

**SUBJECT: HOMELESSNESS & RAPID REHOUSING UPDATE AND HOUSING SUPPORT
PROGRAMME INTERIM REVIEW 2026-2027**

MEETING: PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 14TH JULY 2026

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide an update on Homelessness for 2025/26 and consider an interim review of the Housing Support Programme Strategy for 2026-2027 (see **Appendix 1**), the updated Action Plan (see **Appendix 2**) and interim Action Plan (**Appendix 3**).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.1 To scrutinise the positive progress the Council is making with tackling homelessness.
- 2.2 To scrutinise the desktop data analysis of the homelessness and Housing Support Grant teams for the financial years of 2024-2025 to 2025-2026 and how this informs the actions set out in the accompanying Action Plans.
- 2.3 To scrutinise the Housing Support Programme Interim Review (see **Appendix 1**) giving regard to meeting the aims priorities of the Council.
- 2.4 To note that a future report will be provided to the Committee about the Homeless & Social Allocations (Wales) Act and the impending implementation and associated risks.

3. KEY ISSUES:

Homelessness & Rapid Rehousing Update

- 3.1 In 2023, Cabinet adopted a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan for Monmouthshire. The Plan aims to prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity, to minimise any time households may have to spend in temporary accommodation and to provide the right level of support at the right time to sustain future tenancies through four priority areas:
- Priority 1 - Prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity.
 - Priority 2 - Increase the supply of affordable and settled accommodation.
 - Priority 3 - Provide timely and effective support to sustain accommodation.
 - Priority 4 - Maximising resources and benefits through well connected partnerships
- 3.2 The Council has assessed the up-to-date position in respect of the current homeless situation and below provides a summary overview of the Council's progress. It has been determined that, despite a continuing challenging environment of high presentations (although there is a trend of reducing presentations) and complex support needs, steady but positive progress has been made since 2023. **See Paragraph 3.9 onwards.**
- 3.3 Alongside Rapid Rehousing, the Council has a legal duty to develop a Housing Support Programme (HSP) Strategy ('the Strategy') every four years, with a mid-point review every two years, outlining the strategic direction of the Council's housing related support services. This report considers this mid-point review.

- 3.6 The Council published its existing Housing Support Programme Strategy in 2022 with a mid-point review in 2024. Though a new HSP is now due, the decision has been taken by Welsh Government to delay this process by a year to better align the Rapid Rehousing Guidance and planning process and Local Housing Market Assessment process going forward. A new Strategy will need to be in place by April 2027.
- 3.7 To ensure the HSP remains relevant to MCC's housing and homelessness aspirations, Welsh Government require, for the coming financial year a light-touch, desktop review of the 2022-2026 HSP, using data across the service for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 financial years.
- 3.8 The Housing Support Programme Strategy continues to guide the work of the Council in respect of homelessness and housing related support in the medium term and is aligned to the Rapid Rehousing Transition and Action Plan, as both are underpinned by the vision to prevent homelessness wherever possible and where homelessness cannot be prevented, it is rare, brief and unrepeatable as per Welsh Governments vision.

Key Findings - Homelessness

- 3.9 **Homeless Applications** - need is currently showing positive signs of stabilising and reducing, with an emerging trend of reducing applications. In 2023/24 there were 495 applications. Applications have continued to fall in subsequent years to 403 and 341 for 2024/25 and 2025/26 respectively. This in part, is due to generally increased and earlier homeless prevention. In tandem with this improvement is a reduction in open cases for the Housing Options Team. At 31st March 2026, open cases had fallen to 370 from 658 at the start of 2023/24 meaning that the team is increasingly better able to focus on individual applicants and prevention, enabling officers to increasingly work more proactively.
- 3.10 **Homeless Prevention** - prevention activity continues to be a critical element of the Council's response. The dedicated Prevention Team achieved a 71% success rate in 2024/25, with the most common outcomes being re-accommodation with family or friends (41%) and access to social housing (30%). This again reflects a strong focus on early intervention and seeking housing stability. Performance was 69% for 2025/26. The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 and the need for private landlords to give periodic contract holders six months notice of possession will have supported homeless prevention. The impact of the legislation has tailed off since being implemented as there were landlords who didn't to transition.
- 3.11 Despite these successes, the ability to prevent homelessness through access to the Private Rented Sector (PRS) remains significantly constrained. In 2024/25 only 18% of prevention cases were resolved through the PRS, and 75% of these required financial incentives. Affordability remains the primary barrier, with 59% of failed prevention cases attributed to the cost of private renting. This highlights the ongoing impact of challenging housing market conditions and the limited accessibility of the PRS for households at risk of homelessness.
- 3.12 Overall, while progress has been made in reducing reliance on unsuitable temporary accommodation and maintaining strong prevention outcomes, structural challenges within the housing market—particularly affordability and supply—continue to limit sustainable solutions.
- 3.13 A priority going forwards will be to establish a Young Persons' Housing Group with Children's services to streamline homelessness procedures, ensure consistency, and improve outcomes for young people in Monmouthshire, essentially by seeking to intervene earlier. The group will also seek to support Social Care prepare for new duties relating to young people leaving care relating to the Homeless & Social Allocations (Wales) legislation.

- 3.14 **Duty to Accommodate (S.73 Housing Act (Wales) 2014)** – A local housing authority must help to secure that suitable accommodation is available for occupation by an applicant, if the authority is satisfied that the applicant is— (a) homeless, and (b) eligible for help. The Council has achieved particular success and good performance in this area. The Council can demonstrate a positive trend of reducing need. In 2023/24 294 households were owed a duty. This fell to 226 and 171 respectively over the last two years. For 2024/25 and of those assessed, 60% were owed a Section 73 duty, again reflecting a reduction.
- 3.15 **B & B Placements** - Significant progress has been made in reducing the use of Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation, which remains both high-cost and unsuitable for extended stays. Between April 2023 and March 2026, the number of households accommodated in B&B fell substantially from 94 to 6. As per the priority of the Council, none of these were young people aged under 16, 16/17 or 18-24.
- 3.16 At the time of writing there was one household in B & B and there have been periods since April 2026 of there being **zero** households in B & B. This reduction aligns with the Council's Rapid Rehousing approach and has been supported by the expansion of temporary accommodation supply, particularly through the Monmouthshire Lettings Scheme (MLS), which has increased access to privately leased temporary accommodation. Additional permanent social housing has also been provided through the Council's development programme facilitated through both the Welsh Government Social Housing Grant and Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP) funding. TACP was introduced by Welsh Government to specifically increase the provision of permanent or temporary accommodation for homeless households and supplement the Social Housing Grant funding. TACP has been particularly effective for purchasing acquisitions for family use. TACP has, thereby, enabled the Council to reduce the number of families with young people living in temporary accommodation. The priority going forwards is one bedroomed accommodation for single people.
- 3.17 **Temporary Accommodation including B & B** – at it's peak the Council has had over 200 households in all types of temporary accommodation. At the end of 25/26 there were 142 households in temporary accommodation.
- 3.18 To help achieve the above reduction in B & B, focus has been given to increasing accommodation through the Monmouthshire Letting Service and engaging with private landlords with a view to leasing accommodation as an alternative to B & B. The acquisition and use of Severn View, Chepstow providing 17 units during 2025/26 also supported the reduced use of B & B. The Council has also started to purchase accommodation. Three properties have been purchased to date, two of which will be used as shared housing for single people. All are in the north of the County. In addition, the Council has repurposed Severn View, Chepstow providing 17 units of single persons accommodation.
- 3.16 Other forms of temporary accommodation providing an alternative to B & B, not only provide better quality accommodation but it is also more financially sustainable. The table below provides an illustration of example cost associated with placing an individual in different types of accommodation:

	B & B with Security Per Room	Shared Property per unit	1 Bed Self- Contained
Weekly Rental	490.00	150.00	200.00
Weekly DWP Rate	95.51	95.51	86.19
Total Annual Rent	25,480.00	7,800	10,400
Security	20,679.12	N/A	N/A

Void	N/A	764.08	689.50
Maintenance	1,200.00	300.00	1,200.00
Arrears	N/A	764.08	689.50
DWP Income	-4,966.52	Nil	Nil
Cost	42,392.68	9,628.16	12,979.04
DWP Income	Nil	-4,966.52	-4,481.88
Service Charge	Nil	-741.00	-1,352.00
Total Income	Nil	-5,707.52	-5,833.88
Net Cost	42,392.68	£3,830.64	£7,145.16

- 3.19 The improved position and the fall in need for temporary accommodation is enabling the Council to both reduce the portfolio of temporary accommodation and also re-model the portfolio in terms of type, quality and location. Key aims are to reduce the amount of shared housing and reduce the disproportionate amount of accommodation in the south. A process which has in progress, but inevitably the remodelling.

Key Findings - Housing Related Support

- 3.20 Housing Support remains a key component of Monmouthshire's approach to preventing and reducing homelessness, sitting alongside housing supply and Rapid Rehousing as a core strategic pillar. It is now appropriate to give Housing Support particular focus attention going forwards having given previous focus to homeless prevention (including additional staffing) and increasing the supply of accommodation over recent years, although these two priority areas continue to be relevant.
- 3.21 Work is underway to recommission the Housing Support Grant (HSG) programme, to better align services with local need, supported by improved data quality following a recent data cleansing exercise. While this limits direct comparison with historic data, it provides a more accurate picture of current demand.
- 3.22 Referrals to Housing Support have reduced overall (by 13.8%), but the profile of need is becoming increasingly complex. Mental health continues to be the dominant and fastest-growing support need, increasing significantly despite the reduction in referrals. Domestic abuse referrals, which had risen sharply in previous years in line with regional trends, have reduced in the most recent year, though remain a significant area of demand. Alongside this, there is continued reliance on generic and holistic support services, particularly for older people.
- 3.23 Outcomes from Housing Support remain positive, with over three quarters of individuals successfully maintaining accommodation for at least six months. However, this is set against a cohort entering services with high levels of need, including homelessness and those at risk of losing accommodation.
- 3.24 A key success has been the Codi Housing First initiative which is continuing to develop steadily. Housing First is well supported by the RSL's who assist the Council with the provision of accommodation for this purpose. At the end of 2025/26 there were 19 high need individuals accommodated. Although it is appropriate to note that evictions have unfortunately been necessary, again reflecting the challenges of supporting high needs individuals.

- 3.25 The overall complexity of need has increased markedly. There has been a substantial shift away from low-level support towards higher and more intensive need, with high and intensive cases now accounting for over 30% of all service users. It is not uncommon for the Council to be supporting individuals with considerable health need. Not just mental health needs but physical health issues too. This reflects both improved identification of need and a genuine increase in complexity, with many individuals requiring multi-agency support involving health, social care, and criminal justice services.
- 3.26 Despite rising demand and complexity, the Council's Housing Support Grant allocation from Welsh Government does not currently allow the Council to meet all identified needs in the County, which does limit the ability to maximise housing support to higher needs individuals.
- 3.27 Analysis of those in temporary accommodation reinforces this picture. This cohort is disproportionately male and younger, with a higher concentration of individuals under 40. Mental health remains the most significant need, often alongside co-occurring issues such as physical ill health and offending behaviour, both of which are increasing at a faster rate than within the wider HSG population. This presents risk for both the Council and communities.
- 3.28 The level of need within temporary accommodation has intensified significantly, with a sharp rise in those assessed as having high needs and a corresponding reduction in low and medium cases. Among those with the most intensive needs, mental health is a consistent factor, often combined with substance use and other vulnerabilities, even where these are underreported in formal data.
- 3.29 Overall, the evidence indicates a clear shift towards supporting individuals with more complex, overlapping, and higher-level needs. This places increasing pressure on existing housing support services and highlights the need for more intensive, coordinated, and longer-term support solutions, particularly for those in and moving on from temporary accommodation.
- 3.30 Extending and strengthening support for higher needs individuals is, therefore, a priority. Consideration is currently being given to identifying and scoping out how multi-agency wrap around support can be identified and effectively co-ordinated and delivered. This includes how the Council can work more collaboratively with Health and other partner agencies for this cohort.

Homesearch Housing Register & Settled Accommodation

- 3.31 As at the end of 2025/26 the homeless related profile of the Housing Register was as below:

- Total applicants 3412
- Total applicants in Band 1 468
- Total homeless in Band 1 188

- 3.32 The number of homeless in Band 1 has positively fallen from 303 at the end of 2022/23 and has fallen on consecutive years since. This has been enabled through the support of the Council's partner RSL's who have helped facilitated the provision of additional social housing to homeless households. Last year 76 units and 40% of General Needs lets went to homelessness. The previous year it was 187 units. Whilst this is a reduction on previous years, simplistically the reduction aligns with the reduction in homeless applications. In turn this means that more accommodation is being allocated to non-homeless households on the register.

3.33 Unfortunately, an area of reduced performance is in relation to the average time homeless households spend in Band 1, before they are accommodated. The average for 2025/26 was 20.06 months which was an increase from 10.96 months at the start of the year. The reason for this is because there are a disproportionate number of single people waiting for permanent housing and a disproportionate number of these households have higher needs. It is taking the Council longer to accommodate this cohort of homeless applicants because of the lack of housing support options. This informs the ongoing priority to deliver additional one bedroomed affordable housing units.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 There are no negative implications with this report. **See Appendix 4.**

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 This isn't applicable to this report as this is an update report.

6. REASONS:

6.1 The Council has a statutory duty under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 to develop a Housing Support Programme (HSP) every four years, with a mid-point review every two years, outlining the strategic direction of the Council's housing related support services.

6.2 The Council published its Housing Support Programme Strategy in 2022 with a mid-point review in 2024. Though a new HSP is now due, the decision has been taken by Welsh Government to delay this process by a year to better align the Rapid Rehousing Guidance and planning process and Local Housing Market Assessment process going forward.

6.3 Furthermore, Welsh Government's Homeless & Social Housing Allocations (Wales) has recently received Royal Assent. This interim review and needs assessment will continue to have relevance. The legislation, due to be implemented in September 2027, will be the subject of a specifically focused report to the Committee in Autumn 2026. **See Appendix 5.**

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 There are no resource implications of the report itself nor the interim light touch review of the Strategy.

8. CONSULTEES: Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing & Tourism; Chief Officer Social Care, Housing & Public Health;

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022; Welsh Government Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans: Guidance for Local Authorities; Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2023; Welsh Government Housing Support Programme Strategy Guidance

10. AUTHOR: Rebecca Cresswell, Strategic Homeless Transformation Co-Ordinator

11. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 07815010928 E-mail: rebeccacresswell@monmouthshire.gov.uk