

# Housing and Economy Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 18 January 2018

## Homelessness Task Force - Update

<b>Item number</b>	7.9
<b>Report number</b>	
<b>Executive/routine</b>	Executive
<b>Wards</b>	
<b>Council Commitments</b>	C9

### Executive Summary

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A homelessness task force has been 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 provides an update on the work of the task force since the previous Housing and Economy Committee of 2 November 2017.

## Homelessness Task Force - Update

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 To agree the measures of success outlined in section four.
- 1.2 To agree the creation of a sub group, to include operational staff from relevant service areas to develop task force proposals.
- 1.3 To note that the task force will report back with progress and final recommendations, to the Housing and Economy Committee, on 7 June 2018.

### 2. Background

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- 2.1 The Housing and Economy Committee, of 2 November 2017, agreed to establish a short life task force to address the challenges of delivering homelessness services in Edinburgh.
- 2.2 A report outlining the scope, remit and membership, was agreed by Committee.
- 2.3 Following the Committee, the membership of the task force was confirmed as Councillors Kate Campbell (SNP), Cammy Day (Labour), Iain Whyte (Conservative), Susan Rae (Green) and Robert Aldridge (Liberal Democrat).

### 3. Main report

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- 3.1 The first meeting took place on 12 December 2017 and was attended by all members of the task force.
- 3.2 The task force agreed to meet each month until May 2018. These meetings will be themed and will include the following areas:
  - Priorities
  - Housing First
  - Housing supply
  - Prevention and support
  - Alternative temporary accommodation
  - Assessment and triage
- 3.3 To gain an insight into the current delivery of key services, the task force will undertake a series of visits, in January and February. Initial visits will focus on:
  - Homelessness Services and Temporary Accommodation, 1a Parliament Square

- The Access Point
  - The Streetwork Hub
  - Council contact centre
  - Bed and breakfast accommodation
  - Care shelters
  - Edinburgh Access Practice
  - Locality offices
  - Local authority partners
- 3.4 In addition to these visits, the task force agreed to engage with existing and recent homelessness services' users to obtain feedback on their experience and their thoughts on future service delivery. This will be arranged in January and February. Officers will develop plans to identify service users, who may wish to contribute and report back to the task force in January.
- 3.5 The task force was provided with a presentation on the key challenges facing the Council, in relation to the delivery of homelessness services, which included information provided in the Homelessness Task Force – Remit, Scope and Membership report presented to the Housing and Economy Committee, on 2 November 2017.
- 3.6 Following this presentation, officers will provide more detailed information around costs of service delivery and the impact of welfare reform at a future meeting of the task force.
- 3.7 The task force sought assurances that people presenting as homeless were aware of their rights and responsibilities, in relation to the provision of services. Officers will provide further information, at a future meeting, on the information currently provided to service users and to identify whether any developments are required to make this clearer.
- 3.8 To support future recommendations from the task force, it was agreed that a sub group of key officers will be created to develop proposals and report back to the task force on the implementation measures required.
- 3.9 The development of proposals would require officer support from the following service areas: Finance, legal services, procurement, homelessness services, revenue and benefits, housing and health and social care. Membership of this group would include, but not be limited to these core areas.

#### **4. Measures of success**

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- 4.1 The task force agreed to develop a strategy to achieve the following outcomes, prior to reporting back to Committee on 7 June 2018.
- No families to be accommodated in bed and breakfast.

- No 16/17 year olds or care leavers to be accommodated in bed and breakfast.
- Reduce the number of people in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- Reduce the lengths of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- Reduce the number of people sleeping rough.
- Increase the stock of temporary accommodation, specifically flats, supported accommodation and new forms of temporary accommodation.
- Continued reduction in homelessness presentations.
- Implement the “Housing First” approach.

## **5. Financial impact**

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5.1 N/A

## **6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact**

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6.1 N/A

## **7. Equalities impact**

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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**

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8.1 N/A

## **9. Consultation and engagement**

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9.1 A full programme of consultation will be developed to support the work of the task force.

## **10. Background reading/external references**

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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>.

### **Harry Robertson**

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