

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Sub Committee – For information	Dated: 21/09/2026
Subject: Joint Working Group (JWG) update report	Public report: For Information
This proposal: • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides statutory duties	• Diverse engaged Communities • 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?	n/a
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Summary

This report provides an update on the activity undertaken by the Joint Working Group (JWG) during the previous three months. It outlines key operational activity, partnership developments, emerging issues and priorities for the coming period.

The Joint Working Group is providing clear partnership grip on rough sleeping hotspots, tented encampments and associated anti-social behaviour across the City. Over the past three months, partners have maintained coordinated operational activity, strengthened engagement with affected businesses and communities, and responded quickly to both established and emerging priority locations.

The partnership has continued to manage complex sites including Baynard House Podium, White Lion Subway, Castle Baynard Street and St Benet's Church, while also mobilising a coordinated response to concerns at Unilever Green and the wider Blackfriars area. This work has balanced support and safeguarding for vulnerable individuals with the need to address anti-social behaviour, environmental harm and public safety concerns.

The approach is also attracting external interest. David Johnson, a senior MHCLG representative, has attended meetings and observed the City's partnership

processes as part of wider national work on homelessness, encampments and community safety. This provides useful external recognition of the maturity of the City's model and its potential relevance to emerging national practice.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Joint Working Group remains a central component of the City Corporation's response to rough sleeping hotspots, tented encampments and anti-social behaviour linked to rough sleeping. The group brings together Community Safety, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping services, Thames Reach, City of London Police, British Transport Police, Parkguard, cleansing services, environmental partners, Transport for London (TfL), landowners and other stakeholders to coordinate activity across the City.
2. The partnership operates through a combination of monthly strategic meetings, weekly hotspot reviews, interim operational meetings, site visits and multi-agency Days of Action. This approach enables partners to respond quickly to emerging concerns while maintaining longer-term oversight of complex locations and vulnerable individuals.
3. Throughout the reporting period the partnership has remained focused on prevention, early intervention, safeguarding and problem solving, ensuring that rough sleeping is managed in a coordinated and proportionate way whilst protecting public spaces and supporting those experiencing homelessness.

Current Position

4. During the reporting period the JWG coordinated activity across a number of priority locations including Baynard House Podium, White Lion Subway, Castle Baynard Street, Paul's Walk, St Benet's Church, Aldgate and, more recently, Unilever Green and the Blackfriars area.
5. Partners have undertaken a broad range of interventions including:
 - Multi-agency Days of Action.
 - Outreach engagement and welfare visits.
 - Notice placement and management of abandoned tents.
 - Environmental cleansing and waste removal.
 - Regular hotspot patrols and inspections.
 - Joint risk assessments.
 - Intelligence gathering and information sharing.
 - Engagement with businesses, landowners and local stakeholders.
 - Development of longer-term environmental and enforcement options.

6. Taken together, this activity demonstrates a more proactive partnership model. Partners are identifying emerging issues earlier, agreeing interventions before locations become entrenched and using shared intelligence to move beyond reactive site management.
7. The JWG Teams channel has continued to play an important operational role, enabling partners to share intelligence, discuss developing risks, coordinate responses and address issues in real time. Throughout the reporting period the platform has supported rapid collaboration between operational partners and has facilitated swift responses to concerns raised by businesses, residents, frontline services and partner organisations.

Baynard House Podium

8. Baynard House Podium has remained one of the most complex locations managed through the Joint Working Group. The site has presented a combination of rough sleeping, anti-social behaviour, environmental degradation, safeguarding concerns and operational safety risks. Previous assessments identified significant accumulations of waste alongside concerns regarding threats towards outreach workers and barriers to routine service delivery. The location has therefore remained a priority site for coordinated multi-agency oversight and intervention.
9. Throughout the reporting period partners have maintained a coordinated programme of engagement, risk assessment and environmental management. Outreach teams have continued engagement with individuals sleeping at the site whilst Community Safety, Police and partner agencies have maintained close oversight of emerging risks and opportunities for intervention. The site has remained subject to enhanced safety arrangements, including restrictions on lone working where appropriate.
10. A notable development during the reporting period has been the movement of several key individuals away from the podium area. This has reduced some of the immediate risks associated with the location and allowed partners to begin discussions regarding the restoration of routine cleansing arrangements in parts of the site. Partnership discussions have included reviewing whether some areas can safely return to normal service provision while maintaining appropriate oversight of remaining risks.
11. Alongside operational activity, the Community Safety Team and City of London Police met with senior managers and staff representatives from BT, one of the principal organisations affected by activity on Baynard House Podium. The meeting provided an opportunity for BT to share first-hand feedback regarding the impact of rough sleeping and associated behaviour on staff and the wider working environment.
12. BT representatives outlined a number of concerns, including intimidating and anti-social behaviour, loose animals within the encampment area, significant

accumulations of litter and waste, and the impact these issues were having on staff confidence and perceptions of safety when accessing the area. These concerns were consistent with wider intelligence already being considered through the Joint Working Group and provided valuable additional insight into the impact on businesses and employees.

13. A key issue identified through this engagement was under-reporting. Although staff and managers described a range of incidents and concerns, many had not been reported through formal channels, limiting the evidence available to assess impact, identify trends and support proportionate action.
14. To strengthen the evidence base, Community Safety and Police colleagues developed a short staff survey, accessible by QR code. The survey remains live and captures information on safety concerns, anti-social behaviour, environmental issues and the wider impact on staff. Findings will be reviewed by partners and used to inform future operational activity, engagement and longer-term problem solving.
15. This work has improved intelligence gathering, reassured BT that staff concerns are being acted on, and strengthened the partnership's ability to develop practical, evidence-led responses.
16. The site remains complex and will require sustained oversight. Work is continuing on legal options, supporting evidence and environmental approaches informed by previous successful interventions elsewhere in the City, including the White Lion Subway model.

Unilever Green

17. The most significant emerging issue during the reporting period has been Unilever Green and the surrounding Blackfriars area.
18. Partners identified an increase in rough sleeping activity at the location, accompanied by reports of anti-social behaviour, environmental concerns and increasing stakeholder interest. Observations shared through the JWG identified increased tent numbers, accumulations of waste and concerns regarding the changing nature of activity occurring within the area.
19. The partnership responded quickly by convening an interim multi-agency meeting involving Community Safety, City of London Police, British Transport Police, TfL, outreach providers and other stakeholders. This meeting enabled partners to review available intelligence, assess risk and agree a coordinated action plan.
20. Since that meeting, significant operational activity has taken place. Community Safety officers, Police colleagues, British Transport Police and outreach providers have undertaken repeated site visits, intelligence gathering and engagement activity. Police neighbourhood teams have been briefed, patrol patterns reviewed, and information sharing strengthened between partner organisations.

21. Recognising that successful intervention requires a robust evidence base, Community Safety officers have undertaken direct engagement with local businesses, encouraging reporting and helping businesses understand the most effective routes for sharing concerns relating to anti-social behaviour and criminality. This activity has improved intelligence gathering and strengthened engagement with stakeholders directly affected by the site.
22. The partnership has also worked closely with TfL regarding site management, cleansing arrangements and longer-term environmental solutions. Conversations are ongoing regarding Designing Out Crime principles and potential changes to the physical environment that may reduce the likelihood of future encampments becoming established. TfL representatives have confirmed they are actively considering longer-term design options.
23. Unilever Green remains a developing situation and depends on continued partner coordination, particularly around cleansing, site management and potential longer-term environmental design options. The response to date nevertheless provides a strong example of the maturity of the JWG model: partners have mobilised quickly, maintained clear communication, engaged affected stakeholders and used existing governance arrangements to coordinate action without creating additional structures.

White Lion Subway and wider hotspot management

24. The Joint Working Group has continued to oversee a number of established hotspot locations across the City.
25. At White Lion Subway, partners have continued to monitor the location and respond to further reports of rough sleeping activity. Outreach services have maintained engagement with individuals identified at the site and worked to prevent re-establishment of previous encampment conditions.
26. Activity has also continued at St Benet's Church, Paul's Walk, Aldgate, Castle Baynard Street and Blackfriars. Partners have responded to reports from site managers, residents, businesses and operational teams regarding rough sleeping, fouling, waste accumulation and anti-social behaviour. Responses have included hotspot visits, outreach engagement, environmental interventions and targeted problem solving.

Partnership working and governance

27. A key strength of the Joint Working Group remains the breadth of organisations engaged in the partnership.
28. Throughout the reporting period there has been close collaboration between Community Safety, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping services, outreach providers, Police services, environmental teams, health partners, transport operators, landowners and local businesses.

29. The group continues to operate using the established Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce framework. This ensures interventions remain proportionate and balanced, with support and safeguarding considered alongside enforcement and environmental management measures where necessary.
30. Regular information sharing and oversight meetings have enabled partners to review risk, coordinate safeguarding interventions, monitor progress against agreed actions and respond effectively to both emerging and longstanding concerns. The reporting period has demonstrated an increasingly mature model with strong operational and strategic links across multiple agencies.

National engagement and emerging best practice

31. During the reporting period, MHCLG has continued to engage with the City to understand how the Joint Working Group coordinates homelessness, community safety, policing, outreach, environmental services and safeguarding activity through a single partnership framework.
32. David Johnson, MHCLG's Rough Sleeping and Community Safety Advisor, has attended meetings with City Corporation officers, City of London Police and wider partners, and has observed JWG governance and operational decision-making. This engagement is informing MHCLG's wider work on homelessness, encampments and community safety practice.
33. Officers have been advised that learning from the City's approach is being considered alongside examples from other areas as part of broader national work to identify effective local practice. This gives the JWG model additional credibility and reinforces the value of the City's integrated partnership approach.

Priorities for the next quarter

34. Over the coming quarter the Joint Working Group will focus on the following priority actions and outcomes:
- Maintain delivery of the Unilever Green action plan, with clear partner ownership for stakeholder engagement, cleansing, site management and environmental design options.
 - Sustain progress at Baynard House Podium by managing residual risk, reviewing reporting data and developing longer-term legal and environmental options.
 - Review the BT staff survey results and use the findings to inform future problem-solving, reporting arrangements and engagement with affected businesses.
 - Delivering further Days of Action and hotspot management activity across priority locations.
 - Improve the consistency of reporting from businesses, residents and partner agencies so that future decisions are supported by stronger evidence.

- Progressing environmental and Designing Out Crime opportunities where these may help reduce opportunities for repeat encampments.
- Support outreach providers to maximise engagement with individuals sleeping rough and secure sustainable move-on outcomes wherever possible.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – None

Financial implications - None

Resource implications - None

Legal implications - None

Risk implications - None

Equalities implications – None

Climate implications - None

Security implications – None

Conclusion

35. The Joint Working Group continues to provide effective partnership grip, clear operational coordination and a credible escalation route for rough sleeping hotspots and associated anti-social behaviour across the City.

36. The past three months have seen sustained operational activity, rapid mobilisation around Unilever Green, stronger engagement with affected businesses, continued oversight of complex sites and further development of longer-term options for persistent locations.

37. Some sites remain challenging and will require sustained partner input, particularly where responsibilities sit across landowners, transport partners, environmental services and enforcement agencies.

38. However, the overall position is one of a mature and engaged partnership that can coordinate immediate activity, manage risk and contribute to longer-term strategic thinking. Continued MHCLG interest further indicates that the City's approach is being recognised beyond the Square Mile as a practical model of integrated partnership working.

Appendices

- None

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