

The Moray Council



Temporary Accommodation Strategy

March 2009

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Temporary Accommodation Strategy sets out the strategic priorities and actions to achieve these for the Council and partner agencies in the provision of temporary accommodation for homeless households.
- 1.2 It is set within the context of an ambitious Scottish Government objective to abolish priority need in homelessness by 2012. In turn, this is reflected in the Single Outcome Agreement between the Council and the Scottish Government which indicates that tackling homelessness is a priority for the Council.
- 1.3 The Strategy has been informed by work carried out to model the impact of the abolition of priority need and modelling of the implications of this for temporary accommodation requirements in Moray. It has also been strongly influenced by the findings of the Scottish Housing Regulator's inspection of the Council's homelessness services and in particular, by the recommendations to the Council arising from the inspection.
- 1.4 The strategy will support the wider Homelessness Strategy for Moray currently under review. It has been developed with the input and assistance from a number of partner agencies involved in tackling homelessness in Moray.
- 1.5 The Council is very conscious that tackling homelessness in Moray requires further provision of affordable housing. This remains the key priority for the Council.

2. Strategic aims

2.1 The key aims of the Temporary Accommodation Strategy are:-

- To ensure provision of a range of temporary accommodation options in Moray to meet the needs of homeless households
- To ensure that temporary accommodation is of an appropriate quality to meet the needs of homeless households
- To ensure effective management of temporary accommodation, reflecting service users views
- To ensure that appropriate support and contact is provided to homeless households in temporary accommodation

2.2 The actions identified as **APPENDIX I** to this Strategy indicate how the Council and its partners will work to achieve these aims.

3. Strategic Aim: To ensure provision of a range of temporary options in Moray to meet the needs of homeless households

3.1 To achieve this strategic aim, the Council will seek to:-

- Increase the number of temporary accommodation units available in Moray for homeless households
- Ensure that best use of available accommodation is achieved
- Expand the range of temporary accommodation available – particularly for single persons
- Report all instances where homeless households were not accommodated to Committee.

3.2 Currently, temporary accommodation must be provided by the Council for all homeless applicants whilst their homeless application is being assessed. The duty to provide temporary accommodation for applicants in priority need continues until permanent accommodation can be secured. The move towards the abolition of priority need by 2012 means that the number of homeless households for whom temporary accommodation must be provided – and the duration of the temporary accommodation - will increase.

3.3 The Council's work to assess the likely impact of the move towards the abolition of priority need indicated that it was likely that in cumulative terms between 2007/08 and 2011/12 a shortfall of 840 tenancies would be evident across Moray¹. Further work to model the impact of the move towards the abolition of priority need on the requirement for temporary accommodation was also carried out². This indicated that there was a need to substantially increase the provision of temporary accommodation in Moray by approximately 211 units of temporary accommodation over the next seven years. This would require increases of approximately 30 additional units annually.

3.4 In October 2008, the Council recognised that a continuing shortfall remained and agreed to utilise 15 properties from its own stock as temporary accommodation.

3.5 By March 2009, the Council had identified additional 7 houses for temporary accommodation. It is anticipated that the stock of temporary accommodation units will amount to 145 as at March 2009, taking into account a further 5 properties in the pipeline for completion by end of March 2009.

¹ Modelling the Impact of 2012 – Arneil Johnston – September 2007

² Modelling temporary Accommodation requirements – Arneil Johnston – September 2008

Provider	Bedsit	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	Total
Council	5	5	8	2	20
RSL			10	9	19
Private Sector Leasing	35		4	2	41
Council hostels	14	5		2	21
Supported accommodation		30	5	2	37
<i>Anticipated by end March 2009</i>		1	2	4	7
Total	54	41	29	21	145

- 3.6 For 2009/10, further increases will be required. St Andrews Court, Buckie, will provide 13 units of temporary accommodation leased from Langstane Housing Association. Given that the targets for 2008/09 were not fully achieved, it is proposed to take a further 20 units of the Council's own stock for use as temporary accommodation 2009/10.
- 3.7 The Council has had to rely on the provision of bed and breakfast provision to ensure that it meets its statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation to homeless households. The Council has one of the highest levels of breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order 2004, which sought to restrict the use of such accommodation for specific groups of homeless households. In 2007/08, the Council recorded a total of 64 breaches of the Order. As at 28 February 2009, the Council recorded 43 breaches of the Order for the period 2008/09.
- 3.8 The range of accommodation available is also important. While an increased number of temporary accommodation family units are essential to reduce the incidence of breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order, an increasing number of homeless households requiring temporary accommodation are single persons.
- 3.9 The Scottish Housing Regulator³ identified that the Council required a robust reporting mechanism in place for instances where it failed to provide temporary accommodation to homeless households. Since November 2008, this has been reported to Communities Committee.

³ The Moray Council Inspection Report – Scottish Housing Regulator – January 2009

4. Strategic Aim: To ensure that temporary accommodation is of an appropriate quality to meet the needs of homeless households

4.1 To achieve this strategic aim, the Council will seek to:-

- Ensure that temporary accommodation in use meets the Council's standards.
- Work with temporary accommodation providers to ensure that all accommodation meets the agreed standards
- Achieve significant year on year reductions in the number of breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order, working towards 100% compliance of the Order as soon as is possible.
- Reduce the Council's reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation.

4.2 Temporary accommodation should be of an appropriate quality in terms of the standard of accommodation and facilities provided. The Unsuitable Accommodation Order 2004 sets out broad standards which temporary accommodation should meet in terms of –

- Physical standards
- Proximity standards
- Safety standards

The Order prohibits the use of accommodation which does not meet these standards for homeless households where there are children. As stated earlier, the Council has reported significant numbers of breaches of this Order in 2007/08 and 2008/09.

4.3 A draft standard for temporary accommodation is detailed in **APPENDIX II** to this strategy. The Council recognises that there is a balance to be struck between achieving the standards within a reasonable period of time and maintaining the provision of temporary accommodation to those who need it.

4.4 The views of service users should also influence the standard to be adopted by the Council. For this reason, the Council will consult with service users on the draft standards and seek to finalise standards by December 2009.

5. Strategic aim: To ensure effective management of temporary accommodation, reflecting service user views

5.1 To achieve the strategic aim, the Council will seek to:

- Develop robust information to assist with the management of temporary accommodation
- Review existing policies and procedures ensuring that service users are involved.
- Develop approaches to increasing service user involvement in homelessness policy development and service provision.
- Reflect service users' views of temporary accommodation options, standards and management.

5.2 The Council recognises that it can improve its management of temporary accommodation. This was one of the key recommendations detailed in the Scottish Housing Regulator's inspection of the Council's housing services. The Care Commission regularly inspects the Council's hostels service to ensure that the service meets the National Care Standards. Both inspection agencies have highlighted the need for enhancing service user involvement in all aspects of the service from strategy to development to delivery.

5.3 A key to effective management of temporary accommodation is robust information systems. The Council recognises that the management of temporary accommodation is complex and requires improvements in its information systems.

5.4 The Council has procedures which guide the placement of homeless households in temporary accommodation. These were adopted in April 2007 and will be subject to review during 2009/10. It is essential that service user views are reflected in this review.

5.5 Service user involvement in homelessness services can be further developed to ensure that service users are able to comment on and influence policy, procedures, standards etc. The Council recognises that it does not have well developed models of service user involvement in homelessness services and will therefore work with its partners to develop more robust approaches to this.

6. Strategic aim: To ensure that appropriate contact and support is provided to homeless households in temporary accommodation

6.1 To achieve the strategic aim, the Council will seek to:

- Improve contact arrangements with applicants in temporary accommodation.
- Ensure appropriate support is available to homeless households in temporary accommodation and that any gaps in service are identified and addressed.
- Ensure that Temporary Accommodation and Housing Support Services comply with all legislative requirements and code of practice.

6.2 The Council should maintain regular contact with homeless households in temporary accommodation. Due to workload pressures, this has often been limited to confirmation of ongoing temporary accommodation placements. There is an expectation that regular contact should also keep homeless households informed of the progress of their homeless application and any moves to secure alternative temporary or permanent accommodation.

6.3 Some homeless households may require additional support either to sustain temporary accommodation and/or to move to permanent accommodation. Housing support assessments should be carried out for those households who are likely to need such assistance. Where it is identified that more specialist support is required or that there may be gaps in existing provision the Council will develop appropriate protocols and measures to allow homeless households to access these specialised services. (For example: mental health, drug & alcohol services, etc).

6.4 There is a limited supply of temporary accommodation with support services linked directly to the accommodation. The Care Commission carry out inspections of supported accommodation. The Council and its partners work to ensure that this accommodation is provided for those households who require the specific support services.

7. Monitoring and Reviewing the Strategy

- 7.1 The Homelessness Strategy Group will be responsible for the overall monitoring of the Temporary Accommodation Strategy. The Temporary and Permanent Accommodation Sub Group will take forward any specific tasks that may arise from the Temporary Accommodation Strategy.
- 7.2 Progress on the implementation of the Temporary Accommodation Strategy will be reported annually to the Communities Committee.

Temporary Accommodation Strategy Action Plan

Ref No.	What we will do	Key Milestones	Target Dates	Responsible Person	Monitoring & Reporting	Comment
1.	Ensure provision of a range of temporary options in Moray to meet the needs of homeless households					
1.1	<p>Increase number of temporary accommodation units available to the Council, using research from the Homelessness Modelling work.</p> <p>Agree annually the number of Council properties to be used for temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Work in partnership with other housing providers to increase the number of RSL/PSL etc. properties used as temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Carry out annual review of temporary accommodation resources available. Consider rotation of temporary accommodation as part of the review.</p>	<p>Target for 2009/10 – 20 units</p> <p>Review annually</p> <p>Targets agreed with RSLs</p> <p>Review</p>	<p>March 2009</p> <p>May 2010</p> <p>June 2009</p> <p>March 2010</p>	Housing Needs Manager	Homelessness Strategy Group/ Communities Committee	

Ref No.	What we will do	Key Milestones	Target Dates	Responsible Person	Monitoring & Reporting	Comment
1.2	<p>Ensure that best use of available accommodation is achieved.</p> <p>a. Develop comprehensive information on all temporary accommodation provision across Moray detailing size, type, location & supports available at each location.</p> <p>b. Improve the placement arrangements for homeless households in temporary accommodation.</p> <p>c. Complete risk assessments for all existing provision to ensure that all risks are appropriately identified and steps taken to remove, reduce or to improve the management of these risks.</p>	<p>Information to be available to key staff</p> <p>Single process for placements across all Providers.</p> <p>Risk assessment tool developed</p> <p>Risk Assessments in place for all provision</p>	<p>September 2009</p> <p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p> <p>April 2010</p>	Supported Accommodation Manager	Homelessness Strategy Group/ Communities Committee	
1.3	<p>Expand the range of temporary accommodation available – particularly for single people</p> <p>Review homeless approaches for 2008/09.</p> <p>Investigate further options to expand range of temporary accommodation</p>	<p>Homeless Report 2008/09</p> <p>Options identified</p>	<p>August 2009</p> <p>March 2010</p>	Housing Needs Manager	Homelessness Strategy Group/ Communities Committee	
1.4	<p>Ensure that instances of non accommodation are identified to Senior Officers and reported to Communities Committee</p>	<p>Procedures agreed</p> <p>Incidences reported</p>	<p>March 2009</p> <p>In place November 2008</p>	Housing Needs Manager	Homelessness Strategy Group/ Communities Committee	

Ref No.	What we will do	Key Milestones	Target Dates	Responsible Person	Monitoring & Reporting	Comment
2.	Ensure that temporary accommodation is of an appropriate quality to meet the needs of homelessness households					
2.1	<p>Ensure that all temporary accommodation in use meets the Council's standards</p> <p>a. Consult with service users on the draft standards and ensure that their views are fully considered and reflected in the finalised standard.</p> <p>b. Finalise temporary accommodation standards</p>	<p>Consultation with service users on draft standards</p> <p>Committee agreement to standards</p>	<p>September 2009</p> <p>December 2009</p>	Homeless Strategy & Development Manager	Homelessness Strategy Group/ Communities Committee	
2.2	<p>Work with temporary accommodation providers to ensure that all accommodation meets the agreed standards</p> <p>Agree & consult on Temporary Accommodation standards</p> <p>Audit current provision</p> <p>Identify areas of improvement with all Providers and agree improvement timescales</p> <p>Set target to reduce the use of units that fail the standard.</p>	<p>Standards Agreed</p> <p>Inspections completed</p> <p>Improvements agreed</p> <p>Set Target</p>	<p>December 2009</p> <p>August 2009</p> <p>January 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p>	Supported Accommodation Manager	Homelessness Strategy Group/ Communities Committee	

Ref No.	What we will do	Key Milestones	Target Dates	Responsible Person	Monitoring & Reporting	Comment
2.3	<p>Achieve significant year on year reductions in the number of breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order working towards 100% compliance of the Order.</p> <p>Identify all breaches 2008/09 and set target to reduce breaches</p> <p>Monitor and report use of Breaches to Committee quarterly</p>	<p>Target for 2009/10 = 20% reduction in breaches</p> <p>Quarterly Performance Report to Committee</p>	<p>March 2009</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Housing Needs Manager	Homelessness Strategy Group/ Communities Committee	
2.4	<p>Reduce the Council's reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation</p> <p>Investigate alternative options to B & B linked to 1.1 & 1.3</p> <p>Monitor and report use of bed and breakfast accommodation to Committee</p>	<p>Review report</p> <p>Monitoring reports</p>	<p>March 2010</p> <p>Quarterly</p>	Housing Needs Manager	Homelessness Strategy Group/ Communities Committee	

Ref No.	What we will do	Key Milestones	Target Dates	Responsible Person	Monitoring & Reporting	Comment
3.	To ensure effective management of temporary accommodation, reflecting service users views					
3.1	<p>Develop robust information to assist with the management of temporary accommodation</p> <p>Decide what key information needs to be available, in what format and the best options to gather this.</p> <p>Reflect improved management information in monitoring reports</p>	<p>Key performance data identified</p> <p>ICT options reviewed</p> <p>Improved data gathering process</p> <p>Monitoring reports</p>	<p>June 2009</p> <p>August 2009</p> <p>October 2009</p> <p>Quarterly</p>	Strategy & Development Manager/ Supported Accommodation Manager	Homelessness Strategy Group/ Communities Committee	

Ref No.	What we will do	Key Milestones	Target Dates	Responsible Person	Monitoring & Reporting	Comment
3.2	<p>Review existing policies, procedures and standards ensuring that service users are involved.</p> <p>Detailed project plan for policy/procedural review</p> <p>Revised procedures</p> <p>Develop review/appeals process on temporary accommodation decisions for service users</p>	<p>Plan developed</p> <p>Draft procedures for consultation</p> <p>Final procedures</p> <p>Draft for consultation</p> <p>New Process in place</p>	<p>May 2009</p> <p>March 2010</p> <p>September 2010</p> <p>September 2009</p> <p>March 2010</p>	Strategy & Development Manager	Homelessness Strategy Group/ Communities Committee	
3.3	<p>Develop approaches to service user involvement in all homeless service provision</p> <p>Review best practice</p> <p>Develop and implement service user consultation framework</p>	<p>Review & consultation with service users completed</p> <p>Framework implemented</p>	<p>December 2009</p> <p>April 2010</p>	Strategy & Development Manager/ Supported Accommodation Manager	Homelessness Strategy Group/ Communities Committee	

Ref No.	What we will do	Key Milestones	Target Dates	Responsible Person	Monitoring & Reporting	Comment
4.	To ensure that appropriate contact and support is provided to homeless households in temporary accommodation.					
4.1	<p>Improve contact arrangements with applicants in temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Develop appropriate contact & monitoring arrangements</p>	Methods & monitoring arrangements in place	March 2010	Strategy & Development Manager	Homelessness Strategy Group/ Communities Committee	
4.2	<p>Ensure appropriate support is available to homeless households in temporary accommodation</p> <p>Assessment of support is available when need is identified and appropriate partners engaged.</p> <p>Decide key performance data recording relating to support services.</p> <p>Enhance monitoring of support provision to ensure needs are being fully met.</p> <p>Identify gaps in support provision and take appropriate action to address this with:</p> <p>Council's Housing Support Service Partner agencies Specialised – Social Work, NHS, etc.</p>	<p>Improve access arrangements</p> <p>Key performance in place</p> <p>Monitoring arrangements in place</p> <p>Gaps identified & protocols/SLA's in place</p>	<p>August 2009</p> <p>August 2009</p> <p>March 2010</p> <p>March 2010</p>	Housing Support Manager	Homelessness Strategy Group/ Communities Committee	

Ref No.	What we will do	Key Milestones	Target Dates	Responsible Person	Monitoring & Reporting	Comment
4.3	<p>Ensure that the Temporary Accommodation and Housing Support Services complies with all legislative requirements & code of practice.</p> <p>Monitoring of Inspection Reports and where appropriate improvement plans developed</p> <p>Training of staff to ensure compliance.</p> <p>Develop pro-active approach to identify and respond to legislative changes that may impact on temporary accommodation</p>	<p>Action Plans Implemented</p> <p>Qualified staff</p> <p>Named Officer responsible</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 2009</p>	<p>Housing Support Manager/ Supported Accommodation Manager/ Homeless Strategy & Development Manager</p>	<p>Homelessness Strategy Group/ Communities Committee</p>	

Draft Standards - Temporary Accommodation

MINIMUM STANDARDS

Health & Safety

- A valid Fire Safety Certificate
- An HMO Licence, if appropriate
- A current gas and electric safety certificate
- Carbon monoxide detectors, where appropriate
- Where accommodation has gas central heating, appropriate ventilation and flues are in place
- A valid Energy Performance Certificate, if required.
- Hard wired smoke alarms on each floor of the property
- No glass or mirrored doors within accommodation
- Free from damp, mould growth and infestation.
- it is secure with adequate individual locks
- If the water supply has been drained down at the end of a previous tenancy or prior to the commencement of your tenancy, a test for Legionella will be completed.

The Council will also ensure that:

- the accommodation is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- there is sufficient bedroom spaces offered to meet the needs of the homeless household
- A room should not be occupied by more than 5 persons unless the individuals concerned consent to sharing.

In addition to the above, the following specific standards will apply –

Hostels, Dispersed Properties and Private Sector Leasing

- A written occupancy agreement which is explained and made available in an appropriate format
- A copy of any House Rules
- Access to the Temporary Accommodation Handbook

Private Sector Leasing

Where the Council uses properties from the private sector as temporary accommodation it will ensure that the landlord has:

- Registered with the Landlord Registration Scheme
- Valid buildings Insurance
- Permission from the mortgage lender to allow the property to be let to homeless households

Improving Standards

The Council will continue to develop the temporary accommodation standards annually. Further improvements to the standard will however be dependent on increasing the supply and range of temporary accommodation and also working with all providers to improve existing provision. The Council will work towards the following desirable standards by 2012:

- That all temporary accommodation is located within walking distance of all main services or is on an accessible public transportation route
- Individual bathroom and kitchen facilities are made available to all homeless households.
- There is access to adequate laundry facilities at each location