

## **Appendix 2**

### **Westminster City Council: Draft Rough Sleeping Strategy 2017-2020 Summary**

#### **Executive Summary**

Westminster City Council spends more than any other council in the UK on tackling rough sleeping and helping people off the streets.

Our work means that there is a route away from the street for everyone. Over half of new rough sleepers met by our outreach teams never see a second night out and there is a bed space for everyone in genuine need of help.

Our new draft Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out how over the next three years we will focus on further reducing rough sleeping by preventing even more people from ending up on the streets. Where someone is already sleeping rough, it shows how we will do all we can to support them away from the streets as quickly as possible, helping them to turn their lives around.

And it sets out how we will do this and more at a time of significant funding pressures, by taking a leadership role and becoming more creative about how we, and our partners, help people to rebuild their lives. There are many reasons why people sleep on the streets of Westminster, not all of which the council can control, which makes it all the more important to work together.

With the right solutions and bold actions, rough sleeping is not inevitable. It is harmful and dangerous, and the longer someone sleeps on the street, the more harmful and dangerous it gets. Our draft Rough Sleeping Strategy shows how all our efforts over the next three years will be directed at getting more people off the streets.

#### **What we know about rough sleeping in Westminster**

2,857 people were seen rough sleeping in Westminster during 2015-16. This is 35% of all rough sleepers in London and more than the next seven ranking boroughs combined including the next highest amount in Camden which had 641 during the same period. Since November 2014, the number of non-UK national rough sleepers has exceeded that of UK and Irish nationals. Non-UK nationals can now make up to 65% of rough sleepers in Westminster on any given night.

#### **Our priorities**

Over the next three years, we have three key priorities to reduce rough sleeping:

1. Where it is possible for us to do so, taking more action to prevent people from rough sleeping in the first place and providing a rapid response when people do end up on the streets.
2. Supporting people who are sleeping rough to rebuild their lives – and to stay off the street.
3. Tackling anti-social behaviour and keeping the city safe.

These priorities are supported by specific objectives, concrete commitments and measurable targets that we believe will build on our current practice and help to realise our vision. These are set out in the strategy but some of the new proposals include:

- Working more closely with particularly vulnerable people, such as those coming out of prison or at risk of losing their homes, to prevent them from ending up on the street.
- Better understanding individual rough sleepers' needs by commissioning a new assessment centre where people can stay when they first come off the streets. There they will have their needs thoroughly assessed and be offered personalised support plans that help them back into the community.
- Developing more services for female rough sleepers who often have a history of trauma and abuse, and face distinct challenges on the streets.
- Taking more action to address the health needs of rough sleepers, with a particular focus on mental health issues and substance misuse. We will look at new ways to help people engage with services and raise awareness of the devastating impact of new drugs such as 'spice' on users and those trying to help amongst partners and the wider public.
- Being clear about when we will take enforcement action where there is anti-social behaviour, and using a personalised approach to tackle it.

### **Our targets**

We believe our targets have an important role in demonstrating our objectives and measuring success in achieving them. It is vital, however, that targets in a complex area like this are meaningful and realistic, particularly given that many of the underlying factors are beyond our control. They are set out below:

- In 2015-16, 53% of people seen rough sleeping in Westminster who were new to the streets didn't spend a second night out because they were quickly supported off the streets. We want to increase this to at least 75% of new rough sleepers by the end of the strategy.
- We want to further reduce the scale of long-term rough sleeping in Westminster. One of the ways we will measure this is through a reduction in the proportion of rough sleepers who are seen on the streets for more than two quarters of the year. In 2015/16, nearly 15% of all rough sleepers in Westminster were seen for more than two quarters of the year and our target is to further reduce this to 5% by the end of the strategy.
- In 2015-16, 44% of people who left our accommodation (such as hostels, assessment centres and second-stage accommodation) did so for negative reasons, such as returning to the streets or being evicted. By the end of the strategy we want to reduce this to below 30%.
- One of our objectives throughout the course of this strategy is to focus on the mental health of rough sleepers. One way of measuring whether we are having an impact here is if individuals engage with services. Currently, 64% of people in our accommodation services with an identified mental health need are engaging with mental health services. We want to increase this to 80% of people by the end of this strategy.
- Rough sleeping and its associated behaviours have impacts on the wider communities in Westminster. Our aim is to reduce these impacts and one way we will measure this is through a reduction in the percentage of residents who say that homelessness/begging on the streets are problems in their area. In 2015, 20% of residents thought they were problems and our target is to reduce this to 15% by the end of the strategy.