

Council – 20 December 2017

**Public questions and answers:**

**1. From Mr Southgate to Councillor Ewart-James, Cabinet Member for Housing**

With reference to the annual Shepway 'homelessness count', can the council please state which areas of Shepway will be (or have been) inspected? Furthermore, can the council disclose how this data is used? (For instance, informing funding for support services etc.)

**ANSWER:**

Throughout the year, Shepway Housing Officers and other agencies such as Porchlight, the Rainbow Centre etc keep in contact with rough sleepers and thus are aware of their location. Periodically Shepway Council undertakes a rough sleeper count. Sometimes this is an estimate however this year officers were out between 2.00 am – 5.00 am on the 20th November 2017 to determine a more accurate figure. Based upon information of where rough sleepers were known to be, the areas covered were Folkestone, Hythe and Cheriton, excluding the Marsh area, finding 16 verified rough sleepers in total. Of those 16, 4 were non UK passport holders and were EI nationals seeking work, and two had no connection with Shepway.

This information is reported back to the DCLG (Department for Communities and Local Government) who use the data to inform and shape legislation, and forms part of a complex calculation drawing information from multiple sources to determine the amount of targeted funding allocations for local authorities. This is administered through the allocation of specific grant funding, for example the New Burdens and the Funding Flexible Homeless Grant, both of which used this data in part to determine the final grant allocation to the Council.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

The Mayor of London had changed the severe weather policy meaning it would be implemented after 1 day at freezing temperatures rather than 3. Did Shepway have any intention of doing the same?

**ANSWER:**

Shepway were reviewing the SWEP policy, but it was not yet confirmed what the changes would be.

**2. From Mr Rylands to Councillor Dearden, Cabinet Member for Finance**

In Report Number AuG/17/11 which went before the Audit & Governance Committee on the 29/11/17 at page 10 of the Report

2.5 Special Projects review 2016/17 it states:

A previous audit of creditors showed retrospective orders for the Council as a whole was 20%. As a result an email was sent to Heads of Service and retrospective orders are now being monitored by the Finance department on a monthly basis. Figures for October 2016 to April 2017 show that retrospective orders, overall, have reduced to a range of 8% to 15%

What does 20% equal as a number eg 100, 1000 and what amount in £'s did it represent?

**ANSWER:**

The figures quoted in the report represented the first 6 months of the 2016/17 financial year. At that time, the average number of retrospective orders per month was 55 with an average value per month of £498,753. This included some significant areas of spending within the council and also includes the HRA with major spend on repairs to council stock. To put this into context, this compares with an average monthly number of Purchase Orders correctly prepared of 199 with an average value of £4,455,985. Therefore the financial value of those late PO's is approximately 10% of the total. I would emphasise of course that although the PO's are retrospective, invoices are not passed without a PO and therefore the risk of any fraud or misappropriation is very limited.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

Please provide the figure for retrospective PO's and the value for the Strategic Development Team.

**ANSWER:**

This answer would be provided separately, after the meeting.