

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee	Dated: 03/02/2025
Subject: Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) Update Report February 2025	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides statutory duties 	
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N/A
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
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Summary

This report presents a mid-season update and the context for the City of London's (CoL's) provision and outcomes in relation to its Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) 2024/2025. A fuller end of season report will come to the spring Sub-Committee meeting.

So far, SWEP has been activated twice in the current winter period. The first activation in November 2024 was for two days; for the second activation in January 2025, it was active for 11 days in total. Across the two activations, 68 unique individuals have accepted and come into SWEP accommodation after this being offered by City Outreach.

Last year, 64 people accepted SWEP accommodation across the entire 18 days of activation. The current 2024/2025 winter period has already surpassed that demand.

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

- 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, the Thames Reach City Outreach team target all individuals currently bedding down in the CoL and offer SWEP accommodation placements. (See Appendix 1: London SWEP Guidance 2024–2025).

Current Position

Activation

3. SWEP has been activated twice this winter period so far:

19 November 2024 to 21 November 2024 (2 days)

2 January 2025 to 13 January 2025 (11 days)

4. The following chart shows the activity across the two SWEP activations so far:

SWEP period	Activation	Deactivation	Total clients offered SWEP (accumulative)	Total clients that Outreach attempted contact with to offer SWEP	Total spaces used	Total accepted and booked into SWEP
1	19/11/2024	21/11/2024	88	105	42	40
2	02/01/2025	13/01/2025	94	183	35	34

Total (duplicates removed)	68
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As the chart shows, 68 unique individuals have accepted an offer of SWEP from CoL commissioned services across the two activations. This is an increase from the total last year, where 64 clients accepted SWEP across the 18 total days of activation. Therefore, this winter period has already had more demand than the previous winter in 2023/2024, with fewer activations so far.

Provision

5. 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.

6. A total of 30 local SWEP placements offers are available:

Space in communal spaces of accommodation projects: 13

- Grange Road: 6
- Snow Hill Court: 3
- The Lodge: 2
- Crimscott Street: 2

Hotel bookings (Travelodge): 17

7. 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 Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

8. If CoL reaches the local capacity and Pan-London is full, the provision is reviewed daily, with escalation to team service managers and the head of service as budget holder.

Operational Process

9. Once placed into SWEP accommodation, their supporting workers aim to engage individuals and create a Credible Service Offer and a prioritised move-on plan that reflects their eligibility and needs. Operational management of case progression is provided by CoL officers to uphold the 'In for Good' principle whenever possible.

10. The 'In for Good' principle dictates that local authorities operating under the GLA SWEP protocol should aim to retain all clients placed into accommodation during SWEP periods until there is a support plan in place to end their rough sleeping.

This has since been revised by the GLA (Appendix 1, section 5) to recognise that:

“Local authorities are facing unprecedented challenges that mean it may not be possible to apply In for Good in practice for every person accommodated during SWEP this winter”

Instead, local authorities are encourage to maximise the impact of SWEP and use opportunities to engage, assess and identify longer-term solutions for all of those who accept. CoL has upheld this methodology, with internal oversight and supervision of case management throughout activations.

11. Key Data

Last year, the average acceptance rate was 40.76%. This year we have measured a 45% acceptance rate in activation 1, and 35% in activation 2, showing a similar average of 40% overall.

Move on outcomes from SWEP:

<p>Activation 1 19 November 2024 to 21 November 2024</p>	<p><u>42 SWEP bookings:</u></p> <p>11 closed (9 abandoned, 2 evicted)</p> <p>12 retained (9 temporary accommodation, 2 hotel extension, vulnerable, 1 hospital stay)</p> <p>19 end of stay, booking closed</p>
<p>Activation 2 2 January 2025 –to 13 January 2025</p>	<p><u>34 SWEP bookings:</u></p> <p>7 closed (6 abandoned, 1 eviction)</p> <p>14 retained (4 temporary accommodation, 2 Snow Hill Court, 6 hotel extension, vulnerable, 2 pathway)</p> <p>1 reconnection</p> <p>12 end of stay, booking closed</p>

Corporate & Strategic Implications

12. Financial implications – N/A

13. Resource implications – N/A
14. Legal implications – N/A
15. Risk implications – N/A
16. Equalities implications – N/A
17. Climate implications – N/A
18. Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

19. SWEP activations for 2024/2025 so far have supported high demand, and the average acceptance rate across the two activations is similar in comparison to the 2023/2024 figure of 40%.
20. SWEP capacity in local provision has increased with the support of Snow Hill Court being able to host three individuals. This is one more person than the previous year. The total capacity for local provision is 30 people.
21. A final SWEP report will be submitted to the Sub-Committee during the 2025/2026 financial year, with full analysis of the protocol and delivery of SWEP 2024/2025.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – London SWEP Guidance 2024–2025

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