

Annex 1

TA/Homelessness review – February 2024

Action Plan

Action No.	Action	Lead	Indicative Timescale	Notes
1	Recommence regular corporate TA monitoring meetings	DPHEH	First meeting to be held by 1/4/24	Now report into Management Team monthly.
2	Revise the TA target to reflect the national pressures. Revised target is 90 with a range of 90 to 120.	DPHEH	Complete by 1/4/24	Reported into MT, H&PSSC and Cabinet and revised target agreed.
3	Make permanent the Housing Solutions Service officers on fixed term contracts whose contracts are due to expire at the end of March 2024.	HoHH	Complete by 30/4/24	Agreed at Full Council 9/4/24.
4	Work with Human Resources to address workforce planning issues around remuneration, training and development.	HoHH	Ongoing	To link into corporate work on workforce strategy including retention focus. Training for the team is regular including bespoke sessions e.g. intentionally homeless decision making. Formal CIH Level 3 Certificate in Providing Homelessness Services qualification been offered to all team with nine members of the team taking this opportunity up over the next two years.

5	<p>An Accommodation Team to be established to be responsible for all aspects of temporary accommodation and accessing the private rented sector including the responsibilities for procurement, inspection, placement (including the test of suitability), and the managing of TA (including rent collection) and accessing the private rented sector to discharge duty.</p> <p>The permanent TA Welfare post should be part of the new Accommodation Team along with consideration of a Move-On Officer role.</p>	HoHH	Complete by 31/12/24	Initial discussions have been held with the staff directly involved. Meetings continue with HR and finance to discuss approach and funding. It is our intention to report into General Purposes Committee on 22/1/25 with the proposal for the new team.
6	<p>There should be a simple process for allocating spending from the Council's 'Homelessness Prevention Grant' (HPG) to pay for additional staffing to tackle demand and other homelessness pressures.</p>	HoHH/CFSO	Complete by 31/5/24	This process has improved.
7	<p>For all offers to resolve and prevent homelessness for any case that would otherwise be placed into TA a cost-benefit calculation should be carried out set against the net cost of Temporary Accommodation. This will require the introduction of a cost-benefit framework with clear guidelines for officers negotiating solutions.</p>	HoHH/CFSO	Complete by 31/5/24	We now have much clearer information on TA cost. We have been using the cost-benefit approach in decision-making to prevent TA use. We still need to formalise it within a framework for Officers.
8	<p>A second post for Triage should be recruited to on a temporary basis using TMBC's Homelessness Prevention Grant.</p>	HoHH	Complete by 29/2/24	Post in place
9	<p>Review the work with families where there is a threat of homelessness to ensure thorough enquiries, including home visits, take place</p>	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 30/6/24	Prevention Officer rota in place. Home visits take place where

	and actively use prevention tools to resolve homelessness.			required. In person interviews take place for excluders. Remaining key outstanding action is related to changes to Housing Allocations Scheme to increase prevention priority and this is being reported to Cabinet on 12/11/24.
10	Implement a formal Triage procedure	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 30/6/24	Our Triage procedure has been reviewed and improved. We do continue to ensure any tweaks take place as needed.
11	All applicants referred through from Triage to the Housing Solutions casework team, where there may be a temporary accommodation duty must be seen in person. No applicant should be booked into TA as a result of a telephone interview unless there is a disability that prevents them from attending the office or it is an out of hours placement.	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 30/6/24	In person interviews are now taking place.
12	Urgently implement an expanded 'duty day' operational team which can be achieved within the existing resources (assuming the recommendation on the fixed term contracts is agreed and implemented) to better deal with and control the assessments of emergency presentations and pre-booked appointments.	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 30/6/24	Duty officer in office and support officer rota (could be at home). Also be a senior housing officer in office and move-on officer supporting back office.
13	To urgently implement a casework control and monitoring procedure for managing	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 30/6/24	In place.

	casework once a household is placed into temporary accommodation.			
14	Implement a new framework to strengthen statutory casework for parent and family exclusions	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 30/6/24	Prevention Officer rota in place. Home visits take place where required. In person interviews take place for excluders. Remaining key outstanding action is related to changes to Housing Allocations Scheme to increase prevention priority and this is being reported to Cabinet on 12/11/24.
15	Implement a new framework to strengthen statutory casework for section 21 and other tenancy notices cases	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 30/9/24	Work is underway
16	Implement a new framework to strengthen statutory casework for applications due to a claim that an applicant is homeless due to being a victim of domestic abuse	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 30/9/24	Work is underway. Domestic Abuse Specialist Officer in place – sitting with Triage. DAHA accreditation underway – CK part of working group.
17	Caseworkers should be required to use the relevant interview sheets to determine homelessness, eligibility, priority need, intentional homelessness, and local connection where there is any doubt as to whether an applicant should be accepted or not against these 5 statutory tests.	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 30/9/24	Work underway to support staff with training. Need this to link into Huume and not create lots of additional documents.
18	The Service needs to be more robust on decision-making regarding cases that have been issued with a notice for deliberate rent arrears or unacceptable behaviour and make	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 30/9/24	Intentionally homeless decision training completed. Training being identified – training matrix. KHOG training group in place and questionnaire out re training

	intentionally homeless decisions where appropriate.			needs. Improving situation with financial information and rent arrears so warnings etc can be issued.
19	Unless there is information to indicate that a suitable vacant property in the applicant's preferred area of choice will become available within 1 month a direct offer should be made regardless of the applicant's choice as long as it is assessed as suitable and there is no assessed risk of domestic abuse or other forms of violence.	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 29/2/24	In place
20	Implement routine use of 'Prevention Pathways', which set out the actions that must be taken for each presenting reason that result in a TA duty being accepted.	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 30/9/24	Completed
21	To implement a TA Control and Monitoring spreadsheet/system as a matter of urgency	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 30/4/24	Completed
22	Add capacity for move-on focus and develop a move-on planning and recording process.	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 31/12/24	Some move-on resource in place however additional is proposed. Clearer recording around move-on in place.
23	Introduce a more realistic landlord incentive combined with a more flexible landlord deal	HoHH	Complete by 31/12/24	Still to be reviewed. Landlord/property agent business breakfast meeting arranged for 14/1/25 to talk to them about what they would like to see. To link into new Accommodation Team – see action 5.
24	A dedicated PRS resource needs to be 'freed up' to put together flexible packages that	HoHH	Complete by 31/12/24	To link into new Accommodation Team - see action 5.

	meet the different interests and requirements of landlords.			
25	Undertake more work to get over the message that social housing will not be the end solution for more than a minority of households in TA.	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 31/12/24	Changes to Housing Allocations Scheme to increase prevention priority being reported to Cabinet on 12/11/24. More work to be done with Media team.
26	Focus on sourcing PRS properties out of borough and especially in areas with a larger PRS market.	HoHH	Complete by 31/12/24	To link into new Accommodation Team – see action 5.
27	Consider implementing a 'find your own accommodation' scheme.	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 31/12/24	To link into new Accommodation Team – see action 5.
28	Improve the performance framework and monitoring system using KPIs	HoHH/HSM	Complete by 31/12/24	Huume system allows good performance information and monthly information is now regularly feeding into team performance and review and into Management Team – see action 1.
29	Consider creating new business intelligence capacity through reprioritising the responsibilities of an existing officer elsewhere in the Council who can work on business intelligence and performance. This will ensure dedicated expertise to produce information for analysis and planning including the development of a suite of Power BI reports	DPHEH/MT	Complete by 31/12/24	Huume system allows good performance information. Not sure resources elsewhere from the Council is realistically going to come forward to support.

30	Seek to build up a portfolio with Clarion of up to 40 properties over an agreed time frame with Clarion.	DPHEH/HoHH	Complete by 31/12/24	Discussion continues however impacted by number of properties available with void delays.
31	Seek to explore small scale leasing deals with one or more of the other major Housing Associations with stock in the Borough	HoHH/HSEM	Ongoing	Contact made with housing associations – no opportunities currently forthcoming however we will continue to explore.
32	Identify appropriate site for modular homes to be used as TA - up to 40 units	DPHEH/HoHH/HSEM	Complete by 31/12/24	Work underway
33	To consider that a reasonable number of HMO units should still form part of the Council's TA portfolio	DPHEH/HoHH	Ongoing	In any further development of TA portfolio this is considered.

DPHEH – Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

HoHH – Head of Housing and Health

CFSO – Chief Financial Services Officer

HSM – Housing Solutions Manager

HSEM – Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager