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Title of meeting:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	22 nd March 2022
Subject:	Update on the Street Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Partnership Strategy
Report by:	James Hill - Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services
Report Authors:	Teresa O'Toole - Head of Housing Needs, Advice & Support Lauren Taylor - Rough Sleeping Manager
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Requested by Cabinet

2. Purpose

- 2.1. To provide an update on rough sleeping services in the city.
- 2.2. To provide an update of the Street Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Partnership strategy 2018 - 2020.
- 2.3. To provide an update on bids for Rough Sleeping Initiative funding for services for the period 2022-2025.

3. Background

- 3.1. Since the pandemic began in March 2020, the city council's services for rough sleepers have been through a transformational change. This has gone from a night bed and day centre service, through the use of hotels during the 'everyone in' phase of 2020, to a new pathway which gives real hope to rough sleepers who need support to turn their lives in a different direction. The support of councillors has been integral to this change, and regular reports been brought to outline the developments. In addition, the Portsmouth City Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Partnership Group has provided support and oversight throughout.

- 3.2. The use of hotels in 2020 was not an ideal solution, but the city council made the best provision that was possible given the challenges it faced. It is known that not everyone felt that it gave rough sleepers what they needed, and the learning those facilities provided enabled the Rough Sleeping team that to develop the rough sleeping pathway which began in late 2020 with the leasing of three ex-student blocks.
- 3.3. The most significant development for the pathway in 2021 was the purchase of three accommodation settings, providing over 100 rooms, many self-contained, with on-site support 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Services from across the city council, including public health, social care and many more have worked with our support providers to create the pathway, and more information can be found on the city council's website [Sleeping rough - Portsmouth City Council](#)
- 3.4. Vaccination programmes have been made available, both for rough sleepers on the street and those accommodated in the pathway, and this has meant that the instances of Covid in this vulnerable group have remained low. When Covid cases have occurred, the ability to self-isolate has been available and this has meant that outbreak numbers in any single location have remained under control. Regular updates on any Covid outbreaks have been shared through the multi-agency Health Protection Board and the city council's Business Continuity 'Gold' command structure.
- 3.5. Properties have been developed, with building and personal safety a top priority. Sprinkler systems and oven isolators have been just two of the developments made to help keep service users safe. More importantly, accommodation has been developed to ensure that they feel like home for those who use them.



Example of the kitchen facilities in Kingsway House



Example of a timer switch to minimise fires in cookers and hobs

3.6. However, the Rough Sleeping team is not complacent. There are unfortunately still those who sleep rough on the streets, despite the Rough Sleeping Pathway, and new rough sleepers every month. These are for a wide range of complex reasons, and Outreach and Navigators continue to find and support people on the streets, and help those people gain find accommodation that is right for their needs.

4. Operational update to the existing Street Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Partnership strategy

4.1. Since the publication of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Partnership Strategy in 2018 there has been significant change to operational service delivery. This is captured within the updated strategy (Appendix 1) and summarised as follows:

4.1.1. Night Beds

The Night bed provision has evolved into the newly formed Rough Sleeping Pathway

4.1.2. No second Night out Beds

The Rough Sleeping Hub has access to two 'no second night out' beds. The purpose of this provision is to ensure there is a bed available to prevent any person spending a second night out on the streets. Support is offered to those accessing this service to understand the longer-term need.

4.1.3. Rough Sleeping Pathway

Portsmouth City Council has procured and renovated three buildings, which has created a Rough Sleeping Pathway. This pathway comprises high support needs accommodation containing 41 self-contained ensuite rooms; medium needs accommodation containing 9 shared flats with 45 rooms and low

support needs accommodation containing 5 flats, which makes available 19 rooms.

4.1.4. Homeless Day Services

The homeless day services has re-located from Yew House to Kingsway House, Elm Grove, co-locating it within the accommodation pathway and re-naming it the Rough Sleeping Hub. The service is now open 7 days a week 8am to 4pm.

4.1.5. Commissioned support

Following a tendering process, Society of St James (SSJ) were awarded the contract to deliver the support element of the accommodation pathway, and operational delivery of the rough sleeping hub. The contract commenced in October 2021 for a three-year contractual term.

4.1.6. Grant funding

The government has set out its ambition to end rough sleeping by the end of this parliament and is providing financial support to local authorities to achieve this aim. A total of £1.9 billion of funding has been made available until 2025, and the council has already received £4,608,403 from the Rough Sleeping Action Programme (RSAP) for the provision of the rough sleeping pathway, and over £1million in 2021/22 from the Rough Sleeping Initiative fund to support other rough sleeping services.

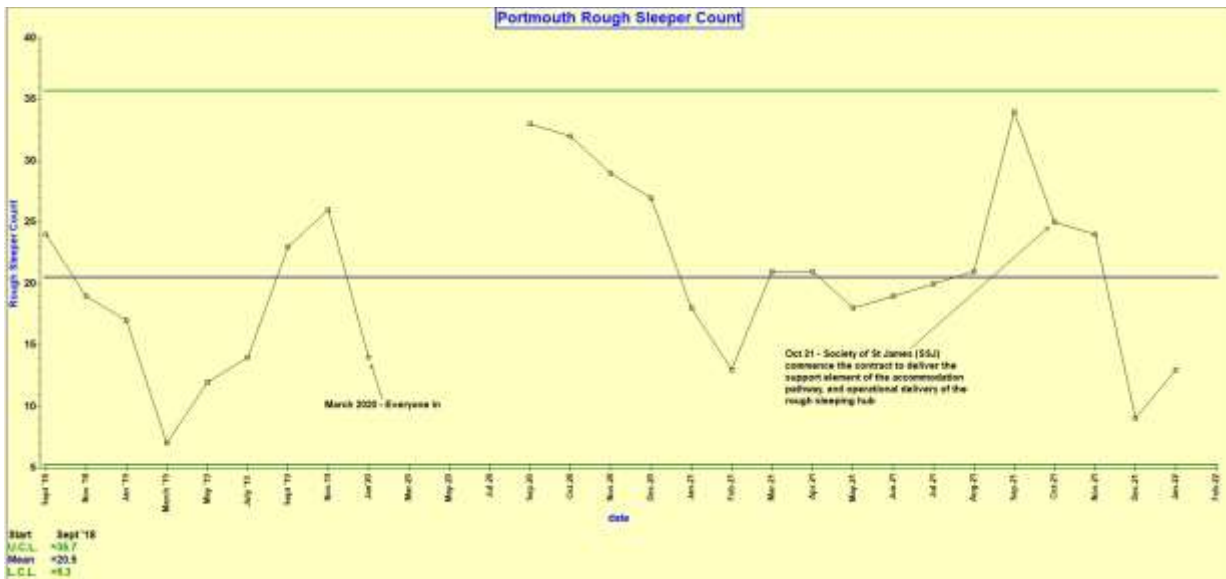
The city council is seeking further funding support, from the department for Levelling Up Housing & Communities (DLUHC)'s Rough Sleeping Initiative programme for the period 2022 to 2025.

4.2. Whilst there have been operational changes to the provision available for those sleeping rough, the strategy and approach remains fundamentally unchanged at this time. The operational developments have improved service delivery in line with the updated vision.

4.3. The outline of this plan was discussed and approved with the Portsmouth City Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Partnership Group on 10th February 2022, and the strategy document will be updated on the city council's website in due course.

5. Current Rough Sleeping data

5.1. The number of rough sleepers is slowly reducing, with the count for November 2021 showing that there were 24 people sleeping rough in Portsmouth. This demonstrates a reduction when comparing figures from previous years, where there were 29 recorded rough sleepers in November 2020 and 26 in November 2019. The graph below shows the numbers of recorded rough sleepers in Portsmouth since 2018.



5.2. Between the October and November 2021 (the first quarter of the support contract for the rough sleeping pathway), 79 individuals were identified to be sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough have accessed the Rough Sleeping Pathway. Within this same period, 8 people have moved on from the pathway to long term supported housing and 12 have moved out of the pathway with assistance to secure settled accommodation in the private rented sector.

5.3. In the same time period, there were 1185 separate visits made to the Rough Sleeping Hub by 175 different people. Many of the individuals have accessed accommodation within the Rough Sleeping Pathway, Commissioned Supported Housing services or directly into the private rented sector.

5.4. In the current financial year so far, 44 rough sleepers / ex-rough sleepers have been supported to access Private Rented Sector accommodation.

6. Next Steps - Strategic plans

6.1. Two decisions were taken by Cabinet on the 30 November 2021 in relation to the work undertaken by the city council on homelessness and rough sleeping. These decisions were to:

6.1.1. Approve the plan for the creation of the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 - 2028, and

6.1.2. Approve the option to update the operational elements of the Street Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Partnership Strategy 2018 - 2020 by the end of 2021/22.

6.2. With regard to the first decision, in 2022/23 the Housing Needs, Advice and Support service will continue the work to review and merge the Street Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Partnership Strategy 2018 - 2020 (2023) and Homelessness Strategy 2018 - 2023 to form a single strategic document called the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 - 2028.

- 6.3. This will require formal consultation and is intended to create a single clear and cohesive strategy covering the statutory and non-statutory functions of the city council in all aspects of homelessness.
- 6.4. With regard to the second decision, operational elements of The Street Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Partnership Strategy 2018 - 2020 have been updated with the aim of extending the relevance of that document until the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is complete.

7. Next Steps - Rough Sleeping Initiative funding bid 2022-25

- 7.1. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has announced a three-year funding from its Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) for 2022-2025 to support with the aim to reduce and end rough sleeping. The expectation is that local authorities build on the learning from previous RSI funding awards in developing a plan to end rough sleeping for their local areas.
- 7.2. The city council has reviewed its needs and submitted a bid for funding to continue existing interventions and create new ones. This was shared with the Portsmouth City Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Partnership Group on 10th February 2022 and includes the following:

7.2.1. Rough Sleeping Navigators: co-ordinate services around the individual to meet all identified needs, including accommodation, health and employment, and seek to remove barriers in accessing services/support. The team works alongside partner agencies in supporting individuals sleeping rough or who are at risk of sleeping rough. The team works flexibly and innovatively in exploring options which fall outside of typical accommodation/support options to personalise housing solutions for those individuals who are entrenched in rough sleeping and challenging behaviours

7.2.2. Health Navigators: co-located within both the ambulance service and the hospital discharge team to support individuals who are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough to access accommodation, primary health care services, pull in appropriate support. The aim is to ensure that no one is discharged from hospital without an address/accommodation offer, and also seeks to engage with individuals to prevent hospital admissions and bed blocking, when community-based support is appropriate or better suited to meet the need.

7.2.3. Private Rented Access: seek to prevent rough sleeping by offering help and support to those individuals at risk of losing their settled home, and work to enable them to continue to reside in that home. The service helps those individuals who are sleeping rough to find an affordable and sustainable solution in the private rental sector, by providing money advice and financial support to secure accommodation as well as providing initial support and advice to both the landlord and the tenant, with the aim of creating settled tenancies.

7.2.4. Rough Sleeping Outreach: act as a first point of contact for those rough sleeping. Proactively engaging with any individual who is found or reported to be sleeping rough to build relationships, signpost to appropriate services and support to engage with services/attend appointments. The bid seeks to improve

response times to notifications of individuals sleeping rough, and to maintain an accurate picture of rough sleeping in Portsmouth to inform developments in prevention interventions.

7.2.5. Criminal Justice Navigator: co-located across the city council and the National Probation Service. To support individuals released from prison or who are engaging with probation and are sleeping rough or at risk of sleeping rough. Building on the impact of other roles, this role is intended to co-ordinate partnership agencies to provide wrap around support to the individual to prevent re-offending and homelessness. This role would lead on risk assessing accommodation options to ensure there is opportunity for success in every case

7.2.6. In-reach support: Supporting 'ex-rough sleepers' to maintain settled accommodation. The aim of providing continuous on-going support is to prevent a return to the streets. From learning, it is recognised that this lack of support can lead to the cycle of homelessness continuing. This support offer will include money advice, responsibilities of a tenant (and a landlord) and practical support to manage a home.

7.3. The city council's Rough Sleeping team worked closely with DLUHC to ensure that the bid was co-produced and met the needs of both government and the city.

7.4. The outcome of the funding application is unlikely to be announced until May 2022. However approximately £149,000 of funding has been confirmed for the first quarter of FY 2022/23 to cover the costs of existing services. Once the outcome of the full bid is known, officers will review the services that will be provided and update the partnership Board, and members, accordingly.

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Signed by: **Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services**

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Partnership strategy

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Report to Cabinet 30 November 2021	Plan for the next Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)
Report to Housing & Preventing Homelessness 26 July 2021	Update on Rough Sleeping Pathway.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)



Report to Housing & Preventing Homelessness 25 January 2021	Pathway for rough sleepers and purchase of associated property.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)
Current Street Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Partnership Strategy	Street-Homelessness-and-Rough-Sleeping-Partnership-Strategy-2018-2020.pdf (portsmouth.gov.uk)
Current Homelessness Strategy	Portsmouth City Council Homelessness Strategy
City Council webpage on rough sleeping services	Sleeping rough - Portsmouth City Council