
**PRE DECISION SCRUTINY OF: CARDIFF ROUGH SLEEPERS STRATEGY
2017-2020**

Purpose of Report

1. To give Members background information to aid the scrutiny of the draft report to Cabinet entitled 'Cardiff Rough Sleeper Strategy 2017-2020.' The full draft report is attached at **Appendix A** and has **three** appendices:
 - **Appendix 1** - The Cardiff Rough Sleeper Strategy 2017-2020
 - **Appendix 2** - Draft EEA Rough Sleeping Protocol
 - **Appendix 3** - Equality Impact Assessment.
2. The Cabinet is to consider the report and its recommendations regarding the Rough Sleeper Strategy 2017-2020 at their meeting on 16 March 2017. At this committee meeting Members will have the opportunity to hear from internal witnesses and to review the consultation responses received and changes made to the Strategy as a result; the consultation schedule is attached at **Appendix B**. Members will then be able to decide what comments, observations or recommendations they wish to pass on to the Cabinet.

Background

3. The Welsh Government 10 year Homelessness Plan, issued in 2009, contains a commitment to address rough sleeping in Wales as well as commitments in a number of related areas to enable homelessness in Wales to be addressed. Cardiff Council's Corporate Plan 2017-19 prioritises supporting people in vulnerable situations, including people who are homeless. Cardiff Council's

Housing Strategy 2016- 2021 contains a commitment to develop a Homelessness Strategy by 2018.

4. In 2006, Shelter published the following definitions of rough sleeping and street homelessness:

*‘**Rough sleeping** is defined by the Government as ‘people sleeping, or bedded down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or ‘bashes¹’).’*

***Street homelessness** is a much wider term than rough sleeping, taking into account the street lifestyles of some people who may not actually sleep on the streets. Street homeless people are those who routinely find themselves on the streets during the day with nowhere to go at night. Some will end up sleeping outside, or in a derelict or other building not designed for human habitation, perhaps for long periods. Others will sleep at a friend’s for a very short time, or stay in a hostel, night-shelter or squat, or spend nights in prison or hospital.’²*

5. The Welsh Government annual count of rough sleepers shows an upward trend in Cardiff, from 26 individuals in 2014, to 30 in 2015 and 53 individuals in 2016. Monitoring by outreach services in Cardiff mirrors this upward trend, with numbers peaking in August 2016 at a weekly average of 60 individuals rough sleeping. Almost a third of those sleeping rough are ‘entrenched’ rough sleepers, in that they have been sleeping rough for more than 6 months. There are also a number of EEA³ nationals sleeping rough in Cardiff.

¹ A ‘bash’ is a makeshift shelter often comprised of cardboard boxes

² Extract taken from Shelter Factsheet, provided in full at Appendix A to the Street Homelessness report to this Committee on 2 October 2015

³ EEA stands for European Economic Area

Issues identified in the Cabinet Report

6. At **points 7-12, Appendix A**, the Cabinet Report identifies a number of issues that the proposed Strategy seeks to address. These include:

- The Council and partners need to increase early intervention efforts to swiftly identify and engage with those new to rough sleeping, diverting them away from the streets into accommodation and services.
- There is a need to co-ordinate and refocus all partners' efforts on ending and not reinforcing rough sleeping.
- There needs to be a review of accommodation to ensure it addresses client needs.
- There is a need for a joined up approach from statutory and third sector partners to address the issue with EEA nationals sleeping rough in Cardiff.
- All partners need to work together to reduce begging, which has increased in recent months; only some of these beggars are rough sleeping, many have temporary or settled accommodation.

Proposed Recommendations to Cabinet

7. The report to Cabinet contains the following recommendations:

1. *'To agree the Cardiff Rough Sleeper Strategy 2017-2020 as set out at Appendix 1.'*
2. *To delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Housing and Customer Service to enter into a joint protocol with Immigration Services and South Wales Police to address the issue of EEA Nationals sleeping rough in the city.'*

Rough Sleepers Strategy

8. The proposed Rough Sleepers Strategy 2017-2020, attached as **Appendix 1** of **Appendix A**, sets out the Council's vision, four high level aims and the actions planned to achieve these. The Strategy outlines how people sleeping rough can receive support, advice and assistance. It identifies provision currently available and how this can be improved to deliver a more wraparound service.

9. The vision is:

'To work towards ending rough sleeping in Cardiff'

10. The four high level aims are:

- i) To work to understand the causes of rough sleeping*
- ii) To work with partners to ensure support is directed towards ending and not reinforcing rough sleeping*
- iii) To ensure early intervention to prevent rough sleepers becoming entrenched*
- iv) To develop a range of accommodation and support solutions tailored to individual needs.*

11. The Strategy has a chapter for each of the key aims as well as a section on addressing begging. It commences with some background information, covering the high level of housing need in Cardiff, the Council's legal responsibilities and duties, and research into the reasons for rough sleeping. A chapter follows this on identifying rough sleepers, which contains statistics for rough sleeping in Cardiff and comparator data across Wales and with some English cities.

12. Each of the chapters for the key aims starts by detailing the current situation and explains the need for the actions proposed in order to meet the key aim. The chapters provide information on services provided by the Council and partners, such as third sector organisations, faith groups and Health services.

13. All the actions detailed in the Strategy are summarised on **Pages 31-32, Appendix 1 of Appendix A**, under the heading 'We Will'. The Strategy states that these will be *'collated to inform an action plan to be taken forward and monitored in conjunction with the Cardiff Housing Strategy'* (**page 5, Appendix 1 of Appendix A**).

Consultation Undertaken

14. There have been two phases of consultation undertaken to inform the development of the Rough Sleepers Strategy. Attached at **Appendix B** is a schedule detailing the responses received in both phases, presented in chronological order, with pages 1 – 6 showing the responses received in the first phase of consultation and pages 7 - 20 showing the responses received in the second phase of consultation. Members are asked to bear in mind that the comments and page numbers stated in the consultees responses refer to earlier drafts of the Strategy and so may not follow through to the final draft appendix to this report.

EEA Nationals

15. At **points 14–16 Appendix A**, the Cabinet Report outlines the current position regarding EEA nationals sleeping rough in Cardiff and references the joint working protocol, attached as **Appendix 2 to Appendix A**, between the Council, Police and Immigration services. The Cabinet report states that the protocol *'formalises procedures for identifying and supporting EEA national rough sleepers to claim appropriate benefits, access employment and accommodation, or to voluntarily reconnect them to their country of origin. However, where clients disengage from services, or are assessed as unlikely to break the pattern of rough sleeping, information sharing will take place to facilitate administrative removal by Immigration Services.'*

Previous Scrutiny

16. At their meeting in October 2015, this Committee carried out in depth scrutiny of the work underway to address street homelessness, with representatives from South Wales Police, Salvation Army, The Huggard and The Wallich as well as Cardiff Council witnesses. Members heard about work underway to remodel the homeless Gateway, to set up reconnection programmes to help those individuals without a local connection to Cardiff return home and to improve information and advice for care leavers.
17. Following the meeting, Members asked for, and received, an update at their meeting on 2 March 2016, specifically on progress with regard to EEA nationals, care leavers, remodelling the Gateway and increasing resources for street homelessness. At the same meeting, Members scrutinised the proposed Supporting People Commissioning Plan, which included additional resources for street homelessness.
18. The Committee's Performance and Budget Monitoring Panel recently carried out a review of the proposed rationale applied to target setting for homelessness indicators, including those regarding rough sleeping which are contained in the Corporate Plan 2017-19. Members also scrutinised the draft Corporate Plan 2017-2019 and Budgetary Proposals, which included additional resource for the homeless outreach team, at their meeting in February 2017.

Way Forward

19. The item will commence with Councillor Susan Elsmore (Cabinet Member – Health, Housing and Wellbeing) being invited to make a statement. Sarah McGill (Director of Communities, Housing and Customer Services) and Jane Thomas (Assistant Director of Communities & Housing) will attend to assist in answering Members' questions.

Legal Implications

20. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

21. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

22. The Committee is recommended to:

- a. consider the information in the report, appendices and at the meeting;
- b. decide whether they would like to make any comments to the Cabinet on this matter in time for its meeting on 16 March 2017; and
- c. decide the way forward for any future scrutiny of the issues discussed.

DAVINA FIORE

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2 March 2017