

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: ALL
REPORT TITLE Update on the Rough Sleeping Review	
REPORT OF Glendine Shepherd	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Housing Scrutiny Committee	DATE 24 th October 2024
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>The report sets out the progress on the actions following the Rough Sleeping Review report presented in July 2024.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report</p> <p>Contact Officer:</p> <p>Simone Melia, Head of Housing Solutions, 5 Pancras Square, N1C 4AG Simone.melia@camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>That the Committee note the contents of this report</p>	

Signed: 

Date: 30th October 2024

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report provides the Housing Scrutiny Committee with an update on the work being undertaken to progress the Rough Sleeping Review recommendations that were presented to Housing Scrutiny Committee in July 2024.
- 1.2 There are eleven core recommendations in which progress updates are provided within this report. Each recommendation is detailed below with an update.
- 1.3 It is asked that the committee notes that the Housing service is currently undergoing a transformation including a major restructuring of staffing structures and functions, and some actions can only be progressed once new roles are filled, and capacity is built into the system.

2. Recommendation updates

1. Develop a fully costed proposal for an optimum rough sleeping system to meet Camden's needs

Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) grant funding from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) which funds the majority of our rough sleeping provision was received for a 3-year term 2022-2025; this funding is due to end in March 2025 with local authorities and MHCLG rough sleeping advisers lobbying for further funding. Local authorities are yet to hear on future funding but are hopeful that with a new government there will be increased opportunities for central government rough sleeping funding such as Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) to maximise resources in this space, although currently there is uncertainty of how this will look and will continue to monitor any suitable opportunities that arise.

Because of the design of government's 3-year RSI funding stream, year three (2024/25) saw the lowest allocation of funding as the national programme assumed that a reduction in rough sleeping would have occurred over the three years of the programme and that not as much crisis support funding would be needed. Despite homelessness increases across the country over the three-year period of the funding, local authorities were left with lower RSI allocations in 2024/25 despite exponential increases in homelessness pressures. To maintain services including outreach at 2023/24 levels, the Council would need to step in and make up the shortfall in funding from its own resources.

This will go some way to allowing us to resource our services, including outreach,

Increased demands on our rough sleeping services alongside cuts in funding from central government has meant that the council has had to rationalise staffing within rough sleeping services over the last year which has adversely impacted our ability to better tackling rough sleeping in the borough. Wider Council funding is currently

being invested to fill the gap in service provision. Despite ongoing pressures, officers are confident that the service will see improvements in tackling rough sleeping following the housing service restructure which will increase capacity within homelessness teams over the next 6 months.

Housing Services are currently undertaking a large restructure, which has put capacity strain on the directorate in recent months. The new structure and recruited to posts are due to go live at the end of this year. In recognition of the importance of our adult hostels pathway on reducing rough sleeping, the new structure will see our adult pathway single supported housing hostel commissioning move into the team commissioning our rough sleeping services. This will enable the service to commission rough sleeping support and single homelessness accommodation services in one place, to give the Council a more strategic focus when considering how internal and external funding is utilised and better enabling external funding bid opportunities. As part of the restructure there are also new roles in place to support rough sleeping within the service and tackle the increased demand, these include a Rough Sleeping Project Officer and a Community Homelessness Prevention Advisor.

Later in Autumn/Winter 2024, following government funding announcements, the Council will be a firm position to co-design any bid for future rough sleeping funding with our MHCLG rough sleeping adviser in a way that moves towards an optimum rough sleeping system and identify opportunities for additional internal and external funding to support an enhanced model.

2. Ensure that future bids for short term funding ensure as far as possible that Camden can deliver sustainable and impactful rough sleeping services

Camden has been successful in securing and agreeing two bids agreed this year as part of the Single Homeless Accommodation Programme (SHAP):

Gray's Inn Road is a 16-bed hostel for people with multiple disadvantages and co-occurring and intersecting needs which is due to open in November this year and a Housing First initiative of 30 units of dispersed accommodation, inclusive of intensive wrap around support which is currently going through the procurement process. This Housing First programme was co-designed with the MHCLG rough sleeping team, in recognition that such a programme is a key intervention in the two boroughs with the highest levels of rough sleeping in London. The scheme is being delivered in partnership with Westminster City Council and Notting Hill Genesis.

Additionally, capital funding has also been secured for purchase and repair of 10 units for Camden and 10 units for Notting Hill Housing Group which will result in a permanent increase in social housing stock in the borough

Camden's Rough Sleeping Commissioner is currently reviewing the intervention elements funded by the Rough Sleeping Initiative funding, assessing impact, relevance and value for money to ensure Camden have the optimum services going forward. Camden want to prioritise elements which have the biggest impact on

ending rough sleeping. This work is aligned with reviewing what the general fund is also funding through single homeless pathways. This work ensures Camden are ready to use any future funding in the optimum way to deliver sustainable and impactful rough sleeping services.

As part of the Homelessness System Partnership (previously known as the Homelessness System Transformation) colleagues across Adult Social Care, Mental health services, substance misuse commissioning, homelessness and the NHS have been working together to introduce a new delivery model for community homeless health services in Camden. This new model is building upon best-practice locally and national examples of what has worked in meeting homeless people's needs. Camden Council is committing resources to this model, such as support from Homelessness Prevention and Adult Social Care, ensuring that resources are targeted and impactful. The model is currently being developed and consulted on, with the aim of being introduced in April 2025.

There are areas of strong collaboration between homelessness services and adult social care when supporting people experiencing homelessness in Camden. As part of the Homelessness System Transformation, and the work of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board, there has also been an increased focus in how the social care needs of people experiencing homelessness can be more effectively met as part of an integrated, multiagency approach. To support the strategic direction of this work and focus on priorities, an Adult Social Care and Homelessness Steering Group was formed in July 2024 co-chaired by the Head of Housing Solutions and the Director of Adult Social Care Operations. Two primary focuses of the group are to improve multiagency safeguarding responses for people experiencing homelessness and to ensure access to appropriate social care assessment and support. The multiagency group will act to identify and remove barriers to accessing support for individuals experiencing homelessness.

3. Develop a strategic approach to enable more assertive influencing of government in respect of rough sleeping and the design of government funding that seeks to address rough sleeping in partnership with local authorities

When Camden receives further information on available funding from the (MHCLG, officers will ensure the co-design of any future RSI funding bids with MHCLG officers, warranting its suitability and sustainability.

Officers have been working with the Cabinet Member for Better Homes to develop a call on government to enable local authorities to respond to the homelessness crisis by building and planning for the next generation of social housing and a call to action to implement a long-term funding model for rough sleeping in order for local authorities to plan their model effectively for rough sleeping and homelessness.

The housing service is in the process of reviewing its Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which will be published in 2025. A developing priority in this is outlining our strategic approach to tackling rough sleeping and influencing central government policy in this space. This includes working with MHCLG via a Rough Sleeping Advisor and influencing policy on a pan-London level through the North

London Housing Partnership (NLHP) and strategic meetings with the GLA, London Councils and the centre for homelessness impact, all of which rough sleeping colleagues meet with regularly. London Councils are also developing a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy and have called on Camden to work with them on our findings so that lobbying will have a stronger pan-London voice.

Officers are currently leading two significant pieces of lobbying work related to the homelessness system;

- Piloting the Women's Census, which explores women's experience of rough sleeping and how this looks different to general assumptions of rough sleeping. Camden are collaborating with Solace and Safe Spaces to measure women's homelessness in a different way and to open up access to support channels for different types of rough sleeping. For example, women are more likely to rough sleep in spaces that do not meet the agreed definition of rough sleeping so can access support even if they are not traditionally 'bedded down' and may be in places such as fast food restaurants and hospitals, walking all night, sex working etc.
- Ineligible service charges direct payments DWP lobbying, which sees Camden leading 13 third sector providers, 12 London boroughs, Homeless Link & London Councils to lobby the DWP to allow direct payment of service charge arrears to supported housing providers in order to better support vulnerable people to maintain their tenancies and to ensure third sector providers can retain financially viable supported housing models which play a key role in helping local authorities relieve homelessness.

4. Move away from language that reflects a binary understanding of support for people rough sleeping and enforcement approaches and develop a local framework that describes the right partnership interventions to tackle rough sleeping that correspond to the support needs of individuals and the circumstances of individual cases.

A revised and refreshed Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is currently being developed. It seeks to centre the lived experiences of people who are or have been homeless in Camden. The strategy is setting a direction of travel for services that work with homeless people in Camden, and it reflects a greater focus on trauma informed and relational practices as well as system and multidisciplinary working needed within these services. In doing so it is responding to this recommendation by acknowledging the partnership and system working that is needed to respond to rough sleeping in the borough.

As part of the development of a local framework, conversations have started about how the established Homelessness System co-producers group could be involved to support the development and ensure people's lived experience is captured in the framework.

A working protocol has been implemented to ensure that the Council's activity aligns with its values and to ensure that the starting point for anyone rough sleeping should always be one of compassion, empathy and understanding. The protocol sets out a clear decision-making process in the case of intervention regarding anyone rough

sleeping, ensuring delivery of compassionate and humanitarian support in order to address the often complex challenges linked to homelessness.

Officers are currently re-launching the Homelessness Forum in response to voluntary and community sector services to make it more community led. Developed citing best practice from Homeless Link and other local authority models, the voluntary sector, NHS and the council will act as equal partners working together to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. Homeless Link are due to initially chair the forum.

All rough sleeping services in Camden are commissioned to be trauma aware. There is a growing movement in Camden to build the capacity for staff and teams to be trauma informed. Commissioners recognise the multiple impacts of trauma on both those accessing and providing support services. We empower the workforce through continuous learning, robust support and regular reflective practice. This builds and maintains meaningful relationships. Service structures need to be accessible and responsive, acknowledging how trauma can affect engagement with support. Through ongoing evaluation and learning, there is continuous assessment and improvement regarding how trauma-informed approach benefits residents. Via Camden's Homelessness System Transformation and Camden and Islington's Trauma Informed Network, a framework has been developed. It organises work around three core principles: Relationship Driven and Collaborative; Curious and Reflective; Stabilisation and Safety in Context

- 5. Work with local partners to ensure that as much flexibility as possible within the established parameters of CHAIN is applied to the verification of people sleeping rough. Work with local partners to ensure that where people do not meet the criteria for CHAIN verification there is an appropriate support offer available to them. Draw on evidence and learning from Camden initiatives regarding alternative verification processes of women and young people sleeping rough to lobby for changes to the CHAIN verification process that would provide for age- and gender-informed recognition of all forms of rough sleeping.**

As mentioned above, Camden is taking part in the Women's Rough Sleeping Census 24-25, responding to the different experience that women have rough sleeping which does not align with the CHAIN definition and pan-London verification of rough sleeping. The re-designed homelessness forum will be key to exploring how rough sleeping can be verified in a different way outside of the CHAIN system to ensure all rough sleeping in Camden is captured and that more residents access support.

New Horizons, a pan-London youth homelessness organisation based in the borough, are also part of a youth homelessness project which sees an agreement that they can verify young people they know to be rough sleeping without the usual CHAIN criteria, recognising the important role that community sector partners play in helping to identify and support those who are street homeless.

The Housing First pilot will be prioritising single women and women in couples. These properties are self-contained which alleviates fear and risk around women

being placed in hostels where they feel less safe. In recognition of Camden's focused work with women, the Ministry of Policing and Crime (MOPAC) fund Camden Respite Rooms, a 16-bed crisis domestic abuse hostel for women with a history of rough sleeping in Camden.

The re-established homelessness forum will provide an opportunity to build on these examples of challenging perceptions of rough sleeping and of working more closely with third sector partners, recognising the crucial and beneficial role that they play in relieving homelessness.

6. Review Camden's current out of hours response for crisis situations

The homelessness service has been piloting an in-house out of hours provision with Contact Camden. This seeks to establish a single point of contact for residents to call in out of hours emergency housing situations.

The pilot has had an initial review, with the service closely monitoring delivery to ensure the correct decisions are being made out of hours and that a quality and statutorily-compliant service is being delivered. Initial review has found this way of working as beneficial and has provided improved service to residents by having a single point of contact. Contact Camden already act as first point of contact for other crisis council service such as social care and are used to linking people in crisis with the Police, Domestic Abuse support services, Mental Health services and Social Care services where needed. More work will be done as we move into implementation of the model to ensure join up with other services as necessary.

7. Share the final recommendations from this review with people with current lived experience to comment on to inform implementation

The Homelessness Systems service have an established co-production group of residents with lived experience and discussions are ongoing in the service on how officers share the recommendations with this group in a meaningful and engaging way. This also includes how the report can be shared by those in the Coproduction group with people experiencing homelessness currently via peer support and research.

8. Review Camden's approach to 'Off the Street' accommodation with a view to considering viable operational improvements in the short term as well as long-term evidence-based strategic change, including the viability in Camden of a Housing First approach at a scale that corresponds to the challenge of homelessness and rough sleeping in Camden that draws on evidence of best practice.

Camden is ensuring a range of accommodation options that meet the varied needs of our rough sleeping population, including a Housing First initiative which is due to mobilise by the end of 2024. This and other accommodation options are outlined in recommendation 2 above. Benchmarking has recently been undertaken by the Council to a Housing First programme in Lille, France which has had success,

although there are of course already successful local models such as Camden's own Housing First service which has run successfully for a number of years.

As mentioned above in recommendation 1, the new Housing Services structure will see our adult single pathway supported housing hostel commissioning function move into the team commissioning our rough sleeping support services and 'off the street' accommodation to enable the service to commission rough sleeping support and single homelessness accommodation services in one place. This will give more strategic focus to the commissioning of accommodation for single homeless people including what is generally referred to as 'off the street' accommodation (accessed once someone rough sleeping is 'verified') and our wider adult pathway hostels which house a number of people with a history of rough sleeping, although not exclusively.

9. Ensure that current work to improve the health, care and support offer for people who are rough sleeping and recently off the streets is underpinned by a robust approach to evaluation

Camden's established Adult Social Care and Homelessness Steering Group underpins the work being done to evaluate and assess the health offer to those rough sleeping. This includes the continuation of the Health Outreach Pilot (HOP) in which a specialist practitioner works closely with our commissioned provider Routes Off the Streets offering holistic support to those rough sleeping and with multiple disadvantages. The new delivery model for community homeless health services in Camden will also provide an opportunity for cross-partner evaluation and accountability as does the evaluation currently being undertaken by Public Health relating to the Homelessness System Programme mentioned below.

10. Continue to take a broad and inclusive approach to the Homelessness Transformation work and the revived Rough Sleeping Forum

Officers are currently re-launching the Homelessness Forum to ensure this is led by the voluntary community sector, NHS and the council as equal partners working together to tackle homelessness. This is outlined in response to Question 4.

The Homelessness System Transformation, now known as the Homelessness System Programme, will continue to take a broad and integrated approach to addressing the challenges homeless people face when accessing services in Camden. The programme will continue to build on our ambitions for a more cohesive and accessible system, embed the 'test and learn' approaches that have been developed and provide ongoing, consistent strategic leadership across Camden's homelessness system.

The programme draws on the knowledge of people with lived experience and those working in the sector to influence the whole homelessness system. This includes creating the conditions for more joined up commissioning; working with health and social care teams to ensure a cross-cutting approach to delivering support; integrating person-centred and trauma informed tools such as the Personal

Passport, Team Around Me and the Trauma-Informed Framework; and mapping access to services to improve access and experience of them.

There is currently an evaluation of the Homelessness System Transformation being undertaken by the Public Health team. The evaluation aims to capture both the outcomes of the programme (such as changes in access to and quality of homelessness services), and to understand how the programme and its components have been implemented and delivered, including the process of working alongside people with lived experiences to co-produce these developments, and the use of a collaborative system-wide approach.

11. Continue to support and learn from the test and learn project that is exploring how the Shared Lives approach can enhance Camden's preventative work with asylum seekers living in Home Office accommodation, building on the opportunities that community willingness to help offer.

A project team has been developing a version of the Shared Lives approach that will deliver a short-term housing solution for asylum seekers leaving Home Office accommodation. Social care, housing and economic development teams have been working together to adapt a model which has been successful in supporting people with learning disabilities, recognising that the challenges and needs of residents in this group are very different. At the moment, the viability of recruiting hosts for this group of residents is being assessed.

3. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services

The Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) is funded until March 2025 and forms part of the resources to support people who are rough sleeping in Camden. As noted above, RSI funding has been tapering off over the period 2022-2025 on the assumption the funded interventions would reduce rough sleeping. Unfortunately, due to wider socio-economic trends this has not been the case. The Council will look to manage the resulting financial pressure within its existing budget.

RSI funding for future years beyond March 2025 has not been confirmed. The council also contributes base budget towards core services at £1m circa in 2024/25 and this is expected to continue in 2025/26. Once the future of RSI is known, the Council will factor in any resulting budget pressures into its budget setting for 2025/26 and its medium term financial planning.

4. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no legal comments.

5. Environmental Implications

The proposals have no environmental impacts.

REPORT ENDS