

Committee: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee	Dated: 04/10/2023
Subject: Severe Weather Emergency Protocol 2023/24	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	1,2,3,4,10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
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: Judith Finlay - Director, Community and Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Will Norman – Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping	

Summary

The City of London has a long-standing commitment to the safeguarding of rough sleepers when extreme weather events occur. Since 2017/18 we have drafted a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) on an annual basis ahead of each winter. The City's protocol follows similar guidelines published by the Greater London Authority (GLA) which effectively act as a best practice blueprint for other London local authorities to follow.

During summer 2022, Britain saw record temperatures and Greater London recorded daytime temperatures in excess of 40 degrees centigrade. Although extreme heat measures were in place, additional summer SWEP guidelines are now in place, and this has been added to the exiting SWEP protocol.

This report sets out the format of the revised City of London SWEP protocol. The new protocol can be found at Appendix 1.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The City's SWEP protocol is reviewed every year to take into account learning from the previous year and any emerging policy or strategy information. A delivery partner consultation is built into this process.

2. The GLA consult with borough rough sleeping leads through the quarterly GLA 'Leads Meeting'.
3. For winter SWEP, individual borough SWEP bed capacity is expected to reflect rough sleeping need, and each borough reports its arrangements to the GLA every autumn.
4. The GLA provides 'Pan-London Overflow SWEP' beds to add capacity where boroughs exhaust their SWEP arrangements, or where London endures a particularly severe or lengthy SWEP activation. Ordinarily, this is only accessible after boroughs have used all available local capacity.
5. Summer SWEP arrangements focus on access to daytime 'cool spaces', health advice, the distribution of water, and signposting information.
6. Summer 2023 was the first year where the GLA published dedicated hot weather SWEP guidelines and the City of London prepared measures in advance. Members received a report setting out these measures at the 3 July Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee.

Updates to the protocol

7. Previous City of London SWEP protocols included an explanation of the origins of SWEP. They linked our local document to the GLA guidelines and set out the specific measures for the coming winter. This latter element was reviewed every summer in preparation for a new draft each autumn.
8. Over previous winters, the City has used different measures each year. This has required substantial reworking of the SWEP protocol. Additionally, the new summer SWEP guidelines issued by the GLA mean that a second point of review and draft has been added to the year.
9. To create a more flexible and agile document, the new City of London SWEP protocol will have three principal sections:
 - i. Main protocol explaining what SWEP is, the review cycle, activation procedures and roles and responsibilities
 - ii. An appendix setting out specific measures for winter SWEP
 - iii. An appendix setting out specific measures for summer SWEP
10. The main protocol will require less detailed changes and will be kept under constant review.
11. The two appendices explaining the measures for both types of SWEP will be subject to more detailed review and are expected to change each year, depending on available resources and changes to best practice guidance.

Current Position

12. Summer SWEP has been in place between June and September 2023. There has been a single amber activation, the level at which 'cool spaces' become available, between 4 and 11 September. During this period, 13 outreach shifts took place, resulting in 174 contacts with 76 unique individuals. A single person took up the offer of access to the 'cool space'.
13. Winter SWEP arrangements are still being finalised. As in previous years, this will take the form of spare capacity within our own supported accommodation pathway and additional capacity specially commissioned to create a flexible and adaptable service offer between October 2023 and March 2024.
14. There are no plans to deviate from the widely adopted practice of winter SWEP activation when a night of zero degrees is forecast.
15. The 'In for Good' principle will apply. This means anyone taking up an accommodation offer will remain in accommodation until our commissioned services have arrived at a credible service offer.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

16. Financial implications – SWEP costs can be met within the existing local risk budget. However, future SWEP demands led by weather events or the expectations of amended GLA guidelines are difficult to predict. Costs of delivering SWEP arrangements have steadily risen in recent years.
17. Resource implications – n/a
18. Legal implications – n/a
19. Risk implications – n/a
20. Equalities implications – n/a
21. Climate implications – there are no implications arising from this report or the measures contained within the protocol and its appendices. However, this SWEP protocol is directly related to year-round weather events.
22. Security implications – n/a

Conclusion

23. The City of London SWEP protocol has been revised to create overarching guidelines with companion appendices which set out the specific arrangements for both summer and winter SWEP periods.
24. This summer saw the City mobilise dedicated summer SWEP plans for the first time. A generally cool summer saw a single amber activation, the activation stage where 'cool spaces' become available.

25. Planning for winter SWEP is underway, and plans will be finalised before October 2023. Arrangements will use capacity in our existing pathway plus additional capacity commissioned to create a flexible response.

Background Papers

- Hot Weather SWEP Report – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee, 3 July 2023

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – City of London Severe Weather Emergency Protocol 2023/24

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