



## COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2006

### Question under Council Procedure Rule 14(2)(b)

#### QUESTION 2

From: Councillor Tait

To: The Portfolio Holder for Housing

“Does the Portfolio Holder share my surprise that on the last occasion a count was made of rough sleepers in Winchester none were recorded? Could I be advised of when the count was made and what criteria were used in determining if someone was sleeping rough?”

#### Reply

“A rough sleeping count was undertaken in November 2003 with the assistance of a staff member from the Rough Sleeping Unit of the ODPM and 1 rough sleeper was identified.

The definition of people sleeping rough defined by the ODPM is:

***People sleeping, or bedded down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); people in buildings or others places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or ‘bashes’.***

**The definition does not include** people in hostels of shelter, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes, squatters, travellers, people who were there earlier or who are known to sleep rough on other occasions, but who are not there at the time of the count, people wandering around and sleeping sites without occupants. Research has found that people seen drinking in the street or begging (even if they have a blanket or sleeping bag) are not necessarily sleeping rough and they should not be included unless they are clearly sleeping rough at the time of the count.

The homelessness team contacted the ODPM in June 2005 to enquire whether a further count should be undertaken and was advised that:

*‘If the LA has identified, through a count, a figure of less than 10, but more than 0, a further count was not necessary, though one may be carried out at the LA’s discretion. They recommend that an occasional hot spot count to keep track of the situation might be more appropriate’*

A hot spot count would cover those areas where rough sleepers have previously been found and plans are being prepared with our partner, Trinity for action later in the year.”