

Committee: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee	Dated: 09/09/2024
Subject: Member Assurance Proposal Report	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, Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services	
Report author: Will Norman, Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping	For Information

Summary

This report provides Members with a proposal for a structured approach to help Members gain insights into and assurance about the delivery of frontline rough sleeping work. The proposal is in two parts:

- 1) Opportunities for scheduled ‘walkabouts’ alongside officers and Outreach workers. This will let Members witness work being carried out first hand.
- 2) More information about our existing services and the structure of the Rough Sleeping team. This will help with new Members’ induction on to the Sub-Committee and serve as a helpful reference tool for existing Members.

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

- Priority 3 – Achieving our goals through better collaboration and partnership.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Rough sleeping numbers in the Square Mile have increased for three consecutive years, and the City of London has the fifth-largest rough sleeping population in Greater London.

2. The introduction of the Rough Sleeping Initiative at the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, and the grant programme that followed, has led to increased levels of central government grant funding.
3. In 2018, Members approved an increase in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping base budget to help the City of London tackle rising rough sleeping numbers. Among other interventions, this funding has enabled the creation of a high-support hostel in Southwark, and the City's first permanent residential assessment centre based in the Square Mile.
4. The scale and complexity of work, allied with the breadth of our partnership arrangements, means that the City of London has some of the most comprehensive and sophisticated arrangements in place for rough sleepers, anywhere in London.
5. Despite this, rough sleeping numbers remain high and visible rough sleeping, particularly in the form of encampments, is becoming increasingly common. Inevitably, this attracts the attention of residents, businesses and visitors to the Square Mile.
6. The Rough Sleeping team receive regular requests for information about the work we are doing, the services we commission, and the challenges that frontline workers face. In the past, Members have asked to join Outreach shifts or to visit particular locations.
7. Officers recognise that it is helpful for Members to be able to articulate to their constituents the nature of the rough sleeping challenge and the work underway to tackle it. Furthermore, the more information that is readily to hand, the better informed and briefed Members will be.

Proposal

8. The Member Assurance Proposal is in two parts:
 - **Part 1** – opportunities for Members to witness work being undertaken at first hand will be scheduled throughout the year – one per quarter. Three 'walkabouts' with an officer will be scheduled, plus an open invitation for a limited number of Members to participate in the annual street count each October.

There is scope for the walkabouts to focus on a particular Ward, area or issue. For example, Members may wish to see high-impact rough sleeping sites or take a close look at visible rough sleeping in a particular Ward. Walkabouts can be scheduled for within office hours or at night.

Officers from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping service will lead the walkabout, and it may or may not be necessary to include Outreach workers from our commissioned services.

Numbers on each walkabout will need to be limited.

- **Part 2** – a document pack will be prepared to help new Members’ inductions, and to act as a reference tool for existing Members. Suggestions for the pack include:
 - Service structure organigram
 - Summary of staff roles and responsibilities
 - Map of commissioned services
 - Supported accommodation pathway flow chart
 - Multi-agency meeting map
 - Annual Greater London CHAIN data summary
 - Statutory homelessness data summary
 - Resources and web links.
9. The document pack will be reviewed annually and made available to Members via email and/or through a digital platform.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

- 10. **Financial implications** – N/A
- 11. **Resource implications** – N/A
- 12. **Legal implications** – N/A
- 13. **Risk implications** – N/A
- 14. **Equalities implications** – N/A
- 15. **Climate implications** – N/A
- 16. **Security implications** – N/A

Conclusion

- 17. The Member Assurance Proposal offers Members a two-part structured approach to helping Members gain and sustain valuable insights into the frontline work of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Service.
- 18. Part 1 involves four scheduled opportunities to witness Outreach work and/or rough sleeping sites and hotspots at first hand, plus three scheduled ‘walkabouts’ and the annual street count in October.
- 19. Part 2 is a document pack to include key data, staff and service information which will be reviewed and updated annually.

Appendices

- None

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