

Report to the Council Executive 5th August 2021

Report Title	Rough Sleeping Initiative	
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List of Appendices

Appendix A – North Northamptonshire Council RSI Year 4 final allocation letter

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To seek the Committee's endorsement of the approach being taken to reduce the number of people sleeping rough across North Northamptonshire and to brief members on the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) allocation for 2021/22 and the programme of activities that are being delivered under the initiative.

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. North Northamptonshire Council has been allocated £737,283 for rough sleeping initiatives in 2021/22. This funding will be utilised to increase staff capacity dedicated to supporting rough sleepers to access accommodation and related support (£631,633) and increase accommodation options for rough sleepers (£95,000) alongside other activities detailed in the report.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Executive:
- a) Endorses the approach and approves the associated spend, being taken to reduce the number of people sleeping rough across North Northamptonshire.

b) Notes the MHCLG allocation for 2021/22 and the programme of activities that are being delivered under the Government’s Rough Sleeping Initiative across North Northamptonshire

3.2 The programme of activities being delivered under the RSI is proving effective in reducing the number of homeless people sleeping rough in North Northamptonshire.

4. Report Background

4.1 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 strategy is to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it completely by 2027.

4.2 The RSI, launched in March 2018 is a related cross-government plan of action to reduce significantly 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.

4.3 The RSI programme for 2021/22 is known as RSI4; being the fourth year that funding has been made available. In early March 2021, the sovereign councils of North Northamptonshire and MHCLG co-produced a North Northamptonshire application for RSI4. An award of **£737,283** for 2021/22 was publicly announced by MHCLG on 15th May.

Figure 1: RSI funding allocations for North Northamptonshire

Sovereign Council	RSI2 2019/20	RSI3 2020/21	RSI4 2021/22
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	

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

4.4 The £737,283 allocation for 2021/22 is combined with a £40,000 underspend carried forward from RSI3 initiatives to enable interventions during this financial year to the value of £777,283 to be delivered.

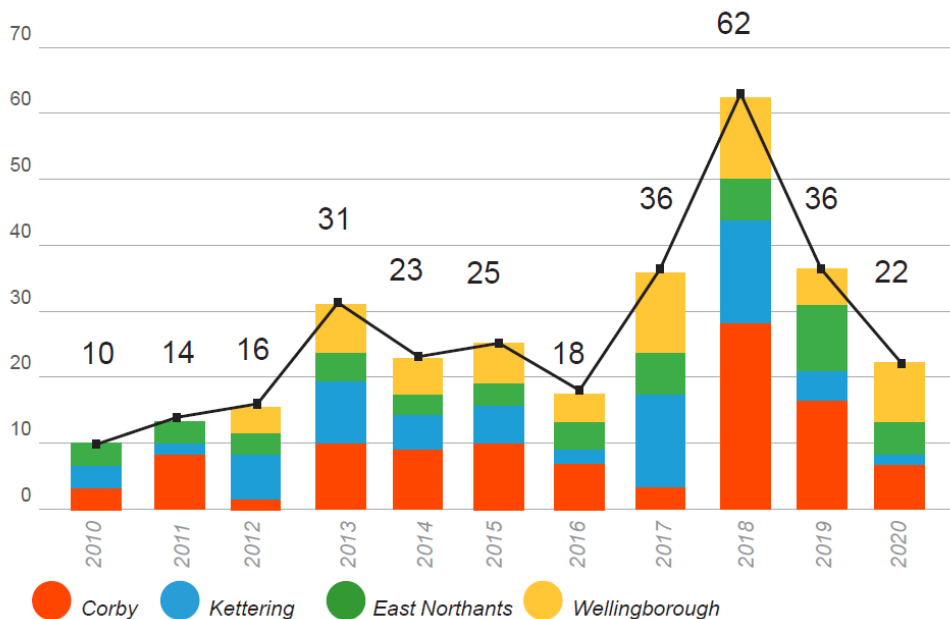
4.5 The sovereign councils of North Northamptonshire have made significant progress in reducing rough sleeping since 2018. 56% of homeless households in North Northamptonshire in 2019/20 were single people, often requiring

support with complex needs including health issues, drug / alcohol misuse issues and debt. Our rough sleeping community are often experiencing multiple exclusion homelessness and include some of our most socially excluded residents.

- 4.6 Since 2010 local authorities have been required to provide an annual snapshot figure of the number of rough sleepers bedded down on a single night in autumn. This figure must be derived via a count-based or evidence-based estimate involving partner agencies and is subject to a strict independent verification process. Figure 2 shows the annual snapshot figures for the sovereign councils of North Northamptonshire since 2010 and shows that 22 individuals were estimated to be sleeping rough across North Northamptonshire on a single night in November 2020. A more recent snapshot figure, taken on a single night at the end of April 2021 and reported to MHCLG as part of the RS14 funding requirements estimated 12 rough sleepers bedded down on a single night across North Northamptonshire.

Figure 2: Annual autumn snapshot rough sleeping returns from the sovereign councils of North Northamptonshire

Annual rough sleeping estimate in North Northamptonshire



Source: KBC, CBC, ENC and BCW rough sleeper counts 2010-2020

- 4.7 Of the 22 rough sleepers in Figure 3 that were reported in November 2020, basic demographic data is collected and shows that:
- Gender: 20 were male; 2 were female
 - Nationality: 16 were UK nationals; 5 were EU nationals; 1 was unknown
 - Age: all 22 rough sleepers were aged 26 years or older

During a more recent single night estimate at the end of May 2021 undertaken as part of the RS14 funding requirements, 15 rough sleepers were reported to be bedded down on a single night and of these, two were younger people aged under 25 years.

- 4.8 On 26 March 2020, 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 share sleeping spaces and basic amenities. By early April, the sovereign boroughs and districts had provided accommodation for the vast majority of rough sleepers with the only people remaining on the streets being those who had declined offers of accommodation.
- 4.9 By the end of April 2020, 76 rough sleepers had been provided with emergency accommodation and wraparound support by the North Northamptonshire sovereign authorities. Six months' later, by the end of October 2020, a total of 121 rough sleepers had been provided with emergency accommodation of which 42 had been assisted to move on into settled accommodation. In addition to those 121 rough sleepers provided with emergency housing, a further 53 rough sleepers or those at risk of sleeping rough had been assisted straight into settled housing to prevent or relieve their homelessness between April – October 2020.
- 4.10 A recent statistical return to MHCLG showed that there were 28 rough sleepers accommodated by NNC in emergency and short-term accommodation as at 31st May as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Of these 28 individuals, almost half are non-UK nationals. 15 are UK nationals, 12 are EEA nationals and 1 is a non-EEA national. 2 of the 28 individuals are young people aged under 25 years of which neither were care leavers.
- 4.11 Whilst a high number of rough sleepers have seen positive housing outcomes in the past year, there is a consistent 'flow' of new rough sleepers requiring support, not only with housing but also with health, addictions and more. Challenges faced by North Northamptonshire Council in eliminating rough sleeping and preventing homelessness amongst single people are:
- There is a consistent flow of new rough sleepers and a need to intervene quickly and robustly, even more so in the context of Covid-19
 - Entrenched / repeat rough sleepers with complex needs are difficult to secure sustainable housing solutions for
 - Those individuals with no recourse to public funds are particularly difficult to assist and require specialist interventions
- 4.12 In addition to the revenue funding opportunity to tackle rough sleeping provided by RSI, the Government also committed £433m between 2020-2024 to deliver 6,000 new units of supported housing towards ending rough sleeping. The 2021-2024 programme is known as the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) and makes available up to £140.9 million capital and £70.7 million revenue funding for authorities outside of Greater London to deliver over 2,700 new supported homes. Council officers are working with specialist advisors at MHCLG to co-produce an RSAP bid for 2021 requesting capital and revenue funding to deliver a project comprising ten additional units of supported housing in Wellingborough.

5 Issues and Choices

- 5.1 The allocation of £737,283 under RSI4 alongside the £40,000 underspend from RSI3, will enable North Northamptonshire Council to enhance its homelessness service for rough sleepers during 2021/22 and ensure that robust and timely housing and related support is available. The funding is allocated for specified activities, some of which are a continuation of RSI3 services delivered by the sovereign councils, and others which are new initiatives for North Northamptonshire Council.
- 5.2 An action plan has been devised to drive forward delivery of the RSI4 programme for North Northamptonshire Council. Figure 3 provides detail with regards to the various elements of the RSI4 activity that is currently being delivered or developed.
- 5.3 The individual activities set out in figure 3 complement the wider strategic approach that is being taken to tackle rough sleeping in North Northamptonshire. This uses the 'Everyone In' opportunity provided by Covid-19 as a catalyst for a longer-term step change in how rough sleeping services are developed and delivered in North Northamptonshire.
- 5.4 RSI4 provides North Northamptonshire Council with an opportunity to develop a comprehensive rough sleeping service that enables timely and effective interventions. The initiatives detailed in figure 3 will enable to Council to take an assertive but person-centred approach to street outreach, deal with the immediate housing and related support needs of rough sleepers and access longer term sustainable housing solutions thus improving the Council's ability to safeguard this cohort of vulnerable adults.

Figure 3: **Staff and initiatives being funded by RSI4 2021/22 in North Northamptonshire**

Role / Initiative	Number	Allocated budget
Staff		
Rough Sleeper Coordinator	2 officers	£100,000
Rough Sleeper Workers (outreach / tenancy support)	11 officers	£411,633
Shelter Manager (Corby)	1 officer	£40,000
Help to Work Officer	1 officer	£40,000
Health Link Worker	1 officer	£40,000
Accommodation		
Dispersed 'Housing First' supported housing (including 2 staff members)	2 officers 6 x 1 bed flats	£40,000
Dorking House shelter support funding	9 x covid safe rooms	£50,000
Emergency accommodation budget	142 x nights of emergency accommodation	£5,000
Engagement / Intervention Fund		
Revenue budget to engage / assist rough sleepers	-	£46,000
Other		
Administrative Support	-	£4,650

TOTAL**£777,283**

- 5.5 The funding allocation will enable a significant increase in staff resources for tackling rough sleeping across North Northamptonshire and finding long term, sustainable solutions for rough sleepers. A total of 18 staff, of which six will be hosted by our voluntary sector partners Accommodation Concern, East Northants Community Services and a partner specialising in dual needs health navigation, will be funded by MHCLG. Recruitment of seven new officers to North Northamptonshire Council is required.
- 5.6 Two Rough Sleeper Coordinators will both provide a strategic and operational lead for the Council's new rough sleeping service.
- 5.7 Generic Rough Sleeper Workers will provide resilience in ensuring that NNC provides a flexible rough sleeping outreach service and housing related support to all accommodated rough sleepers.
- 5.8 A Help to Work officer post will specialise in assisting rough sleepers towards financial independence, essential for those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) who made up 22% of the county rough sleeping cohort accommodated under 'Everyone In' from data obtained in July 2020. The Corby locality has a particular concentration of rough sleepers falling into this category and who would benefit from such specialist intervention.
- 5.9 A Health Link Worker post is likely to take the form of a Rough Sleeping Dual Needs (mental health and drug and/or alcohol misuse) navigator role, providing specialist advice and support to help rough sleepers access health services. 65% of rough sleepers in the county accommodated under 'Everyone In' had a drug and/or alcohol misuse support need (data obtained in July 2020). Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (NHFT), Change Grow Live (CGL) and NNC Housing Options Team will all provide training and support to this cross-cutting specialist role.
- 5.10 Accommodation Concern currently lease two one-bedroom units of council accommodation from North Northamptonshire Council and operate these as intensively supported 'Housing First' units for those rough sleepers who are the most entrenched or who have the most complex and multiple support needs. RSI4 will allow this successful scheme to expand and provide 6 units of accommodation based on the same model.
- 5.11 The capacity of the Dorking House shelter in Corby was reduced from 21 bedspaces to only 9 covid-secure rooms because of the pandemic. Funding obtained via RSI4 will ensure the ongoing financial viability of this much needed resource during 2021/22.
- 5.12 A dedicated Rough Sleeper Intervention Fund of £46,000 will enable officers to work creatively to engage and support those who are experiencing or have experienced rough sleeping. A framework for the use of this fund has been drafted and proposes to allow officers to use the fund for any intervention that enables a move away from the streets, improves the health and wellbeing of rough sleepers, builds trust and engagement and/or enables accommodation to be sustained to prevent repeat homelessness.

6 Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 The RSI4 grant allocation of £737,283 is detailed in section 4.3 and available at appendix A. The grant funding is ring-fenced for the sole purpose of providing Rough Sleeping Initiative funded services and the allocation will be made in two tranche payments in April and October 2021.
- 6.1.2 The Council is required to report on spend to date and forecasted spend in September 2021 and returns will be utilised to inform adjustments to the second tranche payment. Mobilisation of the RSI4 project in North Northamptonshire has been impacted by Covid-19 and Local Government Reform and the projected spend for 2020/21 at the end of May 2021 was £655,000 which is based on recruitment taking place to allow new posts to commence in August 2021. Unless approval can be obtained from MHCLG to repurpose any underspend on other rough sleeping activities, then the Council may see a slightly reduced allocation in tranche 2.
- 6.1.3 The RSI4 grant funding is time limited and all posts funded by the grant are currently (or will be in the case of new and vacant posts) provided on fixed term contracts due to end on 31 March 2022. The exit strategy in relation to RSI funded employees has been considered if RSI revenue funding is not made available in 2022/23. In the case of appointments that include continuous service, as the funding expiry date is known at the outset, the ending of these contracts can usually be for Some Other Substantial Reason (SOSR) thus minimising the risk of redundancy costs in relation to this project.

6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 Part VII 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

6.3 Risk

- 6.3.1 A comprehensive rough sleeping service that takes a supportive yet assertive approach to rough sleeping is imperative in reducing the risk of rough sleepers experiencing deteriorating health and death on the streets.
- 6.3.2 The recent Safeguarding Adults Review following the death of Jonathan, a former rough sleeper in North Northamptonshire, makes a series of

recommendations for Housing, Social Care and Health to work in a more collaborative and coordinated way to identify and address multiple exclusion homelessness. The RSI4 activities detailed in this report will contribute to North Northamptonshire Council achieving those recommendations.

- 6.3.3 Northamptonshire Safeguarding Adults Board has been greatly concerned about the plight of rough sleepers especially following the death of several people in the open over the past five years. The Board wishes to see agencies working together to provide accommodation and support to meet the complex needs of rough sleepers.

6.4 Consultation

- 6.4.1 Key partner agencies including NHFT and voluntary sector partners working with rough sleepers were consulted in the preparation of the North Northamptonshire RSI4 bid.

6.5 Consideration by Scrutiny

- 6.5.1 None

6.6 Climate Impact

- 6.6.1 None

6.7 Community Impact

- 6.7.1 As well as addressing the housing and related health and wellbeing support needs of rough sleepers in North Northamptonshire, the RSI4 initiatives will have wider positive community impacts. Reducing rough sleeping contributes to the North Northamptonshire Council vision by ensuring that North Northamptonshire is a safe and attractive area with a thriving economy. Rough sleeping, 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.

7 Background Papers

- 7.1 Appendix A:



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