

Report

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Report to:	Housing and Technical Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	16 September 2009
Report by:	Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

Subject:	Update on Homelessness in South Lanarkshire
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide an update on homelessness in South Lanarkshire and the likely implications of the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003
- ◆ request approval to conclude an agreement with the Salvation Army to set up a First Stop accommodation facility at Eva Burrow House in Cambuslang
- ◆ request approval for specified developments within the homelessness service

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the content of this report be noted.
- (2) that the Council lease further units of temporary accommodation from the Registered Social Landlord sector to allow us to meet our accommodation duties to homeless households.
- (3) that the Executive Director (Enterprise Resources), in consultation with the Head of Legal Services where appropriate, be authorised to conclude all matters and enter into the necessary lease agreements.
- (4) that the Council conclude an agreement with the Salvation Army to set up a First Stop accommodation facility at Eva Burrow House in Cambuslang.

3. Background

- 3.1. A report to this Committee in August 2005 set out the implications of the 2003 Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act for South Lanarkshire Council.
- 3.2. In particular, the report explained the proposed changes in the way in which homelessness applications are assessed and projected that in order to meet new duties under the legislation, the Council will need to allocate 80% of available lets to homeless households by the year 2012.
- 3.3. The number of homelessness applications to South Lanarkshire Council in 2008/09 was 3,035. This represents an increase of 26% in the number of applications since 2006/07.
- 3.4. 82% of those households found to be homeless or potentially homeless in 2008/09 were assessed as having priority need, meeting the target set for South Lanarkshire by the Scottish Government. We had a duty to house 1,887 households in 2008/09 and in fact housed 1,047 through Council stock, representing 49.5% of available lets.

- 3.5. In order to meet our duties to rehouse homeless households, we have set a target in our local lettings plans for 2009/10 that 55% of lets will go to households in urgent housing need, most of whom will be unintentionally homeless applicants with priority need. The other applicants housed in this category will be those with urgent medical need.
- 3.6. The increase in applications and increase in priority need decisions also means an increase in the demand for temporary accommodation. We have developed a strategic action plan for acquiring further units of temporary accommodation. It is clear that we are not able to meet the need from Council stock alone and are, therefore, looking to increase supply of temporary accommodation units from other sources.
- 3.7. The Minister for Housing and Communities is due to make a statement during 2009 setting out the next steps that local authorities will be required to take in order to meet the 2012 target.
- 3.8. We remain concerned in South Lanarkshire that if the legislative proposals in the 2003 Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act are implemented as they stand, we will be unable to meet our statutory duty to rehouse homeless households by 2012 without seriously disadvantaging other applicants.
- 3.9. In addition to fulfilling our statutory duties, the homelessness service will be subject to scrutiny by the Scottish Housing Regulator who is scheduled to inspect housing services in South Lanarkshire later this year.

4. Reconfiguration of Homelessness Services

- 4.1. The development of homelessness services in South Lanarkshire is underpinned by the Homelessness Strategy for 2006-12. Ongoing work to improve service delivery has been aimed at providing a more effective service in a range of key areas, in order to:-
- ensure better outcomes for people affected by homelessness
 - increase our capacity to meet our duties under the 2003 Homelessness Act
 - manage our housing stock for the benefit of all South Lanarkshire residents
- 4.2. As part of our improvement work, we have reconfigured our homelessness service in South Lanarkshire during 2009. The plan for reconfiguring services was approved by this Committee on 4 June 2008.
- 4.3. The key elements of service provision to homeless households that we have considered as part of the reconfigured service are:-
- assessment of applications
 - provision of temporary accommodation
 - provision of advice, information and support to prevent homelessness
 - assessment of support needs and provision of support to promote successful resettlement
 - advice and assistance to help people where the Council does not have a duty to rehouse
 - provision of secure accommodation when the Council does have a duty to rehouse

- 4.4. The reconfiguration of the homelessness service is almost complete, although we still require to finalise some procedures, establish complete systems for performance reporting and management and to revise the Council's Homelessness Policy which underpins our approach to service provision. The revised Homelessness Policy will be presented to this Committee in November 2009.
- 4.5. The reconfigured homelessness service incorporates significant improvements in both the delivery and management of the service.

5. Working with Partner Services

- 5.1. As well as reconfiguring our own service to homeless households, we have continued to work with partner services in the voluntary sector to ensure that they fulfil their role in preventing and alleviating homelessness in South Lanarkshire.
- 5.2. Some of the developments that we have progressed include:-
- the reprovisioning of the old Blairtum Park House in Rutherglen to offer a new supported accommodation project for young homeless people in Blantyre, managed by YMCA Glasgow. This has been a highly successful project and local residents confirm that the project has no negative impact on their local community
 - the reprovisioning of the old Greenside House hostel in Lanark to provide first stop accommodation and floating support to people affected by homelessness in the Clydesdale area, managed by Blue Triangle Housing Association. The relationship of the project with the local area has improved immeasurably
 - entering into partnership with Loretto Housing Association and Loretto Care to provide first stop accommodation and housing support to people affected by homelessness in the Hamilton area. This project now achieves a 99.4% occupancy and provides effective support to vulnerable people
 - the reprovisioning of the Direct Access Project in East Kilbride to provide 12 supported accommodation places and outreach support for homeless people who have high level and complex needs and who need intensive support in order to resolve their homelessness. This new service will be launched in September 2009.
- 5.3. These developments represent significant improvements to our options for providing temporary accommodation and support to homeless households, and are designed to help us to resolve homelessness more successfully at first presentation and to reduce failed tenancies and repeat presentations.
- 5.4. In addition, we are working to develop a recommissioning plan that will ensure that our commissioned services meet the current needs of homeless households in South Lanarkshire and that this is kept under review in order to ensure that we consistently achieve best value in the interests of service users and the general public.

6. Other Temporary Accommodation Developments

- 6.1. The increase in homelessness applications in South Lanarkshire, along with increased duties to applicants has meant that we have a continued need to increase our supply of temporary accommodation. We are working to a plan to acquire at least an extra 100 places during the course of this year, 2009-10.

- 6.2. The position at 30 June 2009 was that 359 temporary furnished flats were available of which:
- 129 were SLC properties
 - 230 were leased from private landlords or RSLs

This represents a 69% increase in temporary furnished flats since March 2006 when we had just 213 units.

- 6.3. At 30 June, we also had 23 places in first stop accommodation projects and 72 places in supported accommodation projects.
- 6.4. We are continuing to increase the number of units that we lease from the private rented sector as authorised by this Committee in June 2008, and to add to those provided from our own stock.
- 6.5. We are also currently entering into negotiation with a number of Housing Associations to lease property from them to serve as temporary accommodation. We expect to be able to lease a percentage of the extra units we require from housing association stock on an ongoing basis and Committee is asked to approve these negotiations.
- 6.6. In addition, we are currently working to develop a partnership with the Salvation Army to provide first stop accommodation and housing support at Eva Burrow House in Cambuslang. This was previously a care home for older people but has been unused for some years now. Committee is asked to approve the finalisation of a contract with the Salvation Army for this service.
- 6.7. The service will provide short term high quality accommodation and support for 32 homeless people with low support needs from the Cambuslang, Rutherglen and Halfway areas. The development of this service will also help sustain the older people's day care centre which operates from the same site but is not viable as a stand alone facility.
- 6.8. The people who will be accommodated at Eva Burrow House would often otherwise need to be accommodated in Bed and Breakfast accommodation, the costs of which are not recoverable and, therefore, impose a significant drain on Council resources.
- 6.9. The Salvation Army have significant experience of running similar projects elsewhere, including Glasgow and we are confident of providing a successful service at Eva Burrow House.

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1. None

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. Regarding the leasing of properties from RSLs to act as temporary accommodation (see 5.7 above), the cost of the leases from RSLs will normally be the standard rental charge for that property. This will be fully recoverable from tenants, mainly through housing benefit.
- 8.2. Regarding the development of first stop accommodation at Eva Burrow house in Cambuslang, the estimated budget required is set out in Appendix I.

- 8.3. In summary, this will require a Council contribution of just over £250,000 per annum which is almost the same as the equivalent irrecoverable bed and breakfast costs that would be incurred were the applicants placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. However, there are crucial differences between these two accommodation types, firstly we would be providing a level of support in Eva Burrow House that is not available for scattered bed and breakfast accommodation, and secondly, Eva Burrow House would qualify for hostel grant which means that we will be able to recover the cost, thus making a saving to the Council of £250,000 per annum.
- 8.4. In addition, we will have to make some alterations to comply with health and safety issues and to separate the facility from the Day Care Centre. It is estimated that this will cost in the region of £80,000 which will be met from the capital budget we have this year to increase temporary accommodation provision.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1. None.

10. Equalities Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1. 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.
- 10.2. However, once the revised homelessness procedures underpinning the service reconfiguration are completed, an EDIA will be carried out on the full set of procedures.
- 10.3. Relevant consultation has been carried out on an ongoing basis throughout the reconfiguration process.

Jim Hayton

Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

31 August 2009

Link(s) to Council Objectives and Values

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

Previous References

- Report to Housing and Technical Resources Committee August 2005: Implications for South Lanarkshire of Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003
- Report to Housing and Technical Resources Committee June 2008: Proposals to Improve Homelessness Services

List of Background Papers

- South Lanarkshire Homelessness Strategy 2006-12

Contact for Further Information

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

Val Holtom, Homelessness Manager

Ext: 848 2711 (Tel: 0141 584 2711)

E-mail: val.holtom@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Estimated Budget for Eva Burrow House**Eva Burrows House
Revenue Budget**

£

INCOME

Rental Income	326,404
Other Income	265,818

592,222**EXPENDITURE**

Management staff	45,142
Administrative staff	25,380
Care/resettlement staff	279,223
Cleaning staff	23,705
Maintenance staff	21,031
Other staff	39,443
Recruitment costs	2,600
Training and other staff costs	1,200
Premises costs	64,900
Service costs - furniture & equipment	10,250
Catering equipment	1,650
Cleaning	2,950
Laundry	500
Management & administration expenses	12,000
Welfare Expenditure	5,280
Admin, audit & accounting	32,115
Training levy	5,353
Special repairs assessment	8,000
Provision for Replacement of IT Equip't at Centres	1,500
Planned Maintenance	10,000

Total Expenditure

592,222