

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING: Wellbeing Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel

MEETING  
DATE: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2013

TITLE: Homelessness & the use of Temporary Accommodation

WARD: ALL

### AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

**List of attachments to this report:** None

## 1 THE ISSUE

1.1 The Council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation for people who are homeless, have a local connection, are in priority need for accommodation and who did not become homeless intentionally. At the request of panel this report aims to provide an update on the current demands around homelessness and specifically temporary accommodation.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

The Wellbeing Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel is asked to note the report.

### **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, it should be noted that any change in demand for housing advice services and in particular temporary accommodation, would ultimately have significant financial impacts.

### **4 THE REPORT**

#### **Background Information**

4.1 The Council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation for people who are homeless, have a local connection, are in priority need for accommodation and who did not become homeless intentionally. People with a priority need include people with dependant children, pregnant women, and anyone who is vulnerable because of old age, mental illness, handicap or physical disability or other special reason. The Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation)(England) Order 2002 broadened the definition of priority need to include 16 and 17 year olds, care leavers and people who are vulnerable as a result of being in custody or threats of violence.

4.2 Temporary accommodation is a blanket term which can include:

- (1) bed & breakfast accommodation,
- (2) accommodation occupied on a licence e.g. hostel accommodation,
- (3) accommodation occupied on an assured shorthold tenancy e.g. flat or house.

4.3 As these last two types of temporary accommodation are usually run in partnership with not-for-profit housing providers, they are referred to as temporary accommodation schemes. Bath & North East Somerset currently uses all of the above types of temporary accommodation. The temporary accommodation schemes are commissioned through Curo Housing and they provide 28 units of accommodation.

4.4 In addition the Council also commissions a range of services to assist rough sleepers. These are often people who are homeless but where the Council does not have a duty to provide temporary accommodation. This report does not address this area of work.

#### **National and Sub-Regional Context**

4.5 Bath and North East Somerset Council have a relatively low rate of households in temporary accommodation in comparison to the mean of England and the other authorities in the sub-region, as shown in figure 1 below. The chart uses the most recent national data set information which is September 2012. However it should be noted that locally the number of households in temporary accommodation has increased since September 2012 and so it is likely that the performance gap will have narrowed slightly.

#### **Local Perspective**

4.6 In recent years housing Services have adopted a prevention strategy for dealing with homelessness, working hard to maintain existing accommodation and where

necessary sourcing alternative accommodation through either the Council's Homefinders Scheme or if a young adult the Supported Lodgings Scheme. Only as last resort are households placed in temporary accommodation. As a result the number of households in temporary accommodation has decreased significantly over recent years as shown in figure 2 below.

Figure 1: National and Sub-Regional Context

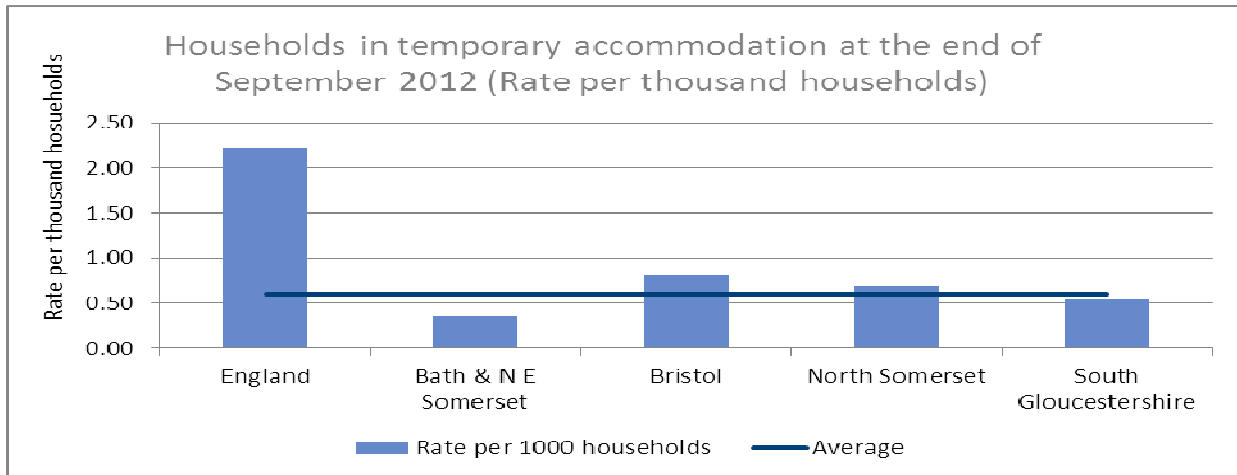
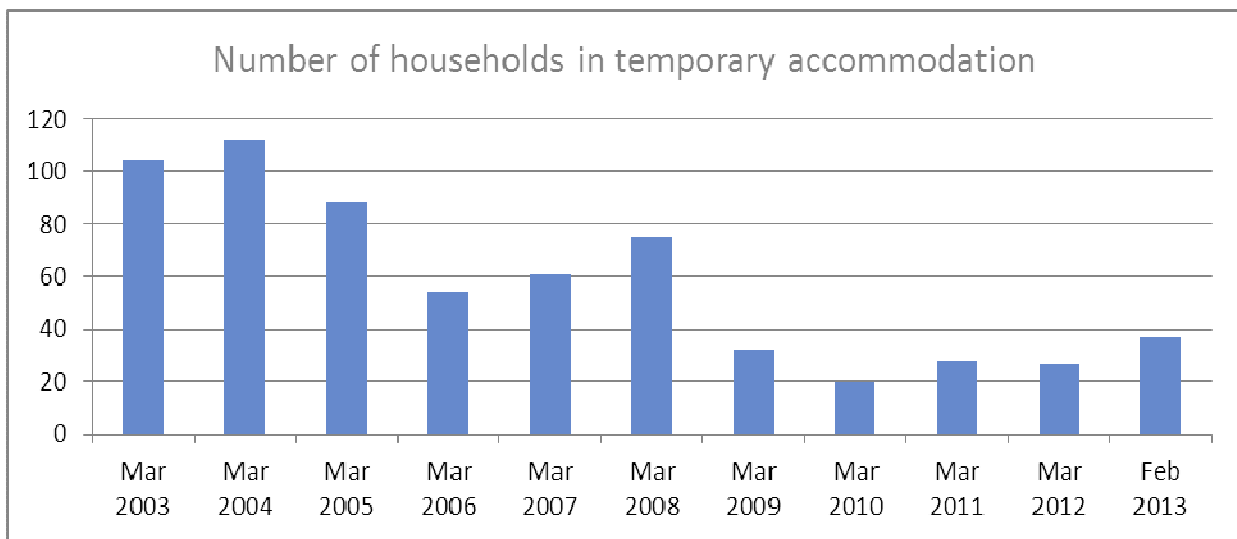
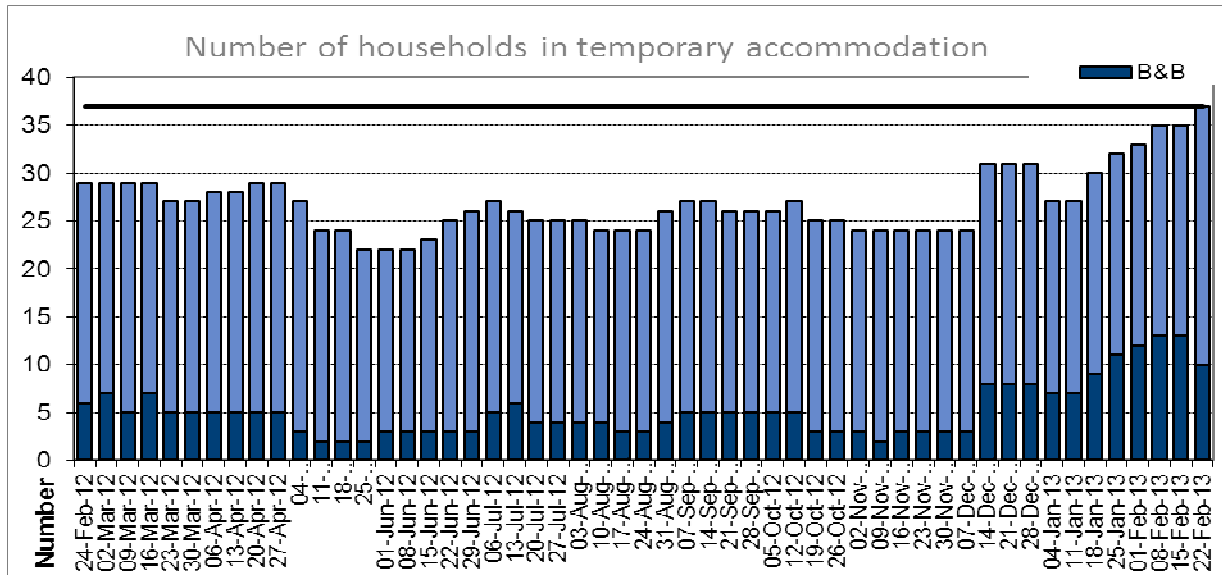


Figure 2: Number of Households in Temporary Accommodation (10 yrs)



4.7 However, since the beginning of the year there has been a significant increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation, as demonstrated in figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Number of Households in Temporary Accommodation (1 year)

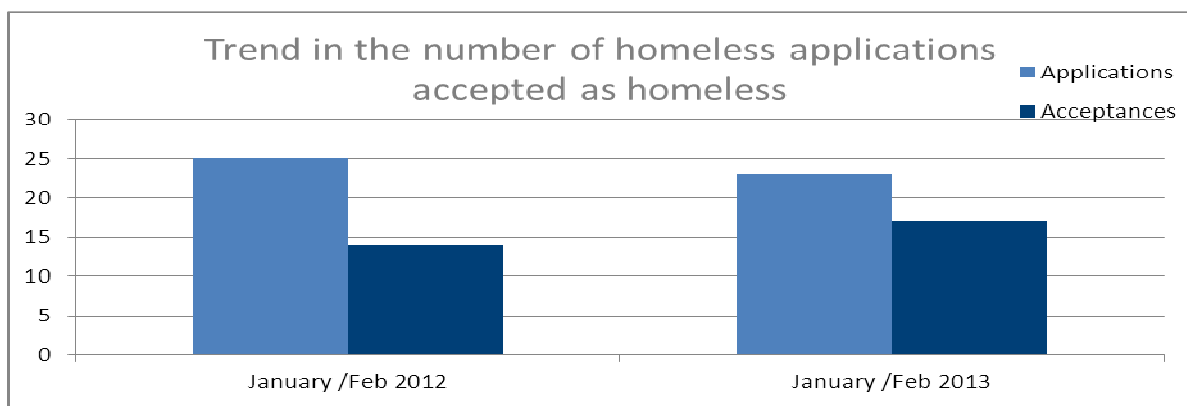


4.8 The numbers of households in temporary accommodation are determined by two fundamental factors. These factors are:



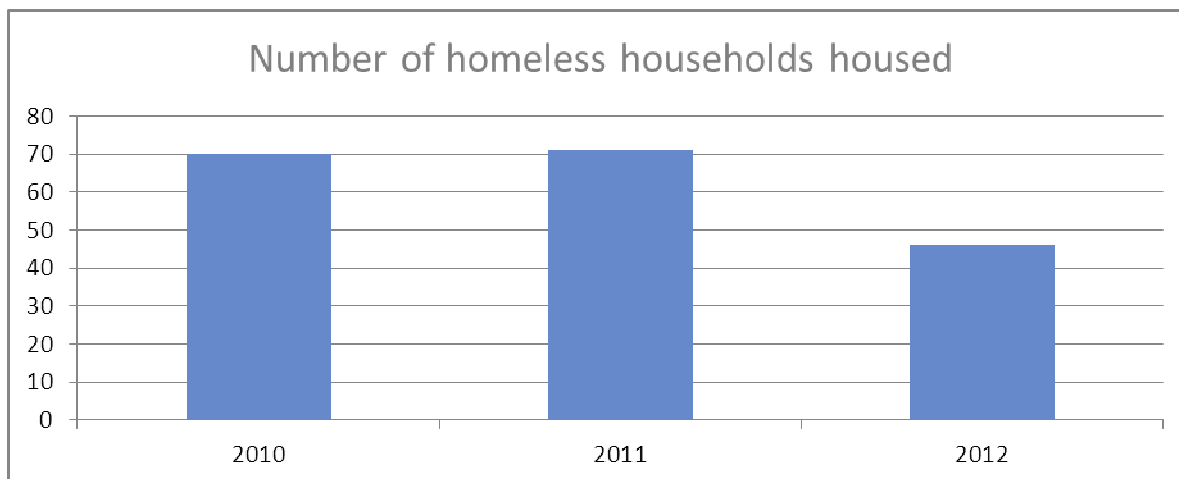
4.9 The numbers of homelessness acceptances have been relatively stable, recording 14 in 2012 and 17 in 2013 for the same period (see figure 4). Whereas the number of households in temporary accommodation housed through Homesearch has decreased significantly.

Figure 4: Trend in Homeless Acceptances



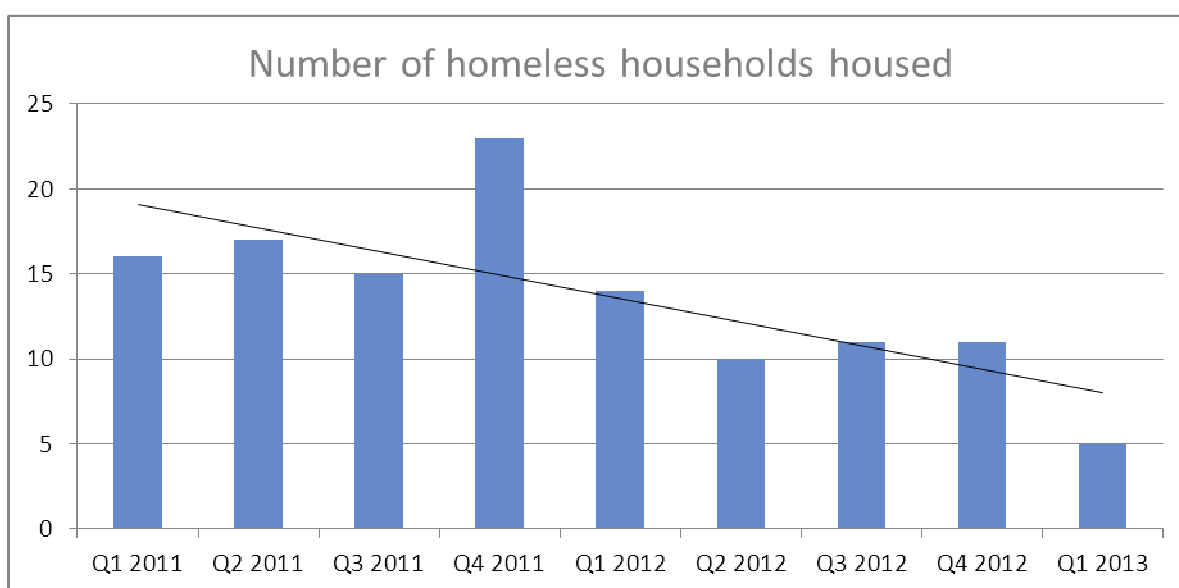
4.10 In 2012, 46 household in temporary accommodation were housed by Homesearch. If you compare this figure to the previous two years, it equates to a fall from 71 households housed by Homesearch (see figure 5).

Figure 5: Households Housed (Annual data)



4.11 When examining the figures in more detail it shows that in 2012 the months of October, November resulted in a low number of homeless people being housed by Homesearch. Apart from an increase in December, this trend has continued for January and February 2013 where in some months only 1 homeless household was housed by Homesearch (see figure 6).

Figure 6: Homeless households housed (Quarterly data)



4.12 As part of the Council's transformation project Housing Services are currently reviewing how the Housing Options & Homeless team operate. As part of this review we will seek to ensure that a "move-on" role is incorporated into any future service design. This involves working with households in temporary accommodation to facilitate and encourage their "move-on" to permanent accommodation. This is a function that has operated successfully in the past and will ensure that households reside in temporary accommodation no longer than absolutely necessary.

4.13 Whilst it is outside of the scope of this paper it should be noted that the Government's welfare reform agenda is likely to further increase demand for the services of the Housing Options & Homeless team. This is at a time when the

Council, and hence the service, has to make additional financial savings. This is a particular consideration in the impending service redesign.

## **5 RISK MANAGEMENT**

5.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has not been undertaken due to the nature of this report, that is, an update report.

## **6 EQUALITIES**

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed because the report aims to provide a briefing only and does not make recommendations for changes to provision, service delivery or policy.

## **7 CONSULTATION**

7.1 Consultation has not been completed because the report aims to provide a briefing only and does not make recommendations for changes to provision, service delivery or policy.

## **8 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION**

8.1 Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Young People; Human Rights; Other Legal Considerations

## **9 ADVICE SOUGHT**

9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

<b>Contact person</b>	Graham Sabourn, Head of Housing Services. (Tel: 01225 477949)
<b>Background papers</b>	None
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	