

## **EXECUTIVE COMMENTARY TO HOUSING AND HOMES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: ROUGH SLEEPING & PREVENTION**

We would like to thank the members of the Housing and Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee and other contributors for this informative report on rough sleeping which to many, highlights the most visible form of homelessness in our city.

Whilst we all acknowledge that rough sleeping is a very complex issue, and that not everyone seen on the streets may be homeless, it is even more important that together with rough sleepers, partner agencies, businesses and voluntary agencies that we all work together to understand and respond to the many challenges and opportunities highlighted in this report.

There is a clear recognition that the increasing numbers of rough sleepers is a national problem and that Birmingham is already working well with a wide and increasing number of partners.

The report is extremely timely given the development of city's Housing Strategy and Council's Homelessness Strategy, where preventing homelessness and tackling rough sleeping will be prominent.

We know there is much more we can do to ensure no-one needs to sleep on the street and we therefore welcome the report and recommendations, in particular that we commit to a 'no wrong door' approach for the delivery of homeless prevention and a 'no second night out' objective for rough sleepers.

We are pleased that a number of improvements have already been made during the inquiry, such as remodelling existing provision of accommodation to support rough sleepers with dogs and provision for couples. We have also been exploring the provision of short-term night shelter opportunities, with existing providers, as well as the use of temporary homelessness units that can be located safely and appropriately in the city.

We have already established a Rough Sleeping Multi-agency Taskforce for the city centre to be launched in mid-June and the new West Midlands Mayor has identified homelessness and rough sleeping as one of his priorities.

Early conversations have taken place with officers from DCLG about Birmingham being a test area for the delivery of a Housing First programme to evaluate its effectiveness in the U.K.

We will continue to work with rough sleepers and all of our partners to learn of best practice and embed suggested improvements in our service going forward.

Cllr Peter Griffiths

Cabinet Member Housing & Homes

Cllr Sharon Thompson

Rough Sleeping & Homelessness Ambassador