

# Overview & Scrutiny

## Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission

All Members of the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission are requested to attend the meeting of the Commission to be held as follows

**Monday 14 December 2020**

**7.00 pm**

**Until further notice, all Council meetings will be held remotely**

Contact:

Tracey Anderson

☎ 0208 356 3312

✉ [tracey.anderson@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:tracey.anderson@hackney.gov.uk)

**Tim Shields**

**Chief Executive, London Borough of Hackney**

**Members: Cllr Sharon Patrick (Chair), Cllr Sade Etti (Vice-Chair),  
Cllr Anthony McMahon, Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Ian Rathbone,  
Cllr Penny Wrout and Cllr Anna Lynch**

## Agenda

**ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

- |   |                        |                   |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Agenda Papers          | (Pages 5 - 140)   |
| 2 | Minutes of the Meeting | (Pages 141 - 162) |

## Access and Information

### Getting to the Town Hall

For a map of how to find the Town Hall, please visit the council's website <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/contact-us.htm> or contact the Overview and Scrutiny Officer using the details provided on the front cover of this agenda.

### Accessibility

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### Further Information about the Commission

If you would like any more information about the Scrutiny Commission, including the membership details, meeting dates and previous reviews, please visit the website or use this QR Code (accessible via phone or tablet 'app')

<http://www.hackney.gov.uk/individual-scrutiny-commissions-living-in-hackney.htm>



### Public Involvement and Recording

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### Rights of Press and Public to Report on Meetings

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and social media providing they do not disturb the conduct of the meeting and providing that the person reporting or providing the commentary is present at the meeting.

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**Monday, 14 December 2020**

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**<https://youtu.be/XlpQCo-ygt4>**

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*Tracey Anderson*

☎ 0208 356 3312

✉ Tracey.anderson@hackney.gov.uk

**Tim Shields**

**Chief Executive, London Borough of Hackney**

|                 |                                                                                 |                                                             |                                                       |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Members:</b> | <b>Cllr Sharon Patrick<br/>(Chair)<br/>Cllr M Can Ozsen<br/>Cllr Anna Lynch</b> | <b>Cllr Sade Etti(Vice<br/>Chair)<br/>Cllr Ian Rathbone</b> | <b>Cllr Anthony McMahon<br/><br/>Cllr Penny Wrout</b> |
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### Agenda

**ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

|   |                                                  |                     |
|---|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | <b>Apologies for Absence</b>                     | 7.00pm              |
| 2 | <b>Urgent Items / Order of Business</b>          | 7.03pm              |
| 3 | <b>Declarations of Interest</b>                  | 7.04pm              |
| 4 | <b>Winter Night Shelter Provision in Hackney</b> | 7.05pm<br>(40 mins) |

Discussion and update on:

- 1) The opening, provision and operations of winter shelters in the borough and the impact of Covid-19.
- 2) Hackney Council's decision making and support in relation to the local winter shelter service provision in the borough.

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                    |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 5 | <p><b>Homelessness and the Impact of Covid-19</b></p> <p>Discussion and update on</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough. Covering the Council's work securing homes for those housed during lockdown and their support to the new street homeless.</li> <li>2) the impact of Covid-19 on this service and impact on future provisions and cost implications to the service.</li> </ol> | <p><b>7.45pm</b><br/>(40 mins)</p> |
| 6 | <p><b>Lettings Policy</b></p> <p>Discussion and update about the lettings policy and the planned consultation on the new proposed policy.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p><b>8.30pm</b><br/>(40 mins)</p> |
| 7 | <p><b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p><b>9.10pm</b><br/>(5 mins)</p>  |
| 8 | <p><b>Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission Work Programme</b></p> <p>To agree or amend the work programme for the remainder of 2020/21</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p><b>9.15pm</b><br/>(15 mins)</p> |
| 9 | <p><b>Any Other Business</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p><b>9.30pm</b><br/>(5 mins)</p>  |

To access the meeting please click in the link <https://youtu.be/XlpQCo-ygt4>

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|                                                                                                                                                   |                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission</b><br><b>14<sup>th</sup> December 2020</b><br><b>Item 4 – Winter Night Shelter Provision in Hackney</b> | Item No<br><b>4</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|

### **Outline**

Winter night shelter provisions would normally open in November as the weather starts to become colder. These are usually in church halls and communal provisions. The global pandemic has impacted on the provisions of night shelters.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan called for the Government to give the same protections afforded to the rest of society and urged for guidance to be issued about how winter shelters can be made COVID-secure, alongside urgent funding to ensure alternative safe accommodation. While there is an exception to the rule of six for 'work, and voluntary or charitable services', allowing the opening of winter night shelters with communal sleeping spaces would expose staff and vulnerable clients to a substantial known infection risk. This would also be contrary to health and safety advice issued to hotels and hostels serving the public.

Government guidance does not endorse the opening of communal night shelter facilities. The Government suggested night shelter projects should consider whether they can provide self-contained accommodation options. For clear safety reasons individual rooms and individual washing facilities should be the default to appropriately protect individuals from communicable diseases such as COVID-19. The Government has advised rotating night shelter models – where a different venue is used each night and people/belongings move each day – carry a higher risk of infection and should not be used. Providers should ensure that staff, volunteers, and guests are supported to adhere to this advice, and other legislation and guidance on social distancing, shielding, self-isolation, and working safely during COVID-19.

The Commission asked for an update on:

- 1) The opening, provision and operations of winter shelters in the borough and the impact of Covid-19.
- 2) Hackney Council's decision making and support in relation to the local winter shelter service provision in the borough.

**Reports in the agenda:**

- Report on Hackney Winter Night Shelter Provision in Hackney from Hackney Doorways

**Invited Attendees:**

**Hackney Doorways**

Trustee, Kathy Meade

**London Borough of Hackney**

- **Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply**, Cllr Rebecca Rennison
- **Head of Benefits and Housing Needs**, Jennifer Wynter.

**Action**

Members are asked to consider the reports, presentations and ask questions.



## **REPORT TO THE SCRUTINY COMMISSION ON WINTER NIGHT SHELTER PROVISION IN HACKNEY**

**Report prepared by:** Christina Ball, Director Hackney Doorways  
**Presented by:** Kathy Meade, Trustee Hackney Doorways

### 1. Introduction

This report provides an overview of the winter night shelter provision in Hackney and Hackney Doorways/Hackney Winter Night Shelter's response to Covid-19.

### 2. Background information

Hackney Winter Night Shelter has been operating in the borough for 25 years. Originally set up by a small group of people in response to the rough sleeping issue they saw locally, several churches decided to each host one night a week to offer food and shelter to homeless people.

The charity Hackney Doorways was established in 2010. Until very recently, the night shelter continued to run from churches (and latterly two primary schools) in Hackney and operated as a "roving night shelter" which means that the venue changed each night of the week. For November and December, 15 bed spaces were offered, which increased to 25 for January through to March. For the latter months, there were 14 venues (a main shelter and a dormitory, accommodating 15 and 10 respectively).

The charity's recent 3-year strategy set out its aim to move to a permanent building, and offer a year-round shelter facility.

The charity is governed by a Board of Trustees and has a small staff team (a director, two advocate workers and a shelter manager), although some additional staff have been recruited for the next six months. The charity works with over 700 volunteers from the local community.

### 3. The Night Shelter Offer

#### 3.1 Women's shelter

In July 2019, the Charity set up a year round women's shelter, part-funded by the GLA Rough Sleeper Innovation Fund. Originally run as a 12 month pilot, this will continue for at least one more year. The women's shelter is run from a 4-bedroomed house in Clapton, leased from the United Reform Church at a below-market rent, and can accommodate up to 9 women, in shared rooms, who can each stay for a period of up to 90 days. During this time, the Women's Advocate Worker, supports each woman to secure more stable move-on accommodation, and to access any other help that they may need to overcome any barriers to their moving-on. This can include accessing welfare benefits, getting legal or immigration advice, securing employment, access to health services, etc. The project has proved very successful in achieving good outcomes for women.

The women's shelter remained open during the whole of the first lockdown period, albeit with a smaller number of women as the GLA insisted that each woman had to have their own room, and so a living room was repurposed as a bedroom. There were five women from March through to September.

Over 90% of the 29 homeless women in year one were found move-on placements and none of the women returned to the streets.

Until the New Year our intention is to keep the number of women low (with a maximum of six) in order to comply with government covid guidelines, and to keep one bedroom free should it be required for any woman to self-isolate.

### 3.2 Winter night shelter

We have secured a temporary (yet "fixed" or "static") venue which opened on 1 November. The capacity for this new shelter is 13, although at least until Christmas with the constantly changing covid restrictions and lockdowns, we will restrict this to a maximum of 10. The building which was previously council offices (owned by Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association) is available to us until the end of February.

We are now seeking premises in Hackney that can be used as a permanent shelter beyond that date.

### 4. Funding

The Charity relies in the main on grants from charitable trusts and foundations, donations and events. It enjoys enormous support from the local community, including faith groups, local businesses and community groups. As far as the author is aware, it has never applied for nor received grants from the Council.

### 5. Effect of covid-19 on service provision

Although Hackney Doorways had planned to move to a “static” shelter venue, we had to accelerate our plans to ensure that we could open this winter. The number of volunteers has been significantly reduced in order to limit the number of people who can be in the shelter to reduce the risk of disease transmission. As a result, it has been necessary to increase staffing levels.

The temporary building in Stoke Newington was furnished and some minor refurbishment works carried out, with the help of volunteers. The service was mobilised within a short space of time.

We are proud that we have been able to set up a comfortable, welcoming and safe space for those who seek our help.

For the coming winter, we are not able to accommodate as many rough sleepers as in prior years.

### Recent lockdown

The 4-week lockdown period meant that we have had to keep guests in all day to abide by the law, which has proved challenging as we have had to increase staff cover to ensure that two staff are on the premises at all times. Although our guests have been fairly accepting of these “rules” it is difficult as the evidence on the local streets is that many do not appear to be following them.

Government guidance on winter night shelters is strict and comprehensive risk assessments have been conducted, with procedures and protocols implemented to ensure compliance. Broadly, this includes:

- the provision of single or small shared rooms with covid-safe screens
- limitations on the number of people who can be in dining room or lounge at one time
- reduction in the number of volunteers so that they can work in small groups
- following all covid safety precautions (covid sanitiser stations, PPE, wearing of masks in communal spaces, etc.)
- procedures in place for guests with coronavirus symptoms (which includes a route to refer to the council to access covid-safe hotel provision if necessary)

Meals are cooked off site and delivered to the shelter by churches and community groups.

### 6. Working with the Council

The winter night shelter and the women’s shelter receive some referrals from the Greenhouse, where clients meet the shelter’s criteria for working with those with low

needs. Most referrals are from other charities and organisations (such as Hackney Migrant Centre, Crisis, Thames Reach, homeless day centres, etc.).

Over recent years, the charity has worked more closely with the Housing Department at Hackney Council and has an excellent working relationship with the Head of Housing and the Rough Sleeping team manager.

The Council supported the application to the GLA and also lent their support to our successful application to the Covid Homelessness Relief Fund. They were instrumental in helping us to find and secure the premises in Stoke Newington.

|                                                                                                                                                 |                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission</b><br><b>14<sup>th</sup> December 2020</b><br><b>Item 5 – Homelessness and the Impact of Covid-19</b> | Item No<br><b>5</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|

## Outline

Councils are subject to a number of statutory duties to accommodate the most vulnerable homeless households and to make efforts to prevent and relieve homelessness. These duties were significantly extended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which came into operation from April 2018. However there is no duty to provide accommodation or shelter for the majority of rough sleepers who do not meet the vulnerability criteria for 'priority need' in the homelessness legislation. In addition there is less responsibility on councils to provide accommodation or shelter to foreign nationals with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) or those from European Economic Area (EEA) countries not exercising their treaty rights, and in some cases councils have no powers to provide help.

At the end of March the government wrote a letter to the leader of every local authority in England asking them to accommodate all people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough and to find alternative accommodation for those in "shelters" where they could not easily self-isolate, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

In the Local Government Association (LGA) report [Lessons learnt from councils' response to rough sleeping during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) it highlights the "The success of *Everyone In* demonstrates that, given the mandate and funding, councils, working with their partners, have the means to end the vast majority of rough sleeping."

In response to the additional funding announced by the Chancellor in the Spending Review to support those at risk of rough sleeping and homelessness Cllr David Renard, Local Government Association housing spokesperson, said:

"Councils have done an incredible job getting people sleeping rough off the streets and have accommodated more than 29,000 people who have faced homelessness since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

"It is good the Government has recognized this with additional funding today, which will help councils to continue their ongoing efforts to support people at risk of rough sleeping and homelessness." But long term the LGA is calling for there to be a shift towards investing in homelessness prevention services

and for council to be given the powers to kick start a post-pandemic building boom for affordable housing to rent.

The Commission asked for the Council to provide an update on

- 1) homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough. Covering the Council's work securing homes for those housed during lockdown and their support to the new street homeless.
- 2) the impact of Covid-19 on this service and impact on future provisions and cost implications to the service.

**Reports in the agenda:**

To support this discussion the following reports have been provided as background information from the Local Government Association.

- LOCAL AUTHORITY BRIEFING: housing people who were rough sleeping and those at risk who have been accommodated due to covid-19
- Lessons learnt from councils' response to rough sleeping during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**There will be a presentation at the meeting from the Benefits and Housing Needs Service.**

**Invited Attendees:**

**London Borough of Hackney**

- **Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply**, Cllr Rebecca Rennison
- **Head of Benefits and Housing Needs**, Jennifer Wynter.

**Action**

Members are asked to consider the reports, presentations and ask questions.





**LOCAL  
PARTNERSHIPS**

# **LOCAL AUTHORITY BRIEFING: HOUSING PEOPLE WHO WERE ROUGH SLEEPING AND THOSE AT RISK WHO HAVE BEEN ACCOMMODATED DUE TO COVID-19**

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Supported by



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Context

At the end of March the government wrote a letter to the leader of every local authority in England asking them to accommodate all people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough and to find alternative accommodation for those in “shelters” where they could not easily self-isolate by the end of the weekend, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Based on MHCLG figures, local authorities have since moved an estimated 90% of rough sleepers known at the start of the lockdown into hotels, bed and breakfasts and other temporary accommodation, and accommodated up to 15,000 individuals.

Local authorities now have the task of sourcing alternative accommodation for this group of people rather than allowing them to return to the streets when lockdown ends. This task is complex, as the majority of rough sleepers need support, at least temporarily, as well as housing, but many do not fall within the definition of those for whom local authorities have a statutory homelessness responsibility to secure accommodation.

Dame Louise Casey, a government adviser on homelessness who reports directly to the prime minister, has been appointed to lead a taskforce to advise the sector on plans to support rough sleepers into long-term, safe accommodation. The £381 million announced for rough sleeping services at Budget has been extended to £433 million with £160m available in 2020/21. The funding is intended to ensure that 6,000 new housing units will be put into the system, with 3,300 of these becoming available in the next 12 months<sup>1</sup> and includes revenue funding to provide support for residents of those homes.

In many cases there may be a need for interim move on accommodation, once initial emergency accommodation is no longer available and before more settled housing and support can be sourced.

All of the best practice we have accessed while preparing this briefing has stressed the critical importance of councils understanding in detail the needs of the people currently accommodated, beginning with their health so as to protect them from COVID-19, and including their support needs and immigration status, so that the right solution can be sourced to give each individual the best chance possible of moving to a stable long-term home. A range of provision, often in collaboration with partners and agencies, will be needed to match individual needs.

On 28 May the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing sent a letter to all council Chief Executives about moving to the next phase of accommodating rough sleepers. He thanks councils for the vital work they have done so far in helping protect this vulnerable group and asks that councils continue to offer help and support. He stresses that next steps should be worked up with health partners to have a health-led approach. MHCLG Rough Sleeping and Homelessness advisors will work with councils to help them prepare initial move-on plans for all individuals by 11 June.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/6-000-new-supported-homes-as-part-of-landmark-commitment-to-end-rough-sleeping>



## 1.2 The challenge

Councils across the country have responded in an unprecedented way to the call to bring “Everybody In”. MHCLG data suggests that 90% of known rough sleepers have been accommodated and a great many more people who were not rough sleeping but were living in night shelter or similar accommodation where social distancing is difficult or impossible have been placed in more suitable accommodation.

Local authorities all over the country want to work with government and a range of local partners to seize the opportunity to end rough sleeping and ensure that those accommodated do not need to return to the streets. But their ability to do so is constrained by a number of factors. £3.2 billion has been made available to councils to support their COVID-19 response, but there are many calls on this funding, not least in meeting local social care responsibilities. In addition, many councils have seen their revenue income from business rates fall very significantly.

In this context, continuing to pay for hotel accommodation for rough sleepers, and those at risk of it, and to provide funds to accommodate people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) beyond the current emergency is extremely challenging for many councils, especially those with large numbers of rough sleepers.

## 1.3 This briefing

We know that councils are working hard to respond to this challenge. This briefing is designed to help you understand the options available for sourcing accommodation and support solutions for this client group in the immediate circumstances of June 2020. It covers sourcing accommodation and support, both interim and longer term, and considers how this may be funded within current resources.

You may already be doing some or all of what we describe in this briefing. We have attempted to quickly assemble ideas and best practice and to signpost you to where you can find further information and help.

This briefing will be updated as things change, which we know they will, as the situation is fast moving.

Councils wishing to access further help can contact the [LGA’s principal advisors for each region](#).

Councils may also wish to refer to the LGA’s [web based resources on housing and homelessness](#).

The LGA has developed an online [COVID-19 resource hub](#) providing information on the broad range of issues to support council’s local responses to the COVID-19 emergency.

The authors of this briefing are **Jenny Coombs** and **Tim Gray**.

**Jenny Coombs** leads Local Partnerships' health and social care programme. She is a qualified town planner and housing professional and previously worked in the registered provider sector and for a London Borough before joining Local Partnerships in 2010. Local Partnerships is jointly owned by the Local Government Association, Welsh Government and HM Treasury. They work only for the public sector and form part of the government family.



**Tim Gray** is an associate of Local Partnerships and also leads an independent consultancy specialising in homelessness, multi-agency collaboration, temporary accommodation, and outcomes-based commissioning. Tim has previously worked for central government, local government, housing associations and the voluntary sector, and has led on the development of a number of programmes and policies of national significance.





## 2 SOURCING ACCOMMODATION

### 2.1 Introduction

This section covers options for sourcing accommodation both from within councils' own stock and with partners. It covers:

- Local authorities
- Registered Providers and charities
- Private rented sector
- Other sources

All of these opportunities will require associated support to a lesser or greater degree. This includes assisting individuals to view, accept and take up a tenancy and, in many circumstances, a level of ongoing support, whether short or longer term. Sourcing support is covered in section 3.

Useful guidance on accommodation and support planning post-COVID-19 from Homeless Link can be accessed below:

[homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/COVID-19%20Transition%20Planning%20local%20homelessness%20provision%20and%20move%20on%20%20.pdf](https://homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/COVID-19%20Transition%20Planning%20local%20homelessness%20provision%20and%20move%20on%20%20.pdf)

### 2.2 Needs assessment and planning

It is extremely important that there is a comprehensive assessment of the needs and issues of those accommodated in hotels in order to inform which types of accommodation will be most appropriate for them.

The assessment should include at least the following:

- Vulnerability to COVID-19, due to ill-health and/or health conditions, age or other risk factors
- Access to public funds i.e. which clients are subject to NRPF conditions, or are without specific status but not able to access benefits or homelessness assistance, such as those whose immigration status is unclear and many European nationals. What may be able to be done to help some of these clients gain access to benefits. This may be through work on immigration status based on current circumstances or through assistance to gain employment
- Status under the homelessness legislation. Where clients are in Priority Need, councils are likely to be under a duty to provide interim accommodation
- Support needs and risk assessment. What level of support does the client need to be able to move successfully into and sustain a stable home? Are they ready to engage with detoxification and rehabilitation for drug and/or alcohol dependency? Is this high support provision, such as Housing First or residential care? Do they need supported accommodation or floating support for a limited time period? Can they be successfully accommodated in private rented accommodation or general needs social housing with limited support after taking up the tenancy?
- Health care (including drug and alcohol dependency), care and support needs. Many people in emergency accommodation have engaged with their own health and wellbeing, and services, for the first time; health gains have been made. Enabling continuity of care should be considered as part of move-on planning

- Current employment and benefit status, including if the individual is subject to the Overall Benefit Cap (OBC)
- Disability, especially where limited mobility means they need accessible accommodation

Some people will also benefit from assessments of care and support needs under the Care Act. LGA and ADASS have published the below briefing:

[local.gov.uk/adult-safeguarding-and-homelessness-briefing-positive-practice](https://www.local.gov.uk/adult-safeguarding-and-homelessness-briefing-positive-practice)

A number of councils have developed systems grouping clients according to vulnerability to infection, support needs, immigration status and other factors to help assess the type of accommodation solutions which will be most appropriate. This type of assessment will greatly facilitate joint working with partners such as housing associations, who may be able to help provide accommodation. It should be carried out by officers with appropriate skills, whether employed by the council, voluntary sector partners, the NHS or using a combination of skills as needed.

Important guidance on triage, assessment and care for homeless people during COVID-19 is available [here](#), which sets out clinical advice and guidance on delivering a health-led, multi-agency approach to reducing the risk of infection and severe illness among the homeless population as a result of COVID-19.

Councils will need to take account of this guidance in their procurement and allocations of accommodation, and will need to account for continued transmission risk, which would suggest maintaining at least some self-contained provision for the more vulnerable COVID-CARE and COVID-PROTECT groups, working in partnership with local public health and NHS leads.

Councils' decisions will also need to account for the possibility of a second spike or a local outbreak amongst those accommodated in hostels or supported housing.

### **Case Study 1 Coventry City Council**

Coventry City Council fund The Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre (CRMC) in the city to provide advice and information. A meeting took place where council commissioners explained that their corporate priority is to assess all 44 NRPF accommodated in the city in order to ascertain their status and following this their accommodation options. CRMC agreed to prioritise this piece of work and meetings were booked for all of the individuals with lawyers employed by the centre. Therefore, there was no additional cost to the council.

More detailed information and advice on how to assess the needs of clients accommodated in hotels and other emergency accommodation has been produced by Crisis:

- <https://crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/resources-for-practitioners/COVID-19-transition-planning/>

- <https://crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/resources-for-practitioners/housing-centre-guides/local-needs-assessment/>

## 2.3 Local authorities

### 2.3.1 Background

Of the 317 councils in England with a housing responsibility, roughly half retain their own stock. In addition many councils have established housing companies in recent years to develop or acquire new housing both in and outside of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Councils also own land and assets, some of which may be suitable for repurposing for accommodation for this client group or for development for new accommodation.

### 2.3.2 Opportunities

#### **Existing stock – settled accommodation**

- Suitable voids in existing HRA stock. It may be necessary to review allocations policies in order to use voids for this client group – see Newcastle’s case study below
- Suitable voids in any housing company owned stock outside of HRA
- Surplus assets such as vacant sheltered housing, care homes or offices that could be repurposed to provide self-contained move-on accommodation
- Accommodation above council-owned retail units may be suitable for conversion to self-contained move-on accommodation





## Case Study 2

### Newcastle City Council allocations during the COVID-19 pandemic

Newcastle's aim was to avoid the use of hotels with the associated costs and problems of non-specialist accommodation providers by strengthening our housing pathways to maximise the value of our existing investment in homeless accommodation.

The Council's existing Allocation and Lettings policy permits the Council to offer direct lets to those in priority need and to suspend the normal way of advertising properties for bidding through the choice-based lettings system. In addition, the Newcastle Housing and Emergencies Concept of Operations allows the Council to suspend policies and procedures where required to respond to an emergency situation, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The decision to suspend the Lettings and Allocations policy was implemented on the 26th of March for an initial three-week period reflective of the government's lockdown period. It was subsequently extended for a further three-week period.

The Council established an Emergency Housing Panel. It already had in place panels for extra care housing, supported housing for people with learning disabilities and supported housing for people with mental health needs. The panels are multi-disciplinary which has been proven to embed a solutions focused approach centred around customer need. Extending the panel approach was agreed as the most effective solution to keep meeting emergency housing need.

The purpose of the panel is to identify appropriate options for people in emergency housing need. It also facilitates the release of vital bed spaces in hospitals, crisis accommodation for homeless people and temporary care placements. The panel is chaired by key officers from the strategic housing service and includes representatives from the ALMO, Your Homes Newcastle, the Homelessness Service and Children and Adult's Social Care.

To date (27th May) the panel have received a total of 194 referrals, this has resulted in 14 hospital discharges to free up urgently needed bed spaces, and moved 70 individuals on from temporary homeless accommodation. The majority of homeless cases dealt with have prevented individuals going into crisis accommodation.

The Council is planning to retain the advantages of the panel and particularly the sense of urgency needed to have rapid rehousing from homeless accommodation and to bridge the gap between supported and general needs housing by strengthening the pathway and in doing so identify the size and nature of the gap to be bridged.



#### Existing stock – interim accommodation

- Some councils use their own stock as temporary accommodation and there may be opportunity to increase this in the short term
- Surplus assets such as above that could be repurposed to provide self-contained interim accommodation
- Councils may also wish to accommodate people in existing leased, nightly paid or other forms of temporary accommodation, although this may be expensive in some areas

### **New stock – settled accommodation**

- Surplus land that could be used for the development of new, permanent supported or move-on housing
- The majority of councils are involved in One Public Estate (OPE) partnerships with other public sector partners in their area. These partnerships are an important way of identifying surplus public estate or opportunities to reconfigure the public estate. OPE partnerships may be able to identify land in the ownership of other public bodies that could be used for development for this purpose. Details of OPE partnerships and contacts can be found at: [local.gov.uk/topics/housing-planning-and-homelessness/one-public-estate](https://local.gov.uk/topics/housing-planning-and-homelessness/one-public-estate)

### **New stock – interim accommodation**

- Land that could be used on a “meanwhile” basis for the construction of temporary housing, potentially demountable and moved to a different location

#### **Case Study 3**

#### **Birmingham City Council**

Birmingham City Council accommodated 143 people as part of the Everybody In COVID-19 response. This included 88 No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) cases, which is higher than expected, as NRPF constituted only 10% of the most recent rough sleeper count in Birmingham. This reveals a hidden problem with NRPF homelessness which has come to light in a number of areas of the country.

The council has accommodated people in a range of accommodation types, including a commercial hotel, commissioned supported accommodation, temporary accommodation, and with some of the non-commissioned supported housing providers with whom the council has a positive relationship.

A night shelter was closed, and the staff redeployed to provide support for those moved into hotel accommodation, which has been crucial to the success of those placements.


The aim of the council is to ensure that everyone who is eligible has suitable offer of accommodation by the second week of June and officers are confident this can be achieved.

The outstanding issue causing most difficulties are the high number of NRPF clients whom the council has accommodated at its own expense under the COVID-19 emergency. Immigration assessments have been made for all NRPF clients, but these cases are often difficult to resolve in the short term.

## **2.4 Registered providers and charities**

### **2.4.1 Background**

Registered Providers are important partners for local authorities in providing sustainable accommodation solutions for those relocated as a result of



COVID-19. There are also a wide range of other charitable organisations working with people experiencing homelessness, that play an important role in either providing accommodation and supporting people to sustain their tenancies.

The National Housing Federation made clear in its [response](#) to the HCLG Committee Inquiry on COVID-19 that “Housing associations have a key role to play in preventing and ending homelessness and have been heavily involved in the effort to alleviate homelessness during the COVID-19 crisis. They are also in a strong position to assist with the next steps following the crisis”.

There is a real will among housing associations and homelessness charities to work with councils to accommodate former rough sleepers and residents of insecure temporary accommodation, and housing associations as partners may have the ability to help in a variety of ways.

The National Housing Federation has produced a briefing for housing associations, which encourages them to work closely with local authorities to help provide move on for homeless people placed in emergency accommodation due to COVID-19.

<https://www.housing.org.uk/globalassets/files/resource-files/housing-providers-and-local-authorities-tackling-move-on-together-during-coronavirus.pdf>

If you do not have strong links with local charities working with people experiencing homelessness you may find it helpful to make contact with the Partnerships Team at Homeless Link. Homeless Link has Partnership Managers who work with homelessness charities in their areas and can help link agencies up and promote collaboration. If you are interested please contact: [Anna.Suswillo@homelesslink.org.uk](mailto:Anna.Suswillo@homelesslink.org.uk)

## 2.4.2 Opportunities

### General Approach

Housing Associations and homelessness charities are keen to work closely in partnership with councils to understand and find ways to meet local needs, and it is likely to be worth bringing the most prominent members of the sector together locally to discuss the contribution which they can make collectively. This can be done by building on existing local groups or fora and, if necessary, seeking support from housing associations where councils have more established relationships in order to bring others on board. There may be a local multi-agency Homelessness COVID-19 Taskforce meeting to oversee initial placements into hotels, and this group could provide an opportunity to progress joint discussions about move on and more settled options, as well as assessment planning. Some new partners may need to be invited to these groups.

In some areas where a number of RPs work across local authority boundaries, there will be advantages in local authorities coming together as a group in order to discuss provision with the main RPs.



## Case Study 4

### Plymouth Alliance

Plymouth City Council (PCC) has had an Alliance contract in place since April 2019 ( 25 separate contracts delivered by seven different organisations collectively known as The Plymouth Alliance) to deliver and effect change across the complex needs system in the delivery of statutory and non-statutory temporary supported housing, homelessness support and drug and alcohol support.

Pre-COVID-19, the Plymouth Alliance had a range of short-term emergency dormitory style provision for rough sleepers (22 bed spaces across two services). In response to the crisis, a 12 bed and a 15 bed house were initially leased for three months (H4H). Night staff from one of the original services, in addition to multi-disciplinary staff from across the Alliance provide 24 hour support at the H4H houses. The day centre kitchen (which closed during the pandemic) is being used to provide (via delivery) one hot meal per day to residents.

Alongside this, a multi-agency response process has been put in place with the Rough Sleeper Outreach Team (RSOT), local authority housing service (Community Connections) and the Access to Accommodation Hub (A2A) to have oversight of how accommodation across the entire system is utilised. Newly evidenced rough sleepers are given a same day appointment.

The Plymouth Alliance has made a commitment to maintain the H4H properties so that there is no longer any dormitory style accommodation and rough sleepers remain off the streets. An additional 48 bed spaces in leased HMO properties have also been taken on.

The Plymouth Alliance are developing their reset strategy for their service model post COVID-19 and there is no intention to return to the previous model of delivery. Part of the reset strategy includes amongst other things: taking on additional staff to work across the temporary accommodation portfolio to support move on wherever possible; bringing on additional HMO properties, for initial temporary accommodation with potential to become permanent accommodation; revisiting day and treatment services delivery to develop new best practice to meet the needs across the wider system.




### Existing stock

It will often be possible to let general needs or supported housing stock already owned by RPs to former rough sleepers leaving hotels. This will depend on the operation of local allocations policies and of RPs lettings policies for vacancies falling both within and outside existing nominations agreements.

A number of housing associations are currently carrying voids, as a result of a suspension of lettings during the COVID-19 lock down. This presents a real opportunity for move on from hotels, but this situation is unlikely to continue for long.

Local authorities should carefully consider their priorities in nominating to these vacancies in order to ensure that the opportunity to house homeless people accommodated in hotels is not lost. This may involve a temporary change to allocations policies and/or



an increased use of direct offers of accommodation, where this is permitted within local allocations policy rules.

In order to maximise the number of lettings available to rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping, it will be sensible for housing associations and local authorities to discuss each applicant's needs on a case by case basis, including any support needed and any issues around arrears or affordability. The appropriateness of housing offers (broadly general needs or supported housing) should be decided based on need. Where more support than usual is needed, funding for this will need to be considered. Applicants with complex needs may benefit from a Housing First or specialist supported housing offer.

New government [guidance to social landlords](#) on lettings was published on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020. This emphasises the need for lettings activities to comply with government advice on [social distancing in the workplace](#), including:

- property inspections for vacating tenants
- collecting returned keys
- conducting viewings
- conducting tenancy sign-ups
- preparing homes to be re-let

Whilst allocations of accommodation by local authorities remain governed by the Housing Act 1996, and associated guidance, it may be worth considering making direct offers of accommodation to those moving out of hotels, rather than following normal bidding processes, where this will increase the speed of moves. In such cases, it is good practice to discuss with the RP concerned any considerations about a particular property (support, location, safety, accessibility) which would affect which potential tenant would most benefit from that type of property. It must be acknowledged, however, that in many areas of the country, there will not be sufficient suitable social lettings of the right size in existing general needs or supported housing stock to accommodate those moving out of hotels within the time available. Some councils may also decide that, where clients would not be in priority need under the homelessness legislation, and would not normally be a priority for a social let, then other options are considered more appropriate.



## Case Study 5

### Wigan Council and The Riverside Group

Your Housing Group and Jigsaw formed the Springboard partnership and currently manage the homelessness supported housing service in Wigan. This is a mixture of hostels, shared houses and flats for people with a range of support needs.

In Wigan there is a weekly multi agency meeting to review the current situation due to COVID-19, which the council housing options team, homelessness commissioning team, the Springboard partners, drug and alcohol team, public health and The Brick (who are operating the hotel with Wigan Council) attend.

There have been a number of move-ons out of the hotel into Springboard's supported accommodation. The partnership have been working with the council and The Brick to identify people who are ready to move on from the hotel. So far five people have been successfully resettled and three more have been identified for the next properties.

Riverside are in discussions with the Council to see if they can develop a supported housing scheme for some of the women in the hotel. These women are vulnerable and have complex needs. Working with the council, people living in Springboard supported housing will be offered tenancies with floating support. This will free up supported accommodation for women with higher support needs.



### Accommodation leased by housing associations or charities

Another possible solution for some clients with support needs is for housing associations or charities to lease self-contained studio or 1-bed private rented sector accommodation and let it to those exiting hotels and hostels. This could be on a short-term or longer-term basis, with the housing association or charity letting accommodation and providing housing management.


If such leased accommodation meets a local need and provides “specified accommodation” as defined in the housing benefit regulations<sup>2</sup>, then it may be possible for housing associations or charities and local authorities to agree a level of rent which makes leasing viable for the client group being considered, including the provision of an appropriate level of housing management.

Some housing associations and charities are already providing non-commissioned supported housing in this way and have arrangements with local authorities to provide nominations. Where such accommodation is already suitable and allows social distancing guidelines to be followed, then it may be possible to use it for the accommodation of former rough sleepers.

In other cases, it may be possible for local authorities to enter into new arrangements with housing associations or charities to provide good quality accommodation of this type, which

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<sup>2</sup> HB Circular [A8/2014](#) gives a definition



can potentially provide a sufficient level of support and intensive housing management for clients who need it, at a lower cost to the local authority than might otherwise be the case.

Depending on local arrangements and the needs of individual clients, housing association leased accommodation could be used on an interim basis or long term to accommodate single homeless clients.

It is important to note, however, that for providers registered with the Regulator of Social Housing, the accommodation would normally need to qualify as “Specialised Social Housing” in order for rents not to be subject to the Rent Standard<sup>3</sup>. This sets a high bar for the level of support needs of residents, and the level of support which needs to be provided.

The Regulator of Social Housing<sup>4</sup> has made clear that it expects registered providers offering specialised social housing to have proper internal controls on rent setting and should set rent levels agreed with the commissioning body, i.e. the local authority in this case.

Charities which are not registered providers are not subject to the same regulations on the level of support which needs to be provided or the level of support needs of those accommodated. However, the housing benefit rules for specified accommodation let by non-RPs are less generous and there is consequently likely to be a cost to the council.

This suggestion will only work with reputable providers and where clear quality standards are agreed between councils and those providers. The reported abuse of the specified accommodation housing benefit rules by some providers in the market to provide poor quality accommodation with poor quality support reported in some areas is very much to be discouraged.

Support, which is not covered by housing benefit, must be separately funded.

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<sup>3</sup> [Rent Standard 2020](#)

<sup>4</sup> RSH [Setting Rents for Social Housing: Addendum to Sector Risk Profile 2019](#)

## Case Study 6

### London Borough of Hillingdon

Hillingdon Council is working in partnership with a local charity, Trinity Homeless Projects, to provide supported HMO accommodation for single homeless adults.

Working with local landlords, Trinity has been able to lease houses and convert into five and six bed homes which it then can offer to homeless clients that have been assessed by Hillingdon Council.

Because Trinity is a charitable organisation providing supported accommodation they are able to claim enhanced housing benefit that allows them to fully fund and provide a holistic intensive housing management service which provides support and supervision for residents. Trinity also provide personal coaching, support in living skills and access to employment and training. Trinity also looks to move on residents when they are ready to do so.

To ensure a close relationship, Trinity sits on the council's Rough Sleeper and Homelessness Strategy Delivery Group and they are a key partner in the council's Rough Sleeper Initiative Programme. All the properties are licenced as HMOs to ensure they are safe for the residents and Hillingdon has further service-level agreements in place with Trinity. Trinity has a long history of working with Hillingdon and is therefore a trusted partner.

To date, Trinity has more than 230 beds in 44 properties and was able to rehouse well over 100 single homeless clients in the past 12 months. Hillingdon is also in the process of leasing a six bedroom property to Trinity in order for them to further expand the rooms available for this client group. This is a model that Hillingdon would like to replicate with local housing associations as it has the potential to significantly increase housing provision for single homeless people.



### Repurposing of new or existing provision

There may also be local opportunities for councils to work with housing associations on available opportunities to change the current or intended use of accommodation owned by housing associations in order to serve the needs of rough sleepers. Such opportunities could include:

- temporary or long-term conversion of RP accommodation intended for market rent or for sale to affordable rent accommodation. This may be facilitated by the slow-down in the commercial market difficulties some housing associations are experiencing. There may be considerations associated with the design and the financing of properties, or with planning permission, which present barriers to such a change of use, but it is worth exploring the options as part of a strategic discussion with local providers
- conversion of sheltered accommodation, commercial buildings, or other accommodation no longer required for its original use to accommodate this client group on an interim or longer-term basis, depending on suitability.



- adaptation of RP owned hostels or supported housing not currently compatible with social distancing to make them suitable in the new circumstances
- acquisition by housing associations of street properties or properties in new developments for use as social or affordable rented accommodation. This could potentially use capital funding from RPs, from councils, from institutional investors, or a combination of sources
- use of sites owned by housing associations which have not yet been developed out to provide demountable prefabricated pod or modular accommodation capable of maintaining social distancing rules
- review of disposal lists to assess whether any properties earmarked for disposal could be repurposed for this use

Capital grant may be required to support these options in some cases. Councils can explore with MHCLG whether any of the new capital funding now available to help end rough sleeping and intended to deliver 6,000 units of accommodation, could be available for this. Councils should approach their MHCLG Homelessness Advice and Support Team (HAST) or Rough Sleeping advisor in the first instance.

### Case Study 7

#### **Greater Manchester Housing Providers: collective response to emergency resettlement**

Greater Manchester Housing Provider (GMHP) is a partnership of 25 housing associations working in the 10 local authorities of the city region, collectively housing over half a million residents. Working with the combined authority, GMHP have agreed to assist in the rehousing of 311 guests directly from hotel accommodation and other temporary accommodation. A significant proportion of this accommodation will be used for Housing first.


This above will be achieved by all members committing to:

- Pledge all available and appropriate properties to GMCA/Las for an initial period of four months to allow for matches to be made
- Pledge all properties to the Combined Authorities “Ethical Letting’s Agency” Programme for six months
- Commit to a “No Eviction” policy
- Partner with charities who have accommodation but need Housing Provider support for Housing Benefit claims

### **Social impact investment**

Councils interested in procuring accommodation and support may be interested in exploring the options to commission services for rough sleepers on a payment for outcomes basis, with the aim of achieving better value for money for the achievement of outcomes including sustained accommodation and employment.

Social Impact Bonds are a way in which public sector commissioners, including local authorities, can contract services on the basis of what they



achieve, rather than paying only for the service itself, with some of the risk taken by social investors. An overview of SIBs can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-impact-bonds>

There have been several examples of successful Social Impact Bonds working with rough sleepers with complex needs including the [GM Homes Partnership](#).

Councils can contact the government's [Centre for SIBs](#) for more information [Centreforsibs@culture.gov.uk](mailto:Centreforsibs@culture.gov.uk)

## 2.5 Private rented sector

### 2.5.1 Background

It is clear that not all clients accommodated in hotels or other facilities in response to COVID-19 can be accommodated long-term by social landlords, and that the private rented sector (PRS) has a key role to play, either in provision of accommodation now, or as a longer-term option. Many short-term rough sleepers or night shelter residents do not have significant support needs, and the majority of those seen sleeping rough by outreach teams are only seen sleeping rough on one occasion.

Private rented accommodation can potentially accommodate people with a wide range of support needs if appropriate support to landlords and tenants is provided. Even Housing First accommodation, for those with the highest support needs, is being provided successfully within the private rented sector.

It is important that private rented accommodation provides appropriate quality and security to meet the needs of the client group. This can sometimes be challenging, especially in areas where private rented accommodation available to low-income households is in short supply. Councils can mitigate this by putting in place inspection processes and ensuring properties meet standards set out in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

### 2.5.2 Opportunities

#### Existing PRS Access schemes

Many local authorities have a successful relationship with private sector landlords which has been developed over many years, either directly or via voluntary sector PRS access schemes to which they nominate or fund.

Councils maintain a list of schemes around the country in their [Help to Rent database](#).

We understand from informal discussions with the voluntary sector and landlords' representatives that there may currently be an opportunity to expand these schemes. This is due both to the private lettings market slowing as result of COVID-19, and as a result of the increase in Local Housing Allowance levels since April which has brought them closer to market rents.

However the Overall Benefit Cap has not risen to reflect the increase in LHA levels, meaning that in some more expensive areas of the country, and especially in much of London, the new LHA levels are effectively not applicable to clients who are subject to the OBC because they are unemployed or do not work sufficient hours.

## Leasing

Another option is for private rented accommodation to be leased. As discussed above this could in certain circumstances be done by RPs, or could be by other providers or agents. Both RPs and charities may be able to designate such accommodation as Specified Accommodation in order to make leasing with the required amount of housing management a viable option, and to enable provision of accommodation to under 35s, who would be impacted by the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) restriction in Universal Credit and Housing Benefit, if the accommodation is classified as PRS. Some clients who are under 35 are [exempt](#) from the SAR restriction, for example those over 25 who have previously lived for at least three months in a hostel where support was provided.

[https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice/benefits/benefits\\_for\\_under\\_35s\\_in\\_shared\\_housing](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/benefits/benefits_for_under_35s_in_shared_housing)

Where charities (as opposed to RPs) let accommodation as specified accommodation, only 60% of the additional housing benefit claimable to fund the extra housing management needed to accommodate single homeless people with support needs is likely to be reclaimable by councils from DWP, and so this will have a cost to the local authority.

Housing Benefit for residents living in specified accommodation does not count towards the Overall Benefit Cap.

Leasing PRS supply as temporary accommodation can also be done by councils. Councils leasing accommodation will in most cases be limited to claiming from DWP the 90% of 2011 LHA rates applicable to temporary accommodation, as councils leasing accommodation for other purposes are likely to have to account for the accommodation within the Housing Revenue Account.

Accommodation leased by organisations other than local authorities can be let at LHA rates if it is classified as private rented, and is then subject to the same benefit rules as other private rented accommodation.

## Increased LHA rates

Obtaining accommodation from the private rented sector may also be made easier by the increase of Local Housing Allowance rates across the country to 30<sup>th</sup> percentile rents from 30<sup>th</sup> April. Both the new and old LHA rates are shown [here](#) for all areas of England.

The largest increases have been in the areas where LHA rates had fallen the furthest behind market rents, with increases of over 40% for some property sizes in some areas. On average across England, LHA rates have increased by between 11% and 15% depending on the property size needed.

As already mentioned, however, in some areas the full increase is not available to those affected by the Overall Benefit Cap.

## Tenant Fees Act exemption

It is also worth noting that the [Tenant Fees Act, 2019](#), which specifically prohibits up-front fees to landlords, contains an exemption for local authorities who need to make an incentive payment to a landlord in order to secure a PRS property. This potentially gives local authorities an advantage in securing properties in parts of the country where properties at LHA level rents are the hardest to find. This of course does not mean that councils should be bidding up prices, or paying more than they need to, especially if competing with other local authorities for the same accommodation. The London Inter Borough Accommodation Agreement and work on joint procurement through [Capital Letters](#) are examples of successful collaboration to prevent competition between councils driving up the costs of accommodation.



## Services to landlords and tenants

Despite the April LHA increases, PRS properties for tenants with a history of homelessness may be difficult to secure in the private rented sector, due to landlord concerns about housing this client group. Councils can help with this by setting up good quality landlord and tenant support services to reassure landlords that help will be available in the event of any problems, such as anti-social behaviour or rent arrears.

Provision of resettlement support and floating support where needed is likely to be attractive to landlords. One of the most important requirements for many landlords is that they feel they have someone at the council who they can turn to in the event of difficulties, who is easily contactable, and who will be responsive in helping to address the problem.

If these things are in place, and if local authorities operate proper procedures in order to ensure that properties are safe, well maintained and provide good quality accommodation, then the PRS can potentially be an important part of the solution.

The National Residential Landlords Association have produced [guidance](#) on dealing with COVID-19 in private rented accommodation.

## 2.6 Other

### 2.6.1 Background

This section covers a range of other provision which local authorities may be able to consider, depending on their local housing markets.

### 2.6.2 Opportunities

#### Private developments


Engaging with developers about units intended for sale is not likely to be fruitful for an interim solution, so those nearing completion that are designed for the rental market are likely to be more useful. As the planning authority councils will be aware of developments in progress in their area. If leasing apartments in a block is being contemplated, the council or a partner organisation may have to take a lease of the whole block, in view of perceptions. A bond or other contractual obligation to undertake repairs, cleaning and redecoration is likely to be needed at the end of the lease.

There could also be owners of permitted development conversions in city centres who would welcome an overarching lease to a council on a short-term basis. Councils thinking of making use of such accommodation should exercise considerable care to ensure that such developments are suitable for the client group in terms of space standards and management, and ensure that accommodating this client group is compatible with other residents who may already be living there.

Longer term there may be opportunities to acquire accommodation intended for sale from developers, if the housing market does not quickly pick up. However, as dispersed accommodation is preferable for permanent housing, these opportunities may be limited.

In any event councils should make use of the contacts they have with developers through their roles as planning authorities to understand what opportunities exist locally.

#### Empty properties



Councils may be able to source additional accommodation through empty properties in the private sector. Targeted work with councils' empty property teams may be fruitful.

### **Student accommodation**

A number of higher education providers have announced they will not be teaching face to face until 2021, which could lead to difficulties in filling student accommodation, at least in the short term. If accommodation is self-contained this may be an opportunity for interim move-on accommodation.

There may also be soon to be completed student accommodation that could be available.

Councils in towns and cities will have high level contacts with the higher education providers in their area, and these should be used to explore what potential there may be for under-utilised student accommodation to be used. In addition the MHCLG Taskforce is engaging nationally with student accommodation providers.

### **Caravan and mobile home parks**

Caravan and mobile home parks, where assessed as suitable and where there is limited local demand due to current circumstances, could be used as interim accommodation to move on from hotels before individuals are offered a permanent home.

Again, councils are likely to have contacts with the operators in their area and could reach out to them to discuss opportunities.

### **Vacant retail space**

Some notable retail brands have gone into administration in recent months and many areas have vacant retail units in their towns and cities. Some of these are units in high streets that would not convert readily, but some are larger, which may have potential for conversion to self-contained units, perhaps with one of the modular temporary buildings suppliers, which there are on government frameworks. For the longer term, councils could purchase in-town stores from receivers to help assemble sites for redevelopment.



## Case Study 9

### Basildon Borough Council

Basildon Borough Council has received a total of 43 approaches from rough sleepers. 58% came in the initial wave of “Everybody in”, with the remaining 42% being received after March 27th. With only five individuals found in Basildon’s rough sleeper count in Autumn 2019, this was a considerably higher amount than anticipated, with many becoming known to the council for the first time.

The council currently has 28 rough sleepers accommodated in hotels and are in the process of offering accommodation in the private sector to all those in receipt of public funds. All approaches have been dealt with in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act, with assessments being undertaken and applications taken under the relief duty.

7 people have been placed successfully in the PRS. The council has also worked with clients on expectation management to reduce the possibility of accommodation offers being refused.

Working closely with colleagues at Essex County Council and agencies such as Peabody South East, all rough sleepers are having support and recovery plans drawn up. This will help identify any assistance that may be required from other agencies to help secure and maintain tenancies. In addition, councils in Essex are meeting frequently to produce a unified recovery plan across the County.





## 3 SOURCING SUPPORT

### 3.1 Introduction

All of the best practice we have accessed during preparing this briefing has stressed the critical importance of councils understanding in detail the needs of the people currently accommodated, including their support needs, so that the right solution can be sourced to give each individual the best chance possible of moving to a permanent home and sustaining a tenancy.

Councils will need to carry out individual assessments of everyone currently accommodated in hotels and other emergency accommodation as detailed in Section 2.2.

### 3.2 Housing First

One of the most widely reported and encouraging experiences from councils is that rough sleepers with complex needs, who have been entrenched on the streets for long periods, have come into accommodation and engaged with services during the COVID-19 crisis in a way which is unprecedented. This provides a unique opportunity to work with people to develop individual, tailored solutions to their needs. Crisis provides guidance on a “by name” approach.

<https://toolkits.homelessness.world-habitat.org/start-making-changes/by-name-list-details/>

Many of these individuals will need bespoke personalised support away from a hostel setting, including to meet health and care needs, if they are not to return to rough sleeping. Housing First, a supported housing model which involves providing a tenancy and intensive long-term support, is likely to be the most appropriate way forward for some. This is not a low cost option, but working to support this group is likely to be a priority for many councils, and evidence shows that this is a highly effective approach to ending homelessness for people experiencing multiple disadvantage.

Homeless Link have produced helpful [guidance and other resources](#) on Housing First for commissioners, and are also happy to give specialist telephone advice to local authorities interested in setting up a Housing First service. Please e-mail: [joanne.prestidge@homelesslink.org.uk](mailto:joanne.prestidge@homelesslink.org.uk)

### 3.3 Support providers in the voluntary and charitable sectors

Many councils commission support services from voluntary and charitable sector and housing association providers. Current circumstances may require contract variation or recommissioning of these services to direct resources to where the client group is currently located and according to changed needs.



## Case study 10

### Cambridge City Council new service model development

At present, there are 118 people housed in temporary accommodation in Cambridge. A working group of caseworkers and managers was formed in order to assess housing and support needs for this cohort. People were placed in one of four groups depending on the severity of their support needs. This enabled the group to identify the most appropriate housing solution for each person.. The options identified were:

Housing First – self-contained accommodation for individuals with multiple and complex needs with intensive wrap-around support (ratio one caseworker to six tenants)

Pods – new, self-contained modular homes in the city, for individuals who would struggle to access shared or supported accommodation, with regular, tailored support (ratio 1:10)

“Hostel Route” – existing, traditional supported accommodation

Supported Shared – shared houses (usually 2-bed) for people who would be capable of sharing with others but would struggle with “mainstream” accommodation. Support provided (ratio 1:10)

Statutory Route – assistance under existing homelessness and/or social care duties, resulting in a social tenancy or a social care placement

Private Rented Sector – shared accommodation for individuals with low to moderate support needs. Support provided (ratio 1:10)

Reconnection – assistance with moving to another part of the country (or another country)

Work is now ongoing to calculate numbers of vacancies. A “plan A” and “plan B” will be offered to every individual currently housed under the COVID-19 measures. There is still likely however to be a shortfall in available accommodation. To address this, the working group is developing links with student accommodation provision in the city to utilise units which are likely to be available due to lower student populations next year, especially from overseas students. The model proposed is for properties to be leased to a Housing Provider who will provide Housing Management, while a local voluntary group previously involved in street outreach provides the support. The model is dependent on being accepted as Housing Benefit Exempt to cover costs of additional intensive housing management.



## 3.4 Adult social care

Some individuals will be in need of more support than a housing or supported housing solution can provide. It is critical in these cases that adult social care is involved to provide an assessment and to be involved in care planning. In two-tier areas in particular it is important to make the right connections with adult social care services and for these to be reinforced at a senior level.



### 3.5 Health services

This cohort of people [report and experience much poorer health than the general population](#), and face barriers to accessing health services; ill-health and health conditions may be undiagnosed and untreated (it is unlikely individuals will be recognised as being in need of shielding). It will be important to work with local NHS organisations and public health teams - particularly commissioners of drug and alcohol treatment services,<sup>5</sup> to ensure that those who need them have health needs assessments and that they develop plans to meet the gaps in health requirements that are identified through these assessments. Councils should work with the local NHS to ensure continuity of care as people move between services or pathways. Pre COVID-19 case studies of successful work between councils and the NHS on health and homelessness are [available here](#).

#### Case Study 11

##### Blackpool Council multi-disciplinary homelessness health team

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, Blackpool Council used funding from the government's RSI programme to set up a multi-disciplinary homelessness health team. The team sat in Housing Options but also included mental health support and drug and alcohol support from the local NHS hospital trust.

Housing Options worked very closely with Public Health on establishing the team. Through Public Health, the local CCG have engaged with the model to the extent of funding its continuation for a further two year pilot period, with a view to longer term funding if successful. The CCG has also funded the addition of physical nursing care, and the lived experience team are involved in co-production of the service as it develops.

This platform having been established, Blackpool was able to very rapidly assemble a virtual multi-disciplinary team to support homeless people with COVID-19 symptoms, which has been very effective.



### 3.6 Criminal justice

#### MoJ Regional Homelessness Prevention Taskforces

The Ministry of Justice has established a Homelessness Prevention Taskforce (HPT) in each regional probation division to which is tasked with working with local authorities and other partners to help prevent rough sleeping during COVID-19.

Each task force aims to identify prisoners at risk of homelessness on release, including those being considered for early release to reduce COVID-19 infection risks whilst in custody, and those being moved from approved premises and bail accommodation.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-rough-sleeping/health-matters-rough-sleeping>

The intention is to identify housing pathways to prevent homelessness and support moves in to settled accommodation and to work across the system with public, private and voluntary sector partners.

Councils can contact the HPT in their area to discuss how they can work together in the current crisis, and should do so especially where established and effective relationships with probation services to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping do not exist. Temporary funding has been made available to support the work of the HPTs.

The mailboxes for the Homelessness Prevention Taskforces in England and Wales are as follows:

| Taskforce                                                                 | Email                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Midlands Probation Taskforce                                              | <a href="mailto:Midlands.ProbationTaskforce@justice.gov.uk">Midlands.ProbationTaskforce@justice.gov.uk</a> |
| Wales Probation Taskforce                                                 | <a href="mailto:Wales.ProbationTaskforce@justice.gov.uk">Wales.ProbationTaskforce@justice.gov.uk</a>       |
| London Probation Taskforce                                                | <a href="mailto:London.ProbationTaskforce@justice.gov.uk">London.ProbationTaskforce@justice.gov.uk</a>     |
| East-KSS Probation Taskforce<br>(East of England/Kent, Surrey and Sussex) | <a href="mailto:East-KSS.probationtaskforce@justice.gov.uk">East-KSS.probationtaskforce@justice.gov.uk</a> |
| SWSC Probation Taskforce<br>(South West/South Central)                    | <a href="mailto:SWSC.probationtaskforce@justice.gov.uk">SWSC.probationtaskforce@justice.gov.uk</a>         |
| NWGM Probation Taskforce<br>(North West/Greater Manchester)               | <a href="mailto:NWGM.probationtaskforce@justice.gov.uk">NWGM.probationtaskforce@justice.gov.uk</a>         |
| NEYH Probation Taskforce<br>(North East/Yorkshire and the Humber)         | <a href="mailto:NEYH.probationtaskforce@justice.gov.uk">NEYH.probationtaskforce@justice.gov.uk</a>         |

### 3.7 Other partners

The challenge of rehousing this cohort of people in suitable permanent accommodation is one which cannot just be borne by councils. Public sector partners including councils, NHS, CCGs, HM Probation Service, and Police and Crime all have a role to play in making this initiative a success. Existing multi-agency fora should be used to involve these agencies in plans and commitments.



## Case Study 12

### Everyone In - Derbyshire Response

Derbyshire Districts have a strong working relationship through the Derbyshire Homelessness Officers Group, a long-standing forum that provides the basis for shared problem solving and resolution of issues.

Individual council rough sleeping numbers are low but the call to get “Everyone In” required a collective response. In Derbyshire, councils have brought in 80 people so far, with the majority having been placed in hotel accommodation. At the start of the crisis a combination of local councils and Derbyshire County Council came together to collaborate on the temporary acquisition of hotels to create much needed extra housing capacity to shield a large portion of the homeless and rough sleeping cohort. This jointly funded initiative was only possible because of the history of partnership.

This has been a major success and homeless and rough sleeping out-reach services, drug and alcohol teams, NHS teams, Police and council housing staff have all pitched in.

Some of those placed have already been found longer term accommodation, and a recovery plan has already been written to deliver intensive support to individuals experiencing overlapping and challenging issues such as offending, drug and alcohol misuse and poor mental health.

Those placed have been given three hot meals a day and it is hoped for some this stability will give them a chance to seek a more permanent change especially as support to each individual will continue. Collective action has been rapid and the multi-agency collaboration very strong, something achieved by working together over many years.





## 4 FUNDING AND PROCUREMENT

### 4.1 Introduction

This section discusses how sourcing accommodation and support may be funded and procured via existing routes. It includes both government capital and revenue grants, and how housing benefit is available to support this client group.

### 4.2 Funding

#### 4.2.1 Local authorities

##### **COVID-19 Funding**

Councils across the country have received allocations from the £3.2 Billion COVID-19 emergency funding

##### **Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI)**

Many councils have received funding for 2019/20 from the government's £112m RSI programme. MHCLG are open to requests to change the use of this funding in order to meet current needs.

An example where this might make sense is if an area has received funding to develop a Somewhere Safe to Stay hub, which would be unlikely to allow COVID-19 social distancing rules. It may be a better use of this funding to provide floating support for clients being moved out of hotels into self-contained accommodation.

There are many other examples of how RSI funding could be better spent in the new circumstances. Councils should contact their MHCLG RSI or HAST advisor to discuss this in the first instance.


There are a number of instances where RSI funding has been used to fund NRPF support, at the discretion of councils.

##### **New Government Rough Sleeping Funding**

Significant funding was announced in the 2020 budget to help rough sleepers. This was split at the time into £144m revenue towards general support services, including access to training, and £237m capital funding to fund accommodation making a total of £381m. This has now been increased to £433m, an increase of £52m in revenue support. In order to deliver 6,000 new units of accommodation, £160m will be brought forward to 2020/21, £30m of which is revenue support.

In addition, £262m revenue for substance misuse recovery services to help end rough sleeping was announced in the budget. Work is underway to model how this spend can best support effective move-on for people in emergency accommodation who are ready to engage and will benefit from treatment; councils will want to ensure they understand how many people are in this position, and information on how it is to be allocated will be announced in due course. It is clear that the government will wish for much of this funding to be directed towards supporting solutions for those affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

An existing £50m move on fund continues to be administered by Homes England, of which there are remaining funds.



Councils should therefore consider what use they could best make of additional capital and revenue funding and discuss this with their HAST or RS adviser.

### **Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG)**

Some councils may be able to redeploy some of their FHSG funding to support homeless people accommodated during the COVID-19 crisis, although many will have already fully committed their allocation.

### **Life Chances Fund**

The government's Life Chances Fund awarded top up funding to local authorities wishing to extend the Single Homeless Prevention Service, [SHPS programme](#), which was initially set up by LB Brent, and in which voluntary sector providers prevent and relieve homeless for single people on a payment for outcomes basis, with upfront service costs funded by social investors.

A number of councils, currently all in London, have already agreed to adopt this approach. New local authorities who wish to join the service will be eligible to apply for a 35% grant from central government to part pay for the outcomes. Councils need to register their interest before **24 June** to be eligible for this support. Those interested should contact Conor Sullivan at Bridges Outcomes Partnerships: [Conor@bridgesoutcomespartnerships.org](mailto:Conor@bridgesoutcomespartnerships.org)

### **Local authority capital programme**

Councils' capital programmes may be able to be realigned to provide some capital.

### **Right to Buy receipts**

In some cases councils with unspent Right to Buy (RTB) receipts could use these for this purpose, albeit within the current rules, where councils cannot use RTB receipts to fund more than 30 per cent of the cost of new homes, and they cannot be combined with grant funding from Homes England.

### **Local authority borrowing**


If development or purchase of new homes for rough sleepers can deliver a positive return, taking into account Minimum Revenue Provision, then councils can consider borrowing for this purpose. With Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) rates at very low levels and Local Housing Allowance (LHA) uplifts meaning the rents payable by Housing Benefit should, subject to OBC restrictions for some clients in some areas, now cover the lower third of private sector rents in any given area, development appraisals may produce more positive results.

## **4.2.2 Housing associations**

The Affordable Homes Guarantee scheme is designed to give RPs access to cheaper finance than would otherwise be the case. This is a well-established scheme, familiar to RPs, and a new scheme operator is about to be selected ready for the new roll out in three to four months. There may be an opportunity for the bespoke delivery of supported accommodation as part of this initiative, although the development of new supported housing has slowed significantly in recent years.

## **4.2.3 Social Investment Capital Funding**

[Big Society Capital](#) is working closely with social investment funds across the country, as well as with government, in order to put together a nationally co-ordinated investment programme to quickly acquire properties providing good quality accommodation for homeless people accommodated during COVID-19.



They have identified a pipeline of 250-400 units worth circa £60m, to be mobilised in the next six months.

Local authorities interested in this, and especially those interested in finding out about becoming co-investors, should contact Karen Ng at BSC [KNg@bigsocietycapital.com](mailto:KNg@bigsocietycapital.com).

#### 4.2.4 Other government funding

##### Housing First

Government awarded £28m to pilot the scaling up of Housing First in three combined authority areas; West Midlands, Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region. In addition over the last decade over 60 other Housing First services have been developed at a local level in England, the majority funded by local authorities.

Councils may wish to explore developing Housing First for the individuals whom they assess as requiring this level of support. Research from England, guidance and other resources can be found on Homeless Link's Housing First England website [here](#).

Councils wishing to consider Housing First can contact Jo Prestidge at Homeless Link who will be able to provide more information about the steps to take.  
[joanne.prestidge@homelesslink.org.uk](mailto:joanne.prestidge@homelesslink.org.uk)

#### 4.2.5 Housing benefit

Many councils have already established benefit claims for clients accommodated in hotels. The available benefit is highly unlikely to cover the full cost of hotel provision, as it will normally be limited to the 1-bed January 2011 LHA rate. Nevertheless, this can make a significant contribution to costs, and it may be possible for housing benefit departments to backdate claims where these have been delayed due to the unusual circumstances.

Clients moving into accommodation provided by an RP or a charity, where support linked to the provision of accommodation is offered, may be entitled to claim additional housing benefit due to the need to pay for additional housing management, if the provision meets the [Specified Accommodation](#) definition.


The level of benefit available should be agreed between the local authority and the provider, and the local authority should agree sufficiently robust oversight arrangements to ensure that high standards are maintained. This may be a way of making leased self-contained accommodation viable and ensure that a properly funded housing management service can be provided for clients who would be at risk in general needs social housing or the PRS.

#### 4.2.6 Voluntary and charitable sectors

Funds could be available locally from the voluntary and charitable sectors. Councils should use their contacts with local voluntary organisations to identify additional bespoke funding for this client group and seek to co-ordinate efforts with third sector partners.

### 4.3 Procurement and modifying existing contractual arrangements

Councils will need to act quickly in many cases in order to source accommodation and support for this client group. One potential barrier to acting quickly is the requirement to follow procurement rules.



Procurement of accommodation and associated housing management falls outside the requirements on local authorities to procure services competitively. However, services such as new or additional floating support or accommodation-based support fall under procurement regulations and would normally need to be tendered for. In other cases councils may have a contract e.g. for a night shelter, which has been closed and would like to make use of the staff in order to support people who have been move to self-contained accommodation.

In recognition of the urgent need to move quickly to deal with the COVID-19 crisis, the government has issued Procurement Policy Notes [PPN 01/20](#) and [PPN 02/20](#) in response.

Under PPN01/20 the usual rules to enter into contracts for goods, works and services can be bypassed, so long as there are genuine reasons for extreme emergency that could not have been foreseen. A policy of rapidly housing all rough sleepers during a pandemic would fall into this.

For floating support (drug and alcohol services for example that wrap around the client but not directly related to housing):

- some councils will already have contracts in place to cover this. Under the PPN they would be allowed to extend the arrangements already in place
- If the council does not have an arrangement in place, but due to COVID-19 they have a genuine extreme emergency in needing to put this contract in place then they can either
  - Do a direct award
  - Call off from a framework or DPS that would be run by one of the professional buying organisations (YPO, ESPO, CCS)
  - Call for competition using accelerated timescales

If a council has funded a night shelter that has temporarily been closed, whether the staff could be redeployed to provide floating support would depend on whether the staff in question have been furloughed (in which case they CANNOT work **for the same employer** whilst they are furloughed) or whether the council have paid the night shelter “supplier relief” under PPN02/20 (in which case they CAN be redeployed).

The current PPNs expire at the end of June.



### Case Study 13

#### LB Lewisham

Lewisham Council has seen, and continues to see, significant increases in rough sleeper presentations since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the short term the council will continue to provide accommodation for rough sleepers in temporary accommodation, with arms-length and visiting face to face support provided by their internal Rough Sleeping Team in partnership with commissioned providers. Additionally, the council has blocked booked 20 beds in what is ordinarily student accommodation until end August, and are working with MHCLG and a local provider to repurpose resources and staffing previously allocated to now-closed night shelter provision in order to support staff on site. This work is accompanied by ongoing efforts to resettle people sustainably according to their needs, whether in the private rented sector, socially, or in supported housing.

In the medium term, from September, Lewisham is investigating more sustainable options for short term rough sleeper accommodation for the period up to the end of 20/21. This will need to be self-contained as far as possible, and will be building on the current work by looking to local partners for accommodation units as a block and with a support provider offering support.

Like many other councils, Lewisham is considering the complex local, regional and national implications for longer term provision which the COVID-19 outbreak and response has highlighted.





## 5 FURTHER HELP

### 5.1 Introduction

This section discusses where further help and guidance can be accessed.

### 5.2 Guidance and good practice

#### **LGA COVID-19 Hub**

The LGA has developed an online [COVID-19 resource hub](#) providing information on the broad range of issues to support council's local responses to the COVID-19 emergency.

Councils wishing to access further help can contact the [LGA's principal advisors for each region](#).

Councils may also wish to refer to the LGA's [web based resources on housing and homelessness](#).

#### **Homeless Link COVID-19 Transition Guidance**

Homeless Link have produced helpful briefing for local authorities and others on [planning local homelessness provision and move on](#)

Homeless Link can also help local authorities to co-ordinate support from voluntary sector organisations in their area, provide advice on Housing First, and on trauma informed approaches to working with rough sleepers.

#### **Good practice from local authorities in providing accommodation solutions for homeless households**

A discussion of good practice and a resource library of examples from councils around the country in providing temporary accommodation, private rented accommodation, property acquisitions and other relevant material is available in the LGA "[Housing Our Homeless Households](#)" report.

#### **Homelessness strategies**

It is clear that the landscape in providing homelessness services is changing in a way that goes beyond the immediate issue of rough sleepers helped off the streets during lockdown. Many local authorities will want to work with partners to review their local homelessness strategies in the light of the new circumstances. The LGA's guidance on developing homelessness strategies may be helpful in this and is available [online](#).

#### **Joint working between local authorities and housing associations on homelessness**

The results of a series of workshops conducted by the LGA and NHF on joint working between councils and housing associations are available [here](#).

#### **Joint working with health and care partners**

Councils will want to continue to develop relationships with health and care partners to help assess needs and enable continuity of care as people move on. NHS England and Improvement manage a homeless health group on the Future NHS collaboration platform (email [england.covid-homeless@nhs.net](mailto:england.covid-homeless@nhs.net) to register for free). The Healthy London Partnership also offer a range of homeless health resources (relevant to out of London councils too).



### **Centre for Homeless Impact COVID-19 Housing Costs Calculator**

The [Centre for Homelessness Impact](#) has developed an online [Housing Costs Calculator](#) specifically to help local authorities to obtain rough estimates of the costs of moving people who are currently in hotels and in shared temporary accommodation to the private rented sector with appropriate levels of support. Future iterations of the Calculator will also include other types of tenure and additional functionalities.

### **Crisis**

More detailed information and advice on how to assess the needs of clients accommodated in hotels and other emergency accommodation has been produced by Crisis:

- <https://crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/resources-for-practitioners/covid-19-transition-planning/>
- <https://crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/resources-for-practitioners/housing-centre-guides/local-needs-assessment/>

Crisis have also developed a “by name” approach.

- <https://toolkits.homelessness.world-habitat.org/start-making-changes/by-name-list-details/>

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# Lessons learnt from councils' response to rough sleeping during the COVID-19 pandemic



The success of Everyone In demonstrates that, given the mandate and funding, councils, working with their partners, have the means to end the vast majority of rough sleeping.

Housing, planning and homelessness

19 Nov 2020

LGA

5.98

**Jump to section**



## Executive summary

Local Partnerships were commissioned by the Local Government Association (LGA) to investigate lessons learnt from the Everyone In response to the COVID-19 crisis in dealing with rough sleeping and those at risk of it and how this can inform future policy and practice, including planning for winter.

We sought information from a range of councils in different parts of the country and experiencing different issues with respect to homelessness and rough sleeping. We looked at the responses to the COVID-19 crisis and homelessness by the UK devolved governments by talking to colleagues in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and reviewed some international comparisons.

We also engaged with various third sector organisations working in the field and with colleagues at the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Now, November 2020, and as the second national lockdown for England is due to begin, our conclusions are presented below.

**General**

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The success of Everyone In demonstrates that, given the mandate and funding, councils, working with their partners, have the means to end the vast majority of rough sleeping.

## **Everyone In**

Where Everyone In worked well there were some features that contributed to its success. These were:

- rapid and expansive response in picking up and accommodating people sleeping rough and people living in unsafe conditions at risk of sleeping rough, including those not normally eligible for public services due to immigration status
- comprehensive needs assessment, including health, substance abuse and specific needs of women
- characteristics of hotel accommodation giving important feelings of safety and self-worth
- multi-agency services coming to the emergency accommodation and encouraging engagement
- rapid turnaround in moving on low needs cohort.

## **Partnership working**

Multi-agency partnership working was key to success, and we frequently heard reports that working together on Everyone In had strengthened existing relationships and built new ones. Important aspects were:

Councils working closely with a broader range of partners than usual, including health, criminal justice, housing associations and the voluntary and charitable sectors. This led to a better understanding from all partners of what the others could do, and the potential to bring together and allocate different sets of resources in new ways.

- Engagement with health to get a tailored service for this cohort, including primary health care and access to mental health and drug and alcohol services.
- Enhanced trust between councils operating across two tier geographies. Counties and districts had interdependent responsibilities and worked together both vertically and horizontally to secure the best outcomes.
- Making the most of new technology to conduct remote meetings between agencies, drastically reducing the logistical barriers to co-operation.

## **Pointers for the future**

Everyone In had brought in new ways of working, some of which respondents felt were more effective and had potential for the future. These were:

- Councils converting the majority of housing options services to telephone only. Some reported people were happier with phone interactions due to the ease of the transaction and reduced stigma. However, others found this was a significant barrier to engaging with some groups and had maintained or set up new mechanisms to facilitate face to face delivery.
- Using teleconferencing, rather than face to face meetings, facilitated collaborative working across wide geographies.
- Reflection on the relative success of pre-existing pathways for single homeless people and the approach adopted at Everyone In. A number of councils were considering how they could mirror the positive aspects of hotel accommodation and rapid move on in new service design to address the negative characteristics of night shelters and hostels, and the greater success rates in moves to settled accommodation that had been achieved.
- Everyone In highlighted the extent of hidden homelessness for single people, in what was often a surprising scale to councils. Given that the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has introduced responsibilities to this cohort, some councils are beginning to think longer term about their affordable housing programme and whether it should include a larger proportion of one-bed accommodation.

## Outstanding Issues

People with no recourse to public funds remain a dilemma. Work to assist people in resolving immigration status and in finding employment was successful for some councils, but there usually remained a proportion for whom there was no solution, and in some areas people without settled immigration status represent a significant proportion of those at risk of sleeping rough.

Shortage of affordable housing is an inevitable blocker in finding move on accommodation. While the MHCLG funded Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) capital programme will provide additional supported housing capacity, there remains a need for more genuinely affordable one-bed accommodation in both the public and private rented sectors, given Housing Benefit and Universal Credit limits

Although many councils had significant success with the Everyone In cohort, it was clear that a one-off exercise was not adequate to maintain long term reductions in rough sleeping in most areas, and a more sustained effort would be needed. Whilst there was enthusiasm for maintaining a more proactive approach to accommodating rough sleepers and those at risk, the resources were not there in most councils to be able to achieve this, especially in the light of concerns about increasing homelessness and temporary accommodation costs linked to the economic impacts of the pandemic.

Many councils are concerned about their ability to provide adequate cold weather provision this winter in a way does not increase the risk of COVID-19 infection.

Despite the enhanced levels of co-operation between services which were widespread during Everyone In, it was nevertheless often difficult to get access to appropriate health services, and especially mental health services, to work with the accommodated cohort. This seems to be a reflection of the lack of specialist primary care services working in homelessness in many parts of the country and a continued wider lack of mental health resources relative to demand.

## Introduction

### Context

At the end of March 2020 the Government wrote to the leader of every council in England asking them to accommodate all people sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough, and to find alternative accommodation for those in shelters where they could not easily self-isolate by the end of the weekend, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This was called 'Everyone In'. Based on MHCLG figures, councils moved an estimated 90 per cent of rough sleepers known at the start of the lockdown into hotels, bed and breakfasts and other temporary accommodation, and accommodated up to 15,000 individuals.

In response to this **Local Partnerships and the Local Government Association (LGA) worked quickly together to produce a briefing paper for councils and other organisations working with rough sleepers** and those at risk of it, pulling together guidance and best practice. It was focussed on the next steps to take in order to secure the right accommodation and support for those individuals accommodated because of the COVID-19 crisis.

This was published in early June. Now, November 2020, and as the second national lockdown for England has begun, the LGA have commissioned a further piece of work, focussing on lessons learnt from the response to the crisis and how this can inform future policy and practice, including planning for winter.

### The current position

That Everyone In was successful and saved lives is beyond doubt. Local government demonstrated its ability to take swift and decisive action in the face of a crisis. This is reiterated by a **recent article in the Lancet**.

At the time of writing it is clear that a second wave of COVID-19 has arrived in the UK. A further national lockdown began for England on 5 November for a period of one month. Local councils are considering how to source sufficient and appropriate housing and support for the people they accommodated in March and subsequently,



as well as how to plan for winter for those rough sleeping or at risk of it, when previous arrangements may no longer be suitable, and a new flow of rough sleepers is present.

The provision of funding by central government, firstly for Everyone In, and subsequently through the NSAP, launched in July, which allocates resources to support councils and their partners in preventing those people accommodated from returning to the streets, has been very important.

## **This report**

We sought information from a range of councils in different parts of the country and experiencing different issues with respect to homelessness and rough sleeping. We looked at the responses to the COVID-19 crisis and homelessness by the UK devolved governments by talking to colleagues in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and reviewed some international comparisons.

We also engaged with various third sector organisations working in the field and with colleagues at MHCLG. A full list of our respondents is given at Appendix 2.

The next sections of our report set out what we found, how this translates into lessons learnt and indications for the future, and our conclusions. Given the situation now is fluid, with the second wave ongoing, and a moving picture of local restrictions and funding deals in different parts of the country, our conclusions represent a snapshot of what we found in September and October this year. We believe they have useful implications to be drawn for work with rough sleepers and homeless people in the future.

The authors of this report are **Jenny Coombs** and **Tim Gray**.

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temporary accommodation, and outcomes-based commissioning. Tim has previously worked for central government, local government, housing associations and the voluntary sector, and has led on the development of a number of programmes and policies of national significance.

## **The current position**

### **Introduction**

This section sets the scene, discusses what happened next after Everyone In and draws some international comparisons.

### **Setting the scene**

Tackling homelessness in England is a shared responsibility between local, national and, in some areas like London and Greater Manchester, regional government.

Councils are in principle left to their own devices in how they tackle homelessness in their area, but are subject to a number of statutory duties to accommodate the most vulnerable homeless households and to make efforts to prevent and relieve homelessness for a range of other groups. These duties were significantly extended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which came into operation from April 2018.

In practice, national government has for many decades taken a keen interest in homelessness, providing dedicated funding to councils such as Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (FHSG) and by employing teams of homelessness advisors to support councils in implementing good practice.

However, despite rough sleeping being the most visible and acute form of homelessness, there is no duty to provide accommodation or shelter for the majority of rough sleepers who do not meet the vulnerability criteria for 'priority need' in the homelessness legislation.

There is less responsibility on councils to provide accommodation or shelter to foreign nationals with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) or those from European Economic Area (EEA) countries not exercising their treaty rights, and in some cases councils have no powers to provide help.

This has led to a range of service provision for rough sleepers across the country, including hostel provision of different range and quality, varying levels of access to health and drug and alcohol services, with some rough sleepers relying on night

shelter provision, and some only able to access support from voluntary or faith based groups.

In the years between 2010 and 2017 rough sleeping, as assessed from annual snapshot counts and estimates of those rough sleeping on a single night in England, rose from 1,768 to 4,751, a rise of 169 per cent.

Partly in response to this rise, government has committed to ending rough sleeping by the end of the current parliament, produced a Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2018, and provided dedicated funding to councils to reduce rough sleeping under the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) programme since 2018/19. Local RSI funded initiatives are designed by council officers in collaboration with homelessness advisers from MHCLG.

By Autumn 2019, when the last snapshot was taken, rough sleeping had reduced by 11 per cent since 2017 to 4,266 on a single night, with a continuing downward trend hoped for.

This is the context in which the COVID-19 pandemic hit in spring 2020.

## **Everyone In**

On Monday 23 March 2020, the COVID-19 lockdown began in England, and on Thursday 26 March 2020, the Minister for Local Government and Homelessness wrote to the leader of every council in England asking them to house all people sleeping rough and to find alternative accommodation for people in hostels and night shelters by the end of the week.

This has become known as the Everyone In initiative. Based on MHCLG figures, councils almost immediately moved an estimated 90 per cent of rough sleepers into hotels, bed and breakfasts and other temporary accommodation. Altogether around 15,000 individuals were moved into hotels and other emergency accommodation across England, according to government estimates, including 5,400 in London.

This was a remarkable feat, requiring great energy on the part of councils, and in many cases an unprecedented level of joint working with partners in health services, the voluntary sector and housing associations.

As commercial hotels had largely shut down in response to the lockdown, opportunities to accommodate rough sleepers in hotel accommodation were much greater than they would otherwise have been, but nevertheless councils moved very rapidly to action. In London, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and London Councils played a very significant role. In other areas district and county councils joined forces effectively.

## What happened next?

### Scale and response

It became evident in many areas that the scale of homelessness and rough sleeping risk was much larger than had been generally realised, with many 'sofa surfers' and other hidden homeless groups living in unsafe conditions approaching councils for help. The data suggests that approximately 15,000 people were accommodated at Everyone In, in contrast with the latest snapshot rough sleeper count of 4,200. There were also specific issues for homeless women living in accommodation where they may be vulnerable to exploitation or abuse. In a number of council areas significant numbers of foreign nationals without access to welfare benefits emerged from faith group run night shelters and other non-commissioned provision.

As well as providing COVID-19 compliant accommodation, a major task for councils and their partners was to assess the health risks for individuals, both those who had been newly taken in and existing supported housing residents.

Those moved into hotels required both an assessment of their support needs, immigration status and mental and physical health needs, and support based on those needs to be able to manage successfully.

In many cases food was directly provided to the new residents by voluntary sector groups and others working in partnership with councils.

Hotels were only one source of accommodation. Many councils made innovative use of other sites, worked with partners providing additional leased supported housing, and modified their use of existing supported housing to make it COVID-19 compliant, with some also making use of portable, modular accommodation on a temporary basis.

### Follow up to the immediate crisis

After the initial Everyone In phase, a number of councils told us that they continued to experience high demand for accommodation from single homeless people throughout the period of lockdown and subsequently, sometimes involving a greater number of people than those initially accommodated. How councils responded to this has varied. On 29 June 2020 MHCLG amended the homelessness code of guidance to include advice on when to class those who might be vulnerable to COVID-19 as in priority need.

This had the effect of moving from a position of Everyone In to assessments of 'clinical vulnerability' and whether a 'history of rough sleeping should be considered vulnerable in the context of COVID-19, taking into account their age and underlying health conditions'.

It has been up to councils whether to continue to accommodate single homeless people who would not be deemed to be in priority need since that point, with the position each has taken varying according to local conditions, but with almost all councils now being more restrictive about who they will accommodate than at the beginning of the crisis, due to resource constraints and the reduction in COVID-19 infection risk over the summer.

## **Plymouth Alliance**

### **Government guidance on provision of night shelters**

**The Government issued guidance on the opening of night shelters for people experiencing rough sleeping on 13 October 2020.**

Due to the risk of COVID-19 infection in communal spaces, the guidance makes clear that night shelters should only be used as a last resort to protect against the risk to health and life of individuals remaining on the streets when other alternative options are unavailable, for example in very cold weather.

The guidance asks councils and night shelter projects to consider whether they can provide self-contained accommodation options. Rotating night shelter models, where different venues are used on different days, should not be used.

Providers and commissioners of night shelters should work closely with their council and adhere to any special measures in place for the local area where the shelter is located. If a council deems that a shelter provision is not required in an area, voluntary and faith groups who usually provide shelter provision should not open their shelters in this area.

The guidance also offers detailed advice on risk assessment, safeguarding, infection management, referrals and triage, PPE and other areas.

**Separate COVID-19 guidance is available for the management of hostel accommodation where residents each have their own room .**

**Impact on rough sleeping to date**

At the time of writing it is hard to assess the medium to long term impact on rough sleeping, as, in most areas, rough sleeper counts have been suspended. Our discussions with councils suggest a varying picture, with rough sleeping numbers much reduced in some areas, but in other places having returned to previous levels, or even exceeding them. This is due to some people returning to the streets, some intermittent rough sleepers not being accommodated during Everyone In because they were not rough sleeping at the time, and some new rough sleepers. The impact of the new English national lockdown is yet to be seen.

In London CHAIN figures show a rise in rough sleeping between April and June 2020, compared to the previous quarter and the previous year, despite Everyone In. It is likely that this can be attributed at least partly to a suspension of London's No Second Night Out (NSNO) service during the pandemic, which has meant that the ability of services to help new rough sleepers off the streets quickly has been diminished. There are plans to reopen a modified NSNO service as soon as possible in a COVID-19 safe way.

It is too early to assess the longer-term impact of COVID-19 on the flows of new rough sleepers onto the streets. Most councils we spoke to believed that increases in rough sleeping following Everyone In were mostly among those already known to services, and that there had not been a large increase in new rough sleepers made homeless as a direct consequence of the pandemic. In London and other places, the ability of outreach services to assist new rough sleepers may have been temporarily compromised.

However, there is clearly a risk that there will be such an increase in the future, as the impact of lost jobs and reduced earnings, coupled with the end to the Government's ban on evictions, plays out over the coming months.

There are also important questions for councils to consider on how to best focus their resources between the priorities of preventing future rough sleeping, accommodating those assessed to be at immediate risk, working with people who have been accommodated since Everyone In, and working with those currently on the streets.

## **International comparisons**

The homelessness response in the UK to the COVID-19 outbreak was unusually rapid and comprehensive by international standards, and it seems clear that this has saved lives.

**In the US, where there was no similar national initiative, there have been a number of COVID-19 outbreaks in homelessness shelters.**

In Europe, measures varied by country, but, to the best of our knowledge, nowhere took steps as quickly and comprehensively as Everyone In to safeguard rough sleepers, those living in shelters and the hidden homeless.

In Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, measures similar to those in England were implemented, and there are aspirations in all the UK nations to build on the success of the initial measures to reduce rough sleeping and single homelessness in the longer term.

In Wales, councils took a variety of approaches to bring people in after a request to do so from the Welsh Government accompanied by an initial promise of £10 million funding. **The Welsh Code of Guidance** has been clarified to continue the Everyone In approach until the end of the pandemic. Subsequently **the Welsh Government has increased this to a £50 million programme of funding** along similar lines to the Next Steps Accommodation Programme in England.

In Scotland the homelessness legislation differs from England and Wales, in having no “priority need restriction” on the duty for councils to accommodate single homeless people. The Scottish Government announced in May that, following the end of lockdown restrictions, the **Unsuitable Accommodation Order**, which currently prohibits accommodating families with children in hotels and B&B accommodation for more than seven days, would be extended to all homeless households. However, **the implementation of this commitment may now be delayed until the end of January 2021.**

In Northern Ireland, £7.6 million has been made available in additional funding for homelessness to cover the period until March 2021. There has been a rise of 68 per cent in the number of households placed in temporary accommodation in the first quarter of 2020/21 compared to the previous year, which almost entirely consists of single people, and with a significant shift in the amount of homelessness due to the breakdown of sharing arrangements. Longer term the aim is to build on current work by integrating health and homelessness responses more closely and moving towards a more housing led approach.

**The Scottish Government has published an updated “Ending homelessness together: action plan - October 2020”.** The action plan has been revised to reflect actions needed in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

## Lessons learnt

### Introduction

This section highlights the lessons learnt and emerging good practice that we discovered.

## **Multi agency response**

### **Background**

Our previous report highlighted the importance of a multi-agency response in the early stages of Everyone In to ensure that people's individual needs were understood and placed at the heart of an area's response. In addition, we found that Everyone In had brought together a wide range of statutory and non-statutory agencies working with street homeless people, and that co-ordination of effort and resources was essential.

### **Multi-agency governance**

It was important to have a multi-agency assessment of people's needs, including health, early on. In some areas such as Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole a 'health first' approach was taken.

It was also important that the council, health, Registered Providers (RPs), and voluntary sector commissioned and non-commissioned organisations worked together, both in the initial stages of bringing people in, and subsequently when people were accommodated in emergency accommodation and moving on to interim or permanent homes. The council is usually best placed to co-ordinate these efforts, although we found examples of such collaboration also being led by other organisations, for example in the Plymouth Alliance.

On occasions existing structures were being utilised, but in others new ones were quickly developed, such as in the case study of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole below. Strong governance and building on existing close working relationships across statutory and non-statutory agencies were success factors.

## **Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council**

### **Working with the voluntary sector**

Outreach support to rough sleepers is almost exclusively commissioned services by councils from the voluntary sector. In addition, non-commissioned services such as night shelters, soup runs, food banks and day centres are mainly delivered by the voluntary sector in response to perceived need, although some are commissioned, including NSNO services. Since 2011, councils have been encouraged by government to adopt a NSNO approach, by commissioning services to support people sleeping rough for the first time and help them off the street.



Existing commissioned contracts for outreach support had been quickly modified to direct support to the hotels or other accommodation where the people were staying. Such agility was an important factor.

For non-commissioned services, such as night shelters and other rough sleeper support, the situation was more nuanced, but, again, support had been re-directed to the accommodation where people were staying. This voluntary sector support was able to deliver important add-ons, such as Homeless Action Barnet (HAB) and Together in Barnet providing mobile phones and chargers for individuals in emergency accommodation, and sourcing and delivering food packages. Up to the end of September HAB had delivered £100,000 worth of food.

Those places which already had effective engagement with the wider voluntary sector were able to mobilise and co-ordinate combined efforts and resources more quickly than those that did not. In other cases it took time to recognise the value of voluntary sector partners and the additional resource they could provide by bringing voluntary effort, charitable donations and access to additional resource from grant funding organisations.

### **Working at a regional scale**

In some areas working at a regional scale has been helpful, to consolidate buying power, and, in two-tier government areas, where responsibilities for housing and support lie with different authorities, to co-ordinate across the geography.

In London the Greater London Authority (GLA), working with London Councils, MHCLG and a wide range of other services was able to quickly set up a network of hotel provision across the capital to assist the London boroughs, to bring in different types of assessment and support, and to work with a number of providers to move residents on to more settled accommodation.

## **Derbyshire**

### **Working with Prison and Probation Services**

In March 2020 Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) established Homeless Prevention Taskforces in every National Probation Service (NPS) region in England and Wales. With funding that was made available due to the COVID-19 crisis they have successfully supported groups of homeless probation service users, including prison leavers and those moving on from approved premises, bail accommodation and support services into longer term accommodation. The initial funding scheme has closed to new entrants and finished on 26 October to existing service users. However, in light of the recent Government announcements, Ministry of

Justice (MoJ) have considered the public health benefits of reinstating the emergency accommodation scheme and have now agreed to reinstate the emergency accommodation funding in targeted areas of England and Wales from 22 October 2020 until 21 January 2021.

There was a significant concern that there might be a large-scale early release of prisoners due to COVID-19, which would increase homelessness pressures on councils, but our discussions suggest that this did not happen in practice. Many councils reported that they were able to work effectively with prison and probation services, the police, and police and crime commissioners during Everyone In, and to resolve difficulties which arose during the lockdown period, such as implementing the Homelessness Reduction Act Duty to Refer.

In some cases co-operation was assisted by regional or countywide co-ordination, for example in London and Essex, among the areas we spoke to.

Homelessness Prevention Taskforces (HPTs) are still live and discussions are ongoing about how to embed them in the future structure of the probation service. Effective collaboration and partnership working with councils is a key focus of the HPTs.

Councils wishing to discuss this further should contact their local NPS Head of Local Delivery Unit or the regional HPT mailbox. The mailboxes for the Homelessness Prevention Taskforces in England and Wales are as follows:

Midlands Probation Taskforce

**Midlands.ProbationTaskforce@justice.gov.uk**

Wales Probation Taskforce

**Wales.ProbationTaskforce@justice.gov.uk**

London Probation Taskforce

**London.ProbationTaskforce@justice.gov.uk**

East-KSS Probation Taskforce

(East of England/Kent, Surrey and Sussex)

**East-KSS.probatiantaskforce@justice.gov.uk**

SWSC Probation Taskforce

(South West/South Central)

**SWSC.probatiantaskforce@justice.gov.uk**

## NWGM Probation Taskforce

(North West/Greater Manchester)

**NWGM.probationtaskforce@justice.gov.uk**

NEYH Probation Taskforce

**NEYH.probationtaskforce@justice.gov.uk**

(North East/Yorkshire and the Humber)

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### **Night shelters and winter planning**

Night shelters had to close during Everyone In, because they were not suitable for social distancing. Typically they may be communal sleeping in a church hall or similar, and because, in some cases, they are staffed and resourced by volunteers they can have a very low cost. There is currently concern about how the combined effects of a second COVID-19 wave, winter, and the continued closure of accommodation normally procured by councils for severe weather emergency planning will impact on the rough sleeping population. Although numbers in some areas may be fewer because of Everyone In, we spoke to various councils where current rough sleeping numbers were approaching and, in some cases, exceeding those seen before.

We spoke to Housing Justice, who operate as an umbrella organisation for faith-group run night shelters. They have been working with MHCLG and Public Health England to develop the recently published guidance for night shelters to enable them to open in the winter as part of winter planning, where single room accommodation is not available. They confirm that better dialogue and partnership with councils is developing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that best practice for night shelters includes working with councils, as this can provide more opportunities for their guests.

### **Cornwall Council**

## **New ways of engagement**

### **Background**

The crisis has led to a review of existing ways of delivering services, both in terms of how digital and other channels are used and in a more fundamental review of current pathways. We also heard from all respondents that bringing people in as a public health response had enabled new and more positive engagement with people who may previously have resisted attempts to support them, or simply not known that help was available.

### **Positive engagement with individuals**

We heard again and again that the fact of having a self-contained room in a hotel, or even a caravan or portable cabin, with adequate washing facilities and food, provided a new sense of dignity and self-worth for many rough sleepers. While this did not apply to all individuals, it did to an extent that our council respondents were surprised. This has enabled many former rough sleepers to make a positive change and to engage with agencies to seek permanent housing. While some people in hotels with complex needs had left the accommodation, these were small numbers, and the overwhelming message was a positive one. There was, however, evidence that the effectiveness of the accommodation in achieving these objectives depended on providing an appropriate level of support. In some cases, new ways to access methadone scripts or alcohol were needed in order to sustain people in accommodation isolated from their usual sources of supply.

#### **The Riverside Group Ltd**

#### **Mayday Trust and Westminster City Council (1)**

### **Changes to existing pathways of support**

We heard from many council respondents that the COVID-19 crisis had led them to review existing pathways of care for rough sleepers. These would typically include some 'staircasing', where a person is offered emergency accommodation, then hostel type accommodation, perhaps for up to a period of two years, and then finally a self-contained home. They learnt from engaging with rough sleepers that hostel accommodation was often considered negative, and particularly in comparison to hotel accommodation, which had given them an insight into 'normal life' by having access to a comfortable room, washing and laundry facilities and regular meals.

#### **Mayday Trust and Westminster City Council (2)**

The councils we spoke to, having first been mandated to engage with this cohort of people, who would mostly not fall within the remit of 'priority need' in the homelessness legislation, had largely stepped up to respond and had been pleased to be given both the mandate and promise of funding to be able to do so. While the

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced prevention and relief duties, which apply to all those who are homeless and threatened with homelessness (provided they are eligible for support from public funds), this did not necessarily result in provision of accommodation, and was sometimes not widely known about amongst rough sleepers and other single homeless people. In addition, some people had had previous negative experiences of engaging with public agencies.

There has been a range of responses following the immediate crisis period. Some councils had continued to adopt an Everyone In eligibility for accommodating people, some had returned to a pre-Covid eligibility for support, and some were operating in between. Even those councils who had taken the decision to return to pre-Covid eligibility were thinking about how their existing responsibilities under the Homelessness Reduction Act could be discharged more effectively in helping people recover from rough sleeping, including, in some cases, reviewing the use of hostel accommodation and to prioritise provision of self-contained accommodation in the future.

## **Westminster City Council rapid hub model**

### **Changes in the way councils are delivering homelessness services**

Many councils reported that they had moved their housing options service to be telephone-based. While some reported that this was difficult, others suggested that customers had preferred the telephone interaction because it did not involve a trip to a council office, and there was less stigma attached. Staff also reported that they found the engagement with customers better and the required documents for evidence could be checked on-line. It has led councils to reconsider how they design their 'front door' to the homelessness service.

Moving to this kind of approach brings the issue of digital exclusion to the fore, as homeless people without access to a telephone or public internet will not be able to engage with such services. Some of the councils we spoke to had either retained, or opened new, face to face services specifically to cope with people not able or willing to engage with services remotely.

## **New ways of delivering homelessness services**

### **Background**

The COVID-19 crisis and the Everyone In response has had a profound short-term effect on homelessness services. But there are also big questions about how future service delivery might be impacted in the medium and longer term.

The evidence from councils we talked to point to a number of common experiences, but also some quite different views about how services should best be run from now on.

## **Learning from Everyone In**

An important learning from COVID-19 is that given clear direction and a promise of funding, councils can move very quickly and do extraordinary things. To reduce street homelessness by 90 per cent in one week is something which many would have thought impossible, but which was accomplished.

The power of targeted joint working between central government, local government, health services, prison services, housing associations and the voluntary sector has also been richly demonstrated.

To what extent this focus can be maintained in the future is currently an open question. The people we spoke to felt that there were a number of key benefits from Everyone In which they would like to take forward into the future. These included:

- Joined up working and regular meetings between housing authorities and other agencies to help tackle rough sleeping, including health services, the voluntary sector, the police, drug and alcohol services, and prison and probation services.
- Use of Teams as a way of being able to meet more frequently without needing to travel long distances.
- A comprehensive focus on the needs of individual rough sleepers in the round, not just their accommodation needs.
- The ability to provide good quality single room accommodation to people who might previously only have been offered a night shelter.
- The ability to support rough sleepers and those on the edge of rough sleeping who are NRPF or EEA nationals without access to public services.
- The ability of district councils and county councils to work more closely together on a day to day basis, rather than face the barriers to effective co-operation which sometimes occur.
- The focus and priority given by all agencies to helping rough sleepers off the streets and to make changes in their lives.
- The ability to make changes to services rapidly to meet changing needs, including temporary redeployment of staff and bringing staff from different agencies together to meet needs.

## **Essex**

## Issues for debate

Other changes are more controversial, with different respondents expressing different views. Examples include:

- whether it should be a priority to accommodate homeless people not in priority need and who are not actually sleeping rough
- the extent to which it is appropriate to accommodate former rough sleepers in the private rented sector (PRS). We heard opinions that it is much better to rapidly rehouse the majority of rough sleepers in the PRS with resettlement support than to keep them in hotels or hostels. However, we also heard opinions that it is really important to address underlying needs first, before making offers of accommodation, and that where this is not done move-on can fail
- the role of Housing First. Whilst almost everyone felt there was a place for Housing First, a number of respondents felt that it was not a panacea and that a variety of service offers are important, including good quality supported housing
- the effectiveness of phone in services versus face to face service delivery. We heard evidence that telephone services can be effective, efficient and less stigmatising than face to face services. However, we also heard that for some groups telephone services are not accessible, and that a face to face service offer is needed, especially if this is delivered by a number of agencies in partnership, rather than by council officers working alone.

Some councils are changing or intending to change their practices. A number of councils we spoke to, such as Cornwall and Hillingdon, have maintained a policy of continuing to accommodate anyone deemed to be at risk of rough sleeping, even if not in priority need. However, there are concerns that this is opening up councils to a level of demand, and a consequent increase in temporary accommodation costs, which most are unable to meet in the longer term.

There is also the question of whether a wider focus on people who might sleep rough has the potential to reduce the focus on more vulnerable people who actually are sleeping rough.

The arguments in favour of using more accommodation with some of the characteristics of the COVID-19 hotel accommodation, including autonomy, access to multiple services to conduct a proper needs assessment, followed by rapid rehousing into settled Private Rented Sector (PRS), general needs social housing with floating support, or housing first accommodation are relatively clear.

Councils have found that this approach has worked well for people for whom a more traditional night shelter followed by a period of perhaps months or years in a hostel, has been much less successful. Liverpool City Council, for example, have decided not

to return to the use of the night shelter type provision they had previously relied upon, and Haringey are determined to review their provision for single homelessness and deliver services in a different way in the future. Westminster want to move to a rapid rehousing model for rough sleepers, with increasing use of the PRS, and consider this will be more cost effective in the medium term.

However, there were also examples we were told about, showing that PRS placements can go wrong if the proper support is not put in place. There is also some evidence that housing first placements are proving more expensive than anticipated in some areas, because the length of time for which support needs to be continued is longer than was first thought. It can also be difficult to access accommodation for housing first on the scale needed.

So, whilst there is a widely recognised need to change approach, and a near universal desire among councils to avoid the use of night shelter accommodation whilst there is a COVID-19 risk, it is certainly not a clear cut decision in many areas to undertake a wholesale move away from supported housing or hostel accommodation.

### **Next steps accommodation programme (NSAP Funding)**

There was real support for the **MHCLG NSAP funding**, which is allowing many authorities to continue to deliver services instigated under Everyone In which would otherwise have to close, and which should provide significant additional accommodation and support for single homeless people for the medium and longer term.

However, we also heard that the capital part of the NSAP funding had certain conditions attached that limited its use, and that more flexibility would have been appreciated.

A number of councils had worries about severe weather provision for the coming winter, as the sort of communal spaces that are normally used will not be able to be used in the same way.

## **Birmingham City Council**

### **Cold weather provision**

It was clear that some councils are better prepared than others to provide sufficient severe weather emergency provision (SWEP) within hostels, hotels and B&Bs. Some expected to be reliant on reconfigured communal spaces, such as day centres with cubicles erected and less people accommodated than would previously have been possible.



How prepared councils felt was largely dependent on how well funded they were, including any NSAP funding they had been able to obtain for SWEP. Some councils fear that there will be a choice between leaving some people out in cold weather, which could be a risk to their life, and bringing them into SWEP provision with a risk of COVID-19 infection.

Although £12 million SWEP funding has been announced for the coming winter, this may not be adequate, an issue which is implicitly acknowledged by the new government guidance detailed above on reopening winter night shelters, despite the risk of COVID-19 transmission that this entails. These issues are complicated by uncertainty about the level of risk from a second or third wave of COVID-19 infection when cold weather appears, and whether there will be a repeat of Everyone In.

Councils we spoke to were extremely reluctant to rely on communal spaces for cold weather provision whilst the risk of COVID-19 infection is present, but in some cases were concerned that they may have no alternative.

### **Future provision in the light of the Everyone In response**

At the time of writing England has just entered a second national lockdown, which has been set for one month. There has been no repeat to date of the Everyone In response, but the Government has announced an additional £15 million 'Protect Programme' to be targeted at councils with high numbers of rough sleepers to provide accommodation prioritising those who are clinically vulnerable.

All councils will have to update their rough sleeping plans by the end of the year, providing an overview of their support for those sleeping rough. They will also be asked by government to carry out a rapid assessment of need for everyone they accommodate and to consider time limited interventions for those rough sleeping now or new to rough sleeping.

The Protect Programme funding is not as comprehensive as Everyone In and it is not clear whether there are circumstances where Everyone In would be repeated. Most councils' working assumptions during our research were that there are not, although there are current calls from a number of organisations for this as a result of the new lockdown

Most councils we spoke to were also concerned about a new surge of homelessness when the Government's eviction ban is lifted, and some areas have already seen increases in homelessness presentations and, in some cases, increases in rough sleeping.

National government is in the driving seat in the direction they give and the future funding they provide, but it is also for councils and their local partners to make best efforts not to lose the gains in effective joint working and rapid response which have been a hallmark of Everyone In, and the lessons learned about what works locally.

It is clear that accommodating everyone sleeping rough at one point in time, if not sustained, is unlikely to reduce rough sleeping significantly in the longer term because of the new flows onto the streets which occur on an ongoing basis, and the cycling of those with the highest support needs on and off the streets.

A sustained effort is needed, but Everyone In shows what can be done.

## Health

### Background

One of the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak was to highlight more starkly than before the extent of health inequalities amongst the population of people experiencing rough sleeping and other forms of single homelessness.

**Research from 2019 had already shown that at least one third of the deaths of rough sleepers are from treatable conditions**, with serious problems in accessing local GP registration, cancer screening and access to treatment for a range of conditions, leading to poor health outcomes. **A recent study of one London hostel, where the average age was 56, showed an average frailty comparable to people aged 89 in the general population.**

Because of the difficulties of registering with GPs rough sleepers make a disproportionate use of accident and emergency facilities, **with a consequent cost burden to the NHS**. In areas where there are specialist GP services, such as London, Brighton & Hove and Bradford, access to health care for homeless people is generally much better than in other areas, where most GPs are not well set up to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

### Health response to COVID-19

To some extent the health response to Everyone In reflected this disparity of provision. Whilst it was possible for rapid health screening and cohort segmentation of those placed in hotels to take place in London and other areas where specialist health services exist, this was much harder to achieve elsewhere. Councils and their partners were greatly assisted by the NHS guidance on **'COVID-19 Clinical homeless sector plan: triage – assess – cohort – care'** produced in early April, which sets out measures to protect those at increased risk of severe illness, reduce transmission risk for residents and staff, and prevent mortality. In London, a pan

London Drug and Alcohol Service (HDAS) was commissioned to work with people in hotels, new protocols were developed on drug and alcohol treatment, and a Covid Care hotel for those with symptoms was set up in East London, with a number of Covid Protect hotels for those assessed as vulnerable established by the GLA and some of the boroughs.

A new assessment tool (CHRISP) was also developed to capture the health and care needs of those accommodated in London, which has provided invaluable information on the population previously unknown. Information on CHRISP as well as a wealth of COVID-19 related health and homelessness advice is available from **the Healthy London Partnership**.

Whilst this level of engagement was not repeated across the country, a number of councils we spoke to reported an increased willingness of health services to work with homelessness services during the crisis, and to work together to resolve issues around individual rough sleepers.

This kind of support, coupled with provision of accommodation, food and other services undoubtedly improved health and wellbeing amongst many of those accommodated under Everyone In.

## **Blackpool Council**

### **Future good practice**

The experience of Everyone In showed both the lack of access to health and care services amongst many homeless people and the gains that can be made when services are taken up.

The links that have been developed in many areas between health and homelessness services should be maintained and built upon wherever possible. In particular, it would be beneficial if more primary care services could reach out directly to those who are homeless or in hostels and supported housing, instead of requiring people to travel to health services, along the lines of the Enhanced Health in Care Homes model now operating in adult social care.

There is also an argument for better assessment of health and care needs among the homeless population and concentration of those with similar conditions in the same location in order to facilitate health care access, rather than, for example, having people with severe drink related health conditions dispersed across a range of provision.

### **NRPF provision**

The situation for health care access for those not eligible to receive public funds is complex. There could be a significant health risk if, for example, homeless people not able to access housing or free NHS treatment due to their immigration status, are concentrated in night shelter style accommodation during the coming winter for lack of any alternative provision.

## **Safeguarding people who are sleeping rough**

People who sleep rough may have tenuous links with the locality where they sleep rough and, if they have been moving around for some time or are non-UK nationals, may not be able to evidence that they are ordinarily resident in any particular council area. This does not detract from councils' responsibilities under the Care Act to make safeguarding enquiries irrespective of ordinary residence. It is important that the risks of living on the streets are not compounded by agencies failing to provide a timely and appropriate service response in the locality where a person is sleeping rough and is at risk of harm or abuse.

Many people who sleep rough may have extremely limited statutory rights to safe accommodation as a result of their immigration status. Councils have a responsibility to offer an assessment for services under the Care Act, and it is unlawful to refuse to assist a person who for reasons of immigration status may not be eligible for local authority services without undertaking a human rights assessment.

People who live on the street may have become homeless as a consequence of abuse and they may also face abuse in their lives on the street. Amongst the population of people who sleep rough there are significantly higher prevalence rates of organic and functional mental illness, substance use, acquired brain injury, autistic spectrum conditions and learning difficulties, and some communicable diseases. Any of these conditions can contribute to behaviours which result in self-neglect. Agencies must also be alert to the possibility that individuals living on the streets may be fleeing human trafficking and modern slavery.

The legal and regulatory framework in this area is complex and council practitioners should always seek detailed advice within their council when seeking to determine an individual's rights under **the Care Act**.

## **Women's rough sleeping**

### **Background**

Although women are less likely to sleep rough than men, according to data from outreach services and annual street counts, women's homelessness can also take different forms, which are equally likely to lead to a risk of COVID-19 infection.

A 2018 evidence review by the University of York found that 'experience of domestic violence and abuse is near-universal among women who become homeless'. In response to ongoing risks to their safety, survivors will often take steps to hide themselves while sleeping rough, or rely on unsafe hidden homeless arrangements with family, friends or partners, including perpetrators of abuse.

### **Good Practice**

The **National Domestic Abuse Policy and Practice Group**, which includes representation from leading domestic abuse, LGBT, homelessness and housing agencies, wrote to the government in May 2020 highlighting some of the issues for homeless women in the light of COVID-19.

These include the need to deliver the safeguards that women survivors of violence and abuse require during Everyone In, including women-only accommodation, ongoing specialist support and additional security measures for safety.

To date there has been no clear national strategy on how this should be achieved, with different approaches taken by different councils across the country. **Good practice**, as suggested by the group, includes:

- involving specialist Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) agencies in planning move-on accommodation and support for women, which takes into account that many are survivors of domestic abuse
- not evicting any domestic abuse survivor from emergency accommodation without an offer of accommodation and support
- providing specialist accommodation and support for women facing multiple disadvantage, including Housing First where appropriate
- developing safe accommodation and support options for homeless couples currently isolating together in emergency accommodation, at increased risk from domestic abuse
- where survivors in couples choose to leave a relationship, local authorities should work with specialist domestic abuse agencies to accommodate perpetrators as well as survivors, to prevent the perpetrator returning to rough sleeping or to the survivor's accommodation
- ensuring that people who are subject to NRPF conditions - or are otherwise not entitled to welfare benefits and homelessness assistance in the UK - do not return to the streets or to their abusers.

## Leeds City Council

### Resources for councils and other services

Useful practical guidance for homelessness services on good practice in working with homeless women during COVID-19 has been produced by **Stand Together** and a range of COVID-19 related resources are available from the **Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance**.

## Issues

### Introduction

This section discusses some of the issues we found affecting councils' ability to deliver positive outcomes. This includes hidden homelessness, people with no recourse to public funds, move-on accommodation and support, and resources.

### Hidden homelessness

#### Background

As well as people actually sleeping on the streets Everyone In explicitly instructed councils to 'focus on people who are, or are at risk of, sleeping rough, and those who are in accommodation where it is difficult to self-isolate, such as shelters and assessment centres'.

Many councils found that this was a much larger number than anticipated. There were people in non-commissioned night shelters or other informal provision, with which councils had hitherto had little involvement, and/or a much larger than expected number of hidden homeless people leading precarious lives sleeping in the homes of friends or family, who had previously been reluctant or not thought it worthwhile to approach councils for help.

## London Borough of Hillingdon and Heathrow Airport

### Nature of hidden homelessness

Reasons for people not approaching councils previously could have been because they were ineligible for assistance on grounds of immigration status or were without a sufficient local connection. In other cases, people owed a relief duty by the council under the Homelessness Reduction Act, but not a duty to accommodate, began approaching councils because of the breakdown of their current arrangements in the face of COVID-19.

Birmingham City Council told us that when the Housing Options Service closed to in-person enquiries as a result of COVID-19 and the main homelessness day centre closed, they opened up an emergency housing options service for single people, initially in their emergency access hostel, and then moving to the day centre. Over the six months from 23 March, they had 1,000 presentations from single people over 25. This is compared to around 40 rough sleepers at the point where the pandemic hit and 70 people who moved into a commercial hotel during the first phase of Everyone In.

This demonstrates that, as in other areas, the number of actual rough sleepers at any point in time is a small number compared to the number of single people who are homeless or at risk of rough sleeping.

Similarly, if we look at London, where the most detailed figures are available, in 2019/20 CHAIN records 10,726 rough sleepers seen bedded down over the year, over nine times as many as the 1,136 in the snapshot count of Autumn 2019. This suggests that, at any time, many more people are at risk of rough sleeping, and will go on to sleep rough, than the number of people actually on the streets at a given date.

Everyone In has made some councils seriously reconsider their approach to non-priority single homelessness for the future, and others have expressed regret at being unable to continue to afford to provide accommodation for the wider cohort which Everyone In allowed them to support and which, for a time, reduced rough sleeping numbers so dramatically.

## **No Recourse to Public Funds and European Economic Area nationals**

### **Background**

No recourse to public funds (NRPF) is an immigration condition that prohibits access to:

- most non-contributory benefits
- homelessness assistance under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996
- a council allocation of social housing under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996.

A person will have no recourse to public funds when they are a national of a non-European Economic Area (EEA) country and have:

- leave to remain with the NRPF condition
- leave to remain subject to a maintenance undertaking e.g. adult dependent relative
- no current immigration permission eg a visa overstayer EEA national.

EEA nationals and their family members are not subject to the NRPF condition but may be unable to claim benefits and housing assistance if they have not obtained settled status (indefinite leave to remain) under the EU Settlement Scheme and are not in work.

### **Supporting homeless people unable to claim benefits**

Historically, it has been extremely difficult for councils to provide support directly to single homeless people with NRPF status or EEA nationals without settled status and who are not in work. It is worth noting, however, that, under Section 180 of the Housing Act 1996, help may be provided by a council in the form of grants, loans, personnel, furniture, goods or staff to any not for profit organisation 'concerned with homelessness or matters relating to homelessness'. There is no stipulation preventing such organisations helping those with NRPF status or EEA nationals, and in practice most of the help that is provided for these groups has been provided by the voluntary sector. As highlighted in Section 3.6 above, having NRPF status does not detract from councils' responsibilities under the Care Act to make safeguarding enquiries irrespective of ordinary residence.

These factors are an important contributing reason to such a high proportion of rough sleepers being foreign nationals. At the 2019 national rough sleeping snapshot across the country 28 per cent of those rough sleeping were foreign nationals.

### **Everyone In emergency response**

During Everyone In, councils were encouraged and enabled to accommodate people with NRPF status, because of the risk to life presented by the COVID-19 outbreak. We understand that around 50 per cent of the 5,400 people taken into emergency accommodation in London during Everyone In were NRPF or EEA nationals not eligible for support under normal circumstances. Many other councils have accommodated people falling into these groups in varying proportions.

### **Coventry City Council**

It has been accepted by Government that councils have accommodated people with NRPF status at Everyone In. However, the Government has also reiterated that the law on NRPF has not changed. The Minister for Local Government and Homelessness' letter to councils on 28 May stated:

'I do recognise that these are challenging times and that you may have accommodated people who would normally and otherwise be ineligible for support, making judgements based on risk to life.



I wanted to take this opportunity to restate the government's position on eligibility relating to immigration status, including for those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).

The law regarding that status remains in place. Local authorities must use their judgment in assessing what support they may lawfully give to each person on an individual basis, considering that person's specific circumstances and support needs.

You will already be used to making such judgements on accommodating individuals who might otherwise be ineligible, during extreme weather for example, where there is a risk to life.'

This has left councils in a difficult position, as the implication of the letter is that support can only be given where there is a risk to life, but there has been little clarification of how such a risk should be assessed.

## **Liverpool City Council**

### **Suspension of derogation and time limited support**

For certain categories of EEA nationals, the position has been temporarily eased by the government's decision to temporarily suspend the UK's derogation from article 24(2) of the EU Free Movement Directive, to enable councils to accommodate and support a specific group of rough sleeping EEA nationals for a single period of up to 12 weeks, as set out in the minister's letter to councils of 24 June.

This allows accommodation and support to be provided for such nationals if they are seeking to gain employment in the UK or to return to their country of origin until 31 December 2020. However, it does not provide access to welfare benefits, such as Universal Credit or Housing Benefit, and the position after 31 December remains unclear.

The **NRPF network has produced a helpful fact sheet** for councils supporting people with no recourse to public funds during the COVID-19 pandemic, giving more details of the routes open to local authorities and the circumstances in which they can be applied.

### **Unresolved Issues**

Our experience of talking to councils about this issue shows that, in areas where there are a significant number of foreign national rough sleepers unable to claim benefits or housing assistance, this is one of the biggest issues facing them.

A number of councils have been actively working with the **NRPF** and EEA nationals they have accommodated in order to assess their immigration status, assist people to find work where they can, assist with resolving immigration status where possible, and in some cases assist the person to return to their home country on a voluntary basis.

This has had significant success, despite COVID-19 related difficulties in gaining employment and progressing immigration cases. Councils in London, Birmingham, Liverpool and elsewhere all have people whom they are accommodating at their own expense, where it is unclear whether or when access to public funds will be possible.

Some councils have pledged that they will not evict these residents onto the streets, whilst in others there is currently an active debate on what to do. The situation is very difficult, and some authorities feel they have no choice but to cease their assistance. Even where councils have accepted an obligation to help those already accommodated for as long as they can, this does not usually apply to those newly arriving on the streets.

New immigration rules laid before parliament and due to come into force on 1 January 2021, have been drafted so as to allow deportation of foreign nationals who are sleeping rough. The Home Office has stated that such powers will be used sparingly.

## **Move-on accommodation and support**

### **Background**

We found a wide variety of approaches to sourcing move-on accommodation, dependent on local circumstances and markets. In all cases sourcing support alongside accommodation was essential, and in many cases more difficult, because of the uncertainty of future funding. However, it was essential to understand in detail each individual's needs and wishes to ensure successful move-on placements.

### **Social housing**

In some areas of the country, where supply of social housing is higher, allocation of social housing was an appropriate route for move-on accommodation. This had entailed changes in allocation policy and suspension of Choice Based Letting.

In Liverpool agreement was reached with the RPs working in the city that all suitable void and new properties would be allocated to move-on accommodation for Everyone In until December. In Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole 80 per cent of social rented allocations are being offered to homeless people.

However, in other areas, the wait for a suitable socially rented property could be two years or more, so this was unlikely to be a fruitful route for move-on. Those people brought in at Everyone In who were in priority need, and thus eligible for assistance under councils' statutory homelessness duties, were more likely to be offered social housing than those who were not.

Some councils spoke of a reluctance on the part of RPs to accept former rough sleepers in general needs accommodation because of perceived problems of anti-social behaviour and tenancy sustainment. We spoke to the Riverside Group Ltd, who are working with Greater Manchester on their Housing First pilot where the housing providers are all RPs and do not place conditions on housing offers. The '**Homes for Cathy**' campaign is also helping to highlight the important contribution RPs can make to providing settled accommodation for this group.

### **Supported housing and Housing First**

Supported housing was still an important pathway, although there was not adequate supply for all, nor was it considered suitable for everyone. Some councils were looking at redesigning pathways, as discussed above, and how supported housing would be used was part of this discussion. Housing First models were considered helpful for some people, but definitely not a panacea, and restrictive because of the revenue costs attached.

Several councils had bid to the Next Steps Accommodation Programme for supported and Housing First projects, both to the interim revenue fund and longer-term capital and revenue funds. Some councils, such as Hillingdon, Plymouth and Birmingham, were working closely with providers of non-commissioned supported housing with access to enhanced housing benefit payments for intensive housing management, and others were looking to do more in this area. However, there was an acknowledgement that the high rents charged can act as a work disincentive, because housing benefit deductions from earned income can be higher, and that move-on pathways are important where this type of accommodation is used.

Haringey Council has offered sheltered housing to anyone over 50, which they report has been very successful in some cases and helped people to come inside, although it is not the choice of everyone.

### **Private rented sector**

In many areas the private rented sector is the most available source of suitable studio or one-bed accommodation. In recent months, when other demand had declined such as Airbnb and demand from students, landlords welcomed this supply. Success in maintaining tenancies relied on councils putting good support in place to ensure rental payments were made and any perceived anti-social behaviour addressed. Most

councils reported limited, and less than expected, anti-social behaviour in emergency accommodation, giving greater confidence that placement in PRS accommodation could be successful.

While in many parts of London rent levels and the overall benefit cap make it difficult to source affordable studio and one-bed accommodation, despite the increase in Local Housing Allowance, in other parts of the country sourcing an affordable supply of one-bed accommodation in the PRS was possible.

Some councils spoke of being wary of PRS offers, as it may be 'too much too soon' for former rough sleepers, but when offered to people with low or medium support needs with the right package of tenancy support, we saw evidence of success.

### **Shared housing**

In areas where the benefit cap makes self-contained housing unaffordable then shared supported housing may be a suitable option, as the one-bed Housing Benefit/Universal Credit rate is applicable for over 35s. In fact, a number of councils reported that some rough sleepers expressed a preference for shared housing.

In Hillingdon, an area with large numbers of rough sleepers present at Heathrow Airport, many of whom have low to medium support needs, they are working successfully with Trinity, a homelessness charity, who manage shared accommodation with support. They have bid to the Next Steps Accommodation Programme for capital and revenue funding to extend this model.

Members of the Plymouth Alliance had also taken on new leased shared supported housing to meet demand, as an alternative to using hotels, and with varying levels of support to meet the needs of different client groups.

### **New provision**

In some areas new provision is likely to be one of the only affordable solutions, where social housing is in scarce supply and PRS accommodation too costly. Haringey Council are in the process of developing a 40-unit modular project on its own land for this cohort, and are remodelling two care homes for medium term provision. They are keen to build up their own supply and have bid to NSAP for capital and revenue support.

### **Move-on processes/h3>**

In consideration of the needs of the client group, many councils had moved away from a one suitable offer only policy, with accommodation stopped if the offer was not accepted, to a more expansive approach, accepting that multiple offers might be

required. Some spoke about a change of mindset being appropriate for dealing with this client group as opposed to other homeless applicants.

Minimal support to include help setting up rent and benefit payments was essential. We heard of cases where this was not provided with consequential breakdown of tenancies. Others were able to provide floating support through varying existing contracts, and to ensure that the help available in emergency accommodation from health, substance misuse and the voluntary sector could continue once people had moved to a permanent home.

Both suitability and affordability assessments should be carried out prior to placing in the PRS, as would be the case when making an offer to a statutory homeless applicant. In London the benefit cap restricts access to considerable amounts of PRS accommodation that might otherwise be suitable and affordable given the recent rise in Local Housing Allowance this April.

## **Greater London Authority**

### **Capital Letters**

## **Resources**

Councils' ability to tackle rough sleeping during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequently is dependent on the resources they have available. Appendix 1 outlines the main funding available to English councils.

Those councils in receipt of Rough Sleeper Initiative funding and Flexible Homelessness Support Grant, areas with high levels of rough sleeping and statutory homelessness, were able to react more innovatively and flexibly. All councils expressed a desire for longer term homelessness funding in the future, to avoid multiple short-term bidding processes, which are resource hungry and can be particularly onerous for smaller councils.

## **Conclusions**

### **Introduction**

This section discusses our conclusions.

### **General**

The success of Everyone In demonstrates that, given the mandate and funding, councils, working with their partners, have the means to end the vast majority of rough sleeping.

## Everyone In

Where Everyone In worked well there were some features that contributed to its success. These were:

- Rapid and expansive response in picking up and accommodating people sleeping rough and people living in unsafe conditions at risk of sleeping rough, including those not normally eligible for public services due to immigration status.
- Comprehensive needs assessment, including health, substance abuse and specific needs of women.
- Characteristics of hotel accommodation giving important feelings of safety and self-worth.
- Multi-agency services coming to the emergency accommodation and encouraging engagement.
- Rapid turnaround in moving on low needs cohort.

## Partnership working

Multi-agency partnership working was key to success, and we frequently heard reports that working together on Everyone In had strengthened existing relationships and built new ones. Important aspects were:

- Councils working closely with a broader range of partners than usual, including health, criminal justice, housing associations and the voluntary and charitable sectors. This led to a better understanding from all partners of what the others could do and the potential to bring together and allocate different sets of resources in new ways.
- 
- Engagement with health to get a tailored service for this cohort, including primary health care and access to mental health and drug and alcohol services.
- Enhanced trust between councils operating across two tier geographies. Counties and districts had interdependent responsibilities and worked together both vertically and horizontally to secure the best outcomes.
- Making the most of new technology to conduct remote meetings between agencies, drastically reducing the logistical barriers to co-operation.

## Pointers for the future

Everyone In had brought in new ways of working, some of which respondents felt were more effective and had potential for the future. These were:

- Councils converting the majority of housing options services to telephone only. Some reported people were happier with phone interactions due to the ease of the transaction and reduced stigma. However, others found this was a significant barrier to engaging with some groups and had maintained or set up new mechanisms to facilitate face to face delivery.

- Using teleconferencing, rather than face to face meetings, facilitated collaborative working across wide geographies.
- Reflection on the relative success of pre-existing pathways for single homeless people and the approach adopted at Everyone In. A number of councils were considering how they could mirror the positive aspects of hotel accommodation and rapid move-on in new service design to address the negative characteristics of night shelters and hostels, and the greater success rates in moves to settled accommodation that had been achieved.
- Everyone In highlighted the extent of hidden homelessness for single people, in what was often a surprising scale to councils. Given that the Homelessness Reduction Act has introduced responsibilities to this cohort, some councils are beginning to think longer term about their affordable housing programme and whether it should include a larger proportion of one-bed accommodation

## **Outstanding issues**

- People with no recourse to public funds remain a dilemma. Work to assist people in resolving immigration status and in finding employment was successful for some councils, but there usually remained a proportion for whom there was no solution, and in some areas people without settled immigration status represent a significant proportion of those at risk of sleeping rough.
- Shortage of affordable housing is an inevitable blocker in finding move on accommodation. While the NSAP capital programme will provide additional supported housing capacity, there remains a need for more genuinely affordable one-bed accommodation in both the public and private rented sectors, given Housing Benefit and Universal Credit limits.
- Although many councils had significant success with the Everyone In cohort, it was clear that a one-off exercise was not adequate to maintain long term reductions in rough sleeping in most areas, and a more sustained effort would be needed. Whilst there was enthusiasm for maintaining a more proactive approach to accommodating rough sleepers and those at risk, the resources were not there in most councils to be able to achieve this, especially in the light of concerns about increasing homelessness and temporary accommodation costs linked to the economic impacts of the pandemic.
- Many councils are concerned about their ability to provide adequate cold weather provision this winter in a way which does not increase the risk of COVID-19 infection.
- Despite the enhanced levels of co-operation between services, which were widespread during Everyone In, it was nevertheless often difficult to get access to appropriate health services, and especially mental health services, to work with the accommodated cohort. This seems to be a reflection of the lack of specialist

primary care services working in homelessness in many parts of the country and a continued wider lack of mental health resources relative to demand.

## More publications about Housing, planning and homelessness

Lessons learnt from councils' response to rough sleeping during the COVID-19 pandemic

Housing Advisers Programme Prospectus 2020/21

Meeting the home adaptation needs of older people

More publications in this topic

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## Political groups



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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission</b><br><b>14<sup>th</sup> December 2020</b><br><b>Item 6 – Lettings Policy</b> | Item No<br><b>6</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|

**Outline**

There has been a steady increase over the last few years in the proportion of households considered to have acute housing needs. The number of social lets that are becoming available are low in comparison to this level of demand.

The 2018 manifesto includes the commitment to “...manage rising demand for social rented homes in Hackney...review how we allocate these homes to ensure the system is as fair and effective as possible... ensuring those in the highest need are a priority.”

To progress this officers have undertaken a review and propose a redesigned letting policy to respond to increased demand and diminishing supply.

**The discussion will cover:**

An update about the new lettings policy being proposed and the planned consultation on the new policy.

**Reports in the agenda:**

- Presentation information on the Housing Register and Lettings Policy Review

**Invited Attendees:****London Borough of Hackney**

- **Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply**, Cllr Rebecca Rennison
- **Head of Benefits and Housing Needs**, Jennifer Wynter.

**Action**

Members are asked to consider the reports, presentations and ask questions.

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# Housing Register and Lettings Policy Review

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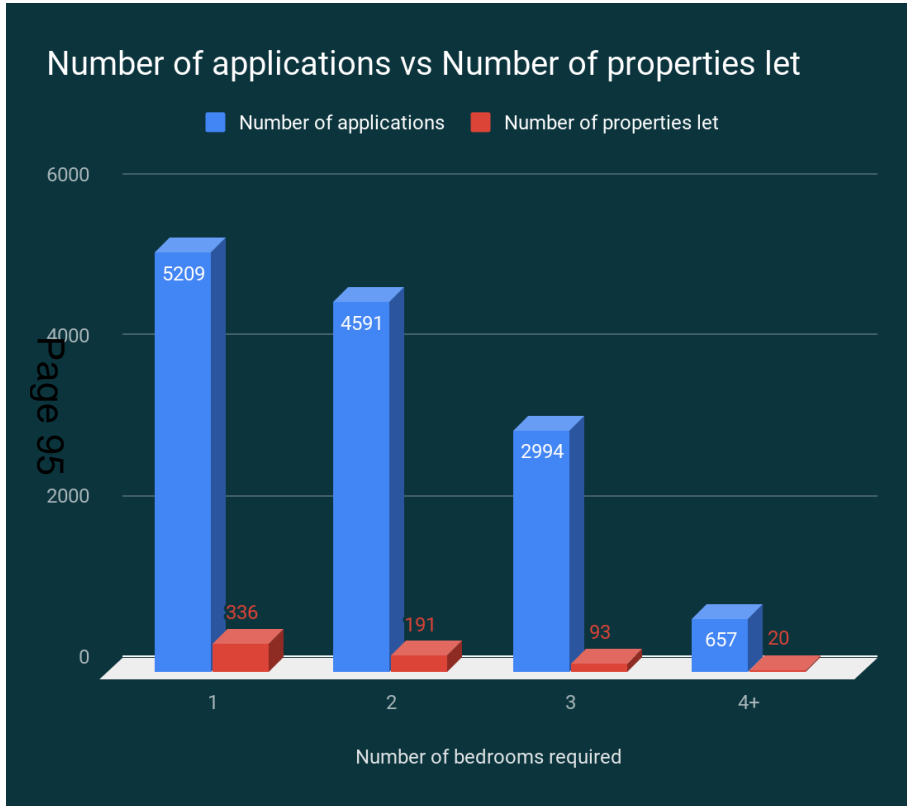


# Current Context - Social Housing Crisis



- There are currently over 13,400 households on the Housing Register
- There has been a steady increase in the percentage of households on the housing register that are considered to be in acute need - from 18% in 2014 up to 34% now;  
More and more of these households are presenting with multiple and complex ongoing housing / support needs;
- Homelessness levels are also increasing: the number of approaches in 2018-19 was up by 39%.
- 3300 homeless households are in Temporary Accommodation
- **Wheelchair demand and number of adapted properties**

# Level of demand



For every 100 properties that become available we will receive 11000 bids...

The no. of Social Lets has diminished significantly over the past 2 years.

1229 lets in 2017/18 to 640 in 2018/19

The drop in social housing supply is a consequence of a number of factors:

- Right to buy
- Regeneration Decants
- Rehousing demand (ASB / DA / Gangs / Management transfers etc)
- Tenants living longer
- No affordable alternatives
- Decrease in building new social housing units

# Current Context - Outcomes



If you require an adapted property or if you are over the age of 55 your estimated waiting time may not be accurate.

**Your estimated wait time is currently**  
**15 years 7 months**

Why is this?





# Current Context - Estimated Waiting Times



Waiting times if the Housing Register was closed as of 24th July

Number of Bedrooms required

Band

1

2

3

4

5+

**Urgent**

10 mths

14 mths

1 yrs

7 yrs

32 yrs

**Homeless/Priority**

3 yrs

12yrs

9 yrs

13 yrs

39 yrs

**General**

6 yrs

19 yrs

26 yrs

26 yrs

53 yrs

**Reserve**

15 yrs

24yrs

30 yrs

28 yrs

54 yrs

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# Need for Change



Mayor's manifesto commitment - "To manage rising demand for social rented homes in Hackney, we will review how we allocate these homes to ensure the system is as fair and effective as possible, including developing local lettings schemes and ensuring those in the highest need are a priority."

# The current scheme is no longer fit for purpose



- The current scheme was designed at a time when supply was more than double current levels
- The current scheme was designed to manage demand based on 2014 levels.
- Through a complex allocation of points the current scheme was designed to differentiate between applicants with different requirements and characteristics to prioritise those with greater needs. This has resulted in applicants constantly searching for additional points in a misguided expectation that it will increase their priority.
- The current scheme is difficult for residents to understand and therefore does not deliver a clear and transparent process.
- The current scheme has low entry requirements which leads to false expectation and increased levels of complaints and reviews.
- **Many applicants have no realistic prospect of securing social housing through the Housing Register.**

# Any Questions?



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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission</b><br><b>14<sup>th</sup> December 2020</b><br><b>Item 7 – Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b> | Item No<br><b>7</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|

**Outline**

The draft minutes of the meeting of the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020 are enclosed.

**Action**

The Commission are asked to review and agree the minutes, and to note the responses to actions arising from previous meetings.

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London Borough of Hackney  
Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission  
Municipal Year 2020/21  
Date of meeting Monday, 9 November, 2020

Minutes of the proceedings of  
the Living in Hackney Scrutiny  
Commission held at  
Hackney Town Hall, Mare  
Street, London, E8 1EA

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| <b>Chair</b>                      | <b>Cllr Sharon Patrick</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Councillors in Attendance:</b> | <b>Cllr Sade Etti, Cllr Anthony McMahon, Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Ian Rathbone, Cllr Penny Wrout</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Apologies:</b>                 | <b>Cllr Anna Lynch</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Officers in Attendance</b>     | Cllr Susan Fajana – Thomas (Cabinet Member for Community Safety), Cllr Carole Williams, Cabinet Member for Skills, Employment and Human Resources, Jason Davis, Strategic Lead (Policy) and lead Officer for Hackney’s Community Safety Partnership, Maurice Mason, Community Safety Partnership Manager, Gerry McCarthy, Head of Community Safety, Enforcement and Business Regulation from London Borough of Hackney                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Other People in Attendance</b> | Commander Catherine Roper (Head of Profession, Crime Prevention, Inclusion & Engagement - London lead for Crime Prevention, Inclusion and Engagement), Commander Jane Connors (London lead for Violence and Stop/Search), Natasha Plummer (Head of Engagement), Sal Naseem (Regional Director London), Detective Superintendent Mike Hamer (Central East BCU Lead for Violence & Criminal Investigation and Deputy Borough Commander), Tim Head (Account Group Project Officer at HCVS), Great Okosun (HCVS Account Group Representative), Yolanda Lear (HCVS Account Group Representative), Superintendent Andy Port (Central East BCU Lead for Neighbourhood Policing & Community Engagement), Louise Brewood, LBH Safer Neighbourhood Board, Nicola Baboneau, (LBH Safer Neighbourhood Board) |
| <b>Members of the Public</b>      | <b>None</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Officer Contact:</b>           | <b>Tracey Anderson</b><br>☎ 0208 356 3312<br>✉ tracey.anderson@hackney.gov.uk                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

**Councillor Sharon Patrick in the Chair**

## **1 Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence from Commission member Cllr Anna Lynch.
- 1.2 Apologies for absence from the Borough Commander of Borough Command Unit Central East (Hackney & Tower Hamlets), Detective Chief Superintendent Marcus Barnett.
- 1.3 Apologies for lateness from Commission member Cllr Anthony McMahon.

## **2 Urgent Items/ Order of Business**

- 2.1 There was no urgent items and the items of the meeting was as per the agenda.

## **3 Declaration of Interest**

- 3.1 No declarations of interest.

## **4 Stop and Search and Inclusive Policing**

- 4.1 In attendance at the meeting for this items from the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC), Natasha Plummer, Head of Engagement. From the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) at MET HQ, Commander Catherine Roper, Head of Profession, Crime Prevention, Inclusion & Engagement - London lead for Crime Prevention, Inclusion and Engagement and Commander Jane Connors, London lead for Violence and Stop/Search. From Central East (CE) Borough Command Unit (BCU), Detective Superintendent Mike Hamer, CE BCU Lead for Violence & Criminal Investigation and Superintendent Andy Port, CE BCU Lead for Neighbourhood Policing & Community Engagement. From the Independent Officer for Police Conduct (IOPC), Sal Naseem, Regional Director London.
- 4.2 The Chair introduced this item and commenced by giving some back ground information about the item. The Chair explained the Commission's work in this area started in 2019 following information about the MPS's plans for body worn cameras and the work of the local Account Group.
- 4.3 The Commission followed this up in June 2020 but were left with outstanding questions and wanted a further meeting with the MPS, IOPC and MOPAC.
- 4.4 The Chair pointed out the Commission has a key role in Hackney to look at these issues on behalf of the community. From 2017, since the death of Rushan Charles, trust and confidence among the communities in Hackney has been decreasing significantly. The MPS statistics show an increase in stop and search in Hackney along with a rise in handcuffing across the MPS.
- 4.5 The Commission represents the views of the community but are mindful the Council needs to work with the police to ensure the community is protected. The Chair pointed out currently not all members of Hackney's community felt protected by the Police. The Commission wanted to see improved relations



between Hackney Council, the community, police and MOPAC to find a way forward.

- 4.6 The Chair highlighted following the death of George Floyd the black community's faith in the police is not as it should be due to police behaviour. But this is a global problem between ethnic minorities and the police. Making reference to the Lammy review report the Chair pointed out there are reports that show the BAME community is overrepresented in the justice system.
- 4.7 The Commission invited the Borough Command Unit (BCU) for Central East (Hackney and Tower Hamlets), Metropolitan Police Service Headquarters (MET HQ) and Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to talk about their work to build trust and confidence and to outline how this public concern was being addressed by the MPS and MOPAC. Included in this discussion was the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) to further explore how the IOPC works with the MPS in terms of their complaints system and to hear about the review finding from their use of stop and search review.
- 4.8 The Commission submitted questions in advance to the MPS Borough Commander, MET HQ and MOPAC officer. These questions covered the following areas:
1. Stop and Search
  2. Trust and confidence
  3. Accountability
  4. Handcuffing
  5. Fair and inclusive policing.
  6. Sources of intelligence
  7. Community engagement work related to building trust and confidence.
- 4.9 The Commission submitted questions in advance to the IOPC covering the following areas:
1. Powers of IOPC in relation to the recommendations they make to the MPS
  2. Role of the IOPC in relation to MPS complaints
  3. Their success in influencing policy and implementation of the recommendations they make.
  4. Information about the IOPCs review on the use of stop and search.
- 4.10 Written response to the questions were provided in the agenda under item 4a and item 4b and supplementary papers.
- Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC)**
- 4.11 The Head of Engagement from MOPAC commenced her presentation covering the key points from MOPAC's written submission and provided further information in response to the questions submitted.
- 4.11.1 MOPAC is led by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan. The Deputy Mayor for Police and Crime, Sophie Linden leads MOPAC on a daily basis. MOPAC's role is to provide oversight of the MPS and ensure delivery of the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan. The Mayor's Police and Crime Plan sets out his strategic ambitions in relation to crime in London. This also sets out his work with partners to drive an effective criminal justice and crime reduction service across London.

- 4.11.2 The Mayor of London sets the strategic direction and budget for the MPS and has powers to bring partners together to problem solve to address key issues affecting Londoners. The Mayor of London does not have operational control of the MPS and cannot direct the MET Commissioner of the MPS. This is a key difference for UK's policing system to other global police forces.
- 4.11.3 The remit of the Head of Engagement from MOPAC covers community engagement and scrutiny. Areas such as wider stakeholder engagement (such as a targeted round table), use of Covid 19 powers, hate crime (this increased during lockdown) and working with local safer neighbourhood boards (SNBs), local stop and search monitoring groups and independent custody visiting in London boroughs.
- 4.11.4 MOPAC highlighted trust and confidence is the central principle to the work of policing by consent. The foundation of which UK policing built and fundamental to the work of the MPS.
- 4.11.5 MOPAC recognise when people have trust in police they are more likely to be satisfied when they encounter a police officer, will comply with police authority and will assist the police with investigations.
- 4.11.6 MOPAC pointed out the view of the police and how powers are used (i.e. stop and search) or perceived to be used by communities, is critical to maintaining that trust and confidence and delivering effective policing in the London.
- 4.11.7 Police confidence is a key measure that has been tracked for a few years through their public attitudes survey. The main measure is a questions about if the police in their area are doing a good job.
- 4.11.8 The most recent survey shows 58% for London and 56% for Hackney - Hackney has consistently tracked below the London average. MOPAC acknowledged the Chair's commented about the fall in confidence over the last 3-4 years. This measure has been compounded by wider society impacts such as austerity, this period of uncertainty and change like Brexit. However it has stabilised at 58% and they hope it will now start to rise in the future.
- 4.11.9 MOPACs role involves overseeing the work of the MPS in its entirety including their work on community engagement, trust and confidence, stop and search and crime reduction. MOPAC also support the community to scrutinise the police at a local level.
- 4.11.10 MOPAC discharge their function by overseeing the work of the MPS and by holding the MET Commissioner and her senior team to account for delivery. This is through various mechanism like 121 meetings with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and their formal Oversight Board.
- 4.11.11 The meetings are used to integrate the data and challenge the MET Commissioner and about the team's performance; whilst also challenging on issues that matter most to communities.

- 4.11.12 Another way they hold the MPS to account is through transparency. The transparency is through the publication of a variety of information and data sets. These cover general crime data - public voice data, information about complaints and police workforce statistics. The officer highlighted the Hackney Account Group had made use of this publically available data to challenge and scrutinise their local police officers.
- 4.11.13 MOPAC fund Safer Neighbourhood Boards. The SNB's hold the local MPS to account and fund community safety matters. MOPAC also fund local crime reduction projects. LBH receives £29k for projects and to support the work of the SNB.
- 4.11.14 MOPAC also work with communities to look at key aspects of policing like custody. This entails working with independent custody visitors to review police custody through to stop and search community monitoring.
- 4.11.15 MOPAC explained stop and search is an important police power but they also recognise it is quite an intrusive power (allowing within set parameters police officers to put their hands in pockets) if it has not been carried out correctly or with dignity.
- 4.11.16 It is important for trust and confidence that policing is seen with legitimacy, is intelligence led, conducted fairly and proportionately. It is key for communities to have this view.
- 4.11.17 MOPAC acknowledged the data show disproportionality and that this is a cause for concern by community. Based on population data they know that black individuals are 3.5 times more likely to be stopped and search compared to a white individual.
- 4.11.18 As part of MOPACs work they support a network of community stop and search monitoring groups to scrutinise that data at a local level. MOPAC recognise it is important to ensure the community performs that functions and that their conversations feed into the work MOPAC is doing at the corporate centre.
- 4.11.19 MOPAC pointed out 2020 have been a challenging year. The world has witnessed the murder of George Floyd and protests around the world have put police services around the world under intense scrutiny. The Mayor of London is committed to an action plan to address 4 key areas MOPAC hope will address trust and confidence in policing.
- 1) **Better use of police powers** – this looks at consistency e.g. for area like the hand cuffing policy and reviewing the disproportionality across a range of tactics and tools like stop and search, tasers etc.
  - 2) **How we work together with black communities to keep them safer** - this is about developing a new framework for engagement between the police and communities. Enabling more accessible opportunities for a wider range of people to be in the conversations. To help with problem solving and to fully understand how people are experiencing policing on the ground. This work takes into consideration their work with safer schools officers, thinking about how they are supported to build relationships with young people and to keep them safe.

- 3) **Building a police service that better represents and serves black Londoners** - people want a service to reflect them and London. More importantly they want the service that can be seen to operate within the various communities in London. This work will focus on the retention and recruitment of black and ethnic minority officers at every level of the service. It will also highlight how communities and young people can get involved in recruitment training, to make it more open and transparent and bring in lived experience. Help to empower and train officers to operate within London.
- 4) **Holding the police to account** - it is clear from conversations with the community they do not recognise MOPAC is doing a lot of accountability and oversight work. MOPAC is thinking about how to make that more transparent and make communities more aware it is happening. Critically they want to build new and broader opportunities for communities to be involved in that scrutiny. MOPAC is look at how to broaden out the remit of borough level scrutiny and are proposing to build city wide scrutiny mechanisms to enable the public to be more involved. This will not just focus on stop and search but look at other police powers such as the use of tasers.

4.11.20 MOPAC acknowledged there is a lot of work to do but highlighted they are building on a good foundation. They are hearing that communities want more to be done and rapidly.

4.11.21 For MOPAC the challenges are:

- a) how they better inform communities about their work holding the MET to account.
- b) enable people to understand their rights and responsibilities in this space.
- c) support and work with the IOPC to help people to understand how the complaints system works and make it more accessible.

4.11.22 As part of this work MOPAC want to create specific opportunities to be held to account for the oversight they do of the MPS in delivering the plan. They want to be held to account by the public for the experience of how policing feels to them.

4.11.23 MOPAC recognise that trust and confidence is important but so is understanding the perceptions, feelings and experiences of the communities. MOPAC would like to see in 4-5 years' time the monitoring indicators reflecting progress and change and the community feeling and experience to improve too. They want a better relationship with communities across London.

#### 4.12 **Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)**

4.12.1 The Head of Profession, Crime Prevention, Inclusion & Engagement - London lead for Crime Prevention, Inclusion and Engagement from Metropolitan Police Headquarters (MET HQ) / MPS commenced her presentation covering the key points from the written submissions by BCU Central East and in response to the questions submitted.

- 4.12.2 The officer's areas of responsibility include crime prevention and inclusion across the MPS. The department has 3 strands the crime prevention strategy, diversity and inclusion strategy and the engagement strategy. These strategies set the tone for the organisation and holds the organisation to account for the activities carried out.
- 4.12.3 The Head of Profession, Crime Prevention, Inclusion & Engagement - London lead for Crime Prevention, Inclusion and Engagement advised her attendance was following strong messages from the community about not seeing and feeling all the activities the MPS is doing to engage with the community and that their internal structures are aware is happening.
- 4.12.4 Referring to the MOPAC officer's comments the MPS echoed that 2020 has been an unprecedented year and that this has been the same for policing.
- 4.12.5 The MPS highlighted at the beginning of the year trust and confidence in the MET was beginning to be positive. People were feeling more informed about local policing and addressing the concerns of local communities and what they cared about.
- 4.12.6 Following March, April and May there has been a slump in the public attitudes survey particularly trust and confidence within the black communities. Especially after the murder of George Floyd. Commenting there has been an out pouring of frustrations from communities, particularly the black communities in London.
- 4.12.7 The Head of Profession, Crime Prevention, Inclusion & Engagement - London lead for Crime Prevention, Inclusion and Engagement explained they have been working with the community and have a long list of the people the department has engaged with daily. However the MPS did accept they did not do enough talking to people for example they did not speak to the Chinese and south Asian communities and at the start of Covid they started to suffer from hate crime.
- 4.12.8 The MPS have carried out more engagement in a number of their normal policing processes e.g. public order. Although they acknowledged the community seems to not see the impact of this work. The MPS recognised their engagement work has not been fully successful in is their BCUs (frontline policing).
- 4.12.9 There has been some inconsistencies in how they were engaging across the organisation. The MPS was not fully aware of who they were engaging with and who they needed to engage with more. The Head of Profession, Crime Prevention, Inclusion & Engagement - London lead for Crime Prevention, Inclusion and Engagement is taking the lead with a group of officers to resolve.
- 4.12.10 In the agenda papers submitted for the meeting the MPS outlined their minimum offer within frontline policing for all BCUs. This should remove the inconsistency within the service from local policing.
- 4.12.11 The MPS will be increasing their scrutiny processes. The MPS is trying to keep communities better informed and respond to the feedback.

- 4.12.12 The MPS highlighted we are about to enter into lockdown 2. Based on the public's feelings about this they will need to navigate this sensitively.
- 4.12.13 The officer highlighted the MET Commissioner has committed to being the most trusted police service globally. The MET Commissioner has 2 priorities: 1) violence – to reduce violence across the capital; 2) Improve trust and confidence between the MPS and their communities. The MPS acknowledge they have a lot of work to do.
- 4.12.14 The London lead for Violence and Stop/Search added the following points in response to the questions submitted.
- 4.12.15 The officer gave an overview of her role which is the lead for violence in the MPS which also covers stop and search. A key aspect of her role is to look at inconsistency and the accountability of police officers within the MPS. Her role includes making sure they are scrutinised, understand the impact, ensure they are visible and able to respond to their communities. This also includes addressing consistency across the BCUs and pan London units' e.g. violent crime task force and the TSG.
- 4.12.16 The officer's role is to oversee stop and search across the MPS to ensure it is done correctly, effectively and that the MPS listens to communities to improve going forward.
- 4.12.17 From Central East BCU, Deputy Borough Commander and CE BCU Lead for Violence & Criminal Investigation commenced his presentation in response to the questions submitted.
- 4.12.18 The Deputy Borough Commanders for CE BCU highlighted the BCU was asked to respond to two questions 1) briefing and tasking for stop and search b) their engagement work.
- 4.12.19 CE BCU is doing their own internal review with the Head of Profession, Crime Prevention, Inclusion & Engagement - London lead for Crime Prevention, Inclusion and Engagement to look at local stop and search. This will be a deep dive into their stop and search activity. The local MPS recognised that to police with consent they needed to work with the community. The local BCU were of the view they do this and that their work with the community is largely effective.
- 4.12.20 The Deputy Borough Commander for CE BCU pointed out he was joined by the CE BCU Lead for Neighbourhood Policing & Community Engagement. This officer supported community safety teams, SNBs and is the lead engagement officer for the borough.

As part of the opening statement the Chair asked the Deputy Borough Commander for CE BCU to provide more information about how they used intelligence for stop and search. Pointing out Members wanted to understand what the term intelligence led meant for policing and in particular how it informs stop and search activity.

4.12.21 The Deputy Borough Commander for CE BCU confirmed the information is the foundation for their tasking. The information is assessed and analysed and then they use it to task police officers to cover particular issues. Following the tasking they analyse the information and then repeat the cycle. One of the priority areas for the MPS is violent crime – knife, gun and robbery. This covers street based offences. The Deputy Borough Commander for CE BCU explained the intelligence information comes from crimes recorded – in Hackney they record 80 crimes a day. This is information from victims, witnesses and other resources e.g. CCTV, Hackney Council or private resources. The MPS also receive information from the public through face to face contact, calls into the service about ASB, weapon carrying or in recent Covid times group gatherings.

As part of the opening statement Members of the Commission asked the Deputy Borough Commander to clarify how they decide an individual or group of people should be stopped and searched. Members wanted an explanation of how the police make a judgement of who to stop and search and who to handcuff. In the Commission's view this information is missing from the reports or regular updates provided. The Deputy Borough Commander was asked to clarify how a police officer on street patrol would decide they needed to conduct a stop and search. Members referred back to the statistics showing disproportionality.

4.12.22 The Deputy Borough Commander explained the reason and grounds for a stop and search were personal to the police officer from what they observed. This is influenced by their own observations, information from a member of the public or as a result of wider tasking. The officer informed the MPS has finite resources so they want to put their police officers in the locations and at the times where the crime is occurring.

4.12.23 The Deputy Borough Commander pointed out Police officers are not instructed to go out and do a stop and search. They have information about the issues, victim information of the crime profile and tasking information. A stop and search could be in response to an emergency call with very specific information and description of the people involved. It could also be as a result of a patrolling police officer's observes of something that is not right. This professional judgement may lead them to have a personal encounter with a member of the public. The Deputy Borough Commander confirmed he would not give an explanation for individual encounters in Hackney because they are as a result of a variety of reasons.

4.12.24 The focus of the deep dive for stop and search is to understand (though body worn videos and supervision) the recorded grounds for a stop and search alongside reviewing the complaints data to assess if it was sufficiently articulated and justified.

4.12.25 As part of the opening statement the Chair referred to best use of resources and indicated a 20% positive outcome rate for stop and search would not indicate a best use of resources. Members also commented it was unclear if these statistics relate to warnings or people being taken through the justice system.

4.13 **Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)**

- 4.13.1 The Regional Director London from the IOPC commenced his presentation covering the key points from the written submissions and in response to the questions submitted.
- 4.13.2 The officer started by saying three words “stop and search”. The officer explained these words provoke a range of thoughts and emotions from people and they can come from a person’s lived experience, from carrying out a stop and search or working closely in this area.
- 4.13.3 The IOPC know that stop and search is a necessary policing tool and part of the policing tool kit. They also know that for members of the black community it’s a policing tactic in which there is disproportionality and this has eroded their trust and confidence in the MPS police.
- 4.13.4 The IOPC recognise both positions and the importance of trust and confidence. The role of the IOPC is to help maintain trust and confidence in policing by ensuring police officers are accountable for their actions, learn lessons and that there is an effective police complaints system. However the IOPC acknowledged there are concerns about engaging with the police complaints system.
- 4.13.5 The IOPC informed their research showed 33 thousand complaints were logged against the police but only 4% were from members of the black community and 1% by young people. In addition less than 1% of total complaints related to stop and search.
- 4.13.6 The IOPC explained this confirms two things 1) the complaints data in this area should not be used as a measure of policing to assess whether communities are dissatisfied with stop and search. 2) Black communities and young people (both with the lowest rates) are least likely to engage with the systems in place that are designed to take forward their concerns.
- 4.13.7 The IOPC has been making efforts to address this through their work on their engagement strategy. They have worked with their youth panel, done joint presentations with MOPAC and the MPS and carried out broader media work to raise the profile of the complaints system.
- 4.13.8 From speaking to the communities in London the IOPC repeatedly heard comments like “why should I make a complaint. It’s just the police investigating themselves.” Although it is correct that the vast majority of complaints go to the police to investigate. The IOPC pointed out if you are unhappy with the review a person has the right of appeal with either MOPAC or the IOPC.
- 4.13.9 In response to the point why complain, the Regional Director made reference to the recent work of the IOPC on stop and search. The Director highlighted the IOPC looked at all completed investigation data featuring stop and search. There were 5, all featuring black men. They reviewed the cases holistically to understand the bigger picture, key themes and trends.
- 4.13.10 Following this review the IOPC made 11 statutory learning recommendations based on the evidence found. The learning recommendations were made at



an organisational level to avoid inconsistencies around stop and search repeating.

- 4.13.11 The IOPC consulted with community stakeholders, young people and organisations working with young people in this space when they were drafting the recommendations from the review.
- 4.13.12 The 6 key themes found in the review were:
- 1) A lack of understanding by police officers about the impact of disproportionality on communities.
  - 2) Poor communication throughout the stop and search.
  - 3) Consistent use of force.
  - 4) Failure to use body worn video at the start of encounter.
  - 5) Continuing to seek evidence when the initial grounds for stop and search were unfounded.
  - 6) The smell of cannabis being used as the sole grounds for a stop and search.
- 4.13.13 The evidence the IOPC found matched the views being expressed by communities across London.
- 4.13.14 The IOPC review highlighted the need for the MPS to better support their police officers to do their job effectively, with the right training and supervision.
- 4.13.15 The IOPC explained stop and search is a policing tool but like any tool it needs to be used with care and in the right circumstances.
- 4.13.16 By making the learning recommendations they hope both the MPS and black communities in London address the gap that exists in their relationship around trust and confidence.
- 4.13.17 The IOPC pointed out to address a problem the first step is an acknowledgement of the issue that needs to be tackled. It is important to recognise the MPS have accepted all the recommendations.
- 4.13.18 The next challenge will be improving and action.
- 4.13.19 The IOPC pointed out none of their work to address this important issue would be possible if those individuals had not made a complaint. Adding, like any service, the MPS can only improve when they are informed something has gone wrong.
- 4.13.20 The IOPC closed with highlighting this is the importance and value of the complaints system.

#### 4.14 **Questions Answers and Discussions**

- (i) **Members commented this has been a journey and there have been several engagement session on this topic with the Police. The Members acknowledged the work of the Accounts Group and the recommendations in the report. Members referred to the CE BCU's written response to question 1 in the agenda. Highlighting under**

**'intelligence and sources of information' it refers to a person behaviour and makes reference to bandanas as grounds for stop and search. Members read out the definition of a bandana and asked why this item of clothing (that could be used by any person) is listed as a reasonable ground for a stop and search.**

The Deputy Borough Commander from Central East BCU explained the occasions on which any type of clothing is used for grounds for stop and search is very seldom. The MPS review grounds for stop and search and it is never based on an aspect of clothing. However there have been groups that identify themselves by clothing colours in large gatherings e.g. at Nottingham Carnival. However for Hackney the colour of clothing is not a significant feature on the streets of Hackney. This would not be a significant reason for a stop and search in Hackney.

- (ii) **The Cabinet Member for Community Safety from London Borough of Hackney (LBH) made the following comments and questions:**

**Hackney welcomed the report of the IOPC on stop and search and was pleased the MPS accepted all the learning recommendations. The Cabinet Member pointed out conversations about stop and search, particularly related to young black men, have been ongoing for decades.**

**The MET HQ mentioned they are doing a lot of community engagement work but the people are not seeing or feeling the engagement work with the community. The Cabinet Member suggested it was time for the MPS to change the way they engage with the community. Pointing out the issues related to stop and search were more about the relationship and engagement with the community.**

**The Cabinet Member suggested to address the issue of trust and confidence. They should implement robust engagement with the community. Safer Neighbourhood Board (SNB) and stop and search monitoring group**

**The Cabinet Member asked the following questions:**

- 1) what support and strengthening can MOPAC offer the SNB and stop and search monitoring group to fulfil their role in scrutinising the activities of the police.**
- 2) How many repeats stop and searches are there in Hackney?**
- 3) In relation to the work by MOPAC, how will the IOPC recommendations be incorporated in their work about the MPS and black justice?**

- (iii) **Members referred to previous reports about police operation and the treatment of people from the BAME communities. Members asked how things will be different this time and the change people will see in relation to how the MPS engages with the community?**

- (iv) **Member commented the MPS had stated community groups are involved but they were unclear about who they were and who they represent.**

- (v) **Member also commented there has been work to look at body worn cameras. The Commission heard that in Hackney the body worn cameras were not being used correctly and hidden by clothing. Members suggested there was wider community involvement to look at the footage of body worn videos (BWV) like the Northampton project - where the community is shown redacted BWVs.**
- (vi) **Members referred to public confidence and suggested this needed statistical data to show how many police officers were disciplined for not wearing their body worn camera correctly. Member also suggested there should be information about how many were disciplined for the miss use of force with handcuffing. Member commented without this type of monitoring information the promises of change were good intentions. Members suggested the community needed evidence to demonstrate there is a difference on the frontline. Members suggested these figures should be made publically available to help improve trust and confidence. Members asked when these figures would be published?**
- (vii) **Members asked if the MPS was working with the Black Police Association (BPA) to help overcome some of the barriers.**
- (viii) **Members commended the poem featured in the report of the Account Group by Yolanda Lear.**
- (ix) **Members referred to the previous question about the criteria for stop and search and handcuffing and pointed out the MPS's response did not outline the criteria. Members also referred to the response dismissing bandanas as grounds for a stop and search and queried how a bandana was decided and then subsequently undecided as grounds? Members asked the MPS to give clarity about the criteria.**
- (x) **Members highlighted the key questions they are seeking responses to were:  
a) why bandana were included and then dismissed?  
b) the criteria for a person to be stop and searched?  
c) why handcuffs are used?**
- (xi) **Members suggested there must be some form of training and criteria otherwise it was based on the individual police officer's judgement. Member did not think this was appropriate. Members asked the MPs to be specific about the criteria.**

In response to the above question the MPS replied.

In relation to how this will be different this is a question and challenge the MPS has asked itself too. The MPS pointed out they have started reviewing and doing things differently.

The MPS highlighted the Mayor's action plan (which will hold the MPS to account for a range of activities) is not just about doing activities but improving the way they communicate and explain all their work to the public.

The MPS aim to improve how they bring members of the community into processes and how they engage with communities to collate their views, experiences with empathy.

The MPS acknowledge they need to listen more and take responsibility for improvements across the organisation. The MPS pointed out they have included community members in the design and delivery of procedures for police officer training across the organisation. This is to put the focus on the lived experience, fairness and understanding and to have empathy at the heart of MPS activity. They have brought in community members and IAG members to help train their new recruits on stop and search to better understand the recipient's views of that activities.

The MPS works with local communities and bring community representatives to their special operations room for things like public orders so they can see decision making and briefings.

The MPS accept if they cannot explain how people can engage with the MPS, IOPC or MOPAC to make a complaint or engage in the scrutiny of their activities they are letting the community down.

The MPS is also rolling out increased scrutiny procedures for use of force. This is being trailed in Hackney but will be rolled out across the organisation. The aim of this work is to encourage more people to scrutinise MPS activity.

Over the summer the MPS implemented a central scrutiny board to look at the use of Covid-19 regulations. This helped to explain how the regulations would be used, where and why.

AT MET HQ the Head of Profession, Crime Prevention, Inclusion & Engagement - London lead for Crime Prevention, Inclusion and Engagement has responsibility of working with the BCUs to make sure their communities understands where they can obtain information and understand how they can make challenges.

The MPS has involved the community in their diversity and inclusion strategy to bring the community into the heart of their work. This includes communicating about the strategy.

MPS highlighted this needs a cultural shift and was not just about activities or a transactional relationship but about empathy and understanding the emotions attached.

Fundamentally the MPS accepted despite all the work they have done it has had limited impact. But it was their responsibility to change. The BCU commitments outlined in the agenda was the start of this process. The roll out of additional scrutiny is an example of this.

- (xii) **Members referred to the Account Group in Hackney and young people on the streets of Hackney, who feel traumatised and abused from stop and search and hand cuffing and asked what difference they will see? Members asked if there will be less handcuffing, less stop and search, politer officers etc. to help people believe.**

In response the MPS explained the difference will be through local police officers. Whilst the Head of Profession, Crime Prevention, Inclusion & Engagement - London lead for Crime Prevention, Inclusion and Engagement from Met HQ accepted, acknowledged and was saddened about the trauma and upset of the young people in London - particularly young black men – and the effects of stop and search. The MPS is pleased there is still some engagements from this cohort and that they are still holding conversations with the MPS.

In response to what will look and feel different. There will be local training delivered for visiting units to give information about the lived experience and the cultural history of Hackney will be provided. They should see a cultural shift in the way local police officers engage with the people of Hackney, talk to them and explain things as well as empathy. This will not take away difficulties and having to work through them.

They are going to be held to account and the IOPC recommendations have been agreed as a commitment from the MPS.

(xiii) **Members asked about the timescale for this work by the MPS.**

In response the MPS advised the roll out of additional scrutiny on the use of force will be in Hackney and referred to the BCU for a fuller response.

The Central East BCU Deputy Borough Commander added the local MPS will endeavour to review the use of force for each stop and search. This includes the use of handcuffing. There will be a team of 5 people who will review every stop and search encounter.

The police officer explained there are 2 aspects to this work. How they use the learning from this work and how they implement any changes in a timely and proportionate way to moderate police behaviour if needed. Working on the soft skills to communicate, deescalate and sympathise with people better. In the interest of transparency they will use a community reference group and monitoring framework to help support the work. This work has commenced and will need to be communicated back to the community.

The MPS pointed out in September 2020 they had 93% of BWV footage for all stop and searches. This was reported as good progress.

Currently the work has started and they are finalising the terms of reference for the external engagement. They will enable some public review of the BWV unedited. They are looking at the governance issues for this work. They hope to open this up to the community monitoring group in a few weeks.

(xiv) **Members asked how the community monitoring group is selected and if it is representative of Hackney's diverse community?**

In response the MPS confirmed the intention is to have a monitoring group that is representative of the community. The local MPS is speaking to the Account Group about their role in this group. They are building the group as

they go but the intention is for all sections of the community to be involved particularly the youth.

In response to the previous questions above the MPS explained there are other areas of on ongoing work within professional standards. An independent advisory group to scrutinise the professional standards processes across the MET service.

The MPS have community members involved to help design their training for stop and search and procedural justice.

They have young people come and talk to new MPS recruits to give their lived experience from being stopped and searched and growing up in London.

In response to the number of police cadets in London. In Hackney they have approximately 130 Volunteer Police Cadet (VPC) and nearly 5000 across London. In relation to diversity it is approximately 40% black and ethnic minority for the VPC. In addition the MPS pointed out they have approximately 4000 additional volunteers that help the police service on a daily basis.

The MPS pointed out there is a lot of work in progress but they recognise they need to better communicate their work and highlight the scrutiny process more. Then they need to listen to the feedback so it can inform their next steps.

- (xv) **Members commended the 5000 police cadets across London. However Members were still disappointed that there were only 130 in Hackney and asked why? Members commented this was not sufficient or a reason to be complacent.**
- (xvi) **Members were of the view for the public to see change this needed to be demonstrated through statistics that showed change. In their view this included the number of police officers held to account.**
- (xvii) **Members referred to the MPS response to the IOPC recommendations in their recent report. Members made further reference to the use of force and the way a police officers' use of force will be monitored - by asking officers to justify their use of force. But Members suggested the list reads as a check list that gives officers an excuse as to why they use force not justification. Members were of the view this does not help to push back to make a police officer justify their actions. Members think this would be an effective way to reduce the use of force.**

In response to the questions about professional standards, disciplinary of police officers and body worn cameras the London lead for Violence and Stop/Search from MET HQ explained in relation the data and publication of the figures the MPS has a stop and search dashboard and a MOPAC dashboard but acknowledged it was not user friendly. The MPs advised they are working with scrutiny group to establish the data needed for each local area so they provide this data. This will be in addition to the MPS level

data on the dashboard. They acknowledge there are variations in data across the MPS.

There is also the visibility of the information and accessibility of the data and they are working on this too. This is what they are working on with the local scrutiny group.

- (xviii) **Members interjected and pressed for the MPS to clarify if they take disciplinary action against police officers for stop and search and not wearing body worn camera correctly? Members commented this should be communicated back to the community with evidence showing how and what action they are taking. Members were still concerned about stop and searched being intelligence led and having no criteria but relied on a police officer's judgement.**

In response the MPS explained the scrutiny groups look at un-redacted videos and including the grounds for the stop and search records. The officer explained the community representatives on the community groups can look at the grounds and the police officers' actions. They can then provide their feedback on the police officers behaviour, the reason for grounds and provide comment on areas of improvement.

In response to Members concern about justifying, the MPS highlighted the stop and search slip and BWV is made available for scrutiny. This the process by which police officers have to justify their action and why. This is how they are held to account.

In relation to the statistics the MPS is happy to provide data to the community groups. This would be the local BCU scrutiny group. The MET HQ officer encouraged them to submit data requests.

The MPS officer reiterated the BWV footage is at 93% and pointed out the scrutiny groups independently select their own footage to watch from a random selection.

- (xix) **The Account Group representative made the following comments. Thanked the Councillors for their reference to the report they produced. Highlighted the report sets out their findings and recommendations. The Account Group advised they have been in meetings but to date there has been little progress.**

**In reference to the IOPC comments they Account Group commented the IOPC's views were justifying stop and search with no regards to the statistics. In their view the IOPC does not understand the problem and that people are not going to them because they think reporting concerns will not be productive. The Account Group highlighted there is no faith in the IOPC and the police regardless of the promises made. The Account Group representative pointed out young people, in particular young black men, have very little faith in the police to help or treat them fairly. The Account Group informed they have been in meetings with the police and have been overlooked and they feel disrespected. This is the view of young people when they have tried to speak to the police or ask for their help.**

- (xx) **The Account Group representative asked how the MPS will fix the problem when the responsibility is being pushed from senior management decision makers onto the local police units. The Account Group expressed the view that senior managers within the MPS were not taking responsibility for the actions of police officers.**

In response to questions raised earlier in the discussion MOPAC provided the following responses in reference to what will be different and the community engagement question by the Cabinet Member from LBH.

MOPAC explained people are more open and receptive to having this dialogue now than they were a year ago. There is an openness to being challenged and to challenge each other to have the conversations. There is a lot of scrutiny so their actions are all under the spotlight. This gives a real opportunity to make some differences requiring more than just words.

MOPAC made reference to their new engagement framework. MOPAC will look at how they diversify some of their activities. There are a number of structures they support but it's clear there is not enough diversity within the formal mechanisms - diversity of thoughts, experience etc. Their formal structures are not providing the full picture of how people are experiencing policing. This can lead to other side conversation but MOPAC would like these conversations to be captured in their formal mechanisms. To make this happen the current structures need more support than currently provided by MOPAC. MOPAC pointed out these are points SNBs and others have made.

MOPAC informed they provide funding to SNBs for their operation and to support community projects. But there is no support given for community development or engagement more widely whilst also holding the police to account. MOPAC does not provide support for this and this is a gap identified. This is an area they will want to address in the new framework.

In reference to information and data e.g. the complaints data, this is available in the public domain. But there are so many different data sets that are buried on a website that it can make it hard to access. And if found they are not always user friendly.

Following publication of the Mayor's action plan MOPAC will develop a collection of data that will bring key data into a format that will be accessible to people. MOPAC will aim to make this available twice a year. This will be a collection of all the key metrics that will help them to understand if they are improving in trust and confidence, disproportionality and if complaints are being handled effectively and on time. The key aim is to bring this information together to enable people to assess it at a quick glance.

In relation to the discussion about how policing operates MOPAC pointed out how a police officer understands and carries out their role/job compared to how the public understand their job/role and how they carry out their job; there is a gap between the two viewpoints.



They need to work together to bring these 2 positions together. Although there may not be agreement there could be better understanding of the different viewpoints and the parameters in which policing operates. To the public policing can seem archaic and it has a lot of regulation that members of the public are not aware of.

It is equally important for SNBs and groups like the Account Group to challenge and point out if there is a different ways things can be done. This can feed into the work of MOPAC.

The Mayor also has influence and can lobby Government for changes in legislation if required. In addition MOPAC can think differently about how they do scrutiny too.

MOPAC pointed out changing policing, the way it operates and how we experience it will not happen overnight. This is a real challenge for them to accept that it will take time to: a) implement and b) have the impact they want. It is important for the communities to understand that if they make changes it will not be immediately seen. However they need to continue to have these conversations to see if they are starting to have the right impact.

What is important to MOPAC is for people say the MPS is more transparent and that they have a better understanding of their operations. They want people to feel they have an opportunity to inform the MPS of their experiences. This would be a success.

If MOPAC publish the action plan and over time they are hearing from the community it is not delivering the changes they want. They will have to review what they are doing. MOPAC recognise it is not good to have a plan and tick off delivery if the public feeling and experience is not different.

The MPS and MOPAC recognise they need to keep being challenged and reminded of what the community want.

(xxi) **Members referred to the IOPC's opening statement making reference that the report was only possible due to individuals logging a complaint in the system. Members referred to comments from the Account Group in this discussion and their lack of confidence in the IOPC. Members referred to the IOPC's youth panel and asked how young people can get involved in this?**

In response to the questions from the discussion the IOPC provided the following responses.

This discussion exemplified the barrier that the IOPC have to overcome to build trust and confidence in the system.

The police complaints system is the system in place and it is designed to take forward public concerns and complaints about the police.

The complaints system was reformed earlier this year to make it easier so that at the end of the process there was a right of appeal to an independent body to make sure the complaint was handled correctly.

In reference to the IOPC's review work the Director reiterated this was only possible because those individuals engaged with the current system and this is the message he continuously communicates to people. The IOPC are encouraging people to get their voice heard if they are unhappy by using the system that is in place. Although it's acknowledged it is not a perfect system.

That being said using the complaints the IOPC conducted an independent investigation and made the learning recommendations.

In reference to earlier discussions about it being the bigger issues that matter. The IOPC agree with this and pointed out this was the rationale behind taking this issues that were happening and presenting them to the MPS at an organisational level. The IOPC used their statutory powers to make learning recommendations and highlighted the MPS had accepted all 11 recommendations. The MPS response is published on the IOPC website.

The IOPC advised in terms of building confidence in institutions it's about the action taken. The IOPC's pointed out the learning recommendations were made using the powers they have. The MPS will be charged with implementation and MOPAC will be charged with scrutiny and accountability of the learning recommendations.

The starting place for any concern is to engage in the system that is there.

- (xxii) **In discussions Members talked about making a recommendation to the Council to work with the Account Group to help residents to make complaints.**
- (xxiii) **Members referred back to their comments and concerns in relation to institutional racism and the disproportionality of young black men who are subject to stop and search. Member wanted a response to explain the reason for disproportionality and the low positive outcome rates in relation to arrests. Members remained concerned about the grounds for stop and search being executed correctly and the use of handcuffing resulting in trauma to those who have been handcuffed. Members were not satisfied with the explanation thus far for the criteria and grounds to conduct a stop and search and that it was being communicated effectively. Member commented the protocols from the College of Policing were not filtering through to police officers on the frontline.**
- (xxiv) **In addition to the points raised about disproportionality in the discussion Members cited that in the previous lockdown the number of arrests, charges and prosecution for drug possession went up dramatically during this period. Members pointed out this is likely to have had a disproportionate impact on young people. Members asked for the MPS's view on this activity and commented because the streets were quieter it might have been easier to pick up people for drug offences during this time.**

- (xxv) **In addition the Account Group representative raised questions about the statistical analysis related to the positive outcome rates. The Account Group asked what percentage of stop and searches do the police find prohibited items e.g. weapons etc.?**
- (xxvi) **The Account Group pointed out the overall positive outcome rate in Hackney is approximately 20-25%. For the general population the stop and search rates generally are 22%. The Account Group highlighted that the positive outcome rate for young black men aged 15-19 years was 14%. The difference in the 2 rates is quite stark for young people. In local dialogue with the BCU young people have been pushing to get a commitment to improve this rate to equal the general population rate. The Account Group suggested this could be a joint piece of work with the MPS, IOPC and MOPAC. So they could push up this outcome rate to at least equal their white peers.**
- (xxvii) **The Account Group asked for a commitment from the MPS, IOPC and MOPAC to remove the disproportionality in the positive outcome rate. But if this commitment could not be made the Account Group asked why?**

In response to the questions raised about the MPS work with the BPA, not being honest and in response to the comments made by the MOPAC officer about needing more than just words from the MPS. The Head of Profession, Crime Prevention, Inclusion & Engagement - London lead for Crime Prevention, Inclusion and Engagement from Met HQ informed the MPS welcomed hearing more from the youth group so they can consider what they could do differently. The MPS accepts that people who do not have trust and confidence in the MPS would struggle to have trust in the words they are saying. But would like to invite them to have a dialogue with the MPS.

The MPS were unable to refer to the current breakdown for Hackney's stop and search rates. However the general positive outcome rate is 22/23%.

The MPS confirmed they did not have target volume rates for stop and search or target rates for positive outcome rate. The MPS acknowledged they have had previous discussion with the Account Group.

The Deputy Borough Commander from the Central East BCU explained the role of the community monitoring group was to look at the data for local stop and search. The local BCU advised this is a regular report to the community monitoring group which is discussed. This report includes a breakdown of ethnicity and age.

The local BCU were of the view they do have a reinvigorated community monitoring group.

The MPS provided the current statistical data in response to the Account Group question. They quoted as at October 2020 the general outcome rate for white people for stop and search was 23% and for black it was 27.7%. In reference to the younger age group of 15-19 the rate for white it was 20% and for black it was 18.3%. Pointing out the gap was slightly lower than the

statistics quoted by the Account Group. For the 20-24 age group it was 22.5% for white and 32.4% for black.

The MPS cautioned against quoting figures that were not current. The MPS highlighted the most recent statistics show an improved position to the figures quoted earlier.

- (xxviii) **Members acknowledged the statistics were different but commented fundamentally the trend was black people were 10 times more likely to be stopped and searched nationally and 8 times more likely in London. Member commented young people were still feeling racially profiled as a criminal by the police and discriminated against. Member commented it will take more than words to overcome the racism young people feel.**
- (xxix) **Member referred to the training and noted a lot of reference to new recruits. Members asked about the training for established police officers.**
- (xxx) **Members also referred to the increase in Section 60s and asked about the stop and search carried out during the period of a Section 60.**

In response the Deputy Borough Commander advised training was important particularly training for new police officers who do not have prior knowledge of Hackney. This is the impact awareness training. Equally training needs to be refreshed for all police officers because experienced police officers become the role models for new police officers.

One of the objectives of the local stop and search review is to use the learning to work on the soft and communicative skills.

In reference to the question about Section 60s. At the peak they had 9 stop and searches in May 2020, 5 in June 2020, 4 in July 2020, 3 in August 2020 and 5 in September 2020. This correlates with the escalation in violence and the unlicensed music events during this period.

The BCU officer explained this is a preventative tool. A Section 60 is used either post incident or as a preventative if they anticipate disorder. The MPS pointed out the number of Section 60s have not escalated and are reflective of the violence profile during lockdown.

In response to the questions about institutional racism, increase in handcuffing and the request for an update on the work with the Black Police Association (BPA). The MPS informed they are commencing a review on handcuffing. This involves community representatives and the IOPC. This will look at the use of handcuffing and arrests primarily linked to stop and search, to understand why it has increased, who they are being used on and the disproportionality for handcuffing. The MPS advised there will be instances when handcuffing is appropriately used but they acknowledge there has been an increase and disproportionate use in particularly on young black men. The review has commenced and will be made public. The review is expected to conclude at the end of this year.

- (xxxix) **Members asked about the MPS safeguarding responsibility and duty of care in relation to the use of handcuffing.**

In response the MPS confirmed their responsibility was to ensure the use of force is lawful and proportionate. Their responsibility is to only use force when it is absolutely necessary.

- (xxxix) **Members asked what further support the IOPC and community safety partnership can provide to young people and the wider community that will encourage them to use the complaints system if they feel unfairly targeted. Members commented it is clear the complaints system is key to raising awareness.**

In response the MPS pointed out and agreed the lack of use of the complaints system is not a measure of success. Agreeing there is a lack of trust in the system. The MPS pointed out there are 4 ways a person can make a complaint about a police officer:

- 1) directly to the IOPC
- 2) to crime stoppers – this is an anonymous process
- 3) to a manager in the local police unit
- 4) directly to the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

The MPS officer committed to working with local SNTs to make the process of complaints more accessible and to make young people feel more empowered. The MPS suggested the Account Group to hold her to account to encourage trust and hold the MPS to account to share the information with them.

In response to the concerns raised about institutional racism the MPS reiterated the MET Commissioners position that she does not consider the MPS to be institutionally racist. However there are issues they need to work through and unconscious and conscious bias. The MPS officer pointed out there are approximately 45 thousand staff who work in and around the organisation. This means the organisation will have the best and worst of society working in the organisation. The MPS officer pointed out there are significant challenges in regards to trust and confidence. The ongoing work with the SNT, scrutiny and senior MPS is showing their commitment to change trust and confidence.

- (xxxix) **Members asked if stop and search videos can be stored for people to access and referenced if they want to make a complaint. Asking if the stop and search video could be given a reference number to be accessed.**

- (xxxix) **The Account Group representative commented the MPS officers stated police officers are not racist. The young person pointed out if you consider the areas where black and Asian communities reside evidence suggests they are suffering at the hands of the police. They are not in areas that have smaller numbers of ethnic minority groups.**

- (xxxix) **The Account Group representative commented if there is no recognition of a problem then it will be hard to make a change. The young person pointed out they have raised the issue of institutional**

**racism but it has been ignored, despite there being statistical information from their research and the MPS's own bodies. The Account Group representative highlighted the responsibility is being passed to the local police officers. But in the young person's view senior management needed to take ownership and responsibility for their employee's actions.**

- (xxxvi) **The Account Group representative added regardless of how the police feel the facts tell a different story. The MPS is institutionally racist if it is viewed from a stop and search prospective, persecution prospective and how the police respond to calls. The MPS use racial profiling and more when they doing a stop and search. Regardless of how the MPS feel there are multiple credible resources and bodies in the UK and internationally that support their statement that institutional racism is a major problem within the UK police system.**

In response the IOPC advised they have developed some resources working with their youth panel. This is a guide for young people on how to access the complaints system.

After the meeting the IOPC will share these resources with the scrutiny committee to share with their networks to build awareness of the system in place.

- (xxxvii) **The Cabinet Member for Skills, Employment and Human Resources at LBH made the following comments.**

**She struggled with the concept that there was no institutional racism in the MPS. The Cabinet Member pointed out it is recorded, reported and researched that institutions within society all have racism built in. Both consciously and unconsciously.**

**Therefore it is not as simple to say there is conscious and unconscious bias in the individual that works within an organisation. That gives the organisation too much of an easy get out clause and the ability to blame individual staff without looking at the systems within the organisation.**

**It is important to remember the key principle written into the Lawrence inquiry about racism and people defining their own experiences. It can be damaging to defining that racism for those individuals.**

**If there are people telling you they are experiencing racism we need to listen and hear their experiences of racism.**

**The Cabinet Member commented we are aware the MET Commission has denied there is institutional racism in the MPS. But urged all officers to take the time to reflect on the organisations they are part of. Highlighting it is very easy to be defensive because we take accusations personally as they wanted to think the best of the organisation they work for. But everyone needed to put themselves aside to progress. Pointing out if they set themselves aside to listen to**

what their residents, society and constituents are saying they will have an indication of the problems, issues and challenges ahead.

The MPS has come a long way but it still has a long way to go too.

The Cabinet Member hoped today's meeting and conversation would open an opportunity to continue to work together. The Council appreciates the MPS signing up to their local charter to be an anti-racist organisation and that the local MPS are signing up to the Council's inclusive leadership programme.

The Cabinet Member informed there has been a lot of work and good dialogue at all levels. The Cabinet Member hoped there would be continued dialogue between the Council, MPS and the Account Group. It was her hope that everyone left the meeting feeling robustly challenged.

## 5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 5.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 were approved.

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| <b>RESOLVED:</b> Minutes were approved |
|----------------------------------------|

- 5.2 The Chair updated on the matters arising from the previous meeting.

- 5.3 The action on page 16 bullet point xi. The Interim Director of Housing to report back on the timescales for delivery for the project implementing cost effective internet access to all blocks in their estates, community halls and the voucher scheme.

This update will follow and will be available at the next meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December.

- 5.4 The action on page 18 bullet point xiv. The Interim Director of Housing to report back about the floods in the blocks in Fellows Court tower blocks north and south and timescale for current works.

In response the Interim Director of Housing advised this repair is being actioned by housing maintenance services and is actively being progressed. The work is complex due to the number of flats which require access to repair the pipe and other work being undertaken in the block.

The Director has advised these issues have been resolved and the council was on site week commencing the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020 to repair the defective pipe. The work was expected to complete by the end of the week.

## 6 Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission- 2020/2021 Work Programme

- 6.1 The Chair asked Members to agree the draft work programme in the agenda for the municipal year.

Members agreed the work programme.

- 6.2 In further discussions about the work programme Members suggested looking at LTNs. The Chair informed the Commission this was not within their remit and would be discussed by the Skills, Economy and Growth Scrutiny Commission on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020.
- 6.3 Members discussed spending more time at the next meeting looking at the work programme.
- 6.4 The Commission Members discussed monitoring the concerns about stop and search and the impact on the community in approximately 6 months.
- 6.5 The Commission Members discussed involving young people in the January meeting focused on parks and open spaces.

## **7 Any Other Business**

- 7.1 None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 9.50 pm



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| <b>Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission</b><br><b>14<sup>th</sup> December 2020</b><br><b>Item 8 – Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission 2020/21 Work Programme</b> | Item No<br><br><b>8</b> |
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**OUTLINE**

The draft work programme for the Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission 2020/21 is attached. Please note this a working document.

**ACTION**

The Commission is asked for any comments, amendments or suggestion for the work programme.

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# Overview & Scrutiny

## Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission: Work Plan July 2020 – April 2021

*Each agenda will include an updated version of this Scrutiny Commission work programme*

| Dates                                                                                                                                                       | Proposed Item                               | Directorate and lead officer contact                                                       | Description, Comment and Purpose of item                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020</b><br>All Council meetings will be held remotely until further notice.<br><br>Papers deadline: Fri 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 | Trust and Confidence                        | Metropolitan Police Service<br>Hackney Borough<br><br>DCS Marcus Barnett, CE BCU Commander | The Commission's scrutiny review highlighted some indicators suggesting lower than average levels of trust and confidence (meeting held on 31st January 2019). The Commission learned a range of activities were being delivered by the police in this area including the activities being delivered by the newly formed BCU-wide Trust and Confidence Board. This item is an update on that area of work and a look at the impact of Covid - 19. |
|                                                                                                                                                             | Stop and Search                             | Metropolitan Police Service<br>Hackney Borough<br><br>DCS Marcus Barnett, CE BCU Commander | At the Commission's meeting in January 2019 the Commission heard about the roll out of body worn cameras, and work with the IAGs, the Safer Neighbourhood Board, and programmes in schools to improve understandings on both sides about stop and search. This item is an update on that area of work and a look at the impact of Covid - 19.                                                                                                     |
|                                                                                                                                                             | Community Safety Partnership Plan 2019-2022 | London Borough of Hackney<br><br>Tim Shields (Chief Executive)                             | An update on the progress of the Community Safety Partnership Plan against the four priority themes of the plan. This update will include an in-depth look at the strategic priority Street Drug Market and Substance Misuse.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

| Dates                                                                                                                                        | Proposed Item                                                                              | Directorate and lead officer contact                                                                        | Description, Comment and Purpose of item                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                            | Metropolitan Police Service<br>Hackney Borough<br><br>DCS Marcus Barnett, CE BCU Commander                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><b>15<sup>th</sup> July 2020</b><br/>All Council meetings will be held remotely.</p> <p>Papers deadline: Fri 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020</p> | Update on Housing Services' Fire Safety works                                              | Housing Services in Directorate of Neighbourhoods and Housing<br><br>David Padfield<br>Director of Housing  | Information about Hackney Council's fire safety works with input from Hackney's Resident Liaison Group.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                                              | Evidence Session for Exploring the work of Housing Associations in Hackney Scrutiny Review | Various Housing Associations and London Borough of Hackney<br>James Goddard, Interim Director, Regeneration | This session will explore:<br>1) The strengths of formal partnership arrangements<br>2) Community investment by housing associations, approaches to supporting their residents to succeed, and partnership with the Council to improve social and economic wellbeing.<br>3) Improving recycling on estates across the borough. |
| <p><b>30<sup>th</sup> September 2020</b></p>                                                                                                 | Update on Thames Water Main Burst in                                                       | Thames Water<br>Steve Spencer –                                                                             | An update from Thames Water on their progress of repair works, a status update on residents returning to their homes (home owners, private tenants, council tenants, registered social landlords and leaseholder) and an outline of                                                                                            |

| Dates                                                                                                    | Proposed Item                                                                                                         | Directorate and lead officer contact                                                                                                       | Description, Comment and Purpose of item                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>All Council meetings will be held remotely.</p> <p>Papers deadline: Fri 18<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020</p> | the N4 area                                                                                                           | <p>Operations Director<br/>Tim McMahon – Head of Water Asset Management</p> <p>Ofwat<br/>Carl Pheasey - Director Strategy &amp; Policy</p> | <p>your investment plans, timescales and the improvements you expect to achieve from this investment plan.</p> <p>An update from Ofwat on the progress of performance for Thames Water, accessibility of this information locally and investment in improvements by Thames Water.</p>    |
|                                                                                                          | Update on the Impact of Covid 19 on Hackney's Housing Service                                                         | Interim Director of Housing David Padfield from LBH                                                                                        | Hackney Housing to provide an update on the impact of Covid 19 on Hackney's Housing Service in relation challenges and opportunities; business as usual activities; repairs; financial position; support to residents and customer service.                                              |
|                                                                                                          | Executive Response to LiH Scrutiny Review - Council and partnership response to escalation in serious violence review | Tracey Anderson<br>Overview and Scrutiny Officer                                                                                           | <p>The Cabinet response to the LiH's recommendations following their scrutiny review looking at the <i>Council and partnership response to escalation in serious violence review</i>.</p> <p>The Commission's review of the Executive's response to the recommendations made by LiH.</p> |

| Dates                                                                                                                                                  | Proposed Item                                                              | Directorate and lead officer contact                                                                                                                                                                                  | Description, Comment and Purpose of item                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                        | Update on Thames Water Donation for Lea Bridge Distribution / Use of Funds | Cllr Rathbone<br>Ward Cllr for Lea Bridge                                                                                                                                                                             | Update on recommendation for distribution / use of funds fro Ward Councillors and The Commission to approve the allocation of funds (taking into consideration the recommendation by the local <b>ward councillors</b> from Lea Bridge Ward) and to agree the governance process or any restrictions on the donations e.g. for a specific use.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                                        | Discussion about work programme for 2020/21                                | Tracey Anderson,<br>Overview and Scrutiny Team                                                                                                                                                                        | The Commission to agree the work programme items for 2020/21.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p><b>9<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b></p> <p>All Council meetings will be held remotely.</p> <p>Papers deadline: Wed 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020</p> | Stop and Search Inclusive Policing linked to Building Trust and Confidence | <p>Metropolitan Police Service<br/>Hackney Borough<br/>DCS Marcus Barnett, CE BCU<br/>Commander</p> <p>Metropolitan Police Service<br/>HQ – Professionalism<br/>Commander Catherine Roper<br/>Head of Profession,</p> | <p>This is a dedicated session to look at more broadly at stop and search and inclusive policing linked to building trust and confidence.</p> <p>The aim of this meeting is to talk with the BCU, MET HQ and MOPAC about the work to build trust and confidence to help us understand how public concern is being addressed by the MPS and MOPAC. We have included the IPOC to further explore how the IOPC works with the MPS in terms of their complaints system.</p> <p>This is a broader discussion to considers how the Police and Councils (not just LBH) can address concerns (linked to the stop and search activity) about community relations and trust &amp; confidence between the Police and local communities.</p> <p>Question in advance have been submitted to the Borough Commander, MET HQ and MOPAC officers covering the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stop and Search</li> <li>2. Trust and confidence</li> </ol> |

| Dates                                                                                   | Proposed Item   | Directorate and lead officer contact                                                           | Description, Comment and Purpose of item                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                         |                 | Crime Prevention, Inclusion & Engagement                                                       | 3. Accountability<br>4. Handcuffing<br>5. Fair and inclusive policing.<br>6. sources of intelligence<br>7. community engagement work related to building trust and confidence<br><br>Question in advance have been submitted to IOPC officers covering the following areas:<br><br>1. Powers of IOPC in relation to the recommendations they make to the MPS<br>2. Role of the IOPC in relation to MPS complaints<br>3. Their success in relation to influencing policy and recommendations implemented.<br>4. Information about the IOPCs review on the use of stop and search. |
|                                                                                         |                 | Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)<br><br>Natasha Plummer<br><br>Head of Engagement |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                                                                                         |                 | Independent Office of Police Conduct<br><br>Sal Naseem<br><br>Regional Director London         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>14<sup>th</sup> December 2020</b><br><br>All Council meetings will be held remotely. | Lettings Policy | Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply<br>Cllr Rennison         | Discussion and update about the lettings policy and the planned consultation on the new proposed policy.<br><br>.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

| Dates                                              | Proposed Item                              | Directorate and lead officer contact                                                                                                                | Description, Comment and Purpose of item                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Papers deadline: Wed 2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2020 |                                            | Head of Benefits and Housing Needs<br>Jennifer Wynter                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                                                    | Homelessness and the Impact of Covid-19    | Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply<br>Cllr Rennison<br><br>Head of Benefits and Housing Needs<br>Jennifer Wynter | Homelessness/rough sleeper update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Commission would like to hear about the Council's work securing a home for those housed during lockdown and also to understand what the Council is doing with the new street homeless.</li> <li>The Commission wants to explore the impact of Covid-19 on this service and impact on future provisions and costs to service</li> </ul> |
|                                                    | Winter Night Shelters Provision in Hackney | Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply<br>Cllr Rennison                                                              | Local housing and rough sleeping teams within local authorities must consider whether the risk people sleeping rough in their area is so great that it requires a night shelter to open or whether there is a more COVID safe option such as self-contained accommodation.<br><br>The Commission wants to look at the decisions about local provision for winter night shelters in the borough.                     |



| Dates                                                                                                                                                 | Proposed Item                   | Directorate and lead officer contact                                            | Description, Comment and Purpose of item                                                                                                                 |
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|                                                                                                                                                       |                                 | Head of Benefits and Housing Needs<br>Jennifer Wynter                           |                                                                                                                                                          |
| <p><b>18<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b></p> <p>All Council meetings will be held remotely.</p> <p>Papers deadline: Wed 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021</p> | Green infrastructure in Hackney | Cabinet Members for Energy, Waste, Transport and Public Realm<br>Cllr Jon Burke | As a result of Covid 19 more residents have remained in the borough which put pressure on communal green spaces in the borough.                          |
|                                                                                                                                                       | Play infrastructure in parks    | Cabinet Members for Energy, Waste, Transport and Public Realm<br>Cllr Jon Burke | There has been uneven provision across the borough. The Commission to look at the design principles for play infrastructures including those on estates. |

| Dates                                                                                                                                                   | Proposed Item                   | Directorate and lead officer contact                                                                                                                     | Description, Comment and Purpose of item                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| <p><b>11<sup>th</sup> February 2021</b></p> <p>All Council meetings will be held remotely.</p> <p>Papers deadline: Mon 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021</p> | <p>Hackney Carnival Update</p>  | <p>Cabinet Member for Planning, Culture and Inclusive Economy</p> <p>Cllr Guy Nicholson</p>                                                              | <p>1) Update on virtual carnival and a follow up from LiH challenging to the council about inclusivity.</p> <p>2) Following the impact of the pandemic and move of the Hackney Carnival to the virtual environment. The Commission wants to explore the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) What happened this year - how successful was the virtual carnival and measures of success</li> <li>b) What was the virtual reach this year?</li> <li>c) Strengths and weaknesses of this year's carnival. In preparation for next year's carnival how do we capitalise and still do a live event.</li> </ul> |
|                                                                                                                                                         | <p>Hackney Library Services</p> | <p>Cabinet Member for Planning, Culture and Inclusive Economy</p> <p>Cllr Guy Nicholson</p> <p>Director of Customers Services and ICT<br/>Rob Miller</p> | <p>Information about Hackney Library services phased re-opening strategy and digital divide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. its approach, response and phased re-opening following Covid-19</li> <li>b. Online activities and changes to the service provision to make it fit for purpose in the future.</li> <li>c. As more services and access to services move online what is the council doing to help residents overcome the digital divide?</li> <li>d. How are council buildings, services and communal spaces being used to support this work?</li> </ul>                                              |

| Dates                                                                                                                                | Proposed Item                                           | Directorate and lead officer contact                                                                                                                                                               | Description, Comment and Purpose of item                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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| <p><b>9th March 2021</b></p> <p>All Council meetings will be held remotely.</p> <p>Papers deadline: Wed 26<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021</p> | Leaseholders Services                                   | Interim Director of Housing David Padfield from LBH                                                                                                                                                | <p>Leaseholders Services – how are leaseholders consulted and engaged.</p> <p>A look at the different types of leaseholders, support to leaseholders and engagement generally and in relation to Section 20 notices.</p>                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                                      | Outcomes of Housing Services' review of Community Halls | Interim Director of Housing David Padfield from LBH                                                                                                                                                | Update on the outcome of the review                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                                                                                      | Resident engagement                                     | Interim Director of Housing David Padfield from LBH                                                                                                                                                | Update on how the council conducts resident engagement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                                                                                                                      | Update on Thames Water Main Burst in the N4 area        | <p><b>Thames Water</b></p> <p>Steve Spencer – Operations Director</p> <p>Tim McMahon – Head of Water Asset Management</p> <p><b>Ofwat</b></p> <p>Carl Pheasey - Director Strategy &amp; Policy</p> | <p>An update on the progress of repair works, a status update on residents returning to their homes (home owners, private tenants, council tenants, registered social landlords and leaseholder) and the progress of performance for Thames Water.</p> <p>A return by officers from Thames Water and Ofwat.</p> |





London Borough of Hackney  
Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission  
Municipal Year 2020/21  
Date of meeting Wednesday, 14 December, 2020

Minutes of the proceedings of  
the Living in Hackney Scrutiny  
Commission held at  
Hackney Town Hall, Mare  
Street, London, E8 1EA

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|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Chair</b>                      | <b>Cllr Sharon Patrick</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Councillors in Attendance:</b> | <b>Cllr Sade Etti, Cllr Anthony McMahon, Cllr M Can Ozsen, Cllr Ian Rathbone Cllr Penny Wrout, Cllr Anna Lynch</b>                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Apologies:</b>                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Officers in Attendance</b>     | <b>Jennifer Wynter (Head of Benefits and Housing Needs), Marcia Facey (Operations Manager), Rebecca Rennison (Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply), Sabrina Pathan (Rough Sleeping Manager), Ian Jones (Legislation and Projects Officer),</b> |
| <b>Other People in Attendance</b> | <b>Kathy Meade (Hackney Doorways)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Members of the Public</b>      | <b>None</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Officer Contact:</b>           | <b>Tracey Anderson</b><br>☎ 0208 356 3312<br>✉ tracey.anderson@hackney.gov.uk                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

**Councillor Sharon Patrick in the Chair**

**1 Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1 No apologies for absence.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the meeting etiquettes.
- 1.3 Apologies for lateness from Cllr McMahon.
- 1.4 At the start of the meeting the Chair thanked council staff (particularly our ICT support officer) for their hard work in making the meetings possible during a pandemic and maintaining services following the cyber-attack on Hackney Council in addition overcoming the world wide Google outage today to make the meeting possible tonight. Thank You!

## **2 Urgent Items/ Order of Business**

2.1 There was no urgent items and the items of the meeting was as per the agenda.

## **3 Declaration of Interest**

3.1 No declarations of interest.

## **4 Winter Night Shelter Provision in Hackney**

4.1 In attendance at the meeting for this item was Kathy Meade, Trustee from Hackney Doorways. Also in attendance from London Borough of Hackney (LBH) was Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply, Cllr Rebecca Rennison; Head of Benefits and Housing Needs, Jennifer Wynter and Rough Sleeping Manager, Sabrina Pathan.

4.2 The Chair introduced this item by explaining the winter night shelter provisions would normally open in November as the weather starts to become colder. These are usually in church halls and were communal provisions. The global pandemic has impacted on the provision of night shelters.

Government guidance does not endorse the opening of communal night shelter facilities. The Government has advised rotating night shelter models carry a higher risk of infection and should not be used. The Government suggested night shelter projects should consider whether they can provide self-contained accommodation options.

In addition providers need ensure that staff, volunteers, and guests are supported to adhere to the advice, and other legislation and guidance on social distancing, shielding, self-isolation, and working safely during Covid-19.

4.3 The Commission asked for an update on:

- The opening, provision and operations of winter shelters in the borough and the impact of Covid-19.
- Hackney Council's decision making and support in relation to the local winter shelter service provision in the borough.

4.4 The Trustee from Hackney Doorways commenced the presentation and highlighted the following points from the report in the agenda.

4.4.1 Kathy has been a trustee and company secretary since 2019 and is an active volunteer for the organisation's women's shelter provision.

4.4.2 Night shelters have been impacted for 2 reasons a) the new night shelter strategy, b) Covid-19.

4.4.3 Hackney Doorways have been operating the night shelter provision in the borough for 25 years. Historically it has been a roving night shelter. Guests would be out all day and carry their personal belongings with them. Returning in the evening.

- 4.4.4 From November – December they would offer 15 bed spaces. From January – March this increased to 25.
- 4.4.5 Previously there was 14 venues operating in the winter months. They had a main shelter and a dormitory because some of the churches were unable to have a capacity of 25.
- 4.4.6 Hackney Doorways were in the process of reviewing their model of operation to consider if it was appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the impact on the shelter guests and the respect for privacy.
- 4.4.7 The provision only operated for 5 months of the year. It was pointed out homelessness is not confined to those months and the bad weather is not just confined to these months either.
- 4.4.8 The long term plan for the night shelter was to move to a permanent premises and provide an all year round facilities. These plans were impacted by Covid and the Government's guidance that night shelters could not operate in their current form.
- 4.4.9 Through the assistance of the Benefits and Housing Needs Service in Hackney Council Hackney Doorways have secured a premises on a short term lease until February 2021. This is a former council building in Stoke Newington. They have been able to take a maximum of 13 guests.
- 4.4.10 Although this provision is lower than their previous capacity it is anticipated that by operating throughout the year they would end up supporting more people than they would operating over the 5 months.
- 4.4.11 The new building was risk assessed for Covid and is in line with the Government guidelines.
- 4.4.12 Hackney Doorways are not using volunteers in the same they did previously. This is due to the Covid restrictions. To ensure continuity and Covid protection, they have a small team of volunteers to supplement the team of short term temporary staff they have overnight.
- 4.4.13 They are looking for permanent venue to lease long term to shift this provision to a year round facility.
- 4.4.14 A second development in the borough has been the opening of a women's night shelter. With the assistance of Hackney Council they received some start-up funding from the rough sleeper initiative. This has enabled them to set up a 1 year pilot. This is located in Clapton in a building leased from the United Reformed Church. This enables them to accommodate up to 9 women in a shared room for up to 90 days. This gives Hackney Doorways more time to work with them and move individuals into long term accommodation. They have a worker to support the women in all areas from immigration, access to benefits and use different ways of finding them long term accommodation.
- 4.4.15 The women's night shelter was kept open all through the first lockdown. But has been reduced to only 5 women in the premises due to Covid and the

Greater London Authority (GLA) insisting the women having their own room. They also have a reduced team of volunteers.

- 4.4.16 Currently they have 6 women in the shelter and Since November they have housed 3 women and have had 3 more join.
- 4.4.17 In relation to the main night shelter. Since they opened on 1<sup>st</sup> November they have mainly taken men - 9 single people. Since November they have housed 3 people.
- 4.4.18 In relation to their funding. Funding has mainly been through fundraising efforts and grants for charitable trusts and foundations. To date they have not applied for any funding from Hackney Council. In addition to these funding avenues they have lots of shops and organisation who sponsor something for them.
- 4.4.19 They have not applied for or received a grant from Hackney Council. To date Hackney Doorways have sustained their operations through community and local organisation support.
- 4.4.20 In relation to their current service offer. Due to Covid they have single rooms. There is also a limit on the number of people they can have in the dining rooms at any one time.
- 4.4.21 Volunteers are working in teams and they have procedures in place for all guests and workers. They keep a spare room for people to self-isolate.
- 4.4.22 To date Hackney Doorways have kept all safe and well from Covid.
- 4.4.23 In relation to working with the Council. Most referrals come from the Greenhouse and also from other charities and homeless organisations. They are currently receiving a large number of referrals because a number of night shelters have not been able to open.
- 4.4.24 There has been close working with the Council's housing department and Hackney Doorways reported having an excellent working relationship with Hackney Housing services and the rough sleeping manager. The Council has also helped the organisation to secure Covid funding to help sustain them during the pandemic.
- 4.4.25 The Trustee pointed out next year will be more difficult financially for the organisation.

#### **4.5 Questions Answers and Discussion**

- i. **Members commented due to the reduction in the numbers and noting you cannot support as many people as you used to. Members asked how the people Hackney Doorways cannot support are being helped particularly over the winter months. Members also asked if there is extra support to help them to stay safe on the streets.**

The Trustee from Hackney Doorways advised all their referrals come from agencies. At the point of referral the individuals are usually supported by that agency. Therefore they expect the agency will continue to work with the individual to find alternative support to take them off the street.



The maximum capacity in the venue is 13 but this has been reduced to 10.

In response to Members asking what the Council can do in this situation. The Head of Benefits and Housing Needs from LBH advised in regards to rough sleeping the carried out the count approximately 2 weeks ago.

The service usually uses this count as an educational tool by having staff from other service areas participate in the count. But this year they were unable to have a large number of volunteers due to Covid. Participation in the count of rough sleepers helps people to understand the levels of support rough sleepers need. The officer pointed out a home and roof is just one are of support a rough sleeper might need.

Just over 20 people carried out this task and the Council counted 18 people bedded down in the borough that night. This is a slight increase on the last count. The officer pointed out other boroughs are seeing similar increases.

In regards to severe weather provision and the operations of Severe Weather Emergency Protocols (SWEP). The borough has seen one emergency called for one night in the borough. For this they utilised hotel rooms for that one night. In this instance the council did not need to provide an emergency shelter.

The council is in discussions with other service areas and emergency planning to consider the setup of an emergency shelter in a council building. There are a number of challenges and things they need to consider to provide this type of emergency shelter. Therefore the council is risk assessing a number of sites and have a short list of 2 under consideration.

It is not the preferred option to open a self-contained shelter due to the risks of infection. The council would be required to implement a number of things such as staffing, signage for one ways systems, additional cleaning and deep cleaning after residents have left etc. In addition to testing and screening for Covid before letting people into the premises and having security to keep people safe. In essence there are multiple things the council would need to consider to deliver this type of provision.

The Rough Sleeping Manager from LBH added in terms of people the winter night shelter cannot accommodate, if they eligible access public funds the Council will assess under the usual homeless housing revenue account (HRA) criteria and process under interim duty of care.

The challenge the council encounters is when an individual has no recourse to public funds (NRPF) or a multiple use individual (in and out of the system indicating complexity).

Currently the case load is a larger number than usual. The officer pointed out Hackney's numbers are lower than other boroughs although they are rising.

Increasingly outreach case workers on the streets are having to make judgement calls on how fit and well a person is to stay out one more night while they try to find the appropriate support for them. In summary for people they

cannot find shelter they are either case work with them on the street or find hotel rooms for them.

For rough sleepers who are unwell they go through the Covid pathway with Mildmay hospital.

Typically the other provision they have in the borough is the no second night out service provided by St Mungo's. This has been shut since the beginning of Covid due to the provision being similar to communal shelter provisions. Hackney Council has worked with the GLA about this and it reopened 6 weeks ago. This is a non-accommodation service. This means rough sleepers are referred there and they start to case work with the individuals to assist them back into the system but they do not provide accommodation. With this service back in operation they are able to move their rough sleepers off the streets quicker.

- ii. **The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply asked the winter night shelter to explain where they get referrals from and to confirm if they work beyond the borough boundary?**

In response the Trustee from Hackney Doorways confirmed a significant percentage of their service users come from Hackney. However they do also take referrals from other agencies who are on the boarder of Hackney.

- iii. **Members commended the winter night shelter for all the work they do in the borough. Members commented the key to shelter services was the follow up work they did. This model was very successful. Members asked if it is still in operation following covid.**

In response the Trustee from Hackney Doorways advised they have the same system in place. The shelter has 2 advocacy workers who work with all rough sleepers. A worker visits the women's' shelter and the main advocacy worker is based at the main shelter. Due to covid there is currently always a worker on site.

At least half of the people in winter night shelter are people with NRPF.

- iv. **Members asked if there was any reason why Hackney Doorways have not accessed funding from the Council. In regards to the stoke Newington premises Members asked if it was open and the current capacity.**

In response the Trustee from Hackney Doorways informed the capacity at the new shelter is 13 but they currently have 10.

The building is owned by another organisation and is subject to planning permission for redevelopment. The length of stay in this premises is subject to other decision making processes. However they are assured they have the premises until at least February 2021. They are currently looking for long term premises. The Trustee pointed out they had hoped to have a larger capacity because the premises has a large basement space. But following a fire assessment this spaces was deemed not suitable for anything but storage.

To date Hackney Doorways have managed so far to self-fund because operating for 5 months of the year it was difficult to get funding for short term provision.

- v. **Members referred to the rehousing of 3 men and 3 women. Members asked how they have managed to rehouse these individuals. Members referred to the long term vision and it becoming a year round provision and asked what would be the difference between their provision and a hostel? Members also asked what will be in place of the winter night shelter. This was seen as a last resort safety net for individuals in the winter period.**

In response the Trustee from Hackney Doorways explained 2 women moved to private sector housing out of the borough and one received accommodation with employment.

In relation to the men they have moved 7 men since November 2020. 3 moved to immigration accommodation. 1 has moved into a shared house and 3 have moved into long term private sector accommodation including a hostel.

In terms of dealing with people who became homeless at winter time. They are anticipating that being open all year round they will pick up people earlier than just in the winter period so they are not homeless in the winter. Therefore anticipating there will not be a crisis in the winter months.

- vi. **Members asked if referrals could be made from a walk in or only through a referral organisation. To enable members of the public to support people into accessing the shelter Members asked what the most common routes of access for people who are homeless.**

In response the Trustee from Hackney Doorways confirmed they are not an open access service but a referral service only. This ensures if they do say no or they do not meet their criteria they will still be supported by the referral organisation to find an alternative provision.

The Chair thanked Hackney Doorways for attending the meeting.

## 5 Homelessness and the Impact of Covid-19

- 5.1 In attendance at the meeting for this item from London Borough of Hackney was Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply, Cllr Rebecca Rennison; Head of Benefits and Housing Needs, Jennifer Wynter and Rough Sleeping Manager, Sabrina Pathan.
- 5.2 The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply commended Hackney Doorways for reviewing their operating model and constantly challenging themselves to do better. Pointing out this is not common practice in the voluntary sector. The Cabinet Member also commended their finance model of independence and in building up a base of individual donors.
- 5.3 The Cabinet Member thanked all the staff supporting rough sleepers and their work on the Council's homelessness response to the pandemic.

- 5.4 The Head of Benefits and Housing Needs commenced the presentation making the following main points:
- 5.4.1 Hackney's approach to homelessness was one step ahead of the Government.
  - 5.4.2 Prior to covid the Council was monitoring this situation and the Rough Sleeping Manager and her team took the decision to bring people in before the Government made their announcement.
  - 5.4.3 The officer pointed out whilst doing this piece of work the service has been trying to still run a business as usual service for all other service provisions.
  - 5.4.4 Covid has impacted on the operation of hostels requiring the operation of hostels to be different. The Council has continued to provide the households in temporary accommodation (TA) with access to hostel caretakers and hostel managers to provide support and additional cleaning. The TA placement team have also worked closely with adult social care to ensure where they have households in TA that were shielding or vulnerable they are supported too.
  - 5.4.5 The council has received a significant increase in enquires. Throughout covid they have seen less enquires from families with children and more from single people.
  - 5.4.6 The Council's Greenhouse is still operating - the council's single person's service. Albeit a virtual service.
  - 5.4.7 The covid work with rough sleepers was prioritised and given a high profile. Achieving corporate input and support from: strategic property services, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and primary care, public health, adult social care and commissioning, finance, community partnerships, housing strategy etc. The partnership still meet weekly and there is a programme of work categorised into short, medium and longer term work streams. This group reports to Hackney Management Team (HMT) gold monthly. This work now sits under the Health and Care and Community Support work stream. This recognises that rough sleeping is not just about homelessness but supporting people too.
- 5.5 The Rough Sleeping Manager added information about the 'Everybody In' work by the Council.
- 5.5.1 Prior to covid Hackney Council had booked hotel rooms. The Council booked 2 large settings where they could also provide support services too. It was pointed out this cohort not only needs housing but support services too.
  - 5.5.2 This took time to achieve but within a week they found their regular rough sleepers and took them in. The next challenge was staffing. The officer pointed out following a number of years of cuts this had impacted on the service sectors that they would use to work with vulnerable people. As a result finding experienced staff with the knowledge and skills to work with this cohort was extremely difficult. In the end the Council used redeployed staff from within the council to help the service.

- 5.5.3 The emergency support set up was unsustainable so the Council commissioned the Single Homeless Project (SHP) to provide support services.
- 5.5.4 At the start of the pandemic Hackney Council housed 219 people across 11 hotels. This was for rough sleepers and any individuals that approached the council as homeless. This therefore covered a range of needs. Through this work they managed to bring in individuals who had previously refused to engage with the systems.
- 5.5.5 Hackney Council reported the vast majority stayed in for a long time and since coming in staff have commented that at least 4 people look different and are behaving differently. The officer explained these are human beings with human stories and they were pleased with the progress some had made. Highlighting there are people they have managed to engage with support services who had previously refused. This has given people self-respect and the belief they can do more with their lives. The officer commended all staff involved in this work.
- 5.5.6 The officer pointed out the underlying issues that are the drivers for these problems still remain - the current emergency is contained as much as possible – as they cannot change the political and policy landscape that can be unkind to people at times.
- 5.5.7 The Head of Benefits and Housing Needs added the ‘Everyone in’ was combined with the hospital discharge process. They achieved the challenge of housing residents with just a 2 hour turnaround time into hotels. This was achieved with the assistance of staff, volunteers, Age UK and support providers. The officer commended all staff involved in this work.
- 5.5.8 The Council’s investment in the Greenhouse model has been very beneficial in the crisis. There has been a health assessment of each person and this identified that in Hackney they are bucking the trend. Amongst their rough sleepers Hackney has approximately 80% registered with a GPs and linked into primary care services. The common trend is close to 30% across London. The officer pointed out getting rough sleepers into in with health services provides the best foundation for keeping rough sleepers engaged with services and accessing the health system.
- 5.5.9 The Rough Sleeping Manager explained Hackney’s approach is to inform them of their rights and taking a rights based approach. Rough sleepers have a right to healthcare and upon initial contact one of the first tasks they seek to do is to get the individual registered with a GP.
- 5.5.10 The Chair commented Hackney Council does not promote the good work of the Greenhouse model. The Chair urged the council to think about its communication strategy in relation to promoting all the good work they do to other boroughs. The chair wanted to see Hackney council better publicise Hackney’s visionary work. Pointing out other boroughs claim successes that Hackney has been doing for years.
- 5.6 The Head of Benefit and Housing Needs continued the presentation.
- 5.6.1 Rough sleeping is a symptom of poor health and they have been doing more joined up working with health colleagues. The officer provided details of what was achieved in Hackney under the guise of prevention, possible and no

- second wave from a health prospective. *(Full details are on slide 5 of the Homelessness presentation).*
- 5.6.2 They encountered challenges with doing this work such as no clear supply chain for PPE, no access to water for rough sleepers on the streets as parks were shut. Officers were working in an environment where they had to find solutions rapidly. (Full details of the challenges they encountered is on Slide 6 of the presentation).
  - 5.6.3 The rough sleeping team did daily tracking and monitoring and trailing new approaches as they worked. But these are only interim solutions not long term. All rough sleepers have various levels of need.
  - 5.6.4 Data sharing was a big challenge that they overcame. They had various health interactions and this was really challenging to manage.
  - 5.6.5 The current phase is now 'in for good'. As things start to return to a new normal and the rental market started to reopen, landlords started to offer properties and virtual viewings. This enable them to move residents with lower level needs into properties private sector.
  - 5.6.6 At the start of this pandemic the council was housing 219 individuals and as of last week this figure dropped to 80 individuals.
  - 5.6.7 The majority of the 80 individuals left have high level support needs. These individuals are likely to need supported accommodation and not general housing.
  - 5.6.8 Approximately 10-15 have very high support needs and currently there is no supported accommodation scheme in the borough that meets the needs of this cohort. This was a gap identified early. In response the Council bid for money from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) and Greater London Authority (GLA) to develop their own scheme to support this cohort. The council has commissioned SHP to be their support provider in the one hotel support unit created. This client group is in for good. Working with this cohort takes a long time and will require long term input.
  - 5.6.9 All the supported housing within the borough is full and there are waiting list for all the single people sleeping pathways for accommodation. The council is working with commissioners and providers to move people on.
  - 5.6.10 Out of the 80 in for good half are NRPF individuals. As this is a corporate service the decision was taken to continue to support these individuals and commission immigration services to provide support in regularising their status.
  - 5.6.11 During covid the numbers of NRPF rose rapidly. Prior to covid the number of NRPF were low in the borough. The council anticipates this rise may be due to the slowdown of the construction and hospitality sector and loss of informal living arrangements. The council is limited in what the law allows them to do for this cohort. The council's approach is a rights based approach. Right to regularised status, nationality etc. The aim of this service is to provide formal credited advice.

- 5.6.12 The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply added the Council is against NRPF and has written to the Government about this because NRPF is inhuman. In response the Government has chosen to remind the council the hostile environment remains in place.
- 5.6.13 In regards to funding and finding a long term solution the council is extremely frustrated with the inability to plan beyond 1 year. They do not have the ability to draw down large sums of money instead they have to access small pots that have to work together. In addition to the time it takes to develop bids that may not get granted or that they only receive half of the funding they bid for.
- 5.6.14 The council has been receiving funding for the next steps accommodation funding and rough sleeping accommodation funding. The key area of challenge for Hackney is accommodation. The council received funding for one out of the 3 they bided for.
- 5.6.15 There are additional funding streams they are still waiting to hear about. It was noted the out of hospital funding stream was released with a 2 week turnaround. Further details are outlined on slide 10 of the presentation.
- 5.6.16 The officer pointed out bids are made in tandem with other organisations and these are pulled together through the Hackney Homeless Partnership.
- 5.6.17 The council has received funding to help deliver a scheme for £2.2 million. This will put towards leasing and refurbishment two hotels to be converted into enhanced supported accommodation for the next five years.
- 5.6.18 The Council did not receive funding for the women's homeless hostel. Now looking for future funding to help with this and will need to find a new premises.
- 5.6.19 Some properties became available for sale from housing associations. The council did not receive funding to buy back ex council properties. This funding was declined by the GLA. The council is still looking at long term solutions and waiting for additional funding streams to come out from Government.
- 5.6.20 For this financial year the cost of 'everyone in' and 'in for good' for rough sleeping has been in excess of £3.2 million. The council has acquired some funding to cover the costs from funding streams released. Resulting in the net cost to the council being approximately £1million.
- 5.6.21 The Council has participated in a large piece of work with the London School Economics commissioned by London Councils. This report shows that it costs approximately £21k per person to take a person off the street and house them in emergency accommodation and support through to settled accommodation.
- 5.6.22 The main drivers for homelessness pre date covid and will still exist after covid. The legislation that is protecting private renters ends in March 2021. The Council is unable to predict what will happen once rent restrictions are lifted by the Government. Estimates from various national reports puts rent arrears for the private and social housing sector at 60%-80%. No estimates have been provided at a regional or local level.

- 5.6.23 In relation to the picture of homelessness next year they are unable to give an estimate. The Council is aware there has been a large impact on unemployment in the borough and high levels of universal credit claims. Therefore the council is making sure the housing needs service is robust and as resilient as possible. There are call for the higher levels of universal credit payments to remain in place covid. There is also uncertainty about the impact of brexit on homelessness.
- 5.6.24 The Covid Act increased the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. The Government announced they will not return LHA rates to previous levels but these will be frozen. However the benefit cap was not increased resulting in more people reaching the benefit cap. In Hackney this impacted more on single people and large families.
- 5.6.25 The key asks would include long term funding and to see the provision of rough sleeping included in statutory provision. Homelessness needs long term solutions.
- 5.6.26 Hackney Council has a housing first pilot with health partners. This is the first CCG funded housing first pilot in the whole country. This has 20 units of accommodation and the aim is to expand this. The council will include this ask in future bids. This is a model the council thinks works and they would like to continue.

## 5.7 Questions, Discussion and Comments

- i. **Member commended the work of staff and their passion and desire to help people on the streets and giving them back their dignity.**
- ii. **In relation to sharing best practice Cllr Lynch informed she had approached the CCG Chair and Hackney Council Finance Director about doing a presentation to NHS England about the wider integrated work in Hackney. Following the publication of the integrated care policy this presents an opportunity to share best practice. The Member suggested the work of the housing Needs service is included in this presentation.**
- iii. **Members commented the integrated care vision includes joint commissioning. Members asked what will the outcomes of the joint working in the future in relation to the joint policy direction produced.**

In response the Head of Benefits and Housing Needs informed the Commission the service has hosted a health and homelessness event in the borough. In attendance at this event was approximately 200 people from homeless and charities, health partners, commissioners, GPs etc. This was the foundation of their joint working. This led to further partnering work for health integrated pathways, funding bids and piloting social workers in the hospital and housing needs services. The officer pointed out from her attendance at regional meetings Hackney is further advanced compared to other boroughs in relation to the joint working with health partners.

- iv. **Members referred to the cost of £21k per person to help house a homeless and commented this was a very small sum for the nation to help abolish homelessness. Members also commented the work**



**highlights that it is not just about housing (a roof over their head) but their health and mental health needs too.**

- v. **The Member echoed the need for Hackney to better communicate their work and to continue lobbying and calling to account the Government's failure.**

In response the Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Members for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply from LBH pointed out sharing what they do is one aspect but there needs to be more conversations that broaden the understanding of the complexity of the outreach work. There are many quotes that just say can you give them a bed. The Cabinet Members always points out that at the height of the pandemic there was still 6 people who would not come into accommodation. This highlights the complexity of the work and that it not just about a bed. It will involve changing the patterns of behaviour which will take a long time to solve.

Members agreed just providing a bed does not solve all the problems. Unsupported care for rough sleeping is not the answer.

- vi. **Members asked what happened in the second lockdown and will London moving into tier 3 make a difference from being in tier 2.**

In response the Head of Benefits and Housing Needs agreed the second lockdown was not as severe as the first.

Throughout the year they have seen an increasing number of new rough sleepers on the street. The outreach team have been finding them quickly and linking them to services. They are starting to see a slight decrease but Hackney is still monitoring and waiting for the outcome in the new year.

The officer pointed out Hackney's service is not just the basic offer and they have staff with higher skill levels delivering a high offer than the standard offer by other councils. Taking a trauma based approach to engaging with rough sleepers.

- vii. **Member asked how people can report a rough sleeper. The Member reported using Streetlink but not getting any report back. Members wanted to know the avenue to report rough sleeping.**

In response the Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Members for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply from LBH confirmed Streetlink was the best route to report rough sleeping. The Cabinet Member reassured Members the report comes through to Hackney Council's outreach team.

- viii. **In regards to financing Members commended the service in being cost efficient and seeking out and tapping into various funding streams to reduce the costs to the council.**

In response the Rough Sleeping Manager thanked the staff in her service area (Ian and Ross) who write the bids.

The Head of Benefits and Housing Needs pointed out their colleagues in strategic property services have been really good negotiators and helped to secure good rates for the temporary accommodation during the pandemic. They are hoping to secure further good rates for future deals to make them cost effective.

- ix. **Members suggested the key action following this meeting was to communicate the great partnership work and what Hackney Council has achieved. Members pointed out this work would ordinarily take 2 years to achieve and Hackney Council has completed it in a very short space of time. Commending all the staff within the team for their hard work.**
- x. **Members referred to the work of 'Everyone in' and asked how the Council will take forward the lessons learnt?**
- xi. **Members referred to the Government announcement to remove foreign nationals from services. In reference to no second night out being back in operation. Members asked if they still have a criteria.**
- xii. **Members referred to the commissioning of the Single homeless Project (SHP) and asked why the council did not commission St Mungo's who currently provide the single homeless persons support in the borough.**

In response the Head of Benefits and Housing Needs advised the homelessness capacity within the borough had decreased. The GLA relied on St Mungos and Thames Reach to deliver the London wide capacity. This meant St Mungo's had no capacity to deliver borough level work. So commissioning the Single Homeless Project (SHP) was next best option and this provider does not currently provide support services in the borough and they had capacity and could set up quickly.

In response to the question about the home office announcement. The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply advised this was similar to a previous policy ruled illegal. Everyone in and this policy contradict each other. To add more complexity the Government has advised this should be the last resort after all other avenues have been exhausted. It was pointed out all avenues for rough sleepers with NRPF have been shut down.

In response the Rough Sleeping Manager advised with no second night out (NSNO) this has been beneficial for the council and they do struggle with the criteria. But they recognise they have to have one. This is no more than 1 night with them. The NSNO will seek out local connections to put people on the right pathway.

In relation to the lessons learnt. This may not be revealed for a year or two. However the officer did notice that there was a connection where people were in with other individuals they usually engaged with on the streets. People felt comfortable.

The Council has also been approached by Cardiff University to take part in research to follow people who were taken into covid hotels to track their journey to settled accommodation. Hackney is one of the boroughs participating in this

work. Reports will be released for 3 months, 6 months and 12 months. This should provide some information to glean some learning from this pandemic.

- xiii. **Members commented rough sleeping is not specific to Hackney and London wide. Members asked what can be done to reduce rough sleeping in partnership with other councils. Members also asked if there is any research that explains why rough sleeping is increasing.**

In response the Head of Benefits and Housing Needs from LBH explained they have a shared health trust with the City of London and their rough sleeping numbers are quite high and they have increased significantly. The officer pointed out compared to their neighbouring boroughs Hackney's increase has been quite small.

Looking at sub regional bids. The recent sub regional bid was for all East London boroughs but central Government asked them to reduce the bid to £200k. This shows the Government is not looking at this holistically, for solutions or at the drivers but salami slicing funding.

The provision for rough sleeping across the boroughs is not equitable and Hackney's service is further advanced. Sub -regional bids are about raising the standards across the board.

The council will continue to attend pan London meetings to discuss initiatives and bench mark weekly on rough sleeping figures and those in hotels.

The council is also doing financial lobbying through their connection with the President of the Society of London Treasurers using their research to show the costs to provide solutions.

Members comments the Government is not taking homelessness seriously and that homelessness could be solved if they make the commitment needed to resolve it.

## 6 Lettings Policy

- 6.1 In attendance at the meeting for this item from London Borough of Hackney was Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply, Cllr Rebecca Rennison; Head of Benefits and Housing Needs, Jennifer Wynter and Operations Manager, Marcia Facey.
- 6.2 The Chair pointed out the consultation for the lettings policy launched on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020. The Commission asked for an update about the new lettings policy and the planned consultation on the new policy.
- 6.3 The Head of Benefits and Housing Needs commenced the presentation making the following main points:
- 6.3.1 Demand for social housing has grown significantly within the borough.
- 6.3.2 The council identified its current lettings policy is no longer fit for purpose.

- 6.3.3 The new policy is in response to the Mayor's manifesto commitment to review how they allocate properties and ensure the system is as fair and effective as possible.
- 6.3.4 The new policy is a radical overall. The officer pointed out that piecemeal changes to the system have not addressed the issues and made the current policy quite difficult to understand and overly complex for residents.
- 6.3.5 The aim is to ensure the new policy is not miss leading or disingenuous. The service has a statutory duty to provide effective and genuine housing advice. Any lettings policy needs to align with this duty and not appear to be disingenuous.
- 6.3.6 The current scheme has encouraged a race to get into the urgent band. This has led residents to think they need to demonstrate they are disadvantaged to get on the council's housing register.
- 6.3.7 There is currently 13,400 households on the register. There has been a steady increase in the percentage of households on the housing register that are considered to be in acute need - from 18% in 2014 up to 34%.
- 6.3.8 The council has found that more households are presenting with multiple and complex housing and support needs. Homelessness levels are also increasing. The number of approaches to the council in 2018-19 went up by 39%.
- 6.3.9 The Council has had its highest level of homeless households in temporary accommodation for a decade. This is currently 3300 households. They also have 183 households seeking wheelchair accessible housing. In the last year only 4 properties meeting this need became available.
- 6.3.10 The Council has 656 households on the London Accessible Housing Register (LAHR). These are households requiring either a ground floor, level access shower or level access throughout. In 2019/20 only 60 properties became available.
- 6.3.11 The current allocations policy is struggling with the current demand.
- 6.3.12 The council reported for every 100 properties they have 11,000 bids. This is a lot of hope and disappointment in these bids. *Slide 5 provides a graphically illustration of the level of demand to properties available.*
- 6.3.13 The council reported the number of social properties to let had diminished significantly. The key drivers for this were outlined in slide 5. Highlighted to be:
- Right to buy
  - Regeneration Decants
  - Rehousing demand (ASB / DA / Gangs / Management transfers etc)
  - Tenants living longer
  - No affordable alternatives
  - Decrease in building new social housing units.

- 6.3.14 Slide 5 also provided a graphical demonstration of the number of properties available to the number of associated applications for those properties. Giving a clear picture of demand verses available properties.
- 6.3.15 The council advised to give residents a clearer understanding of the waiting times they have been working on a tool to demonstrate estimates. The council has a waiting time tool which is available on the council website. This is accessible to residents on the housing register. This tool will tell the resident where they are on the register and how long they will be waiting. This is based on real time information over the past 12 months of the housing register.
- 6.3.16 Slide 7 of the presentation demonstrated the waiting times for each category if the housing register was closed on 24th July 2020.
- 6.3.17 These graphical illustrations showed the larger the property needed the longer the wait time and this also depended on the individual's circumstance. The waiting time increases if their needs are lower than the urgent or higher bands.
- 6.3.18 The council reported the biggest demand currently was for 1 and 2 bed properties but generally they needed a good supply of all property sizes.
- 6.3.19 The principles for new policy is that it is a service which is easily *understood, fair, accessible* and *beneficial* to their residents. *Further details about the principles were outlined on slide 8 of the presentation.* The aim is to ensure the lettings policy and allocations of social housing is seen as one of a range of options within housing options.
- 6.3.20 The consultation period for the new lettings policy is currently live for 12 weeks and will close at the end of March 2021.
- 6.3.21 The new policy will have only the categories with the highest need on the new housing register. This criteria will include those lacking 2 or more bedrooms; having significant medical needs - where the applicant or someone in their household is housebound within it or there is a pronounced impact on the wellbeing of the applicant or someone in their household; having significant social need - where there is a threat to the life/pronounced impact on the wellbeing of the applicant (or someone in their household) and there is no alternative effective remedy other than moving from the accommodation.
- 6.3.22 The council is proposing to have a simpler system of 3 bands (A-C). This is down from the current number of 5 bands.
- 6.3.23 The new policy will remove disingenuous language such as urgent band. Because this does not deliver an urgent solution to an individual's housing needs.
- 6.3.24 Band A will be for people who need emergency housing. This will be a settled housing offer not temporary accommodation. The household will receive a onetime offer.
- 6.3.25 Band B is for significant need either medical or social.

- 6.3.26 Band C is for those who need to on the housing register to access certain types of properties. For example this could be for sheltered or older person's accommodation. These properties are only accessible through the council's housing register.
- 6.3.27 In relation to choice based lettings. The ability to bid for households in bands B and C will remain. The Council is proposing an emergency onetime direct offer for Band A. This should speed up the lettings process and they can pass the property onto the next person on the list quite quickly.
- 6.3.28 Prioritisation will continue to be based on the application date.
- 6.3.29 For applicants that do not qualify to join the new housing register they will receive support and advice to address their needs through alternative options.
- 6.3.30 The Council anticipates the new housing register will have fewer households - approximately 7000. This is roughly half of the current level but will give those applicants left on the register a reasonable chance of being housed.
- 6.3.31 For the applicants that remain on the register the waiting times will still be the same. This is because waiting times are dependent on supply. The supply of properties is not controlled by the lettings policy.
- 6.3.32 The council will continue to minimise fraud and error by more frequent, effective and targeted reviews of the register.
- 6.3.33 The council anticipates the new register will take less resources to manage and administer. Thus providing more assistance and support to people who will not be housed via the housing register.
- 6.3.34 The council outlined housing solutions in slide 12. This offer will be providing:
- Personalised Housing Advice offering wrap-around support
  - Working with other colleagues in the council operating a strengths-based approach with a neighbourhood focus
  - Support to access the private rented sector for households who will not secure social housing.
  - Enhanced Mutual Exchange offering tenancy support. Working with colleagues in housing associations and Hackney Housing to have realistic conversations with residents who may be overcrowded or who have older children and assisting them to access long term accommodation solution
  - Provide a team of dedicated downsizing officers. To support people to find appropriate accommodation for their size who need extra support to go through the process and settle.
- 6.3.35 In relation to the consultation the Council has sent every household on the housing register a letter explaining what is happening and about the consultation process. This will direct them to the online form. Paper forms will be available upon request.
- 6.3.36 For this consultation the Council will be doing face to face and virtual session, online Q&A sessions and has an online consultation form on Citizen Space.

6.3.37 The Council will have a series of engagement events from January – February 2021. In addition to meetings with the Council’s Resident Liaison Group and tenant associations.

6.3.38 There will be general resident engagement sessions and people can sign up to these.

6.4 The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member Finance, Housing Needs and Supply added the following information.

6.4.1 The Cabinet Member thanked staff for all their work on this policy over the last 2 years and their evidence gathering to support the policy.

6.4.2 Highlighted this policy is not changing who gets a council property but about having a more honest system and realistic conversations.

6.4.3 The Cabinet Member pointed out there are two things to bear in mind.

- 1) Doing nothing is not an option. There are families whose children will grow up and leave home before they reach their point on the list. This is to reduce false expectations
- 2) Secondly this is not about savings but about releasing resources to invest more in providing residents with an enhanced support.

#### 6.5 Questions, Discussions and Comments

- i. **In reference to the point about the number of social lets properties that become available. Members asked for clarification if this figure included council properties and registered social landlords (RSLs) in the borough.**

The Head of Benefits and Housing Needs from LBH confirmed this was making reference to all social housing available in the borough – social lets for council and all the housing associations in the borough.

- ii. **Members commented these changes will come as a shock to many people on the existing housing register. Members asked what support will be given to people currently on the register who will not be on the new housing register. Members pointed out they may be concerned about going into private sector housing due to the costs, low LHA rates and being put in a position that encourages you to remain on benefits to make sure their rent is paid.**

The Head of Benefits and Housing Needs from LBH agreed this is a sentiment they have heard. As a result of covid there has been a complete U-turn in behaviour from landlords. The officer pointed out as a result of covid they have seen a shift in landlords mind set about tenants in receipt of benefits. Landlords are viewing tenants on benefits as more secure.

In relation to the people who are homeless or in temporary accommodation. The numbers in work have increased. There is now approximately 80% of households in TA in work. This is a higher number than the households in social housing and in work for both council and RSL properties.

The officer pointed out there has been a lot of change around economics, rent costs and the effect on people.

The officer informed it is the Council's role to smooth the pathways and make conversations realistic. It was pointed out there are a number of housing schemes open and available to people in social housing. E.g. fresh start, seaside and country home etc. In addition to a number of mutual exchange schemes that can work within the council and that work on a pan London basis and between registered providers and councils - housing moves, home finders. There are schemes where people can access social housing outside the borough too. Hackney has been some success with people taking other options.

The officer advised there are people on the register who have not had conversations about their housing needs, future plans and who are sitting on the register bidding. By implementing the new policy this will enable the council to free up some resources to have those conversations with people.

The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply added affordability is something that affects people not on the register as well. There is the LHA up lift which has provided more options particular for households in work when it comes to the private sector. Through feedback having had those conversations the service has heard people are happy and settled after looking at the options available and having those conversations.

- iii. **Members asked if the lettings policy being introduced was only applicable to Hackney or would it apply to other boroughs too.**
- iv. **Members asked how the council was addressing and managing language barriers and suggested the consultation could have engagement sessions in different languages to address the language barriers.**
- v. **Members agreed it was not acceptable to have people on a waiting list knowing they will not get a social let property. It was good to have these honest conversations. Members commented there are people who may not want to come off the housing list and wish to remain on the register in the hope of getting a social housing property. Members also raised concern about people not wanting to go into the private sector due to the higher risks of insecurity of housing and having a bad landlord. Members pointed out the legislation in place is not sufficient to help people hold onto their homes in the private sector.**
- vi. **Members pointed out the consultation is likely to receive hostility because people know they will be taken off the housing list. How is the council planning to prepare and respond to this?**

The Head of Benefits and Housing Needs from LBH confirmed the letting policy was only applicable to Hackney borough. Although other boroughs have been revising and reviewing their lettings policy too.

In regards to households over crowded by 1 bed. Although the council sympathises, it is important that they have realistic conversation and help people to understand that sitting on the housing register will not get them social housing and is not a solution to being overcrowded by 1 bedroom. Highlighting



There options do not have to be a move into the private sector but could be a mutual exchange.

There are approximately 45,000 units of social housing in the borough, of which many are overcrowded but equally they have quite a few under occupied properties. There has not been a large amount of activity through joined up mechanisms in the borough to enable transfers and mutual exchanges among registered providers. This an area the housing strategy team, housing needs team and neighbourhoods and housing teams will be working on next year. They propose to hold social housing fairs to encourage swaps and enable people to see what is available. This is an example of a new trail that could be delivered as solutions for people in Hackney.

The Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Housing Needs and Supply added they would not be encouraging people to come out of social housing into the private sector. But it should be noted there are people on the register and not in social housing. Having those conversations and looking at the properties available could be a solution.

In relation to the consultation they are being really honest about what this means. They want a two way conversation. But the reality is they cannot continue with the current system as is not sustainable. If there are other models recommended or other priorities they need to take into consideration they would encourage this to be provided in the feedback.

The Operations Manager for LBH added in regards to downsizing they had a dedicated team and they were successful in downsizing. This was eroded due to various duties. This team achieved 158 moves per year. They worked alongside the RSLs in the borough. They will be setting this up again and will be meeting in January 2021.

- vii. **Members made reference to there being a review. Members asked if the review will be a review of the person's circumstances.**

The Operations Manager from LBH explained they would carry out a review after 2 years. If in band B they would review the current application.

- viii. **Members asked if the council will be stricter on making people accept the RSL option. Pointing out there may be people holding out for a council property because they want to access the right to buy option. Members also asked if the council tracked the people who were in the urgent band but then did a right to buy application.**

The Operations Manager from LBH advised the council does not track the right to buy when a tenant has come through the homeless route to a property.

The Head of Benefits and Housing Needs from LBH advised there is some monitoring within housing services from the fraud unit. The officer is aware there has been more right to buy applications refused this year than previously due to this work.

In relation to accepting a property offer. All homeless applicants when made an offer get sent an offer letter outlining all the statutory requirements and

advises if this is rejected the council can discharge its duty. An officer usually attends the viewing with the applicant. All offers are classified as social housing regardless if the landlord is the council or an RSL.

- ix. **Members asked for the consultation to be issued in different languages.**
- x. **The Chair closed this discussion by making the following points:**
  - **It was a good suggestions to translate the consultation into local community languages**
  - **Members understood the need for the changes following the period of austerity and cuts to house building.**
  - **Members are aware Hackney Council is trying to build more homes but the council has limited access to funds to build homes for social let.**

## **7 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

- 7.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020 were approved.

|                                        |
|----------------------------------------|
| <b>RESOLVED:</b> Minutes were approved |
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## **8 Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission- 2020/2021 Work Programme**

- 8.1 The work programme for the LiH scrutiny commission was not reviewed or discussed.

## **9 Any Other Business**

- 9.1 None.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 10.00 pm