

COMMITTEE: Council

DATE: 30 June 2010

DIRECTOR: Pete Leonard

TITLE OF REPORT: Homelessness Service Provision

REPORT NUMBER: H&E/10/092

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The actions proposed in this report will assist the Council to deliver against, in particular, one of the five key areas of activity – “the services we provide and secure for the most vulnerable members of our community”.

The report particularly addresses the impact of the refusal of the HMO licence for the proposed temporary accommodation unit at Aberdon House.

It also outlines the detail of the development of the Housing Access Service (Homelessness) and seeks approval for the use of the homelessness budgets in relation the continuation of existing provision and the development of new services to deliver on actions identified in the Homelessness & Resettlement Strategy 2009 - 2013.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that: -

- 2.1. Council agrees to provide delegated authority to the Director of Housing & Environment in conjunction with the Convenor – Housing & Environment Committee and Convenor – Finance and Resources Committee to finalise and implement the Temporary Accommodation Options outlined including establishing an in-house Private Sector Leasing Scheme, extending the provision of Temporary Accommodation Flats, basing an additional manager at 165 Crown Street.
- 2.2. Council agrees to provide delegated authority to the Director of Housing & Environment in conjunction with the Convenor – Housing & Environment Committee and Convenor – Finance and Resources Committee to give further consideration to, finalise and implement the use of other properties for temporary accommodation or purchase of other accommodation establishments.
- 2.3. Council agrees to provide delegated authority to the Director of Housing & Environment in conjunction with the Convenor – Housing & Environment Committee and Convenor – Finance and Resources Committee to finalise and implement the establishing of a prevention team within the service within

current budgets in accordance with Council policies and procedures.

- 2.4. Council agrees to the re-procurement of existing services/procurement of new services within the current budgets in line with the new procurement standing orders for temporary accommodation (including B&B, winter care); furniture storage; advocacy/user involvement; additional support needs, and; improving employability/social networks and provide delegated authority to Council agrees to provide delegated authority to the Director of Housing & Environment in conjunction with the Convenor – Housing & Environment Committee and Convener – Finance and Resources Committee to finalise the operational priorities.
- 2.5. Council agrees to provide delegated authority to the Director of Housing & Environment in conjunction with the Convenor – Housing & Environment Committee and Convener – Finance and Resources Committee to establish corporate pilot initiatives.
- 2.6. Council agrees to further reports being provided to the Housing & Environment Committee outlining the actions taken forward under the delegated authority above.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations ensure that any spend is contained within budgetary provision. These proposals can assist the Council to reduce its current costs whilst at the same time increase income to facilitate the provision of improved outcomes for citizens.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

The proposal links to the Single Outcome Agreement to address the needs of more vulnerable communities with often complex and varied needs e.g. people who are homeless (Local Priority 6); and to the National Indicator and Target 'All unintentionally homeless households will be entitled to settled accommodation by 2012 – to eradicate priority need, to work with all sectors to ensure homelessness is reduced and when it does occur to ensure that appropriate sustainable housing is provided (National Outcome 10).

Vibrant Dynamic Forward Looking - this report is in line with the Council's key aim to enhance the total environment in social housing areas.

The proposals will assist the Council to deliver against, in particular, one of the five key areas of activity – the services we provide and secure for the most vulnerable members of our community and that our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

The proposals will assist in minimising any loss of reputation from a failure to provide a statutory service to meet the needs of homeless households.

There are direct links to the Housing Service Plan 2009-2012 – Modernisation of Service, the Resettlement & Homelessness Strategy (2009 – 2013), the Temporary Accommodation Strategy, and the Shared Risk Assessment – Assurance and Improvement Plan 2010 – 2013.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

As outlined.

6. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1. The Housing & Environment Committee report – Homelessness Service Performance and Developments Towards the 2012 Target – considered on 11 January 2010 by the Housing Environment Committee outlined the challenges facing the Council and the proposed developments in the Service to effectively respond to these challenges.
- 6.2. That report set out a vision for future services which had Prevention as its top priority, central to service delivery, embedded in all operational processes within the structures to deliver.
- 6.3. Agreement was given at full Council on 10 February 2010 to proceed with developing additional temporary accommodation capacity by utilising Aberdon House which would have provided 40 letting bedrooms. A further Housing & Environment Committee on 13 May 2010 agreed a budget and staffing for the accommodation unit at Aberdon House. However, the Licensing Committee on 20 May 2010 turned down an application for an HMO licence.
- 6.4. This report outlines
 - Proposals for action to tackle the immediate pressures in relation to temporary accommodation
 - Issues identified from the Homelessness and Resettlement Strategy, from the Temporary Accommodation Strategy, internally and from external partners which require action
 - Proposals for the implementation of Housing Access Service (Homelessness) developments as outlined in the report to the Housing & Environment Committee on 11 January 2010.
- 6.5. The financial resources to move forward these developments are in place and, therefore, should be utilised as soon as possible to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable members of our community.
- 6.6. The Housing Service Plan 2009 – 2012 agreed in January 2009 outlined the undernoted as the main priorities in relation to homelessness. The proposals outline in this report will contribute significantly to these priorities.
 - Retain the 24 hours contact point for homeless people
 - Deliver on the HomePoint standard for the Homelessness Service and work in partnership across the city with voluntary agencies to provide a network of advice and assistance services.
 - Formal protocols between relevant council services to ensure all necessary attempts are made to prevent eviction
 - Put in place a support strategy for vulnerable applicants and tenants
 - Reduce levels of evictions and notice of proceedings
 - Meet the Government's 2012 target for the removal of priority need;

- Increase the availability of family accommodation for homeless applicants.
 - Work with external partners to secure accommodation and support
 - Review the use of Section 5 referrals and nominations to RSLs
 - Facilitate the supply of affordable homes in the city
 - A sustained reduction in the homelessness journey
 - Identify the future requirements for and supply of temporary accommodation, including direct access, and put in place a strategy
 - Investigate the potential of working with the private sector
 - Increase the turnover of temporary flats and reduce use of B & B
 - Review commissioning specifications to include reference to education, training and employment support mechanisms for homeless people
 - Implement the Betterways protocol for young people leaving care
 - Ensure the Sex Offenders Liaison Officer (SOLO) functions and accommodation is delivered.
 - Ensure appropriate protocols and access to appropriate accommodation is available for violent offenders
 - To publish Quality Assurance and Performance Management Information to all stakeholders on a regular basis
 - Build on the success of Young Single Persons Homelessness Project (YSPHP) & consider the formula for other groups
- 6.7. The three key elements of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 are Community Planning, Best Value and Advancing Well-being. Scottish Government guidance on the latter encourages innovative and imaginative uses of this power.
- 6.8. Local authorities have been asked to consider how the power might be used to pursue activities that contribute to achieving Community Planning objectives, other cross-cutting issues and shared priorities, national priorities, and overarching policies, which promote and improve well-being. These might be policies and programmes that wholly or in part, will close gaps in opportunity or outcomes for disadvantaged groups of people or geographical areas.
- 6.9. Uses might include activities relating to: Enhancing local service delivery; Promoting sustainable development; Improving mental, social and physical health; Tackling poverty and deprivation; Promoting financial inclusion in disadvantaged communities; Reducing inequalities and promoting equalities; Encouraging participation and community capacity building;
- 6.10. The Act gives a local authority the power to do anything that it considers is likely to promote or improve the well-being of its area and persons within it in accordance with the law more generally. The power to advance well-being includes power to: Incur expenditure; Enter into arrangements or agreements with any person; Co-operate with, or facilitate or co-ordinate the activities of, any person, and Provide staff, goods, materials, facilities, services or property to any person.
- 6.11. These proposals will contribute to advancing well-being.
- 6.12. Research commissioned by Solace Scotland (Society of Local Authority

Chief Executives & Senior Managers) stated that homelessness is not a lifestyle choice that people make. It is something that can happen to anyone in society. When homelessness does happen, we need to take into account the experiences of people who find themselves homeless, to help us understand the kinds of services they require and what we can do collectively both to meet their needs and to improve services.

- 6.13. It added that the alleviation of homelessness cannot be achieved in isolation. As we move towards meeting the target of 2012 and the abolition of priority need, it is essential then that Local Authorities adopt a holistic approach in meeting need and preventing homelessness through the implementation of the key priorities identified jointly by the Scottish Government and COSLA.
- 6.14. A ministerial group was specifically been set up to assess, inform and influence progress towards the 2012 homelessness target and to promote a shared understanding of homelessness and ensuring ways of promoting best practice across Scotland.
- 6.15. The 2012 COSLA Steering Group made recommendations that homelessness should be strategically prioritised in corporate business plans and should not be seen as solely the responsibility of housing services. The Steering Group then commissioned SOLACE with the responsibility to provide a corporate view, which recognises and co-ordinates the role of all local authority departments and Community Planning Partnerships in meeting this target.
- 6.16. These proposals will contribute to promoting a corporate response to homelessness in the city.

7. CURRENT SITUATION WITH REGARD THE HOMELESSNESS SERVICE

- 7.1. The number of homelessness presentations actually fell in 2009 – 2010 but they are still, at 2459, 60% higher than five years ago. Overall the rise in presentations in Scotland was 0% and 14% in Aberdeenshire.
- 7.2. An average of 216 households per month presented to the Homelessness Service 2009/2010. 251 in April 2009, 308 in April 2010, up 23%.
- 7.3. One of the particular areas of concern has been our ability to provide temporary accommodation. In 2009 – 2010, 469 or 40 per month were not provided with such accommodation despite us increasing provision by around 50 places.
- 7.4. Throughout Scotland the use of temporary accommodation has increased by 56% from 6,445 to 10,053 households at any one time in the last five years. Aberdeen City had 0.25% of all households in temporary accommodation at 31 December 2009 compared with the Scottish average of 0.44%.
- 7.5. The initiative to provide 75% of lets to homeless households has ensured that all families are getting offers of housing fairly quickly. However, the main problem exists in re-housing single person households. We are currently looking to the housing associations to assist with this.
- 7.6. We are struggling to meet the demand. The increased presentations mean

longer waiting times for interviews. This in turn increases the number of lost contacts, repeat homelessness cases and our overall homelessness journey time has increased to over 100 days. The decrease in the number of voids has also adversely affected the availability of houses.

- 7.7. Providing additional temporary accommodation at Aberdon House was an interim initiative which would have taken some pressure off. There is still a risk of one of our other Accommodation Units being closed and a bed & breakfast establishment that provides us with 28 places is up for sale.
- 7.8. Previously agreement was given to increase the number of flats we use for temporary accommodation as per the table below. However, taking properties for this purpose means that less are available for re-letting.
- 7.9. Agreement was also given to commission a Private Sector Leasing Scheme adding 100 properties a year for three years.
- 7.10. We now need to give impetus to our prevention agenda which has considerable potential to improve the situation for customers and reduce the pressure on other aspects of the current service.
- 7.11. Audit Scotland/Aberdeen City Council Shared Risk Assessment – Assurance and Improvement Plan 2010 – 2013 outlined significant concerns and that focused activity was needed to gain a better understanding of performance in homelessness.
- 7.12. There is clearly a business case in terms of meeting a statutory duty and in meeting priorities set out in the Council's various planning documents.

8. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

- 8.1. The Licensing Committee refused an HMO licence for Aberdon House at its meeting of 20 May 2010. Legal advice has now been given on issues with regard to appealing that decision. An appeal against that decision is being prepared.
- 8.2. We have not been able to identify any other properties that would provide the same number of places as Aberdon House. There are, however, a range of property options that can be explored further.
- 8.3. These would be subject to a decision of the Licensing Committee.
- 8.4. It now seems unlikely that we will be able to provide the requisite number of temporary accommodation places within the timescales that had previously been planned but the following actions are intended to maintain and improve current provision as quickly as possible:
 - Fully utilise the quota of flats for temporary accommodation
 - Develop an in-house Private Sector Leasing Scheme rather than commission externally
 - Put a full time manager into 165 Crown Street and re-apply for a licence

- Urgently take forward the proposals for prevention work
- Consider purchase of a current B&B establishment
- Not insist on an HMO licence for B&B establishments that we use

8.5. These options are outlined more fully in the sections below.

9. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FLATS

9.1. We are currently using 180 properties for temporary accommodation and we will now accelerate this programme to catch up with the previously approved planned capacity as below:

Date	Milestone
December 2009	180 properties
March 2010	200 properties
June 2010	220 properties
September 2010	240 properties
December 2010	260 properties
March 2011	280 properties
June 2011	300 properties

9.2. This provision has no net cost to the Council and, as the number of properties increased, it was planned that additional staff would be required.

9.3. Currently, there is a budget surplus from this scheme which will increase as the number of flats used increases.

9.4. The business case for this action has been previously agreed and fully utilising the approved quota of flats for temporary accommodation will assist in meeting improved outcomes.

10. PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING SCHEME

10.1. A business case has previously been agreed for a Private Sector Leasing (PSL) Scheme and that this would be commissioned externally. Agreement is now being sought to deliver this Scheme internally.

10.2. A Private Sector Leasing Scheme is a voluntary scheme usually designed to provide good quality accommodation for people in housing need. The scheme provides temporary accommodation for the clients until suitable permanent accommodation is found. The majority of schemes in operation are not suitable as long term solutions to shortages in the social housing sector.

10.3. The Council or another managing agent leases the property from the owner for a fixed term, for example 3 years, and then sub let the property to people in need of housing. It is the responsibility of the Council to secure tenants and to manage the tenancies (if it was an in-house scheme) on a day to day basis. The agreement between the Council and Landlord is normally for a fixed period of 1 to 5 years with the option on both sides to terminate the

contract at any time with suitable notice period.

- 10.4. The benefit for the landlord is that he receives a guaranteed rent for the term of the lease although they would retain some of the responsibility for maintaining the general condition of the property.
- 10.5. There is a considerable amount of administration required to secure properties for the scheme and around the management of the tenancies. As a result a dedicated team is required to effectively deliver a successful PSL scheme.
- 10.6. If used, a managing agent would receive a fee for managing the process which is usually recovered through the charge to the tenant. The landlord receives a fixed rent.
- 10.7. Regardless of the type of management agent used, the Council retains 100% nomination rights for the property. The landlord still retains repairing and maintenance responsibilities for the property but in some cases the managing agent will offer additional repair services as part of the scheme.
- 10.8. Local Authorities have been successfully setting up Private Sector Leasing Schemes across the country since 2002, all aiming to provide temporary accommodation for the homeless, using a range of different delivery methods and varying in sizes. Initially most Schemes were outsourced but more and more they are being established in-house. This is the approach being taken by Aberdeenshire Council, for example.
- 10.9. An in-house Scheme has a greater level of flexibility in meeting both the needs of the customers and the Council. It is now possible to use such Schemes to provide permanent housing as well.
- 10.10. The main risks are in relation to actually getting landlords signed up to the Scheme. The costs in the first year will be higher until enough properties are secured to achieve the income levels.
- 10.11. A major business advantage of delivering the Scheme internally would be the efficiencies produced by running it in conjunction with the management of temporary accommodation flats in relation to letting, furnishing, managing voids, rent, HB, utilities, starting and finishing tenancies.
- 10.12. It is, therefore, proposed to set up a team that is responsible for both. A level of housing support will also be required.
- 10.13. Between temporary accommodation flats and PSL flats we will increase provision from 180 to 380 by March 2011.
- 10.14. The staff team, which is still to be finalised, is likely to consist of 1 x Team Leaders, 2 x Depute TLs/Rent negotiator, 2 x admin/finance, 6 x property/housing officers and 6 x support workers.
- 10.15. The costs of this team will be around £500k and this will be paid for from the management charges.
- 10.16. The PSL Scheme would not cost the General Fund any money as there

would be a management fee of up to £60 per unit/week available to cover any costs. This will come from the housing benefit subsidy from the Department for Work & Pensions.

- 10.17. Depending on actual costs, the service could contribute around £400k to other aspects of homelessness provision.

11. HMO LICENCE – CROWN STREET/BON ACCORD STREET

- 11.1. The HMO licence for the Crown Street accommodation unit was turned down and we are still in the process of appealing this decision. A licence for Bon Accord Street was only given for 1 year and this will have to be renewed in February 2011.
- 11.2. In order to protect against losing the appeal for Crown Street, we are proposing to put in a new application for a licence on the grounds of a material change in circumstances.
- 11.3. The Licensing Committee was critical of there not being a day-to-day manager based in the unit and we now propose to do this.
- 11.4. The additional cost for this post of c£30k would be considerably less than the cost of putting 21 people into bed & breakfast establishments at £4,000 per week (£207k per annum) after subsidy.

12. BED & BREAKFAST FACILITIES – HMO LICENCE

- 12.1. A house is a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) if it is the only or principal residence of three or more qualifying persons from three or more families.
- 12.2. In this context, "house" includes any part of a building occupied as a separate dwelling. The legislation covers not only ordinary houses, flats and bedsits, but all residential accommodation, including hostels, student halls of residence, staff accommodation in hotels or hospitals, and so on.
- 12.3. Houses within a building which, although otherwise separate, share use of a toilet, personal washing facilities or cooking facilities, are taken to form part of a single house.
- 12.4. There is no statutory definition of "principal residence". The Order states only that a student's term-time residence is to be taken as their principal residence, and that a hospital is not the principal residence of patients.
- 12.5. We currently insist that any establishment that we use for bed & breakfast must have an HMO licence – on the basis that it will be the only or principal residence for those homeless households using it. These establishments would not routinely need an HMO licence.
- 12.6. There are times we need to use these B&Bs or small hotels and authority is sought to change this practice by not insisting that any establishment that we use for bed & breakfast must have an HMO licence.

13. USE OF OTHER COUNCIL PROPERTIES

- 13.1. There are a number of Council premises that might be able to be used as temporary accommodation. Each of these might need to get an HMO licence to be used for temporary accommodation. The success of such applications might depend on the actual location of the premises.
- 13.2. Most of these establishments are relatively small – from 4 places to about 15 – and this would result in much higher unit costs.
- 13.3. The suitability of individual premises needs to be explored further.
- 13.4. It would take up to six months to get these premises up and running although there is no guarantee in getting a licence.
- 13.5. There could be a further option with respect to premises by turning them into individual self contained studio flats and then it would not have to have an HMO licence. However, this would be a more costly option.
- 13.6. As with Aberdon House, income for the service comes from two major sources – charges to occupants and Hostel Deficit Grant (HDG) from the Scottish Government. An application could be made for HDG which is paid annually in arrears. Charges to occupants would generate income of around £145,000.
- 13.7. If these occupants were placed in bed and breakfast there would be a cost/loss of subsidy to the Council of £160,000.

14. PURCHASE OF ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENT

- 14.1. One of the current establishments we use has recently been sold and there is the potential that we could lose the 28 letting bedrooms at a time when we are already stretched to meet the temporary accommodation needs of those who present to us.
- 14.2. There are a number of smaller bed & breakfast establishments currently on the market each with around 8 letting bedrooms.
- 14.3. A small hotel with 25 letting rooms is also on the market (£1.7m). Price includes some land and other business.
- 14.4. Although housing benefit is payable to households in bed & breakfast, there is still a net cost (loss of subsidy) to the Council. So from a weekly charge of say £315 per week, the cost to the Council is approx. £225 per week.
- 14.5. Purchase of such establishments would result in no loss of subsidy but there could be additional and, although there would also be additional costs, the service would generate a net gain for the Council plus having an additional asset.

15. PURCHASE OF A BLOCK OF FLATS

- 15.1. There is a block of 8 flats (6 x 2 bed, 2 x 1 bed) on the market which could provide accommodation for 14 individuals.

- 15.2. An advantage of this is this would add not take away from current stock.
- 15.3. The flats are let at present so it would take time for these to become available.
- 15.4. In the longer term these could be returned to stock.
- 15.5. The purchase price is offers over £1,350,000 and funding might be considered from Affordable Housing Delivery funds.

16. PREVENTION

- 16.1. Meeting the level of demand that is currently being experienced is difficult enough at present without have to meet the additional needs.
- 16.2. By the end of 2012, 100% of all unintentionally homeless households will be considered to be in priority need. Using this years' figures, this would mean that a further 25+ households per month would require to be assisted (300+ per annum).
- 16.3. We would also expect additional demand from Section 11 referrals (where a landlord/owner/mortgage provider raises proceedings for possession of a dwellinghouse, the landlord must give notice of the raising of the proceedings to the local authority in whose area the dwellinghouse is situated).
- 16.4. The current financial climate may also lead to more families presenting.
- 16.5. The vision for future services has Prevention as its top priority. Prevention is even more important if supply does not improve but this should not be a new form of "gate-keeping". Prevention should be central to service delivery, embedded in all operational processes with the structures to deliver.
- 16.6. Preventing homelessness means providing people with the ways and means to address their housing and other needs in order to avoid homelessness. Prevention activities include those which enable a household to remain in their current home, where appropriate, or to enable a planned and timely move and help sustain independent living.
- 16.7. Homelessness can be prevented by a variety of different interventions to tackle the problem before it reaches crisis point. For homelessness prevention to work, early intervention is vital. Research into homelessness shows that housing problems do not suddenly appear but develop over time.
- 16.8. There is often a period of up to four or five months between the first indication of a housing problem and the eviction notice being served.
- 16.9. Prevention work is consistent with the principles of early intervention. Early intervention should lead to improve outcomes for homeless households such as - Improved accommodation: (in more permanent accommodation including with appropriate support) Improved practical skills: (budgeting, paying bills, cooking) Improved quality of life: (access to leisure, social activities, and life-long learning) Improved social functioning: (less isolated, developing family/other social contacts, able to deal with agencies) Improved

economic well-being: (in employment, debt being tackled) Improved general outlook: (feeling more positive) Improved health: (enjoying good physical/ mental health, accessing treatment) Reduction in risky behaviour: (reduced offending, reduced drug/alcohol related problems, reduced aggression).

16.10. The “toolkit” of prevention activities might include:

- Mediation/counselling, home visits
- Refuge schemes
- Advice, landlord mediation/negotiation, rent deposit guarantee
- Debt counselling, advocacy in court, resolving HB problems
- Advice and support, life skills, budgeting, social networks
- Prevention Fund
- Early, proactive intervention, advice and good range of options
- Specialist support – drugs, alcohol, mental health, etc.

16.11. The diagram at Appendix 1 shows the important role of prevention in the process. This will be the first focus of intervention.

16.12. It is recognised that a household may have to move back into the homelessness assessment route.

16.13. Temporary/supported accommodation might be required during the prevention interventions.

16.14. The prevention approach will initially require additional resources during the transition from the concentration on assessment to a concentration on prevention. These staff will deliver/lead on the interventions and will have the capacity to train/assist housing officers with specialised prevention work support when the take on the proposed generic role.

16.15. It is proposed that a prevention team with a team leader, 4 x prevention support officers and an admin assistant is now established.

16.16. These specialist staff will be able to provided support to households around substance misuse, mental health, etc.

16.17. Homeless persons will still be entitled by law to a homeless interview, assessment and written outcomes. A support assessment is part of this. Currently Aberdeen City has about double the Scottish average for Homelessness Officers' workloads. So as numbers fall we will come into line with existing authorities.

17. REFOCUSING OF RESOURCES

17.1. In the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account there is budgetary provision for the delivery of existing services.

17.2. There is also budgetary provision – Homeless Persons (Funding for External Service Providers) – of £596,627. Finally, there is budget provision of £826,570 with respect to the Homelessness Strategy. These two budgets were formerly ring-fenced budgets from the Scottish Government. Continuing to use these specifically to meet the needs of homeless

households will demonstrate the Councils commitment to further improve our response and ensure that the Council can once again take a leading role in this policy area.

- 17.3. Budget provision for Homeless Persons (Funding for External Service Providers) and Homelessness Strategy has not been fully utilised for homelessness services over the previous years although sums of money have been identified against particular areas of spend.
- 17.4. Draft proposals have been developed to utilise these existing budgets to meet the actions from the Resettlement & Homelessness Strategy 2009 – 2013 and the Temporary Accommodation Strategy particularly in developing the prevention approach. The proposals include examples of effective interventions from elsewhere in the country with respect to prevention, user involvement, improving employability, innovative support packages, practical support, health, etc.
- 17.5. The Homelessness and Resettlement Strategy 2009 – 2013 has a wide range of actions relating to joint working and these proposals will assist the Council to address such issues and be clearly seen to be working more closely with external agencies and internal services.

18. SOCIAL CARE & WELLBEING LINKS TO TEMPORARY/SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

- 18.1. There have been a number of discussions with Social Care & Wellbeing to develop integrated approaches within the Council with respect to meeting needs.
- 18.2. These approaches are consistent with developing a corporate response to homelessness.
- 18.3. Pilot proposals are being considered in relation to Looked After Young People, Mental Health and Criminal Justice/Prison Throughcare utilising temporary accommodation. The latter could contribute to the recent decisions on Accommodation Support for Offenders.
- 18.4. Such pilots could be resourced through the temporary accommodation service charge which would be sufficient to employ a 0.5 FTE Resettlement Worker.

19. CHANGE IN CULTURE

- 19.1. The move towards prevention will be incorporated in a wider change in the culture of the service. The key principles/components of the service will be:
 - Housing Access not Homelessness
 - Prevention including Housing Options
 - Housing First approach
 - All the varying needs of those affected by homelessness will be assessed and addressed individually, effectively and flexibly
- 19.2. Another key plank of this vision is wider engagement. This wider engagement seeks to involve other agencies in a more cooperative manner

with a focus on working together to resolve homelessness rather than an adversarial approach.

20. HOUSING ACCESS SERVICE, NOT HOMELESSNESS

20.1. The service will be renamed to emphasise the new focus.

21. HOUSING FIRST APPROACH

21.1. The service will be based on a Housing First approach.

21.2. Housing First is based on two core convictions:

- Housing is a basic right, not a reward for success in rehabilitation programmes, and
- Once the chaos of homelessness is eliminated from a person's life, social stabilisation occurs faster and is more enduring.

21.3. Housing First is a client-driven strategy embodying the undernoted principles:

- People move into housing directly without preconditions of treatment acceptance or compliance.
- Robust support services along with housing are provided. These services are predicated on assertive engagement, not coercion.
- Continued tenancy is not dependent on participation in services.
- A harm reduction approach to addictions is embraced rather than mandating abstinence although a recovery model should be explored with each customer.

22. NEW PREMISES

22.1. The current service recently moved to the 1st floor at Upperkirkgate. This will assist with planning work across the current teams.

22.2. Some further planning will be required for such a move including the availability of leaflets, posters, revisions of web pages, etc.

22.3. Proposals are currently being developed to use the site at Victoria House, West North Street to provide further temporary accommodation, more intensely supported accommodation and an office base for the homelessness service.

22.4. It is thought that better customer service for this group could be delivered from this dedicated resource rather than from Marischal College.

23. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Paul Hannan, Homelessness Manager

Email: phannan@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Phone: (52)3128

24. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Aberdeen City Council/the Aberdeen City Alliance – Single Outcome Agreement 2009 - 2010

Aberdeen City Council – Budget Speech 2010 - 2011

Aberdeen City Council – Resettlement & Homelessness Strategy 2009 - 2013

Aberdeen City Council – Temporary Accommodation Strategy

Aberdeen City Council – Housing Service Plan 2009 – 2012

Aberdeen City Council – Shared Risk Assessment – Assurance and Improvement Plan 2010 – 2013

Code of Guidance on Homelessness – Scottish Government

Prevention of Homelessness Guidance – Scottish Government/COSLA

Guidance on the Power to Advance Well-being – Scottish Government

Access to Support to Prevent Homelessness – Shelter Scotland

Protection of Tenants with Rent Arrears – Scottish Government

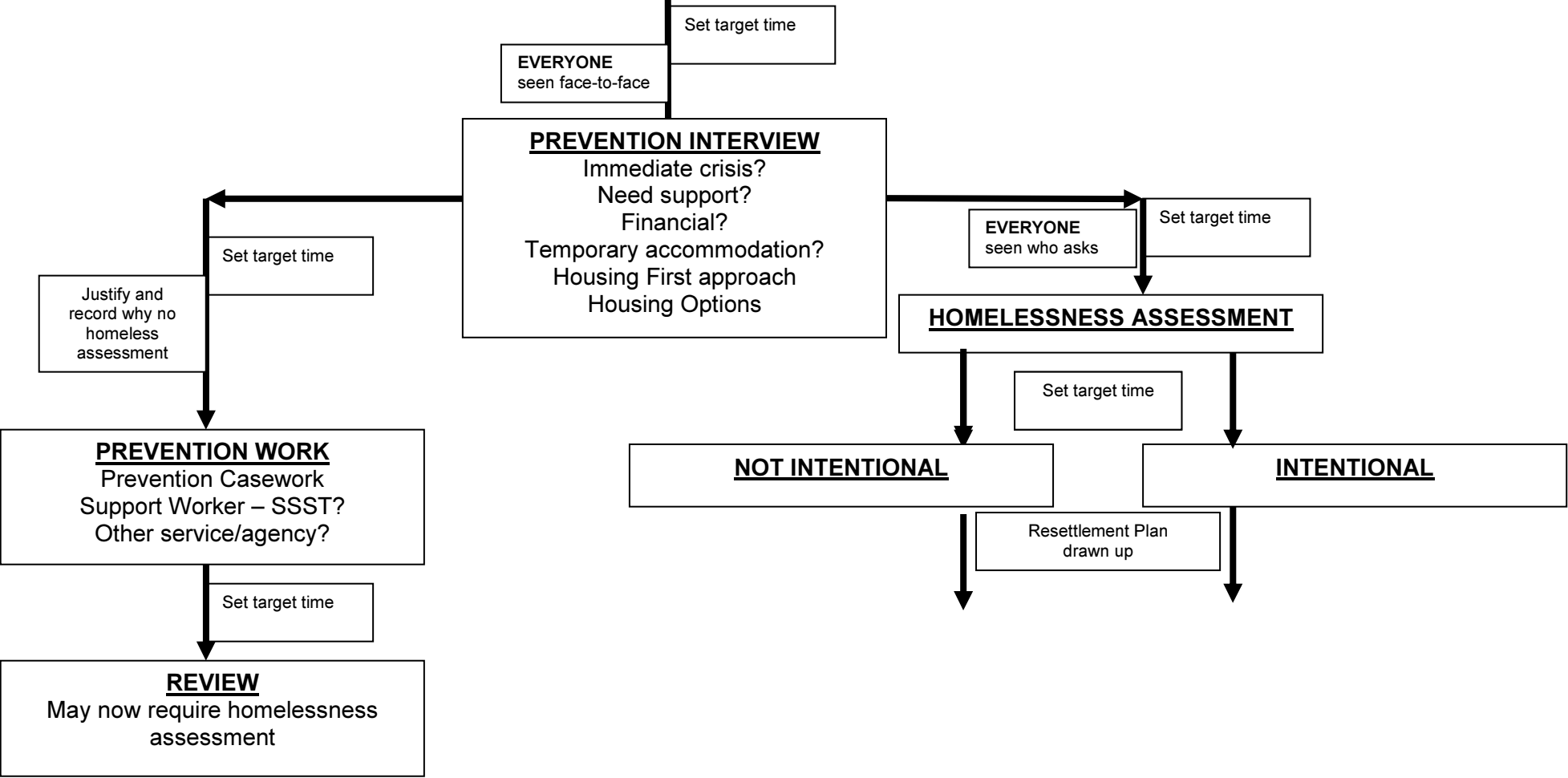
Effective Services for Substance Misuse and Homelessness in Scotland – Scottish Government

HOUSING ACCESS SERVICE

(Homelessness)

PREVENTION & HOUSING FIRST

- Personal caller
- Phone call
- Out of hours
- Resource Management – Court proceedings/Eviction
- Referral agency
- Prison
- Section 11 referral



HOUSING ACCESS SERVICE

(Homelessness)

APPENDIX 1

