

**Subject:** Open Brighton's Homeless Shelters 356 Days a Year  
– Petition: Extract from the proceedings of the  
Council Meeting held on the 1 February 2018

**Date of Meeting:** 29 March 2018

**Report of:** Executive Lead for Strategy, Governance & Law

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**Wards Affected:** All

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

***Action Required of the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee***

To receive the item referred from the Council for consideration.

**Recommendations:** That the petition be noted and considered along with a report as detailed in Council resolution by the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee.

**The Petition:**

We the undersigned petition Brighton & Hove City Council to open homeless night shelters all year round (365 days).

In the meantime, we urge the council to conform to central government directions on opening SWEP shelters (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol). We understand this government requirement is not being met, with approximately £90,000 left unspent from previous years of SWEP budget.

Lead Petitioner – John Hadman

Additional Information

Why is this important?

Rough sleeping has almost doubled in the last year, but, the number of supported beds for homeless people has plummeted. There is also not enough affordable accommodation for people to move on to, making matters worse.

As a result, despite the goal of no second night out, rough sleepers are waiting an average of 12 weeks before some form of accommodation is provided. We therefore urge BHCC to fund resources to expand the amount of support accommodation available for homeless people all year round, not just when temperatures hit 0c and ensure that the existing budget available is spent.

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL****COUNCIL****4.30pm 1 FEBRUARY 2018****COUNCIL CHAMBER - HOVE TOWN HALL****MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Marsh (Chair), Simson (Deputy Chair), Allen, Atkinson, Barford, Barnett, Bell, Bennett, Brown, Cattell, Chapman, Cobb, Daniel, Deane, Druitt, Gibson, Gilbey, Greenbaum, Hamilton, Hill, Horan, Hyde, Inkpin-Leissner, Janio, Knight, Lewry, Littman, Mac Cafferty, Meadows, Mears, Miller, Mitchell, Moonan, Morgan, Morris, A Norman, K Norman, O'Quinn, Page, Peltzer Dunn, Penn, Phillips, Robins, Sykes, Taylor, C Theobald, G Theobald, Wares, Wealls, West and Yates.

**PART ONE****67 PETITIONS FOR COUNCIL DEBATE**

- 67.1 The Mayor stated that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at the council meeting. She had been made aware of one such petition which related to the provision of homeless shelters in the city. She also noted that there was an amendment to the covering report's recommendation from the Green Group.
- 67.2 The Mayor also noted that there was a Notice of Motion, Item, 72(2) on the agenda which related to the same subject, and she was therefore minded to take the item at the same time and to have one debate on the issue.
- 67.3 The Mayor then invited Mr. Hadman as the lead petitioner to present the petition.
- 67.4 Mr. Hadman thanked the Mayor and confirmed that the petition had 5,511 signatures and noted that this was more than the previous petition he had brought to the council last April. He believed that there was a need to address the situation of homelessness and rough sleeping in the city and noted that the Council's SWEP only operated in certain conditions and was not sufficient to resolve the matter. He questioned the lack of progress and noted there were a number of empty council properties that could be used as a night shelter. He also noted that the council had an objective to remove rough sleeping by 2020 and questioned how that target could be achieved. He suggested that the opening of the Brighton Centre as a temporary night shelter was not sufficient and more was needed to be done and hoped that this petition would result in action being taken.

- 67.5 Councillor Moonan thanked Mr. Hadman for the petition and stated that the opening of the Brighton Centre had been a cross-party initiative, which she believed was appropriate and was working well. She wished to thank the officers involved and all those who had volunteered to help make it operational. She also noted that councillors were looking to secure funding to enable a night shelter to be provided permanently and that resources had been identified in the Budget which was due to be considered on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February. She stated that SWEP took into account certain factors and it was difficult to predict the severity of the weather when planning ahead for the year. She stated that the Administration had prioritised the issue of rough sleeping and the Rough Sleeping Strategy was in place and beginning to take effect; to date 1,300 people had been helped to get off the streets; although it was recognised that numbers may increase.
- 67.6 Councillor Gibson moved an amendment on behalf of the Green Group requesting that a report be brought to the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee to identify resources to help prevent homelessness. He stated that rough sleeping was a huge concern in the city and had to be prioritised and action taken. The situation was getting worse with 174 rough sleepers currently in the city. He welcomed the petition and the additional resources that had been identified in the budget; as well as the work being undertaken by voluntary organisations to help address the situation. He also believed that more needed to be done to provide temporary accommodation and that the previous cuts to supported accommodation should be reconsidered. There was a need to provide shelter for 365 days a year and not just on a temporary basis.
- 67.7 Councillor Druitt formally seconded the amendment and reserved his right to speak later in the debate.
- 67.8 Councillor Moonan then proposed the joint Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda on behalf of the 3 Groups represented on the Council. She stated that the opening of the Brighton Centre as a temporary night shelter had made a positive contribution; providing up to 30 beds in a safe environment. She wished to thank the staff involved and volunteers who had enabled it to open and prove to be a success.
- 67.9 Councillor Mears formally seconded the joint motion and stated that she was happy to support the Green Group's amendment. She also wished to thank Mr. Hadman for his efforts to highlight the issue of homelessness and rough sleeping. In regard to the overall situation, she felt that there were too many strategies and not enough information being given to committee on how available funding was being utilised.
- 67.10 Councillor Gibson also seconded the joint motion and stated that he believed the joint working to date had been positive and had made an important start by using a council building. He also felt that the council should look to work more closely with local communities which had also taken the initiative to support rough sleepers. There was a need to expand Housing First and have shelters open 365 days a year.
- 67.11 Councillor Meadows stated that it was a difficult situation and needed to be addressed. She welcomed the actions taken by residents within the city and felt that these needed to be part of a wider strategy, given that thirty plus people were arriving in the city every week.

- 67.12 Councillor Simson stated that at the last Audit & Standards Committee she had asked for information on hidden homelessness and been informed that there was no data available. She was concerned that this issue was not being addressed and was in effect a time bomb that could impact at any moment and needed to be taken into consideration.
- 67.13 Councillor Druitt stated that he wished to pay tribute to Mr. Hadman who should be an inspiration to everyone. There was a huge amount of voluntary support in the city and this needed to be harnessed and the council should work with those volunteers to improve what was on offer to help those on the streets. The Green Group amendment took account of the fact that homelessness was a year round situation and that needed to be recognised.
- 67.14 Councillor Bell noted that funding to assist with homelessness was available and hoped that all parties could work together to ensure it was used effectively.
- 67.15 Councillor Penn stated that there was a housing crisis in the city and more work was needed to address the impact of Welfare Reforms and rent levels in the city of homelessness was going to be addressed.
- 67.16 Councillor Wealls stated that there was a need to improve how the council responded to cases, he was aware of an instance where rough sleeping had been reported but it took several days before anyone attempted to go to speak to the people, who had moved on by that time. He felt that more work was needed to ensure those agencies commissioned to support rough sleeping were taking action and using resources effectively.
- 67.17 Councillor Moonan welcomed the comments and stated that whilst the Green Group amendment could be accepted, it had un-costed ideas and needed to account for the overall budgetary position of the council. It would have helped if the proposals could have been discussed as part of the budgetary process; however she hoped that this important matter could be addressed on a cross-party basis and for difficult decisions to be taken collectively.
- 67.18 The Mayor thanked Mr. Hadman for attending the meeting and presenting his petition; and noted that the Green Group's amendment had been accepted. She therefore put the recommendations as amended to the vote which were carried.
- 67.19 **RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the petition is noted and referred to the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee for consideration at its meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2018; and
  - (2) That a report addressing the issues in this petition be submitted to Policy, Resources & Growth Committee which identifies resources that can be made available through the budget-setting process to prevent homelessness through:
    - 365 day provision of accommodation for rough sleepers with appropriate support services to enable rough sleepers to make a permanent transition

away from rough sleeping

- Reversing the cut in the supply of supported accommodation for rough sleepers made in the summer of 2015
- Expanding the supply of properties for use by Housing First and other move-on accommodation by buying and/or leasing suitable properties
- Working more in partnership with community volunteers to support and expand community initiatives to prevent rough sleeping so that we can meet the Council's goal of 'No second night out'

67.20 The Mayor then put the following Notice of Motion to the vote:

This Council:

1. Recognises the positive contribution of the Brighton Centre Winter Night Shelter in providing rough sleepers with both a welcoming, safe and warm environment, and assistance with a variety of health, housing and other issues, over the cold winter months.
2. Congratulates volunteers and staff for their work on the project above and beyond the call of duty.
3. Resolves to work together on a cross-party basis to tackle budgetary and logistical issues so that projects such as these, that reduce rough sleeping, can continue in future years.

67.21 The Mayor confirmed that the motion had been carried unanimously.

