

## **Housing & Community Safety Scrutiny Committee**

### **Homelessness and Winter Night Provision Update - February 2020**

#### **Summary**

This paper updates the meeting on the current homelessness situation and the winter night provision for rough sleepers and single homeless people in York, how we propose to spend additional funds to reduce rough sleeping, and meet the demands of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017

#### **The Current Homelessness situation**

City of York Council is currently in a partnership with other organisations across York, under the guidance of the Homelessness strategy 2018-2023 Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Together This partnership remains well established for many years and continues to rise to the challenges of tackling all forms of homelessness.

#### **2019-2020 Winter night Provision**

As of 1<sup>st</sup> November 19 York activated its winter night provision for Rough Sleepers and single Homeless People. This is an additional bolster of the emergency beds provision, offering direct access to safe and warm accommodation, so that services are able to react to the challenges of the weather when it becomes more threatening to a person's welfare.

It is worth noting that there is a significant emergency bed provision run throughout the year. This year the provision has been used effectively over winter to offer direct access accommodation to rough sleepers in the vast majority of cases. An analysis of this year's provision will be

undertaken once we return to the No second night out all year round provision, around the 29<sup>th</sup> February at the earliest. This is dependent on weather condition and the possibility of extending the winter night offers.

The winter night service this year has seen times when it is not at full capacity. This has allowed the outreach service the opportunity to provide extra support and offers of accommodation to those who are still sleeping on the streets and at this stage are less willing to access beds and services for a variety of personal reasons.

This is indicative of this year's formal street count figure which was externally verified by homeless link and the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government. This year's street count figure was 7 which is a 22% reduction on last year. The formal annual street count methodology is set out by central government and gives an indication of a typical night. The actual number of rough sleepers in York can fluctuate day by day. The street count took place overnight on 29<sup>th</sup> October into the 30<sup>th</sup> October before the activation of the winter night beds.

The current rough sleeping situation has changed over the last 2 years where, due to the additional resources of the RSI funding, the majority of the entrenched rough sleepers who are from York entered into supported accommodation housing options. These people require additional support and our flexible outreach services remain very much involved in the coordination of these ongoing support packages. Currently we are experiencing a cohort of between 5-13 rough sleepers on any given night, the majority of whom are not from York but are coming to the city from other areas. Our experience is that this is to primarily tap in to the generosity of the night time economy and tourism. These individuals present additional challenges for services, as there is no motivation to engage with services.

We continue to have a small cohort of York people with complex needs and work continues by the outreach teams to engage effectively with them and build relationships with them to a point that enables more positive outcomes.

For 2020-21 we have had confirmation of repeat funding from MHCLG to tackle rough sleeping. The Rough sleeper's initiative fund and the Rapid Rehousing fund have been amalgamated. We have confirmation that we will receive £471,141 funding for this year. This is inclusive of some

additional resources for this coming year. It also includes an £38k underspend on last year's RRP navigator funding as those staff were not recruited into post until Aug/ Sept 2019.

|   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Additional resources 2020/21</b>   |                                    |
| 1 x Substance Misuse Navigator seconded and back filled post to be recruited. | £35,000                            |
| 1x Private Sector Support Worker recruited                                    | £30,930                            |
| 1x Full time RSI Co-Ordinator recruited                                       | £39,000                            |
| <b>Resources 2019/20</b>  |                                    |
| Salvation Army (Early Intervention and Prevention Team – 2x EIP Staff         | £56,000                            |
| RSI Personalisation budget (incl. guaranteed rent)                            | £18,000                            |
| MEAM Workers + Housing First Guaranteed Rent                                  | £85,500                            |
| Private Rented Sector Officer   | £31,580                            |
| MH Outreach Worker  | £42,000                            |
| 3 x Navigators Salaries   | £103,131 (3x Grade 7 @ £34,377)    |
| RRP Personalisation Budget  | £30,000                            |
| <b>Total</b>  | 433,141 + 38K RRP underspend 19-20 |

The winter night provision offers the following.

| <b>During winter 1<sup>st</sup> Nov to 29<sup>th</sup> Feb</b> | <b>Emergency beds rest of year</b> |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>Peasholme centre</b> offers between 7-9 emergency beds      | 7 Emergency beds                   |
| <b>Howe Hill</b> Offers 7 Emergency beds                       | 7 Emergency beds                   |
| <b>Union Terrace Hostel</b> Offers 7 emergency beds            | 2 Emergency Beds                   |
| <b>Robinson Court</b> 1 emergency beds                         | 1 emergency beds                   |
| <b>Yes Below Zero (flat 2 HH)</b> 5 emergency beds             | 4 Emergency beds                   |
| <b>Total 29</b>  | 21                                 |

The above winter provision offers a steady supply of emergency provision to meet the demands of those who wish to access accommodation. There are no conditions attached to offers of accommodation.

In the event of extreme weather Peasholme Centre will also increase capacity further, using 'sit up beds' to accommodate rough sleepers ensuring everyone is able to access warmth and safety if required.

While the winter night provision deactivates on the 29<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020, an assessment is made of the weather conditions and extensions can be applied if required. There is also a decant phase to reduce down to the year round emergency provision so no one is returned to the streets or homelessness.

## **Homeless Reduction Act and Statutory Homeless provision. Current Homelessness situation**

James House proposed handover date is now 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. Following this there will be a 4 week period where we get staff used to the building, check everything is working as it should be, furnish all rooms and offices, and hold two open house events. One event will be for Councillors, media, local businesses and residents along with other interested parties. The second will be for staff. It is therefore hoped that James House 57 units of accommodation will fully operational at the end of March 2020.

We have secured additional funds through MHCLG Flexible homeless support Grant to offer additional resources within our statutory Housing Options Service so we can better manage the additional new burdens of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. These include a Housing Options Supervisor and an additional private rented Support Worker. We have also been able to create permanent positions of what were temporary posts at the implementation of HRA 17 including a Housing Options Worker and Housing Options Support Worker.

The above will enable more proactive working with people around a wider range of housing options and intensive case management of more complex cases.

The Private rented Sector officer has rehoused 15 people in the private sector during this financial year so far.

We have improved partnership with health services in terms of integrating our Rough Sleeper mental Health Worker within the mental health teams with access to their information systems, attendance at 'Huddles', and the ability to refer into their service areas as a qualified clinician.

For anyone who states they would like advice and support around LGBTQ+, staff would support and signpost to relevant support networks within the City (such as York LGBT Forum). Where there is more specialist support required, e.g. transgenderism, the customer would be encouraged to speak to their GP regarding specialist referrals. All packages of support are bespoke to the individual going through the resettlement pathway 'and would take into account diversity of the individuals who require support and accommodation.

Our first cashless giving scheme was launched under 2 Ridings foundation at York Spark and we hope to launch our 2<sup>nd</sup> contactless point soon. Funds from this will be used to provide small grants to people who are or have slept rough to assist them off the streets or out of homelessness. Since Dec 2019 this has raised £1,500

Further information and online donations can be made at

[www.yorkstreetaid.org.uk](http://www.yorkstreetaid.org.uk)

We have worked to provide 4 more Housing first tenancies over the winter period, with a further 2 pending

The current numbers of people with complex needs accessing services continues to be a challenge for us as accommodation is an key tangible need in the lives of most of people who fall in to this category. We are working to increase the availability of suitably supported accommodation by creating specialist housing provision or supplying intensive support. Examples of this are a specialist pathway and move on accommodation for people with severe mental health problems, increased use of Housing First accommodation with partners and the potential for use of shared accommodation with support.

Street Culture continues to be a barrier to breaking away from rough sleeping many people involved in this (*especially those with addiction issues*). Begging activity remains prevalent and highly visible in the city centre. This makes the rough sleeping situation look worse than it is to many residents and visitors who might not be able to determine the difference between a beggar and a rough sleeper or the complexities of working with the associated issues.

We continue with our media campaigns and publicity to bust some of the myths around rough sleeping and to encourage giving by the public to causes that can support people rough sleeping in to more positive and fulfilling lives.

**Recommendation:**

Scrutiny is asked to note this information and to make any recommendations on this topic.

**Author:**

Tim Carroll  
Service Manager Housing  
Options and Support Team  
Tel No. 01904 554124

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

Tom Brittain  
Assistant Director Housing  
& Community Safety