

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee: Homeless and Rough Sleeping Sub Committee – For information Safer City Partnership – For information	Dated: 01/10/2025
Subject: Tackling the Negative Impacts of Rough Sleeping Update	Public report: For Information
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes	Vibrant Thriving Destination Providing Excellent Services Flourishing Public Spaces
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?	Not applicable
Report of:	Judith Finlay, Executive Director of Community and Children's Services
Report author:	Philip Connor, Interim Head of Community Safety

Summary

This report provides an update to Members on the work done to date to tackle the negative impacts of rough sleeping. It notes the harms to individuals from long term rough sleeping, and the negative impact on communities from behaviours that can be associated with rough sleeping.

The report outlines the resources and governance introduced to respond to these concerns. It describes the outcomes and impact of the work to date, and outlines the proposed course of action moving forward.

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, ensuring 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. On 9th December 2024, a draft policy statement and protocol was brought to the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Subcommittee, entitled 'Tackling the detrimental impacts of rough sleeping.'
3. This Policy was subsequently approved by Community and Children's Services on 16th January 2025, and by the Police Authority Board on 12th February 2025.
4. Following the implementation of this protocol, additional resources, governance and partner initiatives have been introduced. Targeted and intelligence-led operational activities are now taking place regularly across the Square Mile

Current Position

5. A specialist Community Safety Officer was employed in May 2025 on a 12-month fixed-term contract, with the responsibility to develop a partnership model of engagement, intervention and enforcement.
6. A Joint Working Group was formed in June 2025, chaired by City of London Police (CoLP) Chief Inspector Garner and including staff from across the Corporation, including Rough Sleeping, Street Cleansing, Community Safety and all relevant teams within the Corporation with a responsibility for rough sleeping, community safety and the built environment.
7. This group meets monthly, to receive operational updates on the work undertaken by the rough sleeping engagement teams, to provide strategic support and resources for ongoing activities, and to deliver against the policy and protocol.
8. A comprehensive register of all active rough sleeping sites has been created of every known rough sleeper in the Square Mile. This register includes a log of all engagement activity, information known about the person, and facilitates effective and proportionate decision making by the strategic and operational groups.
9. The Joint Working Group has strategic oversight of the Days of Action operational group. Days of Action take place monthly, the fifth and most recent

having taken place on 3rd September 2025. This operational group is chaired by Joe Kingston, Assistant Director (Gardens and Cleansing).

10. The Days of Action involve attendance at priority encampment sites by Corporation teams and commissioned partners supported by the Police. Rough sleepers are made aware via outreach that staff are attending in advance. Amongst the activities taking place are targeted cleansing and removal of items considered dangerous or a fire risk, active supportive engagement with rough sleepers and the removal of items which have been previously served with a Notice.
11. Data on rough sleeping numbers is reported quarterly in the Chain Quarterly Report, the most recent of which was prepared in July 2025 covering the period April – June 2025. The next report will be Published October 2025.
12. Between these Action days, there are multiple Teams channels which manage day-to-day operational reporting and co-ordination of operational activities, including engagement with new rough sleepers, management of emerging issues and rapid response to incidents. These are live channels intended to provide a partnership space for real-time communication and response.
13. In addition, the Joint Working Group has a dedicated officer in the Legal team, who has provided detailed advice and support on the development of a proportionate suite of legal options to directly address the harm caused by rough sleeping. These include the service of Community Protection Warnings and Notices, and Notices under the Environment Act. At present, the teams are solely making use of Notices to remove tents or items which partners have confirmed are vacant. 16 such Notices have been issued, with 14 tents removed to date.
14. A comprehensive Equalities Act Impact Assessment has been completed in relation to the work outlined above. Rough sleeping and homelessness are not protected characteristics under the Equalities Act. However, it is noted some who rough sleep may have characteristics which are protected under the Act, including mental or physical health or pregnancy. The Impact Assessment determined there was a neutral or positive impact across all protected characteristics. The Impact Assessment will be reviewed regularly to ensure any activity remains proportionate.
15. The strategic and operational models outlined above, aligned with the partnership approach introduced by the Joint Working Group and implemented both day-to-day through comms channels and via the monthly Days of Action, are providing the Corporation and partners with a greater understanding of the condition of rough sleeping within the Square Mile. The increased fixed-term resource within the Community Safety team has provided effective co-ordination between the various internal teams and external partners, and this report notes the effectiveness of the City of London Police in chairing this Group.

16. The current operational and tactical model for partnership working and rough sleeper support is now embedded within the City Corporation, commissioned partners and the Police. Communication is effective and occurring in real time in response to emerging issues. Partners are in agreement that the current process allows for effective engagement and intervention, and a proportionate and sensitive pathway for enforcement is at an advanced stage and will be ready to be implemented within one month of this report.
17. Days of action will continue monthly to remove tents and other items, and there is an ongoing real-time response to any emerging issues which represent increased risk such as fire risks, with responses taking place within 1 working day.
18. A further report will be brought to this meeting in six months to outline the ongoing work being conducted in this area, any changes or developments to the operational protocols, and any legal actions that have taken place.

Key Data

19. As mentioned above, data on rough sleeping numbers is reported quarterly in the Chain Quarterly Report, the most recent of which was prepared in July 2025 covering the period April – June 2025. This data showed there a total of 259 rough sleepers in the Square Mile in that period, a reduction of 39 on the same period last year.
20. In the Period June – August 2025, the Outreach team made a total of 398 contacts with rough sleepers. This figures includes multiple contact points with individual rough sleepers.
21. Streetlink is the online referral tool for individuals or businesses wanting to report a rough sleeper in the Square Mile. In the period June – August 2025, a total of 173 referrals were made via Streetlink. This includes duplicate reports.
22. During the days of action, 16 Notices of removal have been placed on abandoned tents, and 14 of these have been removed to date.
23. Significant volumes of waste have been removed during the days of action, along with dozens of wooden pallets, with a review of the previous three months activities showing a marked decrease in the number of pallets needing removal from sleep sites, from dozens to single figures.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

24. Strategic implications – The work and direction of travel described above align with multiple strands of the Corporate Plan. Specifically, 'Vibrant Thriving Destination' by supporting the City to be a safe and secure destination. Also 'Providing Excellent Services' through enabling access to effective support and care pathways, which in turn supports people to live healthy and productive lives.

This work also supports delivery of the 'Safer Public Spaces' strand of the Safer City Partnership Strategy 2025-2029.

25. Financial implications - There is a potential ongoing financial requirement to fund 1 FTE member of staff within the Community Safety Team to co-ordinate this work.

26. Resource implications – None

27. Legal implications – Sensitive and proportionate legal actions must be signed off by senior staff and supported by ongoing engagement by outreach services. This mitigates risk to the Coty Corporation.

28. Risk implication – There is risk of legal challenge and reputational impacts with any such actions but the approaches set out above ensure these are mitigated.

29. Equalities implications – An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. Whilst homelessness is not a protected characteristic, those who are homeless or rough sleeping may have a higher chance of having protected characteristics themselves. The EIA shows a neutral or positive impact on any relevant characteristics. This will be regularly reviewed, and will inform any decision making and process development moving forward.

30. Climate implications – None

31. Security implications – Ongoing work to manage the impact of rough sleeping and encampments is required to facilitate the maintenance of safe spaces within the Square Mile.

Conclusion

32. There is now a robust partnership model in place to both respond to emerging issues around rough sleeping and to positively engage and enforce behaviours within encampments. Action is being taken to remove unused items associated with rough sleeping across the Square Mile. Regular operational and tactical meetings are taking place and scheduled with all appropriate partners and commissioned services.

33. The processes outlined above will remain under regular review, and the Equality Impact Assessment will be continually monitored and updated to ensure all activities remain proportionate.

Appendices

- None

Background Papers

- Policy and protocol to tackle the negative impacts of rough sleeping:
Community and Children's Services -16 January 2025; Police Authority Board
-12 February 2025

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