

GROWTH, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 7
10th January 2022	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Adrian Chapman – Executive Director: Place & Economy	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Marco Cereste, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning, Housing and Transport	
Contact Officer(s):	Sean Evans – Assistant Director Housing (Acting)	Tel. 07920 160007

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING ANNUAL UPDATE

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Cllr Marco Cereste, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning, Housing and Transport	Deadline date: N/A
<p>It is recommended that Growth, Resources And Communities Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider the contents of the report and scrutinise the work ongoing by Housing. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to Growth, Resources And Communities Scrutiny Committee to provide an annual update on activity, progress, challenges and plans for housing services.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on activity, progress, challenges and plans for housing services.

2.2 *How does this report link to the Corporate Priorities?*

The Economy & Inclusive Growth & Our Places & Communities

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 The Housing Needs Service has continued to see high levels of demand. As Covid restrictions were lifted and we returned to business as usual we have adapted to ensure that we are able to meet the needs of our customers, while ensuring that clients and staff safety remained a key focus.

Staff in the team have returned to the office where required and support for clients is offered via a hybrid model that ensures clients who need to be seen face to face can be, at Sand Martin House, while those who are able and comfortable are able to meet and liaise with officers via the phone and MS Teams. The team maintains close working with partner agencies with staff from the outreach team are being adaptable to clients' needs and working with them in key partner buildings, ensuring connectivity with other support services such as The Garden House, Outside Links and community associations.

4.2

The Housing Register and Allocations

In May 2022, we launched our new Allocations Policy which had been approved at Full Council. The policy realigns the allocation of social housing with our very strong preventative agenda, this means that those who work with us to prevent their homelessness are awarded greater priority on the Housing Register. The team worked to re-assess the applications of all those who wished to remain on the housing register. The number of those live on the Housing Register was reduced due to people not responding to confirm that they wished to remain on the housing register and the categories of those who had a qualifying right to stay on the register changing.

Demand for social housing remains high, with approximately 100 new people applying each week. However, supply remains extremely low with on average 10 properties being advertised each week.

4.3

Homelessness

The Housing Needs service returned to Sand Martin House on 16 May 2022 to facilitate the delivery of a front line service to customers who do not have access to a telephone or are unable to access via the online portal. This enabled these customers to be seen in person and ensure that those requiring face to face interviews could be seen in person.

The number of households contacting us for homelessness assistance from 1 April 2022 to date has remained high with 2544 households seeking help in comparison with 3298 households in 2021/22 and 1988 in 2020/21. All officers within the service have worked hard to maximise opportunities to both prevent and relieve homelessness and reduce the pressures on providing temporary accommodation to these households. From April 2022 officers have succeeded in preventing homelessness from 15% of households who have become homeless or who are threatened with homelessness.

The introduction and partnership approach through the Supported Accommodation Pathway has delivered increased access to supported accommodation settings for those in unable to thrive within independent accommodation coupled with a defined approach to supporting those who are ready to move on and into independent accommodation.

The service continues to face challenges with securing permanent accommodation for those who we are unable to prevent becoming homeless and the team continue to work with Registered Social Landlords and Private Sector Landlords to secure accommodation for homeless households.

From April 2021 to date, we have had 429 properties that have become available from our Registered Social Landlord partners and in 2021/22 we had 818 properties made available for letting

In August 2022 we launched a social media campaign to attract private sector landlords and hopefully in turn increase access to permanent accommodation. We are pleased to advise that we have had 15 new landlords contact us and have been able to secure accommodation with several of them. We continue to offer incentives to encourage landlords to offer permanent accommodation to homeless households.

4.4

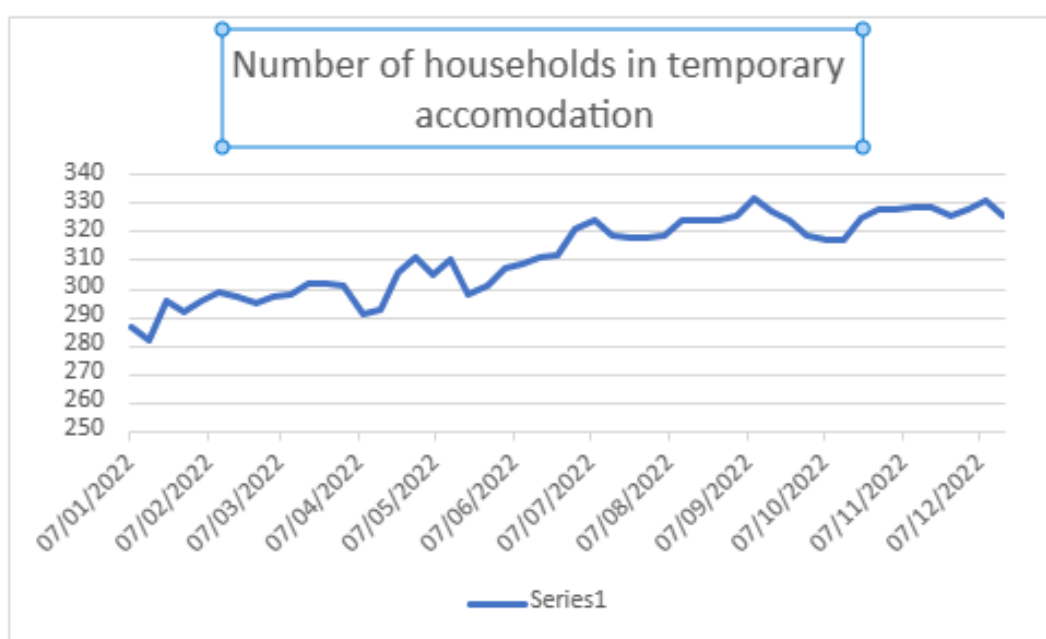
Temporary Accommodation

As demand for services continues at a high level and the number of properties that are affordable continues to be hard to come by the demand for temporary accommodation remains high. During

the year some key lease agreements have come to an end. We have been successful in retaining use of Elizabeth Court for temporary accommodation and Cross Keys Homes have been very supportive in ensuring that the scheme provides the best value to the Council while services remain unaffected. The lease at St Michaels Gate ended meaning that we have had to make use of alternative accommodation options to meet demand, but overall numbers accommodated in temporary accommodation throughout the year have increased against the backdrop of increasing demand.

Over the next year the focus of the team will be shifting further to early help provision, which will support the progress of keeping households in their home or finding alternative accommodation before homelessness occurs. This is essential as we start to see the real impacts of the cost-of-living crisis impacting on crisis services. We will continue procuring suitable accommodation for use as temporary accommodation as well as increasing move on options that will support our preventative work.

The graph below shows the number of households accommodated in temporary accommodation over the last year:



4.5

Rough Sleeping

4.5.1

Rough Sleeper Initiative

In February 2022, we were invited to submit a bid for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding from Department of Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC). As part of the bid, we had to complete a self-evaluation to help consider what was missing from our rough sleeper provision. Unlike previous years RSI funding which had only been for a 12-month period, we were able to bid for funding for 3 years, up until March 2025. This really enabled us to consider our medium- and long-term plans in this area which has allowed us to look at more preventative approaches to rough sleeping.

Later in the year, we were informed that we had been successful for all initiatives that we had requested, totalling just under £3m in funding until March 2025. This includes:

- 6 x Safe Sleeping Spaces
- GP & Nurse Outreach
- Peer Support
- Tenancy Sustainment and Employment Support
- Immigration Advice
- Resettlement Officers

Rough Sleeper Outreach and Housing, Health and Welfare Officers,
Prevention officers – prison, hospital and supported accommodation,
Supported accommodation pathway officer

We have been working with our colleagues in legal and procurement to ensure all the correct legislation to start implementing the initiatives. The funding has enabled us to also increase the rough sleeper outreach team so that we can ensure that we are far more reactive to rough sleeper reports. The team are now going out at least 5 times either very early in the morning or late at night to all reported locations as well as known hot spots to engage with those sleeping rough. We have a core group of rough sleepers who are not engaging with services, so its vital the rough sleeper team persistently try and engage with these clients at different times of the day and night.

As well as this, we have recruited rough sleeper prevention posts. These posts will be based in the hospital, prison and across our supported accommodation settings, with the aim of ensuring that any rough sleeper who goes into one of these institutions, does not come back out on the streets.

4.5.2 ***Housing First***

In September 2022, discussions were had to change the funding for Housing First. This was delivered by Cambridge City Council as part of a wider Housing First programme across the county. However, it was decided that it would sit better within Peterborough. Cambridge had been successful for an additional Housing First post and hadn't recruited to this. We have therefore just finished recruitment for two posts who will be able to support up to 10 clients through a Housing First model. We will be working closely with our Registered Provider partners to source suitable accommodation so that we can really strive to implement this model successfully in Peterborough.

4.5.3 ***Demographic***

The team have worked tremendously hard to reduce rough sleeper numbers over the past 12 months. We continue to accommodate all verified and eligible rough sleepers, even those who we do not have a duty to provide temporary accommodation to. We have successfully reduced the number of people sleeping rough during this period to approximately 24. Nearly two thirds of those sleeping out have restricted eligibility. This means that their primary offer will be a reconnection package or an ability to work with the team to help them become eligible through applications to the EU Settlement Scheme and support in finding employment.

For all those sleeping rough, we work alongside our partners delivering outreach services to rough sleepers including Aspire and Dual Diagnosis Team. This enables us to ensure that we are addressing rough sleepers needs holistically, giving them the best chance to accept and sustain accommodation.

4.5.4 ***Work with partners***

Changes in senior leadership in the Housing Service over the last few years has meant that some of the relationships with our key partners have not been maintained. This year we have taken important steps to reestablish these relationships and build on them. We have worked closely with our Statutory Housing Provider and voluntary sector partners to re-establish a coherent governance structure for housing and homelessness across the city.

We are already seeing the benefits of this work with positive work being undertaken against the homelessness strategy, the development of the supported accommodation pathway and single homelessness task and targeting groups.

This work will continue to grow in the next year with the relaunch of the developer forums and affordable housing providers management groups. We continue to work with partners as a key member of Safer off the Streets Peterborough and through commissioning of services through

the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) and the Housing Related Support programme for supported accommodation providers.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 *N/A report for information*

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 *N/A report for information*

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 *N/A report for information*

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 *N/A report for information*

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

9.1 *There are no financial implications.*

Legal Implications

9.2 *There are no legal implications.*

Equalities Implications

9.3 *There are no equalities implications.*

Rural Implications

9.4 *There are no rural implications.*

Carbon Impact Assessment

9.5 *There are no Carbon Impact implications.*

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 *N/A*

11. APPENDICES

11.1 *N/A*

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