

EXECUTIVE 14th July 2022

Report Title	Rough Sleeping Initiative Programme 2022-2025
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Lead Member	Councillor Matthew Binley, Executive Member for Housing, Communities and Levelling Up

Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To brief the Executive on the Rough Sleeping Initiative 2022-2025 (RSI5) grant award and to seek approval to deliver the programme of activities detailed in the original funding bid.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The approach to addressing rough sleeping in North Northamptonshire is one that recognises the need for a robust and multi-disciplinary service that is designed around the needs of the individual. Significant progress was made by the Council during 2021/22 in reducing levels of rough sleeping through the provision of accommodation and support which was made possible by Government funding provided via the Rough Sleeping Initiative 2021/22 programme.

- 2.2. Following a bid to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in February 2022, North Northamptonshire Council has been successful in securing £2,185,085 of revenue funding for a three-year period 2022-2025 under the Rough Sleeping Initiative programme. The funding period provides more certainty in the medium term as the Council develops its Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. The funding award was announced under embargo on 19th May 2022.
- 2.3. Alongside a £115,000 Rough Sleeper Intervention Fund to allow for creative resolutions to rough sleeping, the funding will be utilised to continue and increase staff capacity dedicated to supporting rough sleepers to access and sustain accommodation and related support (£1,368,015). It will also be used to ensure the continued financial viability of, and potentially expand through recommissioning, the delivery of supported accommodation options for rough sleepers (£702,070).

3. Recommendations

3.1. It is recommended that the Executive:

- (a) Approves the allocated spend of the Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding 2022-2025 as detailed in paragraph 4.21 (figure 8) of the report
- (b) Notes the detail of how the allocated funding will be spent as set out from 4.22 to 4.36 of the report
- (c) Delegates authority to the Executive Member for Housing, Communities and Levelling Up, in liaison with the Executive Director for Adults, Communities and Wellbeing, to take any further decisions and actions required to enable delivery of the Rough Sleeping Initiative programme

3.2. Reasons for Recommendations:

- To ensure that the Council and its partners can sustain and build upon the success to date in reducing rough sleeping and supporting individuals experiencing rough sleeping
- To safeguard this vulnerable cohort of adults who are often experiencing multiple exclusion homelessness

3.3. Alternative Options Considered:

- To not submit a funding application to the Rough Sleeping Initiative programme 2022-2025
- To submit a funding application to the Rough Sleeping Initiative programme 2022-2025 that included a different schedule of activities and proposals

4. Report Background

- 4.1. The primary homelessness legislation is Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and this provides the statutory under-pinning for action to prevent homelessness and provide assistance to people threatened with or actually homeless. The primary legislation has been amended most notably by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 4.2. Under Section 175 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) a person is homeless:
- If they have no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere which is available for their occupation and which that person has a legal right to occupy, or;
 - If they have accommodation but cannot secure entry to it, or;
 - If their accommodation is a moveable structure, vehicle or vessel designed or adapted for human habitation and there is nowhere it can lawfully be placed in order to provide accommodation, or;
 - If a person has accommodation where it would not be reasonable for them to continue to occupy that accommodation.

Under section 175(4), a person is 'threatened with homelessness' if they are likely to become homeless within 56 days.

- 4.3. The Council owes statutory accommodation duties (both interim and settled) to many homeless households but not all. Some homeless households may be ineligible for assistance due to their immigration status. Whilst the Council has a duty to support all eligible homeless households in their efforts to prevent and relieve homelessness, the safety net of accommodation duties are not owed to everyone. Those households that do not meet one of the priority need categories as set out in Section 189(1) and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 are not always owed interim and/or settled accommodation duties. Some households found to be intentionally homeless may also not be owed a settled accommodation duty. The legislative framework, along with a myriad of other factors (e.g. supply of accommodation, personal social circumstances), means that unfortunately some homeless customers resort to rough sleeping.
- 4.4. Rough sleeping is the most visible and acute form of homelessness. The rough sleeping cohort in North Northamptonshire forms a small proportion of the Council's overall caseload of homeless customers. The Housing Options team had a total caseload of 1011 homeless households at the end of May 2022. By comparison there were 11 individuals sleeping rough on any given night at the end of May, and 35 different individuals known to have slept rough during May. Whilst accommodation duties are not owed to the majority of rough sleepers, the Council has discretionary accommodation powers to support this cohort away from the streets. These powers have been exercised since March 2020 since the Covid 19 pandemic and sections 4.9 – 4.10 provide more detail in this regard. The council was temporarily accommodating 40 former rough sleepers as of 7th June 2022 and many more have been supported by our Rough Sleeping Service into settled housing solutions since this time.

- 4.5. In August 2018, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published its national Rough Sleeping Strategy and delivery plan which set out how the Government intended to help homeless people who were sleeping rough, and to put in place the structures needed to end rough sleeping for good. The vision of the original strategy was to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it completely by 2027. A subsequent commitment in December 2019 was made by the Government to end rough sleeping by the end of Parliament in 2024. A review of the national Rough Sleeping Strategy was announced in 2020 to take account of lessons learnt from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.6. The Rough Sleeping Initiative programme, originally launched in March 2018, is a related cross-government plan of action to significantly reduce the number of people sleeping rough. A targeted £30m fund was made available in 2018/19 to 83 local authorities with the highest levels of rough sleeping which did not include any of the sovereign councils of North Northamptonshire. £45m was made available for 2019/20 of which £11m was for areas outside of the 83 previously targeted local authorities enabling some sovereign councils in North Northamptonshire to submit bids. Figure 1 shows the RSI allocations across North Northamptonshire since the sovereign councils were able to bid in 2019/20, and also provides the annual breakdown of the £2,185,085 funding award for the next three years.
- 4.7. The Rough Sleeping Initiative programme for 2022-2025 is known as RSI5, being the fifth year that funding has been made available. Between November 2021 and February 2022, council officers, key partners and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) co-produced a funding application for RSI5. An award of **£2,185,085** for 2022-25 was communicated under embargo on 19th May 2022 but had not yet been publicly announced by DLUHC at the time of writing this report. The embargo is expected to be lifted at some point during July 2022.

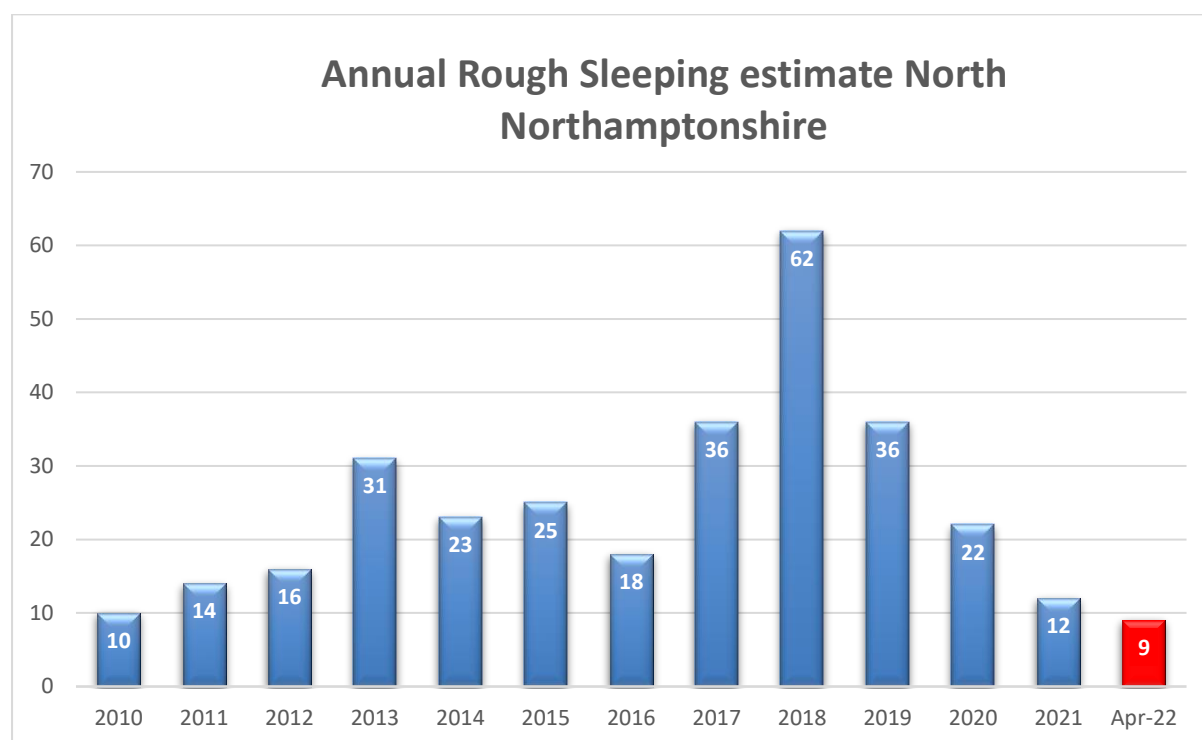
Figure 1: **Rough Sleeping Initiative funding allocations for North Northamptonshire**

	RSI2	RSI3	RSI4	RSI5		
Council	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Corby Borough Council	£122,000	£113,000				
East Northants District Council	£0	£48,494				
Kettering Borough Council	£62,000	£114,191				
Borough Council of Wellingborough	£5,000	£211,000				
North Northamptonshire	£189,000	£486,685	£737,283	£760,960	£744,550	£679,575

Source: Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

- 4.8. RSI grant funding since 2019 has enabled North Northamptonshire Council (and formerly the sovereign councils within North Northants) to significantly reduce levels of rough sleeping. Figure 2 shows the annual mandatory Government returns for nightly snapshot counts and estimates since 2010 and demonstrates a consistent reduction over the past 3 years, achieving the lowest levels of rough sleeping in a decade.

Figure 2: **Annual single night snapshot returns of levels of rough sleeping in North Northamptonshire 2010 - 2021**

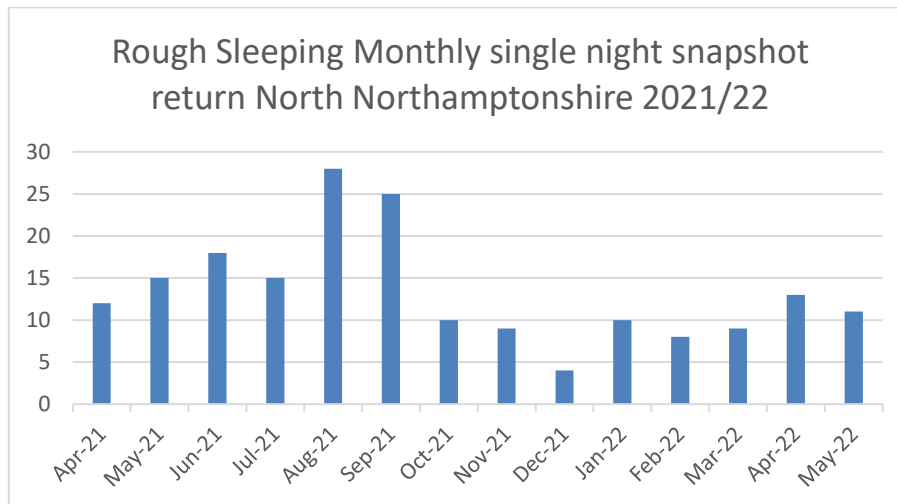


Source: Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

- 4.9. On 26th March 2020, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government announced the 'Everyone In' initiative and instructed local housing authorities to provide accommodation for rough sleepers and put in place measures so that they could safely self-isolate. As well as finding accommodation for people sleeping in the open, it was also necessary to offer accommodation to people using night shelters where guests shared sleeping spaces and basic amenities.
- 4.10. North Northamptonshire Council has continued to exercise discretionary temporary accommodation powers to those genuinely experiencing rough sleeping or at genuine risk of rough sleeping. The Council has increased the supply of supported emergency accommodation to meet demand in the form of S&H in Wellingborough (the former Euro Hotel) discussed at Executive on 16th December 2021 and 19th May 2022.
- 4.11. Figure 3 shows the monthly snapshot data of the number of individuals bedded down outside on a single night towards the end of each month since vesting day. It should be noted that the monthly snapshot and monthly total figures (in

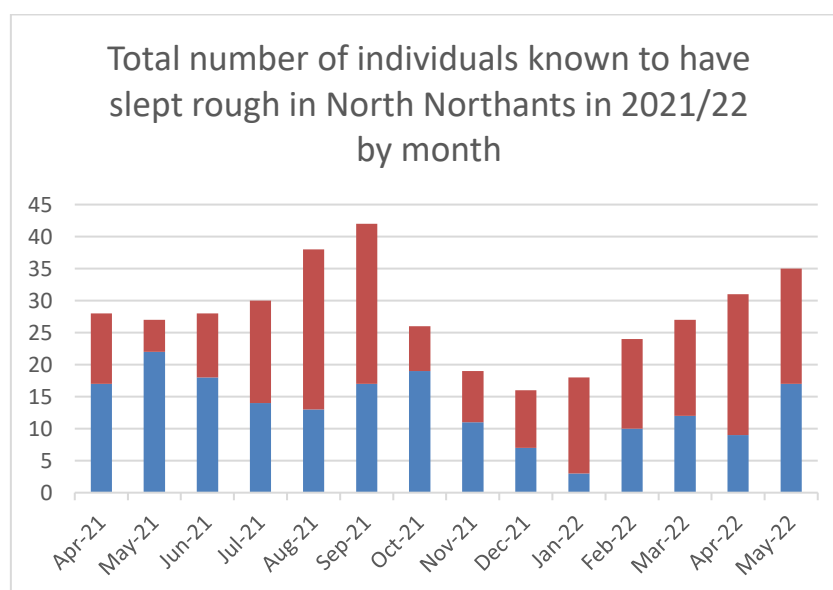
figure 4) will include some individuals being reported more than once, and some individuals who have only been seen bedded down once and who have not required any support from the Rough Sleeping Team.

Figure 3: **Monthly Rough Sleeping single night snapshot data since 1st April 2021**



4.12. Figure 4 shows the total number of rough sleepers known to have slept rough in North Northamptonshire since vesting day for at least one night during each month. Those in red are individuals new to rough sleeping that month and evidence an increasing high flow of new rough sleepers to the streets locally. There is a clear need to enhance prevention activity against the main routes of homelessness to the streets.

Figure 4: **Total individuals known to have slept rough during each month since 1st April 2021**



4.13. So far during the 2022 calendar year the team have seen a particularly high flow of new rough sleepers. External factors such as the rising cost of living, increasing rents and benefits caps are beginning to manifest in an increased demand for homelessness and rough sleeping services. More detailed analysis has been undertaken on the circumstances and causes of homelessness for this cohort between January and March 2022 during which time there were 64 unique individuals recorded as verified rough sleepers. Of these 64 individuals the reasons for homelessness were as follows:

- Eviction from rented accommodation – 26
- Relationship breakdown – 21
- Unknown / transient / passing through area – 13
- Leaving prison – 2
- Had accommodation available – 2

The increase in evictions from rented accommodation is thought to be, at least in part, to the ending of the eviction moratorium.

4.14. Figures 5 and 6 show some demographic data taken from the Rough Sleeping team's caseload of 130 individuals found to be rough sleeping and who have been supported during 2021/22. The charts provide age and nationality breakdown by gender. Some data (particularly around age) is unknown as our cohort of rough sleepers contain individuals who are difficult to engage. Some individuals are reluctant to provide personal details particularly in the initial stages of contact and it takes time to build trust and establish such personal information. Some may have involvement with the criminal justice system and fear being located; others fear immigration intervention. For some transient rough sleepers, such information is never able to be obtained before they have moved on to another geographical area.

Figure 5: **2021/22 Rough Sleeping cohort by age and gender**

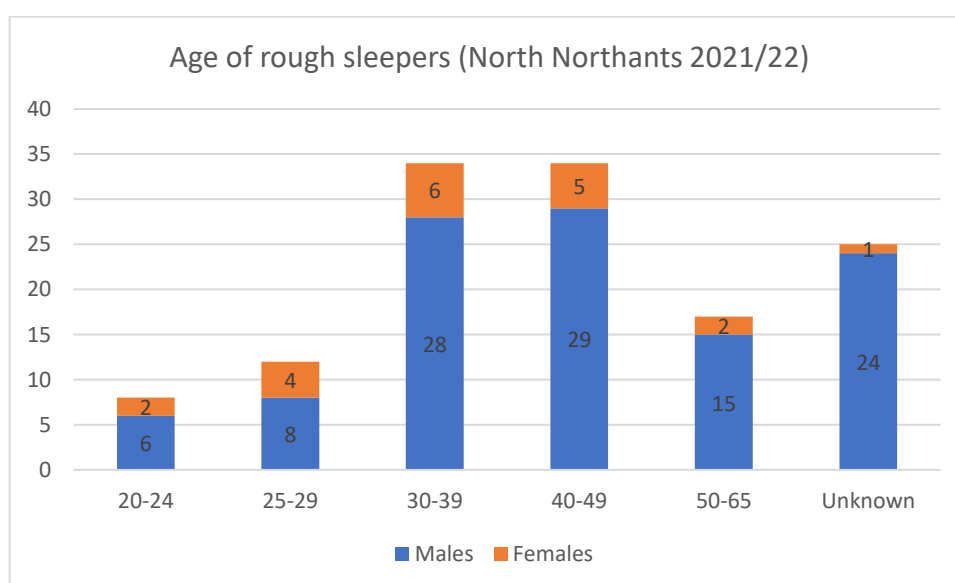
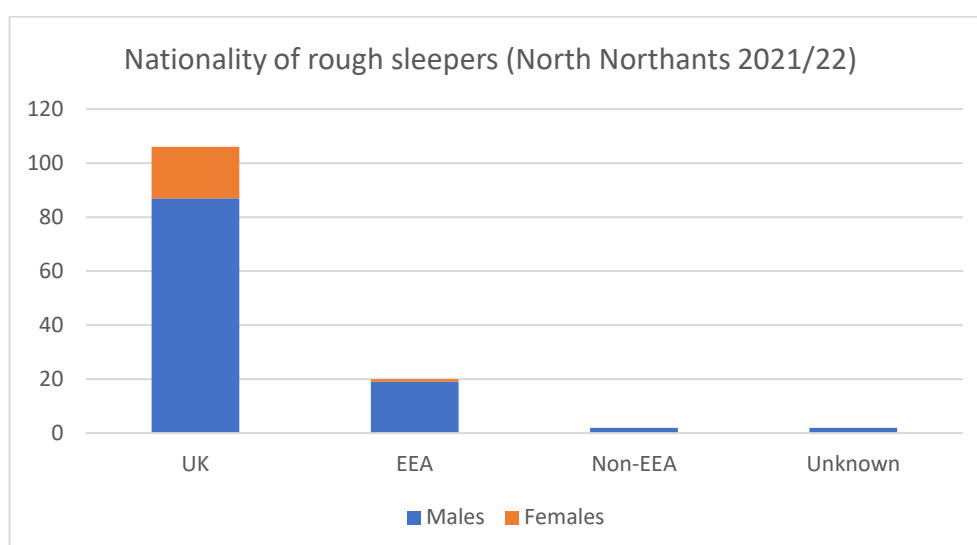


Figure 6: **2021/22 Rough Sleeping cohort by nationality and gender**



- 4.15. Figures 5 and 6 show that 20 of the 130 individuals supported by the team were female. This equates to 15% and falls in line with nationally reported data with the official government snapshot statistics on rough sleeping from autumn 2021 reporting that 13% of reported rough sleepers were female. Figure 5 shows that almost two thirds of rough sleepers supported in North Northamptonshire during 2021/22 are aged 30 or above and that predominantly the cohort are UK nationals accounting for 82% of the 130 rough sleepers supported.
- 4.16. The RSI5 funding application consisted of three parts:
- a) a detailed Rough Sleeping self-assessment
 - b) an application form
 - c) a high-level project plan
- 4.17. Several partners were consulted as part of the self-assessment process to ensure a comprehensive and balanced submission that captured the views and experiences of a wide variety of stakeholders. This is in recognition of the fact that addressing rough sleeping relies on a successful partnership effort within the community. The self-assessment process and bid consultation formed part of the agenda of the inaugural meeting of the North Northamptonshire Homelessness Forum held in January 2022, at which time the following organisations had signed up as members and had the opportunity to participate in facilitated breakout groups:

Figure 7: Stakeholders who were members of the North Northamptonshire Homelessness Forum in January 2022



- 4.18. The self-assessment process involved assessing the Council's current rough sleeping response against four key objectives that should be in place to tackle rough sleeping effectively, namely:
- **Prevention** - Activities to stop people sleeping rough for the first time
 - **Intervention** - Support for those currently sleeping rough to move off the streets
 - **Recovery** - Support for those who have slept rough to ensure they do not return to the streets
 - **Systems Support** - Systems and structures to embed change and monitor progress
- 4.19. The self-assessment process identified that the most established and effective aspect of the Council's rough sleeping services was in relation to the Intervention objective where partners highlighted the effectiveness of the Council's Rough Sleeping Team. The weakest aspect requiring development was in relation to the Prevention objective and therefore this is a focus of the proposed RSI5 activities.
- 4.20. The RSI5 application and project plan were shaped following this feedback, considering aspects of the Council's current Rough Sleeping service that were felt to be effective and where partners felt there were gaps or aspects that needed improving. Results of this self-assessment also helped to shape the final application which was co-produced with the Council's assigned Specialist Rough Sleeping Advisor from DLUHC.

- 4.21. Figure 8 shows North Northamptonshire Council's Rough Sleeping Initiative allocation for 2022-2025 broken down by proposed activity with sections 4.18 – 4.31 providing additional detail on each element.

Figure 8: North Northamptonshire Council Rough Sleeping Initiative grant 2022-25 by activity

RSI Activity	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
Complex Needs Navigation Service (Existing: maintain)	£0	£41,200	£42,400	£83,600
Rough Sleeping Outreach and In-reach Service (Existing: expand)	£397,090	£383,350	£345,975	£1,126,415
RSI Strategy and Partnerships function (New)	£68,000	£45,000	£45,000	£158,000
Housing First Dispersed Accommodation (6 units) (Existing: maintain)	£23,870	£25,000	£26,200	£75,070
Supported Emergency / Off the Street accommodation (Existing: maintain and review)	£100,000	£95,000	£90,000	£285,000
Supported medium term accommodation (Existing: maintain and review)	£127,000	£115,000	£100,000	£342,000
Rough Sleeping Intervention Fund (Existing: maintain)	£45,000	£40,000	£30,000	£115,000
TOTAL	£760,960	£744,550	£679,575	£2,185,085

- 4.22. The Complex Needs Navigator service aims to ensure that our Rough Sleeping cohort can more easily navigate between Health and Housing pathways. The service helps to facilitate and enable timely access to services and treatment to support rough sleepers with their mental health, drug and alcohol and physical health needs, and ensure that agencies are linked and effectively working together to resolve these collaboratively.
- 4.23. This service is currently hosted in the third sector by the Daylight Centre Fellowship based in Wellingborough following their successful selection via Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's (NHFT's) Mental Health Northants Collaboration Panel. Delayed mobilisation of this service due to recruitment issues in 2021/22 means that no additional funding is required during 2022/23. Officers from the Council, Change Grow Live, and NHFT are working collaboratively to embed this new service to ensure its success.
- 4.24. The most significant proportion of the RSI5 funding is available to expand capacity within the Council's frontline Rough Sleeping outreach and in-reach service. During consultation, partners agreed that the existing Rough Sleeping service, led by the Council's Rough Sleeper Coordinator, was essential moving forward and have recognised the positive impact that the team is having on levels of rough sleeping in North Northamptonshire. A self-assessment highlights that intervention services, led by this team are the strongest aspect

of the Council's wider rough sleeping services currently. Partners were keen to expand the Council's capacity to provide floating support to maximise chances of tenancy sustainment across all tenures to prevent rough sleeping, so this was built into the bid.

- 4.25. The current team of generic Rough Sleeper Workers across the unitary area whose role includes both outreach work and in-reach housing support, creates resilience within the Rough Sleeping Service. The flexibility of the roles enables the Council to respond quickly to peaks in demand across different localities. The 2022-2025 RSI5 award will enable the Council to increase staff resources within this service by three additional officers which will allow for the Council to shift more capacity upstream and allocate more resources to prevention activities over time once rough sleeping figures are sustained at a low level.
- 4.26. The funding request for an RSI Strategy and Partnerships function was submitted following feedback from stakeholders who communicated a strong request to ensure that there was adequate project support focused on building and sustaining effective partnerships to collaboratively tackle rough sleeping.
- 4.27. In any area of the housing service, maintaining effective partnerships and relationships with partners and service users is essential to ensure that there is seamless service delivery and efficient use of resources, but is also time intensive. This is particularly the case regarding rough sleeping due to its visibility and the volume of partners across the whole unitary area who are keen to support this cohort. The new function will ensure ongoing, proactive, and regular investment into partners working with rough sleepers and rough sleepers themselves, by building links, aiding understanding and navigation of existing services, maximising homeless prevention opportunities and opportunities for joint working, and ensuring effective information sharing and communication.
- 4.28. The increased grant requirement for the RSI Strategy and Partnerships function in 2022/23 takes account of the fact that a temporary officer will need to be appointed pending the process to recruit a fixed-term employee.
- 4.29. The Housing First Dispersed Accommodation Project has been delivered in Kettering by Accommodation Concern since 2020/21. It provides six dispersed units of self-contained supported accommodation for rough sleepers with high and complex needs. Accommodation Concern lease the six units of council accommodation and their staff deliver the intensive support and housing management services to the occupants. The project has achieved sustainable housing outcomes for some of the Council's most entrenched rough sleepers and partners felt that this service remained a vital part of the Council's overall rough sleeping pathway.
- 4.30. The Supported Emergency ("off the street") accommodation element of the grant relates in the short term to S&H (the former Euro Hotel) which provides 17 rooms of accommodation. Since being opened on 20th December 2021, this model of accommodation has proved successful in stabilising and safeguarding many vulnerable rough sleepers, providing emergency accommodation whilst our Rough Sleeping team build trust, engage and explore more settled housing

and support solutions with the service users. It has also provided flexible surge capacity for example, during periods of high new flow of rough sleepers and during periods of extreme weather. It is a vital first step in our rough sleeping pathway. Further to approval at Executive on 19th May, the Council continues to spot-purchase rooms at this scheme from the third-party provider pending a formal Dynamic Purchasing System procurement process due to launch in the autumn of 2022.

- 4.31. Half of the rooms at S&H are typically occupied by former rough sleepers under discretionary accommodation powers with the other half utilised to discharge the council's statutory interim accommodation duties to other vulnerable homeless individuals. The RSI5 funding allows for this type of provision with full time support, twice daily welfare checks on all guests, and 24/7 security, to continue for the rough sleeper cohort on a nightly paid basis for up to 18 months (by end September 2023) to enable time for the Council to recommission such provision and seek better value for money and sustainability in the medium term.
- 4.32. The Supported medium-term accommodation component of the RSI bid currently relates to funding for Encompass (formerly East Northants Community Services) to continue to provide 15 bedspaces of supported housing at Dorking House in Corby (9 rooms), and the Rushden Homeless Accommodation (6 bedspaces). The schemes provide short-medium term supported housing usually for periods between 3 – 18 months for service users on our Rough Sleeping pathway and have turnover which allows for some direct 'off-the-street' emergency placements.
- 4.33. The RSI5 funding allows for the Council to continue with the two existing schemes during 2022/23 during which time we aim to holistically review our rough sleeping pathway and seek to recommission the minimum 15 bedspaces.
- 4.34. Of relevance to the overall rough sleeping accommodation pathway in North Northamptonshire is the Council's delivery of the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) discussed by the Executive on 18th November 2021. This provides capital funding to purchase ten self-contained one-bedroom properties for rough sleepers with complex / high needs and revenue funding until 2024 for the associated floating support. Delivery is on track to have purchases completed by December 2022. The location and delivery timescales of the RSAP units may influence the Council requirements in terms of the type and location of additional supported accommodation for rough sleepers from 2023/24. The grant conditions allow for flexibility in this regard and for the Council to commission based on trends and demand.
- 4.35. The Rough Sleeping Intervention fund is a flexible budget that helps to facilitate engagement with rough sleepers, prevent and relieve rough sleeping and fund any other activity that has a positive impact on the sustainability of housing solutions for rough sleepers. It can also be used by the rough sleeping team to support our cohort's aspirations and facilitate sustainable positive change, for example around education and training. A procedural framework already exists which sets out how the fund can be utilised and how it sits within the wider toolkit of homelessness prevention activities. The frameworks allow for

significant flexibility and creativity in response to, and in recognition of, the unique and personal needs of every individual.

- 4.36. The Council's RSI5 programme in its entirety aims to assist 200 individuals experiencing (or at risk of experiencing) rough sleeping each year.
- 4.37. Regular monitoring of the impact of the proposed activities will be undertaken and it is recognised that minor changes may be necessary through the three-year programme which will be required to be agreed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

5. Issues and Choices

5.1 The Executive therefore has the following choices:

- (a) Approve the proposed activities detailed in the North Northamptonshire Council Rough Sleeping Initiative 2022-2025 bid and described in this report which have attracted revenue funding of £2,185,085 over three years to enable the Council to build on achievements in reducing rough sleeping
- (b) Do nothing. Should the Council fail to implement the grant funded activities, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities would claw back any unspent grant resulting in a loss of services for rough sleepers in North Northamptonshire.

6 Next Steps

- 6.1 Subject to approval from the Executive, an action plan has been devised setting out the necessary next steps to progress delivery of the RSI5 programme.

7 Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1 Successful prevention or relief of rough sleeping creates savings to the public purse.
- 7.1.2 The RSI5 revenue grant allocation of £2,185,085 is detailed in section 4.21 (figure 8) and available in the background paper at section 8.1. The grant funding is ring-fenced for the sole purpose of providing specified Rough Sleeping Initiative services and the allocation will be made in two tranche payments per annum. The background paper at 8.1 provides more detail in this regard.
- 7.1.3 RSI4 (2021/22) underspend will be deducted from the Tranche 1 grant payment. For North Northamptonshire Council the RSI4 2021/22 underspend

returned to DLUHC at the end of June 2022 was £31,830 due to recruitment difficulties associated with some posts.

7.1.4 There are potential implications for existing RSI-funded staff who were on fixed term contracts until the end of June 2022 pending the RSI5 award being announced. Prior to the contracts of officers in the Rough Sleeping team being extended until end March 2025, a project of harmonisation of job descriptions, pay and terms and conditions has been proposed. The existing team consists of eight officers (including two temporary staff). As the team has evolved, and due to recruitment issues, two officers are undertaking additional responsibilities. There are multiple variations of job descriptions in place for officers conducting similar roles and also disparity in terms and conditions. The three-year RSI5 funding settlement provides an opportunity to harmonise, re-evaluate and formalise roles within the team. Due process will be adhered to in relation to staff consultation and no existing establishment officers will be in a redundancy situation. There is adequate funding to retain existing staff and recruit to 6.3 full time equivalent additional fixed-term posts.

7.1.5 The RSI5 grant funding is time limited and all posts funded by the grant will be provided on fixed term contracts due to end on 31st March 2025. The exit strategy in relation to RSI funded employees has been considered. If RSI revenue funding is not made available from 2025/26, staff who have been undertaking the role continuously for more than two years can qualify for redundancy. Staff who have been employed continuously for more than four years are able to request to be made a permanent member of staff.

7.2 Legal and Governance

7.2.1 The proposal and grant funding will aid the Council to meet its statutory duties to prevent and relieve homelessness as set out in Part 7 Housing Act 1996 as amended (including Homelessness Reduction Act 2017).

7.2.2 Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) prescribes Local Authorities' duties to homeless households. Some eligible rough sleepers with vulnerabilities who satisfy a 'priority need' threshold, trigger temporary accommodation duties under Section 188(1) of the Act. Many rough sleepers, however, have no recourse to public funds or do not meet this vulnerability threshold to trigger the Council's interim accommodation duties. Activity since the 'Everyone In' request to secure accommodation for this cohort has therefore been undertaken by utilising discretionary powers to accommodate rough sleepers which are provided by:

- Relief Duty section 189B and section 205(3) of the Housing Act 1996;
- Section 1 Localism Act 2011;
- Section 138 of the Local Government Act 1972;
- Section 2B of the NHS Act 2006

7.3 Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1 The recommended proposals in this report link closely to the Council's key commitments in the Corporate Plan.
- 7.3.2 With regards to the corporate priority of 'Active, fulfilled lives', the proposal is consistent with the stated corporate aim of ensuring the right services are available at the right time and place, and that the root causes of complex issues such as homelessness are tackled. The proposed RSI5 programme for North Northamptonshire not only allows for increased safeguarding opportunities through timely intervention and enables individuals' support needs to be met but also aims to turn the tide from a responsive to a more preventative service.
- 7.3.3 The proposal also meets the corporate priority of 'Safe and Thriving Places' through helping to ensure that housing supply meets demand, and through tackling the causes of difficult issues such as rough sleeping, that can lead to nuisance, crime and anti-social behaviour
- 7.3.4 Another relevant plan will be the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for North Northamptonshire which will be developed during 2022/23. A partnership event is being planned for September 2022 in this regard.

7.4 Risk

- 7.4.1 If the Executive do not approve the recommendations the Council's current rough sleeping service will be at risk as will the opportunity to build upon achievements to date. Our aspirations to become a more preventative service will be compromised likely to lead to increased financial and human costs associated with this most acute form of homelessness crisis.
- 7.4.2 A further significant risk is that the Council may not be able to provide safe accommodation and related support to meet the demand from individuals experiencing rough sleeping. This would compromise our ability to safeguard vulnerable homeless adults and prevent harm caused by rough sleeping. Many studies have found strong correlations between homelessness and a multiplicity, and increased severity, of both physical and mental health conditions.

7.5 Consultation

- 7.5.1 A variety of statutory and voluntary sector partners with an interest in homelessness matters attended our inaugural North Northants Homeless Forum meeting in January 2022. At this meeting, all partners had the opportunity to contribute to the Council's self-assessment of existing rough sleeping services and help to shape the Rough Sleeping Initiative 2022-25 bid, through highlighting what works well, and where the gaps are. Sections 4.13 to 4.15 of this report provide further information.

7.5.2 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities specialist Rough Sleeping Advisor helped officers to co-produce the Rough Sleeping Initiative funding bid.

7.5.3 Existing contracted providers of RSI4 activities were consulted in the production of the RSI5 bid.

7.6 Consideration by Executive Advisory Panel

7.6.1 This report was taken to the Executive Advisory Panel for Health, Wellbeing and Vulnerable People on 1st July. Members were unanimously supportive of the proposed strategy. Specific points raised included:

- Full support for a more prevention focused Rough Sleeping service in recognition of the fact that there is a high turnover of new rough sleepers. More recent data was shared that showed 28 different individuals known to have slept rough in June of whom 14 were new to rough sleeping that month. The Rough Sleeping team, supported by partner agencies, assisted 11 rough sleepers into accommodation in the same month (settled and temporary solutions).
- Recognition that some rough sleepers identified on nightly snapshot counts have accommodation available to them with 3 of the 12 individuals identified sleeping rough on a given night at the end of June having accommodation.
- The need for robust operational procedures and careful decision making on an individual basis to ensure the best chance of success in assisting the rough sleeping cohort with their accommodation needs.
- The need for a strategy to increase the supply of accommodation for those experiencing rough sleeping. A Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy is being developed in 2022/23 and the capital grant funding received via the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) will enable to acquisition of 10 new units for this client group in 2022.

7.7 Consideration by Scrutiny

7.7.1 Operational or financial delivery of the RSI5 programme may be selected for consideration by Scrutiny.

7.8 Equality Implications

7.8.1 A full Equalities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken but it is unlikely that implementation of the activities associated with the RSI5 grant funding will negatively impact any protected groups. To mitigate any risk in this regard, it is proposed that service users and community groups are consulted via the North

Northamptonshire Homelessness Forum. The Council's RSI5 bid aspires to increase levels of service user engagement in the development of rough sleeping services and learn from those with lived experience.

- 7.8.2 The implementation of the grant funding is likely to have a positive impact on groups that share protected characteristics by helping to protect the health of the rough sleeping cohort and facilitating movement through the Council's rough sleeping pathway resulting in increased capacity to meet new demand.

7.9 Climate Impact

- 7.9.1 The Council will work continuously with providers to ensure that any services commissioned as part of the RSI5 grant maximises the use of technology and exploits service innovations that support the Council's commitment for a greener environment.

7.10 Community Impact

- 7.10.1 The recommended programme of activity will ensure that the Council is able to further enhance its rough sleeping offer and thus safeguard vulnerable individuals.
- 7.10.2 There are wider community benefits associated with an effective rough sleeping service and specifically with the proposed RSI Strategy and Partnerships officer. This role would help to coordinate the charitable efforts of many third sector partners and community groups to ensure a seamless rough sleeping pathway that avoids duplication of resources, and which strives to deliver towards the shared aims which will be agreed within the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy.

7.11 Crime and Disorder Impact

- 7.11.1 There are wider positive impacts associated with a reduction in rough sleeping which, whilst fundamentally and most visibly a housing issue, is also closely interlinked with begging and street drinking, as well as other antisocial behaviour and crime which impacts on local businesses and the local economy.

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 Rough Sleeping Initiative Award Letter 2022-2025
- 8.2 Executive Report 16th December 2021 – [Link](#)
- 8.3 Executive Report 19th May 2022 - [Link](#)