

SUBJECT: LEASE APPROVAL FOR HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION –
MEETING: COMMUNITIES & PLACE DMT
DATE:
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1.1 To agree to sign up to lease agreements as follows :-

- 5 year lease at 12 Station Road, Govilon, Abergavenny, NP7 9RG - Monthly rental £950

This property will enable the Council to provide a 3 bedroom unit for homeless households.

Previously approved to access the Welsh Government Leasing Scheme Wales, but the landlord has since withdrawn from the opportunity. This revised agreement enables the owner to access the Council's private leasing opportunity and for the Council to retain the benefit of the property.

2. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

2.1 The estimated net cost in taking on these properties is listed in the below tables :-

Property	12 Station Rd	Total
No. of Beds	3	
Lease Term (Years)	5	
Weekly Rental	219.23	
Weekly DWP Rate	124.61	
Total Rental	11,399.96	11,399.96
Total Voids	996.88	996.88
Total Arrears	996.88	996.88

Maintenance Service Charge	1,200.00	1,200.00
Total Exp		14,593.72
DWP Income	-6,479.72	-6,479.72
		0.00
Total Income		-6,479.72
Net Cost		8,114.00

<u>B&B Comparison</u>		Total
Weekly Rental	630.00	
Weekly DWP Rate	95.77	
Total Rental	32,760.00	32,760.00
Maintenance	1,200.00	1,200.00
DWP Income	-4,980.04	-4,980.04
Net Cost		28,979.96
Cost Avoidance		20,865.96

2.2 The lease of this property will have the following impact on the Council's temporary accommodation base:-

- Increase of homeless accommodation base by a 3 bedroom unit. Net costs to the council will be £8,114.00, but this will provide a substantial cost avoidance of £20,865.96 when compared to equivalent B&B use at £28,979.96. Due to current demand for homeless services, and loss of accommodation elsewhere, it cannot be said with any certainty that the number of households in B&B will reduce by the unit being acquired. The property will, however, mitigate against the use of B&B and contributes towards a reduced use.

- This property was previously approved for the 'Leasing Scheme Cymru' (LSC) but the landlord has decided not to pursue the scheme due to rents being capped at LHA, and the disparity between LHA and market rents.

2.3 The priority will continue to be to allocate this property intended for homeless use to households currently residing in B & B, thereby reducing the use of B & B. The property will typically and wherever possible, be offered to applicants who have been residing in B & B the longest, but other housing need factors will also need to be taken into consideration on a property by property basis, such as the immediate needs of other homeless households (for example, serious health/medical conditions or safeguarding issues) needing temporary accommodation and type, size and location of the accommodation available. Homeless households normally will be able to remain in the accommodation until permanent social housing becomes available and a successful bid has been accepted.

2.5 The adoption of this recommendation will not produce a core budget saving but it will help reduce the current pressure the authority faces with the cost of Homelessness provision. The uplift in accommodation base will cost £8,114.00 but saves a cost of £28,979.96 when compared with accommodating in B&B.

2.6 In addition, the adoption of the recommendation might not immediately result in a direct and immediate reduction in the use of B & B due to the following:

- a possible suppressed and hidden homeless need that is believed to exist in the County, which can't be evidenced,
- because of a current number of households who are known to possibly need temporary accommodation in the near future (there are currently 22 households that may need homeless accommodation shortly)
- even if a vacancy in temporary accommodation exists, it may not be suitable for an individual household due to specific needs and requirements, which could relate to household size, disability or location – perhaps, for example to mitigate against a threat of violence or safeguarding and
- 'whole system variables' that are out of the control of the Council such as an increase in homeless demand (eg unexpected spikes in demand) that can't be prevented and/or a reduction in social housing properties becoming vacant impacting upon move-on from homeless.

2.7 Making a decision on this property needs to be taken in the context of a number of on-going risks that could impact on future resource implications for the Council. These include:

- Both homeless and Ukrainian related demand can vary in terms of both the numbers of households and the type of households which may impact on B & B use. The Council is trying to mitigate against this by seeking to identify early homeless intervention opportunities;

- The current cost of living crisis, whilst not directly having impacting on accommodation provision as yet, could result in an increase in homeless presentations relating to rent or mortgage arrears.
- The Council is seeing an increase in private rented landlords leaving the sector due to market and regulatory conditions. This will potentially impact on both presentations and loss of Monmouthshire Lettings temporary accommodation provision. Landlords not wanting to accommodate homeless households is an on-going challenge.
- Settled and permanent accommodation vacancies can vary in availability relating to existing tenants needing or wanting to move on and having the options available to facilitate moving.
- New and additional permanent social housing, supported housing and temporary accommodation delivery is being impacted by a number of issues that are presenting challenges to the Council which although expected to continue, overcoming or working around is an on-going priority. For example, phosphate related restrictions, revenue and capital availability, grant funding eligibility etc.

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