

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Review Title: Review of Temporary Accommodation in Bath & North East Somerset**

### **A Review by the Housing & Community Safety (HCS) Overview & Scrutiny Panel**

#### **Background**

Housing Services provide a range of client and property focused housing services including the enforcement of housing standards, the inspection and licensing of houses in multiple occupation, financial assistance to undertake essential works repair for vulnerable residents, the allocation of affordable housing, housing advice and homelessness.

It is part of the homelessness service undertaken by the Housing Advice Team, and in particular the provision of temporary accommodation that this review aims to examine. 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.

Temporary accommodation is a blanket term which can include:

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

As these last two types of temporary accommodation are usually run in partnerships between the local authority and 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 that the Council uses are run through a partnership agreement with Bath Self Help Housing Association, part of the Somer Housing Group.

In March 2005 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) published its strategy for tackling homeless titled "Sustainable Communities: Settled Homes; Changing Lives". This strategy announced a target to reduce the number of households living in insecure temporary accommodation by half by 2010. This is demanding target which will require strong corporate and political commitment if we are to meet it.

#### **Purpose**

The Panel are undertaking a review to make recommendations to the Executive Member for Housing concerning improvements to the provision of temporary accommodation in Bath & North East Somerset.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of this review are to:

- a) Assess the progress made by Housing Services in meeting the Government's targets for reducing the number of people in temporary accommodation.
- b) Look at ways to ensure that the temporary accommodation commissioned is both of high quality and meets, within reason, the assessed needs of residents.

## **Scope**

To achieve objective a) the panel will consider:

- The effect of the Temporary Accommodation Reduction Plan introduced by Housing Services.
- How to ensure that both the supply and demand for temporary accommodation is aligned as far as practicable, thus preventing excessive voids or excessive use of bed & breakfast accommodation.

To achieve objective b) the panel will consider:

- ways in which a non-threatening feedback process can be introduced for existing and former residents of our temporary accommodation schemes.
- Whether, having regard to the above feedback and the views of other stakeholders, the existing temporary accommodation is reasonable.
- Whether, having regard to the above feedback and the views of other stakeholders, there are any service changes or improvements which would reduce the stress caused by being placed in temporary accommodation

The review will not consider

- the processes leading up to a time in temporary accommodation (the assessment stage) or
- housing/processes once people have left the temporary accommodation scheme,

other than how the transition (arrival/departure at temporary accommodation) affected the quality of the experience for the residents concerned.

## **Approach**

The Panel will undertake the following activities to gather evidence

- Receive a briefing from service officers concerning current progress to meet reduction in temporary accommodation target
- Investigate relevant good practice from other Local Authorities.
- Consult with our temporary accommodation partners on the issues surrounding this investigation
- Consult with past and present clients of the service to find out how they felt about their accommodation and the system (including a session where members of the Panel can meet and talk with past and present clients).

## *Temporary Accommodation Review – Agreed Terms of Reference July 2006*

- Consult with Councillors seeking their view and experiences concerning the use of temporary accommodation.
- Hold a contributors session to hear from users /experts and other interested parties.

### **Outputs of this Review**

- Notes & papers from public HCS O&S Panel meetings.
- Short summary report incorporating key findings, conclusions and recommendations for the Executive Member.

### **Constraints**

- The review must be managed within the budget available to the Panel.

### **Project Team**

Housing & Community Safety O&S Panel:	Cllr. Steve Hedges Cllr. Marie Brewer Cllr. Hilary Fraser Cllr. Les Kew Cllr. Sharon Ball
Director:	Jane Ashman, Strategic Director Social & Housing Services
Service Manager:	Graham Sabourn, Group Manager (Housing & Health)
O&S Project Manager:	Bethan Grant
O&S Project Support	Lauren Rushen
Panel Administrator:	Mark Durnford

### **Review Steering Group**

Cllr. Steve Hedges, Cllr. Hilary Fraser, Graham Sabourn & Bethan Grant.

## Draft Outline Project Plan

**PLEASE NOTE THESE ARE ONLY INDICATIVE TIMESCALES, AND DETAILS NEED TO BE CONFIRMED/SCHEDULED.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Stage / Activity</b>	<b>Meeting Type</b>
Jan/Sept	Panel agree TOR and approach to review Agree members of Review Steering Group	Public Panel Meeting
October	Panel receive briefing from service officers	Informal meeting
October	Steering Group discuss details of consultation methods	Steering Group Meeting
October - November	Research / Consultation a) Clients b) Councillors c) Survey of other councils best practice d) Consultation with partners	n/a
November	Panel meet with present and past clients of temporary accommodation	Private meeting
November	Results of research presented and Contributors session held	Public Meeting
Nov/Dec	Draft report circulated to panel	n/a
December	Panel meet to discuss conclusions and recommendations (report deadline 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan 07)	Informal meeting
11 <sup>th</sup> Jan 07	Final report agreed by the Panel	Public Panel Meeting
	Panel's report goes to Executive Member for consideration and response within 6 weeks	n/a
8 <sup>th</sup> March 07	Panel discuss Executive response to recommendations with Executive Member	Public Panel Meeting