Committee: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee	Dated: 09/09/2024
Subject: Rough Sleeping Service Review 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 authors: Will Norman, Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping	**For Information**

Summary

This report provides Members with a proposal for an independent review of the pathways offered by the City of London to rough sleepers encountered by its services. 2023/2024 data reveals that rough sleeping numbers have risen for the third consecutive year in the Square Mile and Greater London. The proposal of a review is driven by the priorities set out in the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023–2027 and a commitment to evaluation and innovation in service delivery.

A specification for the review can be found at Appendix 1. The specification provides background information, expectations for the methodology and outputs, and a description of scope. An external consultant with experience of the rough sleeping sector will be commissioned to deliver the review, which is scheduled to conclude by 31 July 2025. Findings and recommendations will be used to inform our working practices, commissioning priorities and the next iteration of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The draft specification was circulated among Members on 8 August 2024. Feedback has been incorporated into this report and can be found in the appendix in the section relating to scope.

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

- Priority 1 – Rapid, effective and tailored interventions
- Priority 2 – Securing access to suitable, affordable accommodation
- Priority 3 – Achieving our goals through better collaboration and partnership
- Priority 4 – Providing support beyond accommodation

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Data from 2023/2024 reveals the City of London to have the fifth-largest rough sleeping population in Greater London (656 unique individuals). This is the third successive year that rough sleeping numbers have increased in the Square Mile. Between 2022/2023 and 2023/2024, rough sleeping increased by 33% in the Square Mile compared to 19% across Greater London.

2. The City of London single night snapshot figure for autumn 2023 was 61. This was the third-highest figure recorded for Greater London. Reflecting Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) data trends, the 2023 snapshot was the third consecutive rise in rough sleeping in the Square Mile and Greater London.

3. The City of London was awarded a Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) grant of £1.2 million in 2024/2025, the final year of a three-year award where annual grant funding averaged £1.4 million. At the time of writing, the Government's intentions around future grant funding of local authority Homelessness and Rough Sleeping services are unclear.

4. In 2019, the City of London commissioned Homeless Link to deliver 'New Interventions and Approaches for Rough Sleepers – Options Appraisal'. Among the recommendations from that report was a reconfigured Outreach service, including a qualified social worker, residential assessment beds and additional high-support hostel capacity, all of which have since been implemented.

5. Published CHAIN data for 2023/2024 tells us:

   - 656 unique individuals were recorded rough sleeping in the Square Mile
   - 57% of rough sleepers were 'flow' or new to rough sleeping
   - 24% of rough sleepers remained unidentified, meaning our Outreach services were unable to engage them
   - Rough sleepers recorded anywhere in London across two consecutive years represented 32% of the City rough sleeping population. This continues a trend of three consecutive years that this percentage has dropped, but is still significantly higher than the Greater London average of 20%
   - 50 individuals were seen more than 20 times by our Outreach services

- 'Returners' or individuals recorded rough sleeping who had been accommodated, represented 12% of rough sleepers
- 245 accommodation outcomes were recorded. This includes multiple outcomes for individual rough sleepers.

Proposal

6. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping team will commission an external consultant to review our existing interventions, and place these in the context of the size and nature of rough sleeping in the Square Mile. The specification for this work can be found at Appendix 1.

7. The draft specification was circulated to Members on 8 August, and feedback has been incorporated into the latest version.

8. The consultant/consulting firm will have the necessary experience and qualifications to undertake this review and draft a comprehensive report for presentation to senior officers and Members.

9. Key lines of enquiry for the reviewer are:

- Exploration of potential gaps in existing service delivery
- The ability of existing interventions to meet near-future demand
- How available grant funding has been used
- Integration of rough sleeping workstreams into the wider homelessness service
- Strengths and weakness of partnership arrangements
- Services must adequately demonstrate impact.

10. The review will focus on Rough Sleeping services. The Statutory Homelessness team is scheduled to undertake its own independent review this year, and our portfolio of supported accommodation services will be subject to an internal Quality Assurance (QA) process later in the year.

11. The review will consider routes into, through and beyond support. This means that critical touch points with relevant services will be within scope, such as access to supported accommodation, support offered to help people develop confidence, self-esteem and skills, access to drug and alcohol treatment and health services.

12. To ensure that reasonable boundaries and limitations are incorporated, the review will focus solely on the Rough Sleeping service and its touch points with other related services. Areas outside of scope, and the reasons for this are:

- **Detailed review of Statutory Homelessness Services** – requires a particular technical focus. Independent review scheduled to take place separately during financial year 2024/2025.
- **Detailed review of Substance Misuse Services** – commissioned outside the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping service area and subject to existing contract monitoring arrangements.

- **City of London supported accommodation pathway** – separate QA review scheduled to take place in financial year 2024/2025 and every three years thereafter.
- **Roles fulfilled by staff employed by the City of London** – staff contracted to City of London and the structure of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Service are not subject to review.
- **Adult Social Care Service** – regulated area subject to independent audit and inspection. Outside the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping service area.
- **Multi-agency meeting arrangements** – independently reviewed by Homeless Link in 2023. Recommendations implemented throughout 2023 and 2024.
- **The City of London Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023–2027** – will be subject to review towards the later end of the strategy's lifespan.

13. For a more detailed explanation of the scope of the review, please refer to the draft specification which can be found at Appendix 1.

14. To accommodate the existing reviews scheduled for Statutory Homelessness and Pathway, this review is scheduled to conclude by 31 July 2025. The lessons from the review will be used to inform our commissioning intentions and partnership arrangements.

15. The consultant/consulting firm will provide a written report and a presentation of the key findings and recommendations to the Sub-Committee at the first available meeting.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

16. **Financial implications** – N/A
17. **Resource implications** – N/A

18. **Legal implications** – N/A

19. **Risk implications** – N/A

20. **Equalities implications** – N/A

21. **Climate implications** – N/A

22. **Security implications** – N/A

Conclusion

23. Financial year 2023/2024 was the third successive year that rough sleeping numbers increased in the Square Mile. According to CHAIN data, the City of London has the fifth-largest rough sleeping population in Greater London.

24. The City of London is committed to funding and delivering a Rough Sleeping programme designed and resourced to meet local need. In the last three years, this has been complemented by more than £1 million annually in grant funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

25. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping service intends to conduct an independent review of our rough sleeping work streams to help determine the strengths and weakness of our approach.

26. The review will conclude before 31 July 2025. Outputs will include a written report and a presentation of key findings and recommendations. Lessons will be used to inform short- to medium-term commissioning decisions and partnership arrangements.

27. A draft of the review specification has been seen by Members, and feedback incorporated into this report (see Appendix 1).

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Independent Review of Rough Sleeping Interventions – 2024

Will Norman
Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping

T: 020 7332 1994
E: will.norman@cityoflondon.gov.uk