

Subject:	Rough Sleeping Strategy Update		
Date of Meeting:	9 October 2017		
Report of:	Executive Director Neighbourhoods Communities and Housing		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 The report provides a progress update on the implementation of the Rough Sleeping Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the committee note this report.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 The Rough Sleeping Strategy was approved by the Local Authority and partners and signed-up to by Brighton & Hove Connected in June 2016.

3.2 The issue of rough sleeping remains acute with a visible presence on the streets. This not only impacts on the individual's life chances, but also the city's reputation and costs to public services and business.

3.3 The numbers of rough sleepers remain stable, though national and therefore local numbers are predicted to increase in the coming 12 months¹.

3.4 It is estimated² that there are currently around 30 new arrivals to the city per week that are either already rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. This means that local agencies have to work effectively together with over 1500 individuals per year, of which approximately 1,300 cases are diverted or signposted elsewhere to ensure that this does not result in significant increases in rough sleeping locally. The numbers who come from outside the city and those with a local connection is currently a 50-50 split. The vast majority of individuals have complex needs, often relating to substance misuse and mental health issues connected with their vulnerability.

3.5 The strategy that was approved unanimously and signed up to by all local agencies in June 2016 is now being closely monitored and all activity reviewed to ensure that we achieve the most effective outcomes for rough sleepers and the city as a whole.

3.6 The post of Rough Sleeper Strategy Coordinator has been recruited to. This will further improve the implementation of the strategy and will ensure that all agencies are working effectively together to achieve the results required.

¹ Crisis Report Homelessness projections: Aug 2017

² BHT First Base Day Centre and St Mungos

- 3.7 The strategy contains the following 5 priorities:
- Priority 1: Prevent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping.
 - Priority 2: Rapid Assessment and Reconnection.
 - Priority 3: Improving Health.
 - Priority 4: A Safe City.
 - Priority 5: Pathways to Independence.
- 3.8 Each priority contains specific goals and actions and detailed progress updates against all actions contained within the strategy; these can be seen in appendix.1 Some key achievements are:
- Successful launch and implementation of alternative giving scheme ‘Make Change Count’.
 - Successful launch of BThink – a system to effectively share information concerning rough sleepers to ensure that they get the best possible service.
 - Successful recommissioning of homeless support services.
 - Successful tender and appointment of a support service ‘The Passage’ to coordinate and guide third sector voluntary services.
 - Successful initial phase of Trailblazer project to prevent tenancy breakdown and rough sleeping.
 - Successful funding application for Social Impact Bond to improve outcomes for entrenched rough sleepers – full roll out due October 2017.
- 3.9 Significant barriers remain to the achievement of a sustained reduction in rough sleeping including:
- Lack of suitable move on accommodation for existing hostel residents, leading to blockages in Direct Access Hostel accommodation.
 - Increasing numbers of individuals with complex needs.
 - Reduced resources across all sectors dedicated to dealing with rough sleepers.
- 3.10 Future actions planned to ensure effective implementation of the strategy include:
- Refine and further prioritise activity to ensure the most effective use of limited resources.
 - Ensure that a governance system is in place and operational sub groups are functional, appropriately supported and delivering the outcomes required.
 - Explore options and seek agreement on move on housing options.
 - Provision of extended Night Shelter service.
 - Completion and implementation of multi-agency protocol to ensure effective coordination of services including commissioned and non-commissioned third sector services.
 - Further engagement of non-specialist partners in the business sector, providing a whole city approach to reducing street homelessness.
- 3.11 A further update on the implementation of the strategy will be brought to NCE in 6 months’ time.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Rough sleeping in Brighton & Hove is complex and requires a variety of interventions to move toward a successful outcome. In that sense, there is not a single ‘alternative option’ that is useful to describe at this stage.
- 4.2 There is a culture of developing new and innovative approaches to solving the issue of rough sleeping and these will continue to be developed and tested as the work continues. Members will retain oversight of these developments.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The development and implementation of the strategy has been and continues to be widely consulted upon, engaging businesses, community and voluntary sector organisations as well as communities themselves.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The issue of rough sleeping remains an acute problem for the city. This not only impacts on the individual's life chances, but also the city's reputation and costs to public services and business.
- 6.2 There is concern that numbers could increase further with the natural draw of the city, the impact of welfare reforms and the high cost of accessing and sustaining accommodation in the city's private rented sector.
- 6.3 The implementation of the city's current approach to rough sleeping needs to be fully implemented and constantly renewed and updated as circumstances change to ensure that the city's commissioners, service providers and voluntary sector groups are working in partnership to a clear strategic plan that will reduce rough sleeping in the city and improve outcomes for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

The implementation of the strategy is expected to have no significant financial implications to the council. The salary of the Rough Sleeper Strategy Co-ordinator post and other costs are to be met by external funding.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Peter Francis Date: 06/09/17

Legal Implications:

This report is for note only and forms part of a body of work which has been ongoing for some time as part of a wider strategy. What is important to note is the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has received Royal Assent. Unfortunately it is not fully clear its impact as not all of the regulations have yet been put in place and the resource implications are to be identified. There will be significant overlap between the duties under the act and the strategy and there may need to be a realigning of the strategy in parts.

Lawyer Consulted: Name Simon Court Date: 11/09/17

Equalities Implications:

- 7.1 Rough sleepers are a vulnerable group more likely to have contact with the criminal justice system, have drug and alcohol related health conditions, be excluded from mainstream services and have much worse outcomes than other groups. Measures to reduce rough sleeping will have a direct impact on reducing inequality in Brighton & Hove. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for this draft strategy and is available on request.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.2 There are no sustainability implications as a direct result of this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Other significant implications
2. Rough Sleeping Strategy – Strategic Action Tracker
3. Report to Housing & New Homes Committee 20/09/17 - Single Homeless Accommodation Support Services

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None

Crime & Disorder Implications:

Rough sleepers are more likely to commit crime and be the victim of crime. Measures to reduce rough sleeping will decrease the level of crime and perception of crime and increase the availability of the emergency services making the city a safer place for residents and visitors alike.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

Genuine good practice that does not simply result in rough sleepers being pushed to less visible locations appears limited and highlights the challenge faced by the city. We need to ensure that our approach does not view rough sleepers as a problem to move but provides real solutions to prevent rough sleeping and improve the lives of those affected.

Public Health Implications:

As part of the Better Care initiative overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board, an integrated health and care model for the single homeless is being developed. Although the remit of this work is broader than rough sleeping, it will be closely linked with the emerging work to develop a Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

If we do not reduce rough sleeping there will be:

- More early deaths wasted lives
- Reputation damage as a caring city
- Tourism impact from street begging
- Crisis pressure on Police, A&E and other services
- Crime / ASB associated with rough sleeping / street drinking
- Increased costs to the local authority, Police and NHS
- Increased use of acute services

