

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee	Dated: 14/05/2025
Subject: Annual Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) Report 2024	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes• provides statutory duties	1,2,3,4,11
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
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
Report author:	Kirsty Lowe, Rough Sleeping Services Manager

Summary

This report presents narrative and analysis on the City of London's (CoL's) Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) 2024/2025. The report also provides comparison data from previous years' SWEP activations. Reference is made to the 'Winter SWEP' which, for this report, is between September 2024 and April 2025, 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 more SWEP activations and more active days compared to the previous year. There was an increase in individuals who accepted SWEP and an increase in the total number of placements in 2024/2025 compared to the previous year. Most SWEP placements ended in assessment with no onward accommodation. Support services delivered an 'In for Good' approach for 21 placements out of a total of 94.

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:
 - a) 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 and any surplus from the sub-region before using the GLA pan-London offer, though there are exceptions based on clients' needs.
 - b) 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 total City SWEP provision consists of 30 bedspaces in a range of supported and unsupported accommodation settings. This provides a varied set of offers for frontline services to deliver a person-centred approach and appropriate placement.
4. The City SWEP provision consisted of 13 communal bedspaces in supported accommodation settings and 17 self-contained hotel rooms. The projects are listed below:
 - Grange Road: 6
 - Snow Hill Court: 3
 - The Lodge: 2

- Crimscott Street: 2
 - Hotel bookings (Travelodge): 17
5. The Outreach team can refer to pan-London provision once the local and sub-regional provision is exhausted. The pan-London provision consists of self-contained hotel spaces. This resource is managed by the GLA.
 6. The City only relied on pan-London provision for the first SWEP activation where the uptake exceeded our capacity of 30 bedspaces. The City Outreach team placed 34 individuals into CoL supported and hotel bedspaces and referred six individuals to pan-London provision.

Operational Process

7. Once placed into SWEP accommodation, efforts are made to carry out further assessment of everyone's circumstances. Supported accommodation settings where there are trained staff on site will attempt to complete a detailed assessment on behalf of the Outreach teams. Outreach workers will attend hotel accommodation to complete these assessments. The aim is to have all individuals assessed and an identified offer of support before SWEP is deactivated. However, this is not always possible due to the short timeframes of SWEP activation and capacity of the supporting teams.
8. Operational management of case progression was provided by CoL officers to uphold the 'In for Good' approach where possible. This year we were able to deliver 'In for Good' to 21 out of 94 placements. This was due to various reasons, though the key barriers were mainly due to clients' immigration status, resource and capacity of support services, and onward accommodation provision in the City and other local authorities.
9. Last year there was an extra member of staff recruited to assist the Outreach team to coordinate and deliver support to those who came in through SWEP. This year this was not possible due to contractual limitations. However, planning through this year's Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant (RSPRG) should remove these constraints for 2025/2026.

Activation

10. SWEP was activated six times across Winter SWEP 2024/2025, amounting to 27 active days (See Appendix 1, Figure 1).
11. Winter SWEP 2024/2025 saw twice the number of activations compared to the previous year (See Appendix 1, Figure 2). Notably, there was one working day between the second and third activation (See Appendix 1, Figure 1), therefore activations 2 and 3 operated as one sustained SWEP activation of 13 days, with many clients remaining in SWEP accommodation across both activations.

Options

12. See costs below.

Proposals

13. There are no proposals for Members to consider.

Key Data

14. In total, 94 SWEP placements were made assisting a total of 82 people; 304 people were met and offered SWEP across the 27 days of activation; 82 individuals accepted SWEP and were accommodated a total of 94 times, with an acceptance rate of 31% (See Appendix 1, Figure 3). The acceptance rate was higher last year, with 64 out of 157 people accepted a placement (41%).
15. The Outreach team met almost twice as many people this year (304) when offering SWEP compared to last year (157). That is a 47% increase in people being seen rough sleeping across the SWEP period in 2024/2025 compared to the previous year.
16. CoL-commissioned teams and CoL officers worked in collaboration to offer 'In for Good' where possible. Of those assessed, 22% of the placements were offered 'In for Good' and accommodation was extended past the SWEP deactivation date (21 out of 94 placements) (See Appendix 1, Figure 4).
17. Appendix 1, Figure 4 shows that 58% of the total placements (54) were booked back on to the streets, 18% of placements (17) abandoned the accommodation, and only 2% (two placements) were evicted once SWEP was deactivated.
18. Appendix 1, Figure 5 shows, as of 17 April 2025, the location of the 82 individuals who came into CoL SWEP. Of these individuals, 42% (34) are in some kind of accommodation, most being outside CoL and the CoL accommodation pathway; 33% (27) of individuals remain rough sleeping; and 23% (19) individuals' location is unknown.

Cost

19. The total Winter SWEP 2024/2025 cost to date (30 April 2025) are £42,260.60. Some invoices from accommodation providers are still to be submitted and so final total costs are likely to be in the region of £45,000 - £50,000. This can be broken down by:
20. Cost of delivering SWEP through local Pathway: £3,691.76
21. Cost of additional hotel placements (flexible capacity): £38,668.84
22. The total cost to deliver SWEP in 2023/24 was £46,738.66.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

23. Financial implications – N/A

24. Resource implications – N/A

25. Legal implications – N/A

26. Risk implications – N/A

27. Equalities implications – N/A

28. Climate implications – N/A

29. Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

30. Winter SWEP 2024/2025 reflects the increasing demand on homelessness services in the CoL witnessed throughout the year. Double the amount of people were met by Outreach teams during this winter SWEP compared to the previous year. This resulted in a higher uptake of SWEP in the CoL this year than any previous years, however, there was reduced ability to provide extended accommodation once SWEP was deactivated. (see Appendix 1, Figures 2 and 4).

31. 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). Services were less able to offer the 'In for Good' principle this year compared to the previous year.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Key Data

Background Papers

- Annual Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) Report 2023
- Future SWEP Planning Report – Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee, March 2024

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