

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Economy Scrutiny Committee

Subject: Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy

Report of: Deputy Leader of the Council (Housing and Regeneration)

Summary

This report provides an overview of work undertaken and progress towards the delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in the Our Manchester Strategy for those areas within the portfolio of the Deputy leader of the Council (Housing and Regeneration).

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note and comment on the report.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Our Manchester Strategy was formally adopted by the Council in January 2016 and sets the ambitions for the city for the next ten years, to 2025, for Manchester to be:

- Thriving – creating great jobs and healthy businesses
- Filled with talent – both home-grown talent and attracting the best in the world
- Fair – with equal chances for all to unlock their potential
- A great place to live – with lots of things to do
- Buzzing with connections – including world-class transport and broadband

1.2 Executive Members are collectively and individually responsible for supporting the delivery of the Our Manchester Strategy and for providing political oversight and direction to officers for the better outcomes for Manchester residents. The Executive publishes its collective political priorities and those of individual Executive Members, all of which are aligned to the Our Manchester Strategy.

1.3 This report sets out how I as the Deputy Leader of the Council (Housing and Regeneration) have sought to deliver these priorities in the period since my previous report to this committee.

2. Deputy Leader of the Council (Housing and Regeneration) - Portfolio

2.1 As Deputy Leader of the Council (Housing and Regeneration), my portfolio includes oversight of the Council's Housing strategy and its links to business, employment and regeneration, and the Council's strategy to improve access to housing and reduce Homelessness in our city.

I also have responsibility for the overall coordination of the Council's communications, particularly in support of the Our Manchester strategy, and to ensure residents have effective access to council services.

2.2 In addition to these portfolio items I have the lead responsibility for the Town Hall refurbishment project, where a key priority is the creation of social value through the employment of local people in the work to be done over the next six years.

3. Progress and Outcomes November 2016- June 2017

3.1 Our Homelessness Strategy

Over the past six months a full refresh of the Council's strategy to reduce homelessness has been completed, and we now organise our effort under five key areas:

- **Prevention** - We aim to work with people before they reach crisis point to ensure they don't lose their home.

- **Accommodation** - We are setting out to provide enough emergency and temporary accommodation at the right time with the right level of support for individuals and families if they do lose their home.
- **Wrap around support** – It is crucial that people get the right support at the right time. This includes getting people into employment, education and training; debt and budgeting advice; mental health; wider health support; drug and alcohol support.
- **Settled accommodation** - We need to ensure there is enough accommodation for people to move into permanently that is affordable. We want to ensure people are getting the right resettlement support to help them maintain their new tenancies.
- **Rough sleeping** - We are aiming to ensure there is enough support and accommodation for people who are rough sleeping, even though we may not have a statutory duty to many of our rough sleepers.

3.2 **The Longford Centre**

The Longford Centre in Chorlton opened on 15 January. A new staff team has been established, including several people with experience of homelessness and rough sleeping. Considerable support has been given and offered by local volunteers, and the first residents are now living in what is an attractive and well managed centre. At the Longford Centre residents will receive appropriate support to help them to avoid rough sleeping. The 38 beds provided represent a key component of what is now an estate of over 900 beds offering support for homeless single people and couples in well supported accommodation across the city.

3.3 **Cold Weather Provision**

Cold weather provision offering emergency shelter to all rough sleepers who want to come indoors is now made available every night that the temperature falls to zero or below. In addition to this we now operate a night shelter for up to 20 people with complex needs which will run every night until the end of March. Paid workers in the shelter provide advice and support to rough sleepers and help them find longer term accommodation so that they do not have to return to the streets.

3.4 **Increasing Access to Settled Accommodation**

The Council has increasingly had to resort to the use of temporary and supported housing to meet its statutory duties to house homeless families, and to avoid the use of unsatisfactory B&B accommodation. This does not provide good support for families and does not represent value for money for the Council, as most of the homes used are rented from the private sector. To make it easier to provide settled accommodation for families and so reduce their stay in temporary accommodation we have established an initial budget of £5m to purchase a number of larger family houses, and are bringing back into use a number of larger family homes which have been unoccupied for some time. We expect to soon have over 25 houses, and discussions are underway with social landlords willing to use their resources to purchase additional houses. All of these houses will in effect become social homes, with rents below the LHA rate.

3.5 **Strengthening our Strategy for Affordable Homes**

Affordable housing is a key priority for the Council and we have defined affordable housing as 'decent and secure housing that meets the needs of Manchester residents that are below the average household income for Manchester'

Our overall approach to housing affordability involves four key processes:

1. **We're listening to Manchester's residents** and are developing new affordable homes that work for them and their needs, including a mix of tenures so our residents can buy or rent a home of their choice.
2. **We're making sure that our homes are truly affordable** - a principle that runs through all our development plans is that the cost of buying or renting your home should not be more than 30% of your household's income.
3. **We'll replace every social home that's lost** - some tenants chose to buy their homes through right to buy or right to acquire. We'll ensure that every home that's lost this way is replaced.
4. **We'll make best use of the stock we have** - we have 68,000 social rented homes in Manchester. We'll allocate and manage those homes so that they deliver fully for those who need a social rented home.

3.6 **Delivering affordable homes**

In the past two years 955 new social housing units were built in Manchester. In 2017 we secured grants to support a number of affordable homes projects, and in January 2018 we have announced the building of 135 new affordable homes in North Manchester in partnership with Northwards Homes, and the purchase of a number of newly built homes for use in shared equity schemes. 'In the pipeline' there are 2160 affordable homes across the city which should be built in the next three years, and we have committed to another 2000 affordable homes in our Affordability Zones.

3.7 **Using s106 contributions**

The strength of the housing and development market in Manchester now makes it possible to negotiate s106 agreements which contribute directly to the funding of affordable housing in the city. During 2017 we agreed just over £2m of s106 contributions to the Affordable Housing fund.

3.8 **Work with the Private Rented Sector**

Landlord licensing schemes are being introduced across five areas of the city, and immediate benefits for tenants and communities are emerging. The requirement for Licensing was first introduced in Crumpsall, and most landlords there have now made an application. The scheme for Moss Side and Rusholme is now in place and the ones for Moston, Old Moat and Ancoats & Clayton are in development.

Inspection of licensed properties will begin shortly, and a formal evaluation will be done later in the year. So far the schemes all seem to have the positive support of residents.

3.9 **Partnership working**

I attend numerous meetings which help the Council build partnership working with other agencies. In the past few months I have attended meetings of the Manchester Homelessness Partnership, the Strategic Housing Board, and the GM Planning and Housing Commission.

I chair the board which is building the partnership with the Far East Consortium, which will redevelop the Irk Valley north from the city centre, to deliver 10,000 new homes over the next ten years. Most of these will be for sale, but a substantial number, including the very first phase, will be affordable; a smaller number will be new social homes in Collyhurst.

3.10 **The Town Hall**

The Town Hall closed officially after a very busy public event on 14th January. The Coroner's court will remain in the building for several months, but the clock is now counting down the six years until the building reopens in its renewed form. With some minor snags the occupants of the Town Hall have now all been decanted to their new homes. The Project Team is in place, and contractors will begin to be appointed in the next few months, but the public will not see very much happening until hoardings go up in the late summer.

4.0 **Priorities for the next six months**

- 4.1 The social housing waiting list in the City is longer than we want it to be, and a strategy to shorten it is a priority. We can't do this simply by building new social homes, so some innovative thinking will be required.
- 4.2 Our plans to deliver more affordable homes need to be further developed and strengthened, and every opportunity taken to increase the number which can be let at or below the LHA rent level.
- 4.3 Further work is needed to extend the support provided for families and individuals in danger of losing their home.
- 4.4 By the summer we need to have agreed the outline plan for the use of space in the Old Town Hall, so that architects can begin detailed design work.