

Civic Offices
Guildhall Square
Portsmouth
Hampshire
PO1 2AB

04/11/2020

Dear Fort Roche,

Supporting Rough Sleepers

We are writing to thank you on behalf of the city for the magnificent effort you have all put in over the past few, difficult months. When we are all worried about overcoming the next hurdle, it is easy to forget what we have achieved together.

As you know, last March Government told councils to give all rough sleepers and street homeless safe, secure accommodation in a few days. Although the idea of 'everybody in' has been a dream of ours for ages, we know the pressure you all felt in doing it to that timescale. The effort you put in to get that accommodation ready and operational is phenomenal. Your actions changed lives forever and you should all be proud of that.

However, we all knew that could not be permanent. But it did have an impact. So, as lockdown eased and the Council considered what to do next, your efforts meant we could show the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) that we could deliver something longer lasting: a more sustainable accommodation model tailored to the needs of those we had supported.

Your work meant Portsmouth received the seventh biggest interim funding allocation in England: more than £1.5m. We know setting up that accommodation and the support that has to go with it has been challenging and required extraordinary effort. On behalf of the city, we are grateful.

We now await news on the longer term funding from the MHCLG which we hope will provide the means to secure accommodation and support through to March 2024. A separate bid for additional health based support will also go a long way to realising the ambitions we all want for our city.

We are by no means out of the woods in terms of the fight against the Covid-19 virus and there are likely to be ongoing significant challenges. However, when we look back, the partnership working around rough sleepers will be one of the few bright spots and one we rightly all should be proud of.

We have a once-in-a-lifetime chance to end the scourge of rough sleeping. Thanks to your hard work and dedication, this city is taking it. For that, we thank you.

Regards



Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson
Leader of Portsmouth City Council



Cllr. Darren Sanders
Cabinet Member for Housing and Preventing Homelessness



Cllr Steve Pitt
Deputy Leader of Portsmouth City Council