

REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 13 APRIL 2010

SUBJECT: TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION TARGET FOR 2010/11

BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents information on the progress in increasing the number of temporary accommodation units for homeless households. It also seeks agreement on targets to increase the number of temporary accommodation units for 2010/11.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Committee in terms of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to homelessness.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee:-

- (i) notes the progress in increasing the number of temporary accommodation units during 2009/10;**
- (ii) notes that the Council did not achieve its target of zero breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order in 2009/10; and**
- (iii) agrees the targets detailed in paragraph 7 for 2010/11.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 24 March 2009, the Communities Committee agreed a Temporary Accommodation Strategy for the provision of temporary accommodation to homeless households. (Paragraph 6 of the Minute refers). The report to Committee identified the existing pressures faced within the homeless service and set targets to increase the provision of temporary accommodation. It also agreed that it would seek to reduce the number of breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order 2004 to zero.
- 3.2 A target of 49 additional properties was agreed for 2009/10, with 20 coming from the Council's own stock, and 29 other units to be sourced from Registered Social Landlords and/or the Private Rented Sector.

4. **PROGRESS DURING 2009/10**

- 4.1 The Council continues to increase the number of temporary accommodation units that it has available for homeless households. By the end of March 2010, the Council had 189 units of temporary accommodation. This compared with 138 at the end of March 2009 – an increase of 51.
- 4.2 In April 2009, the Defence Housing Executive (DHE) provided 4 properties on a long term lease to help the Council meet the demand for family size temporary accommodation. Following the flood in September 2009, a further 12 properties were leased from the DHE. Although these were originally for a 6 month period, the lease now continues on a month to month basis.
- 4.3 In view of these additional properties – the requirement for 20 Council properties was adjusted for 2009/10. Current provision is as follows:

Landlord	31 March 2009	31 March 2010
Council	41	54
RSLs	26	34
Private Rented Sector	40	46
Defence Housing Executive (DHE)	0	16
Supported Accommodation*	31	39
Total	138	189

* Moray Women's Aid, Turning Point, Moray Youth Action

- 4.4 The profile of temporary accommodation at 31 March 2010 shows:

Landlord	Bedsit	1	2	3	Total
Council	15	18	16	5	54
RSLs	-	8	15	11	34
Private Rented Sector	35	2	8	1	46
DHE	-	-	-	16	16
Supported	22	10	5	2	39
Total	72	38	44	35	189

- 4.5 The target of no breaches in the Unsuitable Accommodation Order for 2009/10 was not achieved. However the Council did make significant progress in reducing the number of breaches in comparison to the previous year. A total of 62 breaches were recorded in 2008/09 compared with the current figure of 46 for 2009/10 – a reduction of 26%. The overall increase in family size accommodation now available to the Council has led to a significant reduction in the number of new breaches since May 2009.

5. CURRENT ISSUES WITHIN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

- 5.1 A report to Audit and Performance Review Committee on 3 March 2010 provided a comprehensive background on the issues faced by the Council in providing temporary accommodation to homeless people (paragraph 7 of the Minute refers). The report identified that there were significant pressures within the homelessness budget and that the main reason for this was the Council's reliance on its use of bed and breakfast accommodation.
- 5.2 During 2009/10, the Council increased the number of temporary accommodation units that it had available for homeless families. This has resulted in the number of new breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order (which seeks to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families to no more than 14 days) now being reduced to single figures each month.
- 5.3 Further analysis on the use of bed and breakfast from April to December 2009 indicated that the Council required 421 nights of accommodation per week to meet existing demand. The majority of people who are placed in bed and breakfast accommodation are single. To enable the Council to reduce its use of bed and breakfast it is estimated that an additional 60 units of temporary accommodation (mainly single persons) would be required. Finding this type of accommodation must be viewed as the main priority for the Council in 2010/11.
- 5.4 A feasibility study has now commenced to consider whether Bishopmill House could be adapted for use as longer term temporary accommodation for primarily single people. Initial indications are that the property could provide up to a maximum of 22 self contained units and this would have a significant impact on reducing the level of bed and breakfast that the Council currently requires. The outcome of this study will be reported to Committee in due course.

6. PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS

- 6.1 The Council intends to develop a more effective and robust approach towards the prevention of homelessness in 2010/11. It is clear that if the Council is able to reduce the level of homelessness in Moray then this will not only benefit those at risk of homelessness, but also reduce the pressures currently being faced by the Council in terms of discharging its statutory duties towards Homeless people.
- 6.2 On 11 March 2010, Officers visited North Ayrshire Council to investigate some of their good practice in preventing homelessness. These are currently being examined in the context of adapting some of these measures for Moray. A further report will be presented to Committee in June 2010.
- 6.3 As highlighted in the report to this Committee on the Homelessness Strategy 2010 - 2015, the Scottish Government is keen for local authorities to use the

private rented sector more effectively to discharge their homelessness duties. The introduction of new legislation (Section 32A of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987) on 25 February 2010 gives some homeless households the choice of whether they can access private rented accommodation in order to meet their immediate housing need. Providing that certain measures are in place and that homeless households agree to the use of this accommodation – a Council can discharge its statutory duty towards that homeless household without the further need to provide alternative accommodation. Officers are currently investigating how this could be effective in Moray.

7. TARGETS FOR 2010/11

- 7.1 Based on the Homeless Modelling Exercise carried out in 2007 and further analysis of the number of homeless presentations, the number of additional units required was estimated at 49 for 2009/10 and 20 units for 2010/11.
- 7.2 In 2009/10, the Council increased provision by 51 units and family sized accommodation is now at a reasonable level to cope with current demand.
- 7.3 At the time of this report the Council had 64 households in bed and breakfast accommodation. Of these 55 were single, 7 were couples, 1 was a single parent and 1 a household of two brothers.
- 7.4 The main priority and continuing pressure within homelessness remains the need for single person accommodation. It is therefore proposed that a target of 18 additional units be secured during 2010/11 and that these should all be suitable for use by single people. The additional units will come from the Council (10) and the RSL's and private sector (8).
- 7.5 Further modelling work will be completed in October 2010 and this may influence whether future targets need to be adjusted.
- 7.6 The target for new breaches in the Unsuitable Accommodation Order will remain at zero for 2010/11.

8. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan

Tackling homelessness is a key action identified in the Single Outcome Agreement under Outcome 10. It is also identified as a priority in the Service Improvement Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

There are no direct financial implications or additional staffing resources arising from this report.

(d) Consultations

Consultations have taken place with the Director of Community Services, the Chief Housing Officer, Housing Needs Manager, Supported Accommodation Manager, Housing Programmes Manager, Housing Strategy and Policy Manager, Senior Area Housing Manager and the Principal Accountant were consulted on this report and agree the content of this report.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 This report notes the progress in increasing the number of temporary accommodation units and the reduction in the number of breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order in 2009/2010 and agrees the targets for 2010/11.**

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Background Papers: held on file by the author
Ref: JS/Temp Acc