update on the City of London's (CoL's) response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the ways in which the CoL rough sleeping team and commissioned services continue to safeguard City rough sleepers. This report looks at the delivery of COVID-19 emergency accommodation and support to City rough sleepers at Carter Lane Hostel and the City Travelodge Hotel.

This report also sets out recent funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), which has financed existing COVID-19 provision and also enhanced the City's service offer to rough sleepers over the winter period.

Recommendation

The Sub-Committee is asked to:

- Note the report

Main Report

Background

1. While a vulnerability to COVID-19 remains inherent in the City's rough sleeping cohort, infection rates have remained low. Our COVID-19 recovery plan and related activity therefore continues as a set of preventative measures to sustain and build on the reduced level of rough sleeping we have witnessed in the Square Mile.
2. The Carter Lane Hostel was leased by the CoL from the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) in March 2020 and, since then, City-commissioned partners

continue to supported City rough sleepers away from the streets into Carter Lane, and then on to longer-term accommodation.

3. CoL has been working alongside Travelodge UK since March 2020 to provide additional emergency accommodation to City rough sleepers when needed. Hotel accommodation has mostly been accessed by the City Outreach team while on shift for those new to rough sleeping in the City or when Carter Lane has reached capacity.
4. The MHCLG notified select local authorities of the available Protect Programme (PP) grant in November 2020. Local authorities with the highest rough sleeping figures were invited to bid for the PP to ensure that health-led responses for people experiencing rough sleeping continues. The CoL PP proposal was approved and awarded on 30 November 2020.
5. The MHCLG notified all local authorities of the available Cold Weather Fund (CWF) in November 2020, encouraging local authorities to update plans for how they were going to make sure people sleeping rough had somewhere to go over the winter. The CoL CWF proposal was approved and awarded on 18 December 2020.
6. On 8 January 2021, the MHCLG circulated a letter from MP Robert Jenrick in response to the recent national lockdown announcement, asking all local authorities to redouble their efforts to help all those currently sleeping rough to access accommodation.

Current Position

7. The CoL Outreach team and partners continue to provide regular street audit shifts, visiting all hotspot sites and known individuals across the CoL to capture an accurate 'on the night' figure of rough sleeping in the authority area. Street audits are akin to street counts, however, using fewer personnel to enable a high level of regularity with as low an impact as possible on operational services.
8. The City has seen an overall reduction in the number of individuals seen sleeping rough in 2020. The last street count took place on 26 November 2020, and 23 individuals were seen rough sleeping on the night – a significant reduction on the previous year's total of 41. Audits conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic show that an average of 18 individuals met on any given night.
9. At the 29 January DCCS Committee, Members agreed a proposal to enter into a new lease with YHA at Carter Lane. The new lease, beginning 1 April 2021, is for 12 months, with break clauses at 4, 6 and 9 months. Break clauses require a 12-week notice period for both parties.
10. Carter Lane remains a busy service where there is a multiagency approach to supporting clients. The service continues to put the health and safety of guests and staff at the centre of what they do, particular since November where new national restrictions and then lockdown were introduced. To date there has been one COVID-19 outbreak at the service, when one staff member and one guest

received a positive COVID-19 test result within the space of 14 days. The service and City officers followed Public Health England guidance and promptly acted upon protocol to safeguard the positive tested individuals and all others in the service.

11. The CoL Outreach team have provided an on-the-night offer of hotel accommodation to any rough sleeper met on shift, which is the continuation of the 'Everyone In' approach. This provision has also been utilised as part of the CoL's response to the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol. Although we have City rough sleepers booked into several Travelodge hotels, the majority are accommodated at the City Travelodge and supported by the City Outreach team and Mobile Intervention Support Team (MIST).
12. The PP grant totals £174,069 and is retrospectively funded by the MHCLG for the period from 1 December 2020 to 31 March 2021. The initial round of funding was targeted at local authorities with the largest rough sleeping figures, with the aim to enhance support to rough sleepers deemed as clinically and extremely clinically vulnerable. The CoL identified that many of the City's most clinically vulnerable rough sleepers are also some of the most street attached and captured in targeted groups such as the 205s and T1000s. The programme is as follows:
 - i) 20 hotel rooms: The City has contracted the City Travelodge to provide a group booking of 30 rooms until 31 March, with 20 rooms funded by the PP, and the remaining 10 funded by the CoL
 - ii) Psychotherapy service: The City has commissioned a part-time psychotherapy service through Providence Row Charity starting on 15 February. This service is to support some of the City's current and previously street-attached clients to get the additional support they need. The service aims to support individuals to gain a better understanding of early life trauma, Post Traumatic Shock Disorder, and the compounded effects of untreated anxiety and depression.
 - iii) Digital Inclusion scheme: The City is to fund and distribute digital devices to all PP clients in accommodation to support them to develop their digital skills and to stay in touch with their support networks and professionals.
13. The CWF grant totals £90,000 and is retrospectively funded by the MHCLG for the period of 18 December 2020 to 31 March 2021. The aim of this grant fund is to support local authorities to provide additional accommodation and support to rough sleepers over the winter period. The programme is as follows:
 - i) Caritas Anchor House + personalisation: The City has continued to contract Anchor House to provide two bed spaces in a supported hostel environment. Anchor House will provide a thorough assessment and support planning with each individual with the aim of gaining EU settled status and/or completing the employment programme.

- ii) Providence Row Housing Association (PRHA) MIST: The City has expanded the MIST service from one peripatetic worker to a team of three: one co-ordinator and two workers. The service ensures that Travelodge clients remain safely accommodated, and that onward accommodation pathways are identified and worked towards as quickly as possible. MIST works closely with the City Outreach team to ensure that clients' immediate needs are assessed and addressed. MIST and Outreach also support the distribution of evening meals provided by an external catering company.
- iii) Catering: The City has contracted Travelodge to provide all City Travelodge guests with breakfast. CoL have also contracted an external catering company, Feast, to prepare healthy evening meals to City hotels, which are then distributed by support services to guests.

Key Data

14. As of 3 February, 41 rough sleepers are booked into the hostel. Quarterly monitoring (October to December) shows that a total of 74 individuals have been supported by the Carter Lane service, with 19 individuals successfully moved on from Carter Lane into longer-term and stable accommodation. The breakdown of these moves are as follows:

	Total
Private Rented Sector	5
Support Accommodation	13
Anchor House	1

15. As of the 3 February, a total of 38 rough sleepers are booked into Travelodge hotel accommodation: 32 in the City, five in King's Cross; and one in Bethnal Green, while 81 clients have successfully moved on from hotel accommodation. The breakdown of these moves is as follows:

	Total
Private Rented Sector	3
Carter Lane	7
GLA hotel stock	37
International Reconnection	4
Support Accommodation	16
Temporary Accommodation	8
City Social housing	1
Other	5

Corporate & Strategic Implications

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

Conclusion

17. The CoL COVID-19 recovery plan and related activity continues to successfully support and safeguard City rough sleepers through a set of measures that has seen the lowest annual numbers of rough sleepers in the City for several years. Thanks to further funding by the MHCLG, the City has been able to enhance its service provision to City rough sleepers over the winter period.

Appendices

- None

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