



**Prosperous Communities  
Committee**

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

**Subject: Temporary Accommodation**

Report by:	Director of Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Contact Officer:	Sarah Elvin Homes and Health Manager  sarah.elvin@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Purpose / Summary:	Approve the Temporary Accommodation Allocation Policy and provide members with an updated position with the work on the Temporary Accommodation project.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

- 1. Members note the progress to date of the work on the Temporary Accommodation Project.**
- 2. Members adopt the Temporary Accommodation Allocation Policy**
- 3. Members delegate minor amendments to the Temporary Accommodation Allocation Policy to the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities in consultation with Chairman of Prosperous Communities Committee.**

## IMPLICATIONS

### **Legal:**

**West Lindsey's statutory duties in relation to temporary accommodation fall within the following legislation:**

**Homelessness reduction Act 2017**

**Homelessness Act 2002**

**Housing Act 1985**

**(N.B.) Where there are legal implications the report MUST be seen by the MO**

### **Financial : FIN/48/25/CPR/SST**

In 2023/2024 £289,000 of Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) was received from Central Government.

In 2023/2024, £234,000 was spent on providing temporary accommodation for homeless households, which is 81% of the total HPG grant received.

As highlighted within the report, there is a cost implication to Housing Benefits subsidy of B&B placements, due to the cap on how much subsidy can be reclaimed per week for this type of placement (£91.15). In 2023/2024 the cost to the Council was £23,900.

No financial implications arising from this update report. A fin ref has already been provided for the stage 2 business case that went to Housing Board.

**(N.B.) All committee reports MUST have a Fin Ref**

### **Staffing :**

**None**

**(N.B.) Where there are staffing implications the report MUST have a HR Ref**

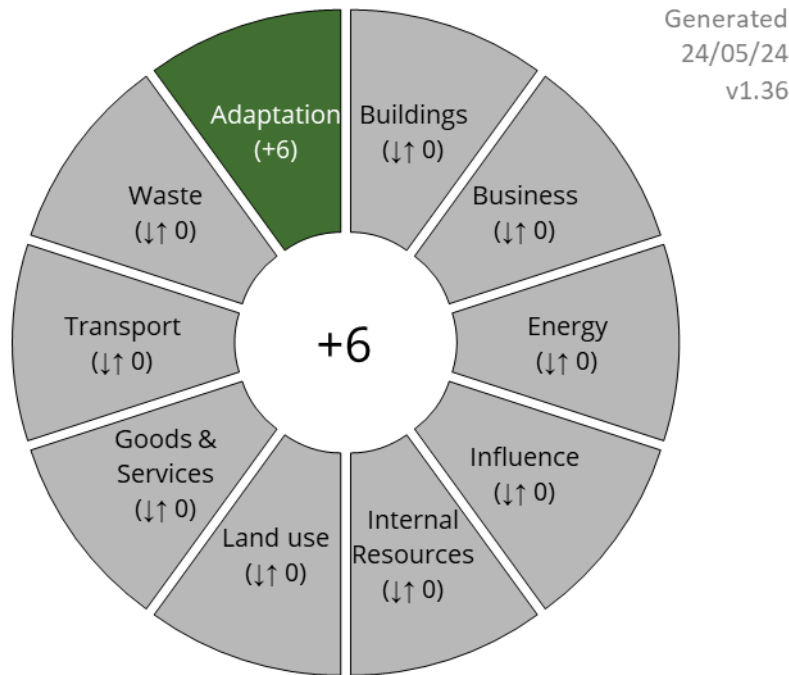
### **Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**

Aa Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the Temporary Accommodation Allocation Policy and is attached at appendix 2

### **Data Protection Implications :**

**The policy has a section in regard to GDPR. This has been approved by West Lindsey Data Protection Officer.**

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :**



West Lindsey District Council will be net zero by 2050 (25 years and 7 months away).

Temporary accommodation usage could be affected adversely should there be flooding, extreme heat, should a hot weather SWEP have to be put in place, people who are rough sleeping could be temporarily housed increasing the usage and need for temporary accommodation. Through the temporary accommodation project, we aim to house people more suitability than spot purchase of nightly accommodation, which in turn will have a positive impact due to being able to require properties that are utilised being a higher energy efficiency standard.

**Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations :**

Through the procurement process, West Lindsey will work closely with the delivery partner appointed to deliver the Temporary Accommodation project to ensure that all requirements in regards to risks around potential for anti-social behaviours are taken into account

**Health Implications:**

Access to safe, suitable housing which is affordable will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents as a wider determinant of health and will contribute to delivery of the Lincolnshire Districts Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Suitable temporary accommodation will have a huge impact on improving the lives of our residents and the offer to them when they are at one of the most vulnerable times of their lives.

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Urgent Delegated Decision for submission of a bid to DLUCH for Local Authority Housing Fund 3 funding.

[Urgent Delegated Decision re Local Authority Housing Fund Round 3 Expression of Interest \(west-lindsey.gov.uk\)](http://west-lindsey.gov.uk)

**Risk Assessment :**

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

*i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)*

**Yes**

**No**

**x**

**Key Decision:**

*A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications*

**Yes**

**x**

**No**

## 1. Context and background

- 1.1 West Lindsey has a statutory duty to place households in temporary accommodation that approach the council and are believed to be homeless, eligible for assistance and in a priority need.
- 1.2 Homelessness Legislation and Guidance is detailed, but simple definitions of eligibility and priority need categories can be found at the following link [Help if you're homeless or about to become homeless - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/help-if-youre-homeless-or-about-to-become-homeless).
- 1.3 West Lindsey receive Homelessness Prevention Grant from Central Government to cover the costs of statutory duties being fulfilled by West Lindsey under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Homelessness Act 2000 and the Housing Act 1985.
- 1.4 There is ever increasing demand for homelessness services due to a number of factors including:
- Cost of living crisis
  - Mortgage rate increases affecting both home owners and landlords
  - Lack of support provision to assist people to maintain their tenancies
  - Lack of availability of affordable housing, especially in rural areas
  - Potential impact of the Renters Reform Act
  - Climate change and emergencies that arise from that such as flooding and other severe weather emergencies.
- 1.5 West Lindsey are in a fortunate position due to managing homelessness budgets and capacity efficiently and effectively that we do not have a large visible rough sleeping problem within the district. However, this has been steadily increasing and we are conscious that with increasing numbers of people presenting as homeless and the financial impact those additional presentations will have, could see this rough sleeper cohort increasing if we do not look to provide more cost-effective ways of providing temporary accommodation to eligible homeless households.
- 1.6 In 2023/2024, £234,000 was spent on providing temporary accommodation for homeless households, that is over 80% of the total Homelessness Prevention Grant received from Central Government of £289k.
- 1.7 We have seen an increase year on year in the numbers of households presenting to West Lindsey as homeless as detailed below:

Year	Number of Homeless applications
2022/2023	604
2023/2024	730

- 1.8 West Lindsey are working with colleagues across Lincolnshire alongside the Lincolnshire Homelessness Partnership Manager to deliver on the Lincolnshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, adopted in 2022. This is a 5 year plan looking to reduce numbers of homeless households and people rough sleeping across the County with a focus on the 5 key priorities:

Protect	Protecting the most vulnerable from experiencing homelessness including tackling rough sleeping
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Prevent	Preventing Homelessness wherever possible
Partnership	Developing and maintaining strategic relationships and partnerships
Place	Ensuring access to the right type of housing solution
Plan	Ensuring a sustainable future for supported housing

1.9 Delivering additional temporary accommodation goes some way to delivering the place priority within this strategy ensuring we have suitable accommodation for our homeless cohort.

## **2. Temporary Accommodation review**

2.1 In January 2022, West Lindsey were successful in a bid to the LGA Housing Advisors Programme and received £25,000 in capacity funding to commission a review of temporary accommodation across West Lindsey.

2.2 The review was put in place to address three key elements of temporary accommodation in West Lindsey and look to deliver outcomes, which could look to improve the service offered to homeless households within the district, be compliant of the guidance and legislation and potentially save money which can then be redirected into homelessness prevention.

The three elements to the review were:

1. Review the temporary accommodation arrangements currently in place and analyse the data and costings of providing that accommodation. Establish if this current model is fit for purpose and if there is anything about the customer journey to the temporary accommodation that could be changed so it's not utilised as often.
2. Assess the need for temporary accommodation – is there a need for additional temporary accommodation and / or a restructure of existing arrangements if deemed not fit for purpose? Establish if there is a need to acquire further units for temporary accommodation and of what type, in which location, with what level of support.
3. Determine a mechanism for delivering projects that can assist with meeting the identified needs of the vulnerable households that can be implemented and potentially utilise S106 off-site contribution funding to deliver the projects with a partner across the district.

2.3 Alongside B&B accommodation not being a suitable option in many cases, it also provides financial challenges for both Housing Benefit and the Homelessness budgets. Housing benefit can claim subsidy of £91.15 per week for B&B stays. Any B&B spend above £91.15 is at a cost to the council.

2.4 B&B's can be anywhere from £40 per night (and that is the very lowest,) to over £150+ per night, meaning if someone was to stay in a B&B for a week, there would be a minimum cost to West Lindsey of £188.85 per week and in many cases, this is much higher.

2.5 The review provided a deep dive into the homelessness demands for temporary accommodation alongside providing in depth breakdowns into costs, profiles of households in temporary accommodation and looks to project the requirement for temporary accommodation going forward.

- 2.6 The review was completed in 2022 and suggests an upwards trajectory for temporary accommodation placements. The full review can be found at this link <https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/housing-homelessness/homelessness/lincolnshire-homelessness-strategy>

### **3. Temporary Accommodation Project**

- 3.1 When the review was finalised, it determined a number of recommendations which have been categorised into Strategy, Supply & Commissioning and Management and Monitoring.
- 3.2 A stage 2 business case was then drawn up and approved at Housing Board to address the recommendations within the Supply & Commissioning recommendations which were as follows:
1. WLDC to diversify its temporary accommodation portfolio by commissioning six to eight additional units of self-contained Temporary Accommodation. These are likely to be in the Gainsborough and Market Rasen areas due to cost pressures elsewhere and could be either in a unit similar to Cross Street, or in dispersed housing converted to two or three separate units.
  2. Renegotiation of the Cross Street contract should aim toward renewal, and possibly seek additional floating support for lower support needs clients in move on accommodation along with potential for making a number of the units wheelchair accessible.
  3. B&B will remain the default accommodation but as a smaller element of a more diverse portfolio of placement options. Management measures to reduce price volatility and to improve the current placement process would be highly desirable, either through block booking of a local facility, or by a supply agreement with Travelodge as a partner. The existing working relationship between the Crittlewood Guest House and WLDC should be maintained, and the possibility of a block booking explored.
- 3.3 Further consultation internally and with stakeholders has taken place to expand on the recommendations which then looked at the type of accommodation to be delivered to meet the needs and where that temporary accommodation needs to be located. There have been a number of additional factors that have come out of that consultation which include:
- At least 3 units of temporary accommodation to be in Market Rasen to cover need for people who are unable to be accommodated in Gainsborough.
  - At least one of the units of accommodation in Gainsborough and one unit in Market Rasen to be adapted for utilisation by a disabled person.
  - 2 units of Cross Street to be adapted for utilisation of disabled people
  - 2 larger properties or ability for the properties to sleep more people through furnishings will need to be in place so larger families can comfortably be accommodated.
  - Minimum of one unit which is not located near a school or play area so can be utilised by sex offenders
  - All units to have access to wifi so that the tenants can be contacted by the Homelessness team

## **4. Procurement**

- 4.1 The project has now been approved through internal governance to move to procurement stage. This has slightly changed since the original review recommendations were published at the end of 2022 and is looking to procure a total of 13 units of accommodation – the 8 recommended alongside the 5 currently in contract. This is to be in line with procurement regulation.
- 4.2 Officers have been working alongside Lincs Procurement to design the specification for the service required. The contract will be for support to be provided within accommodation that is being utilised for temporary accommodation.
- 4.3 The tender will be issued by the end of the summer with a likely start date for the new contract of the beginning of the financial year 2025/2026.
- 4.4 West Lindsey have also submitted an expression of interest for funding through the Local Authority Housing Fund. This funding is to provide additional accommodation for both homeless households to be utilised as temporary accommodation, and resettlement units for Afghan and Ukrainian refugees. The outcome of this expression of interest is yet to be determined and the background papers for this decision are linked above.

## **5. Temporary Accommodation Allocation Policy**

- 5.1 There were a number of other recommendations detailed within the Temporary Accommodation Review which included West Lindsey adopting a Temporary Accommodation Allocation Policy.
- 5.2 It is a requirement within the Homelessness Code of Guidance to have in place a policy for allocation of temporary accommodation units, whether or not they are contractual, or spot purchased.
- 5.3 Officers have worked on the policy with the Homelessness Prevention team and existing partners, the policy can be read at appendix 1.
- 5.4 The policy details how West Lindsey District Council will allocate temporary accommodation to people who are homeless and /or owed a statutory homelessness duty.
- 5.5 West Lindsey will allocate temporary accommodation to people who are:
  - a. Homeless and have a priority need for accommodation, owed the interim accommodation s.188 duty.
  - b. Homeless intentionally and have a priority need for accommodation, owed the s.190 duty to be provided with accommodation for a reasonable period.
  - c. Not intentionally homeless and have a priority need for accommodation, owed s.193 (main) duty to be provided accommodation.
  - d. Homeless and where there is no duty owed but the local authority is providing emergency accommodation under a power to do so. An



example of this would be when accommodation is provided under the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol.

- 5.6 The policy guides partners and customers through the process of allocating temporary accommodation along with all considerations that will be taken into account when assessing if temporary accommodation is to be provided.
- 5.7 The policy ensures that West Lindsey are legally sound when allocating temporary accommodation to homelessness households. This policy does not change our existing practice, it simply articulates how we will allocate temporary accommodation in line with our statutory duties and powers.

## **6. Policy review**

- 6.1 The policy will be kept under constant review to ensure it is at all times fit for purpose and can quickly adapt should there be agreed changes in Legislation or the Homelessness Code of Guidance.
- 6.2 It is suggested that minor inconsequential changes to the policy be delegated to the Director for Planning, Regeneration and Communities in consultation with Housing and Communities Board.

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1 Members note the progress to date of the work on the Temporary Accommodation Project.**
- 7.2 Members adopt the Temporary Accommodation Allocation Policy**
- 7.3 Members delegate minor amendments to the Temporary Accommodation Allocation Policy to the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities in consultation with Chairman of Prosperous Communities Committee.**

