

SUBJECT: LEASE APPROVAL FOR HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION – 6 Wyefield Court, Monmouth, NP25 5TN
MEETING: COMMUNITIES & PLACE DMT
DATE: 11th MARCH 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

- 2-year lease at 6 Wyefield Court, Monmouth, NP25 5TN – 2 Bed. Rent £800 PCM

This property will enable the Council to provide:

- 1 two bed unit to accommodate a small family currently in B&B.

A household has been identified as suitable for this property – a couple with a child. They have current Section 73 duties under homelessness and are due to go into temporary accommodation at the start of March. This is likely to be B&B in Abergavenny due to lack of availability of suitable accommodation in Monmouth, the town that they are homeless from. Both adults are in employment in the Monmouth area, with the Mum working nights. The child attends a local comprehensive school in Monmouth. The household are currently active on the Homeseach waiting list, in Band 1 with the effective date of 29th January 2024. It is anticipated that the household will have a significant wait for suitable settled accommodation, due to their recent date of application.

2. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

2.1 The estimated net cost in taking on this property is listed in the tables that follow :-

Property			Total
No. of Beds	2		
Lease Term (Years)	2		
Weekly Rental	184.62		
Weekly DWP Rate	109.04		
Total Rental	9,600.24		9,600.24
Total Voids	872.32		872.32
Total Arrears	872.32		872.32
Maintenance	1,200.00		1,200.00
Service Charge			
Total Exp			12,544.88
DWP Income	-5,670.08		-5,670.08
			0.00
Total Income			-5,670.08
Net Cost			6,874.80

<u>B&B</u>			Total
<u>Comparison</u>			
Weekly Rental	490.00		
Weekly DWP Rate	95.51		
Total Rental	25,480.00		25,480.00
Maintenance	1,200.00		1,200.00
DWP Income	-4,966.52		-4,966.52
Net Cost			21,713.48
Cost Avoidance			14,838.68

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

- Increasing MCC's portfolio by 1 two bed unit. The household in mind for this property are otherwise likely to go into B&B in just a few weeks. This accommodation type is not suitable for a family and the Authority is open to a suitability challenge or review should this type of accommodation continue for more than 6 weeks.

- 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 £6,874.80 but there would be cost avoidance of £14,838.68 per annum when compared with continuing to accommodate the households in B&B due to a lack of alternative options.

2.3 The priority will continue to be to allocate this property, intended for homeless use, to households currently residing in B & B or to avoid B & B for any households potentially coming through the application process needing temporary accommodation, thereby reducing the use of B & B. On this occasion, a family needing temporary accommodation has been identified who are soon to be made homeless (prevention options have been exhausted) who have a strong need to remain within their local area of Monmouth due to their employment and education situation. The aim, therefore, is to avoid the need for this family going into B & B altogether. Homeless households would normally will be able to remain in the accommodation until permanent social housing becomes available and a successful bid has been accepted. As of 27th February 2024, there were 53 households placed in B&B accommodation across the County, with 11 of these being families.

In addition, the adoption of the recommendation might not result in a permanent 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 soon,
- 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.

2.4 Deciding on these properties 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 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 several 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.

2.5 This proposal supports and contributes to the following objectives of the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28:

- A fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced – the proposal supports the household to maintain employment arrangements.
- A safe place to live where people have a home and community where they feel secure – the proposal mitigates against the use of B & B and to remain in their home community.
- A connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued – the proposal enables the households to remain in their home community and creates an additional unit of temporary accommodation in the Monmouth area, where there is a shortage of accommodation.
- A learning place where everybody can reach their potential - the proposal mitigates against a young person being displaced from school.

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