

**CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL
CYNGOR DINAS CAERDYDD**

CABINET MEETING: 16th March 2017

CARDIFF ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY 2017-2020

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND
CUSTOMER SERVICES**

AGENDA ITEM:

PORTFOLIO: HEALTH, HOUSING AND WELLBEING (COUNCILLOR
SUSAN ELSMORE)

Reason for this Report

1. To seek approval of the Cardiff Rough Sleeper Strategy 2017-2020.
2. To seek delegated authority for 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.

Background

3. The Cardiff Rough Sleeper Strategy 2017-2020 outlines how people sleeping rough, often with complex lives and issues, will receive appropriate advice, support, and homelessness assistance (**see Appendix 1**).
4. Monitoring shows that over the last 2 years, the number of people sleeping rough in Cardiff has steadily increased. Numbers peaked during August 2016, with 68 individuals recorded in one week with a weekly average of 60 individuals rough sleeping. These are the highest figures ever recorded in the city. The Welsh Government organises an annual count of rough sleepers, Cardiff's returns show an upward trend, with 26 individuals observed in 2014, 30 in 2015 and 53 in 2016. The increase in Cardiff is similar to the increases seen at many cities throughout the UK.
5. Sleeping rough detrimentally impacts on individuals' health and wellbeing. The longer someone remains on the streets, the more likely they are to engage in secondary issues such as begging or substance misuse. These associated anti-social behaviours can also impact on citizens, businesses and visitors to Cardiff. Research shows that many rough sleepers have complex needs and the provision of accommodation alone is not enough to address their issues.

6. There is a strong history of partnership working to assist those sleeping rough in the city and a significant level of service provision already exists such as The Rough Sleeping Intervention Team (Breakfast Run) operated by the Wallich, the Huggard Day Centre and Salvation Army Bus Project, while faith groups also provide additional assistance. The Council's Outreach Team works closely with these partner organisations to assist rough sleepers into statutory services. The Strategy acknowledges this partnership working and sets out how current service provision can be improved to deliver a more wraparound service to individuals with a clear focus on helping people to come off the streets.

Issues

7. Around a third of Cardiff's rough sleepers are classed as 'entrenched', having been sleeping out for more than 6 months. 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.
8. Despite a number of agencies assisting rough sleepers in Cardiff, the services offered are not fully coordinated, and some risk perpetuating rough sleeping. There is a need to co-ordinate and refocus all partners' efforts on ending and not reinforcing rough sleeping.
9. Similarly, there is a considerable range of accommodation available to rough sleepers. Cardiff has 45 emergency bed spaces available all year round, supplemented by a further 52 bed spaces under 'Cold Weather Provision'. Cardiff's 5 single person hostels offer 216 bed spaces alongside housing-related support. Work is underway to review this provision to ensure it addresses client needs.
10. There is a significant issue with EEA nationals sleeping rough in the city, many of whom are not working and therefore are without recourse to public funds. There is a need for a joined up approach from statutory and third sector partners to address this issue.
11. There has also been a growth in the number of beggars in the city; only some of these beggars are rough sleeping, many have temporary or settled accommodation. Again all partners need to work together to reduce begging.
12. The Strategy sets out an overarching vision and high level aims as follows:

Vision

To work towards ending rough sleeping in Cardiff.

Aims

- To work to understand the causes of rough sleeping;

- To work with partners to ensure support is directed towards ending and not reinforcing rough sleeping;
- To ensure early intervention to prevent rough sleeping becoming entrenched;
- To develop a range of accommodation and support solution tailored to individual needs.

“We Will” Commitments

To support these aims a large number of actions have been identified as “We Will” commitments. A summary of key commitments are set out below:

- Expand the Council’s Outreach Team to provide a case management approach to assisting those sleeping rough;
 - Strengthen the joint working response, coordinating and refocusing all partners’ efforts on getting people off the street;
 - Work towards “No First Night Out” for those who engage with services;
 - Review accommodation options for rough sleepers and further develop independent living solutions utilising the principles of Housing First;
 - Automatically refer rough sleepers who have been rough sleeping for 3 months into the multi-agency Vulnerable Persons Intervention Pathway;
 - Develop a specialist pathway through services for clients with mental health / substance misuse issues;
 - Build on the success of and ensure the sustainability of the Reconnection Service;
 - Refocus housing-related support services to address the needs of former rough sleepers;
 - Identify alternatives to begging which all partners can refer into and work with the Police to prevent and reduce persistent begging in the city.
13. An action plan will be developed with partners to take forward all the commitments set out in the Strategy and further consultation with partners will take place as the specific initiatives identified in the plan are taken forward.

EEA Nationals

14. A significant proportion of rough sleepers are EEA nationals (around 20% when ‘cold weather provision’ is not in place). As these individuals are not able to access services the ability of the Council and its partners to assist them is limited, which perpetuates rough sleeping. The Salvation Army works with the Council to provide a Reconnection Service for rough sleepers with no local connection to Cardiff and has had significant success in reconnecting individuals to their home areas. Unfortunately many individuals will not engage with the Reconnection Service and therefore other alternatives need to be considered to address the growing number of EEA nationals sleeping rough.
15. As rough sleeping is considered an abuse of free movement rights, such individuals may be subject to administrative removal under Home Office procedures.

16. A joint working protocol between the Council, Police and Immigration has been prepared to reduce the numbers of EEA nationals sleeping rough in Cardiff. This 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. A copy of this draft protocol can be found at **Appendix 2**.

Consultation & Equality Impact Assessment

17. Early consultation took place with key partners involved in the delivery of support services to rough sleepers and significant changes were made to the content and ambition of the Strategy. Further consultation then took place with a wider range of partners and the Strategy was further amended as a result.
18. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the Strategy. A copy of the EIA can be found at **Appendix 3**.

Reason for Recommendations

19. Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to carry out local homelessness reviews and formulate local strategies. This includes an expectation for a specific strategic focus on rough sleeping. An action has been included in the Cardiff Housing Strategy 2016-2021 to develop a Homelessness Strategy by June 2018. This Rough Sleeper Strategy has been developed first however, to address the pressing issue of rough sleeping in Cardiff.
20. The Cardiff Rough Sleeper Strategy 2017-2020 will ensure that the Council has current and relevant strategic plans in place to address rough sleeping.
21. The EEA Protocol will formalise joint working procedures to reduce the number of EEA nationals sleeping rough in Cardiff.

Financial Implications

22. The report proposes expanding the Council's Outreach Team. Any such additional employee costs will be met from Welsh Government Supporting People Grant and will need to be consistent with the terms and conditions of that grant.
23. The report proposes putting in place processes and interventions to make better use of existing support for rough sleepers provided by the Council and external partners. Any other new initiatives will need to be managed within existing Council Budgets.

Legal Implications (including Equality Impact Assessment where appropriate)

24. Statutory duties relating to homelessness are placed on the Council by Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. These include duties relating to the provision of advice and assistance; prevention of homelessness; help to secure or provision of accommodation; and reviews and strategies.
25. Sound strategies and policies are based on adequate consultation with stakeholders and the consultation that has taken place is described in paragraph 17 of this Report.
26. In making decisions the Council has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equality Act 2010. The Council must have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics.

Protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Sex
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief – including lack of belief

27. The report identifies that an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and can be found at Appendix 3. The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment is to ensure that the Council has understood the potential impacts of the proposal in terms of equality so that it can ensure that it is making proportionate and rational decisions having due regard to its public sector equality duty. The Cabinet must have due regard to the Equality Impact Assessment in making its decision.

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.

Sarah McGill
Director

16 February 2017

The following appendices are attached:

- Appendix 1 - The Cardiff Rough Sleeper Strategy 2017-2020
- Appendix 2 - Draft EEA Rough Sleeping Protocol
- Appendix 3 - Equality Impact Assessment

The following background papers have been taken into account

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