

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**STRATEGIC HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD**

**9 November 2009**

**Joint report of the Director of Health and Housing and Cabinet Member for  
Housing**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken  
by the Cabinet Member)**

**1 SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURE FOR ROUGH SLEEPERS**

**Summary**

**This report sets out the proposed procedure for offering emergency accommodation to rough sleepers during periods of severe weather during the winter months**

**1.1 Background**

- 1.1.1 On 18 November 2008 the Government announced the '*No One Left Out – Communities ending Rough Sleeping*' strategy, stating their intention to work with partner agencies to end rough sleeping in England by 2012. The key aims of this strategy are to prevent the flow of new rough sleepers onto the streets, and to support those that are rough sleeping into accommodation to improve their health, consider employment options and rebuild their lives.
- 1.1.2 Communities Local Government (CLG) send a letter to all local authorities each autumn, reminding them of need to have plans to ensure there is cold weather provision for any rough sleepers in the area to bring them off the streets. Historically, this has not been an issue for this borough due to the very small numbers of people actually street homeless and sleeping rough. Nonetheless we have with our west kent LA Partners commissioned temporary winter shelters in times past. However, since 2008, Porchlight have provided a street outreach team in West Kent, and have identified a small number of people seeking their assistance who are street homeless.
- 1.1.3 Severe weather provisions would need to be considered when the weather forecast predicts three or more consecutive nights with a minimum temperature of zero degrees Celsius or lower, during the winter months of November to March (inclusive).

- 1.1.4 Members will be aware from a previous report to the Board that a Kent-wide street count, coordinated by Porchlight, will take place on a single night in November 2009.

## 1.2 Proposed Procedure

- 1.2.1 The proposed procedure is attached at **[Annex 1]**. It is expected that any rough sleepers needing assistance through these provisions will be offered emergency bed and breakfast accommodation by the housing options team, using our existing providers.
- 1.2.2 Only those rough sleepers who have a local connection with Tonbridge and Malling, and meet the criteria detailed in the procedure will be considered for assistance during periods of severe weather.

## 1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 None arising from this report.

## 1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 The net cost of providing emergency accommodation, after payment of any housing benefit, will be met from the existing CLG homelessness grant. However, it should be noted that some rough sleepers may have difficulties in providing sufficient evidence of their entitlement to housing benefit.

## 1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 CLG requires every local authority to make provision for rough sleepers during periods of severe weather, which will assist in meeting the 2012 target to eliminate rough sleeping.

## 1.6 Recommendations

- 1.6.1 Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to **ENDORSE** the proposed procedure for the provision of services to rough sleepers during periods of severe weather in the winter months.

The Director of Health and Housing confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

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Nil

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Cabinet Member for Housing