

## Cabinet

18 November 2025

### Part 1 - Public

#### Executive Non-key Decision



Cabinet Member	Councillor Robin Betts, Cabinet Member for Housing, Environment and Economy
Responsible Officer	Eleanor Hoyle, Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health
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#### Temporary Accommodation Recharge Policy

##### 1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Council has a duty under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, to households who are owed homelessness duties to provide temporary accommodation (TA).
- 1.2 The Council uses a mix of nightly paid accommodation and its own stock to house these households and has recently increased the number of units of TA that it manages and owns. The cost to repair and maintain these was in the region of £46,000 in 2024/25.
- 1.3 These costs are likely to increase as the portfolio expands, with the recent acquisition of the lease for Bridge House, and discussions about further sites such as Bluebell Hill. It is a requirement that the Council ensures value for money and whilst the Council will spend money on legitimate repairs to any TA it is also imperative that when a repair is the result of damage or neglect by an applicant residing in TA, that a charge is passed on to the applicant.
- 1.4 Therefore, the purpose of this report is to seek approval for a Recharge Policy which will allow the Council to recharge applicants where the Council's TA needs repair due to wilful damage or neglect.
- 1.5 This is a new policy and is being proposed with the aims of minimising damage to the Council's properties, and the associated costs of putting this right, and to communicate to applicants that misuse of TA will not be tolerated.

## 2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Improving housing options for local people whilst protecting our outdoor areas of importance.
- 2.2 The recharge policy will ensure that the Council's own TA is maintained to the highest possible standards and provides options to keep households in the district when they require TA, close to schools, work and education to minimise the disruption during a period of homelessness.

## 3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet **APPROVE** the adoption of the new Temporary Accommodation Recharge Policy at **Annex 1** of this report.

## 4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 Whilst the Council has owned and managed TA for several years, the number of units has increased significantly more recently, with the acquisition of Bridge House.
- 4.2 There is also an ambition to further increase the number of units of TA owned and managed by the Council, including the site at Bluebell Hill.
- 4.3 To date the Council has not recharged applicants for any neglect or wilful damage to its TA but given that the cost of repairs in 2024 - 2025 was in the region of £46,000, combined with the desire to add to our TA portfolio, the Council now needs to adopt a policy to recharge for these when required.
- 4.4 When an applicant is offered TA, they sign an agreement for that TA which advises them that they must keep the premises clean, tidy and in a good state of repair, and that they will be responsible for paying for any damage caused. To date the Council does not pursue this nor charge, but the proposed policy will allow action where the agreement signed is not adhered to and to recoup costs when deliberate neglect or damage occurs.
- 4.5 The Council will adopt a firm but fair approach to recharging, and the policy sets out details of what our responsibilities are in providing a service to applicants when in TA and setting out what the Council will repair and what will be the responsibility of the applicant.
- 4.6 It goes on to set out under what circumstances the Council will charge those who stay in TA, and where any damage is due to neglect or is wilful.
- 4.7 It is noted in the Policy that the Council will consider a resident's vulnerabilities or any disabilities when considering recharges. Consideration will also be given where any damage is because of domestic abuse, where the applicant is the victim.

## **5 Proposal**

- 5.1 This report proposes the introduction of a TA recharge policy for households who reside in the Council's owned and managed TA, where wilful damage or neglect is identified.

## **6 Other Options**

- 6.1 That the Council does not have a policy and thus do not recharge applicants, and the Council covers the cost of any repairs.

## **7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 7.1 Recharging for the cost of neglect and wilful damage of the Council's accommodation could reduce the spend on TA repairs and thus be a positive financial impact for the Council's budget.

## **8 Risk Assessment**

- 8.1 There is a financial risk of not having a policy in that the Council must fund repairs. This proposed policy allows the Council to recharge, and the policy sets out how the Council will do this and reduces the risk of the Council being challenged when charging applicants.
- 8.2 Recovery of any recharges is not guaranteed and although normal adopted debt recovery processes will be followed there is a risk of unpaid debt amounts that may have to be considered for write off.

## **9 Legal Implications**

- 9.1 Whilst there is no legal requirement for the Council to have a policy for charging applicants for damage to TA, the Council does have a duty to use public funds responsibly. Without this policy, the Council would not be able to recover costs where the applicant damages the TA wilfully or neglects to look after it.

## **10 Consultation and Communications**

- 10.1 No consultation is required to introduce this policy.
- 10.2 It will be included in any future communications with occupants, that the Council can and will recharge for wilful neglect or damage to TA.

## **11 Implementation**

- 11.1 Policy implementation will require the development of procedures which will allow the Council to manage, charge, and recover any costs.
- 11.2 This will be done working with Finance and other necessary teams from within the Council.

## 12 Cross Cutting Issues

### 12.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

12.1.1 Adaptation and resilience have not been considered.

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 Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people. The results of this analysis are set out in **Annex 2**, the Equalities Impact Assessment.

### 12.3 Other If Relevant

- None

Background Papers	None
Annexes	Annex 1 - Temporary Accommodation Recharge Policy Annex 2 - Equalities Impact Assessment