

REPORT TO: STRATEGY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Date: 4th November, 2019

**TOPIC: POSITION STATEMENT ON THE COUNCIL'S
PROVISION OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR
HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS**

**REPORT BY: JEREMY MANN; HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
& HOUSING SERVICE**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Full Council established a capital programme of £1.2M for the provision of temporary accommodation for homeless householders on the 21st February, 2018.

1.2 This paper reports on the achievements of the programme's objectives.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Strategy and Resources Committee notes that the Temporary Accommodation Programme has performed well against the original objectives of better addressing the needs of the community and saving money.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To provide Members with a project report as the programme nears completion.

4. REPORT

4.1 On the 21st February, 2018, Council established a capital programme for the provision of temporary accommodation of £1.2M. This was in recognition that the most economically advantageous means of meeting this need is to establish a suitable stock of its own housing.

4.2 The Council now owns 8 properties. 4 of these properties have been purchased in the last 12 months.

- 4.3 The Council has secured an overall net saving of between £10K - £15K yr⁻¹ for each unit of accommodation by not having to use third party accommodation, such as hotels. In addition to this revenue saving, the Council also has the further benefit of the long term capital investment in the assets that could be realised in the future.
- 4.4 The Council did not manage any significant social housing before undertaking the project, having previously transferred all housing stock to the local housing association in 2000. Therefore, this programme set a new challenge for both the Environmental Health and Housing, and Property Services' teams to meet.
- 4.5 In terms of the properties purchased, these are a range of two and three bedroom houses. Each were selected based on a series of pre-selected criteria, including items such as low rise modern construction, low maintenance structures and gardens, room sizes suited for the intended occupancies and located in residential areas. The locations were selected based on areas of highest demand, areas suited to residential lettings/high turnover of occupancy, and the grouping of temporary accommodation properties together was avoided. The cross Member working party, which was also established by Full Council, developed this service specification in collaboration with officers.
- 4.6 Each property underwent a minor refurbishment to bring them up to the necessary health and safety standards following gas and electrical checks, fire risk assessments and building surveys. Properties were completed to a robust and consistent finish to enable void periods to be kept to a minimum. Energy upgrades were also conducted, including upgrading insulation and the installation of energy efficient lighting to make the running of the properties affordable for the tenants, whilst also reducing CO² emissions.
- 4.7 When people move into temporary accommodation there is a risk that their health suffers. Uncertainty of their situation, combined with less suitable living conditions, can impact on both the physical and mental wellbeing of homeless individuals and families. This Council's programme is reducing this risk. Specialist support officers are also now available to help address the wider needs of households in temporary accommodation.
- 4.8 There are another 4 units of temporary accommodation in the pipeline. Officers are hoping to complete on the purchase of a 2-bed property in Barnstaple in the next few weeks.
- 4.9 A NDC owned property in Forches is about to undergo a programme of conversion and refurbishment. This will create a one bed flat which is fully adapted for use by a disabled person, and a three bed flat on the first floor. A joint venture project is being explored with North Devon Homes which will hopefully provide a two/three bedroom property in Landkey.

4.10 The demand for temporary accommodation fluctuates between 20 – 30 placements per day. This evidences both the success of the Council’s homelessness prevention service and the help being provided to assist households access new sustainable tenancies.

4.11 The Council’s temporary accommodation programme will be showcased on the BBC TV’s Inside Out SW documentary later in the autumn.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 In 2017/18, the Council spent £427K on the provision of temporary accommodation. This reduced to £291K in 2018/19, and a budget of £271K has been set for 2019/20.

5.2 £190K is currently uncommitted from the original £1.2M capital programme. This represents a reduction of £156k in this period.

6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1 This programme is ensuring that the Council is procuring properties which are affordable, more suitable and in appropriate locations for homeless households. Temporary Accommodation Support Officers help promote wider health, social and employment opportunities.

7. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Article or Appendix and paragraph	Referred or delegated power?

8. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

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

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Provision of temporary accommodation. Report to NDC Executive, 8th January, 2018.

The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report.

10. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

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

Author: Jeremy Mann; Head of Environmental Health & Housing
Andrew Wilson; Senior Surveyor (Built Environment)
Date: 16th October, 2019
Reference: Strategy & Resources Committee Position Statement for TA
Homeless 4th Nov 2019