

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Economy Scrutiny Committee – 9 January 2019

Subject: Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy

Report of: Executive Member for 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 Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration.

Recommendations

The Economy Scrutiny Committee is invited to note and comment on the report.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Our Manchester Strategy, formally adopted by the Council in January 2016, is a vision which plans to get us where we need to be in 2025.

1.2 Manchester is growing, going global and connecting communities to chances for a good life but we have also got some of the lowest wages, the nation's unhealthiest people, more rough sleepers, and too many litter grot spots. We have still got lots to do.

On the way to 2025, we have set some shorter-term goals for 2020:

- Fewer kids in care
- Fix roads, bus and cycle lanes
- Join up Health & Social care
- Better school results
- Cleaner Green places
- Better and affordable homes
- More recycling and less waste
- Work and skills for better pay

1.3 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 achieve better outcomes for Manchester residents.

2.0 Executive Member for Housing & Regeneration

2.1 As Executive Member my portfolio includes the Residential Growth Strategy, affordable housing, housing management, private rented sector, district and neighbourhood centre improvement and other physical regeneration programmes and community assets.

3.0 Building Together - Manchester Labour's Promise to Manchester

3.1 In May 2018, the Executive adopted the commitments made in the Manchester Labour 2018 manifesto as priorities for the Executive.

3.2 Manchester Labour's Promise to Manchester contains 44 specific pledges to be delivered in whole or part over the next 12 months. However, it is not just a list of actions, it also sets out not just what we will do, but also how and perhaps most importantly why.

3.3 There are a number of the promises which are specific to my portfolio:

3.3.1 Health & Social Care

- Begin construction of at least 200 homes for older people at social rents as part of our extra-care schemes.

3.3.2 Housing

- Increase the number of homes being built of all types to meet the wide-range of need and demand in the city including 500 units of social and other secure, decent housing for rent at a level that can be fully met by housing benefit.
- Reject Tory/Lib Dem definition of affordability - 80% of market rent. We believe that no one should have to spend more than 30% of their household income on their housing costs, and for individuals and families on the lowest incomes even that is too much.
- Pilot landlord licensing across the city, with a view to rolling out the practice across Manchester and to use all the limited powers we do have to the full to tackle rogue landlords.

3.3.3 Our Demands of Devolution

- Demand the council is given all necessary legal and financial powers to build council, social and affordable housing to address the housing crisis and fully meet the needs of our people.
- Campaign at every level for a city-wide Renter's Charter covering security of tenure, control over rent rises, and an abolition of unfair letting fees, as well as city-wide landlord licensing.

4.0 Progress on priorities over the last 6 months:

4.1 Affordable Housing

4.1.1 Working with Labour Councillors my first five months as Executive Member have been focused on bringing forward a revised approach to affordable housing in the city. Details of which were scrutinised by the December Economy Scrutiny meeting and endorsed by the December Executive. From genuine community led housing to our ambitious plans to deliver 3,000 council homes these proposals give us a strong base on which to deliver on our pledge to ensure everyone in Manchester can access a safe and secure home which they can afford.

4.2 500 units of social and other secure housing

4.2.1 We have mapped out plans to deliver these homes by 2022 and have strengthened the commitment so that all 500 are social rent. Details were included in the December report to Economy Scrutiny on delivering Manchester's Affordable Housing Strategy.

4.3 Extra Care Housing

4.3.1 Working with the Executive Member for Adult Services, Manchester currently has 7 completed schemes totalling 443 units. A further 7 schemes are now in the pipeline that will deliver 500 additional homes by 2022. A breakdown of the

schemes was contained within the December Economy Scrutiny report on delivering Manchester's Affordable Housing Strategy.

4.4 Housing Enforcement

- 4.4.1 Selective Licensing, the extension to mandatory HMO licensing from 1st October 2018 (affecting up to 5,000 additional rented properties) and the creation of a proactive **Rogue Landlords** team to target small areas and portfolio landlords where property conditions are a concern means that the Housing Compliance and Enforcement Team has expanded as a result, increasing resource and enabling an increase in proactive property inspections.
- 4.4.2 The introduction of **Civil Penalty Notices** (CPNs) has also provided an additional enforcement tool and with fines of up to £30,000, these are likely to have an impact on the behaviour of those landlords who do not provide safe or well managed housing. Civil Penalties can be used as an alternative to prosecution for a number of breaches under the Housing Act.
- 4.4.3 Since April 2018 the team have issued 18 CPNs totalling £150,000. Once recovered, this money will be invested back into enforcement activity in the private rented sector. The team are aware of new powers in relation to Rent Repayment Orders and Banning Orders and will actively seek to utilise these powers in appropriate cases.
- 4.4.4 **Selective Licensing pilots** have been established in Crumpsall, Moss Side, Moston and Old Moat There has been a positive response from the majority of landlords in each area with 99% of identified landlords in Crumpsall applying for a licence. Enforcement action is being progressed against those who have not yet applied.
- 4.4.5 Having been established for around 18 months the Crumpsall scheme is currently the only one where we have meaningful data. A key highlight from this pilot is that a total of 1,700 applications received across all 4 areas have been accompanied by a gas safety certificate, and approximately 30% had been obtained at the time of application suggesting that licensing requirements have resulted in landlords complying. This, along with compliance inspections funded through the licence fee, is continuing to improve safety and standards in private rented properties.
- 4.4.6 We have also issued two civil penalties in the Crumpsall area totaling £13,000. One was in relation to a licensed premises which failed to comply with an Improvement notice and breach of a licence condition and the second for a property which was being operated without a licence.
- 4.4.7 A full review of the schemes will be carried out when they have been in place for a longer period, to understand their impact and whether there are other areas of the city that may benefit.

- 4.4.8 The Rogue Landlord team that has been focusing on flats above shops and portfolio landlords of concern. The team has undertaken days of actions and follow-up inspections in the Stockport Road/Slade Lane area of Longsight, Moston Lane district centre and Cheetham Hill Road district centre, as well as Gorton and Abbey Hey. Four portfolio rogue landlords have been identified that we are currently investigating and further referrals are being explored.
- 4.4.9 Finally, we have begun work to better link our Housing Enforcement activities with work carried out in our Homelessness Services (particularly around prevention of homelessness) and to support work carried out by teams such as Early Help. For vulnerable tenants, good internal communication by Council Officers is important. There are also plans to increase awareness around landlord harassment and illegal evictions, to ensure these cases are appropriately referred and investigated.

5.0 Demands of Devolution

- 5.1 At Combined Authority level I sit on the GM Planning & Housing Commission where we have been developing a joint housing vision for Greater Manchester. This is due to be launched early in 2019. We have also been working with the GM Portfolio Lead for Housing, Homelessness and Infrastructure in lobbying Government for a devolved approach to Right to Buy including full retention of right to buy receipts.

6.0 District and Neighbourhood Centre Improvement

- 6.1 Economy Scrutiny has been at the heart of pushing for a revised approach to District Centres. We need a nuanced approach which is responsive to local needs – one size doesn't fit all. Assistant Executive Member, Cllr Basat Sheikh has been working with the District Centre Sub-Group group to shape an approach across the city which reflects this. It is hoped that the Sub-Group will be in a position to come forward with their first set of recommendations in the new year.
- 6.2 I have also held a number of ward level meetings with Members to discuss concerns in Rusholme, Withington and Didsbury East. There are plans in place in the new year for the production of a local development plan for Withington.

7.0 Closer working with Ward Members

- 7.1 Working with the Director of Housing & Residential Growth I have held a series of ward level meetings with Councillors to better understand local housing concerns and opportunities across the City. These will continue in the year ahead with the aim that these will become a regular feature of Strategic Development and ward member relations.

8.0 Our Manchester working

8.1 As a new Executive Member I have held three sessions with staff in Housing & Residential Growth. Firstly, to introduce myself to staff but most importantly to give staff the opportunity to feed into our policy discussions, provide challenge and contribute directly to discussions on the budget.

8.1.2 I have also spent time shadowing staff in the enforcement team to better understand the role these staff play and the challenges they face. So far I have shadowed staff working on Selective Licensing, Rogue Landlords and HMO licensing. In the new year I have plans in place for a roundtable with staff in these teams to feed into policy discussions on the private rented sector to ensure their valuable frontline experience is utilised in policy development.

9.0 Priorities for the next six months:

9.1 Northern Gateway SRF

9.1.1 Over the summer an extensive consultation has taken place with residents, businesses and wider partners. I have held a number of meetings with ward Councillors and officers are currently going through the consultation responses. It is hoped that the revised SRF will come back to Economy Scrutiny early in the new year.

9.2 Council Housing

9.2.1 I will be working with staff to get a first phase of Council housing off the ground and working with Registered Providers to identify a range of opportunities on Council land to deliver affordable housing.

9.3 Private Rented Sector

9.3.1 High levels of Section 21 evictions, poor housing conditions, rising rent levels and HMO intensification are all creating big challenges for residents in the City. During the first few months of 2019 I will be focusing on drawing up a strategic approach to the private rented sector to address some of these challenges and better join up the work of the Council with our partners in the city.

9.3.2 The Tenants Fees Bill is due its third reading in the House of Lords in the first part of 2019 Parliamentary time permitting. If enacted this will bring significant benefits for renters in the city,

9.3.3 The team have put a bid in to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for further Rogue Landlord funding to extend the work of the current Rogue Landlords team. This will continue to fund 3 officers working proactively across the city. We should find out if we were successful in this bid in January.

9.4 Manchester Supported Housing Strategy

- 9.4.1 Despite the delivery of around 500 units of extra care accommodation there remains additional demand for all types of supported housing, including looking at providing support for people with ongoing complex needs. Working with the Executive Member for Adult Services, health and social care colleagues, housing providers and GM partners, we will develop a supported housing strategy in the spring of 2019.

9.5 Older People's Housing Needs

- 9.5.1 Review progress on Living Longer, Living Better - Housing for an age-friendly Manchester Strategy 2014-2020.
- 9.5.2 There are over 400 older people registered on Manchester Move wanting to downsize. I will work with our Register Providers to put in place financial resources and support for older people who wish to downsize and understand better gaps in housing across the city that are preventing older people from being able to downsize within their local area.

9.6 Manchester Local Plan

- 9.6.1 I will be working with the Executive Member for Environment, Planning & Transport as she consults on the new Local Plan to ensure that our commitment that no Manchester resident should have to spend more than 30% of their gross household income on accommodation costs is embedded in planning policy as well as housing policy.

9.7 Maximising Social Value

- 9.7.1 Working with the Deputy Leader responsible for skills and employment I want to ensure we maximise the social value from expanded new Council house building, including training and employment opportunities for Manchester residents. This means ensuring that there is a clearly articulated ambition from the outset and that mechanisms are put in place to monitor delivery.

9.8 Co-Housing Strategy

- 9.8.1 In response to the national housing crisis there is growing grassroots interest from people in Manchester to solve their own housing needs and I have already been approached by a number of groups. We have committed to develop a strategy to unleash the potential for community-led housing of all tenures across the City by Summer 2019.