

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Resources Scrutiny Commission

20th September 2013

Report of: Julia James Service Director Integrated Customer Services

Title: Deregulated Tenancies (Exempt Accommodation)

Ward: Citywide

Officer Presenting Report: Julia James

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RECOMMENDATION

That this item is deferred for one month. The city's largest provider is in administration with a restructure underway. A full report in October will enable a better picture to be provided of exempt accommodation across the city and its costs to the Council, once the future of that provider is understood.

Summary

Exempt accommodation has been a significant cost to the Council for many years. A new more rigorous approach to these claims over the past three years has reduced the financial risk to the council of this demand led service.

Bristol Foundation Housing (BFH) is responsible for just over 40% of all claims in the city. There has been a long running dispute with BFH as to their claims for exempt payments, many claims are still lodged with the appeal tribunal. Since the agenda was set for the September Resources Scrutiny meeting, BFH has gone into administration with the prospect of either a restructure or liquidation. The outcome of these developments will be known soon, however not before the September meeting.

BFH's future structure or existence will impact heavily on the amount of housing benefit paid. The immediate priorities however are to ensure the welfare of tenants in BFH accommodation so that they are provided with the appropriate advice, guidance and assistance in regard to their housing situation. The outcome of the possible insolvency, along with other developments for exempt accommodation with other city providers can then be reported in October in full.