

# Memo

9 March 2017

To: Members of the Community Development and Safety Committee

cc: Rohan Bush, Manager Affordable Housing Policy  
Viv Heslop, Portfolio Manager Environment and Community, Mayoral Office

From: Graham Bodman, General Manager Arts, Community and Events

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Subject: General Manager Arts, Community and Events insights from Canada trip on actions to address homelessness

In November 2016, the General Manager Arts, Community and Events (GM ACE) went to Canada to look at homelessness responses. This included attending the three day Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness Conference in London, Ontario, followed by a three day study tour of Vancouver, BC. The GM ACE was accompanied at the conference by senior leaders from the following organisations:

- Auckland City Mission (Housing First Auckland Central)
- Vision West (Housing First West Auckland)
- Wise Group/LinkPeople (Housing First South Auckland)
- Lifewise (Housing First Auckland Central)
- Community Housing Aotearoa.

The purpose of the trip was to better understand the Housing First model of reducing homelessness, as well as to investigate the role of local/municipal government in supporting it and other homelessness reduction efforts. It also provided an opportunity to build relationships with key stakeholders in the homelessness sector in Auckland.

Insights from the trip have informed advice to His Worship the Mayor and contributed to the Mayor's proposal for the 2017/2018 Annual Budget which prioritised \$500,000 to promote collaboration across council, government agencies, charities, businesses and philanthropic groups to address homelessness.

Insights and recommendations from the trip will be considered as staff from the Community and Social Policy department prepare their recommendations for the Community and Environment Committee in April 2017.

As well as a presentation from the GM ACE on his key insights from the conference and study tour, the February Community Development and Safety (CDS) Committee meeting included a panel discussion on rough sleeping and an update report on Housing First and rough sleeping. These items informed committee members on rough sleeping, so that members could provide direction to council staff for inclusion in current policy work on homelessness.

At their February meeting the Committee requested that a written report be provided with suggested actions based on the GM ACE's conference attendance and study tour.

## Summary of key insights to date

As shared at the committee's February meeting, key insights from attendance at the conference and the study tour are summarised below:

- there is evidence that the Housing First model of support works to end homelessness
- a national and/or regional housing/homelessness strategy is essential
- strong leadership is necessary, particularly at a civic level
- good data needs to be collated and used to inform good decision making
- cross-sector collaboration is absolutely essential
- a collective impact approach may be useful in responding to homelessness across the region
- training for frontline staff is needed
- point-in-time street counts are essential, but inevitably underestimate the scale of the problem. A robust methodology needs to be developed
- rough sleeping in Auckland is at a scale that can be solved now
- sometimes night shelters and emergency housing are necessary, but this may not be the case in Auckland due to the comparatively 'manageable' scale of the problem
- Auckland is at a crossroads with potential for significant increases in homelessness linked to housing unaffordability, lack of housing supply and socio-economic drivers. The time for action is now
- appropriate resourcing and leadership is essential for success.

As demonstrated by [Vancouver's Housing and Homelessness Strategy](#), a range of interventions are available for addressing homelessness and these may be appropriate to consider in the Auckland context. Interventions used in Vancouver include:

- civic leadership
- provision of land
- regulatory interventions (e.g. inclusionary zoning – 'earn the right to develop more intensively through providing affordable housing')
- partnerships
- advocacy to other branches of government
- provision of funding.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Bodman