

Formal Council Questions and Responses

Date: 10 November 2020

1 Question to the Leader : 2020/17 - Rough Sleeping in Newport

Councillor C Townsend asked:

Could the leader update us on the next steps for people sleeping rough in Newport?
What are the plans for those that were helped in the first lockdown period and why are rough sleepers telling us they are no longer being supported?
What plans are in place during this second phase for those sleeping rough?

There have been reports of rough sleepers being moved on by PCSOs for no reason.
Could the leader issue a statement making it clear that the Labour council condemns these actions and could she also tell us, under what powers the PCSO was acting when moving people on?

Councillor J Mudd responded:

Emergency accommodation continues to be provided for any rough sleepers identified and willing to engage with our services. Since the end of March, over 180 rough sleepers have been offered accommodation and rapid access to a wide range of support services, facilitated by increased funding from Welsh Government. Emergency accommodation has increased substantially to meet increased demand during the pandemic and many households have moved onto more permanent accommodation with our partner RSL's, the private rented and supported housing sectors. Outreach Services also continue to identify, support and accommodate any further rough sleepers. However, as I have advised Member colleagues on a number of occasions, homelessness and rough sleeping are extremely complex issues and the success of any support provided is always dependent on individuals positively engaging with us and our partners in a sustained way. A multi-agency rough sleeper coordination group oversees all services for rough sleepers across the city to ensure support is coordinated and that people can be accommodated and where necessary re-accommodated in line with WG and Public Health guidance. Officers are also working closely with WG and RSL partners, accessing WG funds to increase the capacity of move on accommodation and supported housing across Newport.

Clearly, I cannot comment on individual cases, but interactions between agencies and rough sleepers are often required to help people back into their agreed placements or onto a more positive and stable stage in their journey, which I am sure you will agree is a necessary step in helping people to move on from sleeping rough. I have been reassured by officers that all agencies are working in a positive way, and that any interactions between rough sleepers and agencies are managed sensitively and appropriately.