

SUBJECT: APPROVAL FOR MANAGED HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION – 3 Sunnybank, Abergavenny
MEETING: COMMUNITIES & PLACE DMT
DATE: 15TH JANUARY 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1.1 To agree to sign up to a property management agreement as follows :-

- 18 month agreement for 3 Sunnybank, Abergavenny NP7 5YE - Monthly rental £800

This property will enable the Council to discharge homeless duty for a homeless household into a two bedroom house. MCC's accommodation team have identified a family who is suitable for this property who will otherwise be accommodated in a B&B. This family, a single parent plus two young children, have been priced out of their current private rented accommodation and facing imminent homelessness. All options to address the affordability issue have been exhausted by the Prevention team, including income maximisation and Discretionary Housing Payments. The gross rent for this property is £150 pcm lower than her current property.

2. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 2.1 The addition of this property to MLS's Managed property portfolio will mean that that the Council can discharge its homeless duty and importantly prevent homelessness to a household by providing settled (permanent) accommodation in the private rented sector. MLS will act as the 'agent' for the landlord, collecting rent and co-ordinating repairs, but the landlord will retain legal responsibility for the property including meeting property related costs.
- 2.2 The property will be managed on behalf of the landlord by one of the Options Teams Accommodation Officers.
- 2.3 The alternative for the household identified would be B&B at the below average annual cost:

B&B Comparison		Total
Weekly Rental	490.00	
Weekly DWP Rate	95.77	
Total Rental	25,480.00	25,480.00
Maintenance	1,200.00	1,200.00
DWP Income	-4,980.04	-4,980.04
Net Cost		21,699.96

- 2.4 Households who approach MCC as homeless or at risk of homelessness receive an affordability assessment to establish a realistic rental budget. The Council has identified households that are in a position to rent this property.
- 2.5 The priority will continue to be to allocate this property intended for homeless use to households currently residing in B & B, or prevent going into B&B, thereby reducing the use of B & B. Housing need factors will also need to be taken into consideration on a property-by-property basis, such as the immediate needs of homeless households (for example, serious health/medical conditions or safeguarding issues) needing temporary accommodation and type, size and location of the accommodation available.
- 2.5 Although in theory the adoption of this recommendation is cost neutral as the landlord is liable for maintenance and repairs, and the tenant is liable for the rent, there can be some small fees. To provide support and assurance to the landlord, if required MLS will at times step in to assist with covering the cost of damage to the property by households placed to avoid withdrawal of the property or reputational damage. This is on a case-by-case basis. Alternatively, placing, or continuing to accommodate a two-bedroom household in B&B would cost £21,699.96 per year. Damage is an eligible cost for the Discretionary Homeless Prevention Grant
- 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:
- The property may be offered to a household to *prevent* homelessness and the use of B&B
 - 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
 - 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 (e.g. 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.

3 **AUTHOR:** Rebecca Cresswell, Homelessness Project Officer

4 **CONTACT DETAILS:** Tel: 07815010928 **E-mail:** rebeccacresswell@monmouthshire.gov.uk