



Doncaster Council

Report

Date: 13 October 2021

To the Chair and Members of the Regeneration and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Update on temporary accommodation use as part of homelessness delivery

Relevant Member(s)	Cabinet	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Glyn Jones Portfolio Holder for Housing and Business.		All	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The duties to households that are homeless and at risk of homelessness are set out in the Housing Act 1996 Part VII. This includes a duty to provide temporary accommodation to certain prescribed groups, namely those with dependent children or those deemed vulnerable.
2. This paper sets out the increasing demand for temporary accommodation. Firstly, this is because of the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, which placed additional duties on the local authority. Secondly, this is because of the pandemic and Government's 'Everyone In' programme which required local authorities to accommodate all rough sleepers including individuals who would not normally be owed a duty.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. This report is not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. It is recommended that the Elected Members note this update report.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. The provision of temporary accommodation is an essential safety net for households experiencing homelessness.

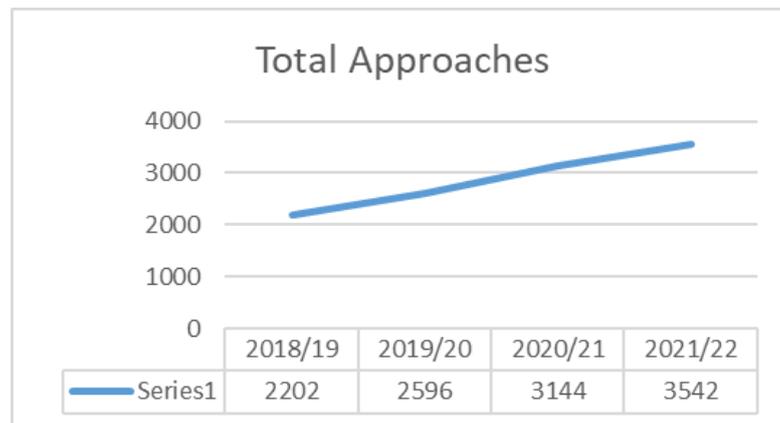
BACKGROUND

5. The duties to households that are homeless and at risk of homelessness are set out in the Housing Act 1996 Part VII. This includes a duty to provide temporary accommodation to certain prescribed groups, namely those with dependent children or those deemed vulnerable.
6. On 3rd April 2018 the Homelessness Reduction Act was introduced which placed considerable additional responsibilities on local authorities.
7. During 2020, Government announced their 'Everyone In' programme in response to the covid-19 pandemic. This required local authorities to make provision to accommodate all rough sleepers during the pandemic. This included rough sleepers who would not have otherwise been owed a temporary accommodation duty under the Housing Act.
8. In Doncaster the duty to provide temporary accommodation is met by a combination of options. Most common are emergency accommodation such as B&B or hotel placements or interim accommodation placements where SLHD managed local authority stock is designated for temporary accommodation use. This local authority owned interim accommodation is dispersed across the borough.
9. Temporary accommodation sits within a whole system approach and a range of other options are sometimes used depending on the specific needs of the household. This could mean that refuge is used for households fleeing domestic violence or respite care for applicants with social care or mental health needs. Home Options deals with a wide range of clients and housing pathways may vary because of their needs. SPOA, Move-on Officers and the Single Point of Access Team work to consider all options for households to best meet their needs.
10. Active prevention and early intervention activity wherever possible is an essential part of the Home Options response before placing households in temporary accommodation.
11. Individuals being placed in interim accommodation are provided with furniture, microwave & fridge as well as household items such as crockery and bedding. Occasionally an individual's interim accommodation can be made permanent if the property meets the needs of the household.
12. Individuals accommodated are provided with support by the Home Options team. Referrals are made in respect of safeguarding or specialist support needs to ensure a system-wide response for the household.
13. Also, refuge accommodation is an option for households fleeing domestic abuse. Households may be placed out of the borough for safety reasons. Similarly, households from other areas may be placed in refuge in Doncaster for safety reasons. SLHD, DMBC and partners are currently engaged in a domestic abuse needs assessment and domestic abuse strategy in response to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The Act requires local authorities

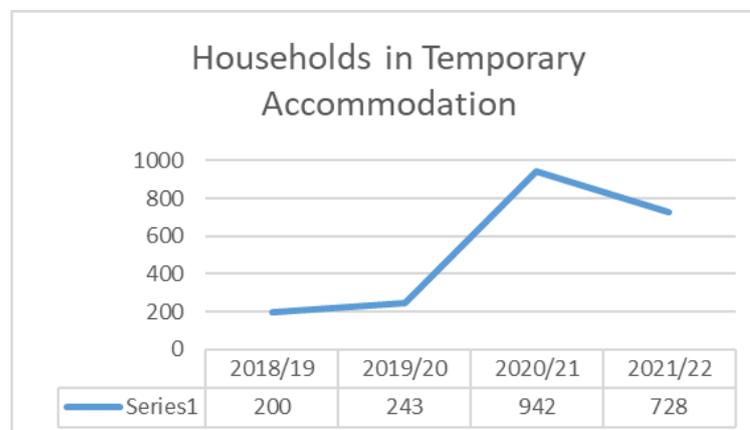
to review and provide sufficient 'D.A. Safe Accommodation'.

DEMAND

14. Demand for help with homelessness has risen dramatically since 2018. This coincides with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018, exacerbated by the impact of the pandemic and the Government's "Everyone In" directive. The below table shows the rise in approaches to Home Options.



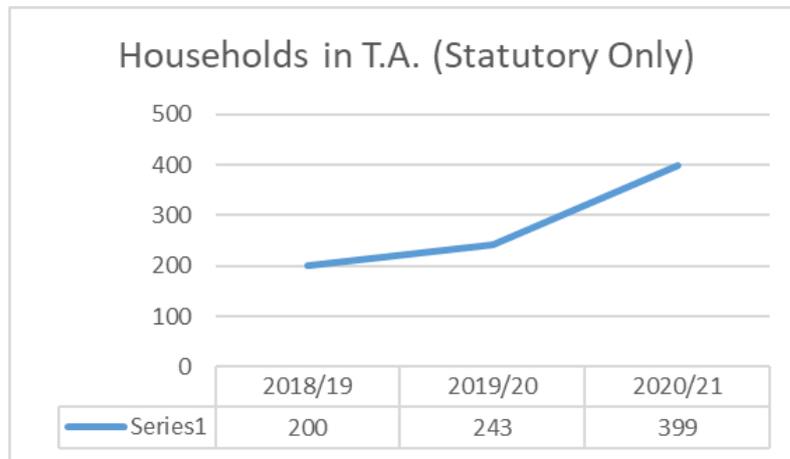
15. The 2021/22 figure is forecasted based on an extrapolation of approaches so far this year.
16. It must be noted that this increase is despite the stay on private rented sector repossession hearings introduced by government to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. Approaches might reasonably be expected to rise further.
17. Consequently, we have seen a considerable increase in the demand for temporary accommodation. The table below shows the number of households being placed in temporary accommodation by year.



18. The figure for 2018/19 is extrapolation of part year data due to the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. The figure for 2021/22 is

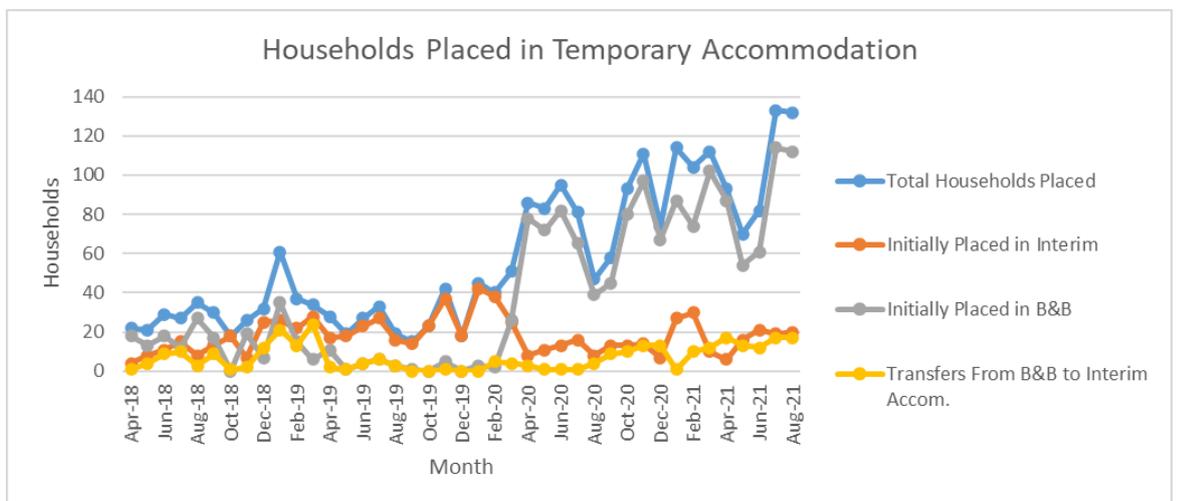
forecasted based on an extrapolation of this year's figures to date.

19. The table shows huge increase in demand on temporary accommodation.
20. This demand is two-fold. Firstly, because of the rise in approaches following the Homelessness Reduction Act but also as a direct result of the pandemic and Government's 'Everyone In' programme. This programme required local authorities to accommodate all rough sleepers or those deemed to be at risk of doing so (previously only rough sleepers owed a duty would be offered temporary accommodation).
21. Despite the increased demand from the 'Everyone In' programme there is a clear underlying statutory demand. The below table shows the increase in placements in temporary accommodation for households where there was a statutory duty to provide it:



FACILITIES USED

22. As mentioned above, temporary accommodation can either be provided in hotel settings or with SLHD managed local authority stock. The below table shows the facilities used for all applicants since 3rd April 2018 (the start of the Homelessness Reduction Act).



23. As can be seen in this graph the numbers being placed directly into interim and those being moved from B&B to interim has stayed fairly constant. The increase in use of temporary accommodation has been by those being

placed directly into B&B.

24. The below table shows the breakdown of facilities used for applicants and households currently accommodated as of 13th September 2021. This is a snapshot showing households in accommodation on a specific night.

Current applicants and households placed in hotel or B&B settings	42
Current applicants and households placed in interim SLHD managed local authority stock	100

25. Of the current applicants and their households accommodated in hotel and B&B settings 12 have dependent children:

Current applicants and households with dependent children placed in hotel or B&B settings	12 (131 total bed nights)
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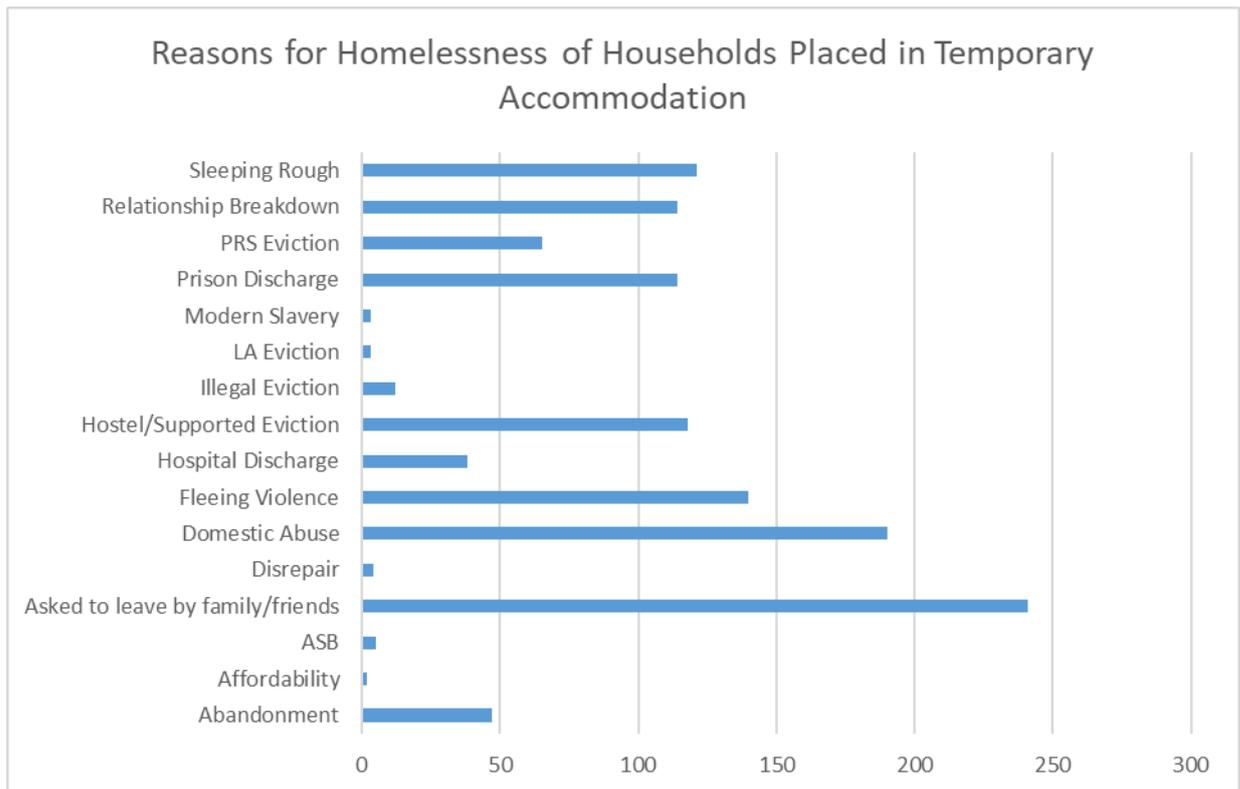
WHO IS ACCESSING TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION?

26. As shown above, of the 942 individuals and households placed in either emergency or interim accommodation in 2020/21 only 399 of those were owed a statutory temporary accommodation duty. The remaining 543 placements were made under 'Everyone In'.
27. Typically applicants would not be owed a temporary accommodation duty if they were not eligible for assistance (no recourse to public funds), not deemed vulnerable or had caused themselves to become homeless intentionally.
28. Analysis of those accommodated since 11th March 2020 shows family makeup as:

Couples	32
Single Females	334
Single Males	699
Families with dependent children	233

29. Analysis of those accommodated since 11th March 2020 shows their initial

reason for homelessness as:



30. This shows a spread across the range of reasons for homelessness. The peaks for reasons such as being 'asked to leave by family' or 'domestic abuse' are consistent with peaks in total approaches. It can't be said that demand for temporary accommodation is disproportionately coming from one particular type of homelessness, other than those such as 'rough sleeping' which are attributable to the 'Everyone In' programme.

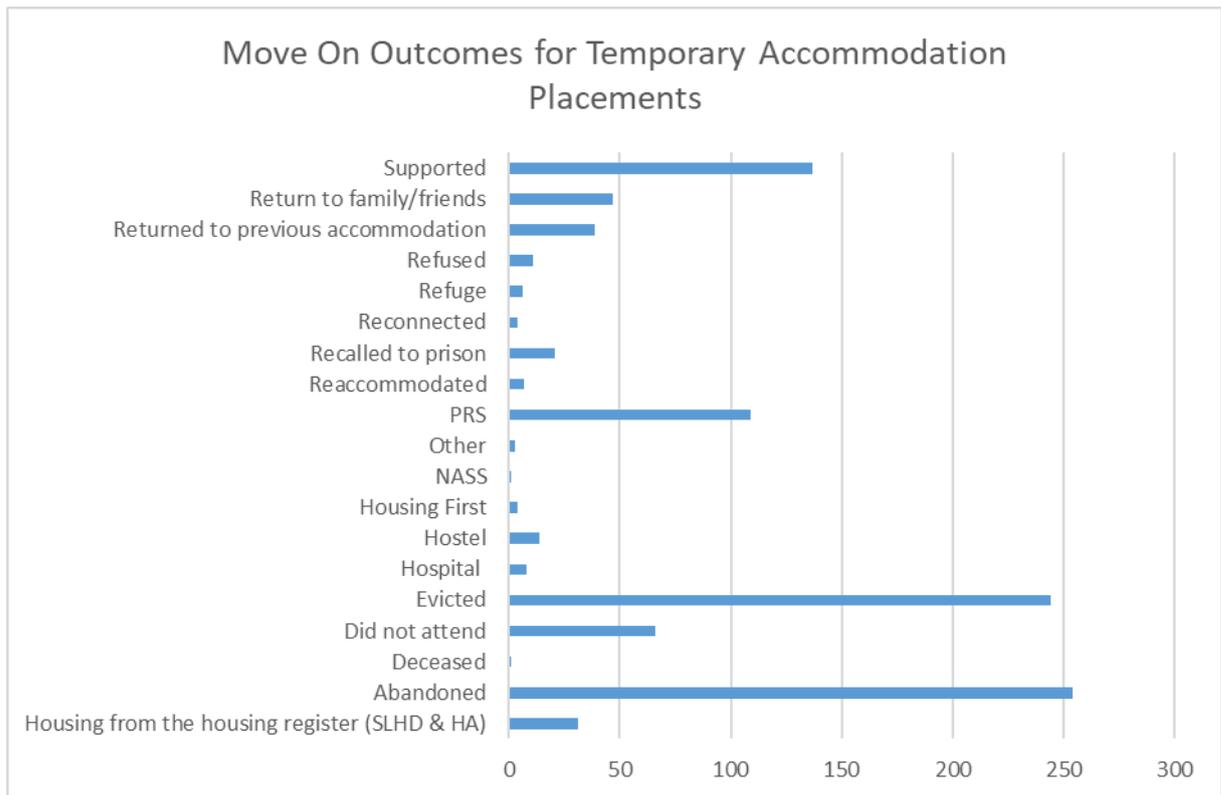
ROUGH SLEEPING & 'EVERYONE IN'

31. It is important to note that the housing pathway for rough sleepers is different than for other types of homelessness. This is because there is specialist commissioned supported accommodation, currently delivered by Riverside as well as the system-wide, multi-agency offer of the Complex Lives Alliance. There has been additional grant funding received from MHCLG to support this cohort.
32. The Single Point of Access (SPOA) team try to help ensure flow through the housing pathway for this cohort.
33. Work is ongoing to understand the effectiveness of the current rough sleeper pathway.
34. The 'Everyone In' programme has placed additional demand on the rough sleeper pathway.

OUTCOMES

35. For individuals and households accommodated in temporary accommodation since 11th March 2020 the below table shows the outcome

at the end of their placement:

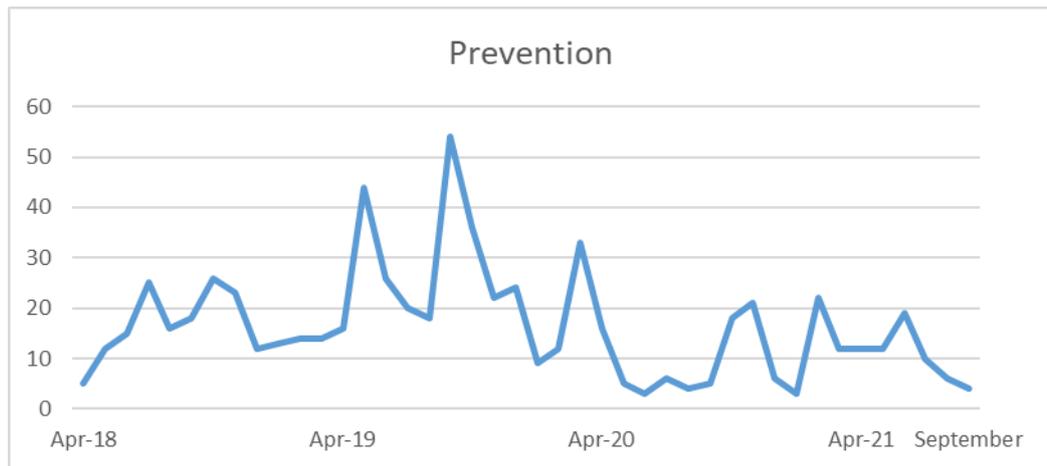


36. This shows high numbers of individuals abandoning or being evicted from temporary accommodation. This did not result in a consequential rise in numbers rough sleeping.
37. Key areas of success can be seen with positive move-on into private rented sector accommodation, supported accommodation and with households being supported to return to their previous accommodation and families.

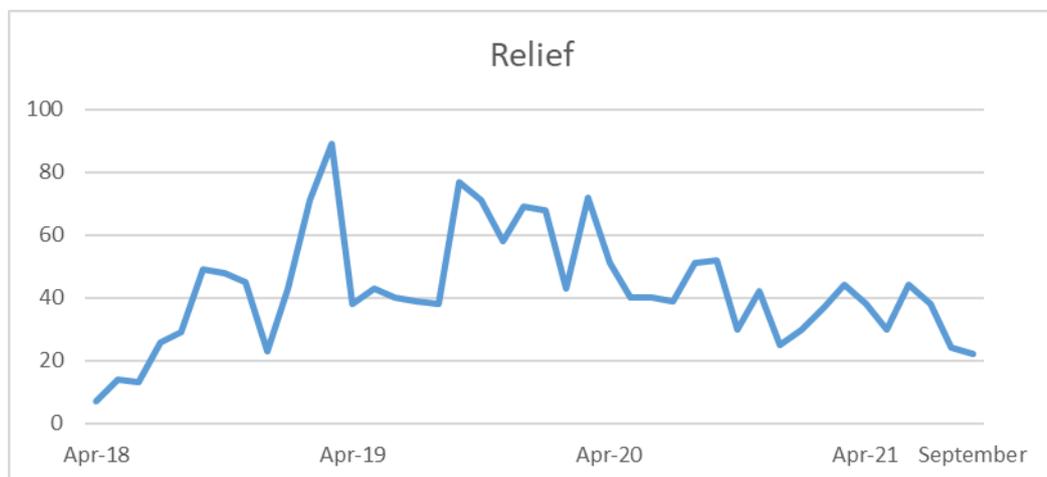
PREVENTION & RELIEF ACTIVITY

38. The terms of 'prevention' and 'relief' of homelessness have specific meaning in relation to homelessness and duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act. 'Prevention' is activity undertaken while someone is still in the accommodation they are at risk of homelessness from. In terms of a homeless application this stage lasts a maximum of 56 days. 'Relief' is activity taken when someone has lost their accommodation or the 56 day prevention stage has expired.
39. Effective prevention and relief activity is the key to long term and sustainable reductions in homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation.
40. This graph shows the numbers of households where their homelessness was successfully prevented. Figures are monthly and cover the period from

3rd April 2018 when the Homelessness Reduction Act came into force:



41. This graph shows the numbers of households where their homelessness was successfully relieved. Similarly, figures are monthly and cover the period from 3rd April 2018 when the Homelessness Reduction Act came into force:



42. These graphs both show rising trends in successful prevention and relief activity from the launch of the Homelessness Reduction Act until the start of the covid-19 pandemic. It is anticipated that as services return to normal the Home Options Team will resume this activity again.

CONCLUSIONS

43. The system is currently overwhelmed due to the twofold increase in approaches. That being from additional statutory duties from the Homelessness Reduction Act and from the demands of the 'Everyone In' programme.
44. Increases for statutory cases have been seen across all reasons for homelessness with particular spikes for reasons typically associated with rough sleeping and complex lives.

NEXT STEPS

45. Effective prevention and rehousing activity can be seen and rates are increasing. The continued emphasis on prevention activity going forward will

reduce demand on temporary accommodation.

46. A homelessness prevention sub-group has been established, led by SLHD Chief Executive Officer to drive forward prevention elements of the homeless strategy. This includes a particular focus on self-help and information.
47. The Home Options team continues to explore ways to increase access to private rented sector accommodation for homeless households as a key prevention and rehousing tool to meet increasing demand. This work has been supported by successful government grants bringing additional resources into the team.
48. With particular regard to rough sleeping, we will review our staffing resources to increase capacity and focus on areas requiring improvement. Again, we have been successful with MHCLG grant applications to bring in posts to support rough sleepers and ex-offenders.
49. We believe improvements can be made in our partnership working with complex lives and the wider partnership to ensure individuals are successfully supported through the accommodation and support pathway. The focus here being to improve successful move on rates and reduce the numbers of individuals being evicted or abandoning accommodation.
50. We have implemented a roadmap for individuals out of covid hotel provision which has seen a significant reduction in the last 2 months.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

45. N.A.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

46. N.A.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

- 47.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	Housing instability affects an individuals ability to find and maintain work.
	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity,</p>	

	<p>where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	
	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	
	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	<p>Stable housing protects and supports vulnerable families.</p>
	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective 	

	leadership and governance	
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RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

48. There is considerable additional pressure on Home Options and their provision of temporary accommodation. This is resulting in families being placed in B&B or hotel style accommodation and people waiting extended periods in temporary accommodation before being offered permanent housing. This creates unsustainable pressure on the Move-On Team and Support Team also.
49. Removing properties from general needs lettings to designation for interim accommodation reduces the move on options for those already in interim and only provides a short term remedy to the placement of households in B&B.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials SRF Date 01.10.21]

50. The Council's legal duties in relation to homelessness are set out in the body of the report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials NF Date 01/10/21]

51. Total costs for temporary accommodation (TA) use as part of homelessness delivery have increased significantly over the past four years. In 2018/19 they totalled £420k and had increased to £2.1m in 2020/21. A slight reduction is projected for 2021/22 at £1.7m.

These costs comprise rent for temporary accommodation, hotels and B&B, homeless shelter, meals and security. TA rent costs have doubled over the past four years to £460k, but the biggest TA increase is in hotel and B&B costs, which totalled nearly £1.3m in 2020/21 and will be in the region of £1.1m this year. Use of hotels incurs on costs of around 25% for provision of meals and security.

A large proportion of these costs are being recovered via Housing Benefit, with total incomes of £1.3m received and £1.1m projected respectively for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials DK Date 01/10/2021]

52. There are no direct HR implications to this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials PW Date 01/10/21]

53. There are no technology implications in relation to this report.

HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials SS Date 01/10/2021]

54. Poor health can be both a cause and consequence of homelessness and there is evidence to show that the health and wellbeing of those who are

homeless is significantly worse than the general population. Living on the streets, in temporary accommodation or in an insecure tenure can have an impact on physical and mental health, drug and alcohol use and the ability to utilise the health systems. This means that, as a group, those whom experience homelessness also experience high levels of health inequality, exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19.

Homelessness is more likely to affect those in society who are most at risk of experiencing poor health than the general population. It is recommended that decision makers take into account the inequalities experienced by these groups, and the barriers they may face, during planning, delivery and evaluation. It is important to consider the longer term consequences if services/support are not provided, for example, if a “reasonable” first offer of accommodation is refused or a client’s behaviour/inability to engage leads to them not being housed.

Having a secure, healthy and appropriate home will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing and improves our ability to contribute to society. By reducing the number of people sleeping rough, homeless or at risk of homelessness it can be expected that there will be a positive health impact on this vulnerable population. Although short term placements are essential to get people off the streets and into a safe, healthier environment and can be necessary to reduce immediate risk, it is important that there is an adequate supply of and access to affordable settled housing to both prevent homelessness and enable progression out of the temporary supported housing pathway.

It is recommended that prevention continues to be the approach of choice wherever possible to prevent our vulnerable communities developing more complex needs and experiencing further negative health impacts of homelessness and rough sleeping.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

55. Equality implications are considered in line with the Equality Act 2011 for the delivery of all SLHD services.

CONSULTATION

56. Not Applicable

BACKGROUND PAPERS

57. None

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Not Applicable

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