

28 November 2017

Rough Sleeping: The City Conversation

Our vision

To ensure that nobody has to sleep rough on the streets of Oxford

Some possible objectives ...

- Maximise community buy-in
- Work together
- Learn from Manchester - get them to show us what they've done
- Work in the open - not concealing information in our own organisation's interest
- Make sure the big players are involved, including businesses, the Universities and individual colleges
- Consensus that rough sleeping should not happen and that it can be avoided

Our common ground / core principles

While rough sleeping remains, we believe that the following could provide some guiding principles for anyone who is concerned about the problem and wants to help address this.

BUT more time is needed to consider these, add to and / or amend them and get the views of other people on what the common ground for the partnership should be.

Proposed at the City Conversation:

- **People are safer off the streets** - Rough sleeping is harmful to individuals & society. We should focus our efforts on helping individuals to access support and accommodation away from the streets.
- **Rough sleepers need shelter and support** - Responses need to involve housing AND appropriate support.
- **Everyone can help** – Everyone including individuals and organisations can do something to help. We need to work with everyone has to offer and build on strengths.
- **We are better together** - All parties, including those not currently involved, should work together in a co-ordinated way to deliver the vision.
- **Lived experience matters** - Homeless people and those who have experienced homelessness need to be part of and help form the solution.

- **Small change should deliver big change** - Giving money directly to individuals is unhelpful and potentially dangerous. It's better to donate to the many homelessness organisations working in the field and we should make this easier to do.

Additional principles we need to talk more about:

- "Rough sleeping is unacceptable"
- "Every voice should be heard"
- "Prevention is better than cure"
- "People need to help people achieve long term, sustainable solutions, eg. by helping them into work"
- "We should do no harm"
- "We should build on small steps"

Next steps

The city conversation should continue towards agreeing a Rough Sleeping Charter for Oxford [by April 2018] that provides guiding principles for all concerned to help address the problem.

This should aim to involve people from all of the following groups:

- People with lived experience of rough sleeping and homelessness
- Homelessness organisations and service providers
- Other charitable groups and voluntary organisations
- Businesses
- The universities and individual colleges
- Students
- Faith groups and institutions
- Public bodies including local authorities, Thames Valley Police and the NHS
- Politicians including councillors and MPs
- Members of the public
- Schools and colleges of further education

It should explore in more detail the following issues:

1. Prevention
2. Community engagement - information, advice and education, how you can help
3. More accommodation & support - including emergency provision, "move on" accommodation, and making sure people have access to welfare benefits
4. Listen to people with lived experience
5. Lobbying for change
6. Data gathering
7. Resilience of the sector - makes sure it is properly funded, looked after and operating in the best possible way/not duplicating

8. Enlist the media and consider a social media strategy

It will be overseen by a small, time-limited steering group of people from the groups represented here today, including at least one person with lived experience.

This will be convened by a third party organisation which can take the City Conversation forward and can command the confidence of the diverse community of interest in this issue, such as the Oxfordshire Community Foundation.

Oxford City Council will write up and share all the feedback from the event and assist with the process of identifying a third party organisation to take the City Conversation forward.