

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Executive – 12 September 2018

Subject: Homeless Strategy

Report of: Nicola Rea, Strategic Lead for Homelessness

Summary

The report highlights the new draft Strategy for Homelessness for the City of Manchester. This Strategy is currently under discussion and will be signed off by the Homeless Partnership in September, for launching on the 10th October, World Homeless Day.

The report also includes the Council's wider action plan for homelessness that will sit below the Strategy for comment.

Recommendations

That Members comment upon the draft Strategy for Homelessness for the city which will be signed off by the Manchester Homeless Partnership.

That Members comment upon the wider draft action plan for the Council on homelessness.

Wards Affected

All

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of the contribution to the strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Reducing the number of people who are homeless, helping them into appropriate accommodation with help to access employment and learning opportunities will help 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 help 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 gain employment and accommodation will unlock their potential to help them become independent citizens who contribute to our city.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	N/A
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	N/A

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

Any cost implications of the Homelessness Strategy will be met from within budget and grants available to the service. Costs for the service for temporary accommodation are significant and are being met from additional Council budget in 2018/19 of £2.1m and Flexible Housing Support Grant of £1.3m. During this year it is expected to reduce these costs by renting and purchasing homes through registered social landlords. This is expected to relieve the current pressure on the budget and release resource for homeless prevention and support and for the Homelessness Strategy,

Financial Consequences – Capital

None

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

There are no background documents upon which this report is based.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Manchester's Homelessness Strategy for 2018 has been co-produced with partners and people who have had personal insight into homelessness. This paper provides an overview of the work undertaken to produce the strategy and an explanation of the documents produced. The Strategy is in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The homelessness strategy is a statutory document for the Council. An Our Manchester approach has been taken to develop this document in collaboration with the Manchester Homelessness Partnership (MHP). Inviting a more collective approach, this has produced a strategy that acknowledges the contributions that organisations across the city can make towards reducing homelessness. The practical action that the Council will be taking to deliver the strategy is outlined in the action plan attached which will sit alongside other action plans produced by organisations across the city. Finally, in addition to the strategy, the Council must undertake a review of homelessness. This review is in the process of being written and will sit behind the strategy, entitled Contextual Information.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Addressing homelessness has become a regional and national priority. Nationally reported figures show an increase of 169% of the people who are sleeping rough since 2010. Alongside this, there has been a 48% increase in homelessness acceptances over the same period, with just over 59,000 households accepted as homeless in England in 2016/17. Losing a home can be the consequence of both structural and individual factors, approaches to reducing homelessness need to look at both of these factors.
- 2.2 Statutory homelessness is now far more closely associated with eviction from the private rented sector than from either of the other two major tenures; social rented and owner occupied. Nationally, there has been a 32% increase in acceptances for loss of an assured shorthold tenancy since 2010. Overtaking more personal reasons such as relationship breakdown. This is also the case in Manchester where loss of private rented sector accommodation has now become the most frequent reason for being accepted as homeless. More detail on the reasons why people present as homeless to the Council is in Appendix 2.
- 2.3 Welfare Reforms, including the capping or freezing of Local Housing Allowance rates, has been a major driver of the loss of private tenancies and homelessness. These reforms have also demonstrably restricted lower income households' access into the private rented sector. The number of Housing Benefit/Universal Credit claimants who are private tenants is now some 5% lower than when the Local Housing Allowance reforms began in 2011, despite the continuing strong growth of the private rented sector overall. The private rented sector has doubled in size nationally in the last ten years, and rents have increased three times faster than wages nationally, homes in this tenure are increasingly unaffordable, particularly to households in receipt of LHA.

- 2.4 During the past 10 years the Council and Registered Providers have improved the quality of social rented properties across Manchester bringing all homes up to the Decent Homes Standard and more. Rents for social housing properties have also been reduced making them relatively more affordable than private rented properties. Along with the increasing quality and lower rents, tenants in social housing have much greater security of tenure than those in the private rented sector. Together these factors have increased the demand for social housing across the city.
- 2.5 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (“the Act”) came into force on 3rd April 2018. The Act is the most radical change to the homelessness legislation in over 20 years, and has demanded that all local authority homelessness services in England significantly adapt and amend their practice to meet the aims and requirements of this new piece of legislation.

3 Strategic Context

- 3.1 Tackling homelessness is indivisible from the wider aims of the Our Manchester Strategy. The ambitions in the strategy to be a thriving and sustainable, highly skilled, progressive and equitable, liveable and connected city, will not be achieved if residents do not have a home. It is therefore a priority of the City Council to reduce homelessness.
- 3.2 Commitments and investment into the service have been made following the City Centre Review, in December 2016, which provided additional investment for services for people who are rough sleeping. This included £984k City Council resources to be invested in services and approaches for people who were rough sleeping in the city centre.
- 3.3 During late 2017 an in depth review of the wider causes of homelessness in Manchester was undertaken. This included analysis of the available resources within the service to address the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act. This review was presented to EMG in October 2017. This indicated that additional investment would be needed to prepare for the new requirements of the Act as the service was predicted to see a significant increase in demand as a result of the Act.
- 3.4 The Homeless Reduction Act came into effect in April 2018. This has widened the access to prevention services for all households at risk of losing their home. Whilst this enables the Council to work much earlier with people who might be at risk of homelessness, this also presents an increase in demand for services. It requires much closer partnership working, acknowledging that there is more that partners can do to effectively identify at risk households and work with them earlier to prevent homelessness from occurring.
- 3.5 Reducing homelessness is also a priority for Greater Manchester. In 2017, the Greater Manchester Mayor committed to eradicating the need for rough sleeping and reducing homelessness by 2020. Greater Manchester are developing a GM strategy to tackle rough sleeping, Manchester’s approach

aligns with this and provides an additional focus on wider preventative work to address other people and families affected by homelessness.

- 3.6 Manchester's strategy has been developed through the Manchester Homelessness Partnership (MHP), established in 2015, consisting of people who have personal insight into homelessness, and organisations working to reduce homelessness. The Partnership has provided a radically different approach to how we design and commission services and has been instrumental in the development of the strategy.

4.0 Development of the Strategy

- 4.1 The MHP has significantly shaped the approach to the strategy refresh. Launched over two years ago the MHP has established the Manchester Homelessness Charter, uniting people, organisations and businesses with one shared vision to end homelessness in the city. The Charter invited contributions from organisations and individuals for how they could support this aim. Alongside this, 10 action groups that look at different aspects of homelessness and identify new approaches and system challenges were established. Each group meets monthly and has a range of attendees from different organisations alongside people with lived experience of homelessness. These groups have provided the key messages for what is working and what might need to change in the city for homelessness services.
- 4.2 Alongside this there have been several larger co-production events, with over 40 plus people attending, that have brought together members of the action groups and other services to look at co-designing services in Manchester. Using the principles of inclusivity and coproduction, previously unheard voices have been given an instrumental role in shaping the strategy.
- 4.3 In addition to this, MHP established a specific multi agency Strategy Scrutiny Group to oversee the development of the strategy. This group has involved partners from the voluntary and community sector, health, the council and people who have had personal insight into homelessness. Alongside providing a regular group to support the development of the strategy, this group is taking forwards the future engagement with organisations to develop their individual action plans to contribute to the strategy.
- 4.4 Alongside the significant engagement undertaken by MHP which has provided the key 'grass roots' messages about what is working and what needs to change in the city, the council has also undertaken a review of the causes and factors driving homelessness locally and the resources and services available to prevent homelessness and provide accommodation. This was reported into EMG in October 2017 and Executive in November 2017. An updated version of this analysis will be contained within the Contextual Information document. This document provides the evidence base for the refreshed version of the strategy and will sit behind the strategy.

- 4.5 Through bringing together the work of the Partnership and analysis undertaken the main features of the strategy including the 3 key aims have been developed.
- 4.6 The main features of the refreshed Homelessness Strategy are that it:
- Takes a positive, strength based approach that focuses on the assets and potential of people; indivisible from an Our Manchester approach.
 - Recognises that preventing homelessness means tackling the root causes of homelessness, addressing poverty and increasing equitable access to work, skills, employment, cultural, leisure and health services across the city.
 - Inspires a city wide and collective response to homelessness in the city. Public services, voluntary organisations, faith groups, businesses, housing providers, cultural institutions all have a contribution to make to the strategies aims.
 - It is a concise, accessible document written in language that is understood by people not just services.
 - Is co-produced and involves the perspective and voice of people who have experienced homelessness, alongside front line staff and people that support people affected by homelessness.
 - Includes action plans from organisations and services that articulate the practical contributions that they will make to the aims of the strategy.
- 4.7 The strategy will focus on three key aims, based on the evidence and engagement undertaken to date. These are:
- Making homelessness a rare occurrence: increasing prevention
 - Making any experience of homelessness as brief as possible: improving temporary and supported accommodation
 - Making sure homelessness a non-recurring experience: increasing access to settled homes
- 4.8 Accompanying these three aims a set of 'We Will' statements have been drafted based on the previous engagement of the Partnership, data analysis and new engagement from front line staff. They have been circulated across all of the MPH action groups for comment alongside Council services. These statements support the definition of what each aim will achieve. A copy of the strategy is attached in **appendix 1**.

5.0 Delivering the strategy: A citywide approach

- 5.1 Members of the MHP have been invited to support this strategy through writing an action plan that contributes to the achievement of the three main aims of the strategy. This is a key feature of the strategy refresh, representing an expansion of the previous Charter commitments, this demonstrates the wider partnership approach that is being taken in Manchester.
- 5.2 Engagement with different sectors is being led by the Manchester Homelessness Strategy Scrutiny Group. Once each sector has completed their action plan the city will have one plan that outlines the contributions

different organisations will make to tackling homelessness. Action plans are being gathered from:

- Manchester City Council
- Greater Manchester Police
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Services
- Health and Mental Health
- Universities
- Voluntary Sector
- Housing Alliance
- Reducing Reoffending Strategic Group
- Faith Sector
- Strategic Housing Board
- Advice Providers.

- 5.3 The action plans are due to be completed in time for World Homelessness Day in October to launch the strategy document. The City Council's action plan will be a working document; the current version is attached as **appendix 3**.
- 5.4 Officers, organisations and people with lived experience want the Strategy to be as short and simple as possible, so that anyone can read, understand and use it. There will be a Contextual Document that is in the process of being written which will sit behind the Strategy. This will have all the additional information that is required through the Homelessness Code of Guidance, and will add further background detail to the Strategy.

6.0 Greater Manchester Context

- 6.1 Homelessness cannot be solved without the help of other Local Authorities across Greater Manchester. All Local Authorities will have had to refresh their Homeless Strategies in light of the Homeless Reduction Act 2018, and the list of when they are published are as follows:

Local Authority	Date of Strategy Refresh
Bolton	Refreshed in 2017 to take into account the HRA
Bury	Current strategy ends in 2018 and preparation is underway to draft a new strategy.
Oldham	30th August 2018
Rochdale	Refreshed in 2017 to take into account the HRA
Salford	4th Sept 2018
Stockport	9th April 2018
Tameside	Nov 2018
Trafford	Jan / Feb 2019
Wigan	The Homeless Strategy is being developed as the current strategy ends later in the year. This will be published in the near future

7.0 Conclusion and next steps

- 7.1 This strategy refresh has been undertaken utilising both an Our Manchester style of engagement and consultation, alongside significant analysis of data and information. It represents a strong evidence base that has been heavily influenced and contributed to by people who have experienced homelessness. It has produced a different style of document that reflects a strong partnership approach and has led to more contributions from partners towards homelessness than any previous version. This document represents contributions not just from the Council but from the city to tackling this issue. Increasingly we need to work together to reduce the number of people and families affected by homelessness. This strategy and accompanying action plans will represent the practical arrangements for how we will achieve this.
- 7.2 The Council Executive are invited to comment on the draft strategy that will be signed off by the Manchester Homeless Partnership, comment on the city council's action plan attached in the appendix and include any further actions that they would like officers to progress.
- 7.3 The homeless strategy layout and artwork is being designed by the communications team and will be launched on World Homelessness Day on 10 October 2018. A full communications plan will be developed to facilitate this launch.
- 7.4 The communications activity to support the redeveloped homelessness strategy is just one part of a wider programme of activity. This builds on the success that the Council has already had, supporting people to change their perceptions on homelessness and rough sleeping in the city centre. This has been carefully managed and has resulted in increased engagement on social media, and a noticeable shift in public perceptions. The new activity will build on the foundations already set and includes a mapping exercise to prepare for winter communications - identifying areas of learning from last year's media interest - and a schedule of messages to help shape and control more of the public narrative around homelessness. This will be supported by new creative multimedia content, helping educate the public on the differences between homelessness, rough sleeping and begging.
- 7.5 An outcomes framework to monitor the Strategy is being developed with external partners and the performance, research and intelligence service.

8.0 Contributing to the Manchester Strategy

(a) A thriving and sustainable city

- 8.1 Reducing the number of people who are homeless, helping them into appropriate accommodation with help to access employment and learning opportunities will help Manchester become a thriving and sustainable city. Helping people to stay in their accommodation through prevention work will also help them to thrive.

(b) A highly skilled city

- 8.2 Having public, private and voluntary sector organisations working together to help people who have personal insight into homelessness into volunteering and employment will help 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.

(c) A progressive and equitable city

- 8.3 Supporting people who are homeless to gain employment and accommodation will unlock their potential to help them become independent citizens who contribute to our city.

(d) A liveable and low carbon city

- 8.4 N/A

(e) A connected city

- 8.5 N/A

9.0 Key Policies and Considerations

(a) Equal Opportunities

- 9.1 As a public body the Council has a number of statutory duties under equalities legislation. These are often referred to as the Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED). The PSED require the Council, through its decision making process, to give due regard to the need:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 9.2 This involves in particular having due regard, to the need to:

- Tackle prejudice; and
- Promote understanding

- 9.3 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender re assignment, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Equality Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics

- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people. Particular attention needs to be paid to the needs of disabled people in taking account of this requirement.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

9.4 Although people who are homeless are not recognised as a protected characteristic, research shows that this group of people are significantly disadvantaged in a range of outcomes compared to their peers. The homeless strategy will work with people, hopefully resulting in increased opportunities for employment, education and or training as well as increased financial well-being and inclusion. The strategy will also help people around accommodation, which will improve their mental well-being.

(b) Risk Management

9.5 Assessment, mitigation and management of risk will be overseen through two channels reflecting both the city wide work, and the work of the Council within that. The governance of the city strategy will be through the Manchester Homeless Partnership Board. The governance of the work that the Council does within the Strategy will be through the city council's governance arrangements.

(c) Legal Considerations

9.6 The legal considerations are addressed in the body of the Report.