

Report to Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:

A.2

Meeting Date: 1 June 2017
Portfolio: Economy, Enterprise and Housing
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and Budget Framework YES
Public / Private Public

Title: ROUGH SLEEPING & BEGGING WITHIN CARLISLE
Report of: Homeless Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager
Report Number: GD.33/17

Purpose / Summary:

This report, requested by the Panel, gives an overview of the levels of rough sleeping within Carlisle and district; the work to date to address rough sleeping and begging within the City Centre; and the strategic priorities outlined within the Interagency Homelessness Strategy for Carlisle 2015-20.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to note the ongoing commitment to address multiple exclusion homelessness and rough sleeping as a key priority area outlined within the Interagency Homelessness Strategy for Carlisle 2015-20.

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

Strategic and Statutory responsibilities

- 1.1** Section 3 (1) of the Homelessness Act 2002 requires the local housing authority to have a strategy which seeks to:
- prevent people from becoming homeless
 - ensure that there is sufficient accommodation in the area for people who might become, or are homeless
 - ensure that people who might be, or are homeless, have sufficient support to prevent them from becoming homeless again
 - consult with other relevant agencies in carrying out the review and in preparing the strategy
- 1.2** The Interagency Homelessness Strategy for Carlisle 2015-20 was developed in consultation with key stakeholders; the action plans are reviewed annually following a comprehensive review of local trends, gap analysis and a review of National Policy.
- 1.3** The 2015-20 strategy and annual action plans are focused on four key priority areas:
- 1) Appropriate flexible accommodation and support pathways
 - 2) Multiple Exclusion Homelessness and Rough Sleeping
 - 3) Positive outcomes for young people experiencing homelessness
 - 4) Prevent and relieve Homelessness

Multiple Exclusion Homelessness and Rough Sleeping¹

- 1.4** Carlisle City Council works closely with key stakeholders and members of the public to ensure that anyone reported and identified as rough sleeping is assisted at the earliest opportunity as part of an ongoing commitment to No Second Night Out (NSNO); the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP); and official rough sleeping submissions in line with government guidance, priorities and national

¹ Please refer to appendix 1 (page 6) for definition of multiple exclusion homelessness, and rough sleeping

standards; these levels are monitored quarterly as part of the interagency strategic working group.

1.5 The NSNO offer includes:

- *Any people identified as rough sleeping to be offered assistance to get off the streets immediately*
- *Members of the public to play an active role by reporting and referring people sleeping rough (via Streetlink and local contacts including out of hours)*
- *If people have come from another area or country and find themselves sleeping rough, the aim should be to reconnect them back to their local community unless there is good reason why they cannot return*

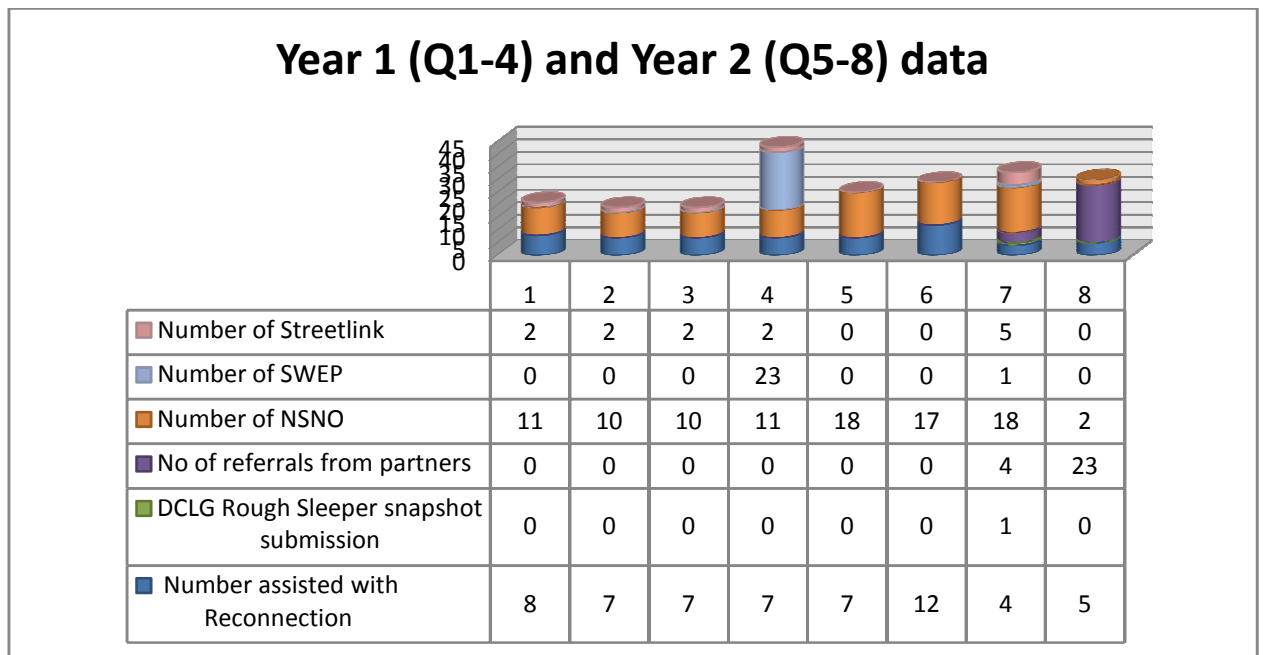
1.6 Throughout the winter months, the weather is monitored closely - where the weather is predicted to be zero degrees or below for three consecutive nights shelter and assistance would be offered to all identified as in need as part of a local Severe Weather Emergency Protocol.

1.7 Carlisle City Council submits an annual snapshot figure in quarter three to the Department of Communities and Local Government to assist in monitoring national levels of rough sleeping. Local authorities are able to decide whether to conduct an official count or submit an estimate based on local intelligence. Table one below outlines Carlisle City Council data submissions for the past three years:

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
0	0	1
Count	Estimate	Count

1.8 On 18th November 2016, Carlisle City Council Homeless Services undertook an official rough sleeper count throughout the hours of 12.30am and 4am, with an independent verifier from Homeless Link. 55 locations were searched by 5 teams (based on intelligence gained through consultation with key stakeholders); one person was located, recorded and reported as rough sleeping - this person was known to us and refused any assistance. The police were notified both in terms of this individual's welfare and as a public safety measure.

1.9 Figure 1 outlines comparative data relating to assistance requests for people reported as or at risk of rough sleeping, for quarter 1-4 for year 1 and 2:



2. Begging

2.1 The homeless services respond to all reports of rough sleeping within Carlisle and district; this response includes actively searching the location(s) reported for the individual and signs of rough sleeping. Where the person is not located a card is left advising officers are looking to offer assistance and how to make contact should this be required.

2.2 From September 2015 it was noted that there was an escalating issue with individuals begging within the City Centre who had been assessed as not homeless. Homeless Service managers have been working with officers from Cumbria Police since October 2015 to agree, outline and monitor the effectiveness of joined up approaches to address this. These issues have also been discussed with key stakeholders to monitor, report and advise individuals who are known to their services to seek appropriate help should this be required.

2.3 Regular street needs audits have been undertaken jointly with officers from the Homeless Prevention and Accommodation services and Cumbria Police since March 2016 to date. Welfare assessments / advice and assistance has been undertaken; and persistent offenders dealt with by positive enforcement by Cumbria Police, resulting in a reported significant reduction in calls to address this issue.

2.4 As a direct result of this effective joint action taken:

- 4 individuals were given verbal warnings
- 2 individuals were offered housing advice and assistance
- 2 individuals were arrested
- 1 individual was deported

2.5 At the last audit carried out in March 2017; there were no individuals identified, and no individuals rough sleeping or begging have been seen or reported since this date.

2.6 This is a standing item on the Homeless Strategy partnership group and there were no local concerns were raised at the last meeting held on 26th April 2017. There is an ongoing local commitment with key partners in Carlisle as part of the strategic work to monitor, report and address any future issues and welfare concerns that may arise.

3. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

3.1 Addressing Carlisle's current and future housing needs

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**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Community Services -

Corporate Support and Resources –

Economic Development –

Governance and Regulatory Services –

Appendix 1:

Multiple Exclusion Homelessness (MEH)

People have experienced MEH if they have been 'homeless' (including experience of temporary/unsuitable accommodation as well as sleeping rough) and have also experienced one or more of the following other domains of 'deep social exclusion': 'institutional care' (prison, local authority care, mental health hospitals or wards); 'substance misuse' (drug, alcohol, solvent or gas misuse); or participation in 'street culture activities' (begging, street drinking, 'survival' shoplifting or sex work).

<https://www.hw.ac.uk/schools/energy-geoscience-infrastructure-society/research/i-sphere/homelessness-social-exclusion/multiple-exclusion-homelessness.htm>

Rough Sleeping

Rough sleepers are defined for the purposes of rough sleeping counts and estimates as:

`people sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments)

people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or 'bashes')

The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters or travellers.

Bedded down is taken to mean either lying down or sleeping. About to bed down includes those who are sitting in/on or near a sleeping bag or other bedding.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vision-to-end-rough-sleeping--2>