

# Non-key Decision Committee Report Tackling Homelessness Quarterly Update

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

**COMMITTEE:** Homes and Housing Delivery Committee

**DATE:** 04 April 2025

**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 (TA), 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 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 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 demountable 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 (PRS)	Getting people into PRS tenancies reduces the burden on social housing and temporary accommodation. In addition, using the PRS to provide some TA can also be better value than some of the current provision.	Includes incentivising landlords to provide affordable tenancies at LHA, 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 the council for use as temporary accommodation.
Homelessness Prevention and Demand management	This helps the council to fulfil housing needs before people reach the point of experiencing homelessness, and reduces the number of placements the council needs to make into TA.	This includes a service redesign, a recruitment drive, changes to ways of working to improve processes, optimising use of the Home Choice policy to support homelessness prevention, 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 Housing Revenue Account (HRA), has so far secured 13 homes for use as TA, and these are in the process of being refurbished, furnished, and allocated. Five of these are now occupied.
6. Strategy and Resources Committee approved a proposal to spend £33m from the General fund on up to 75 properties for use as TA in 25/26.
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 June 2025. This has been scaled up to deliver a further 50 properties in the same way in 2025/26.
8. Homes and Housing Delivery Committee approved a cap of 180 BCC properties per year to be allocated for use as TA, at Homes and Housing Delivery Committee on 13 December. These are now being allocated as they become available.

## **9. New Use of Registered Providers:**

10. The full business case is currently being developed for this work.

## **11. Increasing Access to the Private Rented Sector:**

12. A financial appraisal was completed which demonstrates how the council could benefit from offering more incentives to landlords and clients to secure private rented tenancies, helping people move on from TA. A new target has been set to increase this work, and this was approved at Homes and Housing Delivery Committee 14 February 2025.

13. The council continues to refer clients to an organisation called Beam, who helps clients into employment, matches them to a private rented tenancy and helps them to maintain the tenancy.

## **14. Homelessness Prevention and Demand Management:**

15. A recruitment campaign continues to resource the service to enable an increased focus on the prevention of homelessness.

16. A service redesign is underway. 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. This change went live 2 December 2024 and has been working well.

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 has been split into two teams, each with a dedicated Team Manager – one with a focus on housing supply, and one with focus on emergency accommodation, temporary accommodation, 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 Corporate Leadership Board (CLB). All savings in 24/25 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	£4,293,000	£4,192,466 (as at 05/03/2025)
25/26 approved baseline target	<p>Revenue costs of: £1,925,947 (excluding contingency, and pending approval of the transformation fund at Strategy and Resources Committee in May 2025)</p> <p>Plus capital costs of: £500,000 capital borrowing for 50 modular homes</p> <p>£33,383,400 capital borrowing for 75 acquisitions, which can be sold at the end of 5 years if we no longer require them.</p>	£8,205,606	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, Phi 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 Strategy and Resources committee separately.

Cost reduction in 2024/25 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 (as at 05/03/25)
Increasing the supply of Temporary Accommodation	Property acquisitions, some reallocation of properties from General Needs stock, and demountable development on small areas of land.	£2,733,000	£2,569,853
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	Includes incentivising landlords to provide affordable tenancies at LHA, helping individuals access employment which in turn helps them acquire and maintain a	£1,108,000	£1,180,482

	private rented tenancy, and encouraging some private landlords to lease their properties to the council for use as temporary accommodation.		
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 support homelessness prevention, and working with other services in the council as well as partnership agencies to embed a culture of homelessness prevention.	£452,000	£442,131
<b>Total</b>		<b>£4,293,000</b>	<b>£4,192,466</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.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Demand for TA rises above programme 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 factors which are outside the council's control.
Recruitment and retention is lower than required, so it may not be possible to fully implement the changes required to bring about more homelessness prevention.	The programme includes a review of how the council targets and advertises 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 needed to deliver temporary supported housing.	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 the programme implements a council-owned RP.
Introduction of the Renters' Rights Bill brings a short term risk of increased demand, as landlords may take the opportunity to end tenancies and/or increase their rents before the bill goes live. This may also bring an opportunity for the council, as more private landlords may want to work with the council to increase their security in terms of receiving regular rent payments and having tenants	The service is working on some communications with landlords so that landlords are encouraged to maintain existing tenancies wherever possible.

who are supported in maintaining their tenancies.	
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**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 £4,293,000 of recurring subsidy loss reduction in 24/25, which will be delivered, and a further £8,205,606 of recurring savings in 25/26. The programme is working on additional initiatives that will result in 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 re-baselining at CLB on 12 November 2024, no revenue funding has yet been approved for 2025/26, but the programme will request to spend £1,925,947 plus contingency for 25/26 in a separate paper presenting the programme's full business case.

**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, as well as improving joined up working between different service areas with housing needs, improving decision-making.

**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 have or are planning to separately bring decisions to committee:

Project/work stream	Description of project and decision	Date of committee
Consultation on the allocation of a proportion of General Needs Properties for use as TA	A review was carried out on the pilot of allocating some General Needs units for use as TA. Consultation took place during August and September 2024. The findings were analysed in October 2024, and a report went to Homes and Housing Delivery Committee for a decision on the	Homes and Housing Delivery – approved 13 December 2024



	option of extending the pilot.	
Invest to Save Acquisitions programme	A full business case was developed for a proposal to acquire up to 75 homes for use as TA.	Strategy and Resources Committee – approved 16 December 2024
Approval for activities to support homeless households to maintain and secure Private Rented Tenancies	Approval to increase departmental spend on activities to support private rented tenancies, as well as increasing the target for leasing with private landlords, to deliver savings in 2025/26.	Homes and Housing Delivery Committee - approved 14 February 2025
Tackling Homelessness Full Business Case	The full business case for the programme is being presented, seeking approval to draw down transformation funding to enable the programme to deliver in 2025/26.	Homes and Housing Delivery Committee 4 April 2025

**Background Documents:**

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

[Tackling Homelessness Transformation Programme PDF 133 KB](#) Quarterly update 13 December 2024

[Using general needs council housing as temporary accommodation PDF 256 KB](#) 13 December 2024

[Investment to Purchase Properties for use as Temporary Accommodation PDF 170 KB](#) 16 December 2024

[Activities to Support Homeless Households - Private Rented Tenancies Report.pdf](#) 14 February 2025

## APPENDICES

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

**NO**