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Dear Member

CABINET - WEDNESDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2021

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the Wednesday, 1 September 2021 meeting of the Cabinet, the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No	Item	Page
5.	Contract Award for Keyworker and Temporary Accommodation	(Pages 2 - 8)

Yours sincerely

Lisa Antrobus
Clerk

Meeting: Cabinet **Date:** 1 September 2021

Wards affected: Tormoham

Report Title: Contract Award Key Worker and Temporary Accommodation – Richmond Hotel, Torquay

When does the decision need to be implemented? 2 September 2021

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Swithin Long, Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Tourism

Director/Assistant Director Contact Details: Tara Harris. Assistant Director, Community and Customer Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Torbay Council have been approached by OYO hotel chain to obtain sole use of the Richmond Hotel, Croft Road, Torquay, for a 6 month period for temporary accommodation (TA). This is a 47 bed hotel and will be used for family accommodation.
- 1.2 There is also a need for keyworker accommodation within Children's Services and other services. It is proposed that a blended model be used at the hotel to provide temporary (66% occupancy) and keyworker accommodation (33% occupancy) for 6 months, and that the local authority block book all rooms. The contract would run from the 14 September 2021 – 14 March 2022.
- 1.3 It is the intention that the accommodation be used as the initial placement for families. As soon as self-contained TA is available, the family will be moved to more suitable accommodation whilst either their case is reviewed, or a permanent home is sourced. Additional work is being completed on the procurement of TA and other leased accommodation that is coming online. There is succession planning being undertaken to ensure this is as a temporary 6 month arrangement.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 There are significant challenges in accessing both temporary and key worker accommodation due to the changes in the housing market and cost of the provision. This is resulting in families being offered emergency accommodation that is elsewhere in the country.
- 2.2 Security of supply at a cost effective rate is required for the local authority to meet its statutory duties. The proposed scheme provides the following benefits:

- Secured access to accommodation in Torbay at a fixed cost, both for keyworker and families.
- Reduced rework by officers in having to sources and move placements every few days, putting additional pressure on an already stretched service.
- Stability for families, whose mental health is being impacted by the constant moves.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

1. That OYO, Richmond Hotel, Croft Road, Torquay be awarded a contract for a 6 month period, commencing on 14 September 2021, to provide Keyworker and family temporary accommodation mixed use.

1. Introduction

1.1 It was anticipated that this summer would be challenging in accessing temporary accommodation to meet the number of homelessness approaches to Housing Options. As a result, several properties have been leased and more are being identified to assist with demand. The market is such that this is becoming increasingly difficult. Hotels are fully booked, cost are escalating and hotels due to the elevated market, are choosing not to take our clients. Even those that are being displaced because of a fire. Landlords are also choosing to leave the rental market as house prices have increased. It is unrealised to expect that hotel accommodation would therefore not be utilised as emergency accommodation. So hence it is essential that we stabilise supply and cost.

Examples of current situation and impacts:

- Family who are working with Children Services were offered TA in Bath as this is the only accommodation Housing Options could obtain. The family of 5 understandably refused the accommodation.
 - Out of hours service are finding it even tougher as hotel receptions close after a certain time and online bookings are no good after mid-night. For example, if we try and book a room tonight at 12:05am, check-in time is not until 2pm in the afternoon meaning the booking is useless to out of hours.
 - Cost in the Travelodge have increased to £180 for one night during the summer.
 - It is taking the Housing Options team hours to find placements, when they do find one it's usually only available for a couple of days and so they know in a couple of days' time, the whole process will be repeated. Meanwhile new placements are backing up and the team are routinely working until 6 and 7pm in an evening. The team are struggling to keep people informed resulting in unnecessary call backs.
- 1.2 Accommodation is therefore required where people can be placed and can remain whilst Housing Options resettle them or make a decision on their case. The team are now also receiving feedback that multiple moves and the uncertainty of where they will be is having a significant impact on mental health on families and individuals.
- 1.3 There is also increased demand as the ban on evictions has been lifted and the impacts filter through.

1.2 Benefits of the Proposal

The contract would provide the following benefits:

- Secured access to accommodation in Torbay at a fixed cost, both for keyworker and families.
- Reduced rework by officers in having to source and move placements every few days, putting additional pressure on an already stretched service.
- Stability for families, whose mental health is being impacted by the constant moves.

- Anticipated to not need to place out of area unless in exceptional circumstance or for families own wellbeing. Hence ensuring continuity with schooling in September.
- Reduced costs, taxis are costing £200 plus each way for out of area placements. At current seasonal rates this would provide a saving of £83 p.n. for a couple and child in one room.
- Office accommodation is being provided by the hotel so an onsite presence by Housing Options is available to manage behaviour, placements and move on for clients in a co-ordinated way.
- Ability for partner agencies to link in with the provision.

2.5 Management of the Contract

2.6 It is recognised that due to the nature of the accommodation that this may result in cause for concern within the local community. As such the following measures have or will be implemented, along with the management of wider risk:

- Robust contract booking form agreed and reviewed by legal and insurance teams
- Due diligence completed and will continue on compliance documentation and practices
- Site visits undertaken by appropriate professionals to assess risk
- Inventory's completed of all rooms to mitigate financial liability and ensure safety
- Blended model of use with Keyworkers and families to ensure that sensitive placements are made.
- 7 day presence on site by Torbay Council Housing Options staff to manage placements and act as a single point of contact at the hotel for clients and local residents/business.
- 24 hr onsite presence by hotel staff
- Letter sent to all local business/ residents detailing the use of the hotel and relevant contact details if there are any concerns.
- Offer to discuss and meet with local residents from the Assistant Director of Community and Customer Services.

2. Options under consideration

- 2.1 Several properties have been leased to facilitate access to accommodation during this challenging time. However, not enough properties can be accessed to meet the current demand, due to the challenges within the wider housing market.
- 2.2 A procurement process is also live to ensure sufficiency of supply from April 2022, negating the need for the hotel provision past this date.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 Last year Torbay Council spent £2.7m on the provision of temporary accommodation. The increased costs were because of the pandemic and government direction during this time. Costs however are still high due to changes in the housing market and inability to access cost effective temporary and move on accommodation. Income from Housing Benefit will be used to pay in part for the accommodation.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 Inability to provide accommodation will result in the local authority not being able to meet its statutory duty with regards to homelessness.
- 4.2 Contract and legal requirements have been explored as part of this proposal.

5. Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 No formal consultation is required although it is imperative that this is handled sensitively and discussed with key partners. Also, that appropriate information is provided to neighbouring properties to ensure that they have effective point of contact and that any issues can be resolved rapidly. There has been continual communication with the TBID as this proposal has been developed.
- 5.2 It is important that this is actioned quickly to secure the accommodation for Torbay. Due to OYO's work with central government, it is likely that accommodation will be offered as part of the government wider framework and individuals accommodated from other areas.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

- 6.1 Procurement have been fully involved on the process.

7. Tackling Climate Change

- 7.1 This proposal will negate the need to provide accommodation for families outside of Torbay and enable them to remain local, reducing the need for long distant travel.

8. Associated Risks

- 8.1 If this proposal is not agreed, it is extremely likely that families will have to be placed outside of Torbay, impacting on their ability to access their support network and potential schooling for their children.

8.2 The Local Authority may not be able to meet its statutory duties with regards to homelessness if sufficient accommodation cannot be accessed.

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	x		
People with caring Responsibilities	x		
People with a disability	x		
Women or men	x		
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)	x		
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)	x		
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	x		
People who are transgendered	x		
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership	x		
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave	x		
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	x		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	x		

10. Cumulative Council Impact

- 10.1 Access to accommodation will have a wider impact on other areas especially Children's Services and those requiring keyworker accommodation. Accommodation for families is also providing a challenge to Children's Services.

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

- 11.1 Measures have been put in place to mitigate the impact upon the wider community. See Section 2.5