

Terms of Reference – Strategic Partnership Working Group for Addressing Homelessness

Purpose

1. The Strategic Partnership Working Group for Addressing Homelessness (“the working group”) has been established to address homelessness on the Isle of Man.
2. The working group will work to produce and oversee the implementation of a Homelessness Strategy for the Isle of Man to align with the following Housing & Communities Board (“the Board”) objectives of:
 - a) everyone having a suitable and affordable place to call ‘home’
 - b) the Island’s housing stock meeting the needs of the population now and into the future.
3. The strategy must align with both the Island Plan and the Board’s Plan, and other policies including the March 2020 principles of affordable housing including alternative housing structures, the Housing First concept and commissioning, climate change action and improving the condition of housing, the needs of our older population and better arrangements for landlords, tenants and owner occupiers.

In addition, the working group will ensure the strategy considers and addresses the following main themes as identified in a strategic review commissioned by the Board:

- Creation of clear and multiple pathways for people to access from the point of presenting as homeless*, to having a suitable and affordable place to call home,
- Creating and implementing legislation and a statutory duty to house when presenting as homeless,
- In the immediate absence of legislation, create a working definition of homelessness for all stakeholders to work together in common alignment,
- To create a single system data source that quantifies at any one time the number of people of no fixed abode (NFA), at risk of NFA, and service user needs,
- To establish a cyclical system wide needs assessment programme (e.g. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or a Health Needs Audit etc) to inform current and strategic system and user needs,
- To establish an ongoing programme of homelessness prevention initiatives to reduce current and future needs for homelessness services.

* People can be at risk of or become homeless for a whole host of reasons, some are due to causes such as financial hardship or struggling to find affordable accommodation. Other reasons may be due to life events such as a relationship breakdown, losing a job, physical/mental health problems or substance misuse. There may be need for short term emergency housing due to house fire or natural disaster or fleeing domestic violence. Those experiencing homelessness can be individuals, couples or family groups.

Constitution

4. The working group is appointed by the Housing and Communities Board as a sub-group in order to carry out the functions of the Board.

5. The working group may assemble task/finish groups as required to undertake specific operational based projects who will report to the Strategic Partnership Working Group.

Membership

6. The Working Group should comprise the following:

- Fiona Robinson, Chair
- Head of Policy Development, Cabinet Office
- Director of Public Estates and Housing, Department of Infrastructure
- Head of Housing Operations, Department of Infrastructure
- Executive Director of Strategy & Policy, Department of Health and Social Care
- Deputy Chief Officer, Department of Home Affairs
- Public Health
- The Salvation Army (Strategic Partner)
- Praxis Care (Strategic Partner)
- Housing Matters (Strategic Partner)

Members comprising the group will have responsibility for nominating a deputy in their absence to ensure the meetings remain quorate.

7. The Working Group are expected to engage and consult with operational stakeholders across the homelessness system such as (but not limited to):

- Third Sector charities working to directly support homeless people (e.g. Manx Housing Trust, Women's Refuge etc)
- Third sector charities working to support issues connected to Homelessness (e.g. Manx Citizens Advice, Isle of Man Foodbank, The Samaritans, The Salvation Army (Debt Advice) etc)
- Local authorities
- Statutory service providers (e.g. Manx Care, Isle of Man Constabulary, Prison and Probation Service, General Registry, etc)
- Commissioned service providers (e.g. St Christopher's – Cronk Sollysh)
- Service Users (where appropriate)
- Members of the Public (where appropriate).

8. The Chair may invite individuals or groups to attend the Working Group from within or outside Government.

Governance

9. The quorum for a Working Group meeting is three of the five department members in attendance plus one of the three strategic partners in attendance.

10. Meetings of the Working Group will be scheduled and agreed with the Chair but shall take place at least monthly. Recognising the need to provide suitable dates for external attendees, extraordinary meetings may be convened at short notice.

11. Minutes will be prepared by the Cabinet Office and will be issued to the Working Group at the earliest opportunity and no later than seven working days following each meeting.
12. Agendas are compiled with the approval of the Chair who may also approve late papers.
13. A request for an item to be included on the agenda should normally be accompanied by supporting documentation. The agenda and papers will, wherever possible, be distributed to members at least one week before each meeting by the Secretariat.
14. All documentation issued in relation to the Working Group including the Terms of Reference, proceedings and papers shall be considered to be confidential and should not be circulated for wider distribution without first seeking the necessary permission of the Chair.
15. All decisions relating to policy and strategy must be approved by the Board in support of point 4 under section entitled "Constitution".

Work Programme

16. Due to the large remit of the Working Group its output has been structured to be delivered with a sole focus on addressing homelessness.

The working group will be responsible for establishing appropriate work streams and delivery of actions in support of the Board's plan and the Addressing Homelessness Strategy.

The working group are also responsible for reporting to the Board:

- Work stream(s) plan, status and progress updates
- Work stream(s) risks, assumptions, issues and dependencies (RAID)
- Work stream(s) resourcing status

Finance

17. Funding for any specific initiatives or external resources will require a bid to the Housing and Communities Board as per the terms of reference for the Housing and Communities Fund.