



North Devon Council

Report Date: 6th February 2023
Topic: Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness Update
Report to: Strategy & Resources Committee
Report by: Jeremy Mann: Head of Planning, Housing & Health

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This paper reports on both the demand and achievements of the Council's homelessness prevention services in the period 1st April, 2022 to 18th January 2023.
- 1.2. The report makes recommendations regarding the future provision of temporary accommodation with the objective of ensuring that the required houses are procured at the lowest total cost, whilst still meeting all suitability and quality requirements.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

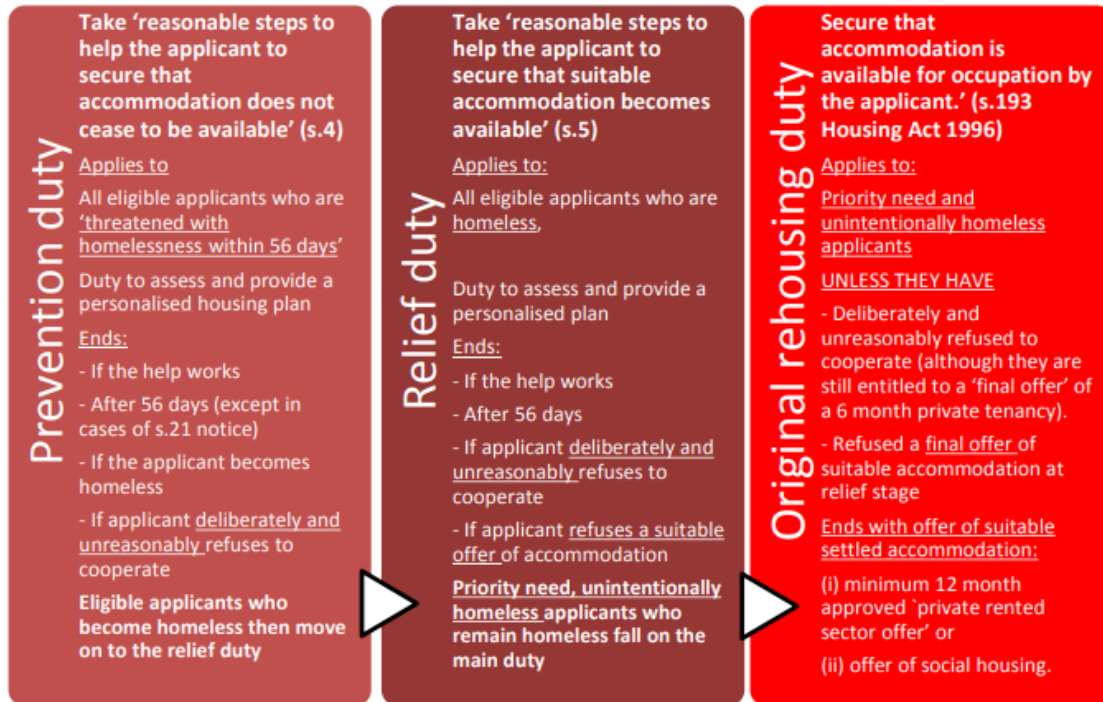
- 2.1. It is recommended members:
 - 2.1.1 Note the performance of the Council's homelessness service in the period 1st April, 2022 to 18th January, 2023.
 - 2.1.2 Recommend that Council vary the capital programme by £2m and that the funds are released.
 - 2.1.3 Provide delegated authority to the Director of Resources/Deputy Chief Executive in collaboration with the Head of Place Property and Regeneration to carry out the proposed property purchases.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. (Reason 2.1.1) to note the scale and complexity of the service at this time.
- 3.2. (Reason 2.1.2) to establish the necessary capital programme and then to release the funding so that the financial benefits of this initiative are released as soon as possible.
- 3.3. (Reason 2.1.3) to enable officers to move quickly in the market place if suitable properties become available.

4. REPORT

4.1. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 effectively 'bolted' two new major duties onto the original statutory re-housing duty. This is illustrated in the following diagram:



4.2 It placed new legal duties on housing authorities and amended the existing legislation in the Housing Act 1996. The duties on the Council now apply to all eligible applicants and are blind to intentionally and priority need. The prevention duty is also blind to local connection.

4.3 Officers are required to undertake thorough assessments and to co-design a personalised response with the applicant.

4.4 The Council is also required to accommodate homeless applicants in the following situations:

- i) If the Council has reason to believe the applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need, then there is a duty to secure "interim accommodation".
- ii) If the relief duty expires (after 56 days) and the household is unintentionally homeless and in priority need, then a main re-housing duty applies and the applicant must be offered suitable settled accommodation (or temporary accommodation until a suitable offer of settled accommodation has been made).

4.5 The scale of the Council's work in this area is set out in the following tables:

Table 1: Housing Options' Overview

1st April, 2022 – 18th January, 2023

Housing Options Overview					
01 April 2022 - 18 January 2023					
Housing Options Presentations Made	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 to date	Total
Total	496	486	391	112	1485
Successful Prevention Outcomes	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 to date	Total
Total	88	60	67	10	225
Secured alternative accommodation for 6 months	43	34	36	5	118
Secured existing accommodation for 6 months	28	15	18	3	64
Secured alternative accommodation for 12 or more months	12	10	10	2	34
Secured existing accommodation for 12 or more months	5	1	3	0	9
Households Entering Temporary Accommodation	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 to date	Total
Total	105	117	111	23	356
Successful Relief Outcomes	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 to date	Total
Total	41	33	42	4	120
Secured accommodation for 6 months	37	27	33	4	101
Secured accommodation for 12 months	3	4	8	0	15
Local connection referral accepted by other LA	1	2	1	0	4

Table 2: Presentations made – reason for the approach

Housing Options Presentations Made - Reason for Approach	Fiscal Year: 2022/2023				Total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 to date	
01 April 2022 - 18 January 2023					
Total	496	486	391	112	1485
Friends/Family Unable Accommodate	107	101	90	21	319
Reason not entered	54	66	72	63	255
NTQ - S21	101	88	39	6	234
Unreasonable to Remain	55	59	63	7	184
Other	66	65	24	2	157
Violence/3rd Party Harassment	34	28	31	5	98
Rough Sleeper	24	33	19	2	78
Landlord Repossession	9	9	18	1	37
Loss of Supported Accom	16	8	13	0	37
Hospital Discharge	11	7	3	2	23
Prison Release	6	7	4	2	19
Loss of Tied Accommodation	1	5	8	0	14
Landlord Dispute	3	1	4	0	8
Care Leaver Asked to Leave	3	4	0	0	7
RSL Repossession	2	1	1	1	5
Illegal Eviction	2	1	1	0	4
Mortgage Arrears	0	2	1	0	3
OUTREACH Support	1	0	0	0	1
Young Person Outreach	1	0	0	0	1
Universal Credit	0	1	0	0	1
Total	496	486	391	112	1485

Table 3: Analysis of the successful prevention activity

Successful Prevention Outcomes - Reason 01 April 2022 - 18 January 2023	Fiscal Year: 2022/2023				Total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 to date	
Total	88	60	67	10	225
Secured alternative accommodation for 6 months	43	34	36	5	118
Secured existing accommodation for 6 months	28	15	18	3	64
Secured alternative accommodation for 12 or more months	12	10	10	2	34
Secured existing accommodation for 12 or more months	5	1	3	0	9
Total	88	60	67	10	225

Successful Prevention Outcomes - Accomodation type 01 April 2022 - 18 January 2023	Fiscal Year: 2022/2023				Total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 to date	
Total	88	60	67	10	225
Private rented sector: self-contained	41	30	5	42	118
Registered Provider tenancy	17	12	2	16	47
Social rented supported housing or hostel	10	7	1	3	21
Staying with family	9	3	0	1	13
Private rented sector: HMO	4	4	0	3	11
Private rented sector: lodging (not with family or friends)	3	1	0	0	4
Staying with friends	2	0	1	0	3
Other	1	1	0	0	2
Owner-occupier	1	0	0	1	2
Caravan / houseboat	0	0	1	0	1
Council tenancy	0	1	0	0	1
Not Known	0	0	0	1	1
Shared ownership	0	1	0	0	1
Total	88	60	67	10	225

Table 4: Analysis of the successful relief activity

Successful Relief Outcomes - Reason 01 April 2022 - 18 January 2023	Fiscal Year: 2022/2023				Total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 to date	
Total	41	33	42	4	120
Secured accommodation for 6 months	37	27	33	4	101
Secured accommodation for 12 months	3	4	8	0	15
Local connection referral accepted by other LA	1	2	1	0	4
Total	41	33	42	4	120

Successful Relief Outcomes - Accommodation type 01 April 2022 - 18 January 2023	Fiscal Year: 2022/2023				Total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 to date	
Total	41	33	42	4	120
Private rented sector: self-contained	18	10	14	2	44
Social rented supported housing or hostel	10	10	13	0	33
Registered Provider tenancy	2	2	7	0	11
Staying with family	6	3	1	1	11
Private rented sector: HMO	2	4	1	0	7
Private rented sector: lodging (not with family or friends)	1	1	2	0	4
No fixed abode: not rough sleeping	1	1	0	0	2
Other	1	1	1	0	3
Staying with friends	0	0	1	1	2
Council tenancy	0	1	0	0	1
Temporary accommodation provided by local authority	0	0	1	0	1
Caravan / houseboat	0	0	1	0	1
Total	41	33	42	4	120

Table 5: Analysis of how the Council has met its temporary accommodation duties

Households Entering Temporary Accommodation 01 April 2022 - 19 January 2023	Fiscal Year: 2022/2023				Total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4 to date	
Total	105	117	111	23	356
Accommodation within your own stock	34	37	35	10	116
Privately managed Bed & Breakfast hotels (privately managed, meal/s provided, shared facilities)	42	35	29	6	112
Other nightly paid, privately managed accommodation, self-contained	17	37	30	6	90
Hostels (including reception centres and emergency units)	6	5	12	0	23
Private sector accommodation leased by your authority or leased or managed by a registered provider	5	3	5	1	14
Other nightly paid, privately managed accommodation, shared facilities	1	0	0	0	1
Total	105	117	111	23	356

- 4.6 The high number of approaches, both reflects the needs of our community but also the effort the Council has made with partners to ensure less people approach in 'crisis'. The volume of approaches is not dissimilar to the previous year but the complexity of many cases is unfortunately increasing.
- 4.7 Notwithstanding an exceptionally challenging housing market, housing officers are delivering high levels of homelessness prevention, and are empowered by policy to undertake wide variety of prevention tools, e.g. discussions with landlords/family members, mediation, provision of financial assistance, etc.).
- 4.8 Housing officers are also having to develop increasing high levels of emotional resilience to manage the experience of helping more people in upsetting circumstances.
- 4.9 There is also an emerging level of new demand which would have not ordinarily impacted on the Council. For example, financial and accommodation challenges in social care are resulting in a number of homelessness applicants receiving care packages in NDC's temporary accommodation.
- 4.10 The temporary accommodation housing authorities need to find to comply with their duties must be suitable in every sense (affordability, location, etc.) or the applicant can challenge. The Council is anticipating a TA demand of 60 units of accommodation night⁻¹ at the start of 2023/24.
- 4.11 The most economically advantageous means of the Council procuring TA for homeless households in accordance with its responsibilities under the Housing Act 1996 and Children Act 2004, is through increasing its stock of owned housing. The Council has been building its own stock since 2018.
- 4.12 Service costs are extremely sensitive to changes in demand and variations in the cost of B&B.

4.13 Officers consider it is now appropriate to increase the numbers of homeless applicants accommodated in properties it owns. The Council currently has 11 units of accommodation of which approximately 50% of these were new property acquisitions following the above 2018 capital investment and 50% were existing Council assets converted into new temporary accommodation.

4.14 Increasing the Council's stock of temporary accommodation by a further 7 / 8 units through a capital investment of £2m increases the capacity and resilience of the service during a time when demand is unlikely to fall. The potential to acquire assets which are likely to increase in value in line with the housing market, does not disable the Council from exercising its discretion to dispose of them in the future and use the receipts to support other priorities.

4.15 Directly providing more temporary accommodation also lessens the potential impact of two threats faced by the service. These are the increased presentation of individuals to the service who are currently being supported in one of a number of refugee resettlement schemes and secondly, the loss of supply which is currently being secured through lease agreements if they could not be renewed. It is important to recognise the superb support being provided by the Pickwell Foundation in relation to the refugee resettlement schemes and how this is positively impacting on this area of service.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1. The Council has seen increased cost pressures within the revenue budget for the provision of temporary accommodation and this trend is worryingly continuing. This Council previously approved in February 2018 the capital acquisition of properties (£1.2million) to hold solely for the provision of temporary accommodation.

5.2. The benefit behind this approach enables the team to house clients in their own house rather than within bed and breakfast accommodation. This is a much better solution for the client and their wellbeing and also a much more cost effective solution for the Council as the B&B accommodation is expensive and costing the Council between £75-£80 per night.

5.3. Even with current borrowing level costs to fund the capital acquisition of the properties, the estimated net saving to the temporary accommodation revenue budget would be around £8,000-£10,000 per unit of property annually compared to the costs of housing clients in the current B&B accommodation.

5.4. The added benefit is also the Council owns and controls these additional properties which will be growing in capital value and provide a much needed asset for our future use.

5.5. Members considered further capital acquisition of property at recently held cross-party budget workshops and provided a steer that we should invest



further in acquiring property for housing temporary accommodation and this be built into the financial projections which form part of the Budget 2023-24, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial strategy which is contained within a separate report on this agenda today.

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1. The recommendations in this report will increase the suitability of temporary accommodation for homeless applicants and should particularly benefit those with the following protected characteristics: age, disability and pregnancy.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

7.1. The energy efficiency measures in the properties would be upgraded as required. This will support the council's environmental objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero carbon by 2030.

8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1 It is anticipated that the recommendations will positively impact on all of the Council's corporate priorities.

9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

9.1. Article of Part 3 Annex 1 paragraph:

9.2. Referred or delegated power?

10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: (The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

Provision of Temporary Accommodation, 8th January, 2018, Report to Executive.

Position Statement on the Council's Provision of Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Households, 4th November, 2019, Report to Strategy & Resources Committee.



12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers.