

Housing, Health & Communities Committee	
Meeting Date	21 st April 2026
Report Title	Winter Shelter project for Rough Sleepers
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing & Communities
Lead Officer	Sarah-Jane Radley, Community & Partnerships Manager Roxanne Sheppard, Housing Advice Service Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. The Committee agrees to create a working group to establish the Council's approach to rough sleeping services including if this includes night shelter provision. 2. To delegate authority to the Head of Housing and Communities to implement the agreed approach. 3. The Head of Housing and Communities to report to the next meeting the outcome of the working group.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides members with an update on the Night Shelter project and seeks approval for a separate working group to determine if a night shelter is the best delivery model in relation to the wider rough sleeping service and seeks delegations to implement the agreed approach.

2 Background, Context and Proposals

- 2.1 HHC Committee has asked officers to consider the option of introducing a night shelter in the borough to support those who are street homeless. Feasibility work has commenced on introducing a night shelter and a range of options have been developed. To move forward, it needs to be decided whether a night shelter is appropriate and, if so, its location and operating model. This must be considered as part of the wider street homelessness approach.
- 2.2 Rough Sleeping services were first introduced in Swale seven years ago when we began to have a more sustained rough sleeping presence. This service is non-statutory and funding was secured for this service through grants.
- 2.3 A wider Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant for 2026/27 and a three-year allocation has been secured, however, this funding sees the grant reducing significantly year on year. Rough sleeping services are the only non-statutory part of the service. The funding allocated to rough sleeping in

2025/26 was £705k This funds the staff within the RSI team, temporary accommodation (TA) placements for this cohort and move on support. During 2025/26 £190k (net) was spent on TA placement for this cohort. In addition, we commission Riverside to provide a supported housing scheme (The Quays -84 bed supported housing scheme) and the Housing First intensive support for entrenched rough sleepers.

- 2.4 When we activate the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) for humanitarian reasons, SBC uses both HMO's and B&Bs to place individuals who are verified as rough sleepers by Housing's RSI team. For 2025/26 SWEP was triggered for 49 nights, providing accommodation for 34 people in this period. resulting in an additional cost of £9,610.94 to the Council.
- 2.5 The number of rough sleepers has increased over the past few years, and the current operating model is not fit for purpose to continue. Consideration also needs to be given on how services can be delivered with reduced funding. A review is underway and this includes reviewing the outsourced services provided by Riverside.
- 2.6 Research has commenced regarding provision of a night shelter The estimated cost of establishing and operating the shelter is up to £156,900, which is expected to reduce to approximately £124,300 subject to donations and voluntary contributions. There is no new additional funding currently identified for this project.
- 2.7 There are four potential models:
 - Rotating Church Model – this is being used in Maidstone and Folkestone (and previously Dover), where a collective of churches offer their facilities on a rotation basis. This means that one venue is not being used seven nights per week and allows each of them to hold other activities..
 - HMO model – This model is being operated in Dover, where one building/facility is utilised for the sole purposes of a shelter, with a separate space allocated to an individual. This model is like the service provision that currently exists under temporary accommodation.
 - Parish/village hall model – This model utilised by Ramsgate brings into use the community facilities available in a village hall by utilising the large space to create sectioned off individual bed areas for guests overnight. Included in this offer is the utilisation of the existing facilities such as the kitchen.
 - The Quays - Riverside have a separate facility on their site which is currently underutilised which may be able to be used as a night shelter.
- 2.8 In addition to the overnight shelter, the provision of a day service is required. This enables the Housing Team and support services to engage with the guests prior

to them being allocated a space in the shelter. This work is critical to ensure that individuals who are placed in the shelter have been through a registration process to make sure they are suitable to be placed within the shelter.

- 2.9 The day centre will offer a multi-agency service, as well as a relaxed safe space for individuals to attend. They will be provided food, support, advice and friendship. This could include services such as Citizen Advice Swale, Forward Trust, Riverside, Salvation Army, NHS, and others. The food, board games and activities will be provided by organisations such as Trussell Trust or other local food banks and supported by their volunteers.
- 2.10 To support the delivery of the day center , partners from Citizen Advice Swale, Forward Trust and Riverside (The Quays), supported by SBC Housing & Communities have submitted a bid to the MHCLG, [Ending Homelessness in Communities Fund](#). This bid looks to develop local voluntary sector working and provide a holistic service for individuals experiencing homelessness. We hope to hear the outcome of this bid by the beginning of June 2026.
- 2.11 A working group of committee members is proposed to review the operating model, including the need for a night shelter, and the associated capacity, outcomes, risks and costs.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Committee agrees to create a working group to establish the Council's approach to rough sleeping services including a night shelter provision.
- 3.2 To delegate authority to the Head of Housing and Communities to implement the agreed approach.
- 3.3 The Head of Housing and Communities to report to the next meeting the outcome of the working group.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 These will be considered by the working group.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The proposals have been compiled in conjunction with partners and will be presented to the working group as part of the options.
- 5.2 Consultation carried out – online form, partner meeting, other shelters

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Health & Housing - To aspire to be a borough where everyone has access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing.
Financial, Resource and Property	The estimated cost of establishing and operating the shelter is up to £156,900, which is expected to reduce to approximately £124,300 subject to donations and voluntary contributions. The rough sleeper services currently are funded through grant funding of £705k
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	SWEP is humanitarian duty rather than a statutory duty. Rough sleeper services are non-statutory.
Crime and Disorder	Locations of rough sleeping has been the subject of a range of ASB reports and the location of a night shelter has to carefully consider the overall impact.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None identified
Health and Wellbeing	Any intervention that takes individuals away from the street will directly benefit their health and wellbeing.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Rough sleepers by their nature are vulnerable individuals and safeguarding processes will be integrated into all service options.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The final proposals will take into consideration risk and health and safety management.
Equality and Diversity	A Community Impact Assessment will be compiled and considered as part of the options analysis
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.
Local Government Reorganisation	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

7.1 None

8 Background Papers

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) – Policy