

Housing and Health Committee	
Meeting Date	4 th March 2025
Report Title	Temporary Accommodation (TA) Spend – Scrutiny Report
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing and Communities
Lead Officer	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing and Communities
Classification	Open
Recommendations	The committee is recommended to: 1. To scrutinise the performance report and controls in place to manage the TA budget

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides the Housing and Health Committee with an update on the current performance in relation to TA and current budget position, the report also discusses the current controls in place to manage the TA budget.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council has a Housing Options Improvement Programme (HOIP) in place to manage and control the spend on TA. The costs of TA to Council's are increasing nationally and there is a risk to the overall financial position of the Council if it is not monitored and managed effectively. A refresh of the HOIP is being undertaken for the new financial year.
- 2.2 The Housing and Health Committee have made some significant investment in interventions to support the control of the TA budget, the most significant are the TA Purchase Programme and an investment in additional staff to work with clients so they can move effectively through the system. Both these investments are currently being implemented and should be fully in place for April 2025.
- 2.3 The Council receives a Homeless Prevention Grant (HPG) from MHCLG each year, in 2024/25 we received £952,700 and we have had £1,346,129 confirmed for 2025/26. Although this grant is welcomed it does not cover the full cost of providing the services and substantial growth has been made within the Council's base budget.
- 2.4 At the January Committee, a request was made to include the details of the Conditions of Grant for the Homeless Prevention Grant. The grant offer letter is shown in Appendix I. The grant conditions are more directive than past years and an initial analysis and gap analysis is being undertaken and will inform the revised HOIP. The performance data will also inform this report in the new financial year.

- 2.5 In addition to the enhanced grant for 2025/26 there is also a consultation currently live regarding the formula for a revised HPG formula for 2026/27 onwards. The revised formula does provide Swale with an increased grant based upon a similar overall funding pot. But there are concerns regarding the formula not taking into consideration some of the constraints of non-stock holding authorities. A copy of the submission will be shared with members of the committee.
- 2.4 This performance and budget report will be provided to the Housing and Health Committee, so they have a clear overview of the current position.
- 2.5 Statutory TA Placements – Total Households on last day of period

	22/23	23/24	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
No. in Statutory TA	337	305	281	285	274	
SBC Own Stock	3	3	12	21	28	
Homeless Hostel	8	14	11	12	10	
Housing Assn	79	84	73	61	76	
B&B and Nightly Let	247	204	185	191	160	
No. outside Statutory Duty (RSI Funded)	54	22	22	20	23	

TA Purchase Programme

	22/23	23/24	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
No. of SBC Owned Stock (cumulative)	3	8	19	27	40	

Households on the Housing Register

	22/23	23/24	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
No. of households on Housing Register	1,433	1,730	1,813	1,836	1887	
No. of lets through housing register.	297	423	133	89	72*	

*provisional

Affordable Homes Delivered

	22/23	23/24	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
New Affordable Homes	208	289	57	38	*	

*Q3 figures currently not available.

- 2.6 The performance data has not been updated since the last Committee meeting in January as we have not reached another quarter end. However, this quarter to date we have seen an uplift in TA with 290 households in Statutory TA at the time of writing the report. We do tend to see a seasonal uplift at this time of year as typically we see an increase in domestic abuse and relationship

breakdowns as well as the impact from the caravan park closures. We are also seeing a worrying increase in presentations from key workers.

- 2.7 The trend for reducing the use of B&B and Nightly let continues (although still makes up our largest proportion of provision) and we have seen an increase of use of our own stock this quarter as more properties have completed, this will be a continuing trend until the current programme is completed. Although we have now completed on 43 properties only 33 are currently in use because of works that have been required before occupation. These works are currently taking place to enable the use as TA. Once all properties are commissioned the void rates will also be included in this report.
- 2.8 The Housing Register demand has stabilised this quarter, with more Affordable Homes continue to be delivered at a good rate, although we know the future pipeline will not sustain these results.
- 2.9 In the last quarter we have started utilising Old Johnson House and this is fully occupied, we are still waiting for Bridge House to become available to us for Temporary Accommodation.
- 2.10 The Housing Options restructure is progressing as planned and we are completing the recruitment for the vacant positions, we have had a large number of applications to all the positions advertised. The service should be fully staffed by April.

Financial Monitoring

- 2.11 The gross external TA costs from April 2024– January 2025 was £3.4m which is a reduction compared to the same period in 2023/24 of £3.8m. This has been attributed to the reduction in the overall no. of households in TA and the use of our own TA during this financial year. The current year end prediction on the whole of the Housing Options budget position is currently predicted to be on budget.
- 2.12 We have had our RSI funding of £705,650 confirmed for 2025/26 at the same level as the previous year, this was highlighted as a risk in the last report. There is also indication that there will also be future years funding. This funding helps to maintain our rough sleeping service and enables The Quays (Supported Accommodation) to continue to operate.

2.13 Risks and Issues

- Demand for homelessness services across the country is still high and is anticipated to continue.
- We have seen limited mortgage repossession cases coming through and there are national reports of customers falling behind.
- We are waiting to use Bridge House; this should be in place shortly.
- Delivery of Affordable Housing remains an issue, despite planning committee securing a strong pipeline, there are not RPs prepared to purchase the properties.
- RPs have scaled back delivery programmes due to viability and capacity within the sector.

- We are experiencing high demand relating to Caravan Park Closures and the impact of the cold weather.
- Renters Rights Bill is predicting some landlords exiting the market.

3 Proposals

3.1 To scrutinise the performance report and controls in place to manage the TA budget.

4 Alternative Options

4.1 None

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 None.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Health & Housing - To aspire to be a borough where everyone has access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing. Running the Council - Working within our resources to proactively engage with communities and outside bodies to deliver in a transparent and efficient way
Financial, Resource and Property	This report looks at the performance monitoring in relation to the TA budget.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Local housing authorities have a duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households in priority need under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). Households might be placed in temporary accommodation pending the completion of inquiries into an application, or they might spend time waiting in temporary accommodation after an application is accepted until suitable secure accommodation becomes available.
Crime and Disorder	None at this stage.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	None at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	None at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	None at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The TA budget has been identified as a corporate risk, due to demand on the service and the budgetary impacts.

Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

None

8 Background Papers

8.1 There are no background papers.