



**To further develop the multi agency approach  
to rough sleepers and to reduce/eliminate  
rough sleeping in Northampton**

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## Foreword

During the Homelessness review (2005/2006) the issue of rough sleepers was highlighted and the need for a further Task and Finish Group within 2006/2007 to be set up to investigate rough sleepers was identified.

The objective of the Task and Finish Group was to review rough sleepers with the aim to further developing the multi Agency approach to rough sleepers and to reduce/eliminate rough sleeping in Northampton.

The Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, comprising Councillors Marion Allen, Jamie Lane and Margaret Pritchard was set up. Three co-opted members, Mr Geoff Owen, Town Centre Manager, Mr Charlie Manning, Services Manager (Rehab), for Ms Eileen Kelly, Director, Northamptonshire Health Care Trust (NHT), and Sergeant Matt Phillips, Northants Police, joined the Group.

The review was a focussed piece of work that linked to the Council's corporate priorities and examined a range of information. The Task and Finish Group looked at evidence from Local Authorities noted for best practice, heard from local churches regarding the assistance that they provide to rough sleepers, met with rough sleepers at locally organised drop in sessions and attended the annual Rough Sleepers count. Interviews with the Portfolio Holder (Housing Services) and senior staff from Northampton Borough Council and various external witnesses were held. Baseline information was received and desktop research carried out using the Internet.

This review was carried out between December 2006 and March 2007.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marion Allen".

**Councillor Marion Allen**  
**Chair of the Homelessness**  
**(Rough Sleepers) Task and Finish Group**



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Lane".

**Councillor Jamie Lane**



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M.E. Pritchard".

**Councillor Margaret Pritchard**

### **Acknowledgements to all those who took part in the Review:-**

- Councillors Jamie Lane and Margaret Pritchard who sat with me on this Task and Finish Group, attended various Rough Sleeper Drop In sessions and the annual Rough Sleeper Count
- Mr Geoff Owen, Town Centre Manager, Mr Charlie Manning, Services Manager (Rehab), NHT, and Sergeant Matt Phillips, Northants Police, for sharing their invaluable knowledge and expertise
- Major Coupe, (Salvation Army), Clive Jekyll (DAAT), Carole Jones (CAN), Reverend Wiseman (Faithworks) and PCSO Nick Kutshcer (Northants Police) for attending meetings of the Task and Finish Group and providing comprehensive answers to the Group's questions
- Chris Porter, (Neighbourhood Warden Team Leader), Grant Everitt (Shelter) and various Churches from around the borough for providing written responses to the Group's questions
- The Salvation Army, CAN, and the Maple Centre for giving the Group the opportunity to attend Drop-In Sessions and meet with various rough sleepers
- Councillor Yousuf Miah (Portfolio Holder) for attending a meeting and providing essential information to inform the review
- Fran Rodgers (Corporate Manager), Madeline Spencer (Housing Services Manager) and Linda Brede (Team Leader) for their hard work and dedication to this piece of work
- Tracy Tiff (Scrutiny Officer) for providing invaluable advice and helping compile the final report

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Task and Finish Group was set up to further develop the multi Agency approach to rough sleepers and to reduce/eliminate rough sleeping in Northampton.

A significant amount of evidence was heard, details of which are contained in the report. After gathering evidence the Task and Finish Group established that: -

- The Task and Finish Group welcomes the Rough Sleepers Forum and the work that has been established but it would like to see membership of the Forum widened to include all Agencies. The Salvation Army is not a member of the Rough Sleepers Forum. There is a need to widen the membership of the Rough Sleepers to include all Agencies. It would be beneficial for all members to sign a confidentiality protocol to ensure there is no breach of confidentiality when individual clients are discussed.
- The Council needs to continue to be interactive and understanding of other Agencies and facilitate partnership working with all Agencies.
- The Salvation Army expressed an interest in joint working regarding a hostel for rough sleepers. This could be investigated in conjunction with a current funding bid to the Department of Communities and Local Government.
- It is clear that Agencies provide services for vulnerable people who are not rough sleepers. For example, some individuals, who are not rough sleepers, go to the Salvation Army's Drop In Session for a meal and a hot drink.
- The Task and Finish Group understands the problems that the local retailers had with rough sleepers and suggested that the Town Centre Partnership be asked if it is willing to donate funds to help alleviate the problem with rough sleepers in the town centre and the Grosvenor Centre. However, the Neighbourhood Warden for the Town Centre has confirmed that the concerns of retailers are somewhat out of date and that rough sleepers are not always/often present at night.
- Individuals who are seen during the day and are perceived to be rough sleepers are different people to those actually seen sleeping rough at night. Individuals actually bedded down during nighttime hours are counted as rough sleepers.
- Rough sleepers need to have a pathway to know where they can go to obtain help. There is a need for close working between the Council and CAN and there should be some investigation into out of hours support and the role of the Police with rough sleepers. The 'Green Book' 'A Pocket Guide for anyone Homeless or Threatened with Homelessness', is a useful booklet for both Agencies and rough sleepers in providing information on how services can be accessed. The booklet was produced eighteen months ago and requires updating. It would be useful for a flow chart to be

produced detailing the process for rough sleepers, which could be included in the development of the 'Green Book.'

- The Council does not currently have a Rough Sleepers Strategy.
- Currently the Council is unable to obtain ethnic origins and immigration status of rough sleepers but it is noted that this information will form part of the proposed rough sleeper database.
- There is a need to provide cold weather provision for any rough sleepers to ensure that they can be brought in from the street. Sufficient additional spaces should be identified to ensure that those most vulnerable, who are sleeping on the streets, are able to get some provision during severe weather conditions.
- The Task and Finish Group supports a Single Access Point for rough sleepers, such as TAP provided by Edinburgh City Council. Some external witnesses interviewed by the Task and Finish Group also made reference to the need for such a facility, for example DAAT expressed the need for a multi-Agency Partnership to have a nucleus sub treatment centre and non-drug specific wrap around care. The expiration of the lease of the building used to house CAN Drop In Sessions and the Hope Centre could provide an opportunity for the introduction of a Single Access Point for rough sleepers in Northampton.
- The Task and Finish Group welcomes the Neighbourhood Wardens sharing information regarding the locality of rough sleepers but the reporting of such information should be formalised.
- An extra 8-10 beds, for rough sleepers are required in Northampton. A bid is currently being formulated, through Supporting People, to extend the current provision. There is also the need for a 'half way house' for individuals who are not as yet ready to move into accommodation.
- The Task and Finish Group is concerned about the waiting time of as long as three months for triage provision at CAN. On average it is between two weeks to a month before the individual is receiving treatment. The Task and Finish Group is also concerned about the waiting time and need for further counselling facilities.
- The Task and Finish Group supports the suggestion made by the representative of Shelter (Nottingham) that Local Authorities consider accepting housing applications from people in prison before their release. This would help to stop the cycle of offending – drug use – homelessness – offending. The Council, in partnership with other District Councils in the county, has links with Woodhill prison. An officer visits the prison once a month.
- The Council received funding of £90,000 per year, from 2004 for a three year period, for rough sleeping initiatives, from the Department of Communities and Local Government and there is a need to ensure that this

is maximised. Early indications show that this funding will continue but the Council is awaiting confirmation from the DCLG.

- The Task and Finish Group is concerned that St Andrews Hospital does not have a Protocol in place for the discharge of its patients.
- From the interviews with rough sleepers, in particular those interviewed at the Salvation Army Drop In Centre, it is apparent that many rough sleepers have nothing to do during the day and are bored. There is the need for a training centre/day centre for rough sleepers. It is recognised that the Hope Centre offers day centre facilities but there is a need for these to be further developed.
- The Task and Finish Group realised the need for the development of awareness and ownership of rough sleeping with all relevant Agencies. A multi Agency networking event, facilitated by the Council, could be held to promote the way forward.
- There is a need for Partners of the Council, through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to be made aware of the work of this Task and Finish Group.

The above overall findings have formed the basis for the following recommendations. The Task and Finish Group asks Cabinet to consider implementing the following recommendations: -

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**5.1 Northampton Borough Council takes the lead with all Agencies working together on rough sleeper initiatives, through the Single Homeless Forum.**

**5.2 The membership of the Rough Sleepers Forum be re-visited to ensure that all relevant Agencies are included.**

**5.3 All members of the Rough Sleepers Forum to sign a confidentiality protocol to ensure there is no breach of confidentiality especially when individual clients are discussed.**

**5.4 The rough sleepers database is developed as a high priority.**

**5.5 The 'Green Book' 'A Pocket Guide for anyone Threatened with Homelessness' be updated and be used for all Agencies as a basis for information regarding available services for rough sleepers. A flow chart be produced detailing the process for rough sleepers and be included in the development of the 'Green Book.'**

- 5.6 A Rough Sleepers Strategy be produced with an emphasis on prevention. The evidence contained in this report should form part of that Strategy.**
- 5.7The Portfolio Holder for Housing Services and the Corporate Manager for Housing Services meets with the Research and Development Department of the Salvation Army regarding the potential for the Salvation Army to develop its existing projects for rough sleepers. This should be investigated in conjunction with a current funding bid to the Department of Communities and Local Government for a purpose built hostel in the town.**
- 5.8Research is undertaken regarding further funding opportunities and joint working for the provision of extra beds for rough sleepers and the provision of a `halfway house`.**
- 5.9Improved communication between CAN and the Town Centre Partnership regarding rough sleepers is encouraged.**
- 5.10The Town Centre Partnership is requested to donate funds to help alleviate the problem with rough sleepers particularly in the town centre and the Grosvenor Centre.**
- 5.11Northampton Borough Council works jointly with Northamptonshire County Council regarding providing provision for rough sleepers during severe weather conditions.**
- 5.12The involvement of Neighbourhood Wardens in providing information of the location of rough sleepers is formalised.**
- 5.13Dialogue takes place with DAAT regarding the potential for joint working to provide more counselling facilities.**
- 5.14The Council looks at ways that it can support CAN to reduce its waiting time for triage provision.**
- 5.15The Council's links with the Prison Service and Probation Service is continued. There is a need for a representative from the Probation Service to attend the Rough Sleepers Forum.**
- 5.16Funding of £90,000 per year, for rough sleeping initiatives, from the Department of Communities and Local Government is maximised.**
- 5.17The Council works with local hospitals regarding the introduction of a Protocol for the discharge of its patients.**
- 5.18The Council works with the Hope Centre regarding the development of its day centre facility.**
- 5.19Consideration is given to a multi Agency networking event, hosted by the Council, to facilitate joint working and highlight awareness of rough sleepers.**



**5.20 A copy of this report is forwarded to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).**

# Northampton Borough Council

## Overview and Scrutiny

### Report of the Homelessness (Rough Sleepers) Task and Finish Group

#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Task and Finish Group was to further develop the multi Agency approach to rough sleepers and to reduce/eliminate rough sleeping in Northampton.
- 1.2 A copy of the Scope of the Review is attached at Appendix A.

#### 2. Context and Background

- 2.1 A Councillor Task and Finish Group was established. Three co optees joined the Group, Mr C Manning, Service Manager (Rehab) for Ms E Kelly (Director) Northamptonshire Health Care Trust (NHT), Mr G Owen, Town Centre Manager, and Sergeant M Phillips, Northamptonshire Police.
- 2.2 The Task and Finish Group agreed that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities:
  - The relevant Council Strategies including affordable housing and the Homelessness Strategy
  - The Council's Rough Sleepers' Strategy/Policy
  - Best practice Strategies/Policies
  - Ethnic origins and immigration status of rough sleepers
  - Number of hostel spaces available
  - Voluntary sector funding
  - Details of the annual Rough Sleeping Count
  - Details of the Local Area Agreement and the potential for addressing rough sleeping
  - Help provided by local churches to rough sleepers
  - Information from Maple Centre regarding health issues of rough sleepers
- 2.3 This review links to the Council's corporate priorities as it demonstrates improving homelessness in Northampton (Corporate Priority 2 refers).

#### 3. Evidence Collection

In scoping this review it was decided that evidence would be collected from a variety of sources:

### 3.1 Corporate Manager (Housing Services)

3.1.1 The Corporate Manager (Housing Services) provided baseline data on:

#### 3.1.3 Voluntary Organisation Funding – Council’s Performance

3.1.3.1 Northampton Borough Council (NBC) provided funding of £10,000 to the Hope Centre for 2006/07, £6,500 was for rent and £3,500 for administration costs. NBC gave a one-off grant of £10,000 to the Hope Centre in 2004. This was for the Centre to develop a five-year business plan. The Plan is operative.

3.1.3.2 The Council received funding of £90,000 per year from the Government in 2004 for:-

- 2004/2005
- 2005/2006
- 2006/2007

A bid must be submitted for future funding. Early indications show that this funding will continue but the Authority is awaiting the Department for Communities and Local Government’s confirmation.

#### 3.1.4 Severe Weather Warning

3.1.4.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government issued a letter advising that Local Authorities should ensure that there is cold weather provision for any rough sleepers in their area to ensure that they could be brought in from the street. The object should be to identify sufficient additional spaces to ensure that those most vulnerable, who are sleeping on the streets, are able to get some provision.

#### 3.1.5 Collection Methods – Rough Sleeper Statistics

3.1.5.1 A recent issue of *Inside Housing* reported that the number of people sleeping rough on the streets of England could be as much as four times higher than the official figure because of the way that they are collected and where.

3.1.5.2 The Department for Communities and Local Government’s statistics show that 502 people were estimated to sleeping rough in June 2006. But *Inside Housing* reported that large numbers of Councils had their estimates rounded down to zero. A total of 158 authorities informed the department that they had between zero and ten rough sleepers in the borough. All of these figures were counted as zero. A further 98 Councils made no rough sleeping estimates at all.

3.1.5.3 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has recently issued new guidelines for Rough Sleeper Counts. It is suggested that rough sleepers are woken and asked questions. The Department for Communities and Local Government supports four counts per year, but has stated that a representative from Homelesslink or the DCLG is present at each count to verify the number of rough sleepers counted. If Local Authorities have less than ten rough sleepers there is no need to carry out Counts.

## **3.2 Housing Needs Team Leader**

- 3.2.1 The Housing Needs Team Leader provided information on the plans for the introduction of Northampton Borough Council's homelessness database. It is envisaged that it should help eliminate double counting of rough sleepers. The database will classify individuals such as rough sleepers or 'sofa surfers'. It will contain a contact name, alias, date of birth, mobile number (if applicable) and details of where individuals normally bed down. The database will then detail the scale of the picture and could enable Northampton Borough Council to bid for funding.
- 3.2.2 An example was given to the Group of a rough sleeper camping but on return later that evening all of his equipment was gone. It was confirmed by the Housing Needs Team Leader that the Council would remove such equipment.
- 3.2.3 Research was carried out into Winter Warmth Schemes. Nottingham City Council is noted for its best practice. The Scheme operates on an as and when basis (when the temperature drops). Only individuals who are known rough sleepers are permitted to enter the premises for the night, this ensures that the Scheme is manageable and safe. Other Local Authorities operate a Winter Warmth Scheme for three months a year during the winter.
- 3.2.4 Copies of the 'Green Book' - 'A Pocket Guide for anyone Homeless or Threatened with Homelessness' was circulated to the Task and Finish Group. The booklet details how rough sleepers can access assistance, both during working hours and out of hours, and gives the contact numbers for all Agencies. It also details the number of beds that Agencies have, including: -

- Acorn House - 31 beds, including three for women
- YMCA - 8 rooms and 4 flats in Derngate plus 19 rooms in St Johns

The 'Green Book' was produced approximately 18 months ago and requires updating.

## **3.3 Looking at Best Practice and other Local Authorities**

### **3.3.1 Local Authorities**

3.3.1.1 Desktop research was carried out with a number of Local Authorities and other organisations regarding rough sleepers and the service that is provided.

3.3.1.2 The following Local Authorities were contacted:

- Coventry City Council
- Edinburgh City Council
- Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (via Stockport Homes)

Other information was obtained via the Internet and the Audit Commission's website.

Key Points:-

### **3.3.2 Edinburgh City Council**

3.3.2.1 Edinburgh City Council established an Access Point (TAP) in 2000 as collaboration between NHS Lothian the Council's Housing, Health and Social Care Departments. TAP provides a single access point to housing, health and social work services, including specialist assistance around substance misuse and mental health. The core client group is for those people who are sleeping rough or at high risk of doing so and who may have complex needs including drugs, alcohol and/or mental health problems.

3.3.2.2 The number of people sleeping rough in Edinburgh, as identified by street counts, has fallen from a baseline figure in May 1999 of 42 to 6 in May 2006. The population is almost exclusively male, white and Scottish. The Council's approach to addressing the needs of people sleeping rough is part of an overall approach to homelessness, and there are no particular Policies, Strategies or procedures particular to this extreme form of homelessness.

### **3.3.3 Bournemouth Borough Council**

3.3.3.1 The Council has successfully changed its approach to dealing with homeless people and those threatened with homelessness: this has reinforced the re-focusing of resources towards prevention and the consequence reduction in homelessness and rough sleeping.

3.3.3.2 The Council's good performance has been achieved through the implementation of a wide range of initiatives, which includes employing CRI STREET services to work with rough sleepers, and has helped almost 450 individuals in the last year, many of which are new to the area. The Council works closely with staff in Social Services to assist individuals being discharged from hospital to find them accommodation or to make their existing accommodation suitable for their return. Joint assessments with Social Services are undertaken with individuals with mental health problems to reduce the chance of homelessness.

3.3.3.3 The Council has put in place a range of direct access emergency accommodation. The Council has a large 52-place hostel for single people, a 17-room hostel for families and a 10-bed hostel for vulnerable young people. The hostels provide other options than sleeping on the streets.

3.3.3.4 The Council, together with the Primary Care Trust, provides a doctor's surgery, three times a week, at the day centre to ensure homeless people can access medical facilities. Support services such as family support and mediation are also offered. Floating support for homeless households is available.

### **3.3.4 Plymouth City Council**

3.3.4.1 Plymouth City Council is the lead Agency on rough sleeping within the city but works with statutory and voluntary sector partners to try to remove rough sleeping from the streets of Plymouth. The City Council and its partners have written a Strategy, summary and action plan. This Strategy covers the whole of Plymouth and reflects the wishes of the Local Authority and the commissioners and providers of local services.

3.3.4.2 The main aims of the Rough Sleepers Strategy are to:

- Reduce the number of people sleeping rough to as close to zero as possible and to maintain the figure at five or less,
- Increase the options and life chances of rough sleepers

### **3.3.5 Mayor of London's Rough Sleepers Strategy**

3.3.5.1 The Mayor of London has a Rough Sleepers Strategy that is committed to improving access to the full range of services available for rough sleepers by bringing together all of the relevant information in one user friendly online resource. [www.homelesslondon.org.uk](http://www.homelesslondon.org.uk) delivers on that commitment and contains details of over 3000 services, including details of accommodation, employment and specialist support.

3.3.5.2 The Strategy is aimed at:

- Rough sleepers and homeless people to find out details of the full range of services that they could use
- Professional advisers to rough sleepers and homeless people to find out details of the full range of services relevant to their client
- Planners of services to be better informed of the provision of services in their area so that new services can be targeted on gaps and overlaps minimised.

3.3.5.3 Information may be accessed in one of three ways:

- By location - all services have been mapped onto a single resource
- By client group - to make access easier for those looking for services for a specific client group, details have been grouped according to one of 17 different definitions, from simple gender based services, to those for ex-offenders, HIV, women fleeing domestic violence.
- By service category - details have been grouped in 15 categories, such as accommodation, advice and employment.

### **3.3.6 Westminster City Council**

3.3.6.1 Westminster City Council has been considering policies to reduce the number of rough sleepers that it has on its streets, including fining rough sleepers

£500 and backing moves to give persistent beggars a criminal record. The Council believes that soup runs take away the motivation for people to come off the streets into hostels where they can get specialist care.

3.3.6.2 Concerns around soup runs in Westminster City Council have been in existence for several years. The main concerns are that the over provision of handouts in Central London helps maintain a street lifestyle for individuals unwilling to be housed and draws people out of accommodation and back into street culture.

3.3.6.3 Since 2000, many attempts have been made by the Council to address this issue, including holding meetings with soup run providers and media campaigners to highlight concerns. Current numbers of soup runs in Westminster are estimated at around 65.

3.3.3.4 Just 17% of the individuals using soup kitchens in Westminster were homeless. Some came out of accommodation to receive food.

### **3.3.5 Charitable Organisations**

The following Charitable Organisations were contacted:

- St Mungo's
- Broadway

#### **3.3.5.1 St Mungo's**

3.3.5.2 St Mungo's is charitable organisation that helps homeless individuals and rough sleepers. The organisation leads London's services for people who are homeless and vulnerable. It is known for its outreach work and hostels for rough sleepers. Each night more than 1,200 individuals sleep in one of St Mungo's care homes and special hostels, supported housing or in its short stay hostels. The organisation employs 60 specialist workers to meet the varied needs of rough sleepers from help with mental health problems to drug abuse to support in setting up a new home. Its two-day centres provide community support for the homeless and ex-homeless.

3.3.5.3 The organisation has published on its website statistics regarding rough sleepers in London in December 2000, details attached at Appendix B.

3.3.5.4 Details of 2005/06 figures regarding homelessness individuals living in St Mungo's hostels are attached at Appendix C.

#### **3.3.6 Broadway**

3.3.6.1 Broadway provides a range of services from street to home for vulnerable individuals when they need it. It works with and encourages other Agencies that support homeless people to push forward the barriers of good practice.

3.3.6.2 The Organisation has access to a London based database (CHAIN) that contains details of individuals, assessments of their needs, contacts and interventions. It is compiled by Agencies in London that work with those

rough sleeping or engaging in other street activities that cause concern in communities and need a welfare response.

3.3.6.3 Information is gathered to enable Agencies to liaise effectively to deliver services to individuals whose lifestyles make it complex to organise effective and sustainable interventions in Multi-Agency settings. Those with access to CHAIN data are voluntary organisations that provide services to the street population, local authorities with responsibility for delivering the homelessness strategy for their borough, and Central Government, which has overall responsibility for homelessness policy.

3.3.6.4 Information about an individual on the CHAIN database can help a worker to make the case that the person is in need of a given service, and so aid their access to it.

3.3.6.5 The key findings of rough sleepers in London during 2005/06 are attached at Appendix D.

#### **3.4 Assistance given to rough sleepers by Churches in the Borough**

Letters were issued to all churches in the borough and a response was received from four:

##### **3.4.1 Cathedral, Barrack Road**

3.4.2 The Cathedral on Barrack Road carries out regular soup runs on Monday evenings. Soup, sandwiches and a chat are offered to rough sleepers. The soup runs began in October 2005.

##### **3.4.3 Grange Estate Church**

3.4.4 The Church on the Grange Estate works in liaison with the Cathedral on Barrack Road. A representative of the Grange Road Church takes part in the Cathedral's soup runs. The two churches work together so that it is easier for the rough sleepers so that they know and accept the church representatives. The soup runs are carried out regularly on Monday and Wednesday evenings.

##### **3.4.5 St Giles Vicarage, Spring Gardens – St Giles Church**

3.4.6 The Church does not offer a regular "service" to rough sleepers however rough sleepers do come to the Vicar's door on a regular basis to ask for food and drink, blankets or money. He gives them a sandwich and drink but has a policy of never giving money and points them to the Hope Centre if they want blankets or clothes. On average he has between two and four visits a week often from the same people. At the church centre there are occasional visits from people asking for help and again the same policy is adhered to. Some rough sleepers had issues, such as mental health problems, that the Vicar was unable to deal with.

3.4.7 As a Church it has tended to say that apart from a sandwich and drink, financial support is provided through the Hope Centre, YMCA and others to



help them deal with the problems rather than trying to set up something itself. A good number of people from the Church's large congregation at St Giles are involved in helping at the Hope Centre or YMCA.

#### **3.4.8 Salvation Army**

3.4.9 The Salvation Army holds a Homeless "Drop In" every Wednesday. At present it has approximately 50 clients every week attending this Drop In. While there people can have a cooked breakfast, shower and if necessary receive clean clothes. During the rest of the week if the Salvation Army has homeless people call at its centre it offers Chip Shop Vouchers that can be spent at the local chip shop.

#### **3.5 Meeting Rough Sleepers in the Borough**

##### **Cathedral (Barrack Road)**

3.5.1 Councillor Pritchard accompanied the Cathedral (Barrack Road)'s soup run on the evening of Monday 18 December 2006, between 9.15pm and 10.30pm.

3.5.2 Two rough sleepers were engaged with, neither of which appeared to have any problems and were friendly. One was on the steps of Campbell House and the other by Barrack Road Post Office, two others had not as yet returned from selling the *Big Issue*. The rough sleepers were offered tea, coffee, soup and sandwiches and provision was left for the two out selling the *Big Issue*.

3.5.3 The soup run also went to the back of Sheep Street, a known place for rough sleepers, but none were there on the evening of 18 December. They also visited the area where sex workers frequent but no rough sleepers were present.

##### **Salvation Army Rough Sleeper Drop In Session**

3.5.4 Councillor Allen attended one of the Salvation Army's Rough Sleepers' Drop In Sessions. The Salvation Army made it nice and welcoming for rough sleepers and the Major had approximately five helpers. There was a notice on the wall stating that due to financial pressures the Salvation Army could only offer one cooked breakfast per client. Extra tea and toasts was however offered.

3.5.4 Around 24 rough sleepers came to the Drop In Session on this occasion and just three were female. A young prolific offender had commented that he felt trapped, he was unable to find work and in turn unable to find a home and felt let down by the system, especially as training had not been provided in prison. Another rough sleeper whose partner had recently committed suicide was receiving help and support from the Maple Centre. One rough sleeper was homeless due to a problem with housing benefit and accommodation. There had been difficulty in understanding the system, and others seemed resigned to their situation and very desolate.

- 3.5.5 One rough sleeper had commented that he was addicted to illegal drugs. He was proud to have recently come off heroine but could not manage each day without `Crack`.
- 3.5.6 Some people went from Drop In Centre to Drop In Centre for hot meals and drinks. After this session they would be visiting the Jesus Centre for a cup of tea, they commented that “there was nothing else to do.”
- 3.5.7 The Drop In Centre is very valued by the rough sleepers in attendance
- 3.5.8 A major fact was that rough sleepers are not necessarily around the town centre but are often sleeping out in the surrounding housing estates.

### **Maple Access Centre**

- 3.5.9 Councillor Pritchard visited the Maple Access Centre and interviewed one rough sleeper. The Maple Access Partnership in Hazelwood Road is a medical practice for 4,000 patients, of which about 400 to 500 are either homeless or have insecure accommodation, 135 are Travellers and 100 Street Sex Workers, many of whom have complex needs including drug and solvent abuse and mental health problems.
- 3.9.10 The General Practice serves the local area as well, and has several ethnic minority groups registered with it. There are three GPs, two Practice Nurses, one Nurse Practitioner, one Shared Care Nurse (Drugs Action Team), two Health visitors (one is seconded to the County Traveller unit), two Mental Health Nurses, a Clinical Support Co-Ordinator and a Counsellor who provides three sessions a week. Direct referrals to hospitals and to the Mental Health Team can be made from the Maple Access Centre.
- 3.5.11 The Maple Access Centre works closely with CAN and Stonham Housing Association’s Tenancy Support Workers, Bridgewood House (Bail Hostel), Acorn House and the Hope Centre. Welfare Rights holds sessions at the Maple Centre and it works with Women’s Aid to support victims of domestic violence who also have substance misuse problems. A rapid prescribing service is provided for prisoners who are drug dependant on their release, to prevent them from going back to illegal drugs. The Centre works in partnership with the Swan Project for Street Workers. Its model is a social one, providing a holistic service to the most vulnerable residents of Northampton. In the future it is hoped to commission other services such as Podiatry and Dentistry.
- 3.5.12 Councillor Pritchard interviewed one patient, a Northampton man in his thirties, who had recently been released from prison. He had been jailed for breaking his licence, as he had missed three appointments with his Probationary Officer. He had been released on Monday 15 March 2007 had slept rough, behind the clinic in St Giles Street, for three nights, but had since been accommodated in Acorn House. Previously he had slept rough for three years, mainly in squats, including the St Edmunds hospital site, as he had been on drugs and could not maintain a tenancy. Many times it was because of rent arrears due to the time it took to process his Housing Benefit. As he had a history of violent outbursts due to his frustration, he had to be

interviewed in a secure place, which took additional time to arrange. In the past he had worked as a painter and decorator and for a cable-laying firm, he had gained some qualifications, but taking drugs had led to crime and frequent imprisonment. The Maple Centre had helped him and continued to supply his Methadone. On April 4<sup>th</sup> 2007 he is due to be part of the Rose Project as a condition of his licence. This is a house run by the Police and Probation Service, with input from CAN, to help prolific offenders. Ideally he would like his own bed-sit, but he would require help with a deposit.

### **County of Northampton on Addiction (CAN)'s Rough Sleeper Drop In Session**

3.5.13 Councillor Allen attended one of CAN's Rough Sleeper Drop In Sessions. CAN is based in a run down area of the town and is close to Acorn House and the Hope Centre. At the time of Councillor Allen's visit, outreach workers were carrying out housing assessments with clients. Details of which are forwarded to the Borough Council.

3.5.14 Councillor Allen met with two clients, both male. One was young and was coming off drugs. He explained that he needed help before going into accommodation. Currently there is no provision of a 'half way house' for such individuals and he was not yet ready to 'go it alone'.

3.5.15 The other client that Councillor Allen met with, had shared a property with his partner who had passed away and the property had been left to her daughter, leaving him homeless. He was dependant upon alcohol but was receiving help. He was close to being offered accommodation but before he could move in he needed to be 'dry'.

3.5.16 Meals are provided by the Hope Centre at CAN's Drop In Sessions on Mondays to Fridays. CAN provides hot drinks.

### **3.6 Portfolio Holder (Residential Operations)**

3.6.1 The Portfolio Holder for Residential Operations attended the meeting on 27 February 2007 (A copy of the minutes of that meeting are attached at Appendix G.)

3.6.2 Key points of evidence:

- Rough Sleeping is defined as prolonged, over a period of time, individuals sleeping in the streets, doorways, derelict buildings etc. Individuals residing in hostels and staying with friends are also defined as rough sleeping, but it is essentially sleeping out in often unsafe and appalling conditions with no alternative.
- The Council received funding of £99,000 per year from the Government from 2004 for: -
  - 2004/2005
  - 2005/2006
  - 2006/2007

- Funding ceases on 31 March 2007 but further funds will hopefully be made available. An early indication is favourable.
- The Council pays £13,750 per quarter to CAN for two outreach workers and £5,000 to the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), which funds its drop in centre.
- Acorn House, based at Ash Street, is the nearest provision to a direct service and has 31 beds.
- Very few rough sleepers have dogs. When individuals do have a dog, CAN will try to place them and their dog.
- An individual cannot be forced to accept accommodation but they will be closely monitored by CAN. There are links to the Maple Access Centre and other Agencies will be made aware of the situation. The Council has a sub Committee that meets on a monthly basis and looks at such issues. Often if individuals have been sleeping rough for some time they find it hard to adapt to domesticity and may well for example, continue to sleep on the floor of a house rather than in a bed. CAN outreach workers will keep a watchful eye on such individuals.
- An extra 8-10 beds for rough sleepers are required in Northampton. A bid is currently being formulated, through Supporting People, to extend the current provision. It is felt that some individuals are not ready to move into Acorn House and there is the need for a 'half way house', in order that individuals confidence levels can be raised in the system.
- 23 bail spaces are available at Bridgewood Hostel which is currently full.
- There is not a robust system in place presently to obtain statistics detailing gender age or ethnicity of rough sleepers but a system is being investigated by the Council.
- The Local Area Agreement (LAA) in respect of housing needs is a town wide issue and there is a need to understand changing society, for example, more single people and ex-prisoners being released into society. These issues need to be included into a bigger debate. Rough sleeping will never completely be eradicated and this needs to be built into future plans.

### 3.7 External Witnesses

Core questions were devised and issued to all witnesses providing evidence to the review. A copy of the core questions is attached at Appendix E.

#### 3.7.1 County of Northampton Council on Addiction (CAN)

3.7.2 Representatives from CAN attended the meeting on 4 January 2007 (A copy of the minutes of that meeting attached at Appendix F).

#### 3.7.3 Key points of evidence:

- CAN defines a rough sleeper as an individual bedded down in the hours of darkness. This also includes individuals sleeping in cars.
- CAN made contact with 33 rough sleepers, during October and December 2006, during their 'spot check' visits on the streets. 22 were bedded down at any one time. CAN make weekly visits, record the names of individual rough sleepers

and checks the records at the end of each month to ascertain how many contacts had been made with each individual during that period. Individuals are engaged with and encouraged to obtain housing advice.

- CAN housed nine individuals in the last quarter.
- Street drinkers are often also rough sleepers and have been counted as so when bedded down on one of CAN's counting exercises.
- The Council's role should be that of co-ordination and awareness.
- CAN provides an outreach contact service to rough sleepers on the street as well as the drop-in service. It assesses individuals, has links with other services and signposts individuals to the relevant agencies. CAN offers housing where appropriate. The organisation began as a counselling service.
- CAN houses homeless individuals from the street into its accommodation.
- Accommodation is provided for rough sleepers but there are waiting lists for counselling and treatment. It is often difficult to keep an individual in accommodation, whilst waiting for counselling and treatment, due to the time of the waiting lists, as they often have drug and mental health problems.
- Co-ordination and accessing services is required as is a joined up approach with all Agencies to tackling homelessness. The following are key issues:
  - Raising awareness
  - Service provision
  - Homelessness prevention
- The waiting time for triage provision can be as long as three months. However, a much quicker appointment for counselling at CAN can be obtained.
- CAN has good links with the Maple Centre and clients are seen here quickly, especially if they are using large quantities of drugs.
- On average it is between two weeks to a month before the individual is receiving treatment.
- There is a two-month waiting list from the GP surgery until the first counselling session. This can be a 'shaky' period for an individual coming off drugs.
- CAN does not have defined emergency accommodation. The individual needs to be assessed before they can be offered accommodation. If CAN has previously engaged with an individual and they have already been assessed they can be housed as an emergency.
- CAN has housed individuals with dogs. However, when making this decision consideration must be given to other sharing the house. It is not a common trend in Northampton for rough sleepers to have dogs. Dogs are often a begging tool.

- CAN has good links with Soldiers, Sailors, Airman and Families Association (SSAFA) and other Agencies who deal with ex-service men and women. Some individuals residing in CAN's houses are ex-servicemen and they are receiving support.

#### 3.7.4 Shelter, Nottingham

3.7.5 The Street Homeless Project Manager, Shelter, provided a response to the Task and Finish Group's core questions:

- A rough sleeper is defined according to the commonly used definition which is:
  - People sleeping, or bedded down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes").
- Street Homelessness is a broader term than rough sleeping, including people who may have somewhere to sleep at night but are on the streets in the day time, such as those staying in night shelters, as well as those a count may miss. 'Street homelessness' is similar to the more traditional term 'of no fixed abode'
- The Council's principal role in relation to rough sleepers as with all homeless people is to fulfil legal obligations in relation to the homelessness legislation. The Council's role should be strategic and preventative.
- The Council should conduct rough sleeper counts according to Department of Communities and Local Government guidelines, with a particular emphasis on gathering good intelligence before the count. Counts are only a snapshot. Therefore the Council should also gather information via monitoring or surveys and by consulting street homeless people themselves. This will provide information in relation to needs and solutions. Statistics from Agencies working with rough sleepers can be useful, as can encouraging Agencies who do not keep statistics to keep them.
- Shelter's core belief is that everyone should have a home. Its outreach teams role is to find and highlight ways that this can be made real for street homeless people. Most street homeless people have other needs in addition to their homelessness and some have multiple needs. The main three of these additional needs are mental health, drug and alcohol misuse, and offending. To solve the problem, Agencies concerned with these problems need to work together with homeless and housing Agencies.
- One role for the Council is to ensure that multi Agency working is maximised. Shelter has developed a multi agency assessment panel toolkit which can ensure effective multi agency working.

- Providing services to street homeless people, many of whom have complex needs, can be expensive but not as expensive failure to meet needs, in terms of costs particularly to the criminal justice system and the health service around crisis intervention.
- Effective multi Agency work helps services users directly and indirectly through better use of resources.
- Many street homeless people with complex needs can benefit from counselling for instance due to having traumatic backgrounds. Counselling is not often easy for them to access. Services that make counselling directly available to rough sleepers have been tremendously successful
- Too many people are being released from custody to the streets, particularly those on short sentences, and they tend to remain in the cycle of offending – drug use – homelessness – offending. It was suggested that the Local Authority could consider accepting housing applications from people in prisons well before they are due for release. Sheffield City Council for instance has a housing officer who will interview people in prisons before release.
- The situation for drug users is particularly difficult. Most providers do not officially take drug users, this means drug users either remain homeless or cover up their drug use in order to get into a scheme. Drug users find themselves in projects not properly set up to deal with their needs. Former drug users looking for a drug free environment find themselves in close proximity to on going drug users.

### **3.7.6 Neighbourhood Warden Team Leader**

3.7.7 The Neighbourhood Warden Team Leader provided information on rough sleeper hotspots in the borough:

- Rough sleepers have a tendency to sleep in most of the businesses' front and rear doorways. They are all used at some point or another.
- Rough sleepers are present in the old Post Office building on the Barrack Road.
- Rough sleepers tend to be present in the following locations:
  - Christchurch North porch way
  - Abington Park could be a potential area but no reports have been received by the Warden
  - Wellingborough Road (but they have now moved on from here)
- There are rough sleepers at:
  - Frog Island
  - Becketts Park around the toilets
  - Abington Square toilets
  - St Edmunds Old Chuchyard
  - Rear of 22-26 Kettering Road

- Shop fronts along the Wellingborough Road
- Generally in any old building
- Individuals sleeping in the toilets at Abington Square are often street drinkers
- The porch at Campbell house and the bus station are usual places for rough sleepers. Street drinkers frequent St Giles Church yard during summer nights
- The rear of Primark used to be a prime location for rough sleepers as did St Catherine's Terrace

3.7.8 The Neighbourhood Warden Team Leader provided a response to the Task and Finish Group's core questions to witnesses:

- Rough sleepers are defined as people found sleeping in doorways, shelters, and derelict buildings
- The Council's role in relation to rough sleepers should be monitoring ensuring their well-being is looked after and that they do not become a problem to other residents.
- The Neighbourhood Warden's role in relation to rough sleepers is monitoring, dealing with the relevant Agencies to ensure their health and safety and try to ensure they do not become a problem to other people.
- The barriers and obstacles to providing a service are that some of the rough sleepers are alcoholics and are aggressive.
- The only solution is to work closely with all other Agencies such as CAN and outreach workers.

### 3.7.9 Police Community Support Officer

3.7.10 The Police Community Support Officer (Town Centre) attended the meeting on 27 February 2007 and provided a response to the Task and Finish Group's core questions. (A copy of the minutes of the meeting are attached at Appendix G.)

3.7.11 Key issues: -

- Rough sleeping is in contravention of three laws: -
  - Vagrancy Act 1824
  - Public Order Act 1994
  - Ecclesiastical Act 1860
- 70% of rough sleepers tend to be from the older generation and are genuine homeless individuals. The younger generation is often more aggressive.
- St Giles Churchyard is a major concern regarding the number of rough sleepers there. Individuals do not just beg there is often drug related events and passers through are intimidated. There are also health and safety issues.



- The Council's role should be to encourage rough sleepers to engage with CAN.
- The Police Community Support Officer's role is one of policing and public safety. Rough sleepers that have been released from prison is a big concern. They often find it difficult to engage, and their social and thinking skills are often very poor
- Housing rough sleepers is not necessarily the end of the problem. There are often other issues such as illegal drug taking and prostitution.
- The Police's role is different to that of other Agencies. The Police receives complaints about rough sleepers and has to deal with these but it does refer rough sleepers to the relevant Agencies. The Police has strong links with CAN.

### 3.7.12 Salvation Army

3.7.13 The Major, of the Salvation Army, attended the meeting on 27 February 2007 and provided a response to the Task and Finish Group's core questions and details of how the Salvation Army engages with rough sleepers.

3.7.14 Key issues: -

- The definition of rough sleepers is essentially someone who does not have their own residence and resides in: -
  - Bed and breakfast accommodation
  - Hostel residence
  - Sleeping at a friend's
  - Street Sleeper
- The Salvation Army does not advertise its service. It has grown through word of mouth from one client to another.
- The Salvation Army offers Chip Shop Vouchers, clothing and bedding.
- The Salvation Army provides the following for rough sleepers at its Wednesday morning Drop In Sessions: -
  - Cooked breakfast
  - Shower
  - Clean clothes
  - New underwear
- The Salvation Army hopes that the following will be offered in the near future: -
  - Washing machine and tumble drying facilities
  - Internet access
- If a rough sleeper asks the Salvation Army to look for accommodation for them, they will first be asked if they are prepared to leave Northampton. If they are willing to leave the town, the Salvation Army will try and get them a bed at a Salvation Army Hostel in Birmingham, Coventry or Nottingham.

- There is a severe lack of accommodation in Northampton.
- Details of the ethnic origins and immigration status, age, gender and sexuality of rough sleepers in the borough were provided. Details are attached at Appendix I.
- The Salvation Army's Research and Development Department expressed an interest to hold discussions with the Council regarding the possibilities of how it can develop its existing project with rough sleepers and also the option of looking at the possibilities of a Hostel. The Single Homeless Forum is currently putting together a bid for funding for rough sleepers to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

### 3.7.15 **Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT)**

3.7.16 The Adult Treatment Lead Officer, Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT), attended the meeting on 27 February 2007 and provided a response to the Task and Finish Group's core questions.

3.7.17 Key issues: -

- DAAT reports to the National Drug Treatment Monitoring Unit, who asks for individuals' accommodation status, such as no fixed abode, temporary accommodation, hostel accommodation, 'sofa surfers'.
- The Council's role should be to develop a Strategy to deal with rough sleepers. The Council's Homelessness Forum is undertaking positive work.
- The Council should also co-ordinate other organisations on the Rough Sleepers Forum, especially where rough sleeping impacts on mental health and well being.
- DAAT has commissioned work, in conjunction with Supporting People, to engage organisations that are not necessarily involved in drug support, into initiatives such as:
  - Open access
  - Structured treatment
  - Various types of prescribing options
- The lack of availability of affordable, sustainable accommodation is a barrier. DAAT has submitted a bid to the Department of Health, for the provision of more structured accommodation. It is envisaged that the individual would then move into privately rented accommodation following the end of the treatment. Accommodation for individuals on structured treatment, on rigid regimes on a daily basis, would be of assistance. It would help stop them dropping out of treatment.
- There is the need for a multi-Agency Partnership to have a nucleus sub treatment centre and non-drug specific wrap around care – Joint treatment and care.
- DAAT is looking into the provision of key working for individuals, which would include a support worker, a drug worker and a counsellor regarding issues around the individual's housing provision.

### 3.7.12 Faithworks

3.7.13 A representative of Faithworks, attended the meeting on 27 February 2007 and provided details of the assistance that the organisation provides to rough sleepers.

### 3.7.14 Key issues:-

- Faithworks is an organisation that helps faith establishments engage with the community.
- The experiences of town centre churches with rough sleepers:
  - St Giles and Christ Church regularly came across rough sleepers; however, Christ Church did not note any rough sleepers during February. St Giles has rough sleepers asking for assistance, two to three times a month, and at least one sleeping in the churchyard. The Holy Sepulchre Church has ongoing issues with rough sleepers in its churchyard and they often tend to 'spill out' into the neighbouring vicarage.
  - Churches have varying attitudes towards rough sleepers and do not always assist, sometimes seeing them as a problem that needs alleviating.
- Faithworks is keen to set up Street Pastors who are volunteers that would travel the streets on a voluntary basis during the hours of 10pm and 6am, over the weekend, liaising with rough sleepers and signposting them to the relevant Agencies. 15 individuals have expressed an interest and will join a 12-week training programme.

## 3.8 NHT's Protocol for Individuals being discharged from hospital or Service

3.8.1 The Services Manager (Rehab), NHT, provided details of the Mental Health Service's Protocols for individuals leaving the Service.

### 3.8.2 Key issues: -

- Where appropriate, service users should be discharged to primary care promptly as part of their recovery process. A Care Programme Approach (CPA) Review will be held with everyone involved in the individual's care before the service user is discharged from NHT and Learning Disability Service. Some individuals are never included in the Service, often, because their need is not high enough or they have been referred to the wrong Agency – NHT will in such instances refer them correctly.
- NHT is involved in a number of initiatives regarding Supporting People. It aims to keep patients in hospital for as short a time as therapeutically possible.
- NHT supports individuals in their own homes and provides supervision to individuals to help them sustain their homes.
- It is difficult to effectively intervene with individuals who are homeless and have mental health problems.
- The Northampton Borough Council housing application process now includes checks for mental health.

- There is no Protocol in place for the discharge of patients from St Andrews Hospital.
- Details of the Inpatient Discharge Process are attached at Appendix J.
- This process will be improved upon the introduction of 'Discharge Information Packs' by NHT

### 3.9 **Town Centre Manager**

3.9.1 The Town Centre Manager provided information on:

#### 3.9.2 **Large National Retailers**

#### 3.9.3 **Beatties**

3.9.3.1 There is a particular problem with rough sleepers inhabiting the spiral access to the Grosvenor and Greyfriars car parks, which is owned by the Council. In November 2006 this was reported to the Council and it was arranged for the area to be cleared requested action by the Asset Management Section to stop further habitation. Unfortunately the rough sleepers have returned.

3.9.3.2 Rough Sleepers use the alleyway through from Wood Street in to the Grosvenor Centre as a toilet.

#### 3.9.4 **Debenham's**

3.9.4.1 People sleeping rough, in and around Northampton, continue to be an issue for all businesses, shoppers, residents, and members of the public. The problem is particularly bad in College Street and St Katherine's Street. The people who sleep rough tend to bring a huge amount of rubbish and junk with them, which they leave behind. Swan Yard at the side of the Debenham's attracts rough sleepers. They frequently force the locks on the large industrial bins stored there and leave rubbish strewn all over the place. Individuals used to sleep in the doorways of Debenham's, leaving rubbish behind and urinating against the building, This, however is no longer an issue, since the store had shutters installed after a spate of burglaries just over a year ago. Rough sleepers are present in doorways along Abington Street, particularly at weekends.

#### 3.9.5 **Bus Station**

3.9.5.1 Part of the Council's contractual obligations to Stagecoach is that it parks its buses overnight in the bus station. Due to health and safety regulations the bus operators are not allowed to lock the buses even when they are parked. As a result rough sleepers simply press the door-opening button and gain access to the buses. Apart from sleeping on them they also urinate, defecate, consume food, and use drugs. In recent months, Stagecoach has provided security guards at additional cost and this is beginning to resolve the problem.

### 3.9.6 **Sheep Street Area**

3.9.6.1 Main concerns of the businesses in the Sheep Street area are about the Wet Shelter. The Wet Shelter was constructed some years ago for people with alcohol problems to drink on the street. An Alcohol Prohibition Order covers the town centre. Rough sleepers devolve from the shelter area and sleep in alleyways and doorways within the area. Again problems exist with rough sleepers urinating and defecating within the areas that they sleep.

### 3.9.7 **St Michael's Car Park**

3.9.7.1 There are problems with rough sleepers in this area as it is open to the public after 20.30 hours as a thoroughfare between St Michaels Road and Wellingborough Road. This also attracts drinkers. As part of the work to implement pay on foot in this car park in May 2007, shutters will be fitted at both entrances to stop people walking through and sleeping rough.

3.9.7.2 Key Issues:

- Rough Sleepers discourage business and customers within the town centre area.
- Their actions involving food, drugs, and toilet habits are an environmental risk.
- The rubbish that accumulates makes the town centre look untidy and involves the council in additional cost of cleansing.
- The health and safety regulations, whereby buses cannot be locked at night encourages rough sleeping.
- As the buses are being used as above this is not conducive to attracting the public to use public transport.
- Rough sleepers are perceived as being threatening to staff and customers.
- Rough sleepers may be associated with criminal activity within the town centre.

### 3.10 **Rough Sleeper Working Group Meetings**

3.10.1 The Task and Finish Group attended a number of the Rough Sleeper Working Group meetings.

3.10.2 Key issues:

- The main agenda items are around rough sleeping issues and individual cases.
- Membership of the Working Group includes:-
  - Northampton Borough Council
  - CAN
  - YMCA
  - The Maple Access Centre
  - Jesus Army
  - Northants Police

- Neighbourhood Wardens
- Acorn House

Other issues that the Working Group is currently investigating include:

- Need for further hostels
- Rough Sleeper Database
- Housing Needs Advice

### 3.11 **Annual Rough Sleepers' Count**

3.11.1 Councillor Lane accompanied the annual Rough Sleepers Count.

3.11.2 Key issues: -

- The Annual Rough Sleepers Count took place on on the night of 21 February 2007. The Count met at 12.30am.
- In day light hours more individuals, who are perceived to be rough sleepers, are present than actual rough sleepers at night. Rough Sleepers tend to bed down at around 2.30am.
- When the Count went out at 1.30am it saw no rough sleepers but when it went out again later, rough sleepers had begun to bed down.
- The Count went through the town centre area, Abington Park, South Bridge and Barrack Road.
- One individual was counted sleeping on a bus in the bus station. Access into the bus station and the buses is easy as both are open.
- The Count concluded around 4am and had counted four individuals plus one sleeping on the bus.
- Counts will take place regularly on a quarterly basis.
- Rough sleepers were also seen under the railway arches

## **4. Conclusions**

After all of the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn:

- 4.1 The Task and Finish Group welcomes the Rough Sleepers Forum and the work that has been established but it would like to see membership of the Forum widened to include all Agencies. The Salvation Army is not a member of the Rough Sleepers Forum. There is a need to widen the membership of the Rough Sleepers to include all Agencies. It would be beneficial for all members to sign a confidentiality protocol to ensure there is no breach of confidentiality when individual clients are discussed.
- 4.2 The Council needs to continue to be interactive and understanding of other Agencies and facilitate partnership working with all Agencies.
- 4.3 The Salvation Army expressed an interest in joint working regarding a hostel for rough sleepers. This could be investigated in conjunction with a current funding bid to the Department of Communities and Local Government.
- 4.4 It is clear that Agencies provide services for vulnerable people who are not rough sleepers. For example, some individuals, who are not rough sleepers, go to the Salvation Army's Drop In Session for a meal and a hot drink.
- 4.5 The Task and Finish Group understands the problems that the local retailers had with rough sleepers and suggested that the Town Centre Partnership be asked if it is willing to donate funds to help alleviate the problem with rough sleepers in the town centre and the Grosvenor Centre. However, the Neighbourhood Warden for the Town Centre has confirmed that the concerns of retailers are somewhat out of date and that rough sleepers are not always/often present at night.
- 4.6 Individuals who are seen during the day and are perceived to be rough sleepers are different people to those actually seen sleeping rough at night. Individuals actually bedded down during nighttime hours are counted as rough sleepers.
- 4.7 Rough sleepers need to have a pathway to know where they can go to obtain help. There is a need for close working between the Council and CAN and there should be some investigation into out of hours support and the role of the Police with rough sleepers. The 'Green Book' 'A Pocket Guide for anyone Homeless or Threatened with Homelessness', is a useful booklet for both Agencies and rough sleepers in providing information on how services can be accessed. The booklet was produced eighteen months ago and requires updating. It would be useful for a flow chart to be produced detailing the process for rough sleepers, which could be included in the development of the 'Green Book.'
- 4.8 The Council does not currently have a Rough Sleepers Strategy.

- 4.10 Currently the Council is unable to obtain ethnic origins and immigration status of rough sleepers but it is noted that this information will form part of the proposed rough sleeper database.
- 4.11 There is a need to provide cold weather provision for any rough sleepers to ensure that they can be brought in from the street. Sufficient additional spaces should be identified to ensure that those most vulnerable, who are sleeping on the streets, are able to get some provision during severe weather conditions.
- 4.12 The Task and Finish Group supports a Single Access Point for rough sleepers, such as TAP provided by Edinburgh City Council. Some external witnesses interviewed by the Task and Finish Group also made reference to the need for such a facility, for example DAAT expressed the need for a multi-Agency Partnership to have a nucleus sub treatment centre and non-drug specific wrap around care. The expiration of the lease of the building used to house CAN Drop In Sessions and the Hope Centre could provide an opportunity for the introduction of a Single Access Point for rough sleepers in Northampton.
- 4.13 The Task and Finish Group welcomes the Neighbourhood Wardens sharing information regarding the locality of rough sleepers but the reporting of such information should be formalised.
- 4.14 An extra 8-10 beds, for rough sleepers are required in Northampton. A bid is currently being formulated, through Supporting People, to extend the current provision. There is also the need for a 'half way house' for individuals who are not as yet ready to move into accommodation.
- 4.15 The Task and Finish Group is concerned about the waiting time of as long as three months for triage provision at CAN. On average it is between two weeks to a month before the individual is receiving treatment. The Task and Finish Group is also concerned about the waiting time and need for further counselling facilities.
- 4.16 The Task and Finish Group supports the suggestion made by the representative of Shelter (Nottingham) that Local Authorities consider accepting housing applications from people in prison before their release. This would help to stop the cycle of offending – drug use – homelessness – offending. The Council, in partnership with other District Councils in the county, has links with Woodhill prison. An officer visits the prison once a month.
- 4.17 The Council receives funding of £90,000 per year, for rough sleeping initiatives, from the Department of Communities and Local Government and there is a need to ensure that this is maximised. Early indications show that this funding will continue but the Council is awaiting confirmation from the DCLG.
- 4.18 The Task and Finish Group is concerned that St Andrews Hospital does not have a Protocol in place for the discharge of its patients.
- 4.19 From the interviews with rough sleepers, in particular those interviewed at the Salvation Army Drop In Centre, it is apparent that many rough sleepers have



nothing to do during the day and are bored. There is the need for a training centre/day centre for rough sleepers. It is recognised that the Hope Centre offers day centre facilities but there is a need for these to be further developed.

4.20 The Task and Finish Group realised the need for the development of awareness and ownership of rough sleeping with all relevant Agencies. A multi Agency networking event, facilitated by the Council, could be held to promote the way forward.

4.21 There is a need for Partners of the Council, through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to be made aware of the work of this Task and Finish Group.

## **5. Recommendations**

The Task and Finish Group recommends to Cabinet to that:

- 5.1 Northampton Borough Council takes the lead with all Agencies working together on rough sleeper initiatives, through the Single Homeless Forum.
- 5.2 The membership of the Rough Sleepers Forum be re-visited to ensure that all relevant Agencies are included.
- 5.3 All members of the Rough Sleepers Forum to sign a confidentiality protocol to ensure there is no breach of confidentiality especially when individual clients are discussed.
- 5.4 The rough sleepers database is developed as a high priority.
- 5.5 The 'Green Book' 'A Pocket Guide for anyone Threatened with Homelessness' be updated and be used for all Agencies as a basis for information regarding available services for rough sleepers. A flow chart be produced detailing the process for rough sleepers and be included in the development of the 'Green Book.'
- 5.6 A Rough Sleepers Strategy be produced with an emphasis on promotion. The evidence contained in this report should form part of that Strategy.
- 5.7 The Portfolio Holder for Housing Services and the Corporate Manager for Housing Services meets with the Research and Development Department of the Salvation Army regarding the potential for the Salvation Army to develop its existing projects for rough sleepers. This should be investigated in conjunction with a current funding bid to the Department of Communities and Local Government for a purpose built hostel in the town.
- 5.8 Research is undertaken regarding further funding opportunities and joint working for the provision of extra beds for rough sleepers and the provision of a 'halfway house'.
- 5.9 Improved communication between CAN and the Town Centre Partnership regarding rough sleepers is encouraged.
- 5.10 The Town Centre Partnership is requested to donate funds to help alleviate the problem with rough sleepers particularly in the town centre and the Grosvenor Centre.
- 5.11 Northampton Borough Council works jointly with Northamptonshire County Council regarding providing provision for rough sleepers during severe weather conditions.
- 5.12 The involvement of Neighbourhood Wardens in providing information of the location of rough sleepers is formalised.

- 5.13 Dialogue takes place with DAAT regarding the potential for joint working to provide more counselling facilities.
- 5.14 The Council looks at ways that it can support CAN to reduce its waiting time for triage provision.
- 5.15 The Council's links with the Prison Service and Probation Service is continued. There is a need for a representative from the Probation Service to attend the Rough Sleepers Forum.
- 5.16 Funding of £90,000 per year, for rough sleeping initiatives, from the Department of Communities and Local Government is maximised.
- 5.17 The Council works with local hospitals regarding the introduction of a Protocol for the discharge of its patients.
- 5.18 The Council works with the Hope Centre regarding the development of its day centre facility.
- 5.19 Consideration is given to a multi Agency networking event, hosted by the Council, to facilitate joint working and highlight awareness of rough sleepers.
- 5.20 A copy of this report is forwarded to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

## **Appendices**

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

### **HOMELESSNESS (ROUGH SLEEPERS) TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

#### **1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review**

To further develop the multi agency approach to rough sleepers.

To reduce/eliminate rough sleeping in Northampton.

#### **2. Outcomes Required**

To develop an awareness and ownership of the issues of rough sleeping with all relevant partner agencies.

To understand the impact it has on policy and resources.

To recommend the development of a Rough Sleepers Strategy or Action Plan.

To agree a common definition of rough sleeping.

To agree the resources required and to assess value for money.

#### **3. Information Required**

- The relevant Council Strategies including affordable housing and the Homelessness Strategy
- The Council's Rough Sleepers' Strategy/Policy
- Best practice Strategies/Policies
- Ethnic origins and immigration status of rough sleepers
- Number of hostel spaces available
- Voluntary sector funding
- Details of the annual Rough Sleeping Count
- Details of the Local Area Agreement and the potential for addressing rough sleeping
- Help provided by local churches to rough sleepers
- Information from Maple Centre regarding health issues of rough sleepers

#### **4. Format of Information**

- Baseline Data
- Details of budget allocation
- Officer Reports/Presentations

- Rough Sleepers Quarterly Count
- Report back from Councillor Lane `sleeping rough`
- Report back from Rough Sleepers Meetings
- Report back from Soup Runs from the Cathedral (Barrack Road)
- Evidence from stakeholders:-
  - Portfolio Holder (Residential Operations)
  - Prison/Probation Service
  - Welfare Rights
  - Sample of town centre businesses
  - National bodies for rough sleepers such as Homelesslink
  - Rough Sleepers expert from the Department for Communities and Local Government
  - Local Churches
  - CAN
  - Neighbourhood Wardens/PCSO's
  - YMCA
  - Connexions
  - DAT

## **5. Methods Used to Gather Information**

- Minutes of meetings
- Witness Evidence
- Desktop Research/web based
- Attending the quarterly rough sleepers count during November/December 2006
- Attending various meetings of the Homelessness (Rough Sleepers) Action Group
- Views of rough sleepers – hosting a `drop in` session
- Attend one of the Monday evening sessions, from the Cathedral in Barrack Road, offering soup to rough sleepers
- Contact the churches in the town to see what help that they offer to rough sleepers

## **6. Co-Options to the Review Committee**

- Police Representative of the Community Safety Partnership
- Geoff Owens, Town Centre Manager, Town Centre Management.
- Eileen Kelly, Director, Mental Health Service

## **7. Evidence gathering Timetable**

November 2006 to March 2007

2 November 2006

Scoping the review

November – December	Visits:- Quarterly rough sleepers count Cathedral (Barrack Road) – Offering soup to Rough Sleepers’
4 January 2007	Evidence Gathering
8 February	Evidence Gathering
27 February	Evidence Gathering
19 March	Finalise Chair’s report

## **8. Responsible Officers**

Lead Officer            Fran Rodgers  
Co-ordinator           Tracy Tiff

## **9. Resources and Budgets**

M Spencer, Housing Services Manager, and L Brede, Housing Needs Team Leader, to provide support and advice.

## **10 Final report resented by:**

Completed by 19 March 2007. Presented by the Chair of the Task and Finish Group to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

## **11 Monitoring procedure:**

Review the impact of the report after six months (September/October 2007)

### **Rough Sleepers in London in December 2000**

- A street count found 370 individuals sleeping rough in 12 inner London boroughs. About 1,1,80 sleep rough in England each night.
- Of those surveyed in December 2000, in inner London, 92 % of rough sleepers were male and 8% female. However only 75% of gender could be determined as people were underneath blankets.
- 12% were under 26 years old
- 65% aged between 26 and 49
- 23% aged 50 plus. Age could be determined for just 63% of those counted.
- 85% were classed as white
- 7% were classed as African or Caribbean
- The remainder was split between Asian, non-British European and other. Ethnicity could only be determined for 62% of those counted.

A survey commissioned by St Mungo's carried out by NOP asked 137 rough sleepers how long they first slept rough. The results were:

- 22% - Under three months
- 10% - Three months to one year
- 15% - One to two years
- 14% - Two to five years
- 12% - Five to ten years
- 18%- More than ten years

A survey commissioned by St Mungo's, carried out by NOP asked 200 people sleeping rough in London, Manchester and Edinburgh about educational and vocational achievements:

- 28% had O'levels
- 8% had A'levels
- 87% had worked
- 53% were looking for work
- 8% were in full time, part time or casual work.



**Homelessness Individuals living in St Mungo's Hostels – 2005/2006**

- 20% have been affected by domestic violence or have a history of being abused
- 35% suffered a relationship breakdown in the last five years
- 35% are socially vulnerable
- St Mungo's research reports that rough sleepers who do not have a drink, drug or mental health problem may find that the conditions on the streets create one. Amongst residents of St Mungo's hostels:
  - 63% have a substance use need
  - 60% have a mental health need
  - 45% have a physical health need

### **Key Findings - Rough Sleepers in London during 2005/06**

- 3,675 verified rough sleepers were contacted by outreach or Broadway (BBS) services in London in 2005/06. An increase of 10% since 2003/04.
- 2,807 people slept rough in London in 2006/07. An increase of 9% in a year.
- 1,608 people were verified as a rough sleeper in 2005/06.
- 89% of rough sleepers were male, 11% female
- 8% were under 26 years, 67% 26-45 years, 26% over 46 years
- Ethnicity:
  - 79% white
  - 11% black
  - 3% Asian
- Support needs:
  - 47% alcohol
  - 44% drugs
  - 32% mental health
- Institutional history:
  - 6% Armed forces
  - 12% Care
  - 45% Prison
  - 38% No institutional history
- Verified rough sleepers and people seen bedded down:
  - 2,675 verified rough sleepers
  - 2,807 verified rough sleepers bedded down
- Verified rough sleepers contacted by outreach of BBS teams in the year:
  - 1,608 new people
  - 2,067 known people
- Temporary accommodation: hostels, assessment centres, rolling shelters and second stage:
  - 1,586 arrivals
  - 1,702 departures

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Overview and Scrutiny Homelessness (Rough Sleepers)  
Task and Finish Group**

**Stakeholder Core Questions**

- 1 How do you define rough sleeping?
- 2 What do you think the Council's role in relation to rough sleepers should be?
- 3 What is your role in relation to rough sleepers?
- 4 What are the barriers and obstacles to providing services?
- 5 Have you identified any solutions?
- 6 Do you have any other comments?

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
HOMELESSNESS (ROUGH SLEEPERS) TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

**Thursday, 4 January 2007**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor Marion Allen      Chair  
Councillor Jamie Lane  
Councillor Margaret Pritchard

**Co Optee**

Charlie Manning                      Services Manager (Rehab), NHT,  
(Representing Eileen Kelly)

Fran Rodgers                          Corporate Manager, Housing and Residential  
Operations

Madeline Spencer                      Housing Services Manager  
Linda Brede                              Housing Needs Team Leader  
Tracy Tiff                                 Scrutiny Officer

**Witnesses**

Carole Jones                              Area Manager, CAN  
Andy Kemp                                 Contact and Assessment Worker, CAN

**1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from G Owen, Town Centre Manager, Sergeant M Phillips, Northants Police, and E Kelly, Director, Mental Health Service, co opted members.

**2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2006**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2006 were agreed.

It was placed on record that Councillor Pritchard declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest, in her capacity as a Trustee of the Hope Centre, for the duration of this review.

**3 TO APPROVE THE SCOPE OF THE REVIEW**

Subject to the following amendments, the scope of the review was agreed (copy attached):-

To reduce/eliminate rough sleeping in Northampton

Inclusion of the following in Information Required:-

Information from the Maple Centre regarding health issues of rough sleepers.

Inclusion in Format of Information:-

Report back from Councillor Lane 'sleeping rough'

Report back from Rough Sleeper meetings

Report back from Soup Runs from the Cathedral (Barrack Lane)

#### **4 WITNESS EVIDENCE - CAN**

Carole Jones, Area Manager, and Andy Kemp, Contact and Assessment Worker, CAN, addressed the Task and Finish Group.

The following core questions were answered:-

##### **1 How do you define rough sleepers?**

CAN define a rough sleeper as an individual bedded down in the hours of darkness. This also includes individuals sleeping in cars.

C Jones emphasised that other agencies have different definitions of rough sleepers.

CAN has made contact with 33 rough sleepers, during October and December 2006, during their 'spot check' visits on the streets. 22 were bedded down at any one time. CAN make weekly visits, record the names of individual rough sleepers and check the records at the end of each month to ascertain how many contacts had been made with each individual during that period. The rough sleeper is asked whether they have somewhere to live. Individuals are engaged with and encouraged to obtain housing advice.

A Kemp gave an example of a case study. He had engaged with a male rough sleeper and had encouraged him to visit the drop in centre. The man did not come from this area but had travelled from London following a relationship break up. He was advised to return to London and A Kemp contacted an outreach worker based in the city. The man was offered accommodation within two days. If this contact had not been made it is possible that the man could have become a regular rough sleeper.

CAN housed nine individuals in the last quarter.

It was noted that street drinkers are often also rough sleepers and had been counted as so when bedded down on one of CANs counting exercises.

## **2 What do you think the Council's role in relation to rough sleepers should be?**

C Jones suggested that the Council's role should be that of co-ordination and awareness.

C Jones commented on the recent improvements, such as the inception of the rough sleepers working group. Contact is made and solutions found with direction and action planning. She expressed concern that it was possible that not all agencies were involved and that double counting was taking place and that all agencies should be counting in the same manner. She supported the introduction of NBC's database that should help eliminate double counting of rough sleepers.

The database would classify individuals such as rough sleepers or 'sofa surfers'. It would contain a contact name, alias, date of birth, mobile number (if applicable) and details of where individuals normal bed down. The database would then detail the scale of the picture and could enable NBC to bid for funding. Work on the database will commence shortly.

## **3 What is your role in relation to rough sleepers?**

CAN provides an outreach contact service to rough sleepers on the street as well as the drop-in service. It assesses individuals, has links with other services and signposts individuals to the relevant agencies. CAN offers housing where appropriate. The organisation began as a counselling service.

CAN can house homeless individuals from the street into its accommodation. The organisation also has this flexibility with Acorn House.

## **4 What are the barriers and obstacles to providing services?**

CAN provides accommodation for rough sleepers but there are waiting lists for counselling and treatment. It is often difficult to keep an individual in accommodation, whilst waiting for counselling and treatment, due to the time of the waiting lists, as they often have drug and mental health problems.

## **5 Have you identified any solutions?**

Co-ordination and accessing services is required as is a joined up approach with all agencies to tackling homelessness. The following are key issues:

- Raising awareness
- Service provision
- Homelessness prevention

The Task and Finish Group asked supplementary questions and heard: -

- The waiting time for triage provision can be as long as three months.

However, a much quicker appointment for counselling at CAN can be obtained.

- CAN has good links with the Maple Centre and clients are seen here quickly, especially if they are using large quantities of drugs.
- On average it is between two weeks to a month before the individual is receiving treatment.
- There is a two-month waiting list from the GP surgery until the first counselling session. This can be a 'shaky' period for an individual coming off drugs.
- CAN does not have defined emergency accommodation. The individual needs to be assessed before they can be offered accommodation. Acorn House has 24/7 cover and CAN has an out of hours contact number. If CAN has previously engaged with an individual and they have already been assessed they can be housed as an emergency.
- CAN has housed individuals with dogs. However, when making this decision consideration must be given to other sharing the house. It is not a common trend in Northampton for rough sleepers to have dogs. Dogs are often a begging tool.
- NBC is currently reviewing its housing policies, including evictions. All evictions must now be signed off at Corporate Manager level. The Authority is looking at prevention rather than eviction.
- Central Government has investigated the number of rough sleepers and has set a target that numbers are reduced by two thirds. Four counts per year would give a more accurate and realistic figure of rough sleepers.
- Should housing tenants fall behind on rent payments, rather than just issue letters, telephone contact is now often made and if required the tenant is referred to debt counselling.
- CAN has come across some ex-service rough sleepers and it has good links with SAFFRA and other agencies who deal with ex-service men and women. Some individuals residing in CANs houses are ex-servicemen and they are receiving support.
- Acorn House was previously known as the night shelter. It provides bed spaces and emergency hostel accommodation.
- CANs work is beginning to link in with the work of DAT. A newly appointed senior officer at DAT has a great understanding of homelessness. A lot of good work is underway.
- Work with the homeless carried out in Northampton is now recognised nationally.
- NBC has undertaken some good work with the YMCA and has mediation links with the organisation. Some of the YMCA's single person accommodation is used as emergency accommodation and it has two crash pads. Crash pads give an individual time to either get them back home or into YMCA accommodation. It is important that the right accommodation is provided for young people. Employees of Connexions have been trained by CAN.
- It was suggested that more information regarding the link with schools be given to a future meeting.
- There is a need for all agencies to work together and have links.

The Chair thanked C Jones and A Kemp for their attendance and comprehensive address.

## **5 ROUGH SLEEPER 'HOTSPOTS'**

The Scrutiny Officer advised that the Town Centre Neighbourhood Warden has confirmed that rough sleepers have a tendency to sleep in most of the businesses' front and rear doorways. They are all used at some point or another.

The Neighbourhood Warden for Castle Ward has noted that rough sleepers are present in the old Post Office building on the Barrack Road.

The Neighbourhood Warden for Abington/Weston advised that rough sleepers tend to be present in the following locations:-

- Christchurch North porch way
- Abington Park could be a potential area but no reports have been received by the Warden
- Wellingborough Road (but they have now moved on from here)

The Neighbourhood Warden for St Crispin commented that there are rough sleepers at:-

- Frog Island
- Becketts Park around the toilets
- Abington Square toilets
- St Edmunds Old Chuchyard
- Rear of 22-26 Kettering Road
- Shop fronts along the Wellingborough Road
- Generally in any old building

The Task and Finish Group commented:-

- Individuals sleeping in the toilets at Abington Square tended to be street drinkers
- Since the builders have been on site, there have been no more reports of individuals breaking in to the St Edmunds site and sleeping there
- The porch at Campbell house and the bus station are usual places for rough sleepers. Street drinkers frequent St Giles Church yard during summer nights
- The rear of Primark used to be a prime location for rough sleepers as did St Catherines Terrace

C Jones, CAN, confirmed that the rough sleeping hotspots identified by the neighbourhood wardens were known hotspots to CAN too.

The Chair suggested that a copy of the core questions to witnesses be emailed to C Porter, Neighbourhood Warden Team Leader, for completion to the next meeting.



**AGREED:** That a copy of the core questions to witnesses be emailed to C Porter, Neighbourhood Warden Team Leader, for completion to the next meeting.

## **6 COUNCILLOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE ROUGH SLEEPER COUNT**

The Task and Finish Group was advised that a 'hot spot' rough sleepers count would take place in February 2007, the date of which would be circulated. The annual count would take place during April. All members of the Group were keen to take part in the hotspot count.

Councillor Lane advised that he would 'sleep rough' on a Friday evening during February. Following advice regarding the safety of doing this on a Friday evening, he would liaise with C Jones, CAN, before going out.

**AGREED:** That the date and time of the hotspot rough sleeper count for February 2007 be emailed to the Group.

## **7 ASSISTANCE GIVEN FROM CHURCHES TO ROUGH SLEEPERS**

The Scrutiny Officer presented a briefing note detailing that letters had issued to all the churches in the borough and a response had been received from four:-

### **Cathedral, Barrack Road**

The Cathedral on Barrack Road carries out regular soup runs on Monday evenings. Soup, sandwiches and a chat are offered to rough sleepers. The soup runs began in October 2005.

### **Church on the Grange Estate**

The Church on the Grange Estate is working in liaison with the Cathedral on Barrack Road. A representative of the Cathedral takes part in the Grange Estate Church soup runs. Flasks from the Cathedral are used. The two churches work together so that it is easier for the rough sleepers so that they know and accept the church representatives. The soup runs are carried out regularly on Wednesday evenings.

### **St Giles Vicarage, Spring Gardens – St Giles Church**

The church does not offer a regular "service" to rough sleepers however they do come to his door on a regular basis to ask for food and drink or blankets or money. He gives them a sandwich and drink but has a policy of never giving money and points them to the Hope Centre if they want blankets or clothes. On average he has between two and four visits a week often from the same people. At the church centre there are occasional visits from people asking for help and again the same policy is adhered to. The church advises people not to give money but sometimes people do.

There are a variety of rough sleepers who have used the churchyard, (the rear of

the Church centre or the rear of Primark opposite our church centre) and although the church encourages them to find help via the Hope Centre, the Night Shelter or CAN some of them are regularly around.

The minister commented that many of the rough sleepers often have mental health or drug/drink abuse problems and the church would like to be able to help them rather than reject them but it is hard to know how best to get involved. As a Church it has tended to say that apart from a sandwich and drink, financial support is provided through the Hope Centre, YMCA and others to help them deal with the problems rather than trying to set up something itself. A good number of people from the church's large congregation at St Giles are involved in helping at the Hope Centre or YMCA and there is a good deal of compassion for the rough sleepers.

### **Salvation Army**

The Salvation Army holds a Homeless "Drop In" every Wednesday. At present it has approximately 50 clients every week attending this Drop In. While there they can have a cooked breakfast, shower and if necessary receive clean clothes. During the rest of the week if the Salvation Army has homeless people call at its centre it offers Chip Shop Vouchers that can be spent at the local chip shop.

The Task and Finish Group commented:

- The vicar at St Giles Church should be made aware of where to signpost rough sleepers
- Contact should be made with the Commanding Officer at the Salvation Army to see whether the Group could attend one of its drop in sessions.
- D Wiseman, Tharthwarks Northampton, hosts regular evening sessions whereby churches attend to hear about different topics and initiatives. It was suggested that D Wiseman be invited to attend a meeting of this Task and Finish Group to answer the Group's core questions and to also filter back information to the organisation.

**AGREED:** (1) That the Commanding Officer of the Salvation Army be contacted to see whether the Group could attend one of its drop in sessions. The Commanding Officer would also be invited to attend a future meeting to provide a response to the Group's core questions.  
(2) That D Wiseman be invited to attend a meeting of this Task and Finish Group to answer the Group's core questions and to also filter back information to the organisation.

### **8 SEVERE WEATHER WARNING LETTER**

The Task and Finish Group noted a letter issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government advising that Local Authorities should ensure that there is cold weather provision for any rough sleepers in their area to ensure that they could be brought in from the street. The object should be to identify sufficient additional spaces to ensure that those most vulnerable, who are sleeping on the streets, are able to get some provision.

The Group commented:-

- Consideration should be given to issuing a press release detailing CAN's contact number and stating where supplies of blankets and/or sleeping bags can be obtained.
- **The final report could include a potential recommendation that a Protocol be devised that a specific premises be open for rough sleepers during severe weather conditions.**
- C Jones, CAN, confirmed that CAN was able to offer the Medical Centre as a provision for rough sleepers during severe weather conditions.

**AGREED:** (1) That the final report could include a potential recommendation that a Protocol be devised that a specific premises be open for rough sleepers during severe weather conditions.

(2) That consideration be given to issuing a press release detailing CAN's contact number and stating where supplies of blankets and/or sleeping bags can be obtained.

## **9 WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL - CURB 'SOUP KITCHENS'**

The Task and Finish Group heard that Westminster City Council has been considering policies to reduce the number of rough sleepers that it has on its streets, including fining rough sleepers £500 and backing moves to give persistent beggars a criminal record. The Council believes that soup runs take away the motivation to come off the streets into hostels where they can get specialist care.

It is thought to have the most rough sleepers in the country and wants to move them into hostels.

Concerns around soup runs in Westminster City Council have been in existence for several years. The main concerns are that the over provision of handouts in Central London helps maintain a street lifestyle for individuals unwilling to be housed and draws people out of accommodation and back into street culture.

Since 2000, many attempts have been made by the Council to address this issue, including holding meetings with soup run providers and media campaigners to highlight concerns. Current numbers of soup runs in Westminster are estimated at around 65.

A copy of Westminster City Council's Soup Run Scoping and Mapping Report January 2005 was also circulated.

A copy of a document from the Dogs Trust was circulated for the Group's information about homelessness projects about accepting clients with dogs.

The Group commented:-

- Only 17% of the individuals using soup kitchens in Westminster were homeless. Some came out of accommodation to receive food.

- London Boroughs often have specific problems
- Soup kitchens are a useful mechanism to engage with individuals
- CAN carries out a staggered soup run on a Tuesday evening. Its soup run engages with the client and often assessments are carried out on the street. CAN's soup runs tend to be seasonal, from October to March.
- A Kemp confirmed that he had engaged with about five Polish men who were not getting enough work and were either living on the streets or in a squat. They used CAN's soup run and its services. CAN helped them find work and private rented accommodation.
- Soup runs are different in London to Northampton
- The Maple Centre offers starter packs to individuals coming off the streets.

## **10 FEEDBACK FROM SOUP RUN FROM THE CATHEDRAL (BARRACK ROAD)**

Councillor Pritchard advised that she had accompanied the Cathedral (Barrack Road)'s soup run on the evening of Monday 18 December 2006, between 9.15pm and 10.30pm. She accompanied two ladies and a man.

They only engaged with two rough sleepers, neither of which appeared to have any problems and were friendly. One was on the steps of Campbell House and the other by Barrack Road Post Office, two others had not as yet returned from selling the big issue. The rough sleepers were offered tea, coffee, soup and sandwiches and provision was left for the two out selling the big issue.

The soup run also went to the back of Sheep Street, a known place for rough sleepers, but none were there on the evening of 18 December. They also visited the area where sex workers frequent but no rough sleepers were present, neither were there any rough sleepers in Gold Street. On this occasion they did not go to the rear of Primark.

## **11 DEFINE QUESTIONS FOR WITNESS EVIDENCE (PORTFOLIO HOLDER)**

The Task and Finish Group defined the core questions to be put to the Portfolio Holder (Residential Operations):-

- 1 What is your definition of rough sleepers?
- 2 Please provide a breakdown of funding that has been allocated to Rough sleepers, such as:-
  - Emergency needs for vulnerable people
- 3 What Protocols are in place to ensure all agencies/ members of the public know what to do if they know the whereabouts of a rough sleeper.
- 4 How is the service level agreement with CAN monitored and how often?
- 5 What are the provisions for rough sleepers?
- 6 What happens if a rough sleeper has a dog?

- 7 What happens to rough sleepers who will not accept accommodation?
- 8 Is there enough emergency accommodation for rough sleepers? If so where is it?
- 9 What is the number of Bail Hostel spaces available?
- 10 What is the ethnic origins and immigration status, age, gender and sexuality of rough sleepers in the borough?
- 11 Please give details of the Local Area Agreement and the potential for addressing rough sleepers.

The Portfolio Holder (Residential Operations) would attend the next meeting of the Homelessness (Rough Sleepers) Task and Finish Group.

**AGREED:** That a copy of the above questions would be issued to the Portfolio Holder (Residential Operations) in advance of the next meeting.

## **12 OFFICER'S REPORTS - BASELINE DATA**

### **(A) NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL FUNDING TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS**

The Task and Finish Group was informed that Northampton Borough Council (NBC) provided funding of £10,000 to the Hope Centre for 2006/07. £6,500 was for rent and £3,500 for administration costs.

NBC gave a one-off grant of £10,000 to the Hope Centre in 2004. This was for the Centre to develop a five-year business plan. This work is in progress.

It was suggested that the Corporate Manager investigates whether funding to voluntary organisations can contribute to the Council's performance in certain areas.

**AGREED:** That the Corporate Manager investigates whether funding to voluntary organisations can contribute to the Council's performance in certain areas.

At this point the Chair referred to data that John Olsen had provided to the previous Homelessness Task and Finish Group that had detailed information of individuals that could potentially become homeless. She suggested that there was a need to know about the Mental Health Services systems that ensure that individuals do not leave this provision homeless. It was suggested that this information be provided to the next meeting.

M Spencer advised of a pilot currently taking place with Supporting People and undertook to provide information to the next meeting.

**AGREED:** (1) That C Manning provides information to the next meeting regarding the Mental Health Services Systems for those leaving the provision.

(2) That M Spencer provides information regarding a pilot with Supporting People to the next meeting.

### **13 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

T Tiff advised that she had held a meeting with G Owen earlier that day and he had offered to provide information on the following to the next meeting: -

- Comments from a variety of town centre organisations regarding rough sleepers
- Security of the bus station
- CCTV and rough sleepers

**AGREED:** That the above items be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

The schedule of meetings was noted:-

Thursday 8 February 2007	Jeffery Room
Tuesday 27 February	Council Chamber
Monday 19 March	Jeffery Room

The meeting concluded at 8:25 pm

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

**HOMELESSNESS (ROUGH SLEEPERS) TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

**27 FEBRUARY 2007**

**Present:**

Councillor M Allen	Chair
Councillor J Lane	
Councillor M Pritchard	
C Manning	Northamptonshire Health Care Trust (NHT) – Provider of mental health services (Co-Optee)
Sergeant M Phillips	Northants Police, (Co-Optee)
G Owen	Town Centre Manager, (Co-Optee)
Fran Rodgers	Corporate Manager
Linda Brede	Housing Needs Team Leader
Tracy Tiff	Scrutiny Officer

**Witnesses**

Councillor Y Miah	Portfolio Holder (Residential Operations)
C Jekyll	DAT
Major A Coupe	Salvation Army
Major R Cushing	Salvation Army
PCSO N Kutscher	Northants Police
Rev D Wiseman	Faithworks

**1 Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Madeline Spencer.

**2 Minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2007**

Subject to the correct spelling of Faithworks, the minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2007 were agreed as a true record.

**3 Witness Evidence**

**(A) D Wiseman**

Reverend D Wiseman, Faithworks, addressed the Task and Finish Group commenting that he is the treasurer for Faithworks, an organisation that helps

faith establishments engage with the community. He is also part of the diocese of Peterborough.

He had asked the town centre clergy for their experiences of rough sleepers:

St Giles and Christ Church regularly came across rough sleepers; however, Christ Church had not noted any rough sleepers during February. St Giles has rough sleepers asking for assistance, two to three times a month, and at least one sleeping in the churchyard. The Holy Sepulchre Church has ongoing issues with rough sleepers in its churchyard and they often tend to 'spill out' into the neighbouring vicarage.

Churches have varying attitudes towards rough sleepers and do not always assist, sometimes seeing them as a problem that needs alleviating.

Faithworks tries to pick up local issues and has homelessness and rough sleepers as future agenda items.

Reverend Wiseman was thanked for his address.

## **(B) Portfolio Holder (Residential Operations)**

Councillor Miah, Portfolio Holder for Residential Operations, provided a response to the Group's core questions: -

### **1 What is your definition of rough sleepers?**

Prolonged, over a period of time, individuals sleeping in the streets, doorways, derelict buildings etc. Individuals residing in hostels and staying with friends is also defined as rough sleeping, but it is essentially sleeping out in often unsafe and appalling conditions with no alternative.

### **2 Please provide a breakdown of funding that has been allocated to Rough sleepers, such as: -**

- **Emergency needs for vulnerable people**

The Council received funding of £99,000 per year from the Government in 2004 for: -

2004/2005  
2005/2006  
2006/2007

Funding ceases on 31 March 2007 but further funds will hopefully be made available. Early indications are favourable.

NBC pays £13,750 per quarter to County of Northampton on Addiction (CAN) for two outreach workers and £5,000 to YMCA, which funds its drop in centre.



**3 What Protocols are in place to ensure all agencies/ members of the public know what to do if they know the whereabouts of a rough sleeper?**

NBC has a service level agreement (SLA) with CAN but not with any other organisations or agencies.

**4 How is the service level agreement with CAN monitored and how often?**

It is very important that the service level agreement is monitored so that it can be justified how funding has been spent. It is monitored on a quarterly basis and reports are submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

**5 What are the provisions for rough sleepers?**

Acorn House, Ash Street, is the nearest provision to a direct service and has 31 beds.

Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) deals with young rough sleepers and they have a waiting list of 16, plus 40 (sofa surfers) on the waiting list for an assessment. YMCA needs more beds.

**6 What happens if a rough sleeper has a dog?**

Very few rough sleepers have dogs. When individuals do have a dog, CAN will try to place them and their dog.

**7 What happens to rough sleepers who will not accept accommodation?**

An individual cannot be forced to accept accommodation but they will be closely monitored by CAN. There are links to the Maple Access Centre and other Agencies will be made aware of the situation. The Council has a sub Committee that meets on a monthly basis and looks at such issues. Often if individuals have been sleeping rough for some time they find it hard to adapt to domesticity and may well for example, continue to sleep on the floor of a house rather than in a bed. CAN outreach workers will keep a watchful eye on such individuals.

**8 Is there enough emergency accommodation for rough sleepers? If so where is it?**

An extra 8-10 beds are required in Northampton. A bid is currently being formulated, through Supporting People, to extend the current provision. It is felt that some individuals are not ready to move into Acorn House and there is the need for a 'half way house', in order that individuals confidence levels can be raised in the system.

**9 What is the number of Bail Hostel spaces available?**

23 bail spaces are available at Bridgewood Hostel but this is full.

**10 What are the ethnic origins and immigration status, age, gender and sexuality of rough sleepers in the borough?**

There is not a robust system in place presently to obtain these statistics. However, a system is being investigated.

**11 Please give details of the Local Area Agreement and the potential for addressing rough sleepers.**

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) in respect of housing needs is a town wide issue and there is a need to understand changing society, for example, more single people and ex-prisoners being released into society. These issues need to be included into a bigger debate.

Rough sleeping will never completely be eradicated and this needs to be built into future plans.

The Task and Finish Group asked questions and heard: -

- CAN will engage with rough sleepers and carry out an assessment.
- Some rough sleepers are just moving through the town and some are local.
- Often CAN will help an individual move back to their home town and receive further support there

**The Chair suggested that the final report needs to include a conclusion that the Council needs to be more interactive and understand the work/role of other Agencies and that all Agencies be linked.**

Councillor Miah was thanked for his address.

**(C) SALVATION ARMY**

Major A Coupe and Major R Cushing, Salvation Army, provided a response to the Group's questions. Further details were also provided.

**1 What is your definition of rough sleepers?**

- Essentially someone who does not have their own residence.
  - Bed & Breakfast Accommodation
  - Hostel Resident
  - Sleeping at a friends
  - Street Sleeper

**2 A breakdown of funding that has been allocated to Rough sleepers, such as was provided:-**

- Emergency needs for vulnerable people
- Breakdown costs for Homeless Drop In

Officers Salary (4 hours per week)	£20.00 per week	<b>TOTALS COST</b>	£108.00 per week
Officers Salary (4 hours per week)	£20.00 per week		
Employees Salary (4 hours per week)	£23.00 per week		
Food Costs	£15.00 per week		
Chip Shop Vouchers	£6.00 per week		
Electricity & Gas Costs	£9 per week		
General Maintenance Costs	£15.00 per week		

At present these costs are met by the local Salvation Army. As the programme has grown beyond our expectations we are now trying to find sources of funding to meet this need.

- 3 **Details of Protocols that are in place to ensure all agencies/ members of the public know what to do if they know the whereabouts of a rough sleeper were provided.**
- The Salvation Army does not advertise its service.
  - It has grown through word of mouth from one client to another.
  - The local Council booklet does say that the Salvation Army offers Chip Shop Vouchers, Clothing and Bedding.
- 4 **What are the provisions for rough sleepers?**  
The following is provided:-
- Cooked Breakfast
  - Shower
  - Clean Clothes
  - New Underwear
- It is hoped that the following will be offered in the near future.
- Washing machine and tumble drying facilities
  - Internet access
- 5 **What happens if a rough sleeper has a dog?**
- The client is asked to leave the Dog outside while they come in and have some food. Dogs have been fed in the past too

- 6 What happens to rough sleepers who will not accept accommodation?**
- If a rough sleeper asks us to look for accommodation for them, they would first ask them if they are prepared to leave Northampton. If they are the Salvation Army would try and get them a bed at a Salvation Army Hostel in Birmingham, Coventry or Nottingham.
- 8 Is there enough emergency accommodation for rough sleepers? If so where is it?**
- There is a severe lack of accommodation in Northampton. I look for accommodation in Birmingham, Coventry or Nottingham.
- 9 What is the ethnic origins and immigration status, age, gender and sexuality of rough sleepers in the borough?**
- Attached are the results of a survey that the Salvation Army carried over the past three weeks.
  - There were 53 responses.
  - Also attached are attendance figures since the Salvation Army started to keep records in November 2005 (Annexe to the minutes)

The Task and Finish Group asked questions and heard:-

- Salvation Army hostels can be found in the South, the nearest being Reading or London
- In response to a question regarding the possibility of the Salvation Army funding a hostel in Northampton, it would be dependant upon what had been identified for capital funding. If the Salvation Army was to manage a homeless hostel it would look to do this on the principles of Supporting People. The Salvation Army's Research and Development Team would be keen to meet with the Council to discuss this
- In Nottingham a one stop shop approach is being introduced and this type of approach is supported by the Salvation Army. Northampton DAT interacts closely with Nottingham DAT

**The Chair commented that the Group had noted that the Salvation Army might be interested in a partnership funding of a hostel.**

Major Coupe and Major Cushing were thanked for their address.

**(D) DAAT (Drug and Alcohol Action Team)**

C Jekyll, Adult Treatment Lead, Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT), advised that DAT is a partnership body of major governing partners in the county. He then provided a response to the Group's core questions:

### **1 How do you define rough sleeping?**

DAAT reports to the National Drug Treatment Monitoring Unit, who asks for individuals' accommodation status, such as no fixed abode, temporary accommodation, hostel accommodation, 'sofa surfers'.

### **2 What do you think the Council's role in relation to rough sleepers should be?**

The Council's role should be to develop a Strategy to deal with rough sleepers. The Council's Homelessness Forum is undertaking positive work.

The Council should also co-ordinate other organisations on the Rough Sleepers Forum, especially where rough sleeping impacts on mental health and well being.

C Jekyll confirmed that DAAT encourages joint working with the Council and Supporting People, reaffirming work that is already being undertaken.

### **3 What is your role in relation to rough sleepers?**

DAAT has commissioned work, in conjunction with Supporting People, to engaging organisations that are not necessarily involved in drug support, into initiatives such as:

- Open access
- Structured treatment
- Various types of prescribing options

There is a need for more communication to bring organisations together.

### **4 What are the barriers and obstacles to providing services?**

The lack of availability of affordable, sustainable accommodation is a barrier. DAAT has submitted a bid to the Department of Health, for the provision of more structured accommodation. It is envisaged that the individual would then move into privately rented accommodation following the end of the treatment. Accommodation for individuals in structured treatment, on rigid regimes on a daily basis, would be of assistance. It would help stop them dropping out of treatment.

### **5 Have you identified any solutions?**

There is the need for a multi-Agency Partnership to have a nucleus sub treatment centre and non-drug specific wrap around care – Joint treatment and care.

DAAT is looking into key working for individuals, which would include a support worker, a drug worker and a counsellor regarding issues around the individual's housing provision.

### **6 Do you have any other comments?**

DAAT is positive about the steps forward made by Northampton Borough Council. It acknowledges that it is a long process with barriers. The more

organisations meet and tackle the issues head on, the more likely solutions are to be found.

The Task and Finish Group asked questions and heard: -

- Regarding the type of accommodation that the bid to Department of Health would be used for includes a hostel, although DAT is not keen to use a hostel. It would prefer to look for dispersed properties.
- Individuals can be self-referred or referred by, for example, a GP, to DAAT. The waiting list for treatment is around 3 weeks but most individuals are seen within a week.
- DAAT deals with all Northamptonshire Local Authorities.
- The situation with rough sleepers and drug problems is similar from town to town.

C Jekyll was thanked for his address.

### **(E) POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER (PCSO)**

N Kutscher, PCSO for the town centre and St Crispin's, provided a response to the Group's core questions: -

#### **1 How do you define rough sleeping?**

Rough sleeping is in contravention of three laws: -

- Vagrancy Act 1824
- Public Order Act 1994
- Ecclesiastical Act 1860

Under the Vagrancy Act 1824 it is a crime to be homeless and beg for money. During this period in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century there was an influx of immigrants from Scotland and ex soldiers.

70% of rough sleepers tend to be from the older generation and are genuine homeless individuals. The younger generation is often more aggressive.

In accordance with the Ecclesiastical Act 1860, St Giles Churchyard is a major concern regarding the number of rough sleepers there. Individuals do not just beg there are often drug related events and intimidating passers through. There are also often health and safety issues.

When individuals leave the armed forces they are not entitled to a house and it is their responsibility to find a job.

#### **2 What do you think the Council's role in relation to rough sleepers should be?**

The Council's role should be to encourage rough sleepers to engage with CAN.

### **3 What is your role in relation to rough sleepers?**

My role is one of policing and public safety. Rough sleepers that have been released from prison is a big issue. They often find it difficult to engage, and their social and thinking skills are very poor. There are many on the Wellingborough Road and around the town centre.

### **4 What are the barriers and obstacles to providing services?**

Housing rough sleepers is not necessarily the end of the problem. There are often other issues such as illegal drug taking and prostitution.

### **5 Have you identified any solutions?**

The individual may not engage with the Police again.

There is no provision for dogs at Campbell Square Police Station; however, Corby Police Station has four kennels.

Sergeant Phillips added that the Police's role is different to that of other Agencies. The Police receive complaints about rough sleepers and has to deal with these but it does refer rough sleepers to the relevant Agencies. The team has strong links with CAN. The Police try not to put rough sleepers in the cells. Sergeant Phillips commented that a one-stop shop would be excellent.

The Task and Finish Group asked questions and heard: -

- The Police has dealt with two generations who are homeless, e.g. father and son.
- Lots more Romanians are now homeless
- There is a need for staged support to house individuals, for example, a homeless person with an Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO)

PCSO Kutscher was thanked for his address.

### **(F) SHELTER**

G Everitt, Shelter, provided a written response to the Group's core questions which was noted.

### **(G) Neighbourhood Warden**

The Neighbourhood Warden Team Leader provided a written response to the Group's core questions which was noted.

## **4 ROUGH SLEEPERS COUNT**

Councillor J Lane advised that he had joined the Annual Rough Sleepers Count on the night of 21 February 2007. The Count met at 12.30am. Councillor Lane commented that in the daytime more individuals who are

perceived to be rough sleepers are present than actual rough sleepers at night. Rough Sleepers tend to bed down at around 2.30am.

When the Count went out at 1.30am it saw no rough sleepers but when they went out again later, the rough sleepers had begun to bed down. The Count went through the town centre area, Abington Park, South Bridge and Barrack Road. The encampment at the railway arches, was seen and one rough sleeper counted in a door stair well. Councillor Lane emphasised that it was raining and it was not long after the murder in Ash Street.

One individual was counted sleeping on a bus in the bus station. Access into the bus station and the buses is easy as both are open. However, a security guard did ask the Count for details of what it was doing.

The Count concluded around 4am and had counted four individuals plus one sleeping on the bus.

Counts will take place regularly on a quarterly basis.

## **5 TOWN CENTRE MANAGER'S REPORT**

G Owen, Town Centre Manager, referred to his previously circulated report emphasising the key issues.

The Task and Finish Group made comment, asked questions and heard:

- Retailers commented on the regular sight of rough sleepers around the town centre
- Regarding the area under the spiral staircase in the Grosvenor Centre where it was perceived to be housing a rough sleeper, the Grosvenor Centre Manager had written to NBC in this respect but had not received a response. However, the Town Centre Manager had had the area cleaned and cleared. A request had been put in to Asset Management for the installation of wiring and G Owen undertook to follow this up.

**The Chair suggested that the Town Centre Partnership ask the members of the Partnership if they are willing to donate funds to help alleviate the problem with rough sleepers in the town centre and the Grosvenor Centre.**

## **6 NHT'S PROTOCOLS FOR INDIVIDUALS LEAVING THE SERVICE**

C Manning, NHT, advised of the Service's Protocols for individuals leaving the Service.

He emphasised that where appropriate, service users should be discharged to primary care promptly as part of their recovery process. A Care Programme Approach (CPA) Review will be held with everyone involved in the individual's care before the service user is discharged from Northants Mental Health



Service and Learning Disability Service. He added however, that some individuals are never included in the Service, often, because their need is not high enough or they have been referred to the wrong Agency – the Mental Health Service will in such instances refer them correctly.

C Manning gave details of the Inpatient Discharge Process. A copy of the flowchart was circulated.

Northants Mental Health Trust is involved in a number of initiatives regarding Supporting People. It aims to keep patients for as short as time as therapeutically possible.

Northants Mental Health Trust supports individuals in their own homes and provides supervision to individuals to help them sustain their homes.

C Manning stressed that it is difficult to effectively intervene with individuals who are homeless and have mental health problems.

L Brede, Housing Needs Team Leader, advised that the housing application process now includes checks for mental health needs.

It was noted that there is no Protocol in place for the discharge of patients from St Andrews Hospital.

C Manning was thanked for his address.

## **7 REPORT BACK FROM MEETINGS WITH ROUGH SLEEPERS**

Councillor Allen advised that she had recently attended one of the Salvation Army's Rough Sleepers' Drop In Sessions. The Salvation Army made it nice and welcoming for rough sleepers and the Major had approximately 5-6 helpers. A notice on the wall stating that due to financial pressures the Salvation Army could only offer one cooked breakfast per client. Extra tea and toasts may however be available.

Around 24 rough sleepers came to the Drop In Session whilst Councillor Allen was present and just three were female. One prolific offender had commented that he felt trapped, he was unable to find work and in turn unable to find a home and felt let down by the system, especially as training had not been provided in prison.

One rough sleeper had recently been bereaved. Their partner had committed suicide. The individual was receiving help from the Maple Centre.

One rough sleeper had commented that their homelessness was due to a problem with housing benefit and accommodation. The person had had difficulty understanding the system.

A couple of rough sleepers seemed to have and portrayed a strong stance of desolation.

One rough sleeper had commented that he was addicted to illegal drugs. He was proud to have recently come off heroine but could not manage each day without `Crack`.

Rough sleepers often went from Drop In Centre to Drop In Centre for hot meals and drinks. After this session he would be visiting the Jesus Centre for a cup of tea.

A major point was that rough sleepers are not necessarily around the town centre but are often sleeping out in the surrounding housing estates.

The Drop In Centre was very valued by the rough sleepers in attendance.

Councillor Pritchard reminded the Group that she had attended the Barrack Road Cathedral's Soup run during December 2006, details of which were provided to the January 2007 meeting.

## **8 REPORT BACK FROM ROUGH SLEEPERS' WORKING GROUP**

L Brede advised the Group of issues that the Rough Sleepers' Working Group was investigating;

- Need for further hostels
- Rough Sleeper Database
- Housing Needs Advice

The main agenda items are around rough sleeping issues and individual cases.

The next meeting will be held on 28 February 2007 at 2pm and an invitation to attend was extended to the Task and Finish Group.

## **9 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Group received a press article on the reporting of rough sleeping from Local Authorities and desktop research undertaken by the Scrutiny Officer.

Councillor Pritchard advised that Reverend Wiseman, Faithworks, was keen to set up street Pastors who are volunteers that would travel the streets on a voluntary basis during the hours of 10am and 6pm liaising with rough sleepers and signpost them to the relevant Agencies. 15 individuals had expressed an interest and would join a 12-week training programme.

The Group asked that the `green booklet` that identifies the different Agencies responsible for rough sleeping issues be circulated to the Group. L Brede undertook to circulate copies.

## **10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as 19 March 2007 commencing at 6.15pm.

The meeting concluded at 20.50 hours

# The Salvation Army Homeless Drop-In Centre Questionnaire Results

## Appendix H

<b>Total Number of forms</b>	53											
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Percentage</b>								
	44	83.02	9	16.98								
<b>Age</b>	<b>16 - 25</b>		<b>26 - 35</b>		<b>36 - 60</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>61+</b>	<b>Percentage</b>		<b>Percentage</b>		<b>Percentage</b>
	2	3.77	11	20.75	38	71.70	2	3.77				
<b>Culture</b>	<b>British</b>		<b>Irish</b>		<b>African/ Caribbean</b>		<b>Eastern European</b>		<b>Asian</b>		<b>Other</b>	
	40	75.47	7	13.21	3	5.66	2	3.77	0	0	2	3.77
<b>Benefit</b>	<b>JSA</b>		<b>Income Support</b>		<b>Disability Allowance</b>		<b>Incapacity Benefit</b>		<b>Pension</b>		<b>Other</b>	
	17	32.08	21	39.62	13	24.53	11	20.75	0	0	1	1.89
<b>Main Reason for Homelessness</b>	<b>Asked/forced to leave home</b>		<b>Rough Sleeper</b>		<b>Refugee/ Asylum Seeker</b>		<b>Evicted from Housing</b>					
	12	22.64	27	50.94	1	1.89	11	20.75				
<b>Where did you sleep last night</b>	<b>Own accomodation</b>		<b>Hostel</b>		<b>*Street*</b>		<b>At a friends</b>					
	4	7.55	1	1.89	24	45.28	24	45.28				
<b>Do you usually sleep on the street</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>									
	41	77.36	12	22.64								
<b>Have you ever had your own Tenecy</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>									
	31	58.49	22	41.51								

# The Salvation Army Homeless Drop-In Centre Questionnaire Results

Survey Conducted between Wednesday 7th February - Wednesday 28th February

<b>Total Number of forms</b>	60											
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Percentage</b>								
	50	83.33	10	16.67								
<b>Age</b>	<b>16 - 25</b>		<b>26 - 35</b>		<b>36 - 60</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>61+</b>	<b>Percentage</b>		<b>Percentage</b>		<b>Percentage</b>
	2	3.33	13	21.67	43	71.67	2	3.33				
<b>Culture</b>	<b>British</b>		<b>Irish</b>		<b>African/Caribbean</b>		<b>Eastern European</b>		<b>Asian</b>		<b>Other</b>	
	46	76.67	7	11.67	4	6.67	2	3.33	0	0	2	3.33
<b>Benefit</b>	<b>JSA</b>		<b>Income Support</b>		<b>Disability Allowance</b>		<b>Incapacity Benefit</b>		<b>Pension</b>		<b>Other</b>	
	19	31.67	24	40.00	14	23.33	12	20.00	0	0	1	1.67
<b>Main Reason for Homelessness</b>	<b>Asked/forced to leave home</b>		<b>Rough Sleeper</b>		<b>Refugee/Asylum Seeker</b>		<b>Evicted from Housing</b>					
	16	26.67	29	48.33	1	1.67	12	20.00				
<b>Where did you sleep last night</b>	<b>Own accomodation</b>		<b>Hostel</b>		<b>*Street*</b>		<b>At a friends</b>					
	5	8.33	2	3.33	28	46.67	25	41.67				
<b>Do you usually sleep on the street</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>									
	45	75.00	15	25.00								
<b>Have you ever had your own Tenecy</b>	<b>Yes</b>		<b>No</b>									
	37	61.67	23	38.33								

### Inpatient Discharge Process

