

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

19 May 2014

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 HOUSING NEEDS UPDATE

Summary

The Council's Housing Options team continues to promote the prevention of homelessness and address the housing needs of local residents. The number of households seeking advice and/or applying to the Housing Register for social housing has remained significantly high as a result of the economic downturn.

1.1 The following tables demonstrate the numbers of customers seen by the Housing Options Team during the last financial year either in person at the Gateway, Tonbridge Castle or the Council offices at Kings Hill or via the telephone advice service. Members will note that the majority of our customers make contact for advice to help them keep their homes or to find alternative accommodation as shown in the table directly below. Further on the tables illustrate the number of customers who are homeless and for whom emergency accommodation needs to be secured and finally the numbers of customers who have been assisted financially to secure accommodation through the Councils Rent Deposit Scheme.

1.2 Members will note that numbers remain stable throughout the year although there is a noticeable drop in December which is expected during the Christmas period.

1.3 Housing options and prevention of homelessness

Month	Contact Made	Advice Only	Prevented	Relieved	Open
April 2013	69	14	2	0	53
May 2013	55	6	6	0	48
June 2013	50	7	6	0	44
July 2013	109	78	12	3	16
Aug 2013	80	48	6	2	24
Sept 2013	57	22	3	1	31
Oct 2013	58	35	15	0	15
Nov 2013	57	23	21	0	22
Dec 2013	28	5	16	0	23
Jan 2014	65	41	13	0	9
Feb 2014	77	40	5	0	30

Mar 2014	61	30	3	0	25
TOTAL	766	349	108	6	

1.4 Homeless Applications

Month	New homeless applications	Duty to house accepted	Duty to house rejected	Average No of days to process applications
April 2013	4	0	4	14
May 2013	2	2	3	16
June 2013	2	2	0	24
July 2013	3	0	2	23
Aug 2013	1	4	3	25
Sept 2013	2	1	3	15
Oct 2013	4	3	1	16
Nov 2013	2	0	2	22
Dec 2013	0	0	1	4
Jan 2014	6	5	4	23
Feb 2014	6	1	0	17
Mar 2014	3	4	4	23
TOTAL	35	22	27	

- 1.4.1 As can be seen from the table above, the number of homeless applications remains low. The applications listed in columns three and four are not necessarily the same as those in column two. This is because a decision on a homelessness application may not be reached during the same calendar month as it was made.

1.5 Temporary accommodation

- 1.5.1 The following table gives the numbers of households living in temporary accommodation at the end of each month. It will be noted that the number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation has remained stable throughout the year.

Date	Number in self contained Temporary Accommodation (AST)	Number in self contained Temporary Accommodation (nightly paid)	Number in traditional Bed & Breakfast	Total
30.04.13	4	9	13	26
31.05.13	4	4	8	16
30.06.13	4	3	7	14
31.07.13	3	10	0	13
31.08.13	3	8	0	11
30.09.13	3	6	0	9

31.10.13	3	11	0	14
30.11.13	3	7	0	10
31.12.13	3	4	0	7
31.01.14	3	6	0	9
28.02.14	3	10	0	13
31.03.14	3	11	0	14

1.6 Rent Deposit Scheme

- 1.6.1 There is an enormous amount of work involved in securing private rented properties for households. The number of successful tenancies arranged and reported below can be considered to be a real achievement. Options Officers often become involved in lengthy negotiations with private landlords who might initially be reluctant to work with households who are on a low income.

Month	Number of Loans approved	Bonds	Customers assisted into a private rented property without a deposit loan or bond	Total
April 2013	2	3	4	9
May 2013	2	0	3	5
June 2013	2	0	1	3
July 2013	1	1	0	2
Aug 2013	5	1	3	9
Sept 2013	3	1	1	5
Oct 2013	4	1	2	7
Nov 2013	1	1	3	5
Dec 2013	10	0	4	14
Jan 2014	2	1	4	7
Feb 2014	2	0	4	6
Mar 2014	2	0	2	4
TOTAL	36	9	31	76

1.7 Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO)

- 1.7.1 We remain committed to discharging our duty to homeless households by an offer of accommodation in the private rented sector. This is proving more challenging than our initial success indicated with the regular supply of private landlords willing to work with us seemingly being on the decline. We have completed six offers and are near completion of our seventh, with the number of households currently awaiting offers increasing.

1.8 Out of Hours

- 1.8.1 On 1 April 2014, the Housing Needs Team took over the responsibility of delivering an Out of Hours Service for homeless customers in the Borough. Seven Officers will work on a rota system to deliver this emergency response

service from five pm to eleven pm weekdays and eight am until eleven pm during weekends and bank holidays.

1.9 Domestic Violence One Stop Shop

- 1.9.1 Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's Crime and Disorder Reduction team working in partnership with Kent Domestic Abuse Consortium and Circle Russet are piloting a weekly One Stop Shop for victims of domestic abuse. The One Stop Shop is being held each Wednesday morning at New Wharf, Tonbridge. It is hoped that victims who would not normally ask for help will find this service more accessible. The One Stop Shop will offer specialist advice and support to help victims improve their situations. The Housing Options Team will be in attendance to give housing options advice to those who may want to escape an abusive relationship or be offered measures to ensure they can remain safe in their homes.

1.10 The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

- 1.10.1 The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 received Royal Assent on 13 March 2014. The act aims to introduce simpler and more effective powers to tackle anti-social behaviour to provide better protection for victims and communities. The new community trigger and community remedy will empower victims and communities giving them a greater say in how agencies respond to complaints. A significant change to the current Law means that perpetrators of Anti-Social Behaviour will be given Injunctions instead of the current 'ASBO', which has in some communities become ineffective in tackling issues.

1.11 Clare's Law

- 1.11.1 On 8 March 2014, a scheme allowing the police to disclose detail of an abusive partner's past came in to force. The scheme, which will be known as Clare's Law, is designed to provide victims with information about a new partner's history of domestic abuse or violent acts.
- 1.11.2 The issue of disclosing information about an individual's history of domestic violence to a new partner was highlighted following the murder of Clare Wood by her former partner in Greater Manchester in 2009. The domestic violence disclosure scheme, also known as "Clare's Law", allows the police to disclose to individuals details of their partners' abusive pasts where this may protect someone from further violence.
- 1.11.3 Alongside the disclosure scheme, police and magistrates in England and Wales can now issue domestic violence protection orders (DVPOs). These can be issued where there is insufficient evidence to charge a perpetrator, and can prevent the perpetrator from returning to a residence and having contact with the victim for up to 28 days, allowing the victim some time to consider their options, with the help of a support agency.

1.12 Housing Register

1.12.1 The table below shows the number of applicants joining and leaving the housing register, including home seekers (those applying for their first social tenancy) and transfers (existing social tenants applying for a move).

Month	Applications Received	Applications Cancelled	Number on Housing Register
January 2014	149	633	1001 (382 Transfers)
February 2014	140	65	1030 (385 Transfers)
March 2014	145	86	1037 (376 Transfers)
TOTAL	434	784	

1.12.2 The following table gives the breakdown of applicants who have been housed through Choice Based Lettings:

Month	Home seekers	Transfers	Total
April 2013	16 (59%)	11(41%)	27
May 2013	23 (66%)	12 (34%)	35
June 2013	13 (59%)	9 (41%)	22
July 2013	25 (62.5%)	15 (37.5%)	40
August 2013	25 (56%)	20 (44%)	45
September 2013	25 (83%)	5 (17%)	30
October 2013	34 (68%)	16 (32%)	50
November 2013	80 (83%)	16 (17%)	96
December 2013	15 (60%)	10 (40%)	25
January 2014	23 (72%)	9 (28%)	32
February 2014	18 (56%)	14 (44%)	32
March 2014	29 (62%)	18 (38%)	47

1.13 Choice Based Lettings

1.13.1 Swale Borough Council and Amicus Horizon have been piloting daily bidding since 12 February 2014. They have reported to the Homechoice Operational Sub Group on 14 March 2014 that approximately forty properties were advertised during the first month. On average, these properties were each advertised for five days.

1.13.2 There will be an evaluation meeting of partners scheduled for June 2014. Rolling out daily bidding will depend on the evaluation outcomes and whether the Project Board agree to the additional funding required for other members to use it.

1.14 Legal Implications

1.14.1 Non arising from this report

1.15 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.15.1 None arising from this report

1.16 Risk Assessment

1.16.1 None arising from this report

Background papers:

Nil

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