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Cllr Yvonne Allan, Housing Convener – Housing,
Communities & Infrastructure Committee
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28 June 2018

Dear Councillors,

You will be aware that the Scottish Government has set out bold ambitions to bring about a step change to end homelessness in Scotland, and I am committed to taking this programme of work forwards in partnership with all local authorities in a way that is responsive and flexible to different local circumstances.

Last November, following recommendations from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, I agreed to provide £70,000 of Scottish Government funding to Aberdeen Cyrenians to establish an outreach service in Aberdeen to work with people sleeping rough through the course of last winter. Given the initial information received by my officials on the impact of this service, with small amounts of additional resource allowing for significant breakthroughs with highly vulnerable individuals, I agreed to provide funding to extend this service by a further four months to June 2018 to enable work to take place with Council officials, and with Aberdeen Cyrenians, to evaluate the impact and explore options for maintaining this service, or similar, for the longer term.

I understand the full evaluation of the impact of the service is not yet published. However, given the early information I have had sight of on the positive impact of the service on very vulnerable individuals, I was surprised and disappointed to learn that Aberdeen City Council have not identified the provision of outreach services for people sleeping rough as an initiative that should be funded as part of their homelessness service.

Given the circumstances I have agreed to further extend the funding for the outreach service, to ensure there is not a "cliff edge" for people being supported. However, this can

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only be an interim measure, as the statutory responsibility to provide homelessness services rests with you as the local authority. I would be grateful if you could now provide me with further information on what arrangements are in place to support people sleeping rough in Aberdeen, your planning around the future provision of outreach services in the city – particularly in the run up to winter 2018-19, and why you felt that the Cyrenians' outreach service no longer required support. My officials will also be happy to discuss if this would be useful.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,
Kevin Stewart

KEVIN STEWART

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