

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING SUB COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 1 October 2025

Minutes of the meeting of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 4.00 pm

Present

Members:

Mark Wheatley (Chairman)	David Williams
Deborah Oliver (Deputy Chairman)	James Breed
Deputy Helen Fentimen OBE JP	Patrick Fowler
Dawn Frampton	Irmani Smallwood
Helen Ladele	

In attendance:

Leyla Ostavar
Helen Lewis, Homeless Link

Officers:

John Barker	- Community & Children's Services Department
Phil Connor	- Community & Children's Services Department
Kirsty Lowe	- Community & Children's Services Department
Will Norman	- Community & Children's Services Department
Chris Pelham	- Community & Children's Services Department
Kate Doidge	- Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Steve Goodman OBE, Shravan Joshi MBE, and Sophia Mooney.

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Patrick Flower declared that he was an associate of Homeless Link, who were to present to the Sub-Committee under Agenda Item 4.

3. MINUTES

The Sub-Committee received the public minutes and non-public summary of the last meeting held on 10th July 2025.

It was noted that Patrick Fowler had observed the previous meeting virtually.

RESOLVED: - That the public minutes and non-public summary of the previous meeting held on 10th July 2025 be approved, as amended above.

4. **INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF CITY OF LONDON ROUGH SLEEPING SERVICES**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services, concerning the key recommendations from an independent review of the City of London's Rough Sleeping services from Homeless Link.

The Committee received a presentation from Helen Lewis, Homeless Link, who provided the outcome of the independent review. The presentation provided an overview of overall findings, including service demand and service gaps; use of grant funding; partnerships and integration; and service impact. The presentation also covered the recommendations from the independent review.

Following the presentation, members of the Sub Committee asked questions and made comments, as follows:

A Member supported the need for immigration advice and highlighted his personal experience and challenges when attempting to gain tier 1 immigration advice for a rough sleeper, noting that City Advice - originally contracted to provide such support - no longer had the capacity or confidence to do so. The Member suggested reviewing the contract with Toynbee Hall to explore how the service could be reinstated and emphasised the urgency of addressing this issue, as many individuals with pre-settled status would see their leave expire in 2026. Officers acknowledged the critical importance and high demand for immigration advice across London as well as noting the significant lack of capacity. It was confirmed that officers were reviewing available funding to improve the services. City Advice were considering whether to strengthen existing service structures, highlighting the broader challenge of recruiting OISC-qualified advisers. Regarding the timing and urgency highlighted by the Member, the Officer confirmed that they will review the suggested deadlines and ensure that they are incorporated into the solutions.

A Member queried the suggestion that the demand for services might decrease and referred to the data from the NEL Regional Commissioning report which showed higher figures compared to other local authorities. Based on this, the Member referred to four areas highlighted within the recommendations: the Move On Team, a proposed 10-bed unit, immigration support and the use of healthcare data to inform service delivery. They also asked about collaboration with housing colleagues and whether homelessness and rough sleeping considerations could be integrated into upcoming regeneration and new build projects. The Member also asked about what priority rough sleepers receive on the housing waiting list, particularly in relation to allocations at Black Raven Court. Her final comment stressed the importance of engaging with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and urged that business should contribute financially to solutions regarding rough sleeping instead of just raising their concerns. The Officer agreed that issues such as the lack of staging posts and beds were recognised as weaknesses but noted that addressing them would depend on securing both revenue and capital funding, potentially through sub-regional collaboration. The Officer also highlighted the challenge of balancing outreach efforts between long-term rough sleepers and those passing through

the City and suggested that greater impact could have been achieved by focusing on those consistently rough sleeping in the Square Mile.

The Member responded by emphasising that talks with developers during the early stages of new build projects presented a key opportunity to secure community contributions, such as through Section 106 funding or the provision of community space. They stressed that these considerations should be explored and embedded during the developmental stage, and not when plans are submitted. The Officer confirmed that he would discuss the suggestions with colleagues and relevant teams.

A Member asked for more data regarding the proportion of rough sleepers who had been accepted by a statutory housing duty in recent years. The Officer agreed to provide this information and clarified that whilst the City Corporation had a duty to take homelessness applications, that this did not always result in a housing duty. They reassured Members that the statutory homelessness team was being temporarily expanded to increase capacity.

RESOLVED: - That the report be received and its contents noted.

5. **CITY OF LONDON POLICE UPDATE**

There was no public City of London Police Update.

It was requested that future reports are provided in written format as opposed to a verbal update.

6. **HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2023-2027 UPDATE REPORT**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services, concerning a summary of progress against the aims set out in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2027.

A Member asked about developing the recruitment practices to increase representation, and whether people with experience were involved in the recruitment processes. It was confirmed that this was being incorporated where possible.

RESOLVED: - That the report be received and its contents noted.

7. **TACKLING THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF ROUGH SLEEPING UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services, concerning an update on the work done to date to tackle the negative impacts of rough sleeping.

A Member acknowledged the efforts to remove hazardous items and support rough sleepers but raised concerns about street and walkway cleanliness in areas with high levels of rough sleeping, including public urination and the provision of bathroom facilities. Officers recognised the importance of maintaining a clean environment and highlighted the recent cleansing efforts, including pressure washing, and new methods of communication that was

being used to provide live updates and coordinate responses. The outreach team regularly signposted rough sleepers to available facilities, including those offered by businesses and accessible public spaces, noting that further signposting work could be done.

A Member shared concerns about used drugs, abandoned fires and rubbish at Barbican Tube Station left by rough sleepers, emphasising the difficulty of coordinating responses between City Police and TfL and asked whether an arrangement could be made to efficiently cleanse the area when similar incidents occurred. Officers committed raising this issue with the Chief Inspector.

The use of pallets for rough sleepers was discussed and whether alternatives were available, such as a roll mat. It was explained that providing sleeping equipment could be seen as supporting or sustaining rough sleeping, acknowledging that there was an ethical complexity of this issue.

RESOLVED: - That the report be received, and its contents noted.

8. **NORTH EAST LONDON ROUGH SLEEPING PREVENTION AND RECOVERY GRANT DELIVERY PROPOSAL**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services.

It was noted that Appendix 1 of the report was in non-public, and it was agreed to discuss in non-public session.

RESOLVED: - That the report be received, and its contents noted.

9. **HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND ROUGH SLEEPING - COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT UPDATE**

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director of Community and Children's Services, concerning an update on the Commissioning and Procurement of services provided to the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Service.

A Member asked about the potential to commission immigration advice services within existing budgets. The Officer had responded that they would look into the matter following the meeting, to understand what had changed and whether Tier 1 advice could be reinstated. They had also noted that funding from the current year's rough sleeping prevention grant might be used to bolster the service, depending on contract flexibility. A redesign of the outreach service was underway, incorporating recommendations from the recent evaluation. Following a Member stating their preference was for immigration advice to be as conveniently located as possible, noting Toynbee Hall's proximity to the City, it was added that resources had recently been placed at the Dellow Centre, reiterating that service planning remained subject to funding. The Chair requested that an update on the City Advice and Toynbee Hall arrangements be shared with Members outside of the meeting.

Following a query on the next funding announcement, the Sub-Committee heard that this was expected in the coming weeks. Regarding the hubs, there had been recent engagement with the GLA's new rough sleeping lead and discussions were ongoing, including within the northeast London sub-region.

The Sub-Committee discussed Winter resources. Officers had confirmed that preparations were underway, including adjustments to the newly renewed navigators' contract to add winter capacity. There were confirmed spaces in the existing pathway, a notional capacity of 17 in hotels and temporary accommodation, and the creation of a six-month winter coordinator post.

A Member had asked whether the target dates listed in the report referred to the actual contract expiry dates. It was clarified that most dates reflected when contracts needed to be in place, whilst one relating to the statutory out-of-hours homelessness response was a target date pending approval.

RESOLVED: - That the report be received, and its contents noted.

10. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

Several items of other business were raised, as follows:

The Chairman praised a recent co-production event organised by Groundswell with Corporation support. He also announced that the Chair of Policy and Resources had given approval for funding a community event, following positive feedback from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Planning for this event was expected to begin later in the month.

The Chairman raised recent resolution sent by the Community and Children's Services Committee to the Finance Committee, concerning a commitment of funding for homelessness from Council Tax. The Sub-Committee heard the response from Finance Committee, which was supportive of the sentiment but that it was not minded supporting ringfencing/hypothecation at this stage, and suggested that the Chairman meet with the Chairman of the Community and Children's Services Committee. Following discussion, the Chairman of Community and Children's Services Committee agreed to take a brief from the Sub-Committee into the upcoming meeting with the Chairman of Finance and report back. Members expressed a desire to ensure that the Corporation pursued funding opportunities linked to the second homes levy and emphasised the need for a clear, committee-backed approach to avoid losing momentum or influence.

Lastly, a Member suggested that the newly formed Local Policing Committee should begin considering rough sleeping and homelessness issues on its agenda. This proposal was welcomed, and the Member committed to raising it at the next meeting.

12. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: - that, under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

13. **CITY OF LONDON POLICE NON-PUBLIC UPDATE**

There was no non-public City of London Police Update.

14. **NON PUBLIC APPENDIX**

The Sub-Committee received the non-public appendix to Agenda Item 8.

15. **QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE WHILE THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There were no non-public questions.

16. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 5.35 pm

Chairman

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