



## CABINET

Tuesday, 5 January 2021

### TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PROCUREMENT AND PLACEMENT STRATEGY 2021-23

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The report outlines the Temporary Accommodation Procurement and Placement Strategy 2021-23 to be used by the Council in connection with the provision of temporary accommodation for homeless households in the district. It considers the procurement of accommodation along with how households will be allocated properties.
2. The Strategy ensures that the Council meets its legal duties and delivers the Housing Needs Service in a transparent way that partners and service users can access.
3. The report seeks Cabinet approval for the adoption of the Temporary Accommodation Procurement and Placement Strategy 2021-2023.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
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<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Richard Kerry Cabinet Member with responsibility for Housing
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<b>Supporting Officer:</b>	Fern Lincoln Housing Needs Service Manager 01502 523138 <a href="mailto:fern.lincoln@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">fern.lincoln@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a>
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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Temporary Accommodation (TA) Procurement and Placement Strategy ensures the Council's compliance with current legislation and case law. It sets out the ways in which the Council will procure sufficient suitable units of accommodation to address existing homelessness pressures, and how it will make decisions on who is placed into which properties. This strategy also has the aim of assisting the Council to achieve its objectives laid out in the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy approved by Cabinet in 2019.
- 1.2 The strategy covers a reasonably short period of two years as the homelessness situation in the district is very dynamic, and TA demand needs to be reviewed with some regularity. A variety of factors can positively or negatively impact TA requirements including, but not limited to, the Covid 19 global pandemic which gave rise to a public health emergency, changes in Government legislation, the current economic environment, and the current housing market.

## **2 THE STRATEGY**

- 2.1 The Strategy covers two areas - how the Council makes decisions about where and when to place people in TA to ensure we meet our legal obligations and adopt good practice, and an analysis of projected demand for temporary accommodation and managing delivery in order to ensure a sufficient supply of suitable accommodation, minimising any financial risk to the Council's General Fund.
- 2.2 The strategy outlines our procurement approach, setting out the challenges facing the Council in obtaining accommodation for homeless households, as well as outlining the general principles that will be followed when procuring TA. The document also provides a current estimate of the number of properties that are needed for these purposes and an action plan for meeting these needs.
- 2.3 The data contained in the strategy provides a broad analysis of recent demand for TA, current geographic rental costs in the district, household compositions, homelessness presentations and current TA availability. Collectively they inform future procurement requirements.
- 2.4 The second part of the strategy addresses TA placements and sets out the Council's policy towards the placement of homeless households in temporary accommodation. It covers all offers of temporary accommodation made under any of the provisions of the homelessness legislation which are detailed in the document. The TA Placement section provides clear direction and advice on the approach that the Council will take, which complies fully with current legislation and guidance.
- 2.5 The strategy, like all our Housing strategies, provides an action plan towards the end of the document that is clear and enables the Housing Needs Service to be held accountable for achieving the objectives. This will be reported on annually to the Cabinet Member for Housing.
- 2.6 The strategy seeks to outline our intentions over the next two years but also be unambiguous about how relevant legislation and case law is applied in the Council's processes to give guidance to staff. It additionally provides detail and clarity on the Council's approach to temporary accommodation for agencies and service users to guide them as to what to expect and minimise any potential challenges.

## **3 HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE EAST SUFFOLK STRATEGIC PLAN?**

- 3.1 The Council's Strategic Plan includes Enabling Communities as one of the five themes. This considers maximising health, wellbeing, and safety in our district. Housing and homelessness clearly sit within this area and providing suitable temporary

accommodation to meet the needs of homeless households contributes towards meeting the objectives set out within this theme.

#### **4 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no financial or governance implications with the adoption of the strategy. Any actions that involve a financial commitment would be subject to a further report to Cabinet.

#### **5 OTHER KEY ISSUES**

- 5.1 This report has been prepared having considered the results of an Equality Impact Assessment for which no group was identified as being disadvantaged by the Strategy. Careful procurement of PSL properties and selection of own stock temporary accommodation is something we have tried to balance to ensure we offer accessible properties when needed. We have ground floor accommodation for single household and families offering facilities such as level access shower and disabled access together with ground floor units to meet the needs of this client group. As such there has been a positive impact on our flexibility to offer accommodation and ensure we meet the needs of clients when TA is required.

#### **6 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 The Temporary Accommodation Procurement and Placement Strategy has been developed in response to the changing requirements of case law around provision of TA. It also seeks to minimise the risk of legal challenge by setting out clearly how the Council seeks to procure a sufficient supply of suitable TA, and how it makes the most appropriate use of this supply to meet its statutory homelessness responsibilities and discharge its duties.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Temporary Accommodation Procurement and Placement Strategy 2021-2023 be adopted.

#### **APPENDICES**

<b>Appendix A</b>	Temporary Accommodation Procurement and Placement Strategy 2021-23
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#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS – None**