

# Greater Manchester Planning and Housing Commission

Date: December 2020

Subject: Homelessness Update

Report of: Molly Bishop, Homelessness Strategic Lead, Greater Manchester Combined Authority

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## PURPOSE OF REPORT

This paper provides an update on activities and strategic developments relating to:

- 1.0** Homelessness Covid response
- 2.0** Next Steps Accommodation Programme
- 3.0** Homelessness Prevention

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## 1.0 COVID-19 EVERYONE IN RESPONSE

- 1.1. The Second Wave Homelessness Covid Preparedness Plan was signed off by Leaders at the November GMCA meeting (Appendix 1).
- 1.2. This outlines clear standards and expectations that all boroughs, their homelessness and public health teams, have co-designed in line with best practise. It defines the approach across both statutory and non-statutory homelessness responses.
- 1.3. The number of people rough sleeping on a single night in Greater Manchester is 115, as per the November 'annual count'.
- 1.4. There is a significant amount of temporary accommodation in place for people who are rough sleeping or at ongoing or imminent risk, however due to slow move on and oncoming flow this does not meet total demand.
- 1.5. Further expansion is being funded by the Government (under Cold Weather Funding and the Protect Programme).
- 1.6. To support this further, an extension of A Bed Every Night accommodation has been approved for 40 more beds/support. This will ensure that people who come inside

can stay inside, as per the ABEN principles, instead of only being accommodated for period of 3 days over cold weather.

## **2.0 NEXT STEPS ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME**

- 2.1. This programme is a significant opportunity to provide settled accommodation for people who are rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. Many will have been helped already through Everyone In but need long term homes to be made available to them, and the remainder will be for people who are currently rough sleeping.
- 2.2. The Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) opened the first phase of a four-year funding opportunity in August. A combined GMCA proposal has been approved to add to the delivery of Local Authority proposals, totalling 224 properties in total.
- 2.3. The GMCA combined delivery plan contains the following:
  - Acquisition and repair – x15 units capital and revenue contracts with 3 Registered Providers
  - Repurposing x5 units in capital and revenue contract with 1 Registered Provider
  - Acquisition and repair, and lease through ELA – 30x units contracted through GMCA into Resonance and support contract (awaiting)
  - Ethical Lettings Agency (ELA) – 10x units contracted through GMCA into ELA and support contract (awaiting)
- 2.4. The aim had been to ensure flexible allocation of properties under each of the methods of delivery between providers. However, Homes England are struggling to deliver this in the first year of the programme. They are however seeking to develop a flexible contracting approach for 2021/22 and beyond.
- 2.5. We are working to reducing any undue competition in dialogue with Local Authorities and Housing Providers to share contact lists and ensure that delivery partners' key areas, property types and capital grant amounts are understood across the piece.
- 2.6. There is significant risk to delivery by March 21 due to the delays in funding confirmation and contract completions (still ongoing). All grant recipients nationally are in the same position and it is hoped that MHCLG will review this timeline in the new year.
- 2.7. We are mitigating any delay in deliver through the ELA and Resonance through the use of existing grant capital.
- 2.8. Procurement of a support service to sit alongside the 40 properties that will be managed by the ELA is underway.
- 2.9. Allocation into properties will require Local Authorities to demonstrate a Local Lettings Policy or Policy Statement within their Allocations Policy to satisfy MHCLG.

- 2.10. Next year's bidding process is due to open in January and we aim to maximise the opportunity for a flexible allocation. This would seek to layer on top of Local Authority proposals, which outline identified opportunities.

### **3.0 HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION**

- 3.1. There is significant risk of homelessness and destitution due to Asylum negative cessations that may be issued in early December. There are 407 people in Greater Manchester who could be issued a negative cessation, which can only be delayed on an individual basis of risk of destitution. Leaders are seeking to write to the Homes Secretary to call for urgent action to prevent this situation.
- 3.2. The Young Person's Homelessness Prevention Pathfinder was approved in the November GMCA meeting and will be stood up in January 2021. This will see 250-300 young people supported to avoid homelessness through prevention interventions across Bolton, Manchester and Salford to test what works, how to target upstream prevention and build local partnerships to deliver through VCSE partners. The intention is for the Pathfinder to move into a 3-4 year Social Impact Bond in 2022 based on the learning developed.
- 3.3. The GM Homelessness Prevention Strategy is progressing, with a range of workshops and strategy sessions convened over the last few months to support co-production. A draft will be available in January, open for a short consultation period in which local partnership events are encouraged to review and feedback.

### **4.0 BED AND BREAKFAST FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1. The Homeless Families Task and Finish Group was convened by the Programme Board to discuss and formulate a pro active response to the Shared Health Foundation's 'Call to Action'.
- 4.2. GM Homelessness leads have collaborated on an updated Bed and Breakfast Framework (Appendix 2) confirming minimum standards for use as homeless accommodation which the task and finish group has considered and reviewed, with due consideration of the issues and drivers of out of borough placements.
- 4.3. The draft Framework sets out the minimum standard that the Greater Manchester Combined Authorities (GMCA) requires in hotel accommodation used to provide emergency accommodation to people who are homeless.
- 4.4. Part B of the Framework outlines commitments made by the local housing authority in each area of Greater Manchester. Separate commitments may be made by Social Services authorities, who may also place households into bed and breakfast accommodation. For example, people with no recourse to public funds.
- 4.5. In producing this document consideration has been given to Chapter 17 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance; Suitability of accommodation, which sets out the minimum recommended standards for Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

- 4.6. The Framework will be reviewed against current BnB usage and standards and recommendations will be brought on the method and speed of implementation.
- 4.7. Assistant Directors from a number of Children's Services departments have joined the task and finish group providing data on numbers of families and children in temporary accommodation and intelligence on patterns of need. Children's Services ADs are progressing the work in each of these areas to advise the task and finish group to contribute to a holistic picture of support to families.
- 4.8. The Homelessness Action Network Advisory Board has led on mapping VCSE and Faith Sector support, highlighting the opportunity provided by utilising the Street Support. Street Support is a well developed digital platform that brings together information on places of welcome.