

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee	4 October 2021
<b>Subject:</b> COVID-19 Recovery Plan Progress Report	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	<b>1, 2, 3, 4, 10</b>
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Will Norman, Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping	

### Summary

This report provides Members with a progress update on the emergency accommodation of rough sleepers since and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The City of London has moved beyond the 'Everyone In' phase instigated in May 2020 and returned to a position closer to our pre-pandemic approach. The report explains how the Recovery Plan now moves into a phase in support of the reduction of the Carter Lane population.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. 16 October 2021 marks 19 months since we started recording data and reporting on our COVID-19 work as a discrete project.
2. In May 2020 the Government announced its 'Everyone In' call to action to local authorities and appointed Dame Louise Casey to drive the effort to ensure that, for the duration of the pandemic, every rough sleeper had an alternative to homelessness and access to safe and suitable accommodation where health needs could be monitored and met, where necessary.
3. In June 2020, Members were presented with a Recovery Plan which set out the overarching principles of our COVID-19 response and recovery work. A summary

of our progress against these principles, as well as a focus on the main workstreams, can be found from paragraph 7.

## **Current Position**

4. On 2 July 2021, the Pan London Housing Needs and Homelessness Group met. This quarterly group is attended by Statutory Homelessness leads from Greater London local authorities, London Councils, Greater London Authority (GLA), Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) and Homeless Link. A return to 'business as usual' was discussed. While no firm resolution was agreed, a consensus was reached that most Councils had already adjusted their operating position closer to that of 'business as usual'. Effectively this means that each statutory homelessness case will be assessed and reviewed on its individual merits and not subject to an 'Everyone In' approach.
5. On 2 August 2021, the City of London ceased operating an 'Everyone In' approach and returned to our substantive position of 'In for Good'. As with other local authorities, this affects our statutory homelessness and rough sleeping services.
6. At this stage, the primary objectives of the Recovery Plan are to:
  - a. reduce the resident population of Carter Lane in line with the duration of the lease
  - b. eliminate costly B&B/hotel use
  - c. reduce numbers of former rough sleepers occupying discretionary temporary accommodation.

## COVID-19 Recovery Plan

7. In May 2020, the City of London developed a COVID-19 Recovery Plan designed to complement a larger effort being steered by the Rough Sleeping Strategic Group – London Councils, MHCLG, GLA, etc. – to ensure the safe recovery of rough sleeping population following the COVID-19 health crisis.
8. Our approach was aligned with that of the GLA and other local authorities, and regional bodies reporting their progress into central Government. To this end, we adopted the same overarching principles (1 to 7 below) with the addition of two City-specific principles (8 and 9). A summary of our progress against these principles is as follows:
  - **Principle 1:** To seek to ensure that no one who has been placed in emergency accommodation in response to the COVID-19 public health crisis is asked to leave that emergency accommodation without an ongoing offer of support to end their rough sleeping.

*This has been achieved through the development and delivery of the City of London Credible Service Offer (CSO) Policy. Every rough sleeper who has used our COVID-19 emergency accommodation services has had access to assessment and support culminating in a service offer designed to alleviate*

*rough sleeping. These offers are developed in consultation with the client. Please see Key Data section.*

- **Principle 2:** To ensure there is the capacity and capability to deliver and implement 'In for Good' offers of support.

*During the pandemic, the service used a dynamic approach to system capacity. Carter Lane increased from 20 to 45 rooms and MHCLG funding was used to procure additional hotel rooms at City Travelodge. More recently as CSOs have come in to play, we have seen increased use of the City's Private Rented Sector Framework and an initial cohort of 10 Carter Lane guests were identified as the first occupants of the new High Support hostel.*

- **Principle 3:** To ensure continued protection from COVID-19 for those who need it.

*Standard Operating Procedures developed by local public health consultants have proven effective at Carter Lane, with no outbreaks recorded. Hotel rooms continue to be a useful resource for those who need self-contained accommodation. We have an operational partner in the Pan-London Find & Treat Team who deliver vaccinations at Carter Lane on a scheduled basis. These clinics are also open to rough sleepers and staff.*

- **Principle 4:** The City of London will work with London boroughs so that no boroughs, including the City of London, are disproportionately impacted as a result of hosting rough sleepers from outside their boroughs during the emergency.

*We have not seen significant impact in this area. Our Outreach teams were effective in using Pan-London (CHORUS) accommodation for rough sleepers lacking a rough sleeping connection with the City, and Carter Lane for those we recognised as eligible for City support. No Pan-London COVID-19 services were hosted in the Square Mile.*

- **Principle 5:** The City of London supports the London-wide approach which will complement the efforts of individual boroughs and providers, and vice versa.

*As reported in April 2021; only a small number of cases referred into CHORUS have been referred back to City of London. In each case this has been consistent with the principles set out by the GLA. Each case has been referred to City of London Adult Social Care.*

- **Principle 6:** To ensure an integrated housing approach with health and care to secure access to services and continuity of care.

*The health implications for this client group have never materialised in a way that many feared. Vaccination clinics have been scheduled and continue to be available to all residents at Carter Lane and for rough sleepers. This will continue as long as the outreach vaccination offer exists. We expect a similar approach to seasonal flu*

*vaccination in autumn/winter 2021-22. Anyone accommodated through the 'everyone in' approach has had access to a Care Act assessment if required.*

- **Principle 7:** Ensure that the roll out is gradual, to avoid a 'cliff edge' and overload of services as lockdown is lifted.

*Carter Lane has evolved from an emergency response service set up to meet the demands created by the pandemic and 'Everyone In', to a dual-function residential service. Our Outreach team have access to a cluster of assessment beds for their sole use, while the remainder of the service is set aside for medium- and longer-term stays. This allows us to plan for an initial cohort of residents who will move into our new pathway provision and provides interim accommodation for residents awaiting the outcome of their CSO.*

- **Principle 8 (specific to City of London):** Some rough sleepers may choose to refuse their offer of support. The City of London will work hard to prevent this but, ultimately, the public health emergency does not bestow upon the City of London the power, or the responsibility, to keep accommodating rough sleepers in emergency accommodation once an offer of support more suitable to the rough sleeper's needs and circumstances has been made and refused.

*This principle continues to be supported by our development and roll out of a fair and equitable CSO Policy. Please see Key Data section.*

- **Principle 9 (specific to City of London):** Enable the transition from recovery plans to long-term capacity development.

*Oversight spanning our COVID-19 recovery work and substantive Growth Programme continues to be provided through a project group which meets weekly. The interdependence between the three core accommodation elements covered by the combined programmes – Carter Lane, City Assessment Centre, High Support Hostel – has been tracked and monitored throughout.*

*A dedicated project team has been assembled to manage the progress of the Assessment Centre project. A contractor has been selected to undertake the capital works element of the Medium/High Support Hostel project.*

### Decant of Carter Lane

9. Planning is underway to ensure a smooth handover of the Carter Lane site to the Youth Hostel Association. The City's lease expires on 31 March 2022.
10. On 15 November 2021 we will begin an organised wind-up of the service, steadily reducing service capacity week on week. The number of beds will reduce by approximately two each week until week commencing 21 February when the last two to four guests will leave. The service will be closed to new referrals from this time.

11. By week commencing 28 February 2022 the service will be empty of guests and a skeleton staff team will be maintained to ensure the security of the premises and facilitate access to contractors.
12. Between 28 February and 28 March 2022, we will be engaged in returning the premises to the condition in which they were handed to us.
13. Our commissioned providers will concentrate on delivering resettlement plans for the medium- to long-term bed occupants. The Outreach team will have a cluster of 10 beds until week commencing 8 February 2022, after which this number will gradually taper. Ensuring that the Outreach team have access to these beds is an operational priority.
14. An initial cohort of 10 guests will move to the new Medium/High Support Hostel and will be among the last to leave.
15. We will ensure that Carter Lane is able to provide Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) capacity for the Outreach team, should it be required.
16. Contingency options include ad-hoc use of B&B and discretionary temporary accommodation. Support can be provided by the additional capacity secured for our Tenancy Support Team through the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) Grant.

### **Key Data**

17. The following points highlight the key data available:
  - Credible Service Offers made: **75**
  - Total successful resettlements out of Carter Lane (April 2020 to July 2021): **48**
  - Successful resettlements out of Carter Lane (year to date): **19**
  - Clients in the COVID-19 Recovery Programme with no recourse to public funds: **9**
    - Of which **7** have applied to EU Settlement Scheme and are awaiting determination on their cases
    - And **2** who have not applied but are still eligible for the scheme
  - Carter Lane population (16 September 2021): **40**
  - B&B population (16 September 2021): **2**
  - Discretionary Temporary Accommodation population (16 September 2021): **8**
  - Between March 2021 and September 2021, the number of clients within the COVID-19 Recovery Programme has dropped from **94** to **50**.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

18. Strategic implications – none
19. Financial implications – none
20. Resource implications – none
21. Legal implications – none
22. Risk implications – none

23. Equalities implications – none

24. Climate implications – none

25. Security implications – none

## **Conclusion**

26. Carter Lane has evolved to serve a dual purpose of interim assessment centre and short- to medium-term hostel.

27. The total number of people we are currently assisting over and above our normal capacity, therefore covered by the scope of the Recovery Plan, is 50. This is a 47% reduction on our position in March 2021.

28. A plan is in place to decant Carter Lane ahead of the end of the lease in March 2022. The plan commences on 15 November 2021.

29. Continued access to assessment beds for the Outreach team has been prioritised.

## **Appendices**

- None

## **Background Papers**

- COVID-19 Recovery Plan Progress Report – April 2021 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Subcommittee

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