

# Memo

25 June 2018

To: Seniors Advisory Panel  
From: Debbie Edwards, Senior Policy Manager Social Policy and Bylaws, Community and Social Policy

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**Subject: Kia Whai Whare Tātou Kātoa: Regional, cross-sectoral homelessness plan for Auckland**

## Purpose

This memo provides background information for the meeting with the panel during July 2018. This meeting will include discussion on the experience of homelessness in the senior community, and how the development of a regional, cross-sectoral plan can address these needs.

## Background

The 2013 census counted 20,296<sup>1</sup> homeless people<sup>2</sup> in Auckland - an increase of 26 percent since 2006. Conservative projections estimate current homelessness at about 24,000, reaching 26,522 by 2021. It is an Auckland-wide issue, and is affecting working households.

Homelessness is broader than rough sleeping. The Statistics New Zealand definition (adopted by Auckland Council) includes people living without shelter (e.g. rough sleeping and in vehicles), in temporary accommodation (e.g. emergency accommodation, shelters, and motels), sharing temporarily<sup>3</sup> and living in uninhabitable dwellings (e.g. garages and sheds).

Those aged over 65 were the least affected group at the time of the 2013 census, at seven percent of the homeless population. There are however, increasing challenges for seniors. Retiring in the private rental market can be precarious, particularly for the financially vulnerable. The cost of meeting rents on fixed incomes can be challenging and the demand for rental property may mean landlords are less willing to make modifications to the dwelling to enable ongoing occupation.

Further, as home ownership declines among current working age cohorts, the numbers of seniors retiring into the private rental sector is likely to increase. Affordability of the private rental market on fixed incomes, and instability in the rental sector may see more seniors at risk of homelessness in the future.

The rapid growth of Auckland's population is outstripping growth in housing supply. Housing affordability (for rent and purchase) is declining and there is significant unmet demand for social, affordable and emergency housing. There are other personal, social and system level factors that also contribute. It is clear that homelessness has a complex set of determinants, and requires a coordinated cross-sectoral solution.

In 2017 Auckland Council sought advice on its position and role in relation to homelessness. It was resolved that homelessness in Auckland should be "rare, brief and non-recurring" and that the council should strengthen the established levers available to "improve, end and prevent homelessness" (ENV/2017/118). The decision included a mandate to provide strategic leadership and inter-sectoral coordination to develop a regional, cross-sectoral homelessness plan (the plan).

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<sup>1</sup> Analysis conducted by the University of Otago.

<sup>2</sup> University of Otago uses the term severe housing deprivation to define homelessness and aligns with the Statistics New Zealand definition.

<sup>3</sup> Not including those in long-term, overcrowded households.

The committee report and accompanying research paper can be accessed at:  
[http://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2017/08/ENV\\_20170808\\_AGN\\_6831\\_AT.PDF](http://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2017/08/ENV_20170808_AGN_6831_AT.PDF)

## Developing a regional, cross-sectoral homelessness plan

Auckland Council has commenced work to lead and facilitate development of this plan, acting as the backbone agency in a collective impact approach. It is envisaged that the plan will be collectively owned and implemented by key government agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders. The key deliverables from this policy project will be:

- regional, cross-sectoral plan - this will set out a shared vision, objectives, priorities and principles for collaboration over the medium-long term
- annual action plan – this will identify collaborative, regional actions that aim to prevent, end and reduce the harm from homelessness
- monitoring and reporting framework – this will provide a framework for tracking progress against outcomes and implementation of the action plan.

The process for developing the plan includes the following:

1. **Research with people at risk and with lived experience of homelessness, and frontline service providers:** this project will map the pathways into and out of the different forms of homelessness, focusing on single mothers with children as a priority group. It will help to identify opportunities for intervention, placing those directly affected at the centre of this project.
2. **Sector system mapping:** the council is working with the key stakeholders to compile an inventory of initiatives that contribute to addressing homelessness. This system model includes:
  - policies, legislation, regulation, and targets
  - coordination, collaboration and engagement mechanisms
  - funding, accountability and governance mechanisms
  - the evidence base, and ongoing planning processes
  - interventions (or services) delivered across the continuum of homelessness to prevent, end and minimise harm from homelessness.

Analysis of this system mapping data will help to identify strengths and synergies, gaps, opportunities for collaboration and potential solutions.

3. **Establishing a cross-sectoral leadership group:** this group will include representatives of central government and non-government agencies, Māori (mana whenua and mataawaka), and leaders in the sector. This group will be key partners in the development and implementation of the plan. Sector leaders attended their first workshop on 31 May 2018.
4. **Engagement events with stakeholders:** three workshops with a broader group of stakeholders are planned for August 2018. These workshops will focus on building consensus around the plan and developing the annual action plan. Further engagement will also be undertaken with a range of forums and networks, including Auckland Council advisory panels.
5. **Authorisation and implementation:** it is envisaged that partners will seek approval through their respective channels. For Auckland Council, this will require reporting back to Environment and Community Committee later this year. An Auckland Council implementation plan, setting out how council will align with, and contribute to the regional, cross-sectoral plan, will be developed early in 2019. This will include agreed local board initiatives.

6. **Identification of opportunities for seed projects:** during the development of the plan, Auckland Council will work with partners to identify immediate opportunities to progress initiatives.

The key steps and indicative timeframe are summarised below:

Indicative timeframe	Action
May – June, 2018	Research with people at risk and with lived experience
	System mapping with key stakeholders
	Workshops with local boards
31 May 2018	Sector leaders' group workshop to develop plan (first draft)
July 2018	Engagement with council advisory panels
August 2018	Stakeholder workshops
November 2018	Plan and action plan presented to Environment and Community Committee (and partner governance) for approval
March - April 2019	Auckland Council implementation plan presented (1) to local boards with actions and then (2) to the Environment and Community Committee

### Engagement with council advisory panels

The affordable housing policy team presented the August 2017 Environment and Committee decision to the Seniors Advisory Panel in October 2017. The panel provided insights into the housing experiences of seniors which will be considered in the development of the plan, and indicated a desire to be kept informed of work in this area. Feedback included:

- The need to see homelessness as a complex, multi-faceted problem which includes poverty, inequality and societal wealth imbalances
- Recognise that homelessness may occur in those who previously had secure housing, but now face affordability challenges, being served notice, a relationship breakdown or landlord unwilling to make modifications to the home
- Housing and quality of life for seniors are linked - issues discussed included elder abuse, loneliness and health problems
- The potential for solutions including shared housing for seniors.

As part of the process for developing the regional, cross-sectoral plan we are meeting with council advisory panels. In particular we'd like to hear your views on homelessness for seniors:

- What changes have you noticed?
- Who is most affected, and why?
- What are the main triggers for homelessness?
- What initiatives are you aware of?
- What more needs to be done to:
  - Prevent homelessness
  - To help people to move out of homelessness?

A representative from the each of the advisory panel's will also be invited to participate in the August stakeholder engagement workshops.