

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 22 September 2011

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Communities

SUBJECT: Rough Sleeping

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform the Board that Halton has been part of a City Region Task Group (Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens, and Wirral) working initially to reduce rough sleeping across the city region, with a vision to eradicate rough sleeping by 2012.

This report seeks approval to sign up to the attached 'No Second Night Out' protocol (Appendix 1) that sets out how the initiative will be delivered across the city region and our role in supporting the partnership.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board note and approve the 'No Second Night Out' Protocol.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 In the 21st century no one should have to sleep rough. Rough Sleepers are those who are roofless, sleeping on the streets or bedded down in open air areas, or other places that are not designated for habitation. It is a dangerous and traumatizing experience. Rough sleepers have an average life expectancy of just 42 years and are 35 times more likely to commit suicide than the general population.

3.2 As well as the often severe social, psychological and physical toll that rough sleeping has on people, it generates significant financial costs. A report by Crisis in 2003 (the most up to date report of its type) estimated that a single homeless person costs the public purse approximately £24,500 a year. These costs include the following:

- failed tenancies
- health and substance misuse problems
- regular contact with A&E departments
- involvement with the police and criminal justice system. (homeless people are often at more risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system and being victims of crime)

- prolonged unemployment and costs of welfare
- benefits and economic inactivity
- Environmental costs of cleaning up and securing rough sleeper sites

3.3 Halton's Rough Sleeper figure submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) for 2010/11 was 2. However, it is recognised that there is a small number of rough sleepers within the district and it is therefore necessary to ensure that effective services are available for Halton's rough sleepers.

CLG have awarded Liverpool an additional £120K in funding to lead on a project across the city region to address single homelessness and reduce rough sleeping. This funding is in addition to the Preventing Homelessness Grant that CLG award to Halton Council annually. The following local authorities have agreed to work together to develop this area of work:

- Halton Borough Council
- Knowsley Borough Council
- Liverpool City Council
- Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council
- St Helen's Metropolitan Council
- Wirral Borough Council

3.4 A City Region task group has been set up which meets monthly to oversee the development of a City Region Protocol which will have the following vision:

“By the **end of 2012**, no one will live on the streets of Liverpool City Region and no individual arriving on the streets for the first time will sleep out for more than one night.”

This is an ambitious but achievable vision for our City Region. An early draft of the protocol is attached in Appendix A which outlines how we intend to achieve this. The key points of this are:

- developing “One point of contact” for reporting rough sleepers across the City Region (i.e. one phone number / email address)
- Ensuring that appropriate services are available across the whole of the City Region
- Assurance that clients sleeping rough within Halton will be accommodated temporarily on the first night and referred directly to the Sub Regional outreach services.
- The Outreach Officer will determine the client's circumstances, accommodation needs and area connection.

- If applicable, the Officer will arrange for the client to return back to the identified connecting authority area. In all cases a personalised solutions client action plan will be devised to address and resolve the housing and social needs.

Discussions are already underway with Liverpool's main provider of services to rough sleepers, the Whitechapel centre to identify what services need to be accessed to support rough sleepers in each local authority area.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 No identified implications however, approval is sought to sign up to and progress with the work to reduce rough sleeping across the City Region. The timescale for implementation, subject to Board approval, will be September 2011 – March 2013.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This scheme will require no additional funding from the Council, as the proposal is funded through a CLG grant to the City Region of £120k (£60k per year for two years). The protocol aims to eradicate rough sleeping by 2012 and does not commit the Council to services beyond that date. However, the City region task group will evaluate the effectiveness of the services in year two, with a view to developing an exit strategy for each region in the partnership.

Additional funding is also available from the national charity Crisis. This funding can be accessed to develop existing schemes to support single people and rough sleepers to access the private rented sector; and priority will be given to extending existing schemes on a geographical basis.

Liverpool already have an existing scheme funded by Crisis, for rough sleepers (delivered by the Whitechapel Centre) and the City Region task group have submitted a sub regional bid for this funding to extend this scheme. This would provide an additional resource to achieve the "No Second Night Out Vision".

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

No Implications

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

No Implications

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Through working with rough sleepers, services will identify people

with entrenched complex health needs; and work to ensure that the required support, care and health services are in place to reduce the negative toll on both the individual and population.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Homeless people and in particular rough sleepers are often at more risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system and being victims of crime. The rough sleeper's service will link in with criminal justice agencies to reduce levels of re-offending and to reduce the risk of clients being victims of crime.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

No Implications

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 No risks have been identified at this point.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 This protocol is about ensuring that there is even more access to services for the most socially excluded, regardless of their location in the City Region, for example, outreach services, cold weather provision and wrap around support solutions.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None

