



<b>Subject:</b>	Winter preparedness for people sleeping rough in Belfast
<b>Date:</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> December 2018
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services
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<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Some time in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to outline the multiagency arrangements in place to support rough sleepers and other vulnerable individuals over the winter period and to bring to Committee's attention the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's intention to establish a homeless support hub in Belfast.
1.2	On 6 <sup>th</sup> November, the NI Housing Executive undertook an annual overnight street count of people sleeping rough in Belfast. Sixteen people were encountered on the street between the hours of 2.00am and 5.00am. Street counts provide a snapshot of people who are bedded down or about to bed down on the night of a count.

1.3	All of the sixteen people encountered were known to services. One had their own home and of the remaining 15 people, all were either known by or engaged with staff conducting the street count with only two accepting an offer of temporary accommodation on the night.
1.4	Many of the people identified as chronically homeless, including people who sleep rough, are characterised by chaotic lifestyles and poor health and well-being. It is typically difficult for these individuals to engage with services and they often decline offers of assistance.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>Committee is asked to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the existing services provided for homeless people and rough sleepers in the city and the additional arrangements in place to support these individuals during winter months, in the form of shelter and associated services.</li> </ul>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p><b>Existing Services</b></p> <p>Services either offered or funded by the NI Housing Executive within Belfast for tackling homelessness include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The provision of day-time and night-time street outreach services;</li> <li>➤ A day centre that can provide support services for up to 100 vulnerable people;</li> <li>➤ The provision of 26 crash beds and a night time reception service;</li> <li>➤ A wet hostel for up to 23 people;</li> <li>➤ 70 units of intensively managed emergency accommodation;</li> <li>➤ The provision of 11 direct access hostels comprising 348 units;</li> <li>➤ 10 hostels of family accommodation with 237 units;</li> <li>➤ Almost 400 private let properties</li> </ul>
3.2	<p><b>Winter Preparedness</b></p> <p>The Housing Executive's Supporting People team is taking a lead in winter preparedness for the homeless sector and has put in place the following arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Distribution of specific winter warmth packs for those on the streets through Council for the Homeless</li> </ul>

- Established communication networks with community and voluntary service providers (NIHE led) raising awareness of weather warnings and requesting preparedness
- Enhanced outreach services if needed (with support from other frontline organisations including Council) to encourage those on the street to take shelter in the facilities provided.
- Enhanced tolerance levels in crisis accommodation and hostel accommodation to ensure those with more challenging behaviours (who may have been excluded from hostels for past behaviour) have access to shelter during severe weather
- Crisis accommodation (Annsgate, etc.) have the ability to provide temporary beds to provide shelter for all those wanting to access it

#### **City Centre Animation Project**

3.3 Council Officers are liaising with NIHE regarding rough sleepers, with a view to preventing further vulnerability.

#### **Additional Services**

3.4 The Policing and Community Safety Partnership and Public Health Agency continue to fund the Street Injectors Support Service and the Dual Diagnosis Service, both of which, alongside the Drug Outreach Team, support individuals with complex addiction and mental health needs. BCC's Community Safety team continues to work closely with these services and the Safer Neighbourhood Officers working patterns have been extended to cover 11.00am-7.00pm, with a focus on the city centre and supporting vulnerable individuals.

#### **Healthcare Hub for the Homeless**

3.5 A new hub providing health and social care services for the homeless is to be opened in the near future in Belfast. It will be led by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT). The aim of the Hub is to bring services out of the clinic setting and into the community and on to the streets, to wrap care around the people who need it most, where they need it. This will include physical and mental health care and addiction services for those sleeping rough or in hostel accommodation. The pilot will run for an initial 18 months with an investment of £225,000 from the Department of Health's transformation fund and will build upon the existing BHSCT homeless public health nursing service and services provided by the voluntary sector. A senior nurse with considerable experience of working in the homeless sector is leading the initiative, designed to help inform future service development. The location of the new hub has still to be decided, however the Trust is

	<p>continuing to work on this and is endeavoring to have it up and running as early as new year.</p> <p>These extended services will include a GP and an outreach nurse coming into the hub two days a week, a dentist and a podiatrist on site for half a day and a senior outreach nurse employed for an additional day. It is understood that a bid has also been put in for funding for a mental health nurse practitioner to be located in the new hub.</p>
3.6	
	<p><b>Service Development</b></p>
3.7	<p>Belfast City Council is working with the Public Health Agency and other partners on a targeted co-ordinated short-term (6-9 months) piece of work to address the needs of injecting drug users, particularly within the city centre. This work will have a particular focus on improving communication and co-ordination amongst services funded to work with these individuals and the wider homeless / at risk of homelessness population within the city and is connected to longer-term strategic actions to tackle health inequalities under the governance of the Living Here Board.</p>
	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p>
3.8	<p>The cost of the extended hours worked by the Safer Neighbourhood Officers in the city centre is included within the emergency budget established to support recovery from the Primark fire. All other work with partners is within existing revenue budgets.</p>
	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.9	<p>There are no particular equality or good relations issues associated with this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	None.