

## London Borough of Enfield

### Cabinet

15 July 2020

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**Subject:** Rough Sleepers Local Delivery Plan  
**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Needs  
**Executive Director:** Sarah Cary, Executive Director Place

**Key Decision:** 5166

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### Purpose of Report

1. Cabinet is asked to approve the local delivery plan for rough sleepers and to support our efforts to secure funding to deliver the plan.

### Proposal(s)

2. Cabinet is asked to:
  1. agree the approach on the support and accommodation of rough sleepers
  2. support the efforts to secure funding to implement the plan
  3. support efforts to secure government policy change as set out in paragraphs 30 and 31 of this report

### Reason for Proposal(s)

3. On Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March, Dame Louise Casey wrote to all local authorities. Her letter requested that all rough sleepers be accommodated by the weekend as part of the national response to the Covid pandemic. This included closing dormitory style accommodation such as night shelters.
4. By 21 May the Council had provided emergency accommodation to some 200 residents, who were entrenched rough sleepers, new to rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.
5. The number of people we have provided emergency accommodation to continues to grow daily. Funding settlements to date are insufficient to meet the costs of the emergency measures required by government during the pandemic and to support them going forward.
6. Cabinet is asked to approve the Local Delivery Plan for rough sleepers and to support our efforts to secure funding to deliver the plan. This plan has been submitted to the MHCLG by the deadline of 4<sup>th</sup> June subject to the approval of Cabinet at this meeting.
7. The Everyone In programme has led to us being able to accommodate an unprecedented number of entrenched rough sleepers. This represents a once in a lifetime opportunity to effectively end rough sleeping in the borough.

### Relevance to the Council's Corporate Plan

8. **Good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods**

The plan will help to create a sustainable pathway for rough sleepers back into the wider community. It will increase the provision of supported housing for rough sleepers and connect residents with the services they need to sustain their housing.

#### **9. Sustain strong and healthy communities**

Rough sleeping is a key factor in health inequality. The average age of death for rough sleepers is currently 44 years for men and 42 years for women. This is 30 years lower than that of the general population. Bringing rough sleepers into accommodation should therefore have a major impact on their quality of life and life expectancy

#### **10. Build our local economy to create a thriving place**

Employment support will be at the heart of the service offer, particularly for those with no recourse to public funds. The plan will help to support residents into employment.

#### **Background**

11. In 2018 the Government's published its rough sleeping strategy. This committed the Government to ending rough sleeping by 2027. Enfield published its Homelessness Prevention Strategy in 2019 which sought to address the rise in rough sleeping experienced in the Borough.
12. Enfield Council has been successfully running a 22-bed night shelter during the winter months. Earlier this year we secured funding to extend this provision to run throughout the year.
13. On Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March, Dame Louise Casey wrote to all local authorities. Her letter requested that all rough sleepers be accommodated by the weekend as part of the national response to the Covid pandemic. This included closing dormitory style accommodation such as night shelters.
14. This presented our services with the challenge of bring all rough sleepers off the streets and finding accommodation for the 22 people using the night shelter by Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March.
15. Staff from across the Council worked extremely hard to achieve this and we moved all of the rough sleepers into self-contained nightly paid accommodation. The following week we took over the running of the Edmonton Green Travelodge as well as more traditional booking of nightly paid accommodation.
16. Since then we have seen a steady stream of arrivals, both of people who have been sleeping rough for some time and those are new to rough sleeping. By 21st May we had accommodated 111 entrenched rough sleepers and a further 83 people who were at risk of rough sleeping.
17. We are aware that there are still 17 rough sleepers in the borough, mainly living in encampments, who have refused all offers of assistance. We are continuing our efforts to bring them into temporary accommodation.
18. The Edmonton Green Travelodge is the first port of call. Residents are accommodated at the Travelodge whilst their needs are assessed. Those with medium or high support needs remain at the Travelodge whilst those with lower needs are moved on to nightly paid temporary accommodation. This

ensures that we are able to ensure that residents do not slip back into rough sleeping.

19. These arrangements are temporary.

### **Next Steps – Local Delivery Plan**

20. The Local Delivery Plan, submitted as a draft to MHCLG on the 4th June, sets out the measures that we intend to take to support rough sleepers into permanent housing. This is not without cost, and despite lobbying for additional resources, the funding available is inadequate. To date we have received £18,000 from MHCLG to support rough sleepers during the pandemic.

21. We want to ensure that all the people we have accommodated during the pandemic have access to permanent housing.

22. In moving people into more permanent housing, there are a number of different issues to address. Around 79 of those that we have accommodated have no recourse to public funds. This has implications for the nature and funding of provision for this group as employment support will need to be paramount. We have received just over £200k from MHCLG to provide support to this cohort but the costs of accommodation, in particular for those with high support needs, will not be met from this fund. Our ability to help non-European Union nationals is also restricted in law. The nature of the help we are legally able to offer this group is therefore restricted.

23. We have assessed the support needs of each person and are developing support plans to sit alongside them. The local delivery plan includes a range of different types of accommodation to address the various needs identified.

### **Main Considerations for the Council**

24. There is a wide range of different support needs ranging from those who will be able to manage a tenancy unaided through to those with high support needs. The plan therefore breaks down the different types of accommodation we need for different groups and sets out how we intend to secure this.

25. The situation for those people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) is complex both from a legal perspective and our ability to provide services/housing. We were requested by government to house all rough sleepers as part of the response to the pandemic. However, those with NRPF are not able to claim housing benefit and this means that there is an additional cost to the council. This is compounded by the legal restrictions on us being able to offer services to those with NRPF beyond the emergency response.

26. The Delivery Plan sets out how we intend to ensure that we are able to ensure that people do not simply revert back to sleeping rough at the end of the emergency measures. Our approach is time limited, driven both by the ongoing cost to the Council and the legal position, but we aim to ensure that none of this cohort return to rough sleeping.

27. The cost to Enfield of housing all of those in need during the pandemic has been calculated at £945,000. These costs include the salaries of those staff who have been seconded into delivering our response as well as the additional accommodation cost. We estimate that it will cost an additional £1.4M to ensure that none of the people we have accommodated return to rough

sleeping. This figure includes staffing and accommodation costs and a phased approach to securing move on accommodation.

28. The government has announced additional funding that has the potential to cover much of the cost of both our emergency response and the provision of longer-term housing. However, it is currently unclear as to how this money can be accessed and there are significant gaps. The government has made it clear that it will not cover the cost of non-EA nationals with no recourse to public funds. For EA nationals the funding will only enable the provision of services for three months. As at 28 May we had accommodated 70 EA nationals and 10 non-EA nationals.
29. The pandemic created the opportunity to bring the majority of rough sleepers into accommodation. This represents a once in a lifetime opportunity to effectively end rough sleeping in the borough. The legacy of covid for this group of people will be determined by the effectiveness of our response.
30. Addressing Rough Sleeping and preventing future homelessness is about funding for housing which we will continue to lobby for. However, there are also policy changes that would create the conditions to enable a shift and deliver a long-term future without Rough Sleeping. We are therefore calling for the following in our Local Delivery Plan:
  - Continue the increase in LHA levels, or to increase them further, to meet market rents and increase the supply of PRS lets for this group.
  - Continue restrictions on evictions. We will ask that plans to stop Section 21 “no fault” evictions are brought forward, before the lockdown measures are lifted.
  - Undertake a fundamental review of the way in which Boroughs use and procure temporary accommodation with a view to ensure London has the right accommodation to meet the needs of its citizens and that markets are not distorted further as a result of the short supply of accommodation in place.
31. We also note and support the call to Government by the charity sector and advocacy organisations for people without recourse to public funds to have restrictions lifted to enable them to access funding including Universal Credit. In this spirit Cabinet is asked to endorse the attached letter to the Homelessness Minister from London Councils and the GLA outlining the required changes.

### **Safeguarding Implications**

32. This is a highly vulnerable group of residents. Safeguarding issues are therefore paramount in both the design and delivery of services to rough sleepers.

### **Public Health Implications**

33. Rough sleeping is a key factor in health inequality. The average age of death for rough sleepers is currently 44 years for men and 42 years for women. This is 30 years lower than that of the general population. Bringing rough sleepers into accommodation should therefore have a major impact on their quality of life and life expectancy.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

34. A full Impact Assessment will be developed for the delivery plan.

## **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

35. None

### **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken**

36. The alternative options would be:

- To simply end the provision of accommodation. This would see the majority returning to rough sleeping and the reestablishment of encampments across the borough. This option has been ruled out as unacceptable.
- To continue the existing arrangements. The costs of this would be significantly higher than moving people into other forms of housing and would mean placing people out of borough for an extended period.

### **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks**

37. The key risk is that we are unable to secure sufficient funding to secure accommodation for all those we have housed to date. This is particularly relevant in considering the housing options for those with no recourse to public funds.

38. The mitigation for this is the emphasis on employment support for this cohort and the time limited nature of the support being offered.

## **Financial Implications**

39. Using the London Councils model to calculate the costs of the next steps outlined in our Delivery Plan we have been able to further validate our figure of a cost pressure of £3-£5m. This incorporates the general increase in homelessness presentations and difficulty of moving tenants on in a pandemic as well as the costs of accommodating Rough Sleepers until their rehousing is secured as well as acknowledging the difficult market conditions and often complex casework involved with this group and this is reflected in the authorities recent returns to the MHCLG.

40. The authority has received £18k in direct funding for rough sleepers and £17.9m in general funding for Covid-19 and whilst this is much welcomed, the pressures that the Council face means the funding is still significantly short of the providing the financial assurance required to deal with the impact of the crisis, meaning that the funding cannot be allocated purely to be used for the Temporary Accommodation and Rough Sleeping pressure.

## **Legal Implications**

41. The Housing Act 1996 Part 7 places a duty on local authorities to house homeless people. Local authorities can only assist people who meet the criteria in the Act. Broadly speaking, this includes people who are homeless, vulnerable and those who have eligible immigration status. The Act also places a duty on local authorities to take and investigate a homeless application and reach a decision as to whether a duty is owed. Whilst the government advised local authorities to accommodate the homeless on public health grounds, the local authority will need to consider whether by accommodating a homeless person, this has triggered the functions under the Act. Each case will need to be considered on its facts. There may also be people who have been accommodated but who would not otherwise be legally

entitled to accommodation due to their immigration status. The local authority will need to be alive to this and have the resources in place to process applications and have accommodation readily available.

### **Workforce Implications**

42. **None**

### **Property Implications**

43. **None**

### **Other Implications**

44. **None**

### **Options Considered**

45. The alternative options would be:

46. To simply end the provision of accommodation. This would see the majority returning to rough sleeping and the reestablishment of encampments across the borough. This option has been ruled out as unacceptable.

47. To continue the existing arrangements. The costs of this would be significantly higher than moving people into other forms of housing and would mean placing people out of borough for an extended period

### **Conclusions**

48. Cabinet is requested to approve the Local Delivery Plan.

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### **Appendices**

#### **Rough Sleepers Delivery Plan**