

# GM PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION

Date: **21 MARCH 2023**

Subject: **GMHPB Homelessness Prevention Strategy Review**

Report of: **STEVE RUMBELOW, GMCA PORTFOLIO LEAD CHIEF EXECUTIVE,  
PLACED-BASED REGENERATION AND HOUSING**

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## Purpose of Report

To report on progress made in delivering the Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention Strategy as a mid-stage point in year 1.

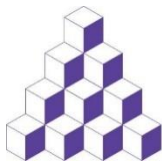
## Recommendations:

Members are requested to:

1. Note the contents of the report.

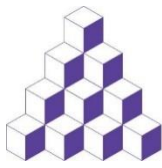
## Contact Officers

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## 1. Introduction and Strategic Context

- 1.1 The Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention Strategy was developed in 2021 with extensive consultation and input from multiple stakeholders, including people with lived experience of homelessness. This was further developed into an Action Plan by a Task and Finish Group of Greater Manchester Homelessness Programme Board (GMHPB).
- 1.2 Since the development of this Strategy and Action Plan, the political landscape and operating environment has changed considerably. We have seen acute pressures (e.g., Afghanistan and Ukraine resettlement schemes) on the whole system, alongside the chronic effects of the Cost-of-Living Crisis which exacerbates existing pressures and conditions which lead people to experience homelessness.
- 1.3 As outlined in a report to this Board in September 2022, delivering against the actions requires us to collectively:
- Support Localities to embed the strategy into their own plans and ways of working.
  - Influence key Thematic Areas and ‘systems’ to change the way they do things.
  - Use the knowledge, connections, and expertise of our Equality Panels to challenge inequalities and better reach communities.
  - Using the strength and leadership of our Action Networks to bring all this activity together.
- 1.4 This paper seeks to outline progress to date, collating feedback from key stakeholders, and exploring emerging opportunities and new areas of focus.



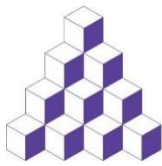
## 2. Indicators, insights and analysis

- 2.1 This year we have begun to sketch out a series of high-level quantitative indicator which help to show whether or not the whole GM system is becoming more preventative across the various ‘layers’ of homelessness risk. See Appendix 1 – Action Plan Indicators for high level indicators.
- 2.2 The focus of 2022 has been to understand what is meaningful to measure and to establish a baseline against which we can measure our progress in future years. Consequently, limited conclusions can be drawn at this stage due to the absence of a ‘normal’ year, not least due to the impact of Covid-19 and the ongoing effects of the cost-of-living crisis.
- 2.3 We know that quantitative data presents a very limited picture of homelessness in GM. In early 2023 we will be carrying out a creative co-production process to interrogate the ‘Where we are now’ assessments against each of the missions, to form a more rounded picture of homelessness and progress being made.

## 3. Delivery of the Priority Actions

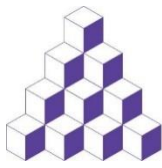
- 3.1 Overall, good progress has been made in the first 12 months of delivery, with some activity recorded against all priorities. Key highlights include:
  - a) **Strategic alignment with Localities and Thematic Areas**
- 3.2 **Localities:** GMCA will continue to offer capacity and support to Local Authorities to develop their Locality Prevention Strategies, to ensure alignment with the GM strategy and use of participatory methods. An overview of alignment and activity across GM is available on request.
- 3.3 We continue to encourage the development of Locality Homelessness Partnerships in collaboration with GM Homelessness Action Networks (GMHAN) and using these partnerships as a mechanism to co-design and deliver local prevention planning.
- 3.4 **Social Housing:** Significant support has been provided to GMHP’s Homelessness Group to explore how the Homes for Cathy commitments can be embedded across GM social housing providers. This includes establishing an action plan, developing a set of indicators to measure progress and hosting

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workshops on key themes. A summary of the collective confidence of a sample of GM Housing Providers is available on request.

- 3.5 **Health Integration:** The development of GM Integrated Care Partnership presents an opportunity to further embed system-wide commitments to inclusion health in the way in which we design, commission and deliver health services. In 2022, there has been a clear focus on co-occurring mental health and substance misuse, including:
- A ‘Discovery’ process to crystallise the knowledge, expertise and ambition of health, homelessness and substance misuse colleagues into a clear mission for a GM approach.
  - The development of a model for co-occurring conditions which shifts towards a standard assumption that everyone accessing substance misuse treatment also has an underpinning mental health need and providing staff across both sectors with the relevant training to meet these needs.
  - Recommissioning Rough Sleeping Dual Diagnosis service, providing a vehicle for the expansion of a GM-wide support service for rough sleeping teams to access support to navigate the service landscape, work in a more trauma-informed way and bespoke interventions for people with longstanding co-occurring conditions.
- 3.6 **Gender Based Violence:** Our strategy and action plan are specifically aligned to the housing priorities within the GM Gender Based Violence Strategy. Through the delivery of the Domestic Abuse Out of Borough protocol, we will be well positioned as a system to understand and learn from the housing needs of people experiencing gender-based violence and make system-wide improvements to prevent homelessness.
- 3.7 **Modern Slavery and Exploitation:** Significant work has been undertaken to recognise the reciprocal risks of homelessness and exploitation, including strategic alignment and involvement of homelessness leads in the Modern Slavery NGO network. This includes streamlining existing pathways through the National Referral Mechanism, better sharing of data and the potential development of the domestic abuse protocol into a “Persons at risk Protocol”.



**b) Driving key stakeholder activity**

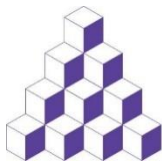
3.8 **GMHAN:** As a critical actor in delivering the Strategy, the GMHAN has successfully re-structured around its core objectives to be more action focused. GMHAN benefits from additional infrastructure to maximise its impact, including:

- A Coordinator to drive the activity of the network forward.
- A dedicated Participation Fund to enable people who are unwaged to participate in the Network, particularly for those with lived experience.
- An emerging fund for small grants to support Locality Partnerships' co-production activity.
- Pooled funding from across the voluntary and statutory sector to enable all the above, to ensure collective ownership.

3.9 **Other Action Networks:** GMCA is ensuring coordination across all action-focused networks at an officer level, with regular catch ups across policy areas. Cross-membership across the networks is encouraged and close linkages are being developed especially with the Food Security Action Network and Cost of Living Response Group, considering the cost-of-living crisis.

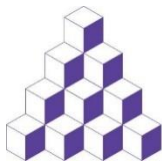
3.10 **Alignment with the National Rough Sleeping Strategy 'Ending Rough Sleeping for Good':** GM has been a key contributor to influencing national strategic priorities, including:

- Working with DLUHC to deliver the Rough Sleeping Data Framework which underpins the national strategy, as an 'Early Adopter'. This provides an opportunity to influence how street homelessness is considered at a national level, building on local and regional learning.
- Contributing to Cross Governmental Department sessions on the framework and strategy, promoting collective ownership of the core drivers of homelessness and pressing the case for change.
- Contributing case studies and evidence to support the development of the Rough Sleeping Strategy and supporting other areas of the country in peer learning sessions.



**c) Driving New Activities and Priorities**

- 3.11 **Inequalities:** A small group of representatives from the housing and homelessness sector have been working alongside the Race Inequalities to examine this specifically in Greater Manchester. A future paper is recommended to come back to a future Programme Board meeting, outlining core findings and actions. It is so far clear that people facing racial inequality (and particularly people from black backgrounds) are significantly overrepresented in Statutory Homelessness.
- 3.12 Further work in 2023 will explore LGBT+ and Disability inequalities in housing and homelessness, building on the body of local and national evidence and begin to look at the intersectional experience of the housing sector alongside people with lived experience of disadvantage.
- 3.13 **Employment, Training, Education and Good Lives:** The Cost-of-Living Crisis is driving a focus on employment and training, not least because employment is no longer a guaranteed route out of poverty for many people. There are many fantastic organisations working in GM to support this agenda, but often in isolation. GMHAN has been critical in bringing these organisations together at the latest quarterly meeting and beginning to form a clear GM narrative on what good life-opportunities mean for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- 3.14 **Housing First Legacy:** Work is already underway to plan for the long-term future of Housing First and particularly how we can adopt learning from the programme into wider system reform on responding to multiple disadvantage. This is linked closely with Changing Futures and it is that the GM Changing Futures programme is having an influence on the way in which we think about homelessness and multiple disadvantage.



## 4. Scrutiny and Feedback

4.1 We asked GMHAN members to tell us what they think of the Prevention Strategy Action Plan. In response to a survey on the action plan itself, GMHAN members provided the following feedback on the action plan:

- How much focus is there on preventing homelessness in Greater Manchester? **Members rated this as 6/10 on average, where 0 represents "No focus at all" and 10 represents "Full buy-in"**
- How do you rate the relevance of the prevention strategy action plan overall? **Members rated this as 6/10 on average, where 0 represents "Not fit for purpose" and 10 represents "Completely relevant"**
- Everyone surveyed felt that the lobbying positions within the Action Plan were still relevant.

4.2 Feedback from this exercise was extensive and honest, with the key points broadly summarised as follows:

### What's going well?

- Lived Experience involvement and participation, with voices being taken seriously and (crucially) expertise that is remunerated.
- Partnership working across policy areas at a local and regional level
- Workforce development, in particular the availability of Trauma and Psychologically Informed practice and ABEN best practice sessions.
- Improved prison leaver pathways and outcomes.
- Activity of GM Housing Providers in prioritising tackling homelessness.
- ABEN, whilst not perfect, has been a gamechanger in providing people with a stable base from which to recover from homelessness.
- RSAP and other national programmes are making a real difference.

### What needs more focus?

- Accessibility, affordability and quality of the Private Rental Sector and better regulation and protection from illegal eviction and other malpractice.

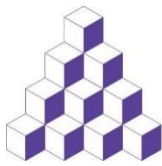
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- Progress in improving access to mental health and drug and alcohol services has been slow, with lack of specialist support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage e.g., learning disabilities, acquired brain injuries.
- Early years, children, care leavers and families, which often get overlooked in homelessness work.
- The supply, availability, quality and accessibility of supported accommodation.
- Pathways into Social Care support for people in temporary and emergency accommodation can be slow, with very high thresholds.
- Pressures in Local Authority homelessness teams can cause delays and inhibit trauma informed practice.
- Peer support and investment in broader initiatives to promote wellbeing and community connectedness.

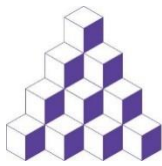
## 5. Upcoming Priorities

5.1 Whilst the missions within the Prevention Strategy provide a useful compass on the overall ambition and direction of travel, the Action Plan will always be a living, breathing document.

5.2 There is a need to improve focus on priorities within the action plan where we have not made significant progress. These areas have been identified as follows:

- **Peer Advocacy Support:** Although significant progress has been made in developing and progressing a GM approach to involving people with lived experience of homelessness, the specific actions to develop peer advocacy support have stalled. This is in part due to a need to develop the infrastructure required to develop this service through programmes like GROW.
- **Care Leaver Transitions:** There has been collaboration across functions to examine what works in ensuring a successful transition e.g., access to social housing, however we have not yet developed specific approaches or joint commissioning. Several projects and developments will catalyse this work, including the establishment of GM Integrated Care Partnership.





- **Street Engagement Hub approach:** The delivery of the Hub model in Manchester has been extremely successful, however further work is required to replicate this approach across Greater Manchester.

5.3 The Board is asked to appraise the upcoming priorities (directly influenced by GMHAN member feedback) which we expect to influence the delivery of the plan and, in some cases, generate new actions. Key activity in the near term includes:

- **Understanding and refining ‘Where we are now’:** through co-production at a GM and Local Authority level, particularly as local strategies grow and are periodically reviewed.
- **Focus on supported accommodation:** through involvement in emerging national conversations (e.g., Supported Accommodation (Regulatory Oversight) Bill) and funding opportunities (e.g., Supported Housing Accommodation Programme). This represents new ground regionally, as commissioning of supported housing sits at a Borough level, however this is a critical resource and is currently the most common move on destination from A Bed Every Night.
- **Influencing the Private Rental Sector:** We are potentially at a point of significant opportunity, with the forthcoming implementation of the Renters Reform Bill nationally, alongside regional commitments to develop a Good Landlord Charter. We may be able to influence the PRS through our existing networks including sharing learning from Housing First and good practice from social housing.
- **Driving up standards and supply of temporary accommodation:** through collaboration across Greater Manchester to address the immediate continued increase in demand for temporary accommodation, whilst generating supply of truly affordable long-term homes for people. This also includes targeted work to drive up the standard of support provided to people in TA. A potential ‘Housing Deal’ with DLUHC provides opportunity for capital spend to reduce the reliance on BnB for families experiencing homelessness in GM.