

# Non-key Decision Committee Report

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**PURPOSE:** Non-key decision update report

**COMMITTEE:** Homes and Housing Delivery Committee

**DATE:** 20 September 2024

**TITLE:** Tackling Homelessness Programme Update

**Officer presenting the report:** Paul Sylvester **Job title:** Head of Housing Options

**Committee Chair:** Councillor Barry Parsons

**Executive Director lead:** John Smith: Executive Director for Growth & Regeneration

**Purpose of Report:**

1. To introduce and provide an update on the progress of the Tackling Homelessness Programme.

**Background:**

2. On 31 March 2024, 117,450 households [in England] were in temporary accommodation, which is an increase of 12.3% from 31 March 2023. Households with children increased by 14.7% to 74,530, and single households increased by 8.5% to 42,920. Compared to the previous quarter, the number of households in temporary accommodation had increased by 4.3% (Accredited Official Statistics - Statutory homelessness in England: January to March 2024, published 08 August 2024).
3. Many local authorities are feeling the impact of this locally and Bristol is no different. In Bristol, demand has continued to grow and there are now around 1,600 households in TA.
4. We know that the experience of living in temporary accommodation negatively impacts some families and individuals who need to use it, to varying degrees. It can be a traumatic experience, leading to negative impacts on mental health, employment, education, and personal relationships.
5. The programme aims to mitigate these impacts by reducing the number of placements into TA, reducing the length of time spent in TA, increasing the amount of supported accommodation, and

supporting people into the private rented sector where possible. Client satisfaction with the accommodation they are placed in will improve, and better value for money will be delivered.

6. The council has a statutory duty to house people who are legally homeless and vulnerable. Due to a lack of affordable housing, much of that accommodation is secured via expensive spot purchased accommodation from the private rental sector. The council claims some of the cost back via Housing Benefit, but this is capped by central government, linked to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates set in 2011, so the amount that the council pays above the cap results in a loss to the council, known as subsidy loss.
7. At the start of 2024, the annual TA subsidy loss for 2024/25 was estimated to total over £18.5m if no steps were taken to reduce this cost. Long-term, the solution to high numbers of households in TA is to increase the amount of general needs affordable housing available so we are working with our Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Registered Provider (RP) partners to identify opportunities to increase our housing stock at pace. In the short-term we are working on various workstreams to reduce our dependence on expensive private-rented TA to reduce our subsidy loss.

**Key points to discuss:**

8. The Tackling Homelessness Programme aims to reduce overspend on the subsidy loss budget, by addressing both the supply of lower cost Temporary Accommodation (TA), and first stabilising and then reducing the demand for TA Placements. The programme will increase the TA supply of accommodation by: buying a number of properties for use as TA and General Needs housing; by exploring, and, if viable, setting up and implementing a council-owned Registered Provider (RP) to provide additional and alternative supported exempt accommodation; and by leasing modular homes on small pockets of council owned land. The programme will stabilise and reduce demand for TA by re-designing the Housing Options service operating model, making a number of improvements to increase our success in preventing homelessness, moving people on from

temporary accommodation, and increasing access to the private rented sector.

9. The programme will contribute to delivering the following long-term vision: A service focused on Homelessness Prevention that works collaboratively with the wider homelessness sector, increases access to private rented accommodation, and maintains a balanced budget, making Bristol a city where rough sleeping is rare, brief, and non-recurrent, and any stay in Temporary Accommodation is short, safe, and secure.
10. The programme includes the following target outcomes:

#1	Reduced expenditure on Temporary Accommodation so that the new operating model is self-financing and we eliminate overspend on TA
#2	Increased access to private rented accommodation
#3	Many more households approach the council early, increasing our ability to prevent homelessness
#4	The service accepts and delivers on more prevention duties and prevents more homelessness
#5	The service makes effective enquiries and delivers consistent decision making, leading to outcomes which are comparable with similar local authorities.
#6	The service only uses hotels as TA by exception

11. The programme includes the following scope:

Area of work	Description	Scope of work
Increasing the supply of Temporary Accommodation	This work will increase the supply of various different types of temporary accommodation, with the aim of reducing the amount of subsidy loss compared to our current provision.	Includes property acquisitions, some reallocation of properties from General Needs stock, and modular development on small areas of land.
New Use of Registered Providers	This project will explore how we can increase our use of Registered Providers (RPs), to reduce the amount of subsidy loss incurred by the council.	Includes the exploration and implementation of a council-owned RP, as well as identifying more short-term opportunities for the council to work with RPs.
Increasing Access to the Private Rented Sector	This is all about working with the private rented sector to optimise our use of the sector. Getting people into PRS tenancies reduces the burden on social housing and temporary accommodation. Using the PRS to provide some TA can also	Includes incentivising landlords to maintain tenancies, helping individuals access employment which in turn helps them acquire and maintain a private rented tenancy, and encouraging some private landlords to lease their properties to a registered provider who

	be better value than some of our current provision.	can manage it as supported temporary accommodation.
Homelessness Prevention and Demand management	This helps us to fulfil housing needs before people reach the point of becoming homeless, and reduces the number of placements we need to make into TA.	This includes a service redesign, a recruitment drive, changes to ways of working to improve processes, optimising our use of the Home Choice policy to meet needs, and working with other services in the council as well as partnership agencies to embed a culture of homelessness prevention.

## 12. Programme Costs and Reduction to Overspend:

The below table provides summary detail of the costs and reduction to subsidy loss overspend associated with this programme. Contingency funding for all programmes is held centrally by CLB. All savings associated with this programme contribute to reducing the forecast overspend on the subsidy loss budget:

	<b>Costs/ Budget (One off costs)</b>	<b>Reduction to subsidy loss overspend</b>
23/24 - Last year position (actuals)	<b>£300,000</b>	<b>£1,837,848 recurring</b>
24/25 – In year – approved baseline as at August 2024	<b>£2,689,985</b>	<b>£3,593,000 recurring</b>
25/26 – to be confirmed (pending budget setting)	<b>To be confirmed</b>	<b>To be confirmed</b> - The programme is working on further opportunities to save money and provide additional housing, and these opportunities will be formally brought into the programme as delivery confidence increases.

## 13. Key Deliverables to date:

14. The programme delivered Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) savings of £1,837,848 in 23/24.

15. The Emergency Accommodation Framework has been re-commissioned, with better controls around pricing and quality of service.
16. 24 flats have been leased from the Hospital Trust, refurbished, and let as temporary accommodation.
17. Two procurement frameworks have been set up to enable Registered Providers to deliver supported accommodation.
18. An independent report has been commissioned to complete an options appraisal on how to get the best value supported temporary accommodation, and to explore the setting up of a council-owned registered provider as one of the options.
19. An independent report was commissioned to experts in homelessness to review the Housing Options service - recommendations fed into projects including increasing access to the private rented sector, and a service redesign that will optimise early support and triage processes.
- 20. Actions to deliver over the coming months:**
21. Recommendations of the commissioned options appraisal report on RPs will be developed into a full business case, including the option of setting up a council-owned registered provider - this is to be brought to Committee in December.
22. Service redesign and recruitment will take place.
23. Consultation on whether to extend a pilot allocating some General Needs homes for use as temporary accommodation - consultation is live from 20 August to 1 October, and the outcome and recommendation will be brought to Homes and Housing Delivery Committee on 13 December.
24. A pilot of leasing small areas of council land to a modular construction company who are leasing us 6 units for use as temporary accommodation is starting to deliver on site.
25. Acquisitions programme continues, to provide additional homes for use as TA.

**Officer Recommendations:**

No decisions required.

1. That the Committee for Homes and Housing Delivery notes the report states that the Tackling Homelessness Programme's financial objectives include £3,593,000 of recurring subsidy loss reduction. The programme is working on additional initiatives that will result in even further subsidy loss reduction, amount to be confirmed.
2. That the Committee for Homes and Housing Delivery notes the report states that as per baselining at CLB on 06 August 2024 and 13 August 2024, the Tackling Homelessness Programme budget is £2,689,985 (plus contingency held centrally by CLB).
3. That the Committee for Homes and Housing Delivery notes that as per baselining at CLB on 28 May 2024, no funding has yet been approved for 2025/26.

**Corporate Strategy alignment:**

HC1 – Housing Supply – the programme will provide more supported housing for those who need it

HC2 - Low or zero carbon homes: new builds and refurbishments will increase the number of low carbon homes.

HC3 - Homelessness: Cost effective Temporary Accommodation for people who are homeless will increase.

ED05 – Good Governance – this programme contributes to making sure that the council is financially resilient

**City Benefits:**

1. Reduction in subsidy loss will contribute to a balanced budget, increasing the financial sustainability of the council.
2. An increase in supported housing from Registered Providers will mean that more people are placed in accommodation that meets their support needs.
3. More suitable temporary and emergency accommodation for those who need it, with less reliance

on the use of hotels.

4. Client satisfaction with the accommodation they are placed in will improve, and better value for money will be delivered with council budgets and resources.
5. Improved staff retention and satisfaction within the council's housing services will mean that the council and citizens of Bristol will benefit from the expertise of an experienced housing team.

#### Consultation Details:

1. The following projects and work streams within the project will separately bring decisions to committee:

Project/work stream	Description of project and decision	Date of committee
New Uses of Registered Providers	The outcome of a commissioned report into how we can make the best use of Registered Providers, including consideration of the option to set up a council-owned RP, has fed into a Business Case, which will come to Resources Committee for approval to go ahead.	Resources Committee - December 2024
Consultation on the allocation of a proportion of General Needs Properties for use as TA	A review has been carried out on the pilot of allocating some General Needs units for use as TA. Consultation has taken place during August and September and a report will come to Homes and Housing Delivery Committee for a decision on the option of extending the pilot.	Homes and Housing Delivery – December 2024

#### Background Documents:

[TA Report for Top 4 June Cabinet](#) Approval for the Temporary Accommodation Project 06/06/2023

[A. Budget Report.pdf \(bristol.gov.uk\)](#) 23/24 Budget Report to Full Council

[Temporary Accommodation Partnership](#) Agreement to partner with the hospital trusts to provide temporary accommodation

[Flexible-level supported homelessness accommodation service \(Temporary Accommodation Services\)](#)

Agreement to proceed with accommodation frameworks for supported housing provided by RPs 4 October  
2022



## APPENDICES

**Appendix A – Further essential background information and detail**

**NO**