Anderson, City & Yorkhill Area Partnership

Briefing Item: Homelessness, Rough Sleepers & Ukrainian Refugees

Summary of Key Points:

- The Council has statutory duties under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 to provide emergency accommodation to any household that it believes to be homeless.

- The commencement of the Public Health Emergency saw a rapid expansion in the need for temporary accommodation provision within the City. This expansion was largely met through increased use of bed and breakfast type accommodation and the leasing of approximately 500 additional properties for use as temporary furnished accommodation.

- The rapid expansion has enabled the Council to routinely discharge its statutory duty and extend public health protections to households with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) during the period of the public health emergency. In addition, the expansion of the provision of emergency accommodation has seen a sustained reduction in the level of rough sleeping in the City, with our commissioned rough sleepers outreach service routinely reporting rough sleeping in single figures. It must be noted that all eligible rough sleepers have access to emergency accommodation if they choose to access it. Daily engagement continues to encourage anyone rough sleeping to consider the offer of accommodation.

- There is also increasing evidence that the extension of the accommodation provision during the public health emergency has enabled considerable improvements in how people engage with treatment, care and resettlement pathways through in-reach work by health and social care services. Establishing a new Complex Needs Service, along with an improved partnership with the Third Sector and Police Scotland, has significantly improved retention rates within Glasgow HSCP services resulting in improved outcomes for our vulnerable homeless population.

- Glasgow HSCP and our partners have ensured that a range of services have been put in place to support the residents within hotels. These services include the provision of hot meals; physical and mental health services in-reach, the commissioning of Wheatley Care to provide onsite support to the residents along with training and support to staff. Training focussed on mental health first aid, suicide prevention, naloxone and harm reduction and de-escalation techniques. More recently, a dedicated team of Social Care Workers and Nursing staff from the Homelessness Service, the Complex Needs Service and Housing First Team has also been established to review the case management of all homeless household's resident in bed and breakfast and hotel accommodation.

- The Council continues to be committed to ending the use of bed and breakfast type accommodation for the provision of emergency accommodation. Glasgow HSCP have produced a temporary accommodation strategy that aims to phase out the use of bed and breakfast type accommodation over three years.

- Work to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation is highly reliant on Homelessness Services securing a continued increase in the number of settled lets for homeless households, improved outcomes in relation to prevention activities and improvements in void property management processes for temporary furnished flats.

- Due to the level of demand for settled accommodation for homeless households

Glasgow HSCP asked RSLs to provide 60% of all settled lets for 2022/23. However, it is unlikely that this will be achieved during this period despite the positive joint working which promoted a greater emphasis on earlier intervention, prevention and support ensuring tenancy sustainment wherever possible.

- The current cost of living crisis is also likely to undermine attempts to reduce bed and breakfast use, as more people may require homeless assistance and emergency accommodation. In addition, RSL partners have informed Glasgow HSCP that there has been an overall reduction in the availability of void properties as less people are moving home. This is also being exacerbated by longer void periods due to utility provider issues with meter appliances and some supply chain issues within the construction industry. These factors, taken together, may undermine progress with the reduction in bed and breakfast use.

Responding to War in Ukraine

- As Scotland's only immigration dispersal area, currently supporting approximately 5000+ asylum seekers, the city has a long history of offering humanitarian assistance to people fleeing violence and persecution.

- Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent commencement of the Scottish Government's humanitarian responses, Glasgow HSCP and the Council has been working closely with the Scottish Government ensure the city delivers a humanitarian response to the war in Ukraine. In particular, to support people who are seeking to come to Scotland to escape the conflict via a national visa scheme. Glasgow has since welcomed over 2500 Ukrainians with a requirement to ensure an infrastructure of support is available to those who require it. Public, private and voluntary sector organisations have worked closely together to ensure people have access to the full range of accommodation, health, welfare and education services. Considerable effort has also been implemented to support many people into employment.

- Whilst the City has significant experience of developing humanitarian responses the scale and speed of the response was unique and has required a significant resource commitment on the part of Glasgow HSCP, the Council and other public and Third Sector partners within the city.

- With the Scottish Government announcement of the departure of the MS Ambition by the end of March 2023 there is an acute need to secure alternative accommodation for 480 households. Plans are now well underway with the Scottish Government and other Local Authorities to secure alternative accommodation within Glasgow and across Scotland.

Briefing note prepared by: Jim McBride Ext: