

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Richard Samuel, Cabinet Member for Resources Cllr Tim Ball, Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Economic Development	
DECISION DATE:	On or after 8 th May 2021	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3246
TITLE:	Supported Housing Provision	
WARD:	All wards	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1: Theobald House Business Case		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation for eligible homeless households. To comply with this duty the Council commissions temporary accommodation from Curo and spot purchases other accommodation, usually bed & breakfast type accommodation when required.
- 1.2 It is proposed that the Council increases capacity by developing a new eleven-unit supported accommodation scheme. This will reduce the Council's reliance on often inadequate bed & breakfast accommodation and provide an enhanced service for homeless households. The scheme will complement the existing temporary accommodation commissioned through Curo.

2 RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet member for Resources and the Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Economic Development agree to;

- 2.1 The development of a supported housing scheme to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households as detailed in the business case contained in Appendix 1.

- 2.2 That the Cabinet member for Resources and the Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Economic Development approve an increase to the Fully Approved Affordable Housing Programme for 2021/22 by £616K for the Theobald House Supported Accommodation scheme (£496K from provisional programme along with £120K Revenue Contribution to Capital Outturn, from the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant).

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation for eligible homeless households under the Housing Act 1996. To comply with these statutory duties the Council commissions supported accommodation, provided by Curo, and spot purchases other accommodation, including rooms at the YMCA and bed & breakfast type accommodation. The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 has placed additional responsibilities on the Council and has further increased demand for temporary accommodation, including having to accommodate households for longer periods of time.
- 3.2 The availability of emergency bed and breakfast accommodation has reduced in the last five years. The last provider of bed and breakfast accommodation in Bath prepared to accommodate homeless households ceased business around 2 years ago. Increasingly the Council has been forced to source emergency bed and breakfast accommodation in the Bristol or South Gloucester areas. Placing households out of area presents many problems to residents who cannot connect with their support networks, work, schools and family. It is also very hard for support agencies to provide support across local authority boundaries.

Review of Temporary Accommodation

- 3.3 In 2019 Housing Services carried out a full review of its use of temporary accommodation. The review considered the current level of provision and quality of the available accommodation that is used to provide temporary housing. The review also considered how best to reduce the use of temporary accommodation by ensuring that the supply is being used efficiently.
- 3.4 The findings of the review included that;
- There is an upward trend in the use of temporary accommodation in Bath & North East Somerset.
 - Use of bed and breakfast has increased significantly, which has led to rising costs.
 - There is an increasing use of out of area accommodation, partly because there are challenges associated with securing bed and breakfast accommodation in a tourist area.
 - Many Homeless clients present with complex issues such as substance misuse, mental health problems or offending behaviour.
 - There is extremely limited provision of temporary accommodation for customers with disabilities

- The findings also noted, that although the use of temporary accommodation is increasing, Bath & North East Somerset Council remains among the 30 lowest ranked local authorities for use of temporary accommodation in England. (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Households in Temporary Accommodation, April – December 2018).

3.5 The Review recommendations included:

- Increasing the amount of temporary accommodation within Bath & North East Somerset and with improved move on support.
- Need to improve efficiency and value for money, through reduced use of expensive private sector emergency accommodation.
- Better segregation of the Hostel accommodation.
- More accessible accommodation for applicants with limited mobility.

3.6 After reviewing and considering the various options to meet the recommendations of the review, such as commissioning more temporary accommodation or sourcing additional bed & breakfast accommodation, the most beneficial option was determined to be the development of in-house provision. This will enable the Council to provide residents with high quality accommodation and support provided directly by the Council. It avoids the risks associated with having all temporary accommodation provided by a single provider, such as, where the resident has been excluded by the provider. It will also allow the Council to ensure that specific client needs can be met, such as, wheelchair accessibility.

Theobald House

1. Theobald House is a former residential home located in Dartmouth Avenue in Bath. The property is owned by the Council and is currently being used to accommodate rough sleepers during the Covid19 lockdowns. The proposal is to renovate and extend the property to create an eleven-room supported housing scheme providing emergency temporary accommodation for homeless households.
2. The scheme is intended to operate complementary to the existing and adjacent temporary accommodation scheme commissioned through Curo Housing. There is potential to share some support resources between the schemes.
3. The refurbished property will have two separate entrances and can be used flexibly, such as, splitting the property into separate family and singles areas. There will be a small on-site office for staff. Various support and welfare services will be provided on site to prepare residents for independent living. The redesign will incorporate modern energy efficient heating, security systems and require low maintenance. There will be self-contained en-suite rooms with shared kitchen and living spaces. Planning permission has been secured for the required extension and amendments to the property.
4. Housing Services will directly manage the accommodation using specialist staff and contractors as required, such as, maintenance, cleaning and security. Existing arrangements within the Housing Options Team as well as partner

agencies will be integrated with this service to provide bespoke move-on support to clients.

- 3.7 The business case for the scheme is attached in appendix 1. The capital expenditure for the scheme will be met through a combination of the Affordable Housing Grant and the Government's Flexible Homelessness Support Grant. The revenue costs of the scheme are self-funded through housing benefit eligible rent. The business case has been informed through benchmarking with other schemes, other supporting evidence and the use of a cost consultant.
- 3.8 The proposed Supported Housing scheme at Theobald House provides eleven units of emergency Temporary accommodation located in the centre of Bath. Residents will benefit from well-located accommodation, that is purpose built and with proper facilities. Existing services providing support and preparing residents for independent rehousing can be provided on site.
- 3.9 Housing Services will be able to reduce its use of expensive Bed and Breakfast accommodation often located out of the district. The scheme is highly flexible enabling quick access at the control of Housing Services and will provide the Council with greater resilience to meet its statutory duties.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Council have a statutory duty to accommodate and assist homeless households under the Housing Act 1996, as amended by The Homelessness Act 2002, Localism Act 2011 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 4.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed additional responsibilities on the Council to accommodate households and in particular introduced the new Prevention and Relief Duties. The 2017 Act also introduced a new, wider, definition of Homelessness.
- 4.3 The statutory Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018 requires Local Housing Authorities to review their temporary accommodation provision.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 The proposals utilise an existing Council building with current valuation of £450K. The capital refurbishment and extension costs, estimated at £616k, will be funded by the Affordable Housing budget and the Government's Flexible Homelessness Support Grant.
- 5.2 The revenue operating costs of £178K will be met from housing benefit eligible rental income of £175K and a service charge £11K, producing annual contribution of £8K.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and which identified many positive aspects of the proposal. Most notably this includes the ability to support vulnerable homeless people with a specific support needs, such as mobility needs and ensuring that clients do not have to move away from their family and support networks.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 8.1 The scheme will meet the demanding AECB energy efficiency building standards. This will be achieved by improving air tightness by installing external wall installation, high performance triple glazed windows, mechanical ventilation heat recovery system and low energy electric heating and lighting.
- 8.2 Currently many homeless households are accommodated in bed and breakfast accommodation located outside of the district. This results in considerable extra travelling for the households who regularly return to the area for schools, work, family and health services. The proposed scheme, being locally located, will considerably reduce the need for such journeys.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 These include continuing to “spot purchase” accommodation and/or commission more temporary accommodation from existing providers. The former was discounted as it has not proved reliable or consistent, is often poorly located and does not require the level of support clients often require. The latter was discounted based on cost, deliverability and ensuring the Council has resilience, particularly when dealing with clients with specific needs.

10 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 Consultation has taken place with the Cabinet Members, Ward Councillors and Statutory Officers.

Contact person	Mike Chedzoy, Housing options and Homelessness Manager 01225 477940
Background papers	None
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