

HOUSING CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 43

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Temporary Accommodation Strategy Annual Update 2009-2010

Date of Meeting: 8th September 2010

Report of: Director of Housing, Culture & Enterprise

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Key Decision: Yes/No No

Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report is the annual update of the 5- year Temporary Accommodation Strategy (2008-2013) that outlines key achievements and progress in implementing year 2 of the strategy 2008-2013.
- 1.2 The Temporary Accommodation Strategy is a sub section of the Homelessness strategy and should be read in conjunction with the Homeless Strategy Annual Update.
- 1.3 The Vision of Temporary Accommodation is *'We will provide good quality, effectively managed properties, that meet the needs of Brighton and Hove's diverse population, contributing to the development of sustainable communities.'*

This report seeks to demonstrate that we are operating and developing a service which realises this vision.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Housing notes the report and progress made on delivering strategic actions of the Temporary Accommodation Strategy during year 2 of the strategy 2008-2013.

3. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2008-2013 was approved by Housing Cabinet in March 2008. The strategy outlines the core objectives for the local authority with regard to the management and procurement of temporary accommodation to meet the needs of vulnerable households in the city in the next five years.
- 3.2 Our strategic objectives are:
- a) to commission temporary accommodation corporately to meet the needs of our internal partners
 - b) effectively manage emergency and temporary accommodation, in accordance with best value
 - c) to commission temporary accommodation and support for vulnerable households to enable them to successfully move on to settled accommodation
 - d) maximise settled housing opportunities

Review undertaken between April – July 2010. Results of the review are listed below.

3.3 **Objective 1 To commission Temporary Accommodation corporately to meet the needs of our internal partners.**

3.3.1 Priority 1 To Increase the Supply and Quality of Temporary Accommodation.

Marketing to landlords is regularly reviewed and updated. We now have in excess of 500 additional units of high quality Temporary Accommodation which has been sourced from the private sector.

3.3.2 Priority 2 Develop the Corporate Commissioning Role By Working With Our Internal Partners to Procure Suitable Accommodation To Meet Their Requirements.

All partners have been met with collectively and individually and have agreed revised and improved SLA's which reflect the service needs. We are procuring accommodation to specifically meet their needs.

3.3.3 Priority 3 End the Use of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation For All Pregnant Women, Households With Children and 16 an 17 Year Olds by 2010.

All households in this category are prioritised and moved on from Bed and Breakfast within 6 weeks. The average for families and pregnant

women is 3 weeks and therefore we are comfortably achieving our target.

3.3.4 Priority 4 To Reduce The Number Of Statutory Homeless Households in Temporary Accommodation by 2010 to 333.

On the 31.3.10 we had reduced the number of Statutory Homeless Households to 317. We are currently meeting weekly to maintain this target.

3.3.5 Priority 5 Advise and support Private Sector Landlords to ensure that properties are of a high Standard.

113 Landlords have signed up for the Accreditation scheme this year, and are booked on training courses. We regular attend meetings with Landlords to ensure all parties are kept abreast of National issues and Best Practice.

3.4 **Objective 2 Effectively manage Emergency and Temporary Accommodation.**

3.4.1 Priority 1 Maximise income collection.

Rent accounting systems have been set up for all leased accommodation, and we are now planning rent accounts for all Emergency Placement accommodation. We have effective protocols in place to ensure that all clients are effectively case worked.

3.4.2 Priority 2 Establish active community, service user and stakeholder engagement.

In October 2008 Temporary Accommodation user groups were instigated but were poorly attended. As this was not the most effective means of taking the views of our clients into account, we followed up with a wide ranging tenant's satisfaction service by telephone. Details of the proposal that came out of this survey with regards to onward consultation are listed as Appendix 2. We are also investigating a web based forum by which people can actively engage with us.

3.4.3 Priority 4 Auditing and monitoring all temporary and emergency accommodation stock ensuring the maintenance of high standards of health and safety.

- Carry out quarterly inspections of all Emergency Accommodation to ensure high standards of Health and Safety are met.

All Emergency placement units are visited on a monthly basis exceeding our original target to visit quarterly. Inspections are carried out to ensure that proprietors are meeting the Health and Safety Inspections. Records of these inspections and the outcomes are kept and are auditable.

- Quarterly contract meetings with providers of Emergency Accommodation to resolve any issues and to jointly work to ensure the accommodation is safe and secure for our communities of interest.

Proprietors or Managers of Emergency Accommodation are present during the monthly inspections and issues are resolved there and then.

- Carry out quarterly inspections of all Temporary Accommodation properties to ensure that properties are being maintained to a reasonable standard.

We aim to visit newly tenanted properties for the first four quarters of the client's tenure. Subject to satisfactory assessment that the Tenant is managing their accommodation we will reduce inspections to bi-annual. This is less intrusive for the client and also highlights that we are happy with their ability to manage their tenancy. Our service remains flexible and responsive to the needs of our tenants and if there are concerns about the client's ability to cope, then inspections can be increased.

These inspections have been effective in identifying where vulnerable clients are not maintaining their tenancies which have allowed us to look at additional support that the client might need. This has also assisted us in minimising potential losses through wilful damage or neglect on the part of the tenant. Offering this service also allows us to demonstrate to our landlords that we are proactively managing their properties and dealing with issues as they arise

We have also recently completed a programme of risk assessing all of the Temporary Accommodation we have with communal areas or shared gardens. This has allowed us to identify any possible risks to tenants and staff who might be working in our accommodation.

- Comply with all legal Health and Safety obligations and promote best practice in these areas through the provision of training for staff.

In March 2009 a Health and Safety working group was set up to govern the management of Health and Safety for Temporary Accommodation. This includes compiling a database of relevant training undertaken and updating the Health and Safety Management Plan. This has been audited and passed by the Corporate Health and Safety Team and we have completed all of the tasks from our audit action plan. The SMS plan is part of an ongoing review of Health and Safety conducted by the above working group.

Annual Gas servicing records, electrical safety certificates and fire alarm testing records and any other records relating to be available on each property file.

Achieved.

3.4.4 Priority 5 Effective management of repairs and Health and Safety through monitoring and inspections, and contract and performance management.

The Council's new repairs contract with Mears commenced in April 2010. Monthly monitoring of performance will be provided by Mears under the terms of the contract. Low level repairs and maintenance is carried out by our Caretakers which minimises cost and provides an efficient service.

3.5 **Objective 3 To commission Temporary Accommodation and support for vulnerable households to enable them to move on to settled accommodation**

3.5.1 Priority 1 Provide advice and assistance to clients and supported housing providers on accessing the Private Rented Sector.

A move on Tool kit has been developed and is actively used by all service providers.

3.5.2 Priority 2 Advise and support health and social care professionals on housing issues.

Regular advice and information sessions held with social care professionals, including but not limited to attendance at area panels, training sessions with individual teams, Options input at Millview, joint working with CYPT and SIT 65. Further to all of the above the regular meetings and reviews regarding SLAs.

3.5.3 Priority 3 Improve access to floating support for vulnerable households, preventing homelessness, and increasing empowerment and independence.

The supporting People Commissioning Team has remodelled services across the city to meet local need. There is currently an ongoing floating support provider's forum to ensure shared good practice.

3.5.4 Priority 4 Improving access to our supported Housing sector.

Effective referral and monitoring of the Support Pathway through the use of an Integrated IT system. Project team are looking into developing an IT system, however integrated paperwork has been completed.

3.5.5 Priority 5 Develop work and learning opportunities for households in Temporary Accommodation.

This piece of work will be prioritised in the next three years of the strategy..

3.6 **Objective 4 Maximise settled housing opportunities**

3.6.1 Priority 1 Increased participation in the Landlord Accreditation Scheme.

This is to provide good quality private rented accommodation. 82 Landlords have participated in Training with a further and 8 pending.

- 3.6.2 Priority 2 Increase the ability of households to access private rented sector accommodation.
Average of 11 properties per week being acquired which we match to households.
- 3.6.3 Priority 3 Build contacts with private landlords and letting agents, maximising the provision of adapted properties, and the neighbourhoods where properties are available.
Permanent invitation to Landlords Association established.
Establishment of online landlord Forum. Several private sector properties adapted.
- 3.6.4 Priority 4 Provide a client focused service to match people with suitable properties including providing introductions, viewings and support.
Direct let officer appointed so as to quickly match households with available private properties to respond to landlords needs.
- 3.6.5 Priority 5 Develop a full register of adapted and adaptable accommodation to improve matching of applicants and properties.
A Full time Accessible Housing Coordinator (AHC) has been employed within the Homemove Team, who works with all the social landlords in the city to ensure that all adapted or adaptable housing is used and allocated in a correct and timely manner. This is to ensure that these high demand properties are used in the best way and that funding for adaptations is used appropriately and for this most in need. To enable this joint working with Occupational Therapy, Social Landlords, Adaption's Teams and Social Services has been on going. The AHC also assesses household access requirements and this enables household to understand in a clear and concise way what properties they are eligible to bid on and if these are or could be adapted to the families needs.
- 3.6.6 Priority 6 Continue the development and implementation of sub regional working to maximise access to housing across the sub region.
The Pan Sussex Partnership now included BHCC, Adur, Lewes, Eastbourne, Chichester, Rother, Wealdon, Hastings, Mid Sussex, Arun and Worthing Local Authorities. We are aiming to reduce the magazine print and to offer a 'personalised freesheet' to those who need more help with the choice Based Lettings Scheme. The homemove Team holds a vulnerable People Register which shows those who need help with the moving process. Within the bidding process cross boundary properties are now available and people from Brighton area have been successful within this scheme and have moved to other Local Authority areas within East/West Sussex
- 3.6.7 Priority 7 Make best use of our existing housing stock.
The Homemove Team now has an Older Peoples Housing Coordinator (OPHC). The age restrictions have been dropped and anyone who now moves to Older Peoples housing must have a recognised and assessed Support Need as well as a Housing Need. Ongoing work is

continuing with other social Landlords in the city who work with older people's housing. The OPHC also works with household to help them with the physical, emotional and financial side of Choice Based lettings as well as an actual move and this has proved a positive role and has increased the number of moves to what was sometimes hard to let properties. Work is on going within this area of housing and extra care housing is now allocated via Choice Based Lettings in a similar way to older peoples housing.

3.7 **SUPPLY**

Private Sector Leasing (PSL)

Over the past 6 years we have increased the supply of good quality self contained units of temporary accommodation, through our 3 - 10 year private sector leasing scheme. We currently lease around 525 self contained leased housing units which provide good quality accommodation.

We can also use leased properties to alleviate overcrowding within the social housing sector. 17 overcrowded households have been re-housed through this process, therefore widening the housing options available.

	Bedsits/ Studio (Single person only)	Bedsits/ Studio (Double suitable for 2 adults)	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed +	Totals
PSL inc. Sanctuary 10 year leasing	0	32	152	212	121	36	553
Council owned HRA*	43	32	25	7	2	0	109
HAMA	0	0	13	78	30	2	123
B&B	0	200	0	0	0	0	200
Total	43	264	190	297	153	38	985

Yearly Demand for Temporary Accommodation

Client Group	1 bed/Studio	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds	Total
Statutory Homeless*	270	190	40	4	504
Mental Health	50	0	0	0	50
CYPT	0	35	15	1	51
Learning Disability	25	0	0	0	25
Older People	20	0	0	0	20
Asylum Seekers	3	2		0	5
Physical Disabilities	20	5	0	0	25
Sub Total	388	232	0	5	680

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Extensive consultation was undertaken in 2007 which informed the development of the strategy.
- 4.2 This report will be published and shared with our partner agencies and communities of interest once approved..

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation made in this report.

Finance Officer Consulted: Neil Smith

Date: 11/08/10

5.2 Legal Implications:

This report provides an update on a strategy that has already been considered from a legal perspective. There are no specific legal implications arising from it, although Legal Services will advise on the procurement of suitable temporary accommodation if required. It is not considered that there are any adverse Human Rights Act implications arising from the report, and in fact the strategy actively supports some convention rights such as respect for private and family life

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley

Date:17/08/10

5.3 Equalities Implications:

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and a full Equalities Impact Assessment of the Temporary Accommodation Service was completed in 2009/10. There is an action plan which is currently being implemented to ensure that our services are appropriately targeted and accessible. These documents are due to be published in 2010/11.

5.4 Sustainability Implications:

Enabling better use of resources to meet requirements more effectively, will ensure that accommodation is sustainable for the tenants and contribute to settled communities when households move on when they are ready to be independent

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

Working in partnership with Agencies including the police to reduce Anti Social behaviour in Temporary Accommodation will contribute to reducing crime and disorder in neighbourhoods where the accommodation is situated.

5.6 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

The demand for Temporary Accommodation is increasing as a result of the economic downturn and people being less able to obtain accommodation and provide for themselves. This is reflected in the increasing numbers of homeless presentations and acceptances which are detailed in the Homelessness Strategy Update. There is a risk that we will need to increase the use of unsuitable B&B accommodation in the short term to meet this growing demand, until we can replace it with good quality leased accommodation.

In addition, the announced changes to Housing Benefit will also impact on the supply and demand for Temporary Accommodation and provide the following Risks and Opportunities.

• Risks:

Preventing homelessness and providing alternative private rented accommodation may be a less attractive option for households who are affected by the changes. This will result in more households making a homeless application and the Council having a statutory duty to provide accommodation. Demand for Temporary Accommodation will therefore increase.

Second, those tenants in temporary accommodation who are in receipt of JSA for more than a year will see a reduction in their HB of 10%.

This may impact on our income collection rate although this is a minor risk as the majority of our tenants have additional vulnerabilities such that they are not in receipt of JSA but receive other benefits such as Incapacity benefit.

- Opportunities:

The reduction of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate to the bottom 30th percentile will not be applied to Temporary Accommodation and so income will not be affected to the extent as for the private rented sector. This may create opportunities for us to increase the supply of Temporary Accommodation as Landlords may prefer the stability of leasing their property to the Council for a fixed period and for a fixed price.

5.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

Providing good quality temporary accommodation that will meet the needs of our partners corporately will result in maximizing income and minimizing expenditure for our corporate partners. We will be better placed to secure private sector accommodation by having one interface and coordinating our work with the private sector.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 This report is an annual update of a current strategy and no alternative options are being considered at this time.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To update members on progress and implementations of the Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2008-2013 to date.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment.
2. Business Continuity Plan.

Background Documents

1. None