

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

AGENDA

HEALTH AND HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL

Date: Thursday, 12 September 2013

Time: 6:00 pm

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

Members:

Councillor Mrs M E Ellerton (Chairman)

Councillor T G Knight (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Miss S M Bell

P J Davies

N R Gregory

D L Steadman

Mrs K K Trott

Deputies: G Fazackarley

D C S Swanbrow

D M Whittingham



1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Health and Housing Policy Development and Review Panel meeting held on 18 July 2013.

3. Chairman's Announcements

4. Declarations of Interest and Disclosures of Advice or Directions

To receive any declarations of interest from members in accordance with Standing Orders and the Council's Code of Conduct and disclosures of advice or directions received from Group Leaders or Political Groups, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

5. Deputations

To receive any deputations of which notice has been lodged.

6. Presentation on Local Health Priorities

To receive a presentation from Ruth Milton, the Director of Public Health, on the role of the Health & Wellbeing Board and the Health Priorities for Fareham.

7. Presentation on Fareham & Gosport Clinical Commissioning Group

To receive a presentation by Dr David Chilvers on the Strategic Priorities of the Fareham & Gosport Clinical Commissioning Group.

8. Discharging the Homelessness Duty through Accommodation in the Private Rented Sector (Pages 5 - 18)

To consider a report by the Director of Community on Discharging the Homelessness Duty through Accommodation in the Private Rented Sector.

9. Review of Temporary Accommodation (Pages 19 - 30)

To consider a report by the Director of Community on a Review of Temporary Accommodation.

10. Review of the Work Programme 2013/14 (Pages 31 - 34)

To consider a report by the Director of Community, which invites the Panel to review the work programme for 2013/14.

P GRIMWOOD
Chief Executive Officer

Civic Offices
www.fareham.gov.uk
4 September 2013

**For further information please contact:
Democratic Services, Civic Offices, Fareham, PO16 7AZ
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FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Health and Housing Policy Development and Review Panel

(to be confirmed at the next meeting)

Date: Thursday, 18 July 2013

Venue: Collingwood Room - Civic Offices

PRESENT:

Mrs M E Ellerton (Chairman)

T G Knight (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: Miss S M Bell, P J Davies, N R Gregory, D L Steadman and
Mrs K K Trott

Also Present: Councillor B Bayford, Executive Member for Housing (items 3 &
10)

The Vice-Chairman, Councillor T G Knight took the chair at the start of the meeting due to Mrs M E Ellerton being delayed.



1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

It was AGREED that the minutes of the meeting of the Health and Housing Policy Development and Review Panel held on 23 May 2013 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman invited Councillor Bayford, the Executive member for Housing to give an update on the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) meeting he had recently attended.

Councillor Bayford informed the Panel that during the CCG meeting they had been informed that physiotherapists have now been appointed across the county tasked with specifically reducing slips, trips and falls amongst older people. In addition to this the CCG discussed the issue of the increase in the number of patients attending A&E, which is felt is as a result of the 111 service and lack of a GP out of hours service.

The Panel discussed issues with the New Community Hospital and expressed concern over the current management of the hospital.

Councillor Bayford informed the Panel that he has recently been appointed as a District Council representative on to the Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISCLOSURES OF ADVICE OR DIRECTIONS

There were no declarations of interest or disclosures of advice or directions made at this meeting.

5. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations made at this meeting.

6. PRESENTATION ON FAREHAM'S ECO-HOUSING EXEMPLAR

The Panel received a presentation by the Senior Housing Officer (Enabling) which outlined Fareham's proposal to build some Eco-Housing exemplars.

The presentation explained that the Government has made a commitment to cut carbon emissions and for new homes to be zero carbon by 2016, and that as a result of this Fareham Borough Council will need to explore ways to make current properties more energy efficient and new homes, including the new Welborne development, zero carbon.

The presentation outlined "PASSIVHAUS" a construction concept for building energy efficient housing, which focuses on high levels of insulation, minimising air leakage, avoiding the use of thermal bridging, using mechanical ventilation and the use of passive solar gain. It was explained to the Panel that this concept is advocated in the Draft Welborne Strategy, and that the Council is currently looking to trial a small scale build of approximately 6 houses in Cold East Close.

It was AGREED that the Senior Housing Officer (Enabling) be thanked for his presentation.

7. THE GOVERNMENT'S GREEN DEAL

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Community which outlined the main aspects of the Government's Green Deal Policy and the actions that the Council propose to take to promote energy efficiency measures in private sector residential accommodation.

Members acknowledged the Council's duty to promote the scheme but raised concerns about the likely level of take up of the scheme by residents due to the scheme being complicated and not producing any immediate financial benefits.

It was AGREED that the Panel endorses membership of the Solent Green Deal scheme as a promotional partner.

8. FLOATING SUPPORT SERVICES FOR OLDER PERSONS

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Community on Floating Support Services for Older Persons, which outlined a proposal to extend the support service currently provided to sheltered housing tenants to older persons living in the borough irrespective of their tenure.

Members expressed concern over the possible additional work load that the Sheltered Housing Officer may incur. The Tenancy Services Manager informed members that there is the possibility that the service could be expanded in the future and that it could lead to additional staff and training.

It was AGREED that the Panel noted the proposal to extend the housing support service to older persons living in the borough regardless of their tenure.

Councillor Mrs M E Ellerton joined the meeting at this point and took the chair.

9. AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Community on the Affordable Housing programme which outlined the Council's achievements in the delivery of affordable housing since 2011 and the progress made towards meeting the target of 500 homes by 2017.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Director of Community addressed the Panel on this item to give a verbal update on the progress of Collingwood House. The Panel was informed that following a meeting of the Executive on 1 July 2013 it was agreed that the tender for the works to redevelop Collingwood House be awarded to the Leadbitter Group. It is hoped that the works will be completed by March 2015.

It was AGREED that: -

(a) the Panel noted the current affordable housing programme and progress made towards the provision for 2013-17; and

(b) the Panel noted the progress made on Collingwood House.

10. REVIEW OF TENANCY AGREEMENTS

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Community which reviewed the current Tenancy Agreements and outlined the consultation process and timetable.

At the invitation of the Chairman Councillor Bayford addressed the Panel on this item.

The Chairman and Councillor Mrs Trott, who formed part of the working group tasked with updating the tenancy agreements, addressed the Panel on this item and explained some of the changes and the reasons for them.

It was AGREED that the Panel endorses the proposed changes to the tenancy agreement and noted the proposed timetable for consultation.

11. REVIEW OF THE WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

The Panel considered a report by the Director of Community which reviewed the Work Programme for 2013/14.

Councillor Gregory requested a report to be brought to the Panel on Potential Fareham Borough Council Sites for Development. The Director of Community advised investigations are still taking place regarding this, but agreed that this could be considered for a future meeting.

It was AGREED that the Work Programme, as set out in Appendix A of the report, be approved.

(The meeting started at 6.00 pm
and ended at 7.46 pm).

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Health and Housing Policy Development Review Panel

Date **12 September 2013**

Report of: **Director of Community**

Subject: **DISCHARGING THE HOMELESSNESS DUTY THROUGH
ACCOMMODATION IN THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR**

SUMMARY

The Localism Act 2011 introduced significant changes to the way in which local authorities can deal with applications for social housing and homelessness. Effective from 9 November 2012, the Act enables local authorities to end the main homelessness rehousing duty through an offer of accommodation in the private rented sector.

RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to approve the policy to enable the Council to discharge its homelessness duty into the private rented sector.

INTRODUCTION

1. The demand for social rented accommodation outstrips supply with over 1300 households on the Housing Waiting List and over 1,000 approaches for housing advice a year. The Council has for many years now, been actively engaging with private landlords to place those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness into the private rented sector with their consent
2. The Council has various duties under the homelessness legislation (Housing Act 1996 Part 7). The main homelessness duty requires the council to secure accommodation for households that are eligible for assistance, homeless through no fault of their own, in 'priority need' e.g. families with dependent children, those who are considered vulnerable for some reason and who have a local connection to the district. Historically, households could turn down offers of suitable private rented sector accommodation and await an offer of social housing, whilst being housed in temporary accommodation provided by the Council.
3. The Localism Act contains powers to allow local authorities to end the main homelessness duty with an offer of private rented accommodation, with a minimum 12 month assured shorthold tenancy, without requiring the applicant's consent.

INTRODUCING THE POWER

4. Having the ability to discharge the Council's homelessness duty into the private rented sector will provide the Council with more accommodation options to offer to a household to whom a homelessness duty has been accepted. This should result in homeless families having a shorter stay in temporary accommodation and often avoiding the need to go into temporary accommodation in the first place.
5. There are various conditions that need to be met in order to discharge the Council's homelessness duty in this way and the policy at Appendix A sets these out in detail.
6. As part of the review of temporary accommodation, the ability to secure suitable accommodation in the private rented sector that complies with the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012, has been considered and proposals to develop a new approach to attract private landlords is being pursued. (See Review of Temporary Accommodation Report on this agenda)

RISK ASSESSMENT

7. Deciding not to adopt the power could result in the increase in demand for temporary accommodation along with households staying in temporary accommodation for longer periods of time, placing increasing pressure on the Housing Options Service.

CONCLUSION

8. By adopting the Policy, the Council will have the opportunity to work more closely with private sector landlords to secure suitable accommodation for statutory homeless households. This will mean fewer households will need to go into temporary accommodation and those that do, will be able to move on within relatively short timescales, compared to the current average move on time.

Appendices:

Appendix A – [Policy to discharge homelessness duty into the Private Rented Sector](#)

Background Papers:

Reference Papers:

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Sara Head. (Ext 4369)

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FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Policy to discharge homelessness duty into the Private Rented Sector

July 2013

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1 Background

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 has made significant changes to the way in which local authorities can deal with applications for social housing and homelessness applications under Parts 6 and 7 of the Housing Act 1996. Local authorities owe applicants who are homeless, eligible for assistance, in priority need and not intentionally homeless the main housing duty to secure suitable accommodation (unless a referral to another local authority can be made under the local connection provisions).
- 1.2 The Localism Act allows local authorities to fully discharge the full housing duty by a 'private rented sector offer' (s193(7AA)-(7AC) Housing Act 1996 as amended by s.148 (5)-(7) Localism Act 2011. This must be an offer of an assured shorthold tenancy and be for a minimum fixed term period of one year.

2 Suitability of accommodation

- 2.1 The Government introduced the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order on 9 November 2012 for such private rented sector offers. This legislation was brought in to ensure that the suitability and location of accommodation are properly considered by Local Authorities when ending the main homelessness duty. The current guidance on suitability contained in the Homelessness Code of Guidance will also continue to apply.

The Suitability of Accommodation Order requires a property that will be offered in discharge of the local authorities' homelessness duty to meet the following conditions:

- **Location** – be located to minimise disruption to education employment and caring responsibilities, take account of the proximity and accessibility of existing medical facilities and other support, access to local services, amenities and transport. Where the property is outside the district, the Local Authority (LA) must notify the LA within whose district it is situated within 14 days. The property must also be affordable.
- **Physical condition of the property** – have been inspected and assessed by qualified staff, within Fareham Borough Council prior to offer, to ensure that it is in reasonable physical condition. (Suitability Checklist to be completed for each property)
- **Health and Safety Matters** – meet the requirements of regulations 5 & 7 of the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994. Have appropriate fire safety equipment installed such as smoke alarms.

Have reasonable precautions to prevent the possibility of carbon monoxide poisoning to include a valid Gas Safety Certificate and the installation of a carbon monoxide alarm. Have a valid Energy Performance Certificate

- **Landlord behaviour** – for the LAs to have satisfied itself that the landlord is a fit and proper person to act in the capacity of a landlord.
- **Evidence of good management & tenancy deposit scheme** – The landlord must provide a written tenancy agreement and also protect the deposit in one of the national tenancy deposit protection schemes.

- 2.2 Where possible, households will be encouraged to take part in accompanied viewings of any property identified for their needs prior to taking up the tenancy in order that the Council can be made aware at an early stage of any issues that the applicant may have with regard to the property.

3. Policy aims and objectives

- 3.1 This policy works alongside the Council's Housing Allocations Policy, Tenancy Strategy, Housing Options and Homelessness Strategy and complies with:
- The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002
 - The Localism Act 2011
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012
 - Homelessness Code of Guidance 2006
- 3.2 This policy will ensure a comprehensive and consistent needs and risk assessment is carried out for each statutory homeless household, this approach will ensure applicants' needs are appropriately met at all times.
- 3.3 This policy will also ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

4 Assessment Procedure

4.1 Fareham Borough Council will wherever possible try to secure accommodation within its own boundary area. However, if accommodation is not available, neighboring boroughs & districts will be considered. There is no restriction on how far outside the borough of Fareham a property will be secured, however applicants' wishes will be considered where possible.

4.2 Each case will be assessed on its own merit. Enquiries will be made by the local authority into the following areas of need and risk:

- The financial circumstances of applicants, the affordability of available accommodation and eligibility under Local Housing Allowance
- The physical, mental and emotional health needs of applicants and practical support required to maintain independent living
- Neighbourhood preferences where these are linked to social support networks and personal safety
- Recent housing history and the status of the homelessness application

4.3 The outcome of these enquiries will be recorded by the Housing Options Team and will determine whether the household is considered eligible for a private rented sector offer. The policy for selecting households for properties is detailed in section five

4.4 To enable the Council to discharge its duty in the most appropriate manner and where appropriate, the Council will work with partner agencies that provide tenancy support to particular groups of vulnerable persons.

5 Assessed as suitable for discharge into private sector

5.1 A private sector tenancy will be considered for statutorily accepted households initially but each case will be assessed on its own merits and a thorough assessment process will be undertaken to ensure that this kind of accommodation is appropriate. If this proves not to be the case then alternative options will be considered.

- 5.2 It is acknowledged that a private rented sector tenancy may not be the most appropriate housing option for some client groups.
- 5.3 Single person households aged *under* 35 will normally be considered for shared housing only, unless they are in an exempt category of persons. Single person households aged *35 and over* will be considered for bedsits, studio or one bedroom units. All other households will be considered for accommodation suitable for their family size and composition.
- 5.4 All households referred to in 5.3 above must:
- have an accepted homeless application
 - have been assessed by Fareham Borough Council as able to afford a private rented sector offer

6 Offers of accommodation

- 6.1 The allocation of available properties will be at the local authority's discretion. Each case will be assessed on individual circumstances and in line with the terms and procedures set out in this policy. At all times, the landlord of the property will have the final decision on who will be accepted into the property.
- 6.1 If an applicant is deemed to be suitable for a private sector offer and a suitable property is available, they will be made an offer immediately. The private sector offer must be an offer of an assured short hold tenancy, with a minimum fixed term of 12 months.
- 6.2 Under the terms and procedures set out in this policy, Fareham Borough Council will consider its statutory homeless duty discharged if a suitable offer is made. Once the offer has been formally made, the applicant's homeless application will be closed.
- 6.3 If a statutory homeless applicant refuses or fails to respond to a suitable offer of accommodation in the private or social sector, then Fareham Borough Council can end its statutory duty to provide accommodation. The local authority will explain the applicant's right to a review of the suitability of the offer of accommodation. The applicant will also be informed that they may lose their right to temporary accommodation.
- 6.4 An applicant, whose statutory homeless duty has ended as a result of their refusal or failure to respond, will have their housing register application dealt with in line with Fareham Borough Councils Housing Allocations Policy.

7 New approaches from applicants previously housed into the private sector under this policy

- 7.1 If an applicant becomes unintentionally homeless from their private rented tenancy within two years, the statutory homeless duty automatically revives (regardless of priority need). This reinstatement of the homelessness duty can only happen once.
- 7.2 In cases where the duty revives and the applicant applies to a different local authority, the applicant can be referred back to the original local authority, unless there is an identified risk of harm to the household. The revived duty may again be discharged through a further offer of private rented accommodation, in accordance with this policy.

8 Reviews on the suitability of accommodation offered

- 8.1 As part of the offer process, applicants will be advised of their right to request a review on the suitability of the accommodation offered. Applicants may also be advised of advice services that can help.

Review process

- 8.2 Applicants can request a review within 21 days of the local authority telling them that they consider an offer to be suitable and that it has discharged its duty under homeless legislation.
- 8.3 Review requests can be made in writing or verbally to the Housing Options Manager. The Housing Options Officer will advise the applicant of the full procedure and process for completing a review of the suitability of the accommodation offered.
- 8.4 Once a review request has been received, the Housing Options Manager or delegated senior officer will write to the applicant to acknowledge the request and provide details of the review procedure.
- 8.5 The review will be completed within 56 days of receiving the applicant's original review request (unless a longer period is agreed).
- 8.6 The review will be carried out by a senior officer who will not have been involved in the original decision.

Review outcome

- 8.7 Once the review has been completed the Housing Options Manager (or delegated senior officer) will write to the applicant informing them of the review decision. The letter will explain the review decision, how the local authority reached this decision, and the right to appeal on a point of law to the County Court. An appeal must be made within 21 days of being

notified of the review decision. (For further information on the appeals processes see below).

Accommodation options during and after a review decision

- 8.8 During the review process the Council is not legally obliged to provide the applicant with temporary accommodation. Applicants will be advised to accept the final offer of accommodation whilst the review is being considered. This is because the applicant will have somewhere to stay during the review process and there is no guarantee of a further offer of accommodation following the outcome of the review.
- 8.9 During the review process the property originally offered, may at the landlord's discretion, be held open whilst the review is considered. If the review is unsuccessful and the property is still available, the applicant may be offered the property again. In this instance the homeless duty will be considered to have been discharged.

9 County Court Appeals

An applicant can appeal to the County Court if they feel the review decision is legally incorrect or if the local authority has not met the time limit to complete the review process. All appeals must be made to the County Court within 21 days of the review decision. Applicants considering an appeal to the County Court are advised to obtain independent legal advice. The local authority is not legally obliged to provide the applicant with accommodation during an appeal process.

10 Complaints to Local Government Ombudsman

- 10.1 If an applicant is not satisfied with a review decision, they can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not consider certain matters, for example if 12 months has passed since the cause for complaint occurred or when matters are, or could be, subject to court proceedings.
- 10.2 The Ombudsman will consider a complaint if an applicant believes they have been treated unfairly as a result of maladministration
- 10.3 Contact details for the Local Government Ombudsman are:

The Local Government Ombudsman
 PO Box 4771
 Coventry, CV4 0EH
 Telephone: 0762 480 3014 Website: www.lgo.uk

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION – SUITABILITY CHECKLIST

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION				
LOCATION	YES	NO	N/A	COMMENTS
Outside FBC district – how far?				
Disruption to employment, caring responsibilities/needs or education of household?				
Reasonable proximity to/accessibility of medical facilities and support which are essential to wellbeing				
Reasonable proximity to/accessibility of local services, amenities and transport				
ACCOMMODATION ITSELF	YES	NO	N/A	COMMENTS i.e. Details or work needed
In reasonable condition generally				
Has fixed form of heating, e.g. gas central heating, storage heaters				
Is free from damp and/or mould				
Suitable kitchen & bathroom facilities				
Handrails & balustrading to stairs				
Electrics certificated (PAT) and appear to be undamaged				
Mains wired smoke detectors in hall and landing spaces				
Furniture complies with Fire Regs				
Valid gas safety certificate				
Carbon monoxide detector supplied				
Energy Performance Certificate available				
If HMO, is it licensed?				
Landlord is a fit & proper person				
Landlord tenancy agreement suitable				

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Health and Housing Policy Development Review Panel

Date **12 September 2013**

Report of: **Director of Community**

Subject: **REVIEW OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION**

SUMMARY

There have been a number of significant changes to national housing policy including the Localism Act 2011 and the changes to benefit entitlement introduced by the Welfare Reform Act 2012. These changes could result in an increase in the number of households seeking housing advice from the Council's Housing Options team. In light of these changes a review has been undertaken of all of the temporary accommodation that is currently available to determine whether a different approach should be taken.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Panel supports the new approach to the management and procurement of Temporary Accommodation as set out in the Report.

INTRODUCTION

1. There have been some significant changes to national housing policies in the last couple of years including those made to the benefits and tax credits system following the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act 2012. Some of these changes will have a direct impact on the ability of some households to continue to afford their housing costs which may result in an increase in the number of households seeking housing assistance from the Council. Some of the caps and thresholds being introduced could also present challenges for the Council as to the type and size of accommodation it is able to secure for some of these households.
2. As a result of these national changes, the structure of the Housing Options team has been reviewed to increase the number of front line Housing Options Officers and included the creation of a new Housing Initiatives Team. The Initiatives Team has reviewed the availability of temporary accommodation (TA) throughout the Borough to help identify current gaps and inform future needs. The other key issue which has been reviewed is how long households are staying in TA and whether more can be done to find them a more permanent housing option.

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION – BACKGROUND AND CURRENT SITUATION

3. Local authorities have a legal duty to house certain people in their area who are, or who are likely to become homeless. They may have become homeless due to the general economic situation, the changes brought about by the Welfare Reform Act, mortgage repossession, the lack of affordable housing for people on lower incomes or family issues. Only 5% of the Borough's housing stock is privately rented and the majority of this exceeds the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) level which someone on full Housing Benefit would be able to afford. Similarly, house prices in the area are out of reach for local people on a low income.
4. Wherever possible Housing Officers try to prevent anyone from becoming homeless but when this cannot be achieved then it is necessary for the household to be placed in some form of Temporary Accommodation (TA). In an emergency or if there is no other TA available, this could include the household being placed in bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation for a short period of time. The use of B&B accommodation needs to be avoided wherever possible, both in terms of its impact on the household, and also the cost to the Council. The average weekly cost for a family in B&B is around £500, with a six week stay costing approximately £3,000.
5. The Government has issued statutory guidance to Local Authorities through the *Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003* which states that B&B accommodation is not suitable for families with children and households that include a pregnant woman, unless there is no alternative accommodation available and then only for a maximum of six weeks.
6. There is a range of different properties which can be used as TA in an emergency to accommodate households who are homeless. It could be a B&B, a hostel (such as 101 Gosport Road), private sector leased (PSL) accommodation or Council or housing association stock.
7. The Council currently has access to 106 units of TA. These TA units range in size and type and are managed by various Registered Providers (RP). The breakdown of the units, including the ownership of each property, is contained in Appendix 1. The majority of this

accommodation is within the Borough, with a very small number of properties in Gosport and Havant. Discussions have been held with RPs operating in the Borough to see whether they have units of accommodation which could be used for TA. However, no properties were identified as being suitable.

8. Members will be aware of the direct access hostel operated by Two Saints at 101 Gosport Road which provides 18 x 1 bedroom flats as emergency TA for single homeless households and that Gosport Borough Council are also able to make referrals to the hostel.
9. First Wessex own two schemes in the Borough which provide self-contained accommodation for homeless households. The first of these schemes is Meon House which is situated in the High Street. There are fifteen one and two bedroom flats which have been used as TA for approximately ten years. With the exception of three households who have been in residence for over two years, the average stay is six months. The scheme provides accommodation close to the town centre and it should be retained and used for those accepted homeless households who need support and/or who are first time tenants. The proposed maximum period of occupation in Meon House is around six months.
10. Sharland Place is First Wessex's other scheme which is situated in South Fareham on Bishopsfield Road, adjoining Broadlaw Walk. The block comprises eighteen one and two bedroom flats which have also been used as TA for around ten years, for the same client group as Meon House. Households in this block have generally been in residence for longer periods of time than in the other TA, making the average stay twenty one months. Therefore a case could be made for the flats to become permanent housing over time, which would help to make the local community a more settled one. However, this would result in a net loss of available TA across the Borough. However, before commencing the change of use of these flats from TA to permanent, further discussions will be held with First Wessex to ensure that alternative TA is identified in the Borough to offset any loss of TA at Sharland Place.
11. In addition to Meon House and Sharland Place, First Wessex have their own PSL scheme, known as Housing Associations as Managing Agents (HAMA) and currently have 22 properties they manage in the Borough. However it is difficult for RPs to manage TA across various local authority areas as staff are focused mainly on their core housing management business. In addition, TA can be difficult to manage and in the past there have been problems with anti-social behaviour at Sharland Place and Meon House. Although these properties constitute just over half of all TA used by the council and are therefore a valuable resource, it is a very small part of the RP's total housing stock.

COUNCIL TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION - FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12. The TA 'borrowed' from the Council's permanent housing stock is managed by the new Initiatives Team within the Strategic Housing division, with any repair works required being carried out by the Council's Responsive Maintenance team. It is important that any voids in TA are kept to a minimum as there is a loss of rental income if the property is not let and the Council could also be meeting the cost of a household in B&B.
13. The Council's Private Sector Leased properties (PSL), which are leased from private landlords for a minimum of twelve months, make up around 30% of the available TA in the borough. Through the PSL scheme, the Council takes on the responsibility for the tenancy

and guarantees a fixed rental income to the landlord irrespective of whether the property is occupied. We also guarantee to return the property to the landlord, at the end of the lease, in the same condition as when the property was originally leased (subject to normal wear and tear).

14. PSL rents are based on the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate for the property size. In return for managing the property on the landlords' behalf, the Council deducts 10% of the full rent charged to the tenant, before passing the remainder onto the landlord. The 34 PSL properties therefore generate a rental surplus of approximately £30,000 per year which helps to cover the management and administration costs of the PSL properties.
15. The Council receives Housing Benefit subsidy from the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) as reimbursement for Housing Benefit paid out to tenants in TA. Local authorities rely on Housing Benefit subsidy to cover the costs of providing TA as most households in temporary accommodation claim Housing Benefit.
16. However, the Government has increased the maximum amount of Housing Benefit subsidy which could be charged for TA for homeless households, which is based on 90% of the appropriate January 2011 Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate for the property plus £60. The £60 is the 'management element', which is in recognition of the increased financial costs associated with providing TA. The rents currently charged by the Council do not include this management element, for example a 3 bedroom PSL currently has a rent of £750 per month (LHA level) but if the Council charged the full amount under this formula the maximum rent that could be charged for a 3 bedroom property would be £935 per month. This gives an additional management charge income of £185 per month, but of course will result in a higher cost to the tenant.
17. If this new management charge was added to all of the Council's PSL existing properties this would achieve an additional rental surplus of approximately £45,000, per annum (£75,000 in total) but would result in a significant rent increase for existing tenants. Therefore, it is proposed that when a new PSL property is taken on, the new rent formula will be applied and when a property becomes void the higher rent will be charged to the new TA tenant.
18. There are also financial liabilities associated with the PSL scheme. The rent is guaranteed to be paid to the landlord for the full twelve months, even if the tenants default on their payments or the property is void. Therefore, there is a potential annual liability of approximately £220,000 for the 34 properties. In reality, very little of this is required. The current rent loss stands at approximately £5,000 per annum and while this figure fluctuates, it generally stays at around this level.
19. In addition to the PSL scheme the Council also works with private landlords through the Assistance for Families For a Dwelling (AFFORD) scheme. The AFFORD scheme is in effect a match-making service, whereby we find a tenant for the landlord who has a property available to rent, which is both affordable and in a good condition. Through the AFFORD scheme the Landlord enters directly into a Tenancy Agreement with the Council's nominated tenant. In order to make this an attractive option for the landlord the Council offers a bond equivalent to one month's rent, together with a rent guarantee for six months.
20. The AFFORD scheme has been a very effective way for the Council to find homeless households good quality accommodation in the private rented sector and there are

currently 94 live AFFORD cases throughout the Borough. The total rent liability for the fourteen properties which are still within the first six months of the tenancy is currently approximately £61,000. To date though, the average financial liability for an AFFORD property is just over £200.

FUTURE TA REQUIREMENTS

21. The current provision of TA has been reviewed to establish whether it is suitable, sufficient and sustainable for the predicted future needs. The introduction of the changes under the Welfare Reform Act mean that some households will be less able to afford their current accommodation and therefore could be more likely to be at risk of becoming homeless.
22. In recent months, nine units of TA have been removed from the list of available accommodation; four at Gibraltar Close (which will be demolished as part of the Collingwood House redevelopment) and five units at the Dibles mobile home caravan park which have been sold with a capital receipt to the Council of just over £200,000.
23. Through the initial review of TA it has been highlighted that some tenants who are currently in TA are staying longer than was originally anticipated, some in excess of two years. This means that there are other households waiting for TA who cannot be provided with accommodation. The reasons for this are varied with some households not bidding for new housing through LetSelect and some not looking for private rented housing opportunities. Before the restructure of the Housing Options team, the focus was more on dealing with new homeless cases that needed re-housing rather than reviewing existing households that had been housed in TA and trying to ensure they were proactively looking for a permanent home.

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION – FUTURE PROPOSALS

24. In general terms, the properties managed directly by the Council through the PSL scheme work best as TA as there is direct control of all aspects of the management of the properties, including rent arrears and void periods. As the tenants are also being supported as homeless households, this also helps to make the management more cost effective.
25. Existing TA will be more proactively managed and tenancies will be regularly reviewed to try and move occupants on to the next stage of accommodation. The three council owned bedsits at 24 Wickham Road are ideally located close to the town centre and have been part furnished. It therefore makes sense to continue to use these properties as an alternative to bed and breakfast. Ideally the maximum period of occupation in these properties will be six weeks, before tenants are moved on. However, it is recognised that some may need to stay for slightly longer.
26. Move on plans should be in place for homeless households in TA and once they have demonstrated that they can manage a tenancy, they can be moved on into an AFFORD property or another property in the private rented sector. The proposed maximum period of occupation in the PSLs is twelve months.
27. It is proposed that discussions are held with First Wessex and Sovereign to review their existing TA in the Borough with a view to:-

- Have a managed transition of the 18 units of TA at Sharland Place to permanent accommodation. This would be First Wessex's preference but there will need to be some discussion as to the how the transition will work in practice.
- Explore the possibility of the HAMA properties being transferred from First Wessex and Sovereign to the Council's PSL scheme. First Wessex has confirmed that this is feasible and as the terms of their HAMA agreement is very similar to the Council's PSL scheme, it is likely that the existing landlords would be in agreement to the switch.

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION - ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

28. The number of new housing advice cases has been consistent at around 1,100 for the last two years and is likely to be similar this year. However, the number of households placed into TA increased sharply from 340 in 2011-12 to 424 in 2012-13; an increase of 84. Based on the figures from quarter one of 2013-14 it is likely that there will be a further increase this year. Additional details can be found in Appendix 2. However it is difficult to predict the future need for TA taking into account the welfare reforms as it may take at least 12-18 months before we really see the outcomes associated with these changes. Therefore, there is a strong likelihood that the pressure on TA will increase.
29. There are currently between fifteen and twenty households at any time who are waiting for TA; mainly families who need two or three bedroom accommodation. There is not enough of this type of property available at present. In addition there is a need for bedsits and/or 1 bedroom flats for single people and childless couples and maybe a small hostel-type establishment is an option worth exploring. The projected numbers of accommodation required can be found in Appendix 2.
30. If the number of households needing TA increases at a similar rate to that of 2011/12, we could need an increase in the number of TA properties for 2014/15. If the current pattern of need is followed, this would require a significant increase in the number of one and two bedroom units, and a slight increase in the number of 3 bedroom units. By the end of March 2014, the aim is to secure a minimum of fifteen additional units of TA. The number of TA units required for 2014/15 will be dependent upon the impact of welfare reforms and being able to reduce the length of stay in TA for existing homeless households.
31. By increasing the number of TA properties this will have staffing implications that will need to be considered in the future, but the aim will be to cover any additional management costs through increased income.

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION – SECURING MORE PROPERTY

32. Expanding the portfolio of TA will be challenging due to the size of the private rented sector in Fareham. As a result, it may be necessary to look at housing opportunities for local people outside of the borough. There is a possibility that some additional council accommodation could be used, but this will only generate a very small number of units. Therefore, the most likely source of accommodation is still from private landlords in the borough. However, in order to make the Council's PSL and AFFORD schemes more attractive to them, some additional incentives will need to be investigated.
33. One option that has been explored nationally by some local authorities is setting up a local lettings agency to attract landlords and encourage them to let their properties to customers of the Housing Options Service. For example, it may be possible to provide

additional services such as free, or discounted gas and electric checks, energy performance certificates (EPCs), a maintenance service, rent guarantee insurance, etc. The level of interest in these options and the associated costs will need to be researched further to determine whether they are viable.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

34. It is possible to increase the income from the PSL properties by including the management element of the TA subsidy in the rents, as outlined in paragraphs 16 and 17 of this Report. This would increase the cost of the rent to the tenant. However, it is likely that the DWP will provide the additional management charge over and above the LHA rent to the Council through some form of additional Housing Benefit subsidy. The details as to how this will operate nationally have not yet been confirmed by the Government.

RISK ASSESSMENT

35. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report. However, if additional TA is not procured, this could lead to higher bed and breakfast costs being incurred by the Council.

CONCLUSION

36. The changes to national housing policy and the difficult economic conditions are likely to result in pressure on the Council to provide TA for local households in housing need. Although it is difficult to accurately predict the amount of TA that will be needed in the future, recent trends indicate that more properties will be needed within the next twelve months. Recent advertising in Fareham Today prompted a number of Landlords to offer their properties to the Council under the PSL scheme and further advertising will be considered later in the year.

37. To ensure that sufficient TA can be provided, a number of steps will be taken. The management element of the TA subsidy will be included in the rent for all new tenancies from 1st October 2013. A package of incentives and management offers will be devised to encourage landlords to work with the Council and this will be reported to Members later in the year.

Appendix One - [Temporary Accommodation Details](#)

Appendix Two - [Housing Options and B&B Statistics](#)

Background Papers:

Reference Papers:

Report to Health and Housing PDR Panel on 14th March 2013 – “Review of Temporary Accommodation.”

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Andrea Howells. (Ext 4370)

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APPENDIX 1 - TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION DETAILS

TA Housing Stock

There are 106 units of temporary accommodation, broken down as follows:

PROVIDER	PROPERTY SIZE					
	Bedsit	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	TOTAL
First Wessex HA	0	17	31	3	4	55
Sovereign HA	0	0	2	0	0	2
FBC (own stock)	3	4	4	4	0	15
FBC - Private Sector Leasing Scheme	0	13	12	8	1	34
Totals	3	34	49	15	5	106

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APPENDIX 2 - STATISTICS

Housing options and temporary accommodation statistics

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14*
ADVICE CASES	1179	1109	272
AVERAGE ADVICE CASES PER QUARTER	295	277	272
HOMELESS CASES	139	126	26
AVERAGE HOMELESS CASES PER QUARTER	35	32	26
PREVENTION/ADVICE CASES IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION	239	325	93
HOMELESS CASES IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION	101	99	17
TOTAL CASES IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION	340	424	440 (projected)
AVERAGE CASES IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PER QUARTER	85	106	110

2013/14* - Statistics for 1st quarter only. Average figures are based on 1st quarter data.

Bed and breakfast statistics

In 2012/13 there were 57 bed and breakfast short term placements, the majority of which were for less than 6 weeks. These are broken down as follows:

- 1 bedroom need – 38 cases
- 2 bedroom need – 14 cases
- 3 bedroom need – 5 cases

In quarter one of 2013/14 there were 12 bed and breakfast placements, broken down as follows:

- 1 bedroom need – 10 cases
- 2 bedroom need – 1 case
- 3 bedroom need – 1 case

Had there been sufficient temporary accommodation in which to place these households, there would have been no need for bed and breakfast placements.

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FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Health and Housing Policy Development Review Panel

Date **12 September 2013**

Report of: **Director of Community**

Subject: **REVIEW OF WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14**

SUMMARY

At its last meeting on 18 July 2013, the Health and Housing Policy Development and Review Panel agreed the Work Programme for 2013/14.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are now invited to further review the work programme for 2013/14.

INTRODUCTION

1. At the last meeting of the Panel on 18 July 2013, members reviewed and agreed the Panel's Work Programme for 2013/14. Members are now invited to give further consideration to the Work Programme for the current year.

REVISIONS TO THE WORK PROGRAMME

2. Members are asked to note the following revisions to the work programme:
 - (a) a report on New Tenancy Agreement has been added to 14 November 2013;
 - (b) a report titled Discharging the Homelessness Duty through Accommodation in the Private Rented Sector has been added to this meeting; and
 - (c) a presentation on Fareham & Gosport Clinical Commissioning Group has been added to this meeting.

RISK ASSESSMENT

3. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report

CONCLUSION

4. The Panel is now invited to endorse the programme of items as set out in the attached Appendix A.

Background Papers:

None

Reference Papers:

Health and Housing Policy Development and Review Panel meeting on 18 July 2013 – Minute 6.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Martyn George. (Ext 4400)

**HEALTH AND HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL
PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2013/14**

<u>MEETING DATES FOR 2013/14</u>	<u>ITEMS</u>
23 May 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the role of the Panel • Review of the work programme 2013/14 • Review of Sheltered Housing Stock • Hampshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy • Development of Land at Palmerston Avenue
18 July 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the work programme 2013/14 • Affordable Housing Programme • The Government's Green Deal • Floating Support Service for Older Persons • Fareham's Eco-Housing Exemplar • Review of Tenancy Agreements
12 September 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the work programme 2013/14 • Presentation on Local Health Priorities (invitation to Director of Public Health) • Presentation on Fareham & Gosport Clinical Commissioning Group • Review of Temporary Accommodation • Discharging the Homelessness Duty through Accommodation in the Private Rented Sector
14 November 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the work programme 2013/14 • Nominations Policy - Six monthly review • Review of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in the Borough • New Tenancy Agreement
16 January 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary overall review of work programme 2013/14

	<p>and draft 2014/15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welfare Reform - update• Review of Housing Arrears• Housing Initiatives (Accessing the private rented sector)
13 March 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final review of work programme for 2013/14 and draft for 2014/15• Empty Homes - Update• Collingwood House Update• Health Update• Homelessness Strategy 2014-17