



24 November 2017

HOUSING RENTAL COMPANY COMMITTEE

A meeting of **Housing Rental Company Committee** will be held on

Monday, 4 December 2017

commencing at **2.00 pm**

The meeting will be held in the Meadfoot Room, Town Hall, Castle Circus,
Torquay, TQ1 3DR

Members of the Committee

Councillor Thomas (D) (Chairman)

Councillor Barnby

Councillor Darling (S)

Councillor King

Councillor Pentney

Councillor Robson

Councillor Tyerman

A prosperous and healthy Torbay

For information relating to this meeting or to request a copy in another format or language please contact:

Lisa Antrobus, telephone: 01803 207087, Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR

Email: governance.support@torbay.gov.uk

www.torbay.gov.uk

(1)

HOUSING RENTAL COMPANY COMMITTEE AGENDA

1. **Apologies**
To receive any apologies for absence, including notifications of any changes to the membership of the Committee.
2. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 5)
To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Rental Company Committee held on 30 October 2017.
3. **Urgent Items**
To consider any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent.
4. **System change to a Housing First/Housing Led system for Homelessness** (Pages 6 - 11)
To note the report.
5. **Emergency Accommodation (Family Provision)** (To Follow)
To consider a report on the above.
6. **Emergency Accommodation (Vulnerable Needs Provision)** (To Follow)
To consider a report on the above.
7. **Housing Strategy Action Plan Update** (To Follow)
To consider the report above.
8. **Government Housing Policy** (To Follow)
To note the report.



Minutes of the Housing Rental Company Committee

30 October 2017

-: Present :-

Councillors Darling (S), Pentney, Robson, Thomas (D) and Tyerman

1. Election of Chairman/woman

Councillor Thomas (D) was elected Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the 2017/18 Municipal Year.

2. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor King.

It was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Conservative Group, the membership of the Committee had been amended for this meeting by including Councillor O'Dwyer instead of Councillor Barnby.

3. Appointment of Vice Chairman/woman

Councillor Robson was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the 2017/18 Municipal Year.

4. Terms of Reference

The Director of Adult Services outlined the submitted paper which set out the terms of reference for the Committee.

Resolved:

That the terms of reference be noted.

5. Housing Strategy Progress

The Head of Partnerships, People and Housing presented the submitted report which set out the Housing Strategy Action Plan and provided members with an overview on the delivery the Housing Strategy to date. It was noted that funding had been secured to provide a Community Housing and Delivery Manager, who would be in post from 1 December 2017. Members were advised the Manager would analyse areas within the action plan to ensure its deliverability.

A number of challenges were made to progress and consistency of updates. Agreed RAG rated strategy would be a standing agenda item and that objectives

would change in accordance with current changes in national housing policy and opportunities for external resourcing of housing delivery.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

6. Business Plan Objectives and Project Plan - Operational Management

The Director of Adult Services advised following the decision in September 2016, where the Council agreed in principle to set up a wholly owned housing company, a Housing Rental Company (to include the Housing Development Company and a Holding Company) had been established and that a revised policy framework document had recently been approved by Council.

The Director outlined the key activities which had been undertaken since July 2017 and highlighted to members the Project Team created to support the establishment of the Housing Rental Company. The Committee were advised that three Company Directors had been approved and that the Directors had already had two Board meetings. External advice had informed the Council that it was necessary to set up a separate rental company and holding company in order to maximise financial benefits from the Housing Company's activities. It was also noted that there was no benefit in having charitable status for the Company's.

The Director of Adult Services went on to explain that the principle objective of the Housing Rental Company would be to support the objectives of the Council to enable ambitious and progressive delivery of the Housing Strategy and outlined seven objectives which could be included. Members discussed the objectives and suggested (v) be strengthened to 'unlock stalled sites particularly in around the town centre' and (vi) be strengthened to 'regenerating properties particularly in areas of deprivation'.

Resolved:

- (i) that, due to tax and administrative reasons the Committee were satisfied that the Company established two further companies as outlined with specific names and clear governance arrangements; and
- (ii) that the Housing Rental Company Committee become a consultee on planning applications with a view to support the Council's Planning Officers in tackling viability and increasing affordable accommodation.

7. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Prior to consideration of the item in Minute 8 the press and public were formally excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the item involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

8. Provision of Temporary Accommodation

The Executive Head of Community Safety presented the submitted exempt report which sought Members' approval to develop a medium/long term solution to the Council's physical accommodation requirements in relation to the Temporary Accommodation Service.

Resolved:

That the Housing Rental Company Committee in principle supports the purchase of the properties subject to a full business case and purchasing model (including a maximum price) being presented to the next meeting of this Committee.

Chairman



Meeting: Housing Rental Company Committee

Date: 4 December 2017

Wards Affected: All

Report Title: System change to a Housing First/Housing Led system for Homelessness

Is the decision a key decision? No

When does the decision need to be implemented? December 2017

Supporting Officer Contact Details: Debbie Freeman, Strategic Commissioning Officer, 01803 208729, debbie.freeman@torbay.gov.uk

1. Proposal and Introduction

Background

The current system around adults who are homeless in Torbay involves the Council's Housing Options team, and commissioned/grant funded services.

At present, people who present to the Council's Housing Options team may be placed in temporary/emergency accommodation whilst a decision around statutory duty is made. People/families to whom the Council has a duty will receive assistance with housing. Single homeless people with complex needs, or who are not owed a duty by the Council, are placed in the Leonard Stocks hostel.

People may also enter the system through the outreach team, who connect with people on the streets with a view to accommodating them. They may be initially housed within Safe Space, a separate unit in the Leonard Stocks building, which immediately accommodates the most vulnerable rough sleepers whilst a housing solution is found.

The current position is that whilst the system works for a majority of people, a large proportion of the most entrenched individuals are not maintaining accommodation, and are repeat users of the system (for data, see section 2 below). This is not only difficult for them as individuals, but it also impacts on the community, and wider services.

In addition, concentrating services for people who are street homeless in one location in the town centre in Torquay is proving problematic in terms of Anti Social Behaviour and re development of the town centre.

Proposal

There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that a model known as 'Housing First' can be successful for repeat users of services. The traditional approach (which we use in Torbay) is to house people in a hostel until they are 'ready' to move into their own accommodation. People are expected to start addressing their drug and alcohol use, debts, mental and physical health needs, legal issues etc to prove that they are 'ready' to move on.

Housing First takes a different approach; the model sees stable housing as the key to people being able to address issues such as drug and alcohol use, legal issues and mental and physical health needs. In this model, people who have patterns of repeated failure in the current system are instead placed straight into stable housing with support.

This model originates in the US, but is also used across Europe. It is becoming increasingly popular in England with 34% of providers now using Housing First.

A switch to using Housing First for repeat users of services in Torbay would clearly need a complete review of how we provide services for people who are homeless. Within this review, we could also look at how to disperse services to avoid the current concentration in one area.

To this end, an application has been made by Shekinah, Westward Housing and Torbay Council to the Nationwide Foundation, to fund a piece of work to look how we can best make the change. The outcome of this bid will be known in early December 2017. If successful, Crisis would carry out the work early in 2018, and produce a report detailing how we can move from using the Leonard Stocks Hostel, to a new system involving Housing First for repeat users of the service, with emergency accommodation for others.

Crisis have recently published a well regarded evaluation of the system in Liverpool (web link in Appendix 1) and are keen to further this work by working with us in Torbay.

The intended outcome of this change would be to find a system that would:

- ✓ Improve outcomes for the individual in terms of tenancy sustainment
- ✓ Improve value for money from in house and commissioned services around homelessness
- ✓ Improve the Castle Circus area for the community as accommodation would not be focused exclusively in that area

2. Reason for Proposal

2.1 In the year 2016/17, 96 people were accommodated in the Leonard Stocks centre. 83% of these people were rough sleeping prior to this. Around half of the people accommodated stayed in Leonard Stocks for up to 3 months, about a quarter between 3 and 6 months, and around a quarter stayed over 6 months. 65% of people who entered Leonard Stocks successfully moved into settled accommodation after their stay. The vast majority of people moved into private rented accommodation with no further support. One third of the people who came

into Leonard Stocks within the year 2016/17 were people who had used the service before. This figure rose to over 50% in the first quarter of 2017/18.

From this data, we can see that:

- ✓ There is a large demand for the service at Leonard Stocks with around 100 people using the service in 2016/17
- ✓ In 2016/17 and 2017/18 to date, between 33% and 50% of this demand came from repeat users of the service, despite high rates of people moving successfully into settled accommodation after their stay.
- ✓ Most people move into private rented accommodation with no support after Leonard Stocks. Repeat usage figures suggest that this move is unsuccessful for a significant proportion of people.
- ✓ Around a quarter of people stayed for longer than 6 months in 2016/17 due to difficulties in accessing move on accommodation (anecdotally this is usually due to landlords being unwilling to accept people with the most complex needs, and people with dogs)

2.2 In addition to the issues outlined above, the concentration of services for people who are street homeless in Factory Row is proving problematic, and a review of the system would also offer an opportunity to address this issue.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

3.1 That the report be noted.

Appendices

Appendix 1:

For the Crisis report on system change in Liverpool

https://www.eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/119040/1/housing_first_feasibility_study_2017.pdf

Background Documents

For background on Housing First in England:

<http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Housing%20First%20or%20Housing%20Led.pdf>

Section 1: Background Information

1.	What is the proposal / issue? To investigate changing the current homelessness system to a system incorporating a housing first approach and looking at the location of current homelessness provision.
2.	What is the current situation? The current system around adults who are homeless in Torbay involves the Council's Housing Options team, and commissioned/grant funded services. At present, people who present to the Council's Housing Options team may be placed in temporary/emergency accommodation whilst a decision around statutory duty is made. People/families to whom the Council has a duty will receive assistance with housing. Single homeless people with complex needs, or who are not owed a duty by the Council, are placed in the Leonard Stocks hostel. People may also enter the system through the outreach team, who connect with people on the streets with a view to accommodating them. They may be initially housed within Safe Space, a separate unit in the Leonard Stocks building, which immediately accommodates the most vulnerable rough sleepers whilst a housing solution is found. The current position is that whilst the system works for a majority of people, a large proportion of the most entrenched individuals are not maintaining accommodation, and are repeat users of the system. This is not only difficult for them as individuals, but it also impacts on the community, and wider services. In addition, concentrating services for people who are street homeless in one location in the town centre in Torquay is proving problematic in terms of Anti Social Behaviour and re development of the town centre.
3.	What options have been considered? Other options are to keep the system as it is, which involves the issues outlined above. This proposal does not commit the Council to a course of action, merely to an evaluation of the possibility of system change.

<p>4.</p>	<p>How does this proposal support the ambitions, principles and delivery of the Corporate Plan?</p> <p>This proposal supports all the principles of the Corporate Plan as it is looking at an innovative solution to an identified problem, which would aim to reduce demand on homelessness services.</p> <p>Reducing homelessness would support a prosperous and healthy Torbay.</p> <p>Targeted actions - this proposal would support protecting and supporting vulnerable adults.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>How does this proposal contribute towards the Council's responsibilities as corporate parents?</p> <p>Nationally around 60% of adults who use homelessness services are parents and due to their complex lives may be in contact with Children's Services. The improvement of services for adults with complex lives will enable them to maintain family relationships.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>How does this proposal tackle deprivation?</p> <p>This proposal would seek to tackle deprivation by reducing entrenched homelessness</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Who will be affected by this proposal and who do you need to consult with?</p> <p>People who use homelessness services Rough sleepers GP service provided by Chilcote surgery The Police Adult Social Care Drug and Alcohol Services DPT</p> <p>We would seek to consult after the evaluation has been done, as this is the stage at which we would make a decision about possible service changes.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>How will you propose to consult?</p> <p>Focus groups with users of services</p> <p>Conversations with partners in services</p>

Section 2: Implications and Impact Assessment

9.	What are the financial and legal implications? No implications at present as proposal is only to evaluate options of a new system.
10.	What are the risks? N/A at present as proposal is only to evaluate options of a new system.
11.	Public Services Value (Social Value) Act 2012 Not applicable at present as the proposal is only to evaluate options of a new system.
12.	What evidence / data / research have you gathered in relation to this proposal? Not applicable at present as the proposal is only to evaluate options of a new system.
13.	What are key findings from the consultation you have carried out? Not applicable at present as the proposal is only to evaluate options of a new system.
14.	Amendments to Proposal / Mitigating Actions Not applicable at present as the proposal is only to evaluate options of a new system.