

AGENDA ITEM 11(e) - Stop Fining Homeless People

Amendment

1. In par 1, line 2, add after 'hotels' 'for at least one night'
2. In par 1, line 2, replace Around 130 of those with more than 200.
3. In par 1, line 4, insert after halls 'private rented accommodation'
4. Replace all of para 2 with : "The Council has also been awarded more than six million pounds from the Government to help provide rough sleepers with safe, secure accommodation, the sixth biggest allocation to any English Council."
5. In new par 3, add at the end of the last word "needs" with ", which is why the council is now providing self-contained accommodation."
6. In new par 4, line 2, please replace "A number of £100 fines" with "Six Fixed Penalty Notices"
7. In new Par 4 add after paid ", none of which have been pursued"
8. Replace all of Para 5 with: It is council policy not to follow the approach of Labour councils like Oxford which threatened £2,500 fines for rough sleepers leaving bags in doorways while recognising that rough sleepers - like other human beings - commit antisocial and criminal behaviour.
9. Add to the end of point 1 the words " Council workers, people in partner agencies and volunteers who have contributed towards this."
10. Replace point 2: "Congratulates the Council on securing record levels of investment from the Government to tackle rough sleeping."
11. Add new point 3 to say: "Recognises the efforts council officers are making to ensure safe and secure accommodation for every rough sleeper, including those for whom a hostel or shared house setting is not appropriate."
12. Replace original points 3 and 4 with new points 5 and 6:
 - Requests Cabinet to continue to support the approach that no rough sleepers should be punished purely if they are a rough sleeper and condemns the approach of councils like Oxford, which threatens rough sleepers with fines for being rough sleepers
 - Asks Cabinet to note that the Homelessness Partnership Group recently discussed with police colleagues the possibility of working more closely to try to develop a support based model around tackling begging and certain antisocial behaviours. This would aim to minimise any police prosecutions of those begging or committing anti social behaviour. Council endorses the Board's decision to look at how this can be handled fairly and sensitively, including whether Fixed Penalty Notices are appropriate.

Proposed by (Name) Councillor Darren Sanders

Seconded by (Name) Councillor Steve Pitt

The Motion to therefore read (see overleaf):

Since the government issued the 'everyone in' directive in March 2020 the council has housed a total of over 400 homeless individuals in hotels for at least one night. Around 200 of those people have now been moved on to new temporary accommodation units across a mix of student halls private rented accommodation and rooms in shared houses.

The Council has also been awarded more than six million pounds from the Government to help provide rough sleepers with safe, secure accommodation, the sixth biggest allocation to any English Council.

A number of rough sleepers, regularly those with the most complex needs, feel they would be unable to cope in a hostel or shared house environment. Often this is due to feeling unsafe as a result of their health and support needs, which is why the council is now providing self-contained accommodation.

A recent investigation by The Mirror found that across the country 420 fixed penalties have been issued by councils to homeless people for begging or loitering in the street. Six Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued by the council to rough sleepers in Portsmouth - none of which have been paid, none of which have been pursued.

It is council policy not to follow the approach of Labour councils like Oxford which threatened £2,500 fines for rough sleepers leaving bags in doorways while recognising that rough sleepers - like other human beings - commit antisocial and criminal behaviour.

Full Council therefore:

1. Recognises the significant efforts that have been made to accommodate local homeless people since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, and thanks all those Council workers, people in partner agencies and volunteers who have contributed towards this.
2. Congratulates the Council on securing record levels of investment from the Government to tackle rough sleeping.
3. Recognises the efforts council officers are making to ensure safe and secure accommodation for every rough sleeper, including those for whom a hostel or shared house setting is not appropriate.
4. Requests Cabinet to continue to support the approach that no rough sleepers should be punished purely if they are a rough sleeper and condemns the approach of councils like Oxford, which threatens rough sleepers with fines for being rough sleepers
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6. Asks Cabinet to note that the Homelessness Partnership Group recently discussed with police colleagues the possibility of working more closely to try to develop a support based model around tackling begging and certain antisocial behaviours. This would aim to minimise any police prosecutions of those begging or committing anti social behaviour. Council endorses the Board's decision to look at how this can be handled fairly and sensitively, including whether Fixed Penalty Notices are appropriate.