

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Neighbourhoods and the Environment Scrutiny Committee – 6
November 2019

Subject: Update on Homelessness and Housing

Report of: The Director of Homelessness

Summary

This report provides an update, subsequent to the report to Neighbourhoods and Scrutiny on the 17th July 2019, on the work that is taking place to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the city. The focus of the report reflects the concerns and questions raised by Members at previous meetings of the committee.

Recommendations

Members are invited to consider and comment on the information contained within this report.

Wards Affected: All

Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable):

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Helping people to stay in their accommodation through prevention work will help them 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 become a thriving and sustainable city.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Having public, private and voluntary sector organisations working together to help people who have personal insight into homelessness into volunteering and employment will contribute to the objective of having a highly skilled city. Employment breaks the cycle of generational benefit dependency and will encourage children to access school and employment in later life.

A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Supporting people who are homeless to access employment and accommodation will unlock their potential to help them become independent citizens who contribute to our city. Working with the Homelessness Partnership to ensure that the views of people with personal insight into homelessness influence ways of working.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Encouraging commissioned and inhouse services to reduce CO2 emissions and reduce their use of plastics will contribute to a low carbon city. Introducing climate change conversations with homeless people will support them in adopting a low carbon lifestyle.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	n/a

Contact Officers:

Name: Mike Wright
Position: Director of Homelessness
Telephone: 0161 234
E-mail: michael.wright@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Nicola Rea
Position: Strategic Lead for Homelessness
Telephone: 0161 234 1888
E-mail: nicola.rea@manchester.gov.uk

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.

Neighbourhoods and the Environment Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 5th September 2018 - Update on the work to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping

Health Scrutiny Committee – 4th December 2018 - Homelessness Business Planning: 2019/20

Neighbourhoods and the Environment Scrutiny Committee - Wednesday 6th February 2019 - Homelessness Business Plan 2019 - 2020

Executive Meeting - Wednesday 30th May 2018 - Executive Priorities 2018/19

Neighbourhoods and the Environment Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 6th March 2019 - Update on Homelessness and Housing

Neighbourhoods and the Environment Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 19th June -
Update on the work of the Section 21 team based within the Housing Solutions Team

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Homelessness is not just about people who sleep rough on our streets, but also consists of the much larger number of single people in hostel accommodation, families in dispersed temporary accommodation, as well as those who are hidden homeless, those who 'sofa surf' and stay with friends on a temporary basis.
- 1.2 Across Manchester an increasing number of individuals and families are becoming homeless and are at greater risk of homelessness by this wider definition. The main reason for statutory homelessness is the loss of a tenancy in the private rented sector which has become the number one cause above domestic abuse. Government welfare changes, which include capping personal benefits and limiting the amount payable in rent via the Local Housing Allowance, have had a major impact in contributing to the loss of tenancies.
- 1.3 This report is an update from the report that went to the Neighbourhoods and Environment Scrutiny on the 17th July 2019. The Committee outlined a number of areas where they wanted further information, which have been expressly considered in this report.
- 1.4 The area of homelessness remains highly challenging. The Council's services continue to see significant levels of demand and footfall, at a time of a growing imbalance between demand and affordable supply. This hugely increases the challenges of ensuring that the Council meets its statutory duties in a manner which provides the best outcomes for homeless households.

2.0 Update to the Committee

- 2.1 The Homeless Department works with both single people and families. Wherever possible, interventions begin prior to someone becoming homeless and we commission advice services which help people to stay in their own accommodation and prevent homelessness.
- 2.2 The statutory framework for tackling homelessness is mainly the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act, which was enacted on 01 April 2018. This changed the focus of homelessness interventions and the statutory homelessness process itself by introducing two new stages - prevention and relief - under a new statutory duty to prevent homelessness.
- 2.3 The key impact of the Act was to bring more single homeless people within the scope of statutory assistance and this has been the case in Manchester, leading to an increase in requests for assistance and in the use of temporary accommodation.
- 2.4 The profile of requests for assistance since the last report to the Committee is outlined in Table 1, below:

Table 1 - Requests for Assistance July - October 2019

	Families	Singles	Total	From MCC	From GM	Outside GM	Other**
July	280	625	905	582	63	38	222
August	222	604	826	498	64	52	212
September	276	566	842	493	99	65	185
October*	282	512	794	487	52	59	196
	1060	2307	3367	2060	278	214	815
	31%	69%	100%	61%	8%	6%	25%

*correct to 25/10/2019

** consists of No Fixed Abode, HMP discharge and last address not known

- 2.5 Table 1 shows that the 3367 separate requests for assistance were made between July-October 2019. This is a historically high figure. Requests for assistance and homelessness presentations are continuing to rise, with the figure for the first quarter of 2019/20 recorded as 80% higher than the same period in 2016/17 (2388 compared to 1329).
- 2.6 It should be noted that the figure of 25% recorded in the 'other' category includes presentations from people with no fixed abode or whose last 'address' was in prison. Many of these will actually be from Manchester and/or have a connection to the city.
- 2.7 Presenting to the Council for assistance requires that the Council fulfil a range of legal duties, prescribed in legislation. One of these may be the provision of temporary accommodation. At the last Scrutiny meeting in July 2019, members requested information on the location of facilities for the accommodation of homeless households. Temporary accommodation is provided through a number of facilities, provided by the Council and partners. The main schemes are outlined below:

Scheme	Provider	Beds/Units	Type of Provision
Dispersed Units	Various private landlords under contract	1500 properties	Individual privately-rented properties in the community, across GM. Floating support.
Bed & Breakfast	Various private owners under a framework	As required, c.200 at any time	B&B units across GM. Floating support.
Longford Centre	MCC	38	Self-contained rooms,

			low support needs, on-site staff
Oak Lodge	MCC	8	Self-contained flats for families, on-site staff
Willowbank	MCC	13	Self-contained flats for families, on-site staff
Women's Direct Access Centre	MCC	33	Individual rooms with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities, on-site staff.
Woodward Court	MCC	60	Self-contained flats, on-site staff.

- 2.8 It should be noted that this portfolio is supplemented by use of schemes on an ad hoc basis as required, for example including women's refuges and units of supported housing.
- 2.9 Accommodation is provided for the extent of the legal duty owed to any household. This may be until a household is rehoused, which may be a period of years, dependent upon individual circumstances. There is a strict legal limit of 6 weeks for the length of stay in bed-and-breakfast accommodation for families. Through the increased level of prevention work, we have been able to reduce overall numbers in bed-and-breakfast and also the length of time that people spend in this form of accommodation.
- 2.10 Support is offered to all households who enter into temporary accommodation, regardless of the nature of the accommodation that they occupy. For site-based schemes, residents will have a key worker to work with them during their stay. This will include income maximisation and also resettlement and rehousing work.
- 2.11 For residents of dispersed accommodation and bed-and-breakfast hotels, support is offered on a floating basis. The Directorate has locality-based floating support teams who work on a caseload basis, including working with households to enable rehousing and move-on.
- 2.12 All temporary accommodation properties are inspected prior to being taken onto the scheme and this includes bed-and-breakfast accommodation. Since July 2019, the Directorate has established a specialist team of inspectors to undertake this work together with instigating a routine of regular inspections. Since July, the team have carried out over 400 property inspections, as outlined below:

		J U L Y	A U G	S E P T
DISPERSED TA				
TOTAL VISITS COMPLETED BY INSPECTORS		1 2 2	1 4 7	3 3 4
TOTAL PROPERTIES INSPECTED		8 3	1 3 8	2 2 7

3.0 Update on the A Bed Every Night Scheme (ABEN)

3.1 The A Bed Every Night programme is a GM-wide programme to provide beds and support to people who sleep rough in the city-region. The scheme is funded through GMCA and each local authority arranges its own response, utilising local intelligence and capacity, with the resources provided by GMCA, based on a common framework. This year, the scheme is to run to 30 June 2020 before being reviewed.

3.2 Last winter, Manchester had 529 unique individuals referred to it through ABEN, and accommodated 377 unique individuals.

3.3 Provision in the city is managed through a range of providers who each provide bespoke responses to assist people who sleep rough. This year, we have enhanced our provision to include more or better of the following:

- Separate provision for women who are sleeping rough.
- Priority given to outreach teams for beds in two of the services to ensure the most complex and entrenched people can access accommodation.
- An out of hours offer.
- Greater flexibility in provision to ensure that single rooms can be offered to those who are unable to share.
- Priority access for people in ABEN into Housing Related Support services through the new Manchester Access and Support gateway.
- Closer links are in the process of being developed with the Housing Solutions Team to ensure that people who sleep rough receive a homeless assessment.
- Better links with health services particularly substance misuse and mental health services, with a focus on monitoring health outcomes.
- A greater focus on reconnection where people come into the city from other areas of the UK.

3.4 As of 31 October, provision in the city for ABEN was as follows:

Provider and Service	Support Needs	Beds Per Night	Timetable
ABEN Cornerstone pods	Low - Medium	16	Operating now - 1st July 2020
ABEN Sanctuary - Stanley Grove	Medium - High	20	Operating now - 1st July 2020
ABEN SPIN - The Well	Low - Medium	14	Operating now - 1st July 2020
ABEN – (NRPF, Refugee)	Low - Medium	10	Opening Monday 28 th October.
ABEN MCC Rochdale Road	Medium - High	24	Operating now - 1st July 2020
ABEN Boaz	Low	15	Operating now – May 30 th 2020
ABEN Sanctuary - Spencer Court	Low - Medium	9	Operating now - 1st July 2020 7 of 9 spaces now available. Sanctuary working at re housing last 2 residents with support from Northward Homes
ABEN Greater Together Manchester - St Cuthbert's Phase 2	Low - Medium	27	Opening 31 st October
Totals as of (31st October 2019)			<u>135</u>

- 3.5 The number of people who sleep rough who come from the armed forces is quite small in the city. While this is also the experience of other authorities in Greater Manchester, it is also understood that this group may be less willing to access services and therefore be under-represented.
- 3.6 The data monitoring which accompanies access to the ABEN programme will identify where people are from the armed forces. This is through self-identification by the person themselves. In these cases, people are referred, with their consent, to appropriate support services. This may be those provided for the armed-forces exclusively, for example the British Legion, breakfast clubs and Broughton House. However, it may also be that specific issues such as PTSD and its mental health impacts are managed through referrals into mainstream services. These are done as people are managed into accommodation. The advantage of the extended ABEN scheme is the additional time which it allows to work with people with often very complex needs.

3.7 Statistical returns are provided to GMCA for monitoring and this includes where people have been identified as being from the armed forces.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the contents of the report.