

Committee: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee	Dated: 10/06/2024
Subject: Annual Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) Report 2023	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?	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, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

This report presents narrative and analysis on the City of London's (CoL's) provision and outcomes in relation to its Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) 2023/2024. It also includes references to previous years' SWEP activations. Reference is made to the 'Winter SWEP' which, for this report, is between September and April, as temperatures are decreased, there is risk of temperatures dropping below 0 degrees, and activation of SWEP is likely to occur.

This report draws Members' attention to the main findings from last winter's activity. The 'key data' referenced in the report can be found in Appendix 1.

This year, there were less SWEP activations and fewer active days compared to the previous year. There was a 24.5% increase in individuals who accepted SWEP in 2023/2024 compared to the previous year. Most SWEP placements ended in assessment of the individual (78%) with 51% of total placements ending with an accommodation outcome.

This report references the following priority areas from the 2023–2027 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy:

- Priority 1 – Rapid, effective and tailored interventions
- Priority 3 – Achieving our goals through better collaboration and partnership.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. SWEP aims to prevent loss of life during periods of extreme and freezing weather in the CoL.

- SWEP is both a local protocol, with CoL-specific guidance and procedures; it is also a Greater London Authority (GLA) protocol. This is reflected in two main ways:

SWEP Accommodation: GLA has Pan-London SWEP provision, though local authorities will also provide their own local accommodation. The expectation is that, under normal circumstances, local authorities will exhaust their own accommodation before using the GLA Pan-London offer, though there are exceptions based on clients' needs.

SWEP Activation: The GLA will activate SWEP when any part of the capital is forecast to be 0 degrees or lower overnight. CoL can activate its own SWEP protocol independent of GLA activation, but the scenarios where this would occur are rare.

2. Once SWEP has been activated by the GLA and CoL officers, Thames Reach City Outreach team target all rough sleepers currently bedding down in the CoL and offer SWEP accommodation placements.

Current Position

Provision

3. The local SWEP accommodation provision available for City Outreach consists of a range of different accommodation projects within the CoL Pathway. This provides a varied set of offers for frontline services to deliver a person-centred approach and appropriate placement.

4. The following local SWEP placements offers were available during the year:

Space in communal spaces of accommodation projects: **11**

- Grange Road: 6
- City Inn Express: 1
- The Lodge: 2
- Crimscott Street: 2
- Hotel bookings (Travelodge): flexible

5. The Outreach team can refer to Pan-London provision once the local provision is exhausted. This Pan-London provision consists of self-contained hotel spaces. This resource is managed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. During the third SWEP activation, senior officers were told that, where possible, support from referring local authorities was required to receive clients back into their local provision during SWEP activation. This was to ease resource pressure and maximise space for teams that did not have access to

their own local provision (Pan-London Outreach teams, Rapid Response Outreach team).

Operational Process

6. Once placed into SWEP accommodation, people were given a Credible Service Offer and a prioritised move-on plan that reflected their individual eligibility and needs. Operational management of case progression was provided by CoL officers to uphold the 'In for Good' principle. An extra member of staff was recruited in the Outreach team for Winter SWEP to support this process and additional need.
7. The 'In for Good' principle dictates that local authorities operating under the GLA SWEP protocol should aim to retain all rough sleepers placed into accommodation during SWEP periods until there is a support plan in place to end their rough sleeping. This was adhered to by the CoL.

Activation

8. SWEP was activated three times across Winter SWEP 2023/2024, amounting to 18 active days (See Appendix 1, Figure 1).
9. Winter SWEP 2023/2024 saw the lowest number of SWEP activations in the last four years (See Appendix 1, Figure 2). Notably, there was one working day between the second and third activation. Therefore operationally, activations 2 and 3 felt like one sustained SWEP activation, with many clients remaining in SWEP accommodation across both activations in the same placement.

10. Key Data

In total, 64 of the 157 people offered SWEP across the 18 days of activation accepted a placement (40.76%) (See Appendix 1, Figure 3).

11. CoL-commissioned teams worked in collaboration to ensure that those accessing SWEP stays were assessed and offers of move-on accommodation were made. Of those assessed, 51% of the placements ended with an accommodation placement confirmed (33 of 64 stays).
12. Of the closed SWEP stays without outcome of assessment or accommodation (16 of 64), only one was due to eviction, which was implemented after SWEP was deactivated. (See Appendix 1, Figure 4).
13. Compared to the last Winter SWEP, there was a 24.56% increase of clients who accepted SWEP (50 clients accepted in 2022/2023, 64 accepted in 2023/2024). (See Appendix 1, Figure 5).

Cost

- Total Winter SWEP 2023/2024 cost: £46,738.66.

This can be broken down by:

- Cost of delivering SWEP through local Pathway: £16,581.43
- Cost of additional hotel placements (flexible capacity): £30,157.23

14. The forecast cost of Winter SWEP 23/24 reported to Members at the March Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Subcommittee was £47,000. This forecast was based on an estimate of 30 nights of SWEP activation (the average of the previous 3 years). The increase in cost per night of activation (18 nights can be explained by the increased use and cost of hotel accommodation).

Corporate & Strategic Implications

- 15. Financial implications – N/A
- 16. Resource implications – N/A
- 17. Legal implications – N/A
- 18. Risk implications – N/A
- 19. Equalities implications – N/A
- 20. Climate implications – N/A
- 21. Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

- 22. Winter SWEP 2023/2024 reflects the increasing demand on homelessness services in the CoL witnessed throughout 2023/2024. More people are accessing support and receiving accommodation offers year on year (see Appendix 1, figure 2).
- 23. The CoL-commissioned Outreach team deliver SWEP offers and assessment to a large number of people, multiple times, during the acute periods of risk to life in cold temperatures. The aim is to ensure that everyone receives a SWEP offer. Appendix 1 shows the volume of the workload (Appendix 1, Figure 3) and the follow-up work of driving the 'In for Good' principle (Appendix 1, Figure 4).

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Key Data

Background Papers

- Future SWEP Planning Report – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Subcommittee, March 2024

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