

Cabinet Response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board – Torbay’s Housing Crisis Review

No.	Recommendation:	Cabinet Response:
1.	To request officers to lobby the Government and Valuation Office in-year providing the evidence base to demonstrate the huge increase in cost of rent in order to request that the Local Housing Allowance is increased in-year and going forward (consideration to be given if other areas having a similar position to us and joining up with them).	Initial contact has been made with the valuation office and an assessment done of local LHA rates compared to neighbours and the average rent by accommodation type. Cornwall’s approach is also being explored in that a wider strategic assessment of the market and increased property prices has been undertaken. Further strategic work will be conducted to assess and link in with relevant statistical partners either to benchmark and or in a joint approach central government. Lead Officer: Tara Harris
2.	To consider paying private landlords more than the standard one month deposit (normally the equivalent to one month’s rent) to encourage them to rent properties to care experienced young people to give them more confidence they will not be left out of pocket once the young person has moved on.	For those who are care experienced a leaving care grant is awarded. Discretionary Housing Payments are also used. The current assistance will be reviewed appreciating that a case by case basis maybe required due to circumstances and property availability. Lead Officer: Becky Thompson/Tara Harris

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3.	To request that officers progress the Rightsizing Project as a priority to explore appropriate incentives and support to make it easier and encourage people living in accommodation that is too large for their need to downsize to free up the accommodation for larger families, working across all Registered Housing Providers and Devon Home Choice to maximise the use of suitable housing stock within Torbay.	<p>This project has been instigated with engagement from all the significant RP's in Torbay accounting for the majority of the housing stock. A partnership action plan is currently being developed looking at the reasons why, incentives required and scale/impact of the project.</p> <p>It is essential that this project also links in with strategic housing development opportunities, to enable appropriate move on homes to be accesses, that are suitable in the right locations for families to stay connected and supported.</p> <p>Lead Officer: Tara Harris</p>
4.	To request that provision of new accommodation for care experienced young people should be a priority for TorVista Homes and other registered housing providers.	<p>TorVista Homes are keen to work with Children's services to better understand their accommodation needs and work together to develop a suite of solutions to help increase the supply and deliver positive outcomes. This was also supported by other Registered Providers as outlined in feedback from the Strategic Housing Board. We will ensure that we are following up with specialist providers.</p> <p>Lead Officer: Liam Montgomery</p>
5.	To explore options to enable more care experienced young people to remain longer term with their foster carers.	<p>We currently as of December 2021 have 30% of our eighteen-year-old care experienced young people in a Staying Put arrangement which reflects a significant year on year increase: 2019/20 YTD 6%, 2020/21 15% and YTD figure is 30%. We will be reviewing the Staying Put Policy and Offer by April 2022.</p>

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		<p>Of our 64 cared for young people, 29 are identified as strong likelihood of converting into Staying Put arrangements with their former foster carers post-eighteen (45%).</p> <p>We are planning to review our Staying Put Offer, and in order to do this meaningfully, this needs to be done with our fostering families. Therefore, we are planning to seek feedback from our fostering families by email and focus group before meeting to review the Offer and consider any amendments of changes necessary.</p> <p>Lead Officer: Nancy Meehan</p>
6.	To explore options for Banding in Devon Home Choice to see if care experienced young people can be given a higher priority and what processes are in place.	<p>The Personal Advisor in Children Services currently refers the care experienced young person to Move-On Panel if they are in housing need a Band B is awarded, if need is assessed. This is standard policy across Devon Home Choice partnership. The extracts from the policy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready for Move on from Supported Accommodation within Devon (including care leavers) (Band B) • The Devon Home Choice Policy states that applicants living in supported accommodation in Devon who are assessed as being ready to move on will be placed in the High housing need band (Band B). <p>As such B Bands are awarded.</p> <p>A process and policy review will be undertaken including opportunities to streamline the process and hence reduce delays.</p>

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7.	<p>That a dedicated resource should be appointed to carry out appropriate enforcement on poor standards of accommodation. That resource and to bring empty properties back into use and an additional resource should be appointed to chase developers to progress sites which are not coming forward but have received planning permission; this is all linked to the establishment of the housing enabling role in-house.</p> <p>(Note: this recommendation has been included as one of the recommendations from the Priorities & Resources Panel review of the Revenue and Capital Budget 2022/2023.)</p>	<p>In response to the budget consultation, posts have been identified and have been included as part of the budget proposals.</p> <p>Lead Officer: Tara Harris (Housing Standards and Empty Homes) David Edmondson (Housing Enablement)</p>
8.	<p>To explore how the Council will resource the investigative work required from April 2022 to confirm the availability and actual short-term letting of residential properties (holiday lets/Airbnb) linked to the changes in Council Tax and Business Rates coming into force from April 2023 which requires proof over the previous 12 months to ensure that the appropriate taxes are collected from the owners of these properties.</p>	<p>A full review of resource is currently being concluded to enable this work to be undertaken, whilst also progressing other government initiatives that have been implemented and recently announced. The same resource is therefore currently being drawn upon to deliver the additional work related to Business Grant Scheme, Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF) and the significant impact of Council Tax rebate related to fuel. It is also anticipated that additional schemes will also be announced.</p> <p>Lead Officer: Tara Harris</p>
9.	<p>To request that officers provide more regular communication to raise awareness of what the Council is doing to address the housing crisis and to highlight the options and support available to local residents and improve engagement and support to community housing groups.</p>	<p>A landlord campaign was launched at the beginning of March to access more affordable private rented accommodation and improve engagement. A detailed communications action plan will be developed and implemented raising awareness and actions being undertaken by the Council whilst working with</p>

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		<p>partners to address homelessness.</p> <p>Lead Officer: Tara Harris (Homelessness agenda) David Edmondson/Local Housing Community Groups (Housing development and supply)</p>
10.	<p>To request that officers look at good practice from other local authorities when refreshing the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to see how we can encourage the development of more larger family homes, single units, units for care experienced young people or units to assist adults with a disability to live independently.</p>	<p>This matter will be picked up by the existing Housing Delivery Group as part of their role to oversee, review and implement the Torbay Housing Strategy Delivery Plan. Internal consultation to start on revised SPD in mid-March.</p> <p>Lead Officer: David Edmondson</p>
11.	<p>To request that officers be encouraged to be more creative to make best use of sites to ensure that they are maximised, including considering greater density and higher developments and to review relevant Policies, where necessary, to enable this to be acceptable within our Policies; and to undertake a structured review of policies which have an impact on housing delivery to ensure that there are (a) no irrelevant/old policies, (b) no elements of policy which conflict with each other e.g. not several top priorities, (c) no policies which are too detailed and indirectly make development stagnate, and (d) whether policies encourage development.</p>	<p>This matter will be picked up by the existing Housing Delivery Group as part of their role to oversee, review and implement the Torbay Housing Strategy Delivery Plan. However, it will also be addressed through the review of other Policy documents including the Torbay Building Heights Strategy and in consultation with relevant key stakeholders and Neighbourhood Forums. Higher density development will need to be located in the right places and respect the character of the existing area.</p> <p>Lead Officer: David Edmondson</p>
12.	<p>To request officers to be more robust in challenging developers to ensure that they are maximising the development potential of the site and providing sufficient affordable housing either within the</p>	<p>This matter will be picked up by the existing Housing Delivery Group as part of their role to oversee, review and implement the Torbay Housing Strategy Delivery Plan.</p>

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	development or via Section 106 contributions and to use experienced professionals to challenge developers assumptions and to follow up on outcomes with clawback mechanisms.	Lead Officer: David Edmondson
13.	To identify a named person to take forward the actions arising from the recommendations of the Board.	As identified above.