

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: 25 November 2022
Subject: Winter Homelessness Update
Report of: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester

Purpose of Report

To update Leaders on the plans to support people at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping this winter.

Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to:

- Note the £460,000 investment into A Bed Every Night being made by the Greater Manchester Mayor within current resources.

Contact Officers

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

Impact Indicator	Result	Justification/Mitigation
Equality and Inclusion		
Health	N/A	
Resilience and Adaptation	N/A	
Housing		
Economy		
Mobility and Connectivity		
Carbon, Nature and Environment		
Consumption and Production		
Contribution to achieving the Greater Manchester Carbon Neutral 2038 target.		

No direct impacts arising from this report.

Risk Management

Relevant risks and mitigations are explored throughout.

Legal Considerations

None.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

Revenue spend included in this report is under the delegation of the Greater Manchester Treasurer.

Financial Consequences – Capital

None.

Number of attachments to the report: 0

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

None.

Background Papers

None.

Tracking/ Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution?

No

Exemption from call in

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency? *None.*

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The proportion of the population at risk of homelessness is rising, with the cost of living notably impacting residents in Greater Manchester. This winter there is expected to be severe hardship facing thousands of households across the region.
- 1.2. This update outlines the importance of Cost of Living response measures to ensure homelessness prevention and details additional emergency prevention measures.

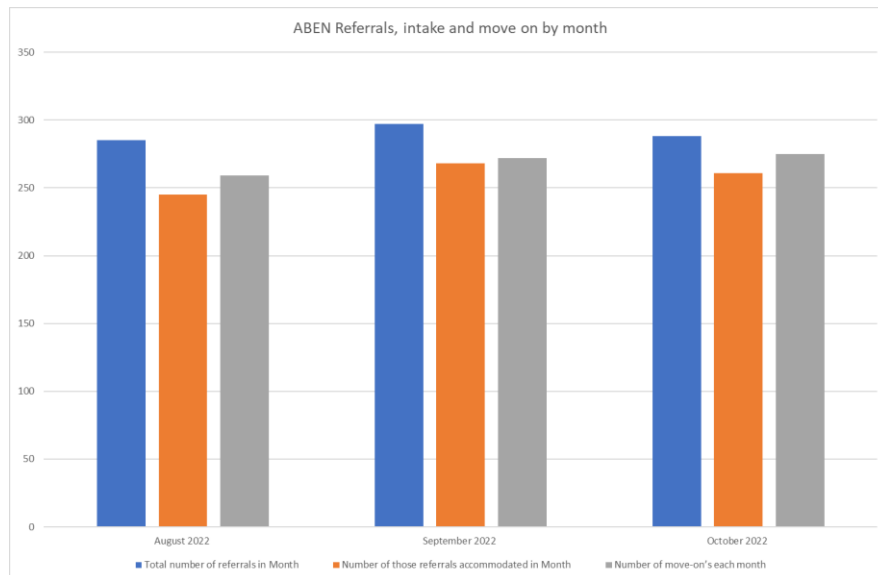
2. Preventing homelessness

- 2.1. Homelessness prevention is the responsibility of all public agencies and effective local prevention partnerships are in place between Local Authorities, wider public services, and voluntary, community and faith organisations. This is codified in the GM Homelessness Prevention Strategy.
- 2.2. Gaps occur where demand is overwhelming and effective support cannot be found. The increasing in affordability of housing poses a severe threat to people's chances of avoiding or exiting homelessness. This risk is most acute for disadvantaged groups and those with capped housing benefit allowances (larger families and young adults aged 18-25).
- 2.3. Recent analysis commissioned from Dataloft shows that just 4% of all tenancies advertised in the last 6 months were at or below LHA rates, with an average monthly rent for a 1 bed at £775.
- 2.4. The urgent need for greater affordable housing supply is recognised within regional and local strategies, including the commitment to 30,000 new social homes by 2037. However the scale of this development is unlikely to meet the short to medium term needs of households requiring more affordable housing to prevent homelessness.
- 2.5. Homelessness teams have been working hard to drive new supply, and access to it, via a range of measures, including:
 - Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme – 232 properties completed across Greater Manchester in the last 18 months.
 - Private Renter Sector access – various landlord incentive and deposit support schemes and leasing via Ethical Letting Agency which resulted in 51 newly leased properties in the last 12 months.

- Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme – upcoming capital and revenue funding programme that is flexible in tenure, focused on new supply, and targeted at entrenched homelessness and young adult cohorts.
- 2.6. Work is ongoing to develop more targeted and collaborative strategic investment in innovative schemes that match current demand from households at homelessness risk or in temporary accommodation.
- 2.7. As we have seen through the Covid-19 pandemic, home and health are also deeply connected. New health risks from the cost of living increases include under-heating resulting in rise in damp and mould. The use of gas heaters and open flames, and of electricity meter tampering also increase risk of to life. Fire services and housing associations are undertaking targeted communications to address these risks.
- 2.8. The strategic and operational responses to the cost of living crisis should be considered as additional homelessness crisis prevention measures. These measures include cash payment via the Household Support Fund, multi-agency hub and warm space, targeted welfare outreach, support and advice, and public information campaigns.
- 2.9. National Government can address these urgent risks of homelessness through increases in welfare (Universal Credit uplift, Local Housing Allowance re-alignment), interventions in rent increases as in Scotland, or evictions as in the pandemic.

3. Emergency responses

- 3.1. Prioritising and supporting people's rental payments to prevent homelessness is be a priority in the operational responses to the cost of living crisis. However with demand rising, our commitment to ensuring that no one has to sleep rough in Greater Manchester requires further expansion of A Bed Every Night (ABEN) provision.
- 3.2. This is evident via the work of multi-agency outreach teams and high rates of ABEN referrals, see graphs below. Our ability to continue to reduce rough sleeping now appears to be stalling for the first time in five years.



Graph 1: Demand and capacity flows in A Bed Every Night Q2 2022/23



Graph 2: Rough Sleeping single night snapshot figures 2010-2022, note the 2022 figure has been taken from October, prior to the November national count date.

3.3. In response to this the Mayor of Greater Manchester is able to commit additional funding into A Bed Every Night this winter (£460,000) on a non-recurrent basis, from the Mayoral budget within current resources.

3.4. This will fund an additional 86 beds across Manchester and Salford, and a further flexible 800 bed nights across Greater Manchester.

3.5. Funding into Manchester will support expanded 66 bed provision at Etrop Grange through the winter months where pressure is acute, and 20 beds in Salford via their flexible dispersed accommodation model.

3.6. All other Local Authorities will receive funding that can be used flexibly to generate new provision or open up existing capacity through move on, totalling an expected extra 800 bed nights.

3.7. This short term measure continues to further emergency responses to rough sleeping in Greater Manchester and continues a clear practical commitment to do what is needed for GM residents.