

## **HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

**11 MARCH 2019**

### **TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION – PROJECT UPDATE**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To update Members on work being progressed to ensure the Council has appropriate temporary accommodation (TA) available to discharge its statutory homeless duties, to meet current and anticipated future demand and determine the long term use of a strategic site, which is allocated for residential development and includes the Seven Hills homeless hostel.

#### **2.0 Background Information**

2.1 Local housing authorities in England have a duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households in priority need under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (amended by the Homelessness Act 2002). A number of households are also placed in TA under an 'interim duty' pending completion of inquiries into a statutory homeless application and remain in TA until suitable secure accommodation becomes available.

2.2 Homeless figures continue to rise nationally and locally. On 3 April 2018 the assessment of statutory homeless changed with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Between 3 April and 30 June 2018 58,660 households were owed this new statutory duty. Of these 33,330 households were owed a new prevention duty, 25,330 households were owed a new relief duty and local authorities accepted 6,670 households as being owed a main homelessness duty. On 30 June 2018 the number of households in temporary accommodation nationally was 82,310, up 5% from 78,540 on the same period in 2017, and up 71% on the low of 48,010 in December 2010.

2.3 In Newark and Sherwood 97 households were placed in council owned TA during 2017/18, which is an increase on the 94 households in 2016/17; yet not quite at the 102 households accommodated during in 2014/15. **Appendix A** provides further information regarding homeless levels in Newark and Sherwood for the past four years and changes regarding household size.

2.4 Despite the continued increase use of B&B usage nationally, NSDC has not found it necessary to place any households in B&B for a number of years due to its proactive preventative approach and having TA available in the District to discharge its statutory obligations. However, Members will be aware from a previous report on the local impact of the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018 that three placements in B&B have been required so far in 2018/2019 and our TA usage is up an average of 21% over the first three quarters.

2.5 The Councils TA offer was commended as good practice in the National Practitioner Support Service Gold Standard Challenge Peer Review of the Housing Options Service. The Council was awarded bronze status as a result of the peer review and subsequent application to a local challenge regarding its corporate commitment to homelessness prevention in June 2017.

### **3.0 Current Provision**

- 3.1 NSDC has two council owned purpose built TA complexes in its ownership at Seven Hills in Newark (currently 16 units) and Wellow Green in Ollerton (10 units) which are both managed by the Council. Repairs, maintenance, rent collection and asset management are delegated functions, carried out by Newark and Sherwood Homes on the Council's behalf under the terms of its Management Agreement.
- 3.2 In addition to this, the Council has access to two further one bedroom flats at Pelham Mews in Newark which are owned and managed by Framework Housing Association. The Council has rights to nominate occupiers to these flats in accordance with the Statement of Joint Working, which accompanies the deed.

#### Seven Hills

- 3.3 Seven Hills was constructed in 1991 and originally comprised of 29 units of accommodation. However, units 17-28 were decommissioned in 2004 due to successful homelessness prevention. These decommissioned units have not received the same improvement works that units 1-16 have (detailed below) and are currently uninhabitable.
- 3.4 In 2010/2011, Seven Hills benefitted from capital improvements works of £112,443 which included installing gas to the site and subsequently providing each of the 16 bedsit units with a self-controlled gas central heating and hot water system, new fire resistant front door and internal doors, replacement double glazed windows and new kitchens and bathrooms. This work brought the units back in line with the Health and Safety Hazard Rating Standard although not up to the standard of Decent Homes (as this standard is not required to be met for TA provision).
- 3.5 Again, in 2016/17 additional capital investment of £68,629 was used to install new kitchens and bathrooms and a decoration of rooms throughout.
- 3.6 However, the provision at Seven Hills is not considered fit for purpose for the future. The majority of homeless households contain dependent children and there are an increasing number of households with an additional adult family member such as grandparent carers, older dependent children or older siblings over the aged of 18. These households types immediately overcrowd the single bedsit style units and for some households can create safeguarding concerns were family members are sharing sleeping space without any privacy. There is also a lack of adequate storage facilities in each of the properties.

#### Wellow Green

- 3.8 Built in the late eighties, Wellow Green is made up of 10 units of 2 bedroom semi-detached bungalow style accommodation. Wellow Green is an off gas site, with the gas mains over 300 meters away.
- 3.9 Capital investment of £92,327 was agreed in 2014/15 to rewire as necessary to meet existing safety standards and support the installation of an electrical heating system with controllable heating in all rooms; installation of mechanical extract fan above the cooker area; a humidistat ventilation fan in the bathrooms; increased thickness of insulation within the roof space to 285mm; replace existing single glazed window with appropriate Euro Cell double glazed unit and replace internal fire safety doors. This work, as with the works at Seven Hills was to ensure the accommodation was in line with the requirements of the HHSRS.

- 3.10 However, following concerns raised by residents that they are paying too much for their electricity since the capital works were undertaken a review was undertaken in 2015/16 to consider what tenants were paying for fuel and if affordable warmth was achievable.
- 3.11 The review found that the anticipated daily cost of heating each unit (based on an 8 hour heating regime using the current electric system) and providing one daily tank full of hot water is approximately £7.80per day - this equates to £54.67 per week. Residents are generally on very low incomes (most are in receipt of benefits) and the transition to TA comes at a very vulnerable time in their lives. In order to support residents with these high fuel costs during the winter months a winter fuel allowance is provided to tenants to enable them to achieve adequate comfort levels within their accommodation and prevent detrimental effects on their long-term health and wellbeing.

#### **4.0 Options for consideration**

##### Re-configuration

- 4.1 Various options have been considered over recent years to ensure the Council has suitable TA available to meet demand.
- 4.2 Back in 2007 Cabinet approved a recommendation to demolish the hostel at Seven Hills and redevelop the site. However, financial restrictions meant this was not pursued.
- 4.3 A previous options appraisals reported to the Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT) concluded in retaining current provision, ensuring it remained fit for purpose through capital investment.
- 4.4 With this in mind, Newark and Sherwood Homes were asked to produce a business case to reconfigure the provision at Seven Hills to meet current and anticipated need – see **Appendix B**.
- 4.5 This proposes that the Council invest in its TA assets and carry out remodelling works to provide 11 x bedsits (including the on call unit) and 9 x larger 2 roomed units (one of which to be fully DDA compliant) at Seven Hills; consider a change the use of the ex-wardens house and install small measures to address some of the energy efficiency issues at Wellow Green.
- 4.6 This proposal would require additional capital investment of **£328,728.39** which has a positive pay- back period compared to other similar property re-configuration on general needs housing contained within the HRA. In considering this proposal, CMT recommended that redevelopment opportunities should be re-visited.

##### Redevelopment

- 4.7 The Seven Hills hostel and land surrounding it (in the Council's and Severn Trents ownership) is also an allocated site in the Council's 'Allocations & Development Management Development Plan Document' for residential development providing around 86 dwellings - Policy NUA/Ho/2 Newark Urban Area - Housing Site 2.

4.8 In addition to this, there are linkages/opportunities presented through the work being undertaken on the Bridge Ward Estate Regeneration programme by the consultant Campbell Tickell.

4.9 Given that the current provision at Seven Hills is considered asset and land hungry soundings were sought from both Members and CMT in July 2018 which confirmed there was an appetite to make best use of strategic site at Quibell's Lane and consider re-providing new fit for purpose temporary accommodation. There was also an interest in exploring Modern Methods of Construction for the whole site and agreement that affordable warmth options for Wellow Green should be investigated.

## **5.0 Project Update**

5.1 Since July 2018 the Business Manager – Housing, Health & Community Relations developed a project initiation document (PID), assembled and led a project team that has:

- Held positive conversations with Homes England with regards potential funding options
- Held positive conversations with MHLG regarding Move On Fund opportunities
- Explored opportunities regarding the OPE transformation/housing programme – Phase 7 bid
- Carried out various financial modelling work
- Undertaken/commissioned various site assessments/ survey work / valuations – which informed the Councils decision not to progress negotiations to purchase the adjacent Seven Trent land, which changed the scope of the project (an exempt report on this was approved by Policy and Finance Committee on 24 January 2019).
- Sought informal planning advice
- Open a dialog with Modern Methods of Construction companies
- Submitted a bid to the LGA Housing Advisor Fund which was successful, securing 20 days consultancy support from Neil Moorland Consultants Ltd – initial scoping meeting has been held and a project plan is currently being developed to ensure best use is made of this resource.
- Commissioned HTA to undertake a feasibility study / design for a new hostel to be re-provided on site and to incorporate a potential residential scheme that contains additional affordable housing – completion date is early March.
- Commissioned Notts City Councils Energy Advice Team to undertake feasibility study to improve the energy efficiency of Wellow Green, considering the use of renewable technology (overseen by the Council's Asset Management team) – completion date to be agreed.
- Visit to a newly purpose built family homeless accommodation at Cherry Tree View, Newcastle (11 March 2019).

5.2 It is proposed that a further report be presented to Homes & Communities Committee in June 2019 to present the findings from the feasibility study for Members comments, which will inform the next steps for this project.

## **6.0 Equalities Implications**

6.1 Equalities implications will be considered and incorporated into the project plan.

## **7.0 Financial Implications FIN18-19/7334**

7.1 The table below provides general fund income and expenditure for 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 for managing two hostels in the Council's ownership, which has become self-financing in revenue terms with the introduction of service charges and increased occupancy levels

	Code	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Housing Rents Gross	93301	-46,769.05	-60,214.52	-49,019
Service Charges	93316	-25,354.88	-24,583.68	0
Recharge Third Party	49363	35,628.85	46,056.94	54,787.49

7.2 The funds for a new temporary accommodation hostel have been incorporated into the Councils' Capital Programme, with £1m funding in 2019/20 and a further £2m in 2020/21. This funding was recommended for approval by P & F Committee, and should be approved by Full Council on 7 March 2019.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

**That Members consider the contents of this report and afford support for the project team to continue its work to ensure the Council has appropriate temporary accommodation provision, which includes appraising opportunities for re-development on the Seven Hills site with a purpose built temporary accommodation facility and feasibility work to consider possible capital investment at Wellow Green.**

### **Reason for Recommendation**

**To ensure this project progresses with Member support to enable the Council to provide appropriate temporary accommodation to discharge its statutory homeless duties.**

### **Background Papers**

Nil

For further information please contact Leanne Monger, Business Manager – Housing, Health & Community Relations on Ext 5545

Karen White  
Director – Governance & Organisational Development

**Homelessness Levels in Newark & Sherwood**

The table below shows detail on statutory applications, assessments, acceptances and the use of temporary accommodation over the last three years.

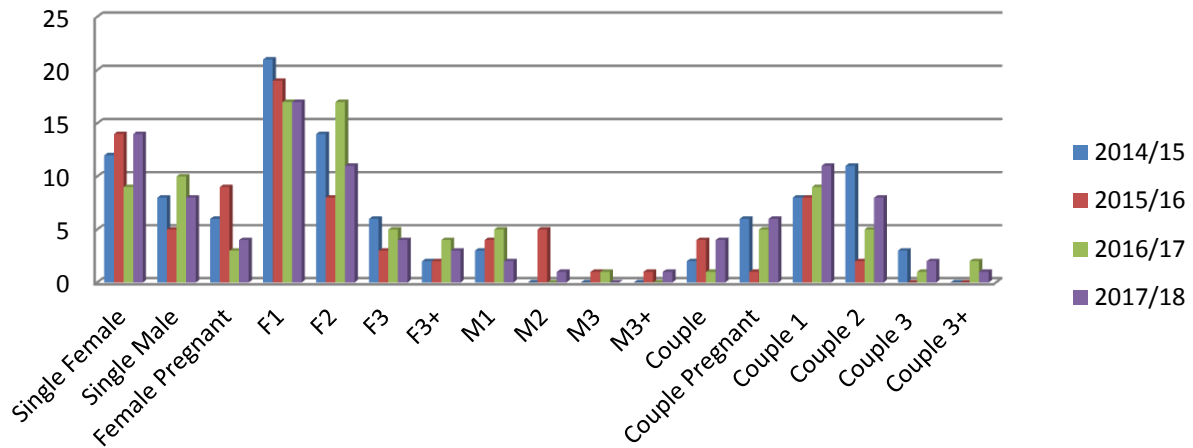
	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Approaches	1000	831	791	925
Contacts Triaged by Customer Services	755	856	978	1286
Homeless preventions	114 (Average 28 per quarter)	189 (Average 47 per quarter)	184 (Average 46 per quarter)	88 (Average 22 per quarter)
Statutory homeless applications	139 (Average 35 per quarter)	129 (Average 32 per quarter)	127 (Average 32 per quarter)	125 (Average of 31.25 per quarter)
Household accepted as being owed a main housing duty	121 (Average 30 per quarter)	94 (Average 23 per quarter)	97 (Average 24 per quarter)	89 (Average of 22.25 per quarter)
Households in temporary accommodation	102 (Average 25 per quarter)	86 (Average 21 per quarter)	94 (Average 24 per quarter)	97 (Average 24.25 per quarter)
Length of stay (average)	10.67 weeks	11.20 weeks	11.53 weeks	9.59 weeks

**Changes in Household Make-up**

Whilst the number of households in temporary accommodation has remained fairly consistent over the last three years, we have seen a significant increase in the complexity of cases, increases to the length of stay due to suitable accommodation not being available or higher support needs being prevalent (these increases become concealed in the average calculation) and an increase in household size and make-up.

The main household type is a single parent (generally female) with one child, which has remained consistent for the last three years. However, single parent families (both male and female) with two or more children have risen significantly (see chart below) suggesting that single units of accommodation are no longer appropriate and that larger units of temporary accommodation are now required.

## Household make-up in Temporary Accommodation



There have been further changes in household make-up, more significantly in 2016/17 than in previous years, that is not obvious from the usual figures recorded. Of the 94 households accommodated in 2016/17 there were 8 which contained dependent children with additional adult members such as grandparent carers, older dependent children or older siblings over the aged of 18. This has remained a feature in 2017/18 with 9 of the 97 households placed in temporary accommodation having a similar household make-up. Over the same four year period there has also remained a steady number of applications from single person households.

These households types immediately overcrowd single units whether at Wellow Green or Seven Hills and for some households can create safeguarding concerns were family members are sharing sleeping space without any privacy. To address this, we have on occasion offered two units of accommodation. However, this is not always possible either because of limited availability or leaving children unsupervised in accommodation separate from their parents/carers.

**APPENDIX B – Proposed remodelled units 11-20**



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PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT	
1:250	4453
DATE	PROPOSED
25 AUG 11	

