

## **Manchester City Council Report for Information**

**Report to:** Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee - 8 February 2022

**Subject:** Homelessness Update

**Report of:** Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods)

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### **Summary**

This report sets out the position of Manchester City Council's Homelessness Service in terms of how it supports local residents and how the emerging transformation programme is seeking to increase the prevention of homelessness, continue the reduction in rough sleeping, reduce the use of temporary accommodation and support residents, with a wide ranging variety of needs, including that of securing a place to call home.

### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to consider and comment on the report in terms of MCC's Homelessness Service, and the revised transformation programme.

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**Wards Affected:** All

<b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city
Good quality and affordable homes reduce carbon emissions.

<b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Having good quality accommodation will help people to thrive. Reducing the number of people who are homeless, or placing them in appropriate accommodation with help to access employment and learning opportunities will contribute to Manchester becoming a thriving and sustainable city.

A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Having accommodation that people can access, in areas where they have a support network to help them, and their children, into education or employment will help grow talent in the city.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Having good quality accommodation in our communities improves the environment people live in and helps them to make a positive contribution.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Ensuring properties are a good quality and high standard will reduce the need to heat properties and therefore reduce energy waste.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Housing infrastructure is central to Manchester's inclusive growth ambitions

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### Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

The Manchester Homeless Strategy

[https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/5665/homelessness\\_strategy](https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/5665/homelessness_strategy)

Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Update on Homelessness in the City of Manchester - 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report is to provide a brief overview on the current position of homelessness in Manchester, the service and partner activity engaged to tackle homelessness in all its forms, as well as the council's emerging transformation programme.

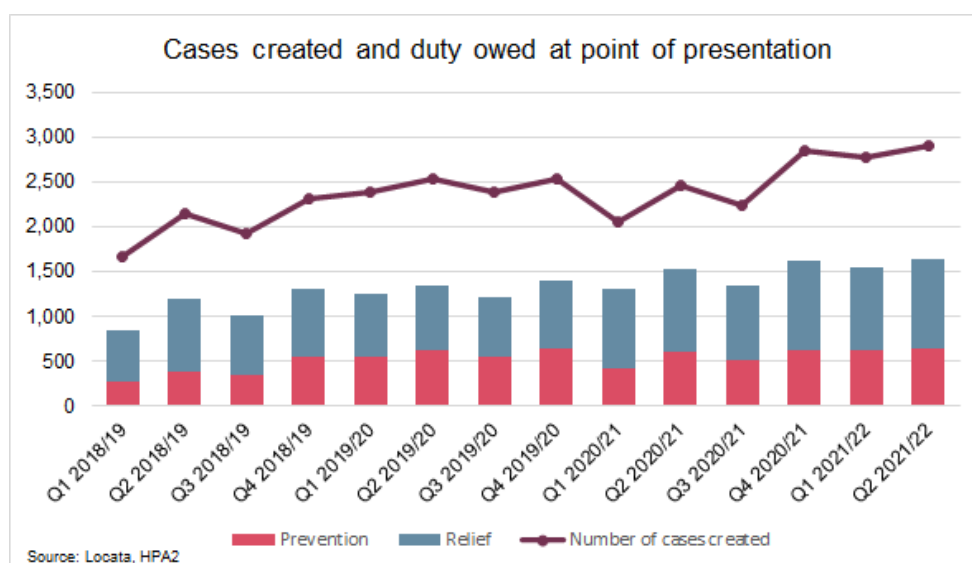
## **2.0 National, Regional and Local Context**

- 2.1 The key drivers for homelessness in Manchester are varied and complex, ranging from significant population growth, affordable housing supply not keeping pace with unprecedented demand, low housing void rates and significant changes to the benefits system through the government's welfare reform act.
- 2.2 Undoubtedly, one of the key factors has been one of the most significant changes in housing legislation, the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) which brought a wealth of new duties to local government to prevent and relieve homelessness, albeit in a context of significantly reduced local government funding and short term and uncertain homelessness funding arrangements.
- 2.3 The local trend of increased homelessness is mirrored nationally, however, in Manchester the increase in homelessness and in the use of temporary accommodation has been particularly acute and this paper aims to set out the Council's strategy and action to first contain and then reverse this trend, noting the significant challenge that this ambition presents.
- 2.4 **Homeless Presentations**
- 2.5 One of the key challenges for Manchester is the number of people presenting as homeless remains significantly high when compared with other Core Cities and London Boroughs. For example, Manchester experienced over 7 out of every 1000 of the population presenting as homeless, compared to the London Borough of Camden at 2 out of every 1000 and Liverpool at almost 2 out of every 1000.

Table 2.1 sets out the numbers of people presenting as homeless since 2018/19 and up until Dec 2021, demonstrating a consistent increase in Manchester over that period, from 1,500 presentations a quarter to almost 3,000.

- 2.6 A key feature of the transformation programme, is focussing on developing a better understanding of this issue and to introduce more effective strategies and practice to improve the position.

Table: 2.1 – Presentations of Homelessness at Manchester



## 2.7 Reasons for presenting as homeless

2.8 There are many reasons for people to present as homeless and although personal circumstances vary, the main reasons are consistent across the country and are primarily due to:

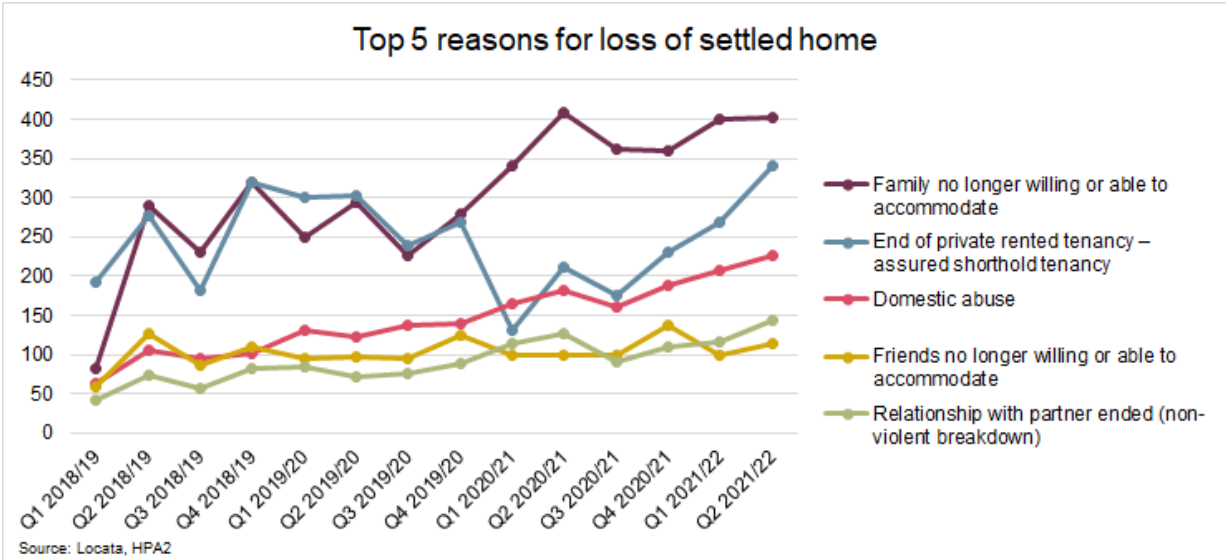
- Family eviction
- Eviction from private rented sector
- Domestic abuse
- Friends no longer willing to accommodate
- Relationship ended with partner (non-domestic violence)

2.9 In relation to combating one of the main reasons for presenting as homeless, 'eviction from private rented sector', the sector is currently awaiting the publication of Renters Reform Bill White Paper. The paper has been delayed to later in 2022 to ensure that the National Audit Office's review of the regulations of the sector are taken into account, and there are no unintended consequences to the reforms. The Bill intends to:

- Abolish Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 - so-called 'no fault' evictions - and improve security for tenants in the private rented sector
- Strengthen repossession grounds for landlords under Section 8 when they have valid cause.
- Remove landlords' ability to grant new assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs)
- Explore improvements and possible efficiencies to the possession process in the courts, to make it quicker and easier for both landlords and tenants to use.
- Outline proposals for a new 'lifetime' tenancy deposit model to help tenants when moving from one tenancy to the next.
- Drive improvements in standards, for example exploring the potential of a landlord register and requiring all private landlords to belong to a redress scheme.

2.10 Table 2.2 below sets out the main reasons for presenting as homeless in Manchester’s up until December 2021. Again, a central aim of the transformation programme is to develop more effective interventions to prevent residents becoming homeless. Clearly, the issue of domestic abuse is different in this regard, as alternative and safe provision, as well as appropriate support, is absolutely crucial.

Table 2.2: Top 5 reasons for loss of settled home



2.11 Rough Sleeping

2.12 In recent years, Manchester has made significant progress in reducing the number of people sleeping rough in the city, from a high of 123 people to today’s levels which are circa 50% less. The reasons for this are many but include:

- Significant increase in staffing in the outreach team
- Development of a ‘navigators’ team, which provides intensive support
- Partnership working with the Anti-Social Behaviour Team (ASBAT) and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) to ensure a cohesive approach
- Significant partnership collaboration across voluntary, public sector and registered providers working with people who sleep rough in the city
- The ‘Everyone In’ initiative
- Housing First
- A Bed Every Night (ABEN)
- Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) Funding
- Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP)
- The Protect Programme
- The Community Accommodation Service programme

2.13 That said, levels of rough sleeping remain a challenge and the service continues to develop a range of initiatives to reduce these numbers even further, these include:

- Collaborative partnership winter approach
- Future RSAP funding bids
- Increased focus on move-on into the PRS with resettlement support
- Increased focus on social work, mental health and adult social care multidisciplinary approach

2.14 The Street Engagement Hub, that works to reduce begging, and the promotion of Real Change, that encourages the public to give to the fund so resources can be targeted to people who are known to be sleeping rough, have also had an impact, encouraging people who have accommodation to stay in their accommodation and find positive daytime activities rather than live on the streets. 'Everyone In' also helped with this process, as people who would have previously begged to fund substance misuse sought support for their addictions and some have managed to sustain this.

2.15 The Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping published in September 2021, focussed on the lessons learnt during the pandemic put forward a series of recommendations to government, to embed and accelerate the ground made in supporting rough sleepers over the past 18 months, including a revised National Rough Sleeping Strategy, if it is to realise the goal of ending rough sleeping by 2024.

## 2.16 **Homeless Prevention and Relief**

2.17 *Homeless Prevention* is when a household who is threatened with homelessness is supported to either stay in their home or find a new home before they become homeless.

2.18 *Homeless Relief* is when a household becomes homeless and the Council supports them by providing interim accommodation.

2.19 In terms of prevention, Manchester has an approximate 30% success rate, against a national average of 58%. There are a multitude of factors that influence successful prevention, such as the housing market, levels of deprivation and employment. However, a major focus of the refreshed transformation work set out in 3.2 is to increase the levels of successful prevention, which aligns with the new Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

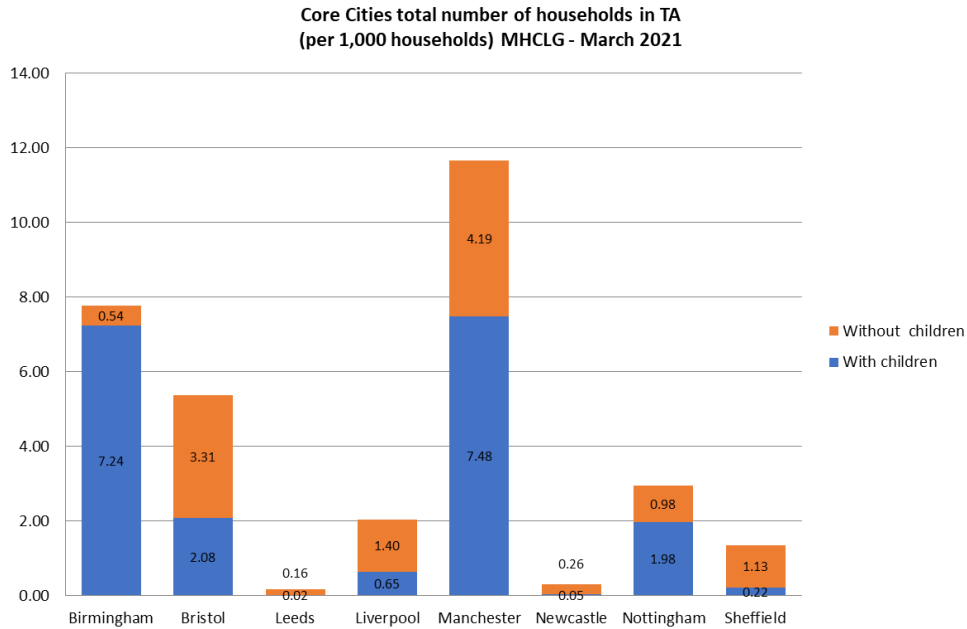
## 2.20 **Temporary Accommodation**

2.21 Temporary Accommodation is the accommodation that people who are homeless reside in whilst waiting for a settled accommodation offer. This can be in either a hostel or a dispersed property. This accommodation is either commissioned or paid for by the Local Authority and does not include 'exempt accommodation' which is fully Housing Benefit subsidy reclaimable.

2.22 Manchester has significantly less exempt accommodation than other Authorities, but a significantly higher use of temporary accommodation than

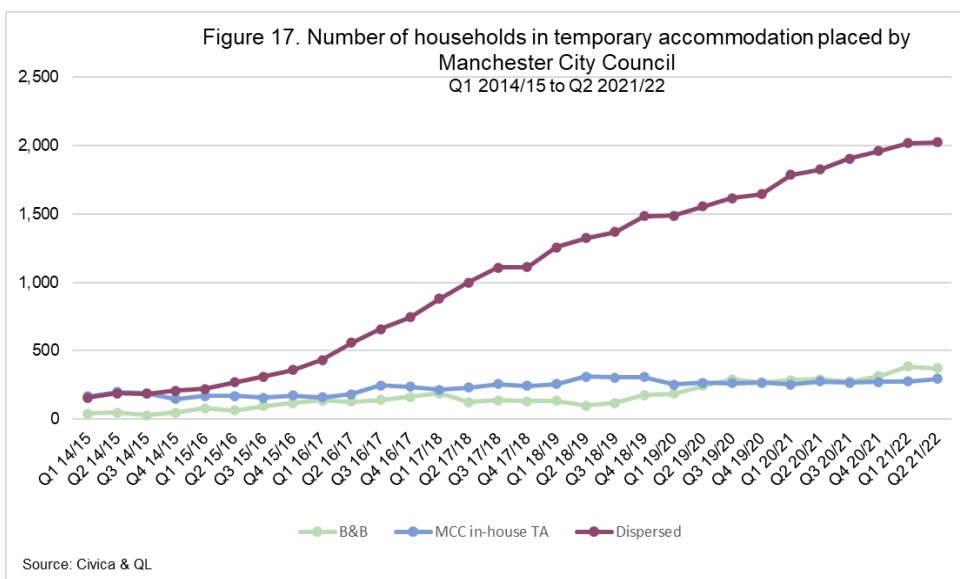
comparative cities. For example, of every 1000 households in Manchester, 11 are in temporary accommodation. This compares with 8 of every 1000 in Birmingham and 3 in every 1000 in Nottingham.

Table 2.3: Core Cities Total Number of Households in TA



2.23 The rate of increase in Manchester’s use of temporary accommodation has also been significantly higher than the national average. Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017, Manchester’s temporary accommodation portfolio has increased by 62%; the national figure has increased by 17%.

Table 2.4: Manchester households in temporary accommodation



## 2.24 Bed and Breakfast

2.25 Bed and Breakfast is a form of temporary accommodation provided on a more short term and often emergency basis. Similar to the overall position on temporary accommodation, the number of single people and families currently in bed and breakfast is higher than the Council would expect and would want, as is the average length of time that people remain in B&B before moving to more appropriate temporary or settled accommodation.

2.26 Again, a key focus of the Homelessness Transformation Programme and the work that the Council is currently undertaking with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is the aim to eliminate the routine use of bed and breakfast for families in the first instance and then single people.

2.27 Table 2.5 below shows the number of people in temporary and emergency accommodation as of the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and the average time they spend in the accommodation before move on to more settled accommodation.

*Table 2.5: Number of households in B&B and Temporary Accommodation in and out of the City*

	<b>Manchester</b>	<b>Outside Manchester</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Average time in TA (days)</b>
<b>Families B&amp;B</b>	38	56	94	20
<b>Singles B&amp;B</b>	182	115	297	79
<b>Families In-house TA</b>	42	0	42	182
<b>Singles In-house TA</b>	252	0	252	186
<b>Families dispersed</b>	1116	699	1815	548
<b>Singles dispersed</b>	107	121	228	490
<b>Total</b>	1737	991	2728	434

## 2.28 Increasing complexity and higher resident need

2.29 In addition to the increase in the number of people presenting as homeless in Manchester, is the marked increase in the complexity of peoples' circumstances and need, when approaching the homelessness service.

2.30 The impact of public service financial reductions, particularly in local government and voluntary services has contributed, as have many factors, to higher numbers of people with mental health, acquired brain injury, learning disabilities and autism presenting as homeless and on the streets. There has been an evidential increase in numbers of people with a variety of behavioural disorders that are complex to treat, as well an increase in people presenting as homeless with significant alcohol and/or drug issues.



2.31 The impact of Welfare Reform and specifically, the introduction of the benefit cap has resulted in significant numbers of larger families presenting as homeless as they cannot afford to stay in their current accommodation. Individuals who are up to the age of 35 only receiving a shared room rate has also had an adverse impact.

2.32 Centrepoint, which provides young people with accommodation, life skills and support has seen a sharp increase in the number of 18-25 year olds who have ended up sleeping on the streets as they struggle to share accommodation due to mental health, autism, behavioural and learning disabilities.

### 2.34 **Good Practice**

2.35 Although the context is challenging and there are a number of areas of requiring improvement which are being addressed, Manchester is recognised as leading best practice in tackling homelessness in variety of fields. For example:

- The Council and City's Response to COVID-19 and the needs of homeless people during the pandemic
- Acclaimed partnership approach driving reduction in numbers sleeping rough
- Exemplar in ending homeless duty via placements into the Private Sector
- Integration of homelessness and social care; social workers embedded within the homelessness outreach service
- Successful family temporary accommodation scheme at Apex house
- A Bed Every Night (ABEN)
- Successful Community Accommodation Service accommodating people directly from prison
- Afghan Refugee emergency response

2.36 This concludes this part of the report in terms of the national, regional and local policy and operating context. The next part of the report focusses on the strategies, partnership working and transformational activity over the short, medium and longer term to improve the outcomes for our residents who are at risk or find themselves as homeless.

## 3.0 **Homelessness Strategy & Partnership**

3.1 The Manchester Homelessness Partnership in 2015, including the City Council, created the City's Homelessness Strategy which has enabled organisations, services and residents to work together on the challenges that can affect people who are experiencing homelessness. The strategy still resonates and focuses on the key aims to:

- Make Homelessness a rare occurrence: increasing prevention and early intervention
- Make Homelessness as brief as possible: improving temporary and supported accommodation

- Make the experience of homelessness a one-off occurrence: increasing access to settled homes
- Reduce the number of people sleeping rough in the city.

### 3.2 MCC Homelessness Transformation Programme

3.3 To support and accelerate the successes of the Manchester Homeless Partnership and collaboration with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Council is now embarking on a refreshed transformation programme as a different approach is vital to unlock some of the most intransigent system issues that are adversely impacting our residents. On that basis, the programme is focussed on the following outcomes:

- Increasing Prevention
- Ending Rough Sleeping
- More suitable and affordable accommodation
- Better Outcomes and Better Lives for people and families at risk of homelessness or who are homeless.

3.4 As well as these outcomes, a revised financial sustainability strategy is being developed for the Homelessness service that first seeks to contain the existing net spend of the service and then to reduce in subsequent years.

3.5 There are a series of projects that are in place to support these outcomes, as well as activities planned for the future, as it is intended that the transformation programme spans over a three-year cycle.

3.6 The table below sets out the aims of each outcome, the activity undertaken to deliver and timeframe.

<p><b>Increasing Prevention</b></p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To increase prevention from 36% to a minimum of 50% over a three year period.</p> <p><b>Activity:</b> The council has embarked on a process review of homeless presentations with a view to establishing new practices to increase prevention in the priority areas of families and friends no longer able to accommodate and evictions from private tenancies.</p> <p><b>Timeframe:</b> Programme started in Jan 2022 and will seek to implement in Summer 2022</p>
<p><b>Ending Rough Sleeping</b></p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> 20% year on year reduction of rough sleeping</p> <p><b>Activity:</b> Continue and accelerate the strategies introduced through the Council’s rough sleeper initiative, next steps accommodation programme and many more, working with partners right across Greater Manchester and DLUHC.</p> <p><b>Timeframe:</b> Ongoing and to 2024/25</p>

<p><b>More suitable and affordable accommodation</b></p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> To significantly reduce the overall numbers of temporary accommodation and create more suitable and affordable permanent housing options for residents.</p> <p><b>Activity:</b> The Council to create a new accommodation strategy for temporary accommodation and deliver a mix of new housing options that improve the quality of provision at considerably lower cost.</p> <p><b>Timeframe:</b> Commence February 2022 and present options appraisal by Summer 2022.</p>
<p><b>Better Outcomes and Better Lives for people and families at risk of homelessness or who are homeless</b></p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> Prevent homelessness for particularly vulnerable groups, improve specialist provision for complex needs and support the delivery of the broader Our Manchester priorities in partnership with Council stakeholders, the Local Care Organisation, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Greater Manchester Housing Providers and Voluntary Sector Organisations.</p> <p><b>Activity:</b> Developing new commissioning strategy in partnership with key stakeholders to provide an improved, systems response to complex issues, across multiple agencies.</p> <p><b>Timeframe:</b> Ongoing</p>

### 3.7 Specific projects as part of these workstreams include

1. Redesign our customer journeys and service pathways
2. Ending the Routine Use of B&B for Families with Children
3. Redesign of the Private Sector Scheme
4. Focusing on improved access and agree new priorities for housing related support services.
5. Identify and commission alternatives to B&B for single people
6. Deliver the Domestic Abuse Support in Safe Accommodation Pathway
7. Review and redesign the Young People's Pathway
8. Develop dedicated discharge schemes for those leaving institutions, for example hospitals and prisons

### 3.8 Financial Sustainability

- 3.9 Running in parallel with the transformation programme, is the development of a new financial sustainability strategy, specifically for the homelessness service, which is focussing on, over time, reducing the net cost of the homelessness service. Please see section 4 for more details.

### 3.10 MCC Housing Strategy & Housing Allocations Policy

- 3.11 The approach to homelessness forms part of the Council's overall Housing Strategy, which is currently being refreshed, with a view to being finalised in

early 2022/23. A key tenet of the revised strategy is to increase the development of affordable homes, which will help to alleviate homelessness in the city.

3.12 In addition, there is a review of the Housing Allocations Policy due in early 2022/23, which will evaluate the impact of the recent changes to the policy from a homelessness perspective. It is likely that some refinement will need to be considered by Members at a future date.

3.13 The Enabling Independence Strategy, which is currently being written and will be finalised in the summer of 2022, is a cross Council strategy looking at temporary and supported accommodation across all services.

As part of the process, a key facet will be analysing demand and understanding where there are gaps across services that lead to people falling out of services and potentially into homelessness.

A significant number of singles in homeless services are not able, to access independent tenancies without ongoing support, and the strategy will look at how the Council as a whole will be able to support them long term.

#### 3.14 **Governance**

3.15 The Homelessness Service is part of the Council's Housing Operations Division in Neighbourhoods. The homelessness transformation programme is overseen by the Council's Housing Board and supported by a new, cross council steering group consisting of:

- Alan Caddick, Interim Director of Housing and Residential Growth
- Dave Ashmore, Director Housing Operations
- Matt Hassall, Head of Corporate Assessments
- Sarah Broad, Deputy Director
- Sean McKendrick, Children Services
- Tom Wilkinson, Deputy Treasurer

#### 3.16 **Partnership Working and Resident Engagement**

3.17 Manchester is nationally acclaimed for its partnership work and the Homeless Service works together with the Homelessness Partnership, ensuring that transformation, development and business as usual is coproduced with partners. The Partnership's Advisory Board will play a key role in the governance structure, providing a critical friend function through the coproduction process.

3.18 People with lived experience will also be part of the transformation process, coproducing the changes to the system with staff and providing valuable insight to the processes from their point of view. This will ensure that the processes are strengths based and keep the transformation focused upon people rather than just the system.

- 3.19 Partnership work across the Council is strong with close working relationships developed between the Homeless Service and other departments. Examples include:
- Revenue and Benefits Unit – Changing the Housing Benefit application process to improve collection rates for those in emergency accommodation
  - Children’s Service – Joint working on improving services for care leavers
  - Adult Social Care - Fortnightly cross department and partnership meetings to focus upon individuals who are both homeless and in need of ASC support.
  - Strategic Housing – The purchasing of properties under the RSAP scheme.
  - Communications – Improved communication and engagement between the council and residents on services available for people who sleep rough
- 3.20 Manchester has a strong working relationship with DLUHC; weekly meetings occur to discuss data, projects and any concerns or best practice that either organisation has. The Council meets regularly with Core Cities to share knowledge, best practice and discuss issues relevant to the larger Authorities in the country. Officers also meet weekly with GMCA and the Greater Manchester Local Authorities to discuss how we can best address homelessness across the conurbation.
- 3.21 The excellent partnership working that Manchester has provides a good basis to ascertain best practice, learn from others and improve services for our population.
- 3.22 COVID-19 has made some aspects of co-production harder, but has also strengthened partnership working, by allowing organisations to take risks together and jointly own services. Going forward the Homeless Service will continue to build on the lessons learnt through COVID-19 whilst being able to improve engagement with people with lived experience as restrictions ease.

#### **4.0 Finance**

- 4.1 As part of the 2021/22 budget setting process ongoing demographic funding for Homelessness had been included for 2022/23 at £1.7m, increasing to £6.7m by 2024/25. In addition a further £7m was added to the start budget for 2021/22 to reflect the additional impact of covid-19 on demand for homelessness services, in anticipation of the impact of the removal of the universal credit uplift and the tenant eviction ban ending.
- 4.2 Whilst the £7m has been utilised, this has been in response to the pandemic and action taken in 2021/22. It is expected that the changes to the service and additional government grant funding around the rough sleeper initiative (yet to be allocated to Councils) will mean that the budget to be sufficient for 2022/23, and that demand reductions and therefore budget reductions will be possible in future years.

4.3 Further details will be provided as the Transformation Programme progresses in the coming months. It is therefore not expected that the further planned £1.7m per annum increase that was originally budgeted for 2022/23 will be required and this has now been removed from the budget assumptions, although the position will be kept under review. This proposal is included within the Budget Report also included on today's agenda

4.4 To manage risk in this area a £1.5m homelessness contingency reserve remains.

## **5.0 Equalities & Diversity**

5.1 At the heart of the service is an equalities driven approach, which has resulted in specific provision being provided to ensure appropriate access and support. Examples include:

- Manchester's first commissioned homeless service for people sleeping rough who identify as LGBTQ+
- A specific service for people who are LGBTQ+ experiencing domestic violence and/or abuse
- Additional provision for women who sleep rough in ABEN with specific services in providing resilience
- Specific provision for people with No Recourse to Public Funds who are sleeping rough
- The introduction of a new service to support people who become refugees to help them avoid being homeless and go straight into private rented sector accommodation.

5.2 Currently, 63% of families in temporary accommodation are from an ethnic minority, whilst 37% of single people are from an ethnic minority. The service and transformation programme, resolutely applies an equalities lens and indeed tackling inequalities is as much a cornerstone of the service improvement journey as tackling homelessness itself.

## **6.0 Risks and Issues**

6.1 As with any major transformation programme there are a range of risks and issues that may impact on the successful delivery of our ambitions. In terms of the aims and objectives set out above, the main risks have been identified below:

- Government strategy and funding on Homelessness, Welfare (UC, LHA rates) continues to decrease
- Demand for services, from an increasingly complex client-base, post austerity, post Brexit, post Covid (and the full impact of COVID-19 yet to be understood) continues to drive homelessness and cost upwards.
- In this context, the scale and complexity of transforming Manchester's homeless service at pace is challenging.
- The Housing market provides both risks and opportunities to provide more affordable and appropriate options.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

7.1 The report sets out the current position of Manchester's homelessness service, detailing the complex and changing national policy context, as well as the local conditions impacting the levels of homelessness in the city.

7.2 The emerging transformation programme focuses on:

- Reducing presentations of homelessness
- Increasing the prevention of homelessness
- Securing more affordable and appropriate temporary and permanent housing options
- Improving outcomes for people at risk or who are homeless