

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 8 April 2019

Report Title: Rough Sleeping Update

Report By: Andrew Palmer, Assistant Director, Housing and Built Environment

Purpose of Report

To advise Cabinet on trends in rough sleeping locally and update on the work of the council and its partners to address this issue.

Recommendation(s)

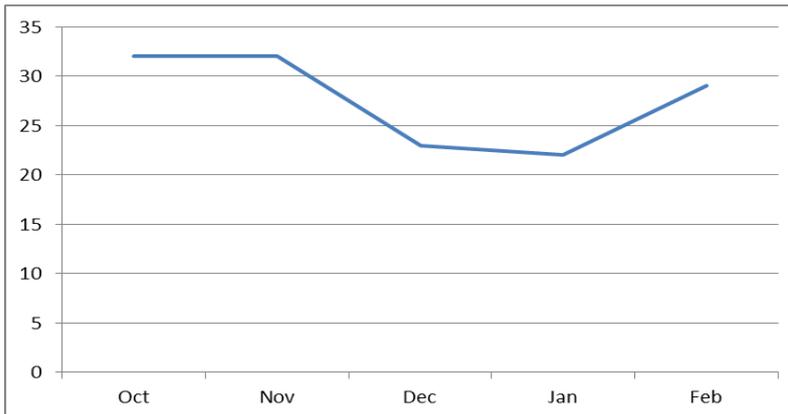
- 1. To endorse the actions outlined in the report aimed at helping to address the increasing trend in rough sleeping.**
- 2. To acknowledge progress mobilising the Hastings and Eastbourne Rough Sleeping Initiative in 2018/19 and to authorise expenditure of £824,843 to continue the programme of services in 2019/20.**
- 3. To authorise expenditure of £310,000 of funding awarded to the Hastings Borough Council-led Rapid Rehousing Pathway project. To grant an exemption to the council's Financial Rules under paragraph 21c of the Financial Operating Procedures, to enable the council to procure the service directly from Southdown Housing Association.**
- 4. That £10,000 be reallocated from the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant allocation to support temporary accommodation and rent in advance of deposits for people using the Rapid Rehousing Pathway.**
- 5. To authorise expenditure of the from the reducing health inequalities programme, funded by Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group, including £20,000 worth of funding for a project working with rough sleepers.**
- 6. To delegate authority to the Assistant Director, Housing and Built Environment in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing and Leisure Services, to finalise arrangements for the mobilisation and delivery, including entering into any contractual arrangements, of the Rough Sleeping Initiative, Rapid Rehousing Pathway and Clinical Commissioning Group funded activities .**

Reasons for Recommendations

The council has secured additional funding for projects to reduce rough sleeping.

Introduction

1. The number of people rough sleeping in Hastings on a typical night in Hastings increased by 85% between 2016 and 2018 from 26 to 48.
2. Nationally, the total number of rough sleepers has fallen by 1.5% from 4,751 in 2017 to 4,677 in 2018.
3. It is possible that the number of people rough sleeping can vary throughout the year. The graph below shows the average number of people rough sleeping in Hastings over the past 5 months:



4. Of the rough sleepers verified in February, 14% were female, 21% had a local connection to Hastings and 10% were flow or new rough sleepers.
5. The fall in the verified number of rough sleepers at the end of 2018 can be attributed in part to additional winter weather provision including the Snowflake Shelter and severe weather night shelter.
6. In addition to housing, rough sleepers often have a range of other needs, particularly related to health, mental health, social care and substance misuse. As such, they require a more intensive level of support to access and sustain accommodation.

Reducing Rough Sleeping

7. The council and its partners are developing a range of activities to reduce the number of people rough sleeping in the town.

Outreach

8. The council part-funds a rough sleeper outreach service through its Community Partnership Fund (CPF) programme, which is delivered by the Seaview Project.
9. CPF funding has been confirmed to continue the service in 2019/20 and 2020/21. The service will provide twice weekly outreach sessions, ensuring the council has accurate information about the number of people rough sleeping in the town and each individual's support needs are understood.

10. Data gathered during the outreach sessions is important in shaping how services for rough sleepers are designed and delivered in the future.

Rough Sleeping Initiative

11. The Rough Sleeping Initiative is a joint project between Hastings and Eastbourne Councils. The aim of the project is to reduce the number of rough sleepers in both towns by improving access to statutory services, temporary accommodation and long term housing solutions for entrenched rough sleepers in both towns.
12. A grant of £664,000 was received from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in June 2018, and the project has been operational since September 2018. The project is managed on behalf of both councils by a Senior Rough Sleeper Project Co-ordinator.
13. A multi-disciplinary team of health, mental health, social care, substance misuse and housing professionals working collaboratively to develop holistic support plans for each individual. Temporary accommodation, with support, is provided at an Assessment Centre in Hastings. From here, the multi-disciplinary team identify the most suitable long term accommodation solution for each individual. Those individuals who require the highest level of ongoing support are able to access new Housing First units in Hastings and Eastbourne. The accommodation for the Housing First units is provided by social landlords, and the project has created a support team to work with individuals placed in this accommodation. The level of support is gradually reduced over time as each individual is able to live independently. The project has also enhanced day centre activities in both towns.
14. The table below shows the project outcomes across Hastings and Eastbourne between October 2018 and February 2019:

	Number of Individuals
Provided with emergency accommodation	8
Provided with temporary accommodation	25
Provided with long-term accommodation	7
Supported accommodation	1

15. The Rough Sleeping Initiative has also enhanced the council’s rough sleeping prevention activities through the Sussex Rough Sleeping Prevention Project. Between October 2018 and February 2019, an additional 74 individuals were prevented from rough sleeping.

16. The project has received a provisional grant allocation of £800,000 from the MHCLG to continue the project for a further year from April 2019. This is supplemented by a carry forward from the 2018/19 grant of £14,000, plus a further £10,843 contribution from Hastings and Eastbourne Councils. This gives a total budget of £824,843 for 2019/20.
17. It has been necessary to re-profile the budget for 2019/20, due to funding reductions to some elements of the project and other interventions exceeding the original budget projections. It has also provided an opportunity to address operational issues identified in the first 6 months of operating the project.
18. The council will need to undertake a procurement exercise to commission day centre, street activities, Housing First support and temporary accommodation services for 2019/20, this is expected to be completed by June 2019. The contracts with our existing providers have been extended while this takes place, to avoid any potential gaps in service provision.
19. The Sussex Rough Sleeping Prevention Project will come to an end in March 2019.

Rapid Rehousing Pathway

20. Hastings Borough Council led a successful 5-party bid on behalf of Eastbourne, Rother, Lewes and Wealden Councils to the MHCLG's Rapid Rehousing Pathway.
21. The project is based on a supported lettings model, creating a dedicated team of support officers working with rough sleepers with low to medium level support needs and people at a high risk of rough sleeping to access and sustain accommodation. The project will accept referrals from the council's housing options team, as well as utilising the referral routes with statutory and voluntary sector partners created through the Sussex Rough Sleeping Prevention Project.
22. In February 2019, the MHCLG confirmed that £310,000 had been allocated to this project in 2019/20. The funding will provide a team of 8 support officers and 1 team leader, 3 members of the team will be co-located with the housing options team in Hastings. The timescales to mobilise the project are very short, as the officers need to be in post in April. We are therefore not able to recruit to these posts directly or carry out a full procurement exercise to meet the required MHCLG timescales.
23. East Sussex County Council have advised that we are unable to vary their existing contract for community based support services.
24. We are therefore seeking an exemption to our financial rules under paragraph 21c of the Financial Operating Procedures to commission the service directly from Southdown Housing Association. Southdown currently deliver a county-wide community based support service for homeless households and have the capacity to mobilise the project at pace. Southdown also successfully delivered the Sussex Rough Sleeping Prevention Project, which came to an end in March 2019.
25. The funding allocated by the MHCLG can only be used to fund staffing. Meeting temporary and long term accommodation costs will remain a challenge for participants in the project. It is therefore recommended that £10,000 worth of Flexible Homelessness Support Grant funding, originally allocated for a rent

guarantor pilot, is reallocated to provide temporary accommodation for participants on the project and additional support to access long term accommodation. An alternative funding source has been secured for the rent guarantor scheme, and the pilot will go ahead as planned.

Reducing Health Inequalities

26. Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) will invest £20,000 in 2019/20 as part of its programme to reduce health inequalities, for a project working with rough sleepers. Hastings Borough Council will also fund a specialist housing options officer to work with rough sleepers, through its Flexible Homelessness Support Grant allocation.
27. The CCG investment will be used to enhance street activity and engagement with rough sleepers, ensuring they are linked to the most appropriate pathway of support. It will also provide a triage service at Seaview, ensuring that the specialist housing options officer can continue to co-locate at the centre part time.
28. The programme will provide funding of £229,186 for phase 1 of the health and wellbeing community hubs, plus a further £85,500 for a co-investment programme in Ore, Hollington and Sidley as set out in the original business plan for 2019/20. However, funding of £12,587 for the co-ordination of these activities has been removed.

Strategic Oversight

29. While the additional resources to tackle rough sleeping are to be welcomed, the short-term nature of much of the funding creates challenges to developing a sustainable pathway of support for rough sleepers.
30. It is intended that learning from all of the above projects will be reported to the East Sussex Housing Officers Group (ESHOG). ESHOG is strategic group, comprising all 5 local housing authorities, reporting to the East Sussex Chief Executives Group on the delivery of housing and homelessness services across the county.
31. The Rough Sleeping Initiative Strategic Board has also been established, which brings together senior representatives of health, mental health, social care, substance misuse and housing partners. The purpose of the board is to ensure that good practice developed by the Rough Sleeping Initiative, informs future service delivery for vulnerable groups.
32. Continuing efforts to reduce rough sleeping will also form a key part of the council's new Housing and Homelessness Strategy, which is due to be adopted later this year.

Wards Affected

All wards

Implications

[Relevant project tools applied? Yes](#)

Have you checked this report for plain english and readability? No

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness Yes

Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17) No

Risk Management No

Environmental Issues No

Economic/Financial Implications Yes

Human Rights Act No

Organisational Consequences Yes

Local People's Views No

Anti-Poverty Yes

Additional Information

Insert a list of appendices and/or additional documents. Report writers are encouraged to use links to existing information, rather than appending large documents.

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