

HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

16 MARCH 2020

Rough Sleeper Update

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To inform Members of the 2019 Annual Rough Sleeper Estimate submitted to the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for Newark & Sherwood and update Members on the outcome from collaborative funding bids, further to the previous report to committee in June 2019.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Since autumn 2010, all local authorities have been required to submit an annual figure to MHCLG to indicate the number of people sleeping rough in their area on a typical night. Further to collating and analysing this data MHCLG go on to release national statistics each year.

2.2 Local Authorities can arrive at this figure by means of an evidence-based estimate (a count of visible rough sleeping), or an estimate including a spotlight count. The count or estimate is a one-off snapshot of the numbers of people sleeping rough in an area and takes place between 1st October and 30th November each year.

2.3 When estimating or counting, it is essential that those included in the count figure fall into the following definition:

- People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments).
- People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or “bashes”).

2.4 There is not currently a national mechanism for recording every person who sleeps rough in England. However, the snapshot methodology aims to obtain an accurate representation of the number of people sleeping rough as possible, while acknowledging that each process has its limitations.

2.5 Newark and Sherwood DC carried out an evidence-based estimate on 14 November 2019, which was informed by an additional spotlight count, supported by Frameworks Street Outreach Team. This methodology was deemed the most appropriate for Newark and Sherwood due to:

- there being a mix of visible/accessible and hidden/inaccessible locations in the local authority area;
- the individuals sleeping rough or overall numbers of people sleeping rough in visible/accessible sites change frequently;
- there is regular intelligence gathering in place by a number of agencies;
- numbers of people sleeping rough are consistently low and known individuals are already in touch with services;

- the local authority can gather sufficient intelligence on people sleeping rough via partner agencies.

3.0 Outcome

- 3.1 Local intelligence from various partner agencies including Nottinghamshire Police, the local rough sleeper drop in service facilitated by Newark Churches Together and the spotlight count by Frameworks Street Outreach Team concluded that **two rough sleepers** spent the night on the streets in Newark and Sherwood on **14 November 2019**.
- 3.2 This is a reduction on figures submitted in previous years and is largely a result of the Council's successful and collaborative work with partners to open a winter night shelter as detailed below. Larger figures were submitted in previous years (2018 – five rough sleepers, 2017 – four rough sleepers, 2016 – five rough sleepers).
- 3.3 Verification by Homeless Link has taken place to ensure the correct process was followed and that an appropriate mechanism was used with a range of local agencies involved to reach the single estimate figure.
- 3.4 Following verification, the final estimate figure was submitted to MHCLG for inclusion in the national figure of rough sleepers. However, the figure will not be included or recognised as an official government statistic until MHCLG publish the final figures, expected February/March 2020.

4.0 Update - Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding

- 4.1 Members of the Committee were advised in a report back in June 2019 of two successful countywide bids and the initiatives this funding would support. A brief overview is provided below:

Initiative	Focus
<p>Rough Sleeping Initiative</p> <p>Funding of a comprehensive street outreach team, incorporating clinicians such as prescribing nurses, mental health nurses and social workers along with additional funding for emergency accommodation.</p> <p>£450K Awarded</p> <p><i>In addition a £10k contribution was made by all seven local authorities</i></p>	<p>This funding will tackle rough sleeping, both in the established community and those attributable to the use of Novel Psychotropic Substances (NPS) - Cannabinoids (Spice/Black Mamba).</p>
<p>Rapid Rehousing Pathway</p> <p>The elements of this funding are: Somewhere Safe to Stay pilots; local letting agencies; supported lettings and Navigators.</p> <p>£511k Awarded</p>	<p>To implement a response to rough sleeping that focuses on quickly supporting rough sleepers into homes.</p>

- 4.2 These initiatives have had a number of successes across the county as well as creating additional support roles within key services, which in Newark and Sherwood are co-located at Castle House with the Housing Options team. Governance and performance management arrangements are in place via a steering group that feeds into the Safer Nott's Board and there are operational sub groups in each locality.
- 4.3 Further to the successes achieved from this first round of funding, the county group agreed to submit a bid to the second round of government funding to enable the continuation and sustainment of these initiatives.
- 4.4 I am pleased to advise that our county submission for round two funding has also been successful, securing a further £836,916.60 to continue the excellent work of these initiatives and enabling reviews to be undertaken for improvement and further development. Approval has also been given by MHCLG for underspends from the collective year one pot to be carried forward into year two.

5.0 The Well Winter Night Shelter

- 5.1 There are currently no legal protections for people sleeping rough in England during severe weather and the provision of shelter is not a statutory duty, even when conditions are life threatening. However, there has been a humanitarian obligation on local authorities to do all they can to prevent deaths on the streets, and for their partners and the public to support these efforts.
- 5.2 Since 2010, the Council has provided a Severe Weather Emergency Shelter for rough sleepers to meet this humanitarian obligation. The shelter was located at Barnbygate Methodist Church and was activated when weather conditions were severe enough to meet the criteria (three consecutive nights below zero). On average, the shelter would support approximately ten different individuals each year.
- 5.3 This year the Council changed its winter provision and worked collaboratively with the Salvation Army to deliver a Winter Night Shelter. The Salvation Army received a large donation (£22,000) and the Council submitted an additional bid to the Governments Cold Weather Fund, which was successful (£10,000). These monies have facilitated the partnership delivery with Salvation Army and Newark Baptist Church of the winter night shelter.
- 5.4 The shelter, known as 'The Well' has been open since November 2019 and will remain open until March 2020. The shelter is located at Newark Baptist Church and has enough bed-spaces to accommodate up to thirteen individuals at any one time. On average we are experiencing approximately ten guests per night and have had over thirty users in total.
- 5.5 It is important to note that the shelter is available to those who are rough sleeping as well as those who are at potential risk of rough sleeping. Those at risk of rough sleeping are often individuals not known to council services and they are often reluctant for one reason or another to come forward and approach services. One aim of the shelter is to engage with and assist individuals before crisis.
- 5.6 The shelter has a well-established agency drop in service taking place each week to assist guests with identified needs; agencies include housing, Change Grow Live, Street Outreach, CPNs, specialist nurse and a Complex Needs Worker.

5.7 The shelter also runs a wider working group, which includes faith groups, Police and supported housing providers that can work collectively to plan a pathway for each individual that uses the shelter. Individual cases are also confidentially considered at a rough sleeper panel, established as part of the Council's vulnerable person's panel. This is in line with the government's Rough Sleeper Strategy 2018, which is a wide-ranging document that lays out the government's plans to help people who are sleeping rough and put measures in place to end rough sleeping for good.

5.8 Currently the agencies and working group are planning an exit strategy for when the shelter closes at the end of March. One of the things that has become very apparent is that single homeless individuals do not step through the doors of Castle House and ask for help. We are aware from the findings in our recent homelessness review, which informed our strategy, that finding a preventative solution for increased single homelessness must remain a priority.

6.0 Equalities Implications

6.1 There are no equality concerns to be considered in relation to rough sleeping estimates. All rough sleepers will be included and assisted to prevent them from sleeping rough regardless of any equality implications and a separate EIA has been carried out for the Winter Night Shelter provision.

7.0 Financial Implications (FIN19-20/6839)

7.1 There are no financial implications with the rough sleeper estimate for the Council. As detailed within the Rough Sleepers Strategy there may be opportunities for additional funding from MHCLG bids to assist rough sleepers countywide which the Council are exploring. Ashfield District Council have agreed to act as the accountable body to manage the funding secured from the successful Rough Sleeper Initiative and Rapid Re-housing Pathway bids.

8.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

This report links to the following objectives within the Community Plan:

Objective 2	Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, and increase feelings of safety in our communities
Objective 8	Reduce levels of deprivation in target areas and remove barriers to social mobility across the district
Objective 9	Improve the health and wellbeing of local residents, with a particular focus on narrowing the gap in healthy life expectancy and other health outcomes
Objective 10	Increase participation with the Council and within local communities

9.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

That committee members consider the contents of this report and make any necessary comments.

Background Papers

Nil

For further information, please contact Cheska Asman – Homelessness Strategy and Safeguarding Officer on Ext 5643 or Leanne Monger – Business Manager – Housing, Health and Community Relations on Ext 5545

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