

**SUBJECT: LEASE APPROVAL FOR HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION – 45 Rockfield Road, Monmouth, NP25 5BA**  
**MEETING: COMMUNITIES & PLACE DMT**  
**DATE: 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024**  
**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

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

- 2-year lease at 45 Rockfield Road, Monmouth, NP25 5BA at £950 PCM

This property will enable the Council to provide:

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

A household with a 2-bed need has been identified as suitable for this property – a single male with 1 child. They have Section 75 duties under homelessness and are currently placed in bed and breakfast accommodation at the Mayhill Hotel Monmouth. The household are currently active on the Homeseach waiting list, in Band 1 with the effective date of 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024. They are regularly bidding though it is anticipated that the household could have a significant wait for suitable settled accommodation, due to a shortage of move on accommodation and numbers waiting.

## **2. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

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

Property			Total
No. of Beds	3		
Lease Term (Years)	2		
Weekly Rental	219.23		
Weekly DWP Rate	124.61		
Total Rental	11,399.96		<b>11,399.96</b>
Total Voids	996.88		<b>996.88</b>
Total Arrears	996.88		<b>996.88</b>
Maintenance	1,200.00		<b>1,200.00</b>
Service Charge			
<b>Total Exp</b>			<b>14,593.72</b>
DWP Income	-6,479.72		<b>-6,479.72</b>
			<b>0.00</b>
<b>Total Income</b>			<b>-6,479.72</b>
<b>Net Cost</b>			<b>8,114.00</b>

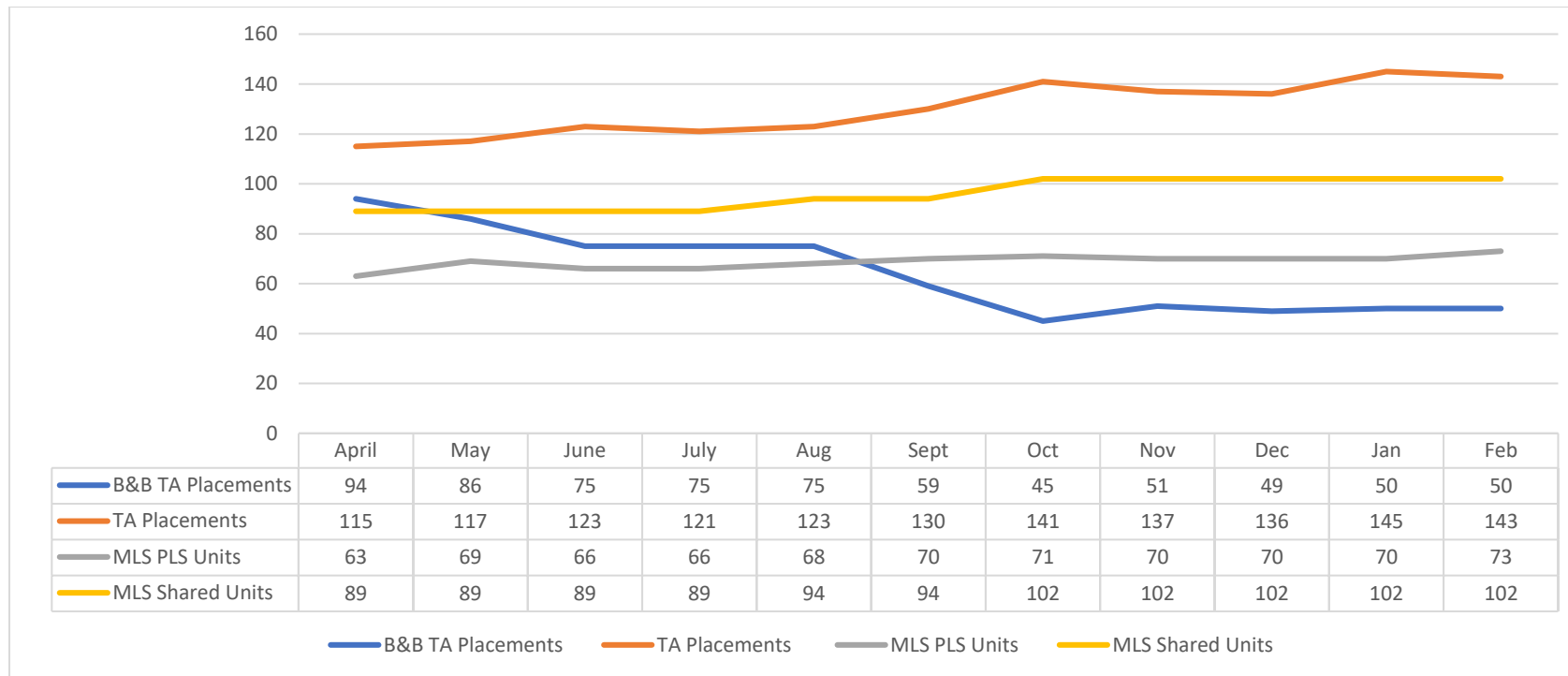
<b><u>B&amp;B</u></b>			Total
<b><u>Comparison</u></b>			
Weekly Rental	700.00		
Weekly DWP Rate	95.51		
Total Rental	36,400		<b>36,400</b>
Maintenance	1,200.00		<b>1,200.00</b>
DWP Income	-4,966.52		<b>-4,966.52</b>
<b>Net Cost</b>			<b>32,633.48</b>
<b>Cost Avoidance</b>			<b>24,519.48</b>

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 three bed unit. The household in mind for this property have been placed in B&B for 2 weeks, having now exhausted all options with friends and family. This accommodation type is not suitable for a family with duties under Section 75 and the Authority is open to a suitability challenge or review.

- 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 but there would be cost avoidance of £24,519.48 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 these properties, 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.
- 2.4 A family, currently being in B & B, with a need for two bedroomed accommodation has been identified for this property. The proposed placements supports Social Care. The circumstances are that the single father was living alone with his parents, but his child through Social Care has come into his care. He was unable to remain at his parents due to the new arrangement. The father is unable to drive and his child attends the Pupil Referral Unit at Monmouth Comprehensive. The placement supports the child's family care arrangement and mitigates against disruption of attendance at Monmouth Comprehensive Pupil Referral Unit. Homeless households will normally be able to remain in the accommodation until permanent social housing becomes available and a successful bid has been accepted. As at 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024, there were 49 households placed in B&B accommodation across the County, with 14 of these being families.
- 2.5 The table and graph below show the numbers of households in B&B and numbers in other Temporary Accommodation placements (leased accommodation and shared). It also shows the number of the number of Private Leasing properties and units of shared accommodation within the MLS portfolio The graph illustrates that additional leased accommodation is helping to contribute to a reduced use of B & B accommodation, although the situation also continues to be reliant on the variables of the level of homeless applications, the ability to prevent homelessness and the number of social housing vacancies. Not all occupants of MLS properties are placed with homeless duties, due to the past pre-Covid practice of using properties to discharge the Council's prevention duty. However, all of these households are now under notice and are subsequently now owed a S.73 duty.



2.6 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 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 these properties needs to take 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.

2.8 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 reduce their living costs by having access to cooking facilities.
- 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 assists them to be part of the community.
- A connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued – the proposal creates an additional unit of temporary accommodation in the Monmouth area, where there is a shortage of temporary accommodation and a demand for placements.
- A learning place where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential - the proposal mitigates against the young person being displaced from school and gives them a safe and quiet environment to support their education.

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