

# Non-key Decision Committee Report



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

**COMMITTEE:** Homes and Housing Delivery Committee

**DATE:** 13 December 2024

**TITLE:** Tackling Homelessness Transformation Programme Quarterly 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:** To provide an update on the progress of the Tackling Homelessness Transformation Programme

## Evidence Base / Context

1. The Tackling Homelessness programme aims to reduce the council's use of expensive temporary accommodation, and to provide better outcomes for families and individuals at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness. More details on the aims and objectives of the programme can be found in the previous quarterly report that came to Homes and Housing Committee 20 September 2024, linked in the Background Documents section below.
2. The programme includes the following scope:

Area of work	Objectives	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. Please see Appendix A for further information.
Increasing Access to the	This is all about working with the	Includes incentivising landlords to

Private Rented Sector (PRS)	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 be better value than some of our current provision.	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 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 experiencing homelessness, 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.

### 3. Progress to Date:

#### 4. Increasing Supply of TA:

5. An acquisitions pilot, led by the HRA, has so far secured 8 homes for use as TA, and these are in the process of being refurbished, furnished, and allocated. Another 22 homes are under offer.
6. A full business case has been developed and a separate key decision paper is going to Strategy and Resources Committee 16 December for approval to spend £33m from the General fund on up to 75 properties for use as TA.
7. The council has leased some small sites of council-owned land to a company who is leasing modular homes to the council to go on those sites and be used as TA. Six properties will be delivered and occupied by the end of January 2025. This idea has been scaled up to deliver a further 50 properties in the same way in 2025/26.
8. We have carried out public consultation on the extension of a pilot which allocates some general needs properties each month for use as TA. Consultation has now closed, and a separate key decision paper is coming to Homes and Housing Delivery committee 13 December.

9. New Use of Registered Providers:

10. An independent report was commissioned which investigated the council's options for getting the most value out of working with Registered Providers (RPs) of supported accommodation. This included a recommendation to pursue the idea of setting up a council-owned RP. An outline business case has been approved and a full business case is now being developed.

11. Increasing Access to the Private Rented Sector:

12. A financial appraisal has been completed which demonstrates how we could benefit from offering more incentives to landlords and clients to remain in private rented tenancies, helping people move on from TA.

13. A contract has been mobilised with an organisation called BEAM, who help clients into employment, and match them to a private rented tenancy and help them to maintain the tenancy.

14. Homelessness Prevention and Demand Management:

15. A recruitment campaign is in progress to resource the service to enable a focus on prevention of homelessness.

16. A service redesign is in progress. This includes having Housing Advisors carry out the initial triage of housing requests when they come into the Citizen Service Point, allowing them to focus on early help and prevention of homelessness.

17. The service development team has been expanded to enable better performance management, training, policy development, service improvements and monitoring of outcomes.

18. The Temporary Accommodation team will be split into two teams – one with a focus on housing supply, and one with focus on EA/TA, move on and support.

19. Within the Homelessness Prevention Team, as well as the addition of triage, the team will include 4

specialist sub-teams, to help focus on more specialist support and help for people in different circumstances and with specific housing needs.

## 20. Programme Costs and Reduction to Overspend:

21. 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>Target Reduction to subsidy loss overspend (recurring)</b>	<b>Actual cost reduction delivered</b>
23/24 – Last year position (actuals)	£300,000	£2,123,000	£1,837,848
24/25 – in year approved baseline target	£2,748,165	£3,593,000	£2,327,910 (as at 12/11/2024)
25/26 approved baseline target	£1,633,348 (pending further refinement and budget approval in February 2025)	£4,634,000	N/A

The costs for each year include the following resources:

- 23/24 - project management, business analyst, transformation leads, part payment for additional Housing Advisors, Simplyphi contract for Private Lettings work stream.
- 24/25 – internal project support services (including project management, business analyst, transformation leads, internal and external comms, finance, data analyst, Legal, backfilling a subject matter expert from the Housing Options service, procurement specialist), consultancy for the review on the homelessness service, externally commissioned advice for New use of RPs, BEAM contract to help people into employment and private rented tenancies, site prep for 6 MMC sites, 7 months' salary costs for additional staff in Housing Options to enable

redesign and a properly resourced service.

- 25/26 - internal project support services (including project management, business analyst, transformation leads, internal and external comms, finance, data analyst, Legal, backfilling a subject matter expert from the service, procurement specialist), consultancy for behavioural insights work, initial mobilisation for 50 MMC sites.
- None of the above includes the full costs for setting up a council-owned RP - this will be requested at Full Business Case stage and will come through committee separately.

Cost reduction is coming from the four main areas of work, as shown in the below table:

Area of Work	Scope of work	Target 24/25	Delivered to date 24/25
Increasing the supply of Temporary Accommodation	Property acquisitions, some reallocation of properties from General Needs stock, and modular development on small areas of land.	£2,433,000	£1,547,851
New Use of Registered Providers	Exploration and implementation of a council-owned RP, as well as identifying more short-term opportunities for the council to work with RPs.	£0 – savings start from 26/27	£0 – savings start from 26/27
Increasing Access to the Private Rented Sector	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 can manage it as supported temporary accommodation.	£708,000	£780,059
Homelessness Prevention and Demand management	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.	£452,000	£0 at time of writing – savings start from December 2024
<b>Total</b>		<b>£3,593,000</b>	<b>£2,327,910</b>

## 22. Key Risks and Mitigations:

23. The programme has a full risk and issues log where risks and issues are logged and mitigations

tracked and monitored. Below are a few of the key risks and mitigations to be aware of.

Risk	Mitigation
Demand for TA rises above our forecasts, increasing the overspend on the subsidy loss budget	The programme is working hard on the prevention projects, and doing as much as possible to control demand, as well as trying to find additional homes. However, this is a demand led service, and there will always be an element of demand which is outside our control.
Recruitment and retention is lower than required, so we may not be able to fully implement the changes required to bring about more homelessness prevention.	The programme includes a review of how we target and advertise for housing advisor roles, and is also developing a retention strategy, including better training, performance management and development and progression.
Registered Providers and Emergency Accommodation providers may not sign up to the agreements we need in order to develop a council-owned RP.	The programme includes a work stream where the council is working with providers to develop processes and agreements for some short term leasing arrangements. These are pre-empting and working through some of the challenges that may come about if we pursue a council-owned RP.

**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

in 24/25 and a further £4,634,000 of recurring subsidy loss reduction in 25/26. 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 re-baselining at CLB on 12 November 2024, the Tackling Homelessness Programme budget is £2,748,165 for 24/25 (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, but is expected to be around £1,633,348 for 25/26 (excluding the New Uses of RPs project).

#### **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:

<b>Project/work stream</b>	<b>Description of project and decision</b>	<b>Date of committee</b>
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 2024. The findings have been analysed in October, and a report will come to Homes and Housing Deliver Committee for a decision on the option of extending the pilot.	Homes and Housing Delivery – 13 December 2024
Invest to Save Acquisitions programme	A full business case has been developed for a proposal to acquire up to 75 homes for use as TA.	Strategy and Resources Committee – 16 December 2024

**Background Documents:**

[Tackling Homelessness Transformation Programme Quarterly Update September 2024](#)

## **APPENDICES**

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

**YES**