

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Personnel Committee – 13 February 2019

**Subject:** Senior Management Arrangements for the Homelessness Service

**Report of:** Acting Director of Adult Social Services (DASS)

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**Purpose**

To seek approval for the establishment of a role of Director of Homelessness Services to take strategic and overall responsibility for the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy within the city. This role will be part of the Senior Management team within the Adults Directorate. (Current and proposed structure charts are attached as Appendices 1 and 2)

**Recommendations**

The Committee is requested to:

1. Approve the establishment of a post of Director of Homelessness Services to take strategic and overall responsibility for the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy within the city. This post will be part of the Senior Management team within Adults Services.
  2. Recommend to Council that the Director of Homelessness Services post is remunerated at Grade SS4 (£94,072 - £103,863).
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**Wards Affected:** All

**Financial Consequences for the Revenue and Capital Budgets**

This is a new role within the council as set out in the Homelessness Service Business Plan. The maximum salary will be £103,863 (£137k including employment costs)

**Contact Officers**

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## **Background Documents**

None

## **1. Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 Despite investment into a number of services there continues to be growing challenges for the City Council's Homelessness service. Demand continues to grow at an exceptional rate and there has been a significant increase in the numbers of households who are homeless in Manchester in recent years, including families, single people, young people, and people who are rough sleeping. This trend is reflected nationally and the roll-out of Universal Credit has made this even more challenging. Universal Credit will also impact upon emergency temporary accommodation, making this form of accommodation financially unviable for the owners. Furthermore, the Homelessness Reduction Act has placed new duties on the Council to prevent homelessness in all circumstances, has widened the application of the assistance and support that the Council is required to give, and has significantly increased the bureaucracy. The response to the Act will need to include investment in prevention services.
- 1.2 A driving factor of the increase in homelessness nationally has been attributed to welfare reform. The capping and freezing of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) has had a significant impact. This has been compounded by other welfare reforms such as the 'bedroom tax', the benefit cap, application of the shared room rate to single households under 35 years, and stricter sanction regimes. There has been an 89% increase in larger families presenting with 3 or more children from 117 in 2015/16 to 221 in 2017/18. It is possible this is as a direct result of welfare reform changes, such as the benefit cap. Of the families recorded as living in temporary accommodation, the largest proportion is single mothers (70% in 2017/18).
- 1.3 Alongside this, Private Rented Sector rents have increased three times faster than wages nationally: homes in this tenure are increasingly unaffordable for families on low incomes, particularly to households in receipt of LHA. In Manchester our success in sustaining economic growth has led to supply failing to keep pace with demand and as a consequence, increases in average rents in the private sector. The loss of a private rented tenancy has recently become the prime reason for people being owed a statutory homelessness duty in Manchester. The National Audit Office reports a similar picture nationally.
- 1.4 There has, and will continue to be, a significant increase in demand. Figures for the first three quarters of 2018/19, since the Homelessness Reduction Act came into force, show that a total of 5,846 households presented as homeless, a 24% increase compared with the same period in the previous year. In the same period, 2,991 statutory homeless applications were taken, a 34% increase when compared with the same two quarters in the previous financial year.
- 1.5 Whilst demand into the service increases, the flow out of the service continues to reduce. The following table shows the number of social lettings to people who have previously lived in hostel or temporary accommodation. This hostel or temporary accommodation category includes all those applying from

commissioned and step down accommodation as well as statutory homeless accommodation.

	Q1 2017/18	Q2 2017/18	Q3 2017/18	Q4 2017/18	2017/18 totals	Q1 2018/19	Q2 2018/19
Hostel/other temporary accommodation	157	150	143	166	<b>616</b>	160	113

- 1.6 This has led to the number of dispersed properties where families are placed on a temporary basis continuing to grow from 929 in August 2017 to 1,433 in December 2018.

## 2. The Homelessness Partnership and strategy

- 2.1 The vision for Homelessness within the city has been co-produced with the Manchester Homelessness Partnership, and is to end homelessness. The Manchester Homelessness Partnership calls on the citizens of Manchester, the city council, healthcare and other public services, charities, faith groups, businesses, institutions and other organisations to adopt the values of the Charter and to implement it through improved working practices and working together in new way.
- 2.2 However, while homelessness remains, the charter provides guiding principles concerning the rights of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We believe that everyone who is homeless should have a right to:
- A safe, secure home along with an appropriate level of support to create a good quality of life
  - Safety from violence, abuse, theft and discrimination, and the full protection of the law
  - Respect and a good standard of service everywhere
  - Equality of access to information and services
  - Equality of opportunity to employment, training, volunteering, leisure and creative activities
- 2.3 We believe that those who work with homeless people have a collective responsibility to ensure that:
- Good communication, coordination and a consistent approach is delivered across all services
  - People with personal insight into homelessness have a voice and involvement in determining the solutions to their own issues, to homelessness, and in wider society.
- 2.4 The Objectives that were agreed in 2017 in the three year business plan for the Council were:
- To continue with the focus on co-production with the Homelessness Partnership to ensure that we have listened to the views of people who

have insight into homelessness and formulate policies, procedures and services with them at the heart of all we do.

- To continue to work in partnership to support people who are living on the street to ensure they have access to accommodation and appropriate support.
- To focus on early intervention and prevention to stop families and individuals from becoming homeless, preventing disruption to the lives of adults and children
- To reduce the use of temporary accommodation for families by focusing on prevention.
- To improve access to settled homes for families and individuals who are in temporary accommodation.

2.5 These objectives have been further refined over the past year, due to the development of Our Corporate Plan and the city's Homelessness Strategy.

2.6 The Homeless Partnership co-produced the Homelessness Strategy for the City (2018-23). The vision for the Homeless Service mirrors the Homelessness Charter vision and the Strategy. The objectives listed above have been refined into the following three key priorities:

- **Homelessness a rare occurrence:** increasing prevention and earlier intervention at a neighbourhood level.
- **Homelessness as brief as possible:** improving temporary and supported accommodation to be a positive experience
- **Experience of homelessness to be a one-off occurrence:** increasing access to settled homes

2.7 Each organisation within the partnership has developed their own response to the strategy and the partnership holds organisations accountable to each other. An outcomes framework is being developed to ensure the actions of the Partnership meet these three objectives.

### 3. **Proposal to establish a role of Director Of Homelessness as part of the Senior Management team within Adult Services**

3.1 In response to the challenges outlined above and the highest level of priority the Council has given to both preventing and alleviating homelessness, it is proposed that a Director of Homelessness post is created. This role will have strategic and overall responsibility for the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy within the city. The role holder will lead both the city's Homelessness service and be responsible for commissioning services linked to delivering the strategy and be responsible for delivering effective outcomes both in Manchester and working through working closely with the Greater Manchester Combined authority. The role holder will promote and work with the Manchester Homeless Partnership supported by the Manchester Homeless Charter to ensure the strategy is continually refreshed and delivered.

3.2 One of the key priorities is to effectively and safely reduce and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping within the city of Manchester. Relationships

are paramount in this role in order to drive forward change, and will include working closely with the Director of Housing and Residential Growth to work on housing related strategies to both prevent homelessness and to support move on into permanent accommodation. The role holder will work closely with other organisations, including Manchester Health and Care Commissioning, Manchester Local Care Organisation, Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust, Greater Manchester Police, Registered Housing Providers and the Department of Work and Pensions. There is also a key strategic relationship with the Ministry of Communities and Local Government both in respect of accessing future funding and also in ensuring the voice of Manchester is heard in emerging policy and guidance.

3.3 Furthermore, linking with other partners such as commissioned providers and the voluntary sector as well as people who have experienced homelessness will be crucial in order to deliver improved outcomes for homeless households. The role holder will also be ultimately responsible for the outcomes of commissioned services to ensure they are working to deliver in an 'Our Manchester', strengths based way in keeping with the Manchester Homeless Charter. This role will be an ambassador for the 'Our Manchester' approach to ensure the city continues to work towards its vision for 2025 in relation to homelessness and housing provision.

3.4 In addition, the role holder will be responsible for ensuring the delivery of all statutory responsibilities in relation to homelessness legislation, including the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

#### **4. Comments of the Director of HR & OD**

4.1 I have been consulted on, and support the proposals contained within this report.

#### **5. Comments from Finance**

5.1 There is budget within the Homelessness service to meet the cost of this role. The role is currently being filled on a part-time interim basis at a cost equivalent to Grade SS5.

#### **6. Comments from Trade Unions**

6.1 To follow