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Councillor Jenny Laing
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10 August 2018

Dear Jenny,

Thank you for your letter of 17 July in response to my letter of 28 June about assertive outreach support for rough sleepers in Aberdeen. This is part of the Scottish Government's ambition to bring about a step change to end homelessness in Scotland, an aim which I am sure you support.

I am pleased to hear that Aberdeen City Council intends to incorporate assertive outreach support as part of your new Housing Support Framework and Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans. However, I am surprised by the indication in your letter that you consider that the Assertive Outreach Service, which has been successfully established in the City this winter, could only be continued by varying current outreach contracts with Aberdeen Cyrenians.

I would be interested to know a bit more of the detail around that decision as I am concerned about the potential detrimental impact on the outreach service overall. If funds were redirected away from existing services how would this meet the needs of those at risk of rough sleeping?

As I mentioned in my previous letter, our decision to extend the funding for the assertive outreach service in Aberdeen was an interim measure in response to its success and to ensure there was not a "cliff edge" for people being supported.

As your local authority has the statutory responsibility to provide homelessness services it is, of course, a decision for the Council to fund a continuation of the assertive outreach service. However, I would expect such a decision to follow an assessment of its impact and contribution to meeting the needs of rough sleepers in the city. I note from your letter that you have still to conclude your own evaluation which doesn't, on the face of it, reassure me about the timing or basis of the Council's decision.

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Perhaps therefore it would be helpful to arrange a meeting with my officials so that we can gain a better understanding of the Council's decision and overall plans.

Yours aye,

Kevin

KEVIN STEWART

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