

## For publication

### **Rough Sleeper Strategy and Cold Weather Provision**

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Meeting: Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Date: 3 December 2020

Cabinet portfolio: Councillor Chris Ludlow

Report by: Assistant Director for Housing

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<b>Purpose of reviewing the topic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To consider progress made against the Rough Sleeper Strategy.</li><li>• To consider the options of accommodation during winter months in the absence of Nightshelter provision</li></ul>
<b>What are the objectives of the review?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To review the outcomes of the first year of the Rough Sleeper Strategy.</li><li>• To consider the current position in relation to COVID-19 pandemic and impacts this had had on service delivery</li><li>• To ensure the availability of alternative accommodation options are available.</li></ul>
<b>Progress to date</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New item on the work programme</li></ul>

## 1.0 **Background**

1.1 On the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020 a report was presented to Cabinet seeking the approval of the North Derbyshire Rough Sleeper Strategy 2020-21.

1.2 Cabinet approved the recommendation to approve the strategy and the accompanying table of commitments.

1.3 The table of commitments is attached as Appendix A.

## 2.0 **Current position and key milestones**

2.1 Shortly after the strategy was approved the country was placed into a national lockdown as a result of the COVID pandemic.

2.2 Alongside the national lockdown, MHCLG launched the “Everyone In” initiative requiring local authorities to accommodate all rough sleepers. This recognised that rough sleepers were considerably high risk of contracting and spreading the virus should they remain sleeping rough.

2.3 The new requirements placed a considerable pressure on existing accommodation supply which consisted largely of Bed & Breakfast, in addition under lockdown, hotels were required to close unless they were accommodating people under homeless legislation. This led to the closure of accommodation options that would normally have been available.

2.4 To address the reduction in accommodation options the council agreed to:

2.4.1 Identify and use 15 units of existing council stock as emergency accommodation and,

2.4.2 In partnership with partners across Derbyshire commissioned a 36-unit hotel for the provision of emergency temporary accommodation for rough sleepers.

2.5 During the pandemic we accommodated 78 people.

- 2.6 We were also able to provide emergency food deliveries to the most vulnerable customers.
- 2.7 In addition to this, in partnership with a local pharmacy, enabled the delivery of prescription medicines for those who needed it.
- 2.8 Upon closure of the 36-unit hotel we ensured everyone had an offer of alternative and in most cases, permanent accommodation; ensuring no ex-rough sleepers returned to the streets.
- 2.9 In order to ensure that as many rough sleepers as possible had the maximum opportunity to maintain their tenancies and accommodation we developed the Keeping Everyone In Service (KEIS).
- 2.10 The KEIS service is delivered by P3, a registered housing and support provider, it is specifically designed to support people to sustain their tenancies that would otherwise been at high risk of failure without this intervention. This service launched on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020.
- 2.11 The KEIS service includes a specifically funded Mental Health Housing Options worker to focus upon the needs of people experiencing mental health issues.
- 2.12 The project also includes the recruitment of a Probation Link worker to form an essential link between housing options/homeless services and Probation. The post will be based within Probation Service to enable access to probation and offender management systems and support information sharing and a joined-up approach to helping people with a history of offending.
- 2.13 In addition, we have developed and launched a Housing First project in Chesterfield on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020. This provides 7 units of specialist accommodation and

support for the most vulnerable rough sleepers that are considered at the highest risk of losing any other form of tenancy or accommodation. We have currently identified 2 customers for this service and this will increase over the coming weeks.

- 2.14 A key factor in our successes during the pandemic has been the strength of our partnership relationships across all sectors. We have actively engaged with local authorities across the County and Derby City, key third sector partners and faith groups and other statutory bodies in developing emergency responses and future projects and activity.
- 2.15 This partnership activity has been accelerated during the pandemic due to the emerging requirements and overriding objective of keeping people safe from harm.
- 2.16 The focus has enabled key actions and commitments contained within the Rough Sleeper strategy to be brought forward and implemented sooner than they would have been. A summary is at Appendix A.
- 2.17 **Winter Provision and Nightshelters.**
- 2.18 During the previous 2 winter periods we have commissioned the provision of a winter nightshelter in partnership with Derby City Mission.
- 2.19 Government guidance during the pandemic means that the provision of a nightshelter is not a viable option this winter due to the way in which nightshelter accommodation is provided. The risk of contraction and spreading of the COVID-19 virus is too high.
- 2.20 Due to this guidance we have acted swiftly in partnership with other local authorities and identified an alternative

option to enable the safety of rough sleepers during the cold winter months.

2.21 This provision includes a mix of:

2.21.1 Existing B&B accommodation

2.21.2 Additional units from CBC stock

2.21.3 A 36 unit building in the Derbyshire Dales area

2.22 A project plan is currently being developed in conjunction with YMCA as lead agency with funding sources identified to ensure that this provision is available with a target date being set of 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

2.23 It is expected that the service will be accessible until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

2.24 In order to maximise the impact of this provision we are including the following within the project plan:

- 24/7 support provided by Derby City Mission staff who would otherwise have provided the nightshelter,
- Specialist support services being available during the daytime,
- Focus on “move-on” accommodation to ensure an offer of alternative or permanent accommodation is available.

### 3.0 **Barriers/obstacles**

3.1 Funding previously approved for the winter night shelter can be redirected into this provision. Additional funding is being sought from Derbyshire County Council Public Health department.

3.2 Additional funding has been announced via MHCLG for cold weather support 'Protect Project'

3.3 Transport to the location in Derbyshire Dales is a potential risk. CBC have a preferred contracted taxi company which we already use when travel is required for rough sleepers out of hours.

#### 4.0 **Conclusion**

4.1 Despite the pandemic creating a national emergency and extreme pressures and demands on our services, the response has been extremely positive from Officers and partners alike.

4.2 It has demonstrated the effectiveness of existing partnership relationships and networks but has enhanced joint working to deliver outcomes that would not otherwise have been possible within the timescales.

4.3 The data gathered during this activity will prove to be essential in continued service improvements and developments going forward. This is being enhanced by a planned ethnographic research project with Derbyshire County Council colleagues which is development.

#### **Document information**

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<b>Background documents</b>	
None	
<i>This must be made available to the public for up to 4 years.</i>	

<b>Appendices to the report</b>	
Appendix A	<i>Table of commitments - North Derbyshire Rough Sleeper Strategy 2020-21</i>

<b>Appendix A</b>	
<b>Table of Commitments.</b>	
<b>Prevention:</b>	
1.	Improve data intelligence base/profile of people sleeping rough in North Derbyshire.
2.	Explore early interventions such as education in schools
3.	Provide a programme of training to ensure all public bodies understand the 'duty to refer' in respect of rough sleeping.
4.	Request that the Clinical Commissioning Group and Health & Wellbeing Boards make the health needs of rough sleepers a strategic priority.
5.	Strategic co-ordination of funding applications to include Rough Sleeper Initiative, Cold Weather Fund and any other available funding under national Rough Sleeper Strategy
6.	Better understanding of how to help people with no recourse to public funds coming out of hospital/prisons.
7.	Develop a range of Move on options including PRS accommodation.
8.	Strategic co-ordination and increase in provision of appropriate supported accommodation options.
9.	Develop provision of 24/7 supported accommodation.
10.	Look at positive ways of engaging and communicating with the general public about helping rough sleepers
11.	Build in-reach services with hospitals/prisons to ensure no one is discharged to the street.
12.	Review and update hospital discharge policies.
13.	Ensure provision of services for priority groups including Veterans, LGBT+, BAME, same sex couples and families, DV, MH and physical disabilities, care leavers, ex-offenders, Gypsy and Travellers
14.	Build working relationships with the DWP including 'Homeless Champions' in every Job Centre Plus
15.	Ensure we offer the right services to people who have been victims of trafficking or modern slavery
<b>Intervention:</b>	
16.	Increase and expand the provision of local outreach work to include quick intervention to prevent people from becoming entrenched
17.	Develop a 'Street Medicine' model including community prescription
18.	Improve access to emergency accommodation including crash pads
19.	Future commitment to the provision of a winter nightshelter

	including integration of health services into the services offered.
20.	Explore provision of storage facilities for rough sleeper's possessions.
<b>Recovery:</b>	
21.	Work with partners to build a programme of recovery options to help people stay off the street
22.	Work with partners to develop a needle exchange
23.	Explore provision of specialist mental health support from within housing options services.
24.	Develop provision of intense support for individuals with high level and multiple needs
25.	Implement a panel cross sector panel of experts for individuals with high level and multiple needs.
26.	Engage with Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust