Dear Councillors

We call upon Manchester City Council to reject the proposals for a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) across Manchester City Centre.

The PSPO proposals:

Under these proposals people who are sleeping rough, homeless people and those threatened with homelessness will face on the spot fines of £100 for:

- Obstruction - resting in doorways, stairways or the pavement;
- Drinking alcohol - other than in licensed premises;
- Sheltering in a tent – and smoking a cigarette or eating food;
- Urinating and defecating outside – when there are no toilets they can use; and
- Discarding needles or syringes – when there are no sharps bins.

If the person cannot pay, they can be prosecuted in court with a fine of up to £1000.

Our Shared Vision, Values and Principles:

In 2015, the Council came together with other statutory, voluntary, religious and commercial organisation to declare our joint vision to end homelessness in Manchester by working in new ways together in Manchester's Homelessness Charter.

At the heart of the charter were guiding principles concerning the rights of people who are homeless and at risk of homelessness.

We declared that everyone who is homeless should have a right to:

- A safe, secure home, with appropriate level of support to create a good quality of life
- Safety from violence, abuse, theft and discrimination, and the full protection of the law
- Respect and a good standard of service everywhere
- Equality of access to information and services
- Equality of opportunity to employment, training, volunteering, leisure and creative activities

We committed to good communication, coordination and a consistent approach across all services.

We pledged that people with experience of homelessness must have a voice and involvement in determining the solutions to their own issues, to homelessness, and in wider society

This Charter became part of Manchester's Homeless Strategy for 2018-2023. The Strategy recognised that to address the problem of homelessness we need to:

- Address inequalities and create equitable access to skills, education, employment and health alongside housing;
- Ensure that personal circumstances are not a barrier to accessing services and opportunities;
- Give extra support to those who might need it to overcome these structural issues;
- Create environments for people to thrive;
- Build self-expression, increased well being, greater social inclusion and positive relationships in order to create a much deeper and more effective support structure;
- Focus on what really matters, rather than just patching problems, and take time to consider underlying causes and experiences rather than make assumptions;
- Work “with” people and families, not “on” them, as this creates change and enables people and families to flourish; and
- Offer people who have experienced long-term repeated rough sleeping access to whatever treatment, care or support is needed in their local community. Ensuring this support is delivered in a flexible and person-centred way to help reduce the risk of another period of homelessness.

We were all encouraged to work towards these aims together with the Council and the Manchester Homelessness Partnership using a strong shared vision and common approach.

In our view the PSPO proposed by the Council is in complete opposition to this vision and approach. The PSPO will create a hostile environment for homeless people in the City Centre, it will increase inequality and it will threaten the safety and security of homeless people in our city.

The views of people who are homeless on the PSPO:

In keeping with the value of co-production, which is central to the Manchester Homelessness Charter and Partnership, the opinions of people who are homeless were gathered for the first PSPO consultation. A summary of their feedback is given below:

- It feels like this whole thing is particularly aimed at people who are homeless
- What is the PSPO serving to protect? It isn’t the rights of people who are homeless.
- This is there for the businesses, shoppers, tourists, and citizens with money. For the city-centre economy.
- There need to be easily accessible city-centre needle exchanges or more places where people can safely dispose of needles. Addiction exists, we need appropriate support.
- Rather than further criminalising some of the most vulnerable people in society, we could provide safe and supported places for injection. It would be financially and ethically beneficial.
- It feels like there is a real lack of compassion surrounding this whole thing. If you have no place to live, where are you expected to go to the toilet?
- I think some people come into the city to beg because of austerity cuts, because they are being trafficked, because they have an addiction to satisfy or simply to pay for bills. We should be looking at why.

- If the Council had been able to safely and appropriately house me, why on earth would I pitch a tent in the centre of town?
- What may seem like litter to some people may actually be another person's only belongings which are both useful and meaningful to them. We need more humane solutions.
- It feels like we are trying to sweep people who are most likely weak, poor, vulnerable and disenfranchised under the carpet.
- It must be taking so much energy, time and money to try to push this through – why is it seen as a priority for the Council? Think what we could achieve if people put that much effort into other things.

<u>The False Assumptions Underlying the PSPO:</u>

It is our view that those supporting the PSPO do so on the basis of false assumptions.

There is a Bed for Every Night:

Despite our shared commitments and efforts, the reality is that there is not a bed for every night for every person or enough support to meet their needs. It is therefore not true or fair to suggest that all homeless people can avoid the risk of being fined by simply taking up offers of accommodation and support.

People can be coerced or threatened into accepting help:

Where there is an offer of accommodation and support for a homeless person, but the individual is not ready to accept help, fining them or threatening to do so is not going to resolve the underlying problems.

Manchester's Homeless Charter and Strategy was based on our experience as to the ways of working with homeless people that are effective – working "with", not "for", and building the self-expression, wellbeing, relationships and inclusion that gives homeless people the opportunity for real and positive change.

<u>The Harmful Consequences of the PSPO:</u>

In our view this punitive approach will:

- Cause serious harm to homeless people, as those who have nowhere to go to avoid the risk of punishment will hide in darker streets in the City Centre or move to the outskirts where they are more at risk from harm from others, less likely to be discovered if their health is at risk and further away from support services;
- Encourage negative views and assumptions about homeless people among the wider public and increase the abuse and discrimination that homeless people face; and

- Cause homeless people to distrust the Council and the services that work in partnership with the Council, making real and lasting positive outcomes more difficult.

The shared vision in our Homeless Charter is to put an end to homelessness in Manchester, not an end to homeless people.

We do not feel that our concerns or those of homeless people about the dangers of this PSPO have been properly canvassed or considered.

We urge the Council to reject the proposed PSPO and to return to the values and principles of the Manchester Homelessness Charter and Homelessness Strategy.

Sincerely,

Paul Martin OBE - Chief Executive, LGBT Foundation

Gail Heath - CEO The Pankhurst Trust (Incorporating Manchester Women's Aid)

Fergal McCullough - Director, The Mens Room

Amanda Croome - CEO Booth Centre

John Organ - Manchester Homeless Charter Partnership Board

Dee Lowry - Business Engagement Lead, Manchester Homelessness Partnership

Siobhan Pollitt - Chief Executive, Back on Track

Mike Wild - Chief Executive, Macc

Jo Walby, CEO, on behalf of the staff team at Mustard Tree

Matthew Johnson - Development Manager, Inspiring Change Manchester

Stephen Brown MBE - City Centre Ministries Manchester

Irene Brown - City Centre Ministries Manchester

Niall Love - Street Support Salford & Manchester

Beth Knowles - Sustainable Housing and Urban Studies Unit, University of Salford

Dr Andrea Gibbons - Sustainable Housing and Urban Studies Unit, University of Salford

Prof. Phillip Brown - Sustainable Housing and Urban Studies Unit, University of Salford

Judith Vickers - Lifeshare

Holly Eddleston - Lifeshare

Alice Sparks - Invisible (Manchester)

James Hutton - Mad Dogs Street Project

Dawn Kaveney - Manchester Mind

Nigel Allmark - PhD Student with the Manchester Homelessness Partnership, Manchester Metropolitan University

Mylo Kaye - Pledge

Karen Buckley - Manchester People's Assembly Against Austerity

Daryll Pollit – Street Treats

Billa Ahmed - Homeless Aid UK

Michelle Hill - Homeless Aid UK

Susannah Gill – Don't Walk Past

Johanna Royle - Ferney Lee Primary School

Carol Jones & Christine Harrison - Caring & Sharing

Jessica Turtle - Museum of Homelessness

Charlotte Hughes - The Poor Side Of Life

Jon Glackin - Streets Kitchen

Sam Butt - Myriad Foundation

Denise McCormick - The Ark

Jolene Hampson - Unity outreach Glossop

Charlie Barat - Homeless Support Project

Angela Barratt - Street Support Manchester

Naomi Collier - WalkaboutMCR

John Ryan - Greater Manchester Hub Manager, Shelter UK

Damon Spillane - Homeless Project Manchester

Susan Muir - End Result Group

Michele Morgan - Feeding Rochdale Homeless

Ian Allinson - President, Manchester TUC

Rabbi Robyn Ashworth-Steen - Manchester Reform Synagogue

Rev'd Cody Coyne - Cross Street Unitarian Chapel

Lauren Coulman - Noisy Cricket C.I.C

Nancy Wilson - The Co-operative Group

Lisa Atherton - The Federation

Jamil Abdulkader - Trustee, Noor Masjid Mosque

Saiqa Naz - Mental Health Practitioner

John Catterall - Greater Manchester Unite Community Branch Vice Chair and on behalf of Officers

Pritpal Singh Makan - Sikh Sewa Organisation (SSO Manchester)

Jo Morfee - Co-Founder, InnovateHer

Elizabeth Mora - Social Worker, Cornerstone Day Centre

Mr Maqsood Ahmad OBE - CEO, British Muslim Heritage Centre

Dr Elsie Whittington - Manchester Quaker Meeting

Sandy Broadhurst - Chair, Stockport United Against Austerity

Gareth Smith - Streetwise Opera