

Tackling outdoor sleeping – more money for local Councils

I am glad the government has announced new measures and money to reduce sleeping on our streets. People should never have to sleep outside, especially when it so cold and wet. West Berkshire Council will receive £69,585 for Homelessness Support next year, and £104,834 to help homelessness prevention. Wokingham Council will receive £338,056 for Homelessness Support and £65,253 for Homelessness prevention.

These sums are proportionate to the level of rough sleeping we find in our area. It is a much greater problem in parts of London, where for example the Borough of Newham will receive £10.7m under the two headings to deal with their much larger problem. Other London Boroughs also receive several millions each reflecting their higher level of need.

I look forward to the local Councils adding these sums to their existing housing and social service budgets., Very often the underlying problem for a rough sleeper is wider than the immediate absence of a roof over their heads. It requires help to be offered to deal with addictions or to help them find work. The policy is for everyone to have the option of a hostel place or temporary accommodation, though of course the authorities cannot make someone take up such an offer. If you do meet someone with no shelter to go to please tell them that the Council is there with ways to help.