

Report

Report to:	Housing and Technical Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	17 June 2020
Report by:	Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

Subject:	Proposed Lease of Student Residencies at Barrack Street, Hamilton from the University of the West of Scotland
----------	--

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:

- ♦ advise on action taken, in terms of Standing Order No 36(c) in view of the timescales involved, by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Chair and an ex officio member, due to the pressure on the Homeless Service arising from the current Covid 19 Emergency, to enter into an agreement with the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) for the use of accommodation within the student residencies at Barrack Street, Hamilton

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the action taken, in terms of Standing Order No 36(c) by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Chair and an ex officio member, to enter into lease arrangements with the University of the West of Scotland for 50 units of student accommodation at Barrack Street, Hamilton on the main terms and conditions outlined in Section 4 be noted;
- (2) that, if necessary due to further increases in demand, arrangements can be entered into for additional units; and
- (3) that the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in consultation with the Head of Administration and Legal Services, if appropriate, be authorised to conclude all matters in respect of the grant of lease and to enter into the necessary legal agreements on terms which are in the best interests of the Council.

3. Background

3.1. As the wider impacts of Covid 19 take effect, the Council still has a statutory duty to provide suitable temporary accommodation to homeless households. During the period that national government and Public Health restrictions have been in place demand for temporary accommodation from homeless households has continued. With the restrictions that have been introduced, including social distancing and the closure of non-essential businesses there has been a decline in the availability of suitable accommodation which has made meeting this demand a challenge.

3.2. Action has been taken to support the provision of accommodation:-

- ◆ progressing remedial work to empty Council properties
- ◆ leasing additional temporary stock from Housing Associations and the private sector
- ◆ utilising hotel accommodation

3.3. In order to meet the continued demand and pressure for temporary accommodation, it is proposed that the Council's portfolio of temporary and Emergency First Stop accommodation is enhanced further. To take this forward the Council has engaged with the University of the West of Scotland, who currently has student residencies at Barrack Street, Hamilton consisting of 147 units. It is anticipated that the residencies, which are due to be replaced by a new facility at Caird Street as of September 2020, will be available from mid May 2020.

3.4. The discussions to date have concluded with an agreement in principle for the Council to take over 50 of the units for use by the Homelessness Service. UWS will continue to be responsible for the maintenance and management for the whole property.

3.5. The Salvation Army, a specialist support provider, will be commissioned to deliver the management and housing support services required for the units occupied by the council, providing a staff presence 24 hours per day. A bid of £100,000 has been submitted by The Salvation Army to the Scottish Government's 3rd sector fund for this purpose with additional sources of funding currently being sourced.

4. Proposal

4.1. It is proposed that the terms and conditions of the agreement will be as follows:-

- ◆ the Council will lease 50 units of accommodation
- ◆ the rental will be £85 per week per unit, which is inclusive of utilities and building maintenance
- ◆ the arrangement will run for a period of 6 months with the facility to extend for a further period if necessary
- ◆ UWS will be responsible for all building maintenance, repairs and legislative compliance
- ◆ the Council will commission a management company to run the day to day operations for the Homeless Service

5. Employee Implications

5.1. There are no employee implications arising from this proposal.

6. Financial Implications

6.1. There will be additional costs to the Council in delivering increased 1st stop homeless accommodation, however it is anticipated these will be offset through collection of rent, UK and Scottish Government funding assistance to 3rd sector organisations.

6.2. The proposed net cost of the accommodation is significantly lower than alternative options in the private sector.

7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

7.1. There are no climate change, sustainability or environmental implications arising from this proposal.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. Failure to provide suitable temporary accommodation would result in a statutory breach and a failure to meet priorities set out in the Council's Local Housing Strategy.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. Consultation has been undertaken with a range of partners including Planning and NHS Lanarkshire.
- 9.2. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.

Daniel Lowe

Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

18 May 2020

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Improve the quality, access and availability of housing
- ◆ Improve the lives of vulnerable children, young people and adults
- ◆ Tackle disadvantage and deprivation

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Joanne Forbes, Property Services Manager (Asset and Estates)

Ext: 5139 (Tel: 01698 455139 or 07795 090569)

E-mail: joanne.forbes@southlanarkshire.gov.uk