

SUBJECT:	Severe Weather Emergency Protocol
MEETING:	Adult Select
DATE:	24th October 2017
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To consider the attached Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) which details the Council's proposed response towards rough sleepers in times of severe weather conditions and make recommendations as appropriate (**see Appendix 1**).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 Consider the implications of rough sleeping and the role of the Council, particularly during periods of severe weather
- 2.2 To recommend to Cabinet that the proposed Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is adopted with immediate effect.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Although there is no strict definition of what counts as "severe weather", it is proposed the Council will adopt a common sense approach and identify any weather that could increase the risk of serious harm to people rough sleeping, this can include extreme cold, wind or rain. For the purposes of the protocol a rough sleeper is as defined as:
- 3.1.1 People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting in/on or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People bedded down in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or "bashes").
- 3.2 Every year Local Authorities have to report to Welsh Government on the number of rough sleepers there are within their area. Data collection takes the form of two counts, a one night count and a count over a period of time.
- 3.2.1 One Night Count - this takes place on a pre determine date and in known geographical areas where rough sleepers are known to bed down or likely to bed down. During 2015 the count took place on the 25th November between the hours of 11pm to 3 where one person was identified as sleeping rough. For 2016/17 the count took place on the 4th November between the hours of 10pm to 5am. No rough sleepers were identified.
- 3.2.2 Count Period – data is collected over a two week period with assistance from the voluntary sector, faith groups, local businesses/residents, health and substance misuse agencies, and the police. For the winter of 2015/16 this took place during 2nd – 15th November and identified five people sleeping rough. For the winter 2016/17 and took place during the 10th – 23rd October and identified one person as sleeping rough (more information can be found [here](#)).
- 3.3 There is an expectation within Welsh Government that local authorities should ensure that there is provision in place to address the needs of rough sleepers in their area during period of severe weather conditions, particularly so during the winter months.
- 3.4 It is aimed to introduce what is known as the 'Severe Weather Emergency Protocol' or SWEP from winter 2017. The protocol will ensure that any verified rough sleeper with or without a

local connection is found accommodation during periods of severe weather, particularly when extreme cold temperatures for extended spells can threaten their safety and wellbeing.

3.5 Who is Eligible?

3.5.1 Any person sleeping rough on the streets in the extreme cold. This includes those without recourse to public funds such as A10 nationals from the EU accession. This states the rough sleeper must:

- be at risk if they continue to sleep rough during the course of the severe weather
- have nowhere to sleep indoors during the course of the severe weather (Indoors does not include cars, sheds or garages)
- agree to the assistance offered by the Council

3.6 The Process

3.6.1 The protocol is triggered by a weather forecast from the Met Office predicting three consecutive nights, or more, of a temperature of zero degrees Celsius or lower. For other forms of extremes of weather, for example wind and rain, the Council will take a pragmatic approach based upon meteorological warnings designated red and the likelihood of serious harm occurring because of extended periods of rough sleeping before triggering the protocol.

3.6.2 As soon as the protocol is triggered, the duty Housing Options Officer will contact the relevant organisations both external and internal agencies, to advise that SWEP is in place, with details of who to contact if they identify any rough sleepers.

3.6.3 If an identified rough sleeper meets the above criteria they will be offered emergency accommodation, which is likely to be B & B, for the duration of the severe weather.

4. OPTIONS:

4.1 Option 1: To do nothing.

4.2 Option 2 To adopt the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol. This option is recommended.

5. OPTIONS EVALUATION

5.1 Option 1: To do nothing: To adopt this option would be contradictory to the expectations of Welsh Government and could mean that rough people are at risk of serious of harm during periods of severe weather conditions.

5.2 Option 2: To adopt: By adopting the protocol it will provide the framework in which to establish when severe weather conditions are expected and to plan in advance the appropriate response to prevent serious harm occurring.

6. REASONS:

6.1 The Welsh Government has a long term objective to end the need for anyone to sleep rough and expects all Local Authorities to implement a written cold weather plan stating their arrangements to give assistance in periods of cold and/or severe weather.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

7.1. In the event of a period of severe weather, the Council should expect take-up and, therefore, will incur costs of approximately £40-50 per person per night, although applicants may be eligible for housing benefit. Any related costs will need to be funded from the Housing & Communities cost centre.

8. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 No implications have been identified in respect of this report. The Equalities Impact and Sustainable development assessments are attached (See Appendix 2).

9. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The policy supports the Council's Safeguarding policy. There are no implications identified See Appendix 2).

10. CONSULTEES: Cabinet Member for Enterprise; Chief Officer for Enterprise; Head of Planning, Housing & Place Shaping; Shelter, Housing Associations

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

12. AUTHOR: Stephen Griffiths, Strategy & Policy Officer (Housing & Communities)

13. CONTACT DETAILS:

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Appendix 1

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol for Rough Sleepers

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In times of severe weather conditions, Monmouthshire County Council recognises that rough sleepers are particularly vulnerable to harm and death and it should therefore make provision to prevent this from happening.
- 1.2 As there is no strict definition of what counts as “severe weather”, Monmouthshire County Council will adopt a common sense approach and put measures in place to identify any weather that could increase the risk of serious harm to people sleeping rough. Severe weather can include extreme cold, wind or rain.
- 1.3 This document sets out the arrangements that Monmouthshire County Council will put into place to ensure that people sleeping rough are not at risk of dying during extreme cold and severe weather and is known as the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP).
- 1.4 The protocol defines a rough sleeper as:
 - 1.4.1 People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting in/on or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People bedded down in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or “bashes”)

2. Purpose of the Protocol

- 2.1 The purpose of the protocol is to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to move rough sleepers from the streets and in to a place of shelter if it is believed that they are at risk of dying due to sleeping rough during extreme cold and severe weather conditions.

3. When are the protocol arrangements triggered?

- 3.1 The Duty Housing Options Officer will check weather forecasts on a daily basis by using the [Meteorological Office website](#).
- 3.2 For periods of extreme cold the protocol is triggered when the night time temperature is predicted to be zero degrees Celsius or below for three consecutive nights for Monmouthshire.
- 3.3 For other forms of extremes of weather, for example wind and rain, the Council will take a pragmatic approach based upon meteorological warnings designated red and the likelihood of serious harm occurring because of extended periods of rough sleeping before triggering the protocol.

- 3.4 As soon as the protocol is triggered, the duty Housing Options Officer will contact the relevant organisations both external and internal agencies, to advise that SWEP is in place, with details of who to contact if they identify any rough sleepers.

4. Who is eligible for Help?

- 4.1 Any person sleeping rough on the streets in the extreme cold. This includes those without recourse to public funds such as A10 nationals from the EU accession states.
- 4.2 The rough sleeper must:
- be at risk if they continue to sleep rough during the course of the severe weather
 - have nowhere to sleep indoors during the course of the severe weather (Indoors does not include cars, sheds or garages or any building not designed for habitation)
 - agree to the assistance offered by the Council
- 4.3 Many entrenched rough sleepers may be wary of services and less likely to engage. The extreme cold weather increases the risk of death or serious illness to people who sleep rough. Given this, a refusal to accept assistance during this time may be grounds to trigger referrals to other services, such as for mental health assessments.
- 4.4 In rare circumstances we may refuse to accommodate someone if it is considered too high risk to place that person into B&B, for example, on the advice of police, probation or mental health services or when an individual is aggressive, violent or threatening violence. In such circumstances, this will be discussed with our Housing Options Manager and clearly recorded.

5. Procedure

- 5.1 If the rough sleeper meets the above criteria they will be offered emergency accommodation which is likely to be B & B accommodation for the duration of the severe weather.
- 5.2 Housing Options Team will manage the emergency accommodation bookings and will place rough sleepers they become aware of into emergency accommodation during the time that the SWEP is in operation. They can be contacted on 01633 644644 both during office hours and outside of office hours.
- 5.3 The accommodation will be confirmed before midday on a day to day basis.
- 5.4 The weather forecast will be checked daily and once the minimum temperature is predicted to have risen above zero degrees Celsius, emergency accommodation will no longer be provided.
- 5.5 On cessation of the protocol Housing Options will work with those who have been temporarily accommodated under the protocol to identify accommodation options and to minimise where possible people returning to the streets.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The cost of providing emergency accommodation during the SWEP will be covered from existing Council resources although applicants will be supported to apply for housing benefit.

7. Monitoring and Review

- 7.1 The following information will be recorded and used to monitor the extent of rough sleeping in the borough:
- Number and composition of rough sleeper households.
 - Number of nights accommodated for each household.
 - The cost of emergency accommodation per night for each household.
- 7.2 This Protocol will be reviewed on an annual basis. This will be carried out in consultation with our key stakeholder partner organisations working with rough sleepers.



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Future Generations Evaluation (includes Equalities and Sustainability Impact Assessments)





Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Stephen Griffiths Phone no: 01633 644455 E-mail: stephengriffiths@monmouthshire.gov.uk	Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal Severe Weather Emergency Protocol. The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) details the Council's proposed response towards rough sleepers in times of severe weather conditions
Name of Service Housing & Community Services	Date Future Generations Evaluation form completed 11 th October 2017


1. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal.

Well Being Goal	How does the proposal contribute to this goal? (positive and negative)	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	A neutral contribution.	
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	A neutral contribution	

Well Being Goal	How does the proposal contribute to this goal? (positive and negative)	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	It positively contributes to the health of rough sleepers through the provision of good quality accommodation during times of severe weather. It also provides an opportunity to engage with rough sleeps and offer support for them to access more permanent and stable accommodation.	
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	By increasing engagement with rough sleepers and being able to provide support this will reduce the need for people to resort to rough sleeping	Through the provision of official sites both transit and permanent sites.
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	By increasing engagement with rough sleepers and being able to provide support this will reduce the need for people to resort to rough sleeping and provides the opportunity for the rough sleeper to be better integrated into the general community as a whole.	
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	A neutral contribution	

2. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	How does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle?	What has been done to better to meet this principle?
 <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The offer of accommodation during periods of severe weather conditions will meet the short term need of the rough sleeper but it is the engagement process and support that address their longer term future by enabling them to address their long term accommodation needs.</p>	
 <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>Yes through a homelessness provider group</p>	
 <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>As above.</p>	
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	

Sustainable Development Principle	How does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle?	What has been done to better to meet this principle?
<div data-bbox="107 229 277 399"><p data-bbox="118 363 266 399">Integration</p></div> <p data-bbox="293 229 481 478">Positively impacting on people, economy and environment and trying to benefit all three</p>	<p data-bbox="517 229 927 260">This requires further consideration.</p>	

3. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics? Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	None	None	
Disability	None	None.	
Gender reassignment	None	None	
Marriage or civil partnership	None	None	
Race	none	None	
Religion or Belief	None	None	
Sex	None	None	
Sexual Orientation	None	None	
Welsh Language	None	None	

4. **Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on important responsibilities of Corporate Parenting and safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect either of these responsibilities?** For more information please see the guidance note <http://hub/corporatedocs/Democratic%20Services/Equality%20impact%20assessment%20and%20safeguarding.docx> and for more on Monmouthshire's Corporate Parenting Strategy see <http://hub/corporatedocs/SitePages/Corporate%20Parenting%20Strategy.aspx>

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	None	<i>No negative impacts</i>	
Corporate Parenting	None	No negative impacts	

5. **What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?**

Rough Sleeper Counts

- 6. SUMMARY:** As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

The main positive benefits of this policy are: The safety and wellbeing of rough sleepers

The main negative impacts are: None identified to date

- 7. Actions.** As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable. Yes

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible	Progress
Submit to Cabinet	November / December	Stephen Griffiths	

- 8. Monitoring:** The impacts of this proposal will need to be monitored and reviewed. Please specify the date at which you will evaluate the impact, and where you will report the results of the review. – Not Applicable

The impacts of this proposal will be evaluated on:

Not Applicable