

Housing, Health & Communities Committee	
Meeting Date	14 th July 2026
Report Title	Rough Sleeper Services
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing & Communities
Lead Officer	Roxanne Sheppard, Housing Advice Service Manager
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. The Committee to note the service offer for rough sleepers as prioritised by the member working group. 2. To invite Riverside to a future meeting to scrutinise the implementation and impact of The Quays + model.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides members with an update on the outcomes from the member working group that took place on the 14th May 2026, which was established to review the delivery options for rough sleepers and whether a night shelter provision should be established.

2 Background, Context and Proposals

- 2.1 At the April 2026 HHC committee, members considered a report detailing work to date that had been conducted on establishing a night shelter within Swale. It highlighted a range of options and the complexities of this approach, and that it needed to be considered in relation to the wider service offer that was already or could be in place for rough sleepers in the borough. It also explained that the current delivery model was not fit for purpose for the volume of clients and staffing ratio.
- 2.2 As reported at the last HHC committee the grant for Rough Sleeping has been merged into a wider Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant for 2026/27 and a three-year allocation has been secured, this funding sees the grant reducing significantly year on year. (£70k reduction for 27/28 and a further £31k the following year). Rough sleeping services are the only non-statutory part of the service. This grant also restricts the use of spend on Temporary Accommodation (TA).
- 2.3 The funding allocated to rough sleeping in 2025/26 was £705k This funds the staff within the RSI team, temporary accommodation placements for this cohort and move on support. In addition, we commission Riverside to provide a

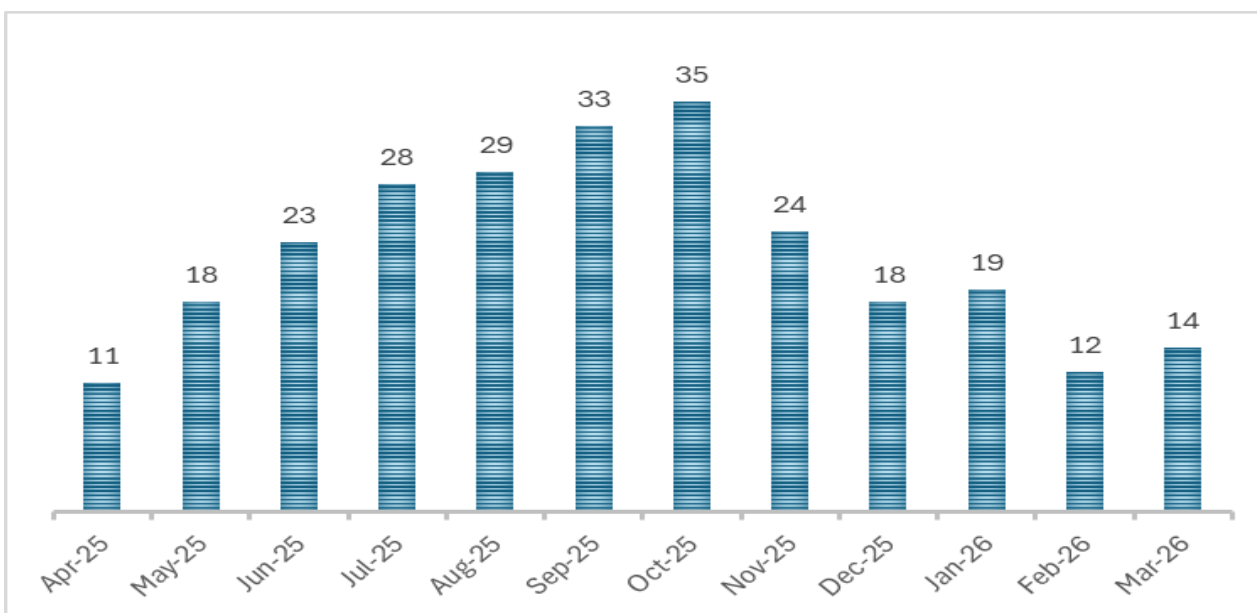
supported housing scheme (The Quays an 84-bed supported housing scheme) and the Housing First intensive support for entrenched rough sleepers. Therefore, assumptions have been made that we will continue to allocate a similar level of grant to these services, but the service offer is integrated where possible into the main service.

- 2.4 The working group was held on 14th May 2026 and comprised of Cllr. Neal, Cllr Perkin, Cllr. Pollard and Cllr. Watson and was supported by officers. Members were provided summaries of spend and outcome information for 2025/26 as a basis for the discussion and the research information on a range of night shelter options. All the services were prioritised using the MoSCoW method (Must, Should, Could, Won't).
- 2.5 The table below shows the services that were provided and spend during 2025/26 on supporting rough sleepers in the borough, both on the street and in accommodation. Due to changes in grant conditions, we cannot directly provide standalone TA but we can provide supported housing with this grant.

Summary of spending and provision 2025/26

Category	Amount (£)
Staff	153,629
Queenborough Road	44,264
Temp Accommodation	159,301
Housing First	127,260
The Quays	183,764
Rent in advance / deposits	37,896
TOTAL	706,114

Numbers of verified Rough Sleepers 2025/26



2.6 HHC committee had asked officers to explore the introduction of a night shelter in Swale to support rough sleepers during the winter months. Extensive research had taken place by the Community and Partnership team in conjunction with the VCSE and delivery partners to review delivery options available for a night shelter. All options would require a large volunteer base, would cost in the region of £157k and operate for approx. 4 months of the year on a 7 night a week basis. The occupancy was around 8 – 10 bed spaces per night.

2.7 The operating models explored and considered are shown in the table below.

Option	Summary	Outcome
Rotating church model	Churches host on rotation	Not viable locally due to limited engagement from enough churches and resource intensity required to set-up each evening.
St Michael's shelter	Male-only, 8–10 capacity	Good engagement from the Church, concerns were raised by Police due to previous issues of street drinking and ASB in the vicinity of this location.
HMO model	Single building with rooms	Similar options are already in place with rough sleeper current service.
Village hall model	Partitioned shared space	Not preferred due to impact on existing provision used within halls and no suitable venue currently identified. Also concerns raised around overlap of existing uses and the needs to set up the shelter.

The Quays additional building	Use of existing site capacity	Most practical option if needed, subject to controls. Could potentially still be explored as part of work with Riverside. Further due diligence is required and funding identified.
Z-pods	Modular units	Feasibility study had previously been conducted. This would require capital investment and was out of scope for this current project.

- 2.8 The working group reviewed the current provision, costs and outcomes and alternative provision. The overall budget provided a significant constraint on what provision could be put in place and the balance between enhancing and changing existing provision to introducing a new scheme such as a night shelter that would provide limited spaces for the cohort. The working group therefore concluded that it would have better outcomes and more impact to enhance and amend current provision, rather than establish new services at the current time.
- 2.9 The table below shows the options considered, funding allocation and rationale for service provision.

Service Option	Allocation	Description	Rationale
Outreach team	£156k	This is the core team of the manager and 2.5FTE and provide support to those on the streets and oversee clients in the service.	Core engagement and support at first point of contact. Viewed as essential core part of the service.
Queenborough Road and Support Team*	£134k	This is a small 8 bed scheme that provides intensive support to clients. The support team staff will also support those in TA and HMOs.	Proven effective model with excellent outcomes for those who have been through the scheme. The bed spaces are similar to those that could be offered in a night shelter and is enhanced model of the HMO night shelter model that was considered.
The Quays (Continue current service offer)	£0 – Funded The Quays+ instead	An 84-bed supported housing hostel that provides 24 hour support to their clients.	The scheme has limited support staff which directly impacts on the outcomes that can be achieved. An enhanced model has been provided as an

			option to improve outcomes.
The Quays +	£266k	An enhanced model that would separate the current scheme and create 2 specialist areas one as a recovery area and another for complex cases, providing additional support and enhanced pathways.	By increasing investment in the existing scheme, it will enable more direct support to clients, this would provide better value for money. With increased outcomes and move on, this would also support the statutory services as it is also a good prevention pathway to prevent individuals having to rough sleep in the first place.
TA & HMOs *	£80k	A small budget to provide accommodation outside of main schemes, these clients will also be supported by the support team.	Flexibility to manage seasonal demand and meet individual needs.
Housing First transition	£44k	Funding towards services that support existing housing first clients, to ensure resilience and access this function will form part of the wider support team functions.	Support existing clients on housing first to have long-term support.
Rent in advance	£40k	A small budget to support the move on pathway for this cohort.	Assists with overcoming the financial barriers of accessing private rented accommodation for this cohort.
Night shelter	£0 Not Funded	To create a new night shelter provision in Sittingbourne.	This was agreed not to progress and focus on existing provision. The provision of a range of supported housing options

			provides longer-term support once the service is accessed.
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- 2.10 One of the main benefits of a night shelter that has not been addressed with the agreed service provision, is the wider approach the at the VCSE can provide to engaging with rough sleepers and offering a base for multi-agency support in a more informal setting. To address this a bid has been submitted to MHCLG to the Ending Homelessness in Community Fund, for a day centre. A day centre will offer a multi-agency service, as well as a relaxed safe space for individuals to attend. (provided food, support, advice and friendship). Citizens Advice have led on the bid in conjunction with Forward Trust and Riverside. Unfortunately, we have just had confirmation that the bid was unsuccessful, consideration is now being given to other ways to establish this work.
- 2.11 The working group also requested that with a significant increase in funding to Riverside to provide an enhanced offer at The Quays, they would like a Scrutiny Overview towards the end of this civic year. Therefore, it is recommended that Riverside is invited to a future HHC Committee meeting.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Note the outcomes of the member working group.
- 3.2 To invite Riverside to a future meeting to scrutinise the implementation and impact of The Quays + model.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 These were considered by the working group.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The proposals have been compiled in conjunction with partners and the rough sleeper team and presented to the working group.

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 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	None identified at this stage.
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

[Winter Shelter for Rough Sleepers Committee Report April 2026](#)