

Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee

03 December 2024

Part 1 - Public

Matters for Information



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Responsible Officer	Eleanor Hoyle, Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health
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Update on Homelessness/Temporary Accommodation action plan

1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report updates Members on the action plan that was developed following the consultancy review of the homelessness/temporary accommodation service area at the end of 2023.

2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Improving housing options for local people whilst protecting our outdoor areas of importance.
- 2.2 The work of the homelessness service helps with meeting the housing need and options of residents and others.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 This report is for information only.

4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 The homelessness/temporary accommodation service area was reviewed by external consultants late in 2023. A number of actions were recommended and an action plan was developed to monitor progress.

5 Proposal

- 5.1 The updated action plan is provided at Annex 1. It has been rag-rated with green meaning the action is complete, amber meaning work is underway and red meaning most of this action has yet to be commenced.

5.2 I hope Members will appreciate how much has been achieved within what is already an extremely busy service. 55% (18 out of 33) of the actions have now been fully completed with only four actions remaining that have not yet commenced. I have highlighted a few of the positive changes below:

- Excellent performance monitoring information now supplied monthly into Management Team to allow for corporate oversight.
- Six posts which were on fixed term contracts have been made permanent.
- Formal Chartered Institute of Housing Level 3 Certificate in Providing Homelessness Services qualification been offered to all relevant Officers with nine members of the team taking this opportunity up over the next two years.
- Additional triage resources are in place.
- In person interviews are now taking place routinely for households who potentially need to access temporary accommodation or who are excluding family members.
- Casework is now monitored more closely to focus in on key decision-making timelines.

5.3 The action plan set ambitious targets and as Members can see most have been met or are on track. For the actions still outstanding the timescale will be revised and it is intended that all actions will be complete by 31 March 2025.

5.4 The actions that are rag-rated as red relate to improving our opportunities to access the private rented sector to facilitate move-on and discharge of duties. This work will be championed by the proposed new Accommodation Team which we are working towards being established early in 2025.

6 Other Options

6.1 None

7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

7.1 A number of these actions require funding and this has been managed to date within existing resources e.g. training and the annual Homelessness Prevention Grant funding that the Council receives.

8 Risk Assessment

8.1 The ongoing costs associated with providing temporary accommodation is one of the Council's most challenging financial issues. It is essential that any actions to manage numbers, reduce the cost of temporary accommodation provision and ensure good debt recovery are undertaken.

9 Legal Implications

9.1 Homelessness duties are set out in Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.

10 Consultation and Communications

10.1 A number of these actions include for consultation and good communication e.g. working with landlords and clear messages about social housing availability.

11 Implementation

11.1 The implementation of this action plan is ongoing and completion dates will be revised.

12 Cross Cutting Issues

12.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

12.1.1 Limited or low impact on emissions and environment.

12.1.2 Climate change advice has not been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

12.2 Equalities and Diversity

12.2.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

12.3 Healthy Lifestyles

12.3.1 The link between good housing and health is well documented and evidenced.

Background Papers	None
Annexes	Annex 1 – Action Plan