

Housing and Economy Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 2 November 2017

Homelessness Task Force – Remit, Scope and Membership

Item number	7.13
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	
Council Commitments	C9

Executive Summary

A homelessness task force is being created to support the coalition commitment, C9: Create a homelessness task force to investigate the growing homelessness problem in the city. The team will review the use of bed and breakfast premises and explore alternatives that better meet the needs of individuals and families, with an aim to end the use of bed and breakfast facilities. The task force will be chaired by the appointed Homelessness Champion, Councillor Kate Campbell.

This report will outline the scope, remit and membership of the task force.

Homelessness Task Force – Remit, Scope and Membership

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To confirm the political make up and appoint the members of the task force.
- 1.2 To note the chair of the task force.
- 1.3 To agree the remit.
- 1.4 To note the task force will provide an update report in January 2018.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council's homelessness services are facing unprecedented pressures, with demand for both permanent and temporary accommodation exceeding supply and addressing these pressures will require a city-wide partnership approach to ensure that sustainable solutions are found.
- 2.2 The Council has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation for anyone who is assessed as homeless and requires it, until an offer of settled housing is made.
- 2.3 Homelessness presentations continue to fall year on year in the city, due to a Council wide increase in focus on prevention and early intervention. In 2016/17, 3,386 households presented as homeless, down from the peak of 5,517 in 2006/7.
- 2.4 During the same period, the average homelessness case length has increased from 109 days to 303 days, as a result of welfare reform, lack of affordable housing options, the removal of non-priority status and a growing population, despite the delivery of 8,565 affordable homes in the city during that same period.
- 2.5 Because of the increase in case length, there is greater pressure on the Council's temporary accommodation services. Each evening the Council, through a range of services, accommodates approximately 1,850 households.
- 2.6 The breakdown of average use of accommodation each evening is included in appendix one. The largest increase in use over this period by accommodation

type is in bed and breakfast and short term lets, 349 and 184 households per night respectively.

- 2.7 The Council also operates the Private Sector Leasing Scheme, managed by Link Housing, which provides accommodation for around 1500 homeless households at any time, on a longer-term basis. The contract for this scheme allows up to 1750 properties, however, numbers are currently decreasing due to difficulties in attracting landlords, such as:
- A buoyant market, with greater income available by letting directly to tenants;
 - Increased demand for private rented properties ensuring no long void periods;
 - Increase in landlords using properties for short term lets;
 - House price increases in Edinburgh leading to landlords who held properties during recession now selling.
- 2.8 The net cost of providing temporary accommodation in 2016/17 is £10.173 million, included in this figure is the net cost of bed and breakfast provision at £5.738 million. Future welfare reform changes are likely to see net costs of the Council fulfilling its statutory duties to homeless people increase significantly and officers are currently modelling the potential impact, based on up to date information around proposed welfare benefit changes.

3. Main report

- 3.1 The remit and outcomes which the task force will seek to achieve are:
- Build on existing prevention work which further reduces homelessness presentations;
 - Reduce the number of people rough sleeping, accessing temporary accommodation and living in insecure accommodation;
 - Increase the supply of quality council led temporary accommodation provision, reducing the reliance on bed and breakfast;
 - Ensure that appropriate support is available for all homeless people who require it.
- 3.2 The Council has appointed Councillor Kate Campbell as Homelessness Champion, as part of her role she will chair the Homelessness Task Force.
- 3.3 Members of the task force should include an elected member from each political party, nominated and agreed through the Housing and Economy Committee.
- 3.4 The national Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, announced by the Local Government and Housing Minister on 19 September 2017, shares common goals with the Homelessness Task Force and through the convener and vice convener of the Housing and Economy Committee, the Council will

seek to identify synergies and contribute to pilots and initiatives delivered by this group.

- 3.5 To support the development of potential solutions a range of evidence gathering is required which will cover areas, such as:
- Review of the costs of existing temporary accommodation and provide costs for potential alternative provision.
 - Assessment of the complexity of service users need.
 - Examine the suitability of existing temporary accommodation options.
 - Analysis of additional temporary accommodation required to eliminate the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.
 - Establish the range of advice and support available to homeless people.
 - Highlight existing barriers to move on or settled accommodation.
 - Identify Council properties which could be developed to provide temporary or move on accommodation.
 - Establishing what works, reviewing cases where successful outcomes have been achieved.
 - Assess barriers to tenancy sustainment by reviewing cases of repeat homelessness.
 - Analysis of the impact of current and future welfare reform.
- 3.6 An update on the evidence gathering exercise and recommendations for work streams, based on this analysis will be considered at the Housing and Economy Committee on 18 January 2018.
- 3.7 A further update report detailing the progress of these workstreams and proposed solutions will be considered and the Housing and Economy Committee on 7 June 2018.
- 3.8 The Housing and Economy Committee will agree and progress any change in service delivery which can be managed within existing department budgets. Any change in service provision which requires investment, on a spend to save basis, will be referred to the Finance and Resources Committee.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 A continued reduction in homelessness presentations.
- 4.2 A reduction in repeat homelessness presentations.
- 4.3 A reduction in rough sleeping.
- 4.4 A reduction in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

- 4.5 A reduction in homelessness case lengths.
- 4.6 A reduction in the time spent in temporary accommodation.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 N/A

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 N/A

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 An equalities and rights impact assessment will be developed to support the work of the task force and will be constantly reviewed to reflect proposed changes to models of service delivery.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 N/A

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 A full programme of consultation will be developed to support the work of the task force. This will be created following the initial data gathering exercise and included in the report for the Housing and Economy committee on xx January 2018.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 The Scottish Government statement relating to the creation of the national Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Action Group can be found here:
<https://news.gov.scot/news/homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-action-group>.

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11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Homelessness Data Sheet

Homelessness Data Sheet

Appendix 1

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-08	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Homeless Presentations	5517	5147	4881	4779	4662	4448	4289	4065	3986	3601	3386
Average Homeless Case Length	109.0	128.4	164.4	174.4	180.7	205.2	202.9	209.2	217.9	247.3	303.1

Table 1: Homeless Presentations and Average Homeless Case Length 2006-07 to 2016-17

		2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-08	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Households in Temporary Accommodation (1 April)	B&B	220	251	286	310	295	312	317	340	392	391	569
	Flats	277	293	332	298	302	314	309	328	328	346	375
	Supported Units	111	134	142	143	143	157	159	177	173	175	192
	STLs	0	0	4	2	7	50	53	88	83	135	184
	Hostels	528	528	528	528	528	528	528	528	528	528	528
	Total	1136	1206	1292	3281	1275	1361	1366	1461	1504	1575	1848

Table 2: No of Households Accommodated in Temporary Accommodation on 1 April 2006-07 to 2016-17

		2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-08	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Affordable Homes Built by Tenure	Social Rent	371	469	259	471	465	458	307	375	263	217	283
	Mid Market Rent				18	31	18	255	584	430	351	410
	Low Cost Home Ownership	89	30	152	91	29	181	297	326	362	490	483
	Total	460	499	411	580	525	657	859	1285	1055	1058	1176
	Running Total	460	959	1370	1950	2475	3132	3991	5276	6331	7389	8565

Table 3: No of Affordable Homes Built by Tenure 2006-07 to 2016-17