

Subject: Rough Sleeping and Single Homelessness

Report to: Housing Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 16 October 2014

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This paper proposes that the Committee notes its recent report on rough sleeping and single homelessness.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes its report, *No Going Back: Breaking the Cycle of Rough Sleeping and Homelessness*, as agreed by the Chair under delegated authority.**
- 2.2 **That the Committee notes the responses from the Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform, and Kris Hopkins MP, Minister for Homelessness, to the relevant recommendations in *No Going Back*.**

3. Background

- 3.1 During 2013/14 the Housing Committee undertook an investigation into rough sleeping and single homelessness in London.
- 3.2 An initial meeting in May 2013 assessed the success of the Mayor's No Second Night Out initiative and found that there is a sizeable group of people who sleep out intermittently, caught in a cycle of temporary accommodation solutions and rough sleeping.
- 3.3 In October 2013 the Committee then held a second meeting examining service provision for repeat rough sleepers.
- 3.4 This was followed up in January 2014 by a visit to a homeless hostel in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham.

3.5 The Housing Committee, on 12 February 2014, resolved:

“That authority be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, to agree a short report on the impact of welfare reform on housing.”

4. Issues for Consideration

4.1 The Chair of the Committee, Darren Johnson AM, agreed, in consultation with Lead Members, the Committee’s report on rough sleeping and single homelessness. On 31 July 2014, the Committee published this report, *No Going Back: Breaking the Cycle of Rough Sleeping and Homelessness*. The report can be found at **Appendix 1** and on the London Assembly website at:

www.london.gov.uk/priorities/regeneration/publications/mayor-caught-napping-as-rough-sleeping-rises.

4.2 The report made the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

The Government should amend the priority need conditions to entitle single homeless people in England to settled accommodation. This should not affect boroughs’ ability to manage their housing allocations, though they may wish to review them as appropriate, taking into account local circumstances.

Recommendation 2

The Mayor should monitor and report on boroughs’ contributions to GLA-funded homelessness programmes such as No Second Night Out to encourage active participation in this pan-London challenge.

Recommendation 3

The Mayor should begin discussions with the Government and London Councils to establish pan-London and sub-regional commissioning arrangements for services supporting single homeless people and rough sleepers. The Mayor should be responsible for these arrangements. This will ensure that rough sleepers have access to a properly coordinated suite of services to help them stabilise their lives.

Recommendation 4

The London Health Commission should assess how health services can be made to join up with and complement other services which support rough sleepers and single homeless people, including whether the Mayor needs a statutory responsibility and power to achieve this.

Recommendation 5

The Mayor should write to the Ministerial Working Group on Rough Sleeping to highlight the need for greater flexibility in the design of JobCentre Plus and NHS systems, for example, to enable homeless people to participate in and realise full benefit from them.

The Mayor should also lobby the Department for Work and Pensions to broaden the easement to the Jobseeker’s Allowance (Homeless Claimants) Amendment Regulations 2014 so that it covers all homeless claimants, not just those who are newly homeless, and for the duration of their hostel stay,

not just the first four weeks, so that vulnerable people without stable accommodation are best supported to acquire and sustain accommodation and employment.

And the Mayor should lobby Government to maintain welfare assistance payments (the former Social Fund) and to be allocated a tranche of these funds which would help support access to the PRS for single homeless people across London.

Recommendation 6

The Mayor should continue to make the case with the boroughs for a Living Wage procurement standard, emphasising the positive impacts the Living Wage would have on keyworkers as well as the longer-term cost savings effective keyworker support offers to the boroughs and other public service budgets. He should also write to the Ministerial Working Group on this issue.

Recommendation 7

The Mayor should press hard for at least a proportionate share of Department of Health hostel funding for London which has by far the largest number of rough sleepers and single homeless people in the country. He should also press DCLG to clarify urgently what revenue funding will be available to support homelessness projects in London for 2015-16 and beyond.

Recommendation 8

The Mayor should monitor and report on the availability and location of different types of hostel accommodation in London over time to enable a strategic view to be taken on what provision is needed and where. As part of this he should assess whether the Arlington model, of low-support housing and training facilities combined with social enterprise space, could usefully be replicated in each sub-region.

Recommendation 9

As indicated in our April 2013 report *Assessing the Consequences of Welfare Reform*, the Government should ensure Local Housing Allowance rates are regularly reviewed and properly take account of the higher rental costs in London than elsewhere in the country.

Recommendation 10

The Mayor should work with the boroughs and London Councils to establish what needs to happen to make the achievement of the homelessness 'gold standard' a reality.

- 4.3 The Committee has invited the Mayor, and others to whom recommendations are made, to respond. Responses have so far been received from the Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform (letter attached at **Appendix 2**) and Kris Hopkins MP, Minister for Local Government with responsibility for homelessness (letter attached at **Appendix 3**). Any further responses will be reported to the Committee, at which time any potential follow-up actions will be considered.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1: *No Going Back: Breaking the Cycle of Rough Sleeping and Homelessness*

Appendix 2: Letter to the Chair from the Lord Freud, dated 28 August 2014

Appendix 3: Letter to the Chair from Kris Hopkins MP, dated 9 September 2014

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers: None
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