

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING SUB COMMITTEE

Monday, 22 February 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub Committee held via Microsoft Teams at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Marianne Fredericks (Chairman)	Natasha Maria Cabrera Lloyd-Owen
Tijs Broeke (Deputy Chairman)	Alderman Bronek Masojada
Randall Anderson	Benjamin Murphy
Mary Durcan	William Pimlott
Helen Fentimen	Henrika Priest
Alderman Alison Gowman	Jillian Reid, Safer City Strategic Partnership
Alderman Vincent Keaveny	Ruby Sayed
Reverend Paul Kennedy, City Church	

Officers:

Simon Cribbens	- Community and Children's Services Department
Kirsty Lowe	- Community and Children's Services Department
Will Norman	- Community and Children's Services Department
Chris Pelham	- Community and Children's Services Department
Simon Young	- Community and Children's Services Department
James Gibson	- Chamberlain's Department
Kerry Nicholls	- Town Clerk's Department
Chloe Rew	- Town Clerk's Department
Chandni Tanna	- Town Clerk's Department
Inspector Joe Easterbrook	- City of London Police
PC Jason Foster	- City of London Police

Also Present:

Martin Burrows	- Director of Research and Campaigns, Groundswell
Sarah Hough	- Research Project Worker, Groundswell
Becky Rice	- Independent Researcher, Groundswell
Kristian Draper	- Area Director, Thames Reach
Beth Winter	- Area Manager, Thames Reach
Rowan Wyllie	- Lead Manager, Thames Reach

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for lateness were received from Randall Anderson and William Pimlott.

The Chairman led the Sub-Committee in welcoming Inspector Joe Easterbrook, Local Policing – Partnership and Prevention Hub who had recently joined the City of London Police.

2. **MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

There were no declarations.

3. **MINUTES**

The Chairman requested an update on Minute 8: Supporting European Union Nationals with No Resource to Public Funds. The Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping reported that all homeless individuals who qualified were being encouraged to apply for settled status. Twelve guests at the Carter Lane hostel were currently applying for settled status of which three had been awarded pre-settled status. Work was underway to identify the approach being taken by other local authorities and updates on this work would be presented to future meetings of the Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED, that the public minutes and non-public summary of the meeting held on 1 December 2020 be approved.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Members received the Sub-Committee's outstanding actions list and the following updates were noted:

- The Sub-Committee's Away Day would be rescheduled to later in the year, following confirmation of the Sub-Committee's membership for the new municipal year. The Away Day would provide Committee Members with an opportunity to consider its future goals and whether the Sub-Committee would benefit from expanding the current membership.
- Action 5/20/HRS which specified that the Safer City Partnership, Police Authority Board and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee be notified of any plans to publicise photographs of individuals who were rough sleepers and who had Criminal Behaviour Orders would be removed from the Outstanding Actions list as there were no plans to proceed with this proposal.

RESOLVED, that outstanding actions be noted.

5. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk presenting the Terms of Reference of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee and the following points were made:

- A Committee Member suggested that the wording of the Terms of Reference be strengthened to reflect the active role of the Sub-Committee in responding to Government and regional policies. This was supported by another Committee Member who used the example of recent changes to the status of European Union Nationals to illustrate how the Sub-Committee had responded to Government policies.
- Another Committee Member asked that the Community and Children's Services Committee be requested to consider delegating authority to the Sub-Committee to make decisions in the area of homelessness and

rough sleeping. A number of Committee Members voiced support for this proposal.

The Chairman agreed to review the Terms of Reference in light of the points raised (Action 1/21/HRS) and noted it was not proposed to change the Sub-Committee's frequency of meetings at this time. The amended Terms of Reference would be submitted to the Community and Children's Services Committee on 30 April 2021 for final approval.

RESOLVED, that:

- The Chairman review the Terms of Reference in light of the points raised for submission to the Community and Children's Services Committee for final approval; and,
- No change be made to the Sub-Committee's frequency of meetings.

6. **THAMES REACH PRESENTATION**

The Sub-Committee heard a presentation of the Area Director of Thames Reach and the following points were made:

- Thames Reach was a London-based medium-sized charity that had been commissioned to deliver homelessness outreach services for the City of London Corporation from November 2020. During the first four months of operation, contact had been made with 169 clients of whom 34 had moved into accommodation, seven had moved on and two had been reconnected. The City of London Outreach Team took a whole team approach to reducing the number of people living on the street and supported new rough sleepers via a rapid response, assessment and offer approach whilst longer-term rough sleepers were offered more personalised support based on their strengths.
- The Outreach Team worked to a number of targets including rapid response to referrals, offers formed and delivered within 72 hours of first contact and supporting 75% of eligible reconnections into safe accommodation, with an overall aim to reduce the number of people living on the street. A focus was placed on multi-agency working, including with the Rough Sleeping and Mental Health Programme (RAMHP), Parkguard, Doctors of the World and the City Assessment Service. Work was underway to embed the service model and increase staffing, as well as to recruit 20 volunteers. In the longer-term it was hoped to reduce the Street Count to under 20 individuals and long-term rough sleepers to under 30 individuals.
- With regard to the differing approaches taken to new and longer-term rough sleepers, the Lead Manager advised that as longer-term rough sleepers often stayed in the same area, external agencies were able to provide a consistent level of support. New rough sleepers tended to be more transient and Thames Reach worked closely with neighbouring boroughs to ensure that individuals received consistent support. In

response to a question from a Committee Member, the Area Director agreed that it was difficult to evidence the number of individuals that had been supported away from the streets, but work was being undertaken with commissioners to identify robust measures to monitor progress and this could include use of the Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN).

- A Committee Member noted the value of engaging with individuals in their first language and suggested that consideration be given to producing a multi-lingual leaflet which outlined how individuals could access support. The Area Manager advised that team members had a range of language skills which would further be built on through the planned volunteering programme and that the Team also used a 24/7 language phonenumber. Another Committee Member suggested that some longer-term rough sleepers might respond better to those with experience of homelessness and the Area Director confirmed that Thames Reach placed a strong emphasis on employing team members with lived experience of homelessness. Thames Reach was also working closely with Street Buddies, a peer-led outreach service in the Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea areas. A Committee Member suggested that details of any volunteering opportunities be provided to Members to circulate across their networks and that the Heart of the City charity offered a way to involve small and medium-sized enterprises.

The Chairman thanked the Area Director, Lead Manager and Area Manager of Thames Reach for their excellent presentation and requested that regular updates be provided to the Sub-Committee on the work of Thames Reach.

RESOLVED, that the presentation be noted.

7. **GROUNDSWELL - CITY VOICES PRESENTATION**

The Sub-Committee heard a presentation of the Director of Research and Campaigns, Research Project Worker and Independent Researcher of Groundswell which had been commissioned to undertake City Voices research and the following points were made:

- Groundswell worked with people with experience of homelessness, offering opportunities to contribute to society and create solutions to homelessness. In August 2020, the City of London Corporation approached Groundswell to undertake City Voices research which aimed to capture learning from work to move people away from the streets at the start of the COVID-19 period and hear directly from individuals who were rough sleeping during this time. It was anticipated that the City Voices work would inform future service design and act as a springboard for ongoing client involvement and co-production of services.
- The City Voices research project focused on the experience of individuals in coming in from the streets, staying in short-term accommodation and moving into longer-term accommodation. Nineteen phone and face-to-face interviews had been completed with clients, as

well as nine interviews with staff and an outreach shift with rough sleeping individuals. The research had identified a number of push and pull factors to entering short-term accommodation including fear of the COVID-19 pandemic, quality and location of short-term accommodation, and rapid scripting. These learning points had been used to create a series of recommendations including the need for a trauma-informed approach to commissioning and service delivery, a health-led and gender-informed model and recruitment of support workers or managers with lived in experience of homelessness.

- In response to a question from a Committee Member, the Independent Researcher advised that key areas of new learning arising from the City Voices research included the role of rapid scripting and an immediate health first offer in encouraging individuals to engage with services. The location of Carter Lane hostel had been a major factor in encouraging individuals to move into short-term accommodation as it enabled them to remain within their local community. The Rough Sleeping Service Manager confirmed that the final report of the City Voices research would form the basis of an action plan which would be used as a springboard to develop innovative approaches to future service delivery. The Director of Research and Campaigns further emphasised the value of incorporating the voice of the service users in future decision making and commissioning of services and follow-up workshops would be arranged to consider how this could be put into practice.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Research and Campaigns, Research Project Worker and Independent Researcher of Groundswell for their excellent presentation and requested that Groundswell attend the Sub-Committee's upcoming Away Day to provide an update on its City Voices research.

RESOLVED, that the presentation be noted.

8. **ROUGH SLEEPING DATA Q3 2020/21**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services in respect of rough sleeper data for Quarter 3 2020/21 and the following point was made:

- The total number of rough sleepers in the City of London was 132 in Quarter 3 2020/21 which represented a 25% increase on the previous quarter and was mainly related to new rough sleepers in the City of London who were largely refusing to engage in support. The number of individuals who were well-known to the Team had increased from 40 to 44 and there had been an increase of 48 to 52 individuals whose rough sleeping pattern fluctuated. During the quarter, 18 individuals seen as new rough sleepers were accommodated but there had been no reconnections recorded as taking place. Support need within the homeless and rough population remained broadly consistent with previous quarters with mental health as the most prevalent need followed by substance and alcohol misuse.

RESOLVED, that the update be noted.

9. COVID-19 UPDATE REPORT

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services providing a COVID-19 update and the following points were made:

- Whilst homeless and rough sleeping individuals were inherently vulnerable to COVID-19, infection rates had remained low. A focus had been placed on preventative measures to sustain and build on the reduced level of rough sleeping in the City of London during the COVID-19 period. This included short-term accommodation at the Carter Lane hostel and other locations where individuals could be safeguarded whilst accessing the multi-agency support that was intended to help them move on to longer-term accommodation. The Carter Lane hostel had supported 74 individuals during Quarter 3 2020/21, of which 19 had successfully moved into longer-term and stable accommodation. A further 81 individuals had successfully moved into longer-term and stable accommodation from other hostel provision. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government had recently announced additional short-term funding which would be used to strengthen the existing service offer.
- In response to a question from a Committee Member, the Rough Sleeping Service Manager confirmed that the City of London Corporation's contract for the use of the Carter Lane hostel had been extended for a further twelve months until 31 March 2022, with break clauses at six, nine and twelve months if the provision was no longer required. A vaccination session had been delivered at the Carter Lane Hostel enabling eleven clients and two staff members to receive a COVID-19 vaccination and it was hoped to run another vaccination session shortly. There were complexities around offering vaccines to individuals who remained on the streets but work was underway with health partners to identify a viable delivery mechanism for this cohort.

RESOLVED, that the update be noted.

10. SEVERE WEATHER EMERGENCY PROTOCOL - MIDWINTER INTERIM REPORT

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services providing an interim report on the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) for Winter 2020/21 and the following point was made:

- Winter 2020/21 had been a challenging period for the SWEP due to the unusually cold weather which had resulted in eight separate SWEP activations across 32 nights with 36 homeless or rough sleeping individuals being brought into accommodation since 23 December 2020. In response to a question from a Committee Member, the Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping explained that whilst still

having central responsibility, the Greater London Authority had delegated authority to local authorities to activate SWEP in response to local need. The City of London Corporation took a range of factors into account including precipitation and wind and kept SWEP activated over periods where it likely that cold weather would be ongoing. The Chairman welcomed the activation of SWEP over weekend periods as this provided opportunities for sustained engagement and support with homeless and rough sleeping individuals.

RESOLVED, that the update be noted.

11. CITY OF LONDON POLICE UPDATE

The Sub-Committee heard an update of the Superintendent of the City of London Police and the following points were made:

- Operation Luscombe which aimed to identify issues and support those who were living on the streets had been temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Work was underway to digitise the Operation Luscombe process which would support stronger data capture and analysis. The British Transport Police would also be joining Operation Luscombe once remobilised, which would include joint patrols with the Police and outreach providers. The overall approach to enforcement was changing and would focus on prevention. Homeless individuals whose support needs were being met in the City would be allowed to remain, whilst those who commuted to the City for the purposes of begging would be excluded.
- Officers within the Partnership and Prevention Hub had met with Thames Reach and Turning Point and were committed to building strong partnerships across all areas of rough sleeping, anti-social behaviour and mental health. The City of London Police had refreshed its training package for custody officers on rough sleepers in custody, which included signposting rough sleepers to local services and a similar package had been created for front office staff. In response to a question from a Committee Member, the Inspector confirmed that the Police's Dedicated Ward Officers focused on community engagement and were based within the Partnership and Prevention Hub which took a strategic partnership-based approach to longer-term community issues.

RESOLVED, that the update be noted.

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

There was one question.

A Committee Member asked whether there had been any increase in the mortality rate of individuals who were homeless or rough sleeping during 2020. The Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping advised that there had been two deaths of homeless individuals associated with the City of London during the 2020 calendar year

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was one item of other business.

The Chairman led the Sub-Committee in thanking the Framework Knitters for their kind donation of socks and blankets to homeless and rough sleeping individuals staying at the Carter Lane and other hostel provision at Christmas.

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that, under Section 100(a) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

Item no	Para no
15	3
16	3
17	3
18	3
19	3

15. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2020 be approved.

16. CITY ASSESSMENT CENTRE UPDATE

The Sub-Committee heard an update of the Director of Community and Children's Services on the City Assessment Centre.

17. CITY OF LONDON POLICE NON-PUBLIC UPDATE

The Sub-Committee heard a non-public update of the Chief Inspector of the City of London Police.

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

There were no non-public questions.

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

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 12.56 pm

Chairman

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