

Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Households

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE



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PORTFOLIO	Housing and Leisure
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PURPOSE

1. To seek approval from Members to expand the provision of temporary accommodation for homeless households and those rough sleeping in Burnley.
2. To respond to the Motion to Full Council that was approved on 26th February 2020, regarding tackling homelessness and providing a night shelter for rough sleepers within the borough of Burnley.

RECOMMENDATION

3. That Executive:
 - a) approves the implementation of the temporary housing scheme A Bed Every Night as set out in this report.
 - b) approves the use of £45,000, identified through the budget amendment approved at Full Council on 26th February 2020, as a contribution to fund the scheme.
 - c) reports to Full Council that the proposal in this report is an immediate step to provide accommodation in the Borough for rough sleepers.
 - d) reports to Full Council that the proposal in this report is more sustainable than a night shelter and will strengthen the Council's capacity to tackle rough sleeping.
 - e) reports to Full Council that a draft Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been prepared and will be going out to consultation shortly.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

4. To prevent and relieve homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough through a comprehensive approach that will focus on providing individuals with accommodation and support to access and sustain settled housing.

5. To expand and improve the provision of temporary accommodation in the Borough that will address identified gaps in current service provision by introducing direct access housing to assist the Council and other stakeholders to respond to immediate homelessness.
6. To ensure that Burnley Council, partners and stakeholders have access to a wide and diverse range of services to meet the needs of homeless households within the borough.
7. To ensure that through the expansion of temporary accommodation services in the borough the type of accommodation introduced is in line with Government guidance on reducing the spread of Covid – 19.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Temporary Accommodation in Burnley

8. Currently in Burnley there is a range of temporary accommodation that assists the Council to provide housing for homeless households,
 - Gateway (Calico) – 30 units of self-contained accommodation aimed at single people with complex needs.
 - Orchard House (Safenet/Calico) – 20 units of accommodation for victims of domestic abuse.
 - Jane’s Place (Safenet/Calico) – 15 self-contained flats for victims of domestic abuse with complex needs.
 - Three-bedroom house (Burnley Council) – self-contained accommodation aimed at homeless families.
 - 2 x Two-bedroom house (Burnley Council) – self-contained accommodation aimed at homeless families.
 - 19 bedspaces in housing in multiple occupation that are a specific response to the Covid – 19 pandemic. 17 of these bedspaces are in properties that are leased on a six-month agreement with the expectation that they return to the landlords in September 2020.
9. Whilst the Gateway, Orchard House and Jane’s Place provide valuable services for households in Burnley the nature of the accommodation and the funding mechanisms dictate that these schemes provide housing and support services to a wider geographical area than Burnley. They are therefore not exclusively for the use of the Council or agencies working with homeless households and individuals in Burnley.
10. It is also important to note that the 17 bedspaces provided to manage the Covid – 19 pandemic are short term additions to the Council's provision of temporary accommodation and will be returned to the landlords in September this year. These properties have allowed the Council to successfully manage the increased demand on homelessness services because of the pandemic but cannot be factored into longer terms solutions to prevent and relieve homeless.

Direct Access Accommodation

11. Probably the greatest challenge that local authority homeless services face is the provision of temporary accommodation for cases of emergency homelessness. These cases are where the local authority get notification on the day that an individual or family are currently roofless and have no accommodation available for their occupation. This type of homeless presentation requires “direct access” accommodation that can be occupied immediately. All the temporary accommodation schemes mentioned at paragraph 5 above can provide direct access but their ability to do so is entirely dependent on the availability of rooms. Due to the high demand for accommodation for homeless households it is often not possible to secure a room in these schemes at very short notice.
12. In circumstances where accommodation is required with immediate effect very often the only option available to local authorities is hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation. A further challenge that is faced when dealing with direct access accommodation is that most hotels and bed and breakfast establishments in Burnley are very reluctant, or unwilling, to accept referrals from the Council’s homeless service. In most cases officers must source accommodation outside of Burnley. Under these circumstances the case officer will work with housing providers to try and secure accommodation back in Burnley as soon as possible dependent on availability.
13. Due to the level of demand for temporary accommodation for homeless households and an increasing reluctance of hotel providers to assist the Council, officers have identified a gap in service provision for short term direct access accommodation. A number of discussions have taken place with housing providers to review the possibility of strengthening this area of accommodation provision and Stepping Stones have developed the proposal set out below based on the specific requirements of the Council’s homelessness service and their experience of running a similar scheme in Rochdale. Stepping Stones currently operate 3 supported housing schemes in Burnley and have been present in the borough as a housing provider for approximately 20 years with an excellent track record of service delivery.

The Proposal

14. The proposal is to provide 10 fully furnished properties in Burnley with one full time housing support worker with a target of assisting a minimum of 60 homeless clients over a twelve-month period. The service will be able to provide clients with daily visits Monday to Friday to provide intensive tenancy support and re-housing assistance where required, they would also have access to a 24-hour telephone advice and support service 7 days a week. The intention would be to tailor support services to the individual’s requirements to maximise the success of the accommodation for service users.
15. The scheme is designed to facilitate direct access provision by carrying a higher rate of voids to ensure that a least one property is made available from Friday for weekend provision and operate a check in service between the hours of 7:00am and 2:00am, 7 days a week.
16. Whilst not identical, the scheme is based on a model that Stepping Stones currently operate for Rochdale Council. This scheme started in November 2018 as part of the Greater Manchester A Bed Every Night (ABEN) initiative to accommodate all rough

sleepers and homeless people regardless of whether the local authority had a duty to rehouse them or not. The pilot started with 4 dispersed properties.

17. Due to the success of the pilot the service was extended in July 2019 to July 2020 and expanded to include 8 properties. The scheme has recently been increased again doubling the number of staff and increasing the provision to 20 properties from July 2020 to April 2021.
18. The service has been viewed as a significant success with the vast majority of customers having achieved a positive outcome and either moved into social or private rented housing or moved into a longer term supported accommodation service.
19. To date the scheme has worked with 133 customers over an 18-month period with 119 “move ons” (the remaining 14 customers are still in ABEN scheme properties). Only 2 moves were unplanned or negative moves with the other 117 rehoused appropriately and in a planned way. Given that the scheme would have worked with some of the most complex and challenging customers in the borough the above demonstrates a strong success rate.
20. By minimising the use of hotel accommodation and with the ability to provide immediate intense housing support homeless clients will be more likely to achieve a better outcome. The expectation is that repeat homelessness will reduce as customers will be assisted to move from a housing crisis to a planned sustainable housing solution. The temporary accommodation provided will also ensure that customers are located close to existing services and support networks they use.

Motion to Full Council 26th February 2020

21. At the Full Council meeting of 26th February 2020, a motion was approved that the Council recommend the Executive:
 - Take immediate steps to provide accommodation within the Borough for rough sleepers with a statutory need under the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol.

Work in partnership with the 3rd Sector to:

 - Expand this provision to a Night Shelter within the Borough, offering overnight accommodation every night of the year for those who want to opt to “sleep in”.
 - Develop a strategy to reduce and prevent homelessness.
22. The proposal in this report represents an immediate step to introduce services to tackle rough sleeping and will expand the accommodation provision available to house rough sleepers under the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol.
23. The proposal represents a more sustainable approach to temporary accommodation than a Night Shelter alone as it will aim to tackle rough sleeping and homelessness by providing accommodation together with support to access appropriate housing and reduce the risk of repeat homelessness.
24. The Council are currently producing a Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and will be going out to consultation soon.

25. The project detailed in this report will also provide self-contained accommodation in dispersed housing that in the current circumstances provides a type of accommodation in line with the Government guidance on reducing the spread of Covid – 19.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

26. The cost to the Council of implementing this scheme would be £50,000 per annum. This figure would be a contribution to the revenue costs of the scheme to provide housing support and other wrap around services. A detailed breakdown of costs is available but cannot be published as part of this public report.
27. Officers have carried out a review of the costs of the proposal and the level of service provision to produce an estimate of the likely savings that would be achieved for the Councils temporary accommodation budget. This has enabled us to provide a net cost of the proposal that takes account of savings that can be achieved to current operational budgets.
28. Between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020, the Council housed 78 homeless applicants in hotels. The total cost of this provision was £34,037. Based on the target of 60 customers per year assisted through the proposed scheme we could reasonably expect a 75% reduction in our use of hotel accommodation. This in turn would generate a annual saving for the temporary accommodation budget of approximately £25,527 (75% of £34,037). Therefore, the net cost to the Council of providing this service for 12 months would be approximately £24,473.
29. The proposed financing of the scheme would enable an 18-month pilot at a cost of £75,000 that would be funded utilising £45,000 budget allocation as approved at Full Council on 26th February 2020, and £30,000 from the existing temporary accommodation budget. It is considered that this proposal represents the best use of the £45,000 budget allocation to improve and expand homeless services in a cost effective and sustainable way.
30. Officers will also work to secure further funding over the next 12 months to extend the scheme beyond the pilot period. The Council will closely monitor the recent Government announcement of a further £105 Million for homeless services and identify any opportunities to secure further funding for the scheme.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

31. The introduction of the above scheme would assist the Council to deliver its Prevention of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
32. There are no additional policy implications associated with this report.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

33. Cross Party Homelessness Working Group

BACKGROUND PAPERS

34. None

FURTHER INFORMATION

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