

City of London Police

Response to issues relating to Rough Sleeping

Chief Inspector Nikki Gander



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Background

In May 2024, City Community MARAC referrals highlighted increasing concerns at rough-sleeping encampments at Peninsular House and Castle Baynard Street. Initial multi-agency responses achieved short-term improvements but were not sustainable.

In September 2024, a serious knife-related assault at Castle Baynard Street escalated concerns. Although effective post-incident partnership working enabled all individuals to be placed into temporary accommodation, the incident exposed gaps in prevention, shared risk management and long-term solutions.

Key Issues Identified

- Lack of policy or procedure for managing high-impact rough-sleeping sites
- Limited shared intelligence and collective risk awareness
- Links to serious violence, drug use, ASB and safeguarding risks
- Growing public health and environmental concerns (waste, fire risk, pests)
- Increasing fear of crime and impact on residents, workers, businesses and visitors
- Recognition that policing alone could not deliver sustainable outcomes



Partnership Response

A problem-solving, prevention-focused approach was adopted, aligned with the Home Office Hot Spot Action Fund.

Joint Protocol adopted

A joint protocol, “Tackling the Negative Impacts of Rough Sleeping”, was developed, establishing:

- A welfare-first approach with proportionate enforcement risk-based, case-by-case decision-making
- The requirement for a dedicated ASB (Rough Sleeping) Co-ordinator role

Joint Working Group formed

The City of London Joint Working Group was established in December 2024 to provide a dedicated multi-agency forum.

Principle: *To work in partnership to make the City a safe place to live, work and visit, for everyone.*



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Formation of Joint Working Group



Activity and Enablers - In its first year, the JWG has delivered:

- Monthly multi-agency intelligence and risk meetings
- Co-ordinated action days (policing, outreach, cleansing, enforcement)
- Clear lead-agency ownership of risk/issues with appropriate partner support
- Joint Police and Outreach engagement to improve accommodation take-up
- Use of legal powers where necessary and proportionate
- A shared Teams channel enabling real-time intelligence sharing and rapid response

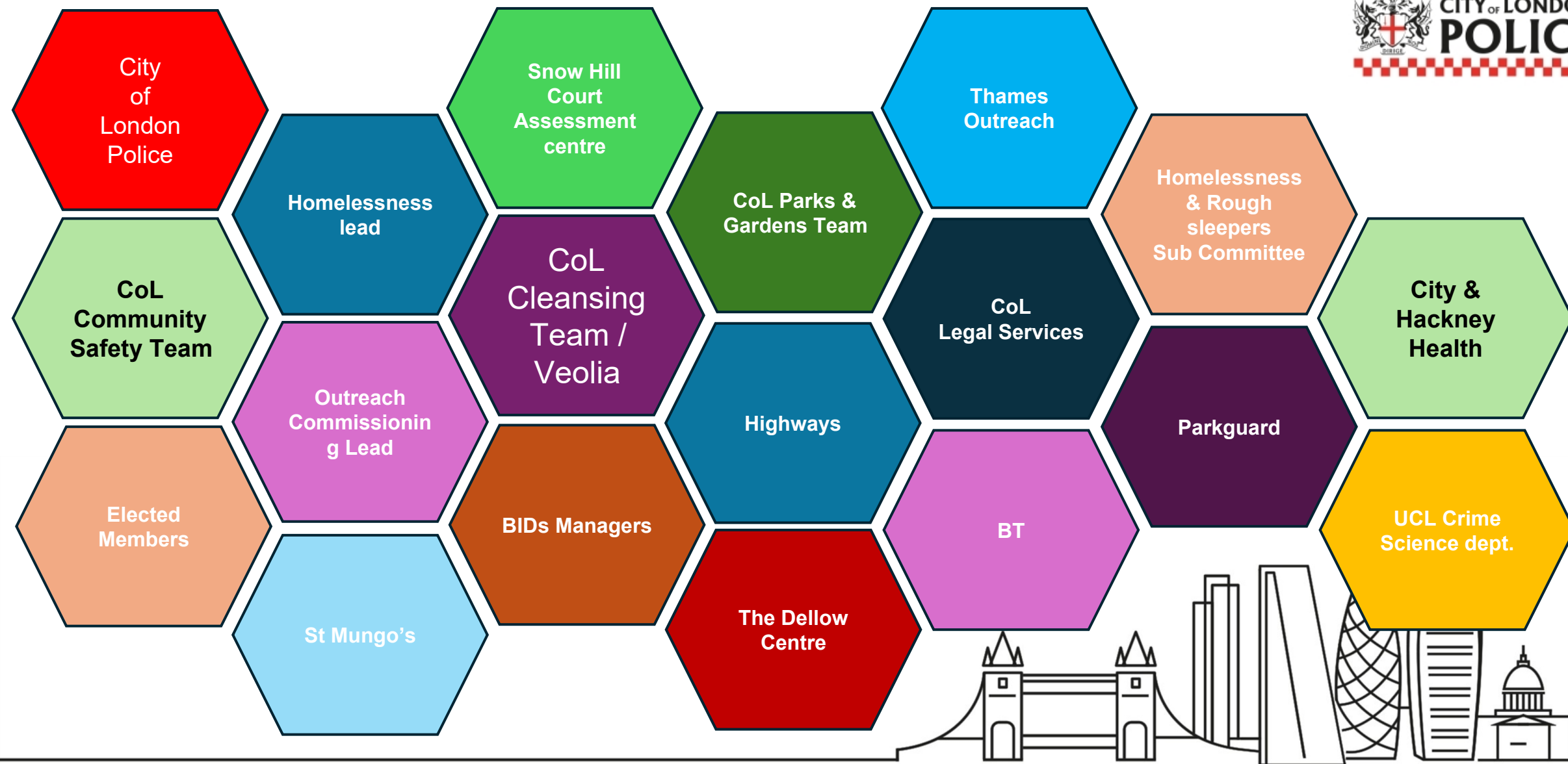
Impact After One Year - The Joint Working Group has:

- Embedded a consistent, preventative partnership model
- Improved safeguarding and collective risk management
- Reduced ineffective repeat interventions
- Supported more sustainable accommodation outcomes
- Reduced pressure on police and partner services
- Increased reassurance for residents, workers and businesses



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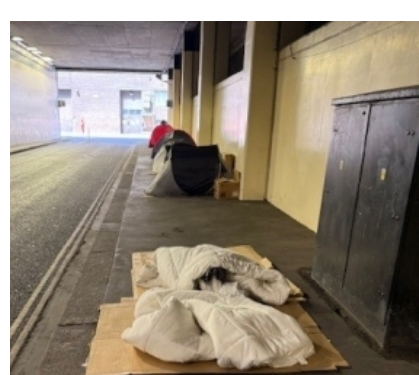
Membership / Partners / Key stakeholders



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Castle Baynard Street



Tunnel



White Lion Hill
Subway



Peninsular House walkway



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Success stories



Peninsula House

April 7 tents
October 6 tents
Cleared risk to public health, blocked drains, urination pools, use of bins, removed waste

Steelyard Passage

3 tents, escalating violence, early intervention, joint visits, arrests due to shared awareness, support for businesses,

Baynard House

RS blocking fire escape route. Joint approach from Police/Outreach to relocate and due to engagement, move to accommodation

Rose Alley

Polo Bar & KFC unable to use alley, obstructed by 3 tents, 2 vulnerable RS's and known offender, health risks. CPW/CPN issued, joint Outreach, couple supported to re-inhabit cuckooed flat in LBTH, Offender summonsed for breach of a court order, planning permission support for gate to restrict access

St Dunstan's Court.

Vulnerable RS at this & other sites, complex MH needs, significant ASB/health issue for residents due to urination. Joint MARAC referral for multi agency care plan to safeguard.

White Lion Hill subway

Obstruction by tents causing 300 students a day to cross road, 4 months of evidence gathering to prove risk and welfare approach and legal advice. 28 day notices served and plan to serve CPW/CPN. Action plan to prevent recurrence

Blackfriars underpass

RS with large dogs, not on leads, dog/human waste, impact on businesses and local community. CPW/CPN and CBO banned from City.

Golden Lane Est

RS gaining entry to communal areas, smoking crack, set fire to lift, aggressive if challenged. Parkguard tasked with night patrols, located RS, Police called and Officer ID male for arson

Castle Baynard Street

April 23 tents
October 13 Tents
Removal of pallets, abandoned tents, mattresses, bedding, Rubbish, fire hazards.



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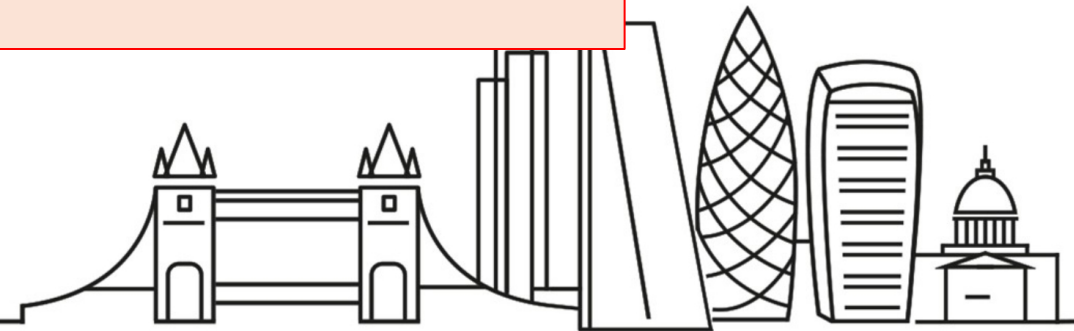
Conclusion

After one year, the Joint Working Group represents a significant shift from reactive enforcement to structured, intelligence-led partnership problem solving, delivering safer outcomes for individuals, communities and the City.

Full Review being undertaken by Nikki Gander & Phil Connor Jan 2026.

“Success” in this area is as much about the strength of the partnership and ability to work together closely to tackle difficult and complex problems as it is about statistical outcomes. The confidence and trust between partners, those who sleep on the streets and the local community of residents, workers, businesses is established and positive. We continue work to improve this, but we now have a forum for open and honest discussion, exploration and problem solving.

Given the significant increased risk of serious harm to those who sleep on the streets, its worth pausing to acknowledge what this work may have prevented.



Next Steps

Strategic

12-month strategic review
Review JWG TOR & Membership
Identify learning & celebrate Success
Transfer chairship to CoL CST

12-month strategic review
Tackling the effects protocol
CoLP/Col Governance (NHPSB)

CST Rough sleeping ASB post
Support permanent post
Co-located with CoLP

Operational

White Lion Hill Subway
Enforcement options
Prevention of further tents
Review process

City Gardens Depot
Build confidence & Trust
Evidence gathering
Environmental options
Legal options

Practical prevention of encampments
Design out options
Established protocols
Shared interactive RS mapping

Aspirational

Increased Assessment capacity
City currently has 14 beds

Rough Sleeper profiling
Safeguarding & risk understanding
Identifying exploitation and criminality
Improve understanding of needs
Provision of appropriate services



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