

# SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL

## Report

**Subject** : Rough Sleeper Policy  
**Committee** : Environment & Climate Committee  
**Date** : 9 December 2024  
**Author** : Marc Read, Head of Environmental Services

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### 1. Report Summary:

- 1.1. This report seeks approval to adopt the Rough Sleeper Policy, which outlines the approach Salisbury City Council will take to manage rough sleeping on its land while supporting individuals experiencing homelessness.

### 2. Background:

- 2.1. Salisbury City Council recognises the growing concern of rough sleeping within its community. This policy reflects the Council's commitment to addressing the complex needs of rough sleepers while ensuring the concerns of residents and businesses are considered.
- 2.2. The policy follows the repeal of the Vagrancy Act 1824, signalling a shift from punitive measures to support-based interventions, aligning with national best practices for addressing homelessness.
- 2.3. Current estimates indicate a rise in rough sleeping nationally, with 3,898 individuals counted in autumn 2023, highlighting the urgent need for coordinated action.

### 3. Key Considerations:

- 3.1. The Rough Sleeper Policy identifies the following key areas of focus:
  - Compassionate Engagement: Ensuring all actions are humane and respect the dignity of rough sleepers.
  - Partnership Collaboration: Working with Wiltshire Council, law enforcement, charities, and health services to provide support.
  - Community Safety: Balancing support for rough sleepers with measures to address anti-social behaviour.
  - Clear Protocols: Providing guidance for council officers and residents on safe and effective engagement with rough sleepers.
- 3.2. The policy emphasises prevention, support, and community safety as strategic priorities to reduce rough sleeping and its associated challenges.

### 4. Guidelines & Maintenance:

- 4.1. **Guidelines for Council Officers:** The policy outlines clear steps for engaging with rough sleepers, including documentation, involving appropriate teams, and ensuring safety during interactions.
- 4.2. **Maintenance and Review:** Regular monitoring of council land, coordination with partners, and annual policy reviews ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

## 5. Recommendations

5.1. It is recommended that the Committee:

- Approve the adoption of the Rough Sleeper Policy.
- Endorse the continued collaboration with partner organizations to support individuals experiencing rough sleeping and address anti-social behaviour.

6. **Wards Affected:** The policy applies to all Salisbury City Council land and, by extension, all wards within the Council's jurisdiction.
7. **Background Papers:** Rough Sleeper Policy document outlining detailed actions, guidelines, and partner collaboration framework.

## 8. Implications:

- 8.1. **Financial:** Implementation costs will involve coordination efforts, with external funding or partnerships utilised where possible.
- 8.2. **Personnel:** Training for Council officers on the updated protocols and partnership engagement.
- 8.3. **Environmental Impact:** The policy indirectly supports sustainability through community well-being and reduced strain on public spaces.
- 8.4. **Equalities Impact:** Focuses on inclusive support, ensuring that rough sleepers are treated with dignity and respect while addressing diverse needs.



## **Rough Sleeper Policy**

### **Salisbury City Council Land**

Protocol Number	Version	Owner	Doc No.	PDF No.	Date Published	Review Due	Review Team

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Salisbury City Council recognises the complex needs of rough sleepers within the community while ensuring the concerns of residents and businesses are addressed. Our aim is to approach rough sleeping with compassion and dignity while balancing public health, safety, and environmental concerns.
- 1.2 This policy establishes guidelines for handling rough sleepers on Council land, outlining how we collaborate with partner agencies to provide support, whilst ensuring appropriate action is taken to address anti-social behaviour where necessary.
- 1.3 The estimated number of rough sleepers in autumn 2023 was 3,898, representing a rise for the second consecutive year, although still below the peak of 2017. Rough sleepers often face violence and significant health disparities, including mental health challenges and barriers to accessing services such as healthcare, housing, and employment.

## 2. **Policy Objective**

2.1 This policy aims to:

- Provide a humane and respectful approach to rough sleeping on Council land.
- Collaborate effectively with Wiltshire Council, law enforcement, and charity organizations to prevent and reduce rough sleeping.
- Address anti-social behaviour associated with rough sleeping in a balanced and appropriate manner.
- Provide clear guidance for Council officers and the public on how to engage with rough sleepers.

## 3. **Legal Framework**

3.1 Historically, rough sleeping has been criminalized under the Vagrancy Act 1824, which allowed authorities to fine or move on individuals found sleeping rough. In 2022, Parliament voted to repeal this act, though it remains in force until officially enacted. Salisbury City Council advocates for the respectful treatment of individuals experiencing homelessness and will prioritize support over enforcement, except where safety concerns necessitate intervention.

## 4. **Strategic Priorities**

4.1 To address rough sleeping effectively, Salisbury City Council has developed the following strategic priorities:

- **Prevention:** Work with Wiltshire Council and other partners to prevent rough sleeping through early intervention and support services.
- **Support and Rehabilitation:** Provide assistance to individuals sleeping rough, helping them access services that support recovery and stability.
- **Community Safety:** Address anti-social behaviour related to rough sleeping, ensuring that the safety and welfare of both rough sleepers and the community are safeguarded.

## **5. Guidelines for Engaging with Rough Sleepers**

### **5.1 Initial Actions for Council Officers**

- **Do Not Approach Alone:** Rough sleepers may have mental health challenges or weapons for self-defence. Engage cautiously and ensure safety.
- **Document the Situation:** Record the location, any identifiable characteristics of the individual or site (such as tent colour or litter), and use tools like What3Words to provide accurate location data.
- **Photography:** If safe to do so, take a photograph of the area.
- **Report to Management:** Inform your line manager as soon as possible and follow internal reporting procedures.

### **5.2 Further Actions**

- **Notify StreetScene and CCTV Manager:** The StreetScene team may need to clean affected areas, and the CCTV Manager should be informed to aid in coordinating with partner agencies.
- **Inform the Rough Sleepers Team:** Contact the Wiltshire Council Rough Sleepers Team at [Roughsleeperteam@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Roughsleeperteam@wiltshire.gov.uk).
- **Contact StreetLink:** Report rough sleepers to StreetLink to connect them with local services.
- **Involve Police if Necessary:** If the rough sleeper appears to be under 18 or in immediate danger, contact the police on 101 or 999.

## **6. Roles & Responsibilities**

### **6.1 Salisbury City Council**

- **Monitoring:** Regularly monitor Council land for instances of rough sleeping and document observations.
- **Coordination:** Support Wiltshire Council, charities, and outreach services to provide rough sleepers assistance.

- **Awareness:** Raise public awareness about rough sleeping and available support services, encouraging compassionate action from residents.

## 6.2 **Community Responsibilities**

- **Avoid Direct Confrontation:** Residents should avoid approaching rough sleepers directly and instead report their observations to Salisbury City Council or Wiltshire Council.
- **Report Incidents:** Residents can report concerns about rough sleepers, especially if immediate assistance is required.
- **Provide Information on Support Services:** When safe to do so, offer rough sleepers information about local shelters and services.

## 7. **Roles & Responsibilities**

7.1 Salisbury City Council will collaborate with the following partners to support rough sleepers and address related challenges:

- **Wiltshire Council and Housing Authorities:** To facilitate access to emergency housing and longer-term accommodation solutions.
- **Charities and Outreach Teams:** To provide essential services such as food, healthcare, and counselling to rough sleepers.
- **Local Health Services:** To ensure rough sleepers receive necessary medical attention, both physical and mental.
- **Law Enforcement:** To manage anti-social behaviour appropriately while ensuring that enforcement remains a last resort.

## 8. **Reporting & Review**

- **Incident Reporting:** All incidents involving rough sleepers must be documented and reported to the CCTV Manager.
- **Policy Review:** This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective, relevant, and aligned with best practices for supporting rough sleepers and maintaining community safety.

## 9. **Further Information & Resources**

- **StreetLink:** Visit [www.streetlink.org.uk](http://www.streetlink.org.uk) or call 0300 500 0914 to help connect rough sleepers to local services.
- **Shelter England:** Visit [www.shelter.org.uk](http://www.shelter.org.uk) for information and legal advice on homelessness.
- **Salisbury City Council Contacts:**
  - **Name:** Keith Jackson – CCTV Manager
  - **Email:** [kjackson@salisburycitycouncil.gov.uk](mailto:kjackson@salisburycitycouncil.gov.uk)
  - **Phone:** 07849088205

Salisbury City Council is committed to working with its partners to ensure that all residents, including rough sleepers, are treated with compassion, respect, and dignity.