

Decision Pathway – Report Template



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 05 February 2019

TITLE	Supported Family Accommodation Framework		
Ward(s)	All		
Author: Karamo Sanyang	Job title: Commissioning & Contracts (Homelessness) Officer		
Cabinet lead: Cllr Paul Smith	Executive Director lead: Colin Molton		
Proposal origin: BCC Staff			
Decision maker: Cabinet Member Decision forum: Cabinet			
Timescales: Cabinet Date: Tue 05/02/19			
<p>Purpose of Report: The purpose of the report is to seek approval to increase the number of supported family accommodation units whilst reducing the number of emergency accommodation units where no support is provided. In addition to providing accommodation with support that better meets the needs of homeless households, this proposal will also reduce spend on Housing Option's budget. The Housing Options team is currently securing accommodation for families through the Emergency Accommodation Block Contract.</p>			
<p>Evidence Base:</p> <p>We have carried out research into the support needs of families in Emergency Accommodation and found that the majority of households that we contacted had support needs which aren't being met. These included budgeting, access to benefits, employment/education/training and mental health. Meeting these support needs by providing additional supported family accommodation will increase resilience and contribute to future tenancy sustainment.</p> <p>Emergency Accommodation is more expensive than Supported Family Accommodation. The providers of this emergency accommodation charge Bristol City Council for using this accommodation. Bristol City Council partly recover these costs through Housing Benefit and accommodation charges paid by the households living in this accommodation, however not all costs are recovered. Emergency accommodation is not supported accommodation and therefore Housing Benefits cannot claim full Housing Benefit (HB) subsidy.</p> <p>We have 51 units of Emergency Block accommodation managed by Housing Associations which we plan to convert to Supported Family Accommodation effective from 1st April 2019. For these units there is currently a subsidy loss of about £280k per annum which is funded by a general fund budget within the Benefits Service. In addition to this, the Housing Options service fund the shortfall between housing benefit payments, charges received from households and what we pay the providers. This shortfall is approximately £80k per annum. The total cost to Bristol City Council is £360k per annum. When these units are converted to Supported Family Accommodation, Bristol City Council will only have to cover the costs of Support provided which is approximately £150k per annum. The costs are set out in the Supported Family Accommodation Specification.</p> <p>We aim to attract providers to the Supported Family Accommodation Framework from the Emergency Block Contract providers and other providers of Supported Accommodation.</p>			

We currently have 42 Supported Family Accommodation Units in the Framework with a commitment of £485k for three years ending 31st March 2021. We plan to secure an additional 100 supported family accommodation units. Therefore we are seeking a further commitment of £912,183 which will cover 3 years funding of support costs for 100 units (calculated as no. of units multiply by unit cost per annum & multiply by number of years). This figure allows for flexibility should providers be able to offer additional units. The funding for the additional units will come from re-allocating Flexible Homelessness Support grant which is currently being used to cover Housing Benefit Subsidy loss and pay for emergency accommodation. No new revenue funding is needed.

This is not a general fund saving but will reduce the funding from the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant to Housing Benefits and reduce the Housing Options spend on Emergency Accommodation.

Having the providers in our supported family accommodation framework will allow us to monitor their performance as we currently do with the other properties on the framework increasing efficiency, value for money and reducing the costs to the council.

Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:

That Cabinet

1. Authorises an increase in the value of the current Supported Family Accommodation Framework by £912,183 to enable an increase to the Supported family accommodation units and help reduce spend on Housing options budgets.
2. Notes that this will be funded from The Flexible Homeless Support Grant.
3. Delegates authority to the Executive Director for Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to accept new providers bringing additional units onto the Supported Family Accommodation Framework Contract up to the value set out in this report.

Corporate Strategy alignment: To reduce costs to the council by reducing the no. of temporary emergency accommodation and achieve value for money. Key commitment to reduce the overall level of homelessness and rough sleeping, with no-one needing to spend a ‘second night out’.

City Benefits: This proposal when approve, will benefit the city as it will help reduce the spend on Housing Options budget, and place families in a better regulated supported accommodation where support will be provided to help families move on into longer term accommodation.

In addition, we will assess any new providers applying to join the framework around the social value that they will bring to the contract. We have effective contract management processes set up within the team with regular performance reporting on equalities data.

Ultimately, if the approach outlined in this report is not approved the council will continue to pay high rent through Emergency block contract. Homeless families in the Emergency accommodation will continue to live in the Emergency accommodation with no support, Revenues & Benefits will continue to lose on Housing Benefit subsidy and Housing Options spend will not be reduce.

Consultation Details: n/a

Revenue Cost	£n/a	Source of Revenue Funding	Cost Centre 15156.
Capital Cost	£n/a	Source of Capital Funding	n/a
One off cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

1. Finance Advice: The temporary accommodation budget has overspent in recent years due to increased numbers of families requiring accommodation and the increase cost of individual units. The Flexible Homeless Support Grant has been used to mitigate the in-year overspends but that is not a sustainable position. This proposal seeks to increase the number of units commissioned under the Supported Family Accommodation Framework with at the same time reducing the number of units purchased within the Emergency Block Contract. This will deliver savings of

£4k per unit, reduce the call on the Flexible Homeless Support Grant, reduce the housing benefit subsidy loss, contribute to delivery of the savings plans and bring forecast expenditure back to within budget.

Finance Business Partner: Neil Sinclair – 22th November 2018

2. Legal Advice: The report seeks approval for additional funding in support of revised commissioning arrangements, the effect of which is to make less use of Emergency Accommodation, and replace this with greater use of the existing Supported Family Accommodation Framework, partly by encouraging providers to move over. This request does not raise any particular legal issues. The proposal will involve converting existing Emergency accommodation into supported accommodation, and encouraging more providers to join the framework. The existing framework is an “open” framework established under an EU compliant process, in accord with the light touch regime and allows for providers to join during its currency. It runs for 3 years from early 2017.

Legal Team Leader: Eric Andrews Team Leader -25 January 2019

3. Implications on IT: “There are no identifiable IT implications in this proposal.”

IT Team Leader: Ian Gale 27th November 2018

4. HR Advice: ‘No HR implications anticipated’

HR Partner: Celia Williams 26th October 2018.

5. Reputational narrative: Increasing the number of supported family accommodation units is likely to be viewed positively by residents and the media - especially in light of negative coverage around the family who were placed in a Premier Inn for three years. Key messages around the difference between Emergency Accommodation Framework and Supported Family Accommodation Framework may need to be developed as well as a narrative around homeless households.

PR officer: Izzy Kongsgaard 26th October 2018.

EDM Sign-off	Julian Higson	28 th November 2018
Cabinet Member sign-off	CLlr Paul Smith	3 rd December 2018
CLB Sign-off	Mike Jackson	11 th December 2018
For Key Decisions - Mayor’s Office sign-off	[name]	[date]

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal Support needs research and Supported Family Accommodation specification	YES
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	NO
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	NO
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal “There are no significant environmental impacts relating to this report and a full Eco IA is not required”.	NO
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Combined Background papers	No
Appendix J – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix K – HR advice	NO
Appendix L – ICT	NO

