

## Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation Pressures

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<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Helping People
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):</b>	N/A
<b>Exempt Information:</b>	No

### 1 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the following areas:
- 1.1.1 An overview of the service.
  - 1.1.2 An understanding of the homelessness demand for Melton
  - 1.1.3 An understanding of the need for temporary accommodation demand for Melton
  - 1.1.4 The cost of temporary accommodation since April 2022
  - 1.1.5 The challenges for homelessness for 2025/26 and the mitigation in place to deal with this

### 2 Recommendation

#### That the Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 **Considers the report and provides comments to Cabinet for reflection.**

### 3 Reason for Recommendation

- 3.1 To enable the Scrutiny Committee to fulfil its responsibilities in relation to scrutinising matters relating to homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation, on behalf of the council.

### 4 Background

#### 4.1 The Process

- 4.1.1 The introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 in April 2018 saw one of the biggest changes in homeless legislation and changed the way local authorities work with people who are facing homelessness. The council's statutory homeless duties are administered by the Supporting Communities team which includes Housing Options, Homelessness and Resettlement.
- 4.1.2 When a person/household approaches a local authority, the housing options team needs to understand:
- i. If the household is eligible for assistance
  - ii. If the household is homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days
- 4.1.3 It is here that we decide if the household is owed a homeless prevention or a homeless relief duty.
- 4.1.4 **Homeless Prevention** – someone at risk of becoming homeless within 56 days i.e. someone who may be served a section 21 notice from their landlord. This duty runs for 56 days where it would then turn into a Homeless relief duty
- 4.1.5 The housing options team would work with the household to either prevent them from becoming homeless in the first instance using a range of options including but not limited to paying rent arrears, negotiating with landlords or family and friends or signposting to support agencies or find alternative accommodation using support such as paying deposits and rent in advance, referrals to supported accommodation.
- 4.1.6 This support is available to every household that is eligible and is threatened with homelessness or is homeless. There is no requirement for a vulnerability called a priority need at this stage.
- 4.1.7 If the household approaches during the prevention stage, the housing options team can work with them for 112 days (56 days prevention duty + 56 days relief duty). However, should they approach when they are homeless, the housing options team only get 56 days to work with them (relief).
- 4.1.8 **Homeless Relief** - someone who is homeless i.e. rough sleeping, past the notice period, sofa surfing. This duty runs for 56 days and it is here where the housing options team would decide that the household has given a "reason to believe" they are a priority need and is owed temporary accommodation.
- 4.1.9 After the end of the relief duty, the housing options team will then make a decision based on assessments made during the relief and possible prevention periods to decide if:
- i. The household has a priority need: –
    - fleeing domestic abuse,

- has dependent children who would reasonably be expected to reside with them
- pregnant or a member of the household is pregnant
- vulnerable as a result of old age, a mental illness, learning or physical impairment
- a 16 or 17 year old
- a person who is under 21 and was fostered between the ages of 16 and 18
- a person aged over 21 who is vulnerable as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered
- a person who is vulnerable as a result of having been a member of His Majesty's regular naval, military or air forces
- a person who is vulnerable as a result of having served a custodial sentence;
- a person who is homeless, or threatened with homelessness, as a result of an emergency such as flood, fire or other disaster

ii. If the household has deliberately done or failed to do something and as a consequence has ceased to occupy accommodation where it was available and would have been reasonable for them to continue to occupy (Intentionally homeless).

iii. Local Connection - Has lived within the Melton Borough for 6 out of the last 12 months or 3 out of the last 5 years

4.1.10 If a household passes all 5 tests the council will owe a main homeless duty to the household, (eligibility, homeless, priority need, not intentionally homeless and local connection), The main statutory homeless duty can only be discharged by offer of private rented accommodation for 12+ months or offer of accommodation from the housing register.

4.1.11 If a household does not pass all 5 tests, the council has no further duty to the household

4.1.12 A flow chart of the homeless process is in Appendix 1

## 4.2 **Providing Temporary Accommodation**

4.2.1 Section 188 (1) requires housing authorities to secure that accommodation is available for an applicant (and their household) if they have a reason to believe that the applicant may:

4.2.2 (a) be homeless;

4.2.3 (b) be eligible for assistance; and,

4.2.4 (c) have a priority need.

4.2.5 This is applicable when a household is owed a relief duty. The threshold to provide this is low and is only a "reason to believe". A priority need does not have to be proved at this point

4.2.6 For those owed a prevention duty, temporary accommodation is not required which is why efforts need to be made to resolve cases owed a prevention duty to prevent the household needing temporary accommodation.

4.2.7 For Melton Borough Council, temporary accommodation would take the form of:

- i. A placement in supported accommodation such as Westbourne House with EMH Homes
- ii. Bed and Breakfast accommodation
- iii. Private self-contained flats rented on a nightly basis
- iv. Council properties

4.2.8 Temporary accommodation is a demand led service and our current arrangements do not always provide the flexibility we need to prevent the unnecessary use of expensive emergency nightly paid accommodation such as B&B.

## 5 Main Considerations

5.1 The **Housing Options Function** is comprised of the following officers:

- 5.1.1 Strategic Lead, Supporting Communities - Rachel Chubb is responsible for managing the team and ensure delivery of objectives which contribute towards the council's homelessness strategy, that the council is compliant with delivering the statutory homeless duties and that any risks re temporary accommodation and raised and mitigated as early as possible.
- 5.1.2 Rachel is also the Council's Lead Officer for Resettlement & Asylum, Domestic Abuse and Care Leavers. These service areas are outside the scope of this report.
- 5.1.3 Housing Options Officer (HOO) – Michelle Partridge is responsible for delivering the council's homelessness statutory duties. Michelle has worked in the housing options team for 16 years
- 5.1.4 Housing Options Officer (HOO) – Oliver McElroy is also responsible for delivering the council's homelessness statutory duties. Oliver was recruited to the role in Nov 2023. Whilst never formally working in a local authority environment his experience is with rough sleepers and chaotic homelessness via a homeless charity in a 56-bed hostel in Nottingham.
- 5.1.5 Senior Housing Options Officer (HOO) – Azmat Havani. Azmat started with the council on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 after the departure of a previous officer on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2025. Azmat has been a housing options officer with Peterborough and Stevenage councils as well as previous roles as a debt advisor for the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- 5.1.6 Temporary Accommodation Officer (TAO) – William Frost. William was recruited to the role in Oct 2023 with experience of providing support to people facing unemployment. He is responsible for managing the moves in and out of people in temporary accommodation and working with customers to reduce stress and anxiety during this process. This role is currently on a fixed term basis subject to future funding and demand.
- 5.1.7 Triage and Allocations Officer – Melanie Hammond. Melanie started with Melton Borough Council as a customer services advisor in June 2024 and started with the Housing Options team on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025. This role is currently only for 12 months. Melanie is the first point of contact for all customers offering early preventative advice and highlighting any major concerns to the housing options officers which could escalate as well as allocating customers to council properties through the choice-based lettings system. This role is currently on a fixed term basis subject to future funding and demand.

- 5.1.8 Housing Options Support and Systems officer – Nicholas Evans. Nick has worked for Melton Borough Council for 11 years but has worked with the Housing Options team for 7. Nick's role is to maintain the administration of the housing register, shortlist applicants for properties and ensure the IT system meets the needs of the team.
- 5.1.9 Capacity challenges and impact - since 1 April 2024, the Housing Options team operated with 2.75 FTE housing options officers which was a reduction from 3 FTE due to staff changes in hours. From 3 January 2025, the team operated on 1.7 FTE housing options officers due to changes in personnel.
- 5.1.10 In December 2024 a decision notice was approved for the Housing Options establishment to be: 2.75 housing options officers, 1 x senior housing options officer, 1 x FTE triage and allocations officer (fixed term until March 2026, 37 hours), 1 x FTE systems and support officer and 1 x FTE temporary accommodation officer (fixed term until May 2025).
- 5.2 Provision of council owned Temporary Accommodation (TA)**
- 5.2.1 With the rising costs of providing temporary accommodation (TA), Housing Options led a TA project in 2024 to consider the most cost-effective response to the provision of TA in all forms of accommodation.
- 5.2.2 This included ensuring the use of MBC stock was value for money, appropriate and met regulatory parameters.
- 5.2.3 The project explored opportunities to resolve the following:
- i. Understand the full costs associated with temporary accommodation
  - ii. Reduce the costs associated with voids following the use of MBC stock for temporary accommodation.
  - iii. Formalise the internal arrangements for use of MBC stock for temporary accommodation with a written and agreed service standard, ensuring flexibility to meet the needs of vulnerable people needing our support and reduce the requirement for long stays in Bed & Breakfast (B&B) accommodation.
  - iv. Maximise the rents and charges for temporary accommodation.
  - v. Investigate whether a formal arrangement with EMH (East Midlands Housing Group [www.emh.co.uk](http://www.emh.co.uk)) would be appropriate to provide accommodation to meet our needs and present a paper to SLT with recommendations.
- 5.2.4 The costs of MBC temporary accommodation are predominantly attributed to the void turnover of each property. Prior to April 2024, Housing Options used a set number of properties at the same addresses. This meant that properties were used on average 2.5 times a year by different households.
- 5.2.5 The project resolution was to use different council properties and convert those in appropriate council properties to introductory tenants at a time when was appropriate. This was not a shortcut to accommodation but minimised the turnover and void costs to the council. Example of this process is shown in Appendix 2
- 5.3 Cost of temporary accommodation**
- 5.3.1 The increased demand for the use of temporary accommodation is a national issue. In 2023/24, The LGA reported that councils spent nearly £2.3 billion on temporary

accommodation - around £1.06 billion of this cost needs to be met by councils from the specific homelessness grant and then subsidised from general funding.

- 5.3.2 A night in bed and breakfast accommodation can cost the council anywhere between £85-£110 per night. The VAT element is recoverable but does mean VAT invoices need to be provided by the supplier to ensure this can be achieved. The council only receives £13.04 back in housing benefit and only where the person being housed is eligible for Housing Benefit. This amount is based on the rate of Local Housing Allowance set in January 2011. This amount is not reflective of rents in 2025. There is much lobbying across the local government sector for this amount to be increased.
- 5.3.3 The council receives a grant from central government called the homeless prevention grant. This is intended to be spent on homeless prevention and until 2025/2026 this was not ringfenced.
- 5.3.4 The grant for Melton Borough Council has increased over the last 3 years which is in part due to better reporting of figures and lobbying from local government. This has increased from £103, 500 in 2022/2023 to £256, 167 for 2025/2026.
- 5.3.5 Changes to the conditions for 2025/26 mean that the grant is ringfenced, to maintain prevention activities during this period. This will mean that 49% of local authorities' funding allocation must be spent on prevention, relief and staffing activity. The 49% within this ringfence may not be spent on temporary accommodation
- 5.3.6 This ringfence is based on figures submitted for 23/24 <sup>1</sup>. Below are figures for how regions and Melton allocated their homelessness prevention grant.

Region	Staffing	Prevention and relief activities (not staffing)	Temporary accommodation	other
Yorkshire and Humber	48%	19%	31%	1%
East Midlands	38%	21%	39%	2%
West Midlands	34%	33%	30%	3%
East of England	34%	19%	44%	3%
<b>Melton</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>1%</b>

- 5.3.7 The councils spend on non-MBC temporary accommodation for the last 3 years is

- 2021/22 - £133,350
- 2022/23 - £86,000
- 2023/24 - £94,000
- 2024/25 - £394,520

- 5.4 The councils spend on MBC temporary accommodation is:

- 2022/2023 - £55,590 (based on a void cost of £1,895 per property turnover for 12 properties)

<sup>1</sup> [Homelessness Prevention Grant 2025-26: technical note - GOV.UK](#)

- 2023/2024 - £52,532 (based on a cost of £2,221 per property turnover for 10 properties)
- 2024/2025 – Est £33,600 (based on a void cost of £2400 per property turnover for 8 properties). **This figure will be finalised before scrutiny committee**

- This cost includes rent, void turnover costs and any repairs and maintenance whilst being used as temporary accommodation.

5.4.2 To reduce the spend on MBC properties, the use of temporary accommodation was reduced from 10 to 8 properties. In January 2025 we attempted to increase this back to 10 but property availability affected the ability to do this.

5.4.3 The current number is 9 properties as at 16.04.2025

5.4.4 The Council received the following in housing benefit in each of the following years along with the percentage of claimants this related to:

- 2032/24 - £23,000
- 2024/25 - £46,615. 6% of claims submitted were ineligible due to earnings, a further 6% did not have a housing benefit claim submitted due to short stays and/or out of hours calls so no contact with an officer was made to complete the claim.

## 5.5 Understanding the Homeless Demand

### 5.5.1 Homeless Duties accepted vs Placements into Temporary Accommodation

Year	Homeless duties accepted	Households placed into temporary accommodation	No of households over 100 days	Average stay in temporary accommodation
22/23	385	78	30	70
23/24	351	67	14	61
24/25	384	93	37	71

### 5.5.2 Outcomes achieved

Year	Secured accommodation for 6+ months Prevention duty	Secured accommodation for 6+ months relief duty	Secured accommodation under a main duty	Main duty accepted
22/23	84	60	45	4
23/24	66	71	45	16
24/25	34	53	48	24

5.5.3 Approaches have remained similar since 2022/23 and until 24/25 the number of households in temporary accommodation remained even. Placements surged in 24/25 for a variety of reasons.

- Increase in complex cases which is shown in the table below which mean more people meet the threshold for temporary accommodation

	23/24		24/25	
	Placements in all forms of TA	No of Households	Placements in all forms of TA	No of Households
<b>Mental health</b>	22	17	<b>45</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Domestic Abuse (victim)</b>	17	15	<b>41</b>	<b>27</b>
Learning disability	0	0	1	1
Dependent children	29	25	42	35
Physical disability	1	1	3	3
Elderly	2	2	2	1
Pregnant (main reason)	1	1	4	3
SWEP	2	2	7	6
Care Leavers	2	2	1	1
Asylum	0	0	4	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>65</b>		<b>117</b>

- ii. Reduced number of MBC properties as temporary accommodation. MBC properties are less expensive to the general fund but incur a cost due to the rigidity of the repairs contract. Converting tenants from TA tenants to introductory tenants in the same property has happened more in 2024/25 which means we have had a longer wait for a new property to replace it. In 2023/24, someone could move out and then the same property would be brought back into use in a few days. Whilst this has created a sustainable community, reduction of move ins and positive impact for the customer, it has influenced the availability of properties we can use as temporary accommodation.
- iii. Increase in number of complex cases where independent living solutions have taken multi agency involvement to resolve, such as people with a physical disability and/or care needs. This has resulted in longer stays in temporary accommodation. 2 cases were in temporary accommodation for more than 12 months which meant we were unable to move them on and secure further properties.
- iv. Increase in cases from asylum move-on accommodation where English has not been a first language. The lack of asylum support within the borough would place single households at a vulnerability due to lack of services and assistance and subsequent eligibility for priority need
- v. More complex cases but limited options of supported accommodation. Some households have stayed longer than they should have done because they were due to access rare spaces in supported accommodation.
- vi. Decrease of people referred into private rented sector due to lack of availability, landlords leaving the sector and tougher barriers for people on Universal Credit
- vii. Changes in behaviour of customers making investigation of cases lengthier and more complex.
- viii. Delayed after-effects from a departure of 50% of the team in 2023/24 and the start of a new team in November 2023 which made it difficult to get in front of cases whilst also learning a new system and new processes. This is now being addressed with the recent recruitments.

- ix. Reduction in hours of a housing options officer reducing the resource from 3 FTE to 2.7 since April 2024 and departure of a full-time officer since early January 2025. This meant the team operated on 1.7 FTE housing options officers for 3 months of the year.
- x. 24/25 saw a rise in people approaching with mental health issues which on evidence of proof indicated there was a reason to believe there was a priority need. Households fleeing domestic abuse are also given an automatic priority need following changes implemented in The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- xi. Reduction of options for supported accommodation within the county. Leicestershire county council ceased funding for the single person hostel in April 2024. Future funding arrangements mean that only people with a connection to the Charnwood area can now be considered.

## 5.6 Challenges for 2025/2026

- 5.6.1 Uncertainty around the introduction of legislation affecting the private rented sector (Renters Rights Bill). It is unknown the effect this piece of legislation will have but a working group has been established to navigate this.
- 5.6.2 Potential increase in rough sleeping and homeless duties due to increase in closure notices and projected increase in intentionally homeless decisions.
- 5.6.3 Challenges with organisations such as MEARS and SERCO who have government contracts to find and lease accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees.

## 5.7 How this will be addressed in 2025/26

- 5.7.1 Clear processes have been established and new staff given time to learn processes and legislation before being asked to deal with cases. This promotes clear communication and decision making from the start.
- 5.7.2 Introduction of the triage post which means more of the administrative work in gathering information can be completed by this officer rather than the housing options officer dealing with all queries which may not be relevant to them.
- 5.7.3 Joint work with housing services to establish a team to develop the IT system used by housing options, tenancy services and housing assets. The housing options support officer has huge amounts of knowledge on the system which was not being utilised to its potential. The aim of this initiative is to streamline processes, reduce workarounds and have the IT system do more of the “manual work” currently covered by officers. This would free up capacity and resource as well as creating resilience within the council. This venture means a small amount of income is brought into housing options and will be used to support the cost of the triage officer.
- 5.7.4 Upgrade of a housing options officer to a senior housing options officer to enable more support for officers in the team as well as focusing on efficiencies that can be created to streamline processes, increasing resource within the current structure.
- 5.7.5 Joint work with Leicestershire districts to create a SWEP (severe weather emergency protocol) provision which will be a sit up service as opposed to a night in bed and breakfast. A sit up service could be a chair in a community hall rather than a bed in a bed and breakfast costing £85 per night. This should focus potential rough sleepers on resolving long term goals rather than people sofa surfing only approaching when the temperatures drop below freezing.

- 5.7.6 Discussions with different providers re cheaper forms of temporary accommodation. Other self-contained, private accommodation can be used on a nightly basis for a cost of £55-£65 per night but we are eligible to claim a higher rate of housing benefit for these forms of accommodation. This return can be approx. £20.22 per night. We do not want to use too much of this accommodation as this then creates a bigger demand on resource in the private rented sector.
- 5.7.7 Discussions about separate contracts for void and repairs of council owned temporary accommodation.
- 5.7.8 Providing feedback and comments to national consultations on the pressures to homelessness budgets ensuring Melton has their voice and opinions heard.
- 5.7.9 Housing benefit maximisation by processing claims in a timely manner and for the eligible family members.
- 5.7.10 Ensuring all Vat is recoverable on temporary accommodation

## 5.8 Case Studies

### Case Study 1: Hoarding

- 5.8.1 A referral was received by Leicestershire hospital partnership in February 2024 re a person that was unable to return to their property due to its conditions. The property had multiple infestations of rats, no clear walkways, no electricity and no working sanitation. He had to crawl under items to get out of his door but was able to walk to the shop to buy food and basic necessities.
- 5.8.2 The property was inspected by environmental health and a subsequent prohibition notice was served meaning he could not return to the property. They owned this property which provided further complications re assets and equity.
- 5.8.3 The council accepted a homeless duty as they had no home to return to and was a priority need because of his physical and mental health needs. The person was involved with adult social care but assessments said that the person was able to address his own care needs, he just chose not to. There were some physical needs which couldn't be addressed in his former property.
- 5.8.4 The person was ready for discharge from hospital and as such the council needed interim accommodation which was accessible whilst we assessed the homeless duty and worked with him to find appropriate accommodation. Work with tenancy services meant we could accommodate him in the short term in one of the council's sheltered schemes.
- 5.8.5 They had clear hoarding issues and as such private rented accommodation was unsuitable. A referral was meant to the county provision "Safe Spaces" but as they had left the accommodation they no longer qualified for their assistance. They were accommodated albeit temporarily, in March 2024. adult social care closed the case. The only support the person received was from housing options.
- 5.8.6 Complaints were received from other residents and tenancy services re the smell of the flat despite regular interaction from our temporary accommodation officer. The officer made a new referral to adult social care whilst also doing the following actions which were over and above any expectations:

- i. Removed rubbish bags as the person claimed he could not open the door to the rubbish chute.
- ii. Requested an adaptation to the door handle and keys so the person could open and lock his door properly.
- iii. Removed urine-soaked sofa cushions and took them to the washing area whilst showing the person how to use a washing machine.
- iv. Cleaned the bathroom
- v. Continued communication with adult social care to update of the circumstances despite them closing the case

5.8.7 A meeting was arranged in August 2024 with adult social care so we could understand why the person did not meet the threshold for their support. They explained the sale of the house meant they could now fund any additional support they needed, there was potentially undiagnosed autism, but they reinforced the person was able to meet their care needs, they just didn't want to. The person was affecting other residents and as such tenancy services wanted the person accommodated elsewhere.

5.8.8 Following this information, we met with tenancy services and explained the situation.

- i. The council had a statutory duty to accommodate this person. We had to offer a property to him
- ii. If he was to move into a flat with no communal facilities he would be forgotten about and the hoarding would restart. With staff resource and capacity, it was unlikely tenancy services officers could do a physical check on the property every week which is what was needed. Staying within a sheltered scheme meant he would have contact with the Independent Living Coordinator which could raise any concerns should they arise.

5.8.9 An agreement ensued that we would work with the person to employ a personal assistant as he now had funding from the sale of his house. A personal assistant was employed but they left within a month due to the person's behaviour and it was then decided that we would encourage him to employ a cleaner. If he didn't keep the property in a reasonable standard, he would be served notice and asked to leave meaning he would be homeless.

5.8.10 A cleaner was employed but evidence was required from tenancy services to show this would not be ended prematurely. This property was converted into an introductory tenant on 7 April 2025. This person used 1 unit of our 8 units of temporary accommodation for the entirety of 2024/25.

### **Case Study 2: Modern Slavery**

5.8.11 A couple approached with 2 children fleeing a caravan site. Significant concerns were raised about the suitability of the accommodation and the coercive nature of the owners of the site.

5.8.12 The couple had only lived at the site for 3 weeks and prior to that lived out of area.

5.8.13 The couple had moved into a caravan believing they were moving into a house. No due diligence had been undertaken and there was a suspicion they had fled their property in the previous area. There was no local connection to the Melton borough but there was family in another area where the applicant's father lived.

- 5.8.14 The couple had 3 school age children and the threats made to them were significant to warrant police support of a move. The council's safeguarding responsibilities took precedence in this instance over the production of formal identification and initial investigative work which would ordinarily have happened.
- 5.8.15 The family were placed in a taxi to another area and placed in self-contained accommodation. A referral was made to the receiving authority to pick up a homeless relief duty as Melton had no homeless duty to this family. A referral to another local authority should be addressed by the receiving authority within 10 working days.
- 5.8.16 The referral was eventually picked up by the receiving authority after 12 weeks which cost the council approx. £15,000 in temporary accommodation. This was only resolved after escalation to Melton Borough Council's chief executive and an agreement was reached that the receiving authority would pay £6000 of the accommodation costs.
- 5.8.17 During this process referrals were made to police, children's services and environmental health to bring together professionals to address wider issues with this case.

## **6 Options Considered**

- 6.1 Early discussions with the Leicestershire YMCA for the potential for a 30-40 room supported accommodation project.
- 6.2 To operate a process which is not person-centred and ask customers to produce all forms of documentation on arrival before any accommodation is provided. This would not be best practice and would be at odds with the trauma informed and person-centred approach the team currently operate. However, there is a balance which can be achieved.
- 6.3 Form a stronger relationship with drug treatment agencies to understand the options of rehab and detox facilities for our most difficult and entrenched customers. This is with a view to providing sustainable options for those that are ready to enter treatment.
- 6.4 To employ agency staff if there will be significant absences of staff within the time which will affect performance. A balance needs to be made about which is the higher cost.
- 6.5 Joint work with other Leicestershire districts re enforcement work and support offered to landlords impacted by Renters Rights Bill to encourage more landlords to take our customers.
- 6.6 Development of a county domestic abuse protocol to ensure consistent methods are used and prevent "housing authority shopping".
- 6.7 To continue to submit bids through the Local Authority Housing Fund which requires local authorities to secure properties for ARAP refugee resettlement and temporary accommodation. The council has secured 2 properties for its own stock for ARAP families and 1 for temporary accommodation during LAHF 2. We were unsuccessful for a bid in the LAHF 3 round.
- 6.8 To engage the mediation service operated by the Local Government Association at an earlier stage to resolve issues where homeless duty referrals are not picked up by the receiving authority.

## **7 Consultation**

- 7.1 Not applicable

## 8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication

- 8.1 Any feedback will be considered as part of future planning and shared with Cabinet as appropriate
- 8.2 Consider temporary accommodation as an option when looking at conversion of MBC assets
- 8.3 To continue to submit bids for Government funding to increase the use of temporary accommodation
- 8.4 To continue a monitoring system for cases in temporary accommodation and audit of cases to ensure stays in bed and breakfast are justified and appropriate in length.

## 9 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The actual cost of the homelessness service for 2023/24 and forecast outturn for 2024/25 are set out below. The net direct cost of the service to the council in 2023/24 was £65k rising to a forecast net direct cost of £470k in 2024/25. This does not include any overhead costs for management time and other indirect staff costs such as customer services, finance, legal etc. This shows how much the rising cost in temporary accommodation is adding to the overall net cost to the council which has to be met from the general fund budget. There has been a recent consultation paper containing new proposals relating to the allocation of Homelessness funding which could see a significant reduction in funding received by this council for which lobbying is being undertaken across the local government sector.

	23/24	24/25
<b>Expenditure</b>	£	£
Staffing	214,832	239,525
Bed and Breakfast	96,060	441,224
Other	55,436	71,678
Rent Deposit	29,508	29,525
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>395,836</b>	<b>781,952</b>
<b>Income</b>		
Homelessness Prevention Grant	- 107,430	- 109,031
Homelessness Prevention Grant Top up	-	- 65,727
Ukraine Claim	- 52,695	- 842
Asylum Grant	- 112,500	- 44,750
Rough Sleeping	- 20,095	- 51,158
New Burdens	- 34,123	- 34,766
Afghan Funding for DHP	- 4,000	-
Northants	-	- 6,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>- 330,843</b>	<b>- 312,274</b>
<b>Net cost</b>	<b>64,993</b>	<b>469,678</b>

**Financial Implications reviewed by: Director for Corporate Services**

## **10 Legal and Governance Implications**

10.1 There is a wide range of legislation which is relevant to a local authority's Social Housing Allocations Policy. The principal obligations are created by Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 which has been amended at various points to refine those requirements. The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) Regulations 2006 are made under the 1996 Act and specify certain categories of person who are or are not eligible for allocation of local authority housing.

10.2 In addition, the 1996 Act requires local authorities to have regard to Guidance issued by the Secretary of State when exercising its housing allocation functions. The latest amendment to that Guidance was issued in June 2024. The Guidance highlights specific legal obligations which are relevant to allocation of housing for example the duties applying to certain people who left Afghanistan since 2021 or those who left Ukraine after the Russian invasion.

10.3 The Council must ensure that its Allocation Policy does not prevent those who may be eligible for allocation of housing from registering and being considered under the scheme.

10.4 The additional legislation and guidance which has amended or is relevant to housing allocation includes the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018, Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Localism Act 2011, National Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018, Children Act 2004, Equality Act 2010, Care Act 2014 and Armed Forces Act 2021. The proposed policy has been drafted having regard to these provisions.

**Legal Implications reviewed by: Monitoring Officer**

## **11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications**

11.1 Our statutory duties are in line with meeting equality and safeguarding requirements

## **12 Data Protection Implications (Mandatory)**

12.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed because there are no risks to the rights and freedoms of natural persons.

## **13 Community Safety Implications**

13.1 As the council continues to do more work on resolving complaints of anti-social behaviour, this will create an increase in approaches to housing options and subsequent homeless investigations. However, the Housing Options team are fully appraised of these activities so that we can take a collaborative approach.

## **14 Environmental and Climate Change Implications**

14.1 None

## **15 Other Implications (where significant)**

15.1 Potential increase in rough sleeping without appropriate long-term accommodation.

## **16 Risk & Mitigation**

Risk No	Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Risk
1	Staff shortage leads to increased caseloads and households stay in temporary accommodation longer than necessary	Low	Critical	9
2	Officers do not follow a set procedure and differences in practices and decision making across the different housing options officers.	Low	Critical	9
3	Cost of bed and breakfast accommodation increases meaning overall cost increases to the council exceeding budget	Very Low	Catastrophic	8
4	Use more MBC properties as temporary accommodation incurring further cost to the council	Very Low	Critical	6
5	Due to shortage of temporary accommodation rates paid are difficult to be negotiated meaning they are high	High	Catastrophic	20
6	Housing benefit is not maximised	Very Low	Critical	6

		Impact / Consequences			
		Negligible	Marginal	Critical	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Score/ definition	1	2	3	4
	6 Very High				
	5 High				5
	4 Significant				
	3 Low			1,2	
	2 Very Low			4,6	3
	1 Almost impossible				

Risk No	Mitigation
1	Allocate a set amount of money to fund an agency worker for 3 months should there be staff absence

1	Regular checks, 121's in place to manage staff welfare and ensure the team feel supported to prevent absence
1	Ensure staff are multi skilled to be able to pick up other job roles if required in an emergency
2	Quarterly audit of homeless applications and checks made during monthly 121's to ensure applications are investigated thoroughly
2	Introduction of senior housing options officer to provide support to the team with decision making if needed.
2	Build on work within private rented sector and provide a package across council services to prevent people entering temporary accommodation.
3	Continued contract discussions with repairs contractors. When a contract is to be renegotiated, temporary accommodation to be included as a separate cost than general needs accommodation
4	Charging Policy to be introduced to increase support charges for those in MBC temporary accommodation. This would be extra income for the council
5	To continually investigate other companies to ensure we achieve the best price for accommodation
6	Auditing of cases in TA and checklist monitored re claims made to housing benefit

## 17 Background Papers

17.1 None

## 18 Appendices

18.1 Appendix A – Diagram of homeless process

18.2 Appendix B – Diagram of use of MBC Temporary Accommodation properties

18.3 Appendix C – Temporary Accommodation Booklet