

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee	Dated: 01/10/2025
Subject: Independent Evaluation of City of London Rough Sleeping Services	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivers Corporate Plan 2024–2029 outcomes	Links to Corporate Plan outcomes 1,2,3,4,10
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	NA
What is the source of Funding?	NA
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	NA
Report of:	Judith Finlay – Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services
Report author:	Will Norman – Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping

Summary

This report introduces the key recommendations arising from the independent review of the City of London’s Rough Sleeping services. The report was commissioned by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Service in November 2024, with the final report delivered in August 2025. The review was undertaken by independent homelessness sector specialists, Homeless Link.

The review report highlights that the City of London has a comprehensive service offer with extensive and mature partnership arrangements. A number of existing services are noted as being particularly valued, including the Snow Hill Court Assessment Centre, Rough Sleeping Social Worker, and our focus on homelessness health and access to emergency beds for rough sleepers with no recourse to public funds.

The report makes several recommendations for additions or adaptations which would strengthen the City’s approach. The areas covered include more short-term

accommodation for rough sleepers, access to specialist immigration advice, and further enhancements to the outreach team.

The report includes a section that sets out how officers will use this information to influence current and future decision-making.

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

- Priority 1 – Providing 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. In 2019, the City of London commissioned Homeless Link to deliver the 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. Further insights and recommendations were also used when drafting the current City of London Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-27.
2. Members received a report at the 9 September 2024 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee which set out a proposal to commission a new review of the City of London's response to tackling rough sleeping. This decision was made in the context of four consecutive years of rising rough sleeping in the City of London.
3. Published Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN) data for 2024/25 tells us:
 - 878 unique individuals were recorded rough sleeping in the Square Mile. This is a 34% increase on 2023/24.
 - 65% of our rough sleepers were 'flow' or new to rough sleeping – up from 57% in 2023/24.
 - 35% of rough sleepers remained unidentified, meaning our Outreach services were unable to engage them – up from 24% in 2023/24.

- 41 individuals were seen more than 20 times by our Outreach services – down from 50 in 2023/24.
 - 279 accommodation outcomes were recorded – 34 more than in 2023/24. This includes multiple outcomes for individual rough sleepers.
4. Homeless Link were commissioned to carry out the review. The work began in November 2024 and concluded with the submission of the final report in August 2025. This report can be found at Appendix 1.
 5. In July 2025, Members were updated on the outcome of the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) Housing Advice and Support Team (HAST) diagnostic visit, which was carried out between January and March 2025. While this process looked specifically at the City's Statutory Homelessness team, and the Homeless Link review is limited to our Rough Sleeping services, there are cross-cutting themes and interrelated factors across the two processes.

Current Position

6. The report groups findings and recommendations around four thematic areas: i) the ability of the existing service to meet expected future demand; ii) effective use of grant funding; iii) partnership and integration with wider homelessness services; and iv) demonstrating service impact.
7. The review examined supporting documentation and data, extensive stakeholder engagement and best practice examples found elsewhere in the sector.
8. A summary of the findings is as follows:
 - I. Challenges faced by the existing service in meeting expected future demand include:
 - Continued high 'flow' (new) and high transience of rough sleeping population
 - A high proportion of people experiencing rough sleeping who have mental health needs; an increasing number of people with complex needs; and a shift to a younger age group
 - A higher-than-London average of 'stock' (long-term) rough sleepers
 - A continuing significant proportion of non-UK nationals, including those with no recourse to public funds
 - Significant numbers of people sleeping rough in encampments.
 - II. Effective use of grant funding – the report suggests that consideration should be given to how grant funding is or could be used in the following areas:
 - The outreach health van/mobile health delivery model

- The focus and priorities of the Homeless Health Co-ordinator
- The Rough Sleeper Navigator model and how we engage with transient and long-term rough sleepers.

III. Key observations relating to partnership and integration with wider homelessness services include:

- There are many examples of successful and effective partnership arrangements already in place
- Opportunities exist to strengthen collaboration between Rough Sleeping and Statutory Homelessness teams, which could in turn improve access to homelessness applications
- Further development of the Rough Sleeper Social Worker role to improve access to the Care Act, along with consideration of the possibilities for deeper system change around the interface between Adult Social Care and Rough Sleeping services.

IV. Demonstrating service impact observations include:

- Output and outcome expectations are clearly communicated through service specifications and key performance indicator frameworks
- The profile of City of London rough sleepers is well understood and is used to inform service design and delivery
- Opportunities exist to increase monitoring of the Sub-regional Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator, particularly in relation to the interface between Rough Sleeping and Statutory Homelessness services across the sub-region.

Next steps

9. Officers are currently reviewing the report and considering the findings and recommendations in the context of:

- Current and near future procurement activity
- Statutory homelessness and rough sleeping demand data
- The allocated budget for Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Services
- MHCLG Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant (RSPARG) funding announcements for the City of London and the North East London sub-region.

10. Learning from existing contract delivery combined with the recommendations included in this report will be used to set operational priorities and inform our allocation of RSPARG funding (both City of London and sub-regional). At present this is limited to the 2025/26 financial year, pending confirmation of further funding.

11. Long-term and more complex ideas will be included in the next iteration of the City's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which will continue from 2027/28.
12. Officers are engaging with the MHCLG, Greater London Authority and London Councils around the future of grant funding and governance arrangements in the North East London sub-region to ensure that future structures help the City of London to achieve its strategic and operational objectives.
13. An analysis of the City of London's use of, and options for, Temporary Accommodation and the Private Rented Sector is underway. This cuts across the Homeless Link and HAST reviews.
14. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee and Health and Wellbeing Board received a report setting out how primary care needs are being delivered for rough sleepers in the Square Mile. Members will receive an updated report with a more detailed vision for potential future service delivery in February 2026.
15. An updated position, including a summary of new or amended work resulting from the findings and recommendations from the report, will be presented to Members at a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee in early 2026.

Options

16. There are no options for Members to consider.

Proposals

17. There are no proposals for Members to consider.

Key Data

18. The key data can be found at paragraph 3.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

19. Financial implications – none
20. Resource implications – none
21. Legal implications – none
22. Risk implications – none
23. Equalities implications – none
24. Climate implications – none
25. Security implications – none

Conclusion

26. Homeless Link were commissioned to undertake an independent review of the City of London's rough sleeping services. The work began in November 2024 and a final report was provided in August 2025.
27. While not linked to the HAST diagnostic review of the City's Statutory Homelessness team, the two reviews combine well to create a comprehensive and cross-cutting evaluation.
28. The findings confirm that the City has a comprehensive and well-established service offer, which is supported and delivered by mature and productive partnership arrangements.
29. The report provides recommendations for how the City of London could improve its current service delivery and develop new and additional workstreams which will help the City tackle changing and emerging demand.

Background papers

- Meeting the Health Needs of Rough Sleepers – 10 July Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee and 11 July Health and Wellbeing Board
- Statutory Homelessness Service Delivery Plan – 10 July Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee
- North East London RSPARG Proposal – 1 October Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub-Committee

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Rough Sleeper Services Review Report August 2025

Will Norman

Head of Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping

T: 020 7332 1994

E: will.norman@cityoflondon.gov.uk