Health & Wellbeing Board
18 November 2026
Rough Sleeping Programme
For Review and Consultation

Cabinet Member:
Cllr G Taylor, Housing & Homelessness

Local Councillor(s):

Senior Leadership Team:
S Crowe - Executive Director, Housing, Prevention and Communities

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Statutory Authority: Dorset Council

Report status: Public Choose an item.

1. Executive summary

1.1 The Government has recently launched the national **Rough Sleeping Programme**, delivering the Prime Minister's commitment to end rough sleeping and ensuring that everyone sleeping rough has access to a route off the streets before Christmas 2026.

1.2 The programme combines immediate interventions with a longer-term commitment to settled accommodation and intensive wraparound support for people experiencing the most entrenched forms of rough sleeping.

1.3 Dorset Council has already established a multi-agency response involving housing services, voluntary and community organisations, outreach providers, substance misuse services, and mental health services.

1.4 This partnership approach recognises that rough sleeping is not, just, a housing issue as individuals often have a range of complex needs, poor physical and mental health outcomes, social exclusion, and reduced life expectancy.

1.5 The immediate priority is to ensure that anyone sleeping rough in Dorset can access appropriate accommodation and support this winter, whilst developing sustainable pathways into longer-term housing solutions. Alongside this, work is underway to review the level of local need,

strengthen partnership arrangements, and explore opportunities for additional accommodation and support provision through future programme funding.

1.6 We believe that The Health and Wellbeing Board has a key role in supporting this agenda through system leadership, promoting collaboration across agencies, and ensuring rough sleeping remains a shared priority across, housing, social care, and health services.

1.7 This report provides an overview of the Government programme, outlines work undertaken by Dorset Council and its partners to date, and seeks the Board's support in promoting a coordinated, whole-system response to rough sleeping across Dorset.

2. **Recommendation(s)**

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

2.1 Note the Government's national Rough Sleeping Programme and its ambitions to provide an immediate route off the streets and longer-term settled accommodation for people experiencing rough sleeping.

2.2 Note the work already underway across Dorset Council and partner organisations to develop a coordinated local response.

2.3 Recognise rough sleeping as a significant health and wellbeing issue requiring sustained multi-agency collaboration.

2.4 Support partnership working across housing, health, social care, voluntary and community sector organisations to maximise opportunities arising from the programme.

2.5 Champion a prevention-focused approach that seeks to address the root causes of rough sleeping and homelessness.

2.6 Consider whether this Board should form part of an active governance structure, in particular, this initiative could sit very well as part of the role of the Healthy Places Subgroup, which could receive regular updates on progress and partner involvement.

3. Reason for the recommendation(s)

3.1 Rough sleeping has significant impacts on health, wellbeing, community safety, and wider public services. Individuals who sleep rough frequently experience multiple disadvantages, including poor physical health, mental ill-health, substance dependency, trauma, and social isolation.

3.2 The national Rough Sleeping Programme presents an opportunity for Dorset to strengthen existing partnership arrangements, improve outcomes for residents experiencing rough sleeping and secure additional investment to support both immediate and long-term solutions. Endorsement from the Health and Wellbeing Board will help reinforce the importance of a joined-up system response and ensure that health inequalities associated with rough sleeping remain a strategic priority

4. The report

4.1 Local Position

4.2 Dorset Council has a strong track record of partnership working to prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping. Through commissioned outreach services, voluntary sector provision, housing advice and support services, the Council and its partners have continued to engage with people experiencing rough sleeping across the county.

4.3 Whilst overall numbers remain relatively low compared with many urban authorities, individuals sleeping rough in Dorset often present with complex and multiple needs requiring coordinated intervention from a range of services. Access to affordable homes, mental health support, substance misuse treatment, and community-based support remain key challenges. It is also important to note that the pathway may not always be about the provision of a general affordable home, but, instead, a range of different types of accommodation as needs change.

4.4 Multi-Agency Partnership Response

4.5 In response to the national Rough Sleeping Programme, Dorset Council and partners have already undertaken significant preparatory work to establish our approach to the Governments stated policy objective.

4.6 The work has focused on increasing assessment, outreach, prevention, and accommodation capacity to ensure that people sleeping rough can be identified quickly and supported into suitable accommodation.

4.7 Key elements of the Dorset response developed to date include:

4.8 Establishment of a multi-agency Rough Sleeper Taskforce bringing together housing, outreach, and voluntary sector partners.

4.9 Development of a Night Assessment Centre model, supported through additional staffing and accommodation resources, based at “The Bus Shelter” in Weymouth.

4.10 Expansion of outreach and navigator capacity through partnership working with Alongside and other commissioned services.

4.11 Creation of specialist rough sleeper housing casework capacity within Dorset Council to go beyond traditional homeless case management, focusing on securing and sustaining permanent accommodation outcomes and supporting move-on arrangements.

4.12 Investment in prevention activity, including dedicated prevention worker capacity through the Lantern Trust.

4.13 Enhanced partnership arrangement with The Bus Shelter to strengthen emergency accommodation and out of hours support provision.

4.14 Provision of rent in advance and personal budgets to increase access to accommodation within the private rented sector.

4.15 Identification of accommodation capacity, staffing requirements and funding proposals to support delivery of the programme.

4.16 In September Dorset was allocated £1.1m of Government funding over three years to implement the programme. £703k in revenue and £438k in capital. The initial Dorset proposal outlines, initially, c£252,000 of revenue investment requirements across staffing, accommodation, and prevention activity, together with contingency provision to respond to emerging needs. The Government has now announced via a letter from the Deputy Prime Minister to Local Authorities, that the National Allocation will be doubled, with a clear expectation that a range of key partners are required to work together to provide long term solutions to Rough Sleeping. This additional funding will be made available from 2027/28. Dorset, has not, at the time of writing this report, been made aware of the revised funding.

4.17 We are working closely with MHCLG and are required to submit out final proposals for the initial phase (Routes off the street by Christmas) by 1st December.

4.18 This work provides a strong foundation for Dorset’s participation in the national programme and demonstrates the commitment of local partners to a coordinated housing-led approach.

5. **Accommodation Options currently being considered** A range of accommodation options will form part of the response.

5.1

Accommodation Type	Purpose	
Night Assessment Centre (The Bus Shelter, Weymouth)	Immediate assessment, stabilisation, and support planning	6
Bed & Breakfast Accommodation (Weymouth)	Emergency temporary accommodation	10
Spot Purchase Accommodation (Lyme Regis & Swanage)	Flexible emergency accommodation provision	3*
Private Rented Sector Tenancies	Settled accommodation supported by Rent in Advance and personal budgets	4
Direct Lets through Housing Register	Permanent accommodation solutions	9
Total Planned Capacity		**32**

*Subject to confirmation

6. Legal considerations

6.1 The final programme will be subject to MHCLG grant conditions.

7. Financial implications

7.1 The Government has indicated that funding will be made available to support delivery of the Rough Sleeping Programme, including immediate "route off the streets" provision and longer-term settled accommodation with intensive wrap around support. Dorset Council will continue to assess opportunities for external funding and will bring forward any specific financial implications as programme guidance and allocation arrangements become clearer.

8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

8.1 Not applicable

9. Well-being and health implications

9.1 People experiencing rough sleeping face some of the poorest health outcomes in society and often experience barriers to accessing mainstream healthcare services. Improving access to accommodation, healthcare, mental health support, and substance misuse services can significantly improve individual wellbeing outcomes, reduce health inequalities, and lessen demand on emergency and crisis services. The programme provides an opportunity to strengthen integrated support arrangements across Dorset.

9.2 Bringing this programme to the Health and Wellbeing Board is an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the programme, but more importantly to seek the assistance and buy in of key partners in tackling this very complex and multifaceted client group. In this respect the support and involvement of partners outside of Dorset Council is a key requirement if we are to meet the long-term commitment to ending Rough Sleeping.

9.3 We are asking the Board, not just to note this report, but to consider how partners can get meaningfully involved and help plan what happens after Christmas, and the long-term wrap around support envisaged by the Government's guidance.

9.4 In addition, and to strengthen the partnership approach does the Board feel that it can form part of an active reporting and governance arrangement to ensure we do not lose sight of our objectives?

10. Other implications

10.1 Not applicable

11. Risk implications

11.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium
Without effective partnership coordination there is a risk that opportunities presented through the national programme may not be fully realised, leading to poorer outcomes for individuals experiencing rough sleeping.

Residual Risk: Low-Medium
Risks can be mitigated through strong governance, effective partnership working, robust needs assessment and continued focus on prevention and early intervention. This version should fit well within Dorset Council's committee report format and position the Health and Wellbeing Board as a key strategic partner rather than the operational lead.

12. Equalities

12.1 The Government's Rough Sleeper Programme is designed to meet the short and long term needs of all people sleeping rough, irrespective of any characteristic that person may present as. The response in Dorset is geared towards a system which reflects those values and objectives. Due to the speed and changing nature of the funding and guidance Dorset has had to respond quickly to phase one of the programme and ensure partners are in

place to deliver this phase and seek approval from MHCLG by the 1st of December. A full EQIA will be produced as we fully develop our response and will be submitted in support of the wider programme.

13. Appendices

13.1 None

14. Background papers

14.1 The Rough Sleeping Programme - from the Government's GOV.uk website

15. Report sign-off

15.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Assurance & Governance (Monitoring Officer), the Director for Resources (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Cabinet Member(s)