

Name of meeting: Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel
Date: 12 December 2018
Title of report: Rough Sleeping Update: Winter 2018/19

Purpose of report To provide an update, for information and discussion, on the Rough Sleeping situation including changes to our Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) and our application proposals for Rough Sleeping Strategy funding.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	Not Applicable .
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	Not Applicable
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not applicable
Date signed off by Strategic Director & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	Karl Battersby, Strategic Director for Economy and Infrastructure, 4/12/18
Cabinet member portfolio	Councillor Cathy Scott

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: None

Public or private: Public

Have you considered GDPR?

No information, which would identify any individual person, is included within this report.

1. Summary

- 1.1 Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) – Outlining the amendments to the Council’s SWEP process which are intended to improve the emergency provision to rough sleepers while facilitating better support and monitoring.
- 1.2 Rough Sleeping – Outlining the latest estimated numbers of rough sleepers within the Kirklees Council area together with an update on partnership working
- 1.3 Rough Sleeping Strategy (RSS) Funding Opportunities – Outlining progress on Kirklees Council’s bids for the Government’s RSS Funding

2 Information required to take a decision

2.1 Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

Background

- Our Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is activated when the temperatures are forecast to fall to zero degrees or below for three consecutive nights. Additionally, SWEP can also be activated or prolonged where weather is particularly adverse so some flexibility. Our SWEP provision is intended to minimise the risk of death or severe ill health by providing an additional safety net of an emergency bed for those at risk of sleeping rough in extremely cold conditions

Issues

- Intensive local social media publicity regarding rough sleeping and periods of cold weather throughout winter 2017/18 led to some adverse publicity about the Council’s SWEP provision.
- Our SWEP partner, Clare House homelessness hostel experienced some friction between hostel and SWEP customers especially in the mornings.
- Limited and inconsistent follow up advice and support for those provided with an emergency bed under SWEP

Improvements

- To improve the SWEP provision for winter 2018/19 and amend the Guidance and associated documentation accordingly
- Clearer client communications around behaviour, expectations and consequences associated with SWEP provision (verbal & written)
- Dedicated ‘out of hours’ SWEP referral telephone line
- Breakfast voucher for the Mission Café for each person accommodated under SWEP.
- Alternative SWEP accommodation (where higher risks)
- Additional/replacement SWEP related kit (i.e. beds/bedding/toiletries)
- Housing Solutions Officer on site at the Huddersfield Mission to offer individual bespoke advice and facilitate appropriate support.
- More robust monitoring to include follow up outcomes in addition to SWEP accommodation take up
- To explore more creative outreach/follow up support

RSS Funding

- The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) are making funding available to local authorities. The 'Rough Sleeping Cold Weather Fund' is intended to help provide swift, bespoke interventions to rough sleepers in their area as well as enhancement of existing services. Expected to be up to a maximum of £10,000 for Kirklees Council. This is likely to fund the improvements proposed above.
- This funding is for the immediate cold weather period although further resources will be made available for 2019/20 linked to the MHCLG Rough Sleeper Strategy.

2.2 Rough Sleeping Update

Rough Sleeper Numbers

- The most recent rough sleeper estimate exercise was carried out in November when 13 people were verified as sleeping out. This is a 63% increase on the November 2017 figure.

Year	Number of Rough Sleepers
2010	5
2011	11
2012	9
2013	4
2014	4
2015	6
2016	5
2017	8

- The National rough sleeper figures for 2018 will not be published by MHCLG until January 2019. There was a 15% increase nationally between 2016 and 2017 while since 2010 rough sleeping estimates saw an increase of 169%

Rough Sleeping Intelligence

- Within the Kirklees area, it should be noted that, in addition to the increase in rough sleeping and homelessness generally, the sharing of intelligence among organisations has improved greatly in recent years.
- In previous years, Housing Officers met once a year with key partners to agree the rough sleeper figure. During 2018, the number of key colleagues, partners and homelessness organisations contributing to intelligence sharing has increased. The quality of the intelligence among homelessness partners and those undertaking street outreach work is excellent. There are now Quarterly meetings held to discuss those individuals at risk, those actually sleeping rough and those taking up subsequent accommodation and support.
- During 2018, Homelessness Forum partners have prepared a useful guidance document and networking opportunity for organisations, charities and volunteer groups undertaking street outreach across Kirklees. This is scheduled for launch later this year.
- A common view of street homelessness is that it is solely a problem of lack of accommodation. Health problems including substance abuse and complex factors are often the precipitant of homelessness or barriers to prevent people

from acquiring and/or sustaining appropriate accommodation. Such issues can lead to social isolation, a reluctance to engage, inability to sustain a tenancy and difficulty managing household budgets. To illustrate this, of the 13 individuals verified as actually sleeping out for this year's snapshot:-

- 7 have held, or had an offer of, a Council tenancy, supported accommodation or temporary accommodation in the previous year but lost it due to abandonment or chronic non-engagement (54%)
- 4 had some accommodation on the night of the snapshot but slept rough (31%)
- 2 have had little contact with Housing Solutions Service (15%)

RSS Funding

- Housing Solutions Service have submitted a funding application to the MHCLG to support them with a Rapid Rehousing Pathway (RRP) for rough sleepers.
- The proposal is to fund dedicated Navigators within Housing Solutions to target those people where there is a cycle of rough sleeping and who keep returning to a life on the streets. Through intensive work on an individual basis, the Navigator will better understand and tackle the underlying reasons and barriers faced by each individual. These are likely to include substance misuse, alcohol dependency and poor mental health.
- Additionally, the Navigators will work to identify and support women who are within the 'hidden' homeless and are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. These are often women with multiple complex needs who are reluctant to come forward when they are at risk of homelessness. We are aware that a number of women may sleep during the day, in very insecure and unsafe situations, and work at night. They may resort to 'sofa surfing' and/or sex work. Our Navigators would work closely with women and domestic abuse services to ensure interventions are earlier, effective and empowering for this group of women.
- MHCLG are expected to confirm successful bids imminently.

3 Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

- The SWEP improvements and the Rapid Rehousing Pathway proposal are intended to create a more collaborative relationship with individual rough sleepers. Establishing rapport and setting clear, realistic expectations will help individuals begin to take responsibility for the success of their own support and future sustainable accommodation.

3.2 Working with Partners

- The SWEP improvements and the Rapid Rehousing Pathway proposal will build further upon the existing rough sleeping partnerships outlined above. Extending our SWEP offer brings together the strengths and experience of Home Group, managing the single homelessness hostel, and the Huddersfield Mission who provide a supportive and socially inclusive environment for this vulnerable group.

3.3 Place Based Working

- Extending the range of partners and homelessness organisations sharing rough sleeping information have, and will continue to have, the benefit of capturing intelligence and information from across the Kirklees area. While rough sleeping is more visible within the town centres, we are increasingly aware and engage with those living out in parks, fields and outlying areas.

3.4 **Improving Outcomes for Children**

- While these services are aimed at single adults, improvements in the lives of those who may be parents may impact favourably on their relationship with their absent children

3.5 **Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)**

- Success with the funding application and ability to claim back SWEP expenses will help alleviate General Fund spend

4. **Consultees and their opinions**

- Home Group and The Huddersfield Mission have co-operated with the revised SWEP process
- Partners contributing to the rough sleeper intelligence meetings include Housing Solutions Service, Police, Huddersfield Mission, CHART, Home Group (Clare House), Simon on the Streets, Fusion Housing, Safer Kirklees, Police, Choices, One Big Family, Commissioning – Housing Related Support.

5. **Next steps**

- 1) Re-issue SWEP Guidance and distribute as per SWEP circulation list for Winter 2018/19
- 2) Submission to MHCLG of Rough Sleeper figure for Kirklees Council
- 3) Report progress on Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) funding applications

6. **Officer recommendations and reasons**

Scrutiny Panel members comment on and note the information in the report.

7. **Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations**

The portfolio holder is supportive of the bids made to secure additional funding to support this area of work and welcomes the proposed changes to the SWEP arrangements.

8. **Contact officer**

Stephen Cale, Operations Manager, Housing Solutions Service

9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**

None

10. **Service Director responsible**

Naz Parkar, Director for Growth & Housing