

<b>Committee:</b> Community and Children's Services	<b>Dated: 20/09/2024</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Tackling the negative impacts of rough sleeping	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Simon Cribbens, Community and Children's Services	

### Summary

This report informs Members of work to develop a policy position and operational protocol in relation to rough sleeping in concentrations of tents which have associated anti-social behaviour or detrimental impact on the community. The policy will be subject to Member approval.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

### Main Report

#### Background

1. The City of London Corporation is committed to supporting those who sleep rough on the Square Mile have a route off the streets tailored to their needs and circumstances. The Corporation invests in specialist outreach services, hostel accommodation (including provision for those with complex needs), a dedicated social worker, health and substance misuse services and a recently opened assessment centre providing emergency beds and a place of safe assessment away from the streets.
2. Services are delivered in the context of increased pressures - with the level of rough sleeping increasing across the capital. Many of those who sleep rough in the City are entrenched and have complex needs. Such individuals often refuse offers of support, accommodation and other welfare intervention.

3. Rough sleeping can be associated with activities like begging, street drinking, substance misuse and other antisocial behaviour. For those who live, work or learn in the City, these behaviours can be intimidating or have detrimental impact, and where they persist they may undermine confidence in the Corporation's support services and the City Police. Those who sleep rough are also disproportionately likely to be the victims of crime and exploitation.
4. Not all those who sleep rough engage in begging, anti-social or criminal activities. However, anti-social behaviour has been associated with the presence of tent encampments in the City. This has included defecation and urination in public spaces, substance misuse and verbal abuse of Corporation officers and contractors. Such encampments can also have wider detrimental impacts on the community, including deterring use of or blocking access to the highway or other public and privately owned spaces.
5. Two such encampments are present in the Square Mile – one at Peninsular House close to the Monument, the other at Baynard House. Both have elicited concerns from Members, City businesses and Corporation Officers, and requests for action to be taken.

### **Current Position**

6. The City Corporation has co-ordinated action to reduce the impact of anti-social behaviour associated with the encampment at Peninsular House. While this has had a positive impact (including resulting in the take up of accommodation offers previously refused) a number of tents remain, and three individuals continue to sleep rough.
7. The presence of tents and rough sleeping at Peninsular House has persisted for six years. During that period the number of people sleeping rough fluctuates – reaching 12-15 people at times. In April 2024 16 tents were present. Where numbers of tents or individuals sleeping rough have reduced, it is common for people to return, or for those new to rough sleeping in the City to occupy tents that remain.
8. A further encampment of tents used for rough sleeping has established at Baynard House in the west of the Square Mile. Twenty tents have been reported in this location.
9. A range of powers exist that can be used to intervene with and tackle anti-social behaviour – including that associated with the behaviour of some who sleep rough. It should be noted that enforcement powers are not used solely because someone is sleeping rough or homeless. Powers also enable the removal of tents where such action complies with the legal framework set out.
10. Interventions to respond to encampments in the City have been reactive in relation to escalating issues. It is notable that some other authorities – where there is much greater issue and incidence - have developed and resourced clear and agreed approaches in the form of policy, protocols or guidance. These

ensure clarity and transparency about the approach to interventions, and a clear authorisation process which drives consistency with that approach. They can ensure issues of welfare support, risk and proportionality have been fully considered and evidenced.

11. The use of legal powers is rightly challenging, and open to legal challenge. It is imperative that such powers are used carefully and proportionately and are underpinned by robust evidence of both support to an individual, and the impact of behaviours. Their use must align with all with the legal obligations of specific powers and be underpinned by assessments of Equalities Impact and (for some powers) a Human Rights Act assessment.
12. Operationally, interventions are complex and require a range of activity by many services and partners in advance and at the time. Consideration must be given to many humanitarian and practical issues.
13. Officers are currently engaging with partner local authorities to learn from approaches developed by them. They are also working closely with internal partners, the Corporation's commissioned rough sleeping services and the City of London Police. This work will inform the development of a policy position to clearly set out the Corporation's aim and approach – and the limitations or conditions of that. It will be underpinned by a clear protocol or guidance setting out the requirements and process for authorising any planned enforcement activity.
14. This policy will be subject to the approval of relevant Members to ensure it aligns with the values and commitments of the City Corporation. It will be developed in the coming weeks with the intention to bring it to a committee cycle before the end of the year.
15. The development of this work will also consider the resource implications to ensure the process that underpins the policy is rigorously co-ordinated and delivered.

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

### Strategic implications

16. The policy will be developed in line with the commitments and values of the City Corporation's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

### Financial implications

17. None

### Resource implications

18. None

### Legal implications

19. Noted within the report.

Risk implications

20. None

Equalities implications

21. The development of the is policy will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

Climate implications

22. None

Security implications

23. None

## **Conclusion**

24. The development of a clear policy and operational framework in relation to addressing encampments will provide confidence and clarity about the use of interventions.

## **Appendices**

- None

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