

**HOMELESSNESS – THE RESPONSE TO THE COVID 19 CRISIS  
AND DELIVERING THE FUTURE SERVICE MODEL**

**HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES – CLLR LYNDA THORNE  
AGENDA ITEM: 6**

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*Appendices 1, 2 and 4 are not for publication as they contain exempt information of the description contained in paragraphs 14 and 21 (Appendix 1 and 4) and paragraph 16 (Appendix 2) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972*

**Reason for this Report**

1. To note the impact of Covid 19 on the delivery of services for single homeless people in Cardiff.
2. To note the steps already taken to secure additional permanent homeless accommodation to replace temporary provision and ensure that no service user will experience a reduction in service availability as lockdown measures are relaxed.
3. To approve the provision of further accommodation and support for single homeless people and families.
4. To approve the Direct Award of a contract to deliver temporary accommodation units at the Gasworks site, Grangetown for families.
5. To approve the additional measures outlined in this report that will deliver the new model of homeless provision in Cardiff.

**Background**

6. In recent years, like all major British cities, Cardiff has experienced a dramatic rise in the number of people homeless or rough sleeping, working with our partners it has been possible to make very significant progress in reducing the number of individuals sleeping rough and in March 2020 Cardiff had achieved the lowest level for six years.
7. Following extensive research into good practice across the world, proposals were developed to improve the services in Cardiff, to maximise prevention, ensure effective assessment of need and deliver the right accommodation pathways to meet the wide range of issues presented by our single homeless clients. This approach was endorsed in our

Corporate Plan 2020/23. A multi-agency steering group was established to deliver this new vision chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities.

8. At the beginning of March 2020 there were 30 rough sleepers in Cardiff, down from 84 rough sleepers the previous year. The key presenting need for those rough sleeping was substance misuse although the complex nature of the issues faced by these individuals meant that most also had other challenging health needs.
9. In addition, there were 140 individuals in emergency accommodation, 98 of whom were sharing sleeping spaces and were required to leave the accommodation during the day. In addition to the emergency accommodation, more than 600 individuals were living in hostel and other supported accommodation. A report on the challenges faced by the existing services in place to meet the needs of single homeless people and the steps being taken to address these was considered by Cabinet in December 2019.

## **Issues**

### **Impact of the Covid 19 Pandemic**

10. On 20 March 2020 the Welsh Government announced that an additional £10 million had been made available to Local Authorities to assist in the response to the Covid 19 pandemic and mitigate the impact on homeless individuals.
11. It was crucial that significant levels of additional self-contained accommodation was sourced quickly in order to ensure that no-one remained on the street and specifically that individuals could self-isolate should they be symptomatic of the virus. The numbers residing in existing emergency accommodation had to be very significantly reduced to ensure that the virus did not spread within this vulnerable group.
12. In the first 3 weeks of the crisis 140 clients were rehoused into accommodation where they could shield / self-isolate. In total 182 units of supported accommodation have been established during the crisis made up of:
  - 20 Isolation units (Shipping container developments in Ely and Butetown – recently completed and intended for family temporary accommodation, repurposed to meet this need.)
  - 2 Hotels (130 units at the OYO in Riverside and the Youth Hostel Hotel in Splott)
  - Move on accommodation (16 units in Countisbury House, Llanrumney)
  - Re-purposed building (16 units at the Parade in Plasnewydd)
13. 24 hour support and security staff were allocated to all sites and 3 meals a day and snacks have been provided to ensure that clients can remain at the property at all times.

14. The detail of the homelessness arrangements put in place to meet the Covid 19 crisis, as set out above, were considered by Cabinet in June 2020.
15. As clients remained in the accommodation it quickly became clear that there was an unprecedented opportunity for services to work with those who wanted to take a step away from substance misuse. Health and third sector colleagues have been providing services directly into the hotels, hostels and supported housing aimed at harm reduction and rapid prescribing. Therapeutic and counselling services have also continued throughout the crisis to ensure that clients underlying needs are identified and met.
16. A new long lasting drug substitute was made available with the support of Welsh Government and the results have been exceptionally positive with 71 clients now referred for services.
17. From the start of the crisis the numbers of presentations from single homeless people increased significantly with an average of 45 new presentations a week (as compared to 25 a week before the pandemic) increasing the already significant pressures on services and resulting in the continued use of some shared sleeping spaces.

### **A New Vision for Homelessness**

18. The experience of the response to the pandemic so far, combined with the work previously undertaken to review Cardiff's current service model has made clear the pressing requirement to continue to provide additional accommodation with multi agency support into the long term, to meet the needs of single homeless people in Cardiff.
19. Prior to the pandemic a strategic review of services was carried out led by Councillor Lynda Thorne, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities. This review set out a new pathway for accommodation and support services for single homeless people. A range of partner representatives were involved in the development of this new pathway and this had been well received in consultation sessions. The findings from this strategic review has been combined with the learning from the pandemic to develop a new vision for homeless services for single people in Cardiff.
20. The vision for the future has 4 key components:
  - To prevent homelessness wherever possible – and where it is not possible for the experience of homelessness to be rare, brief and not repeated.
  - To deliver an assessment/ triage approach to all those presenting as homeless. A service that will properly and comprehensively identify the needs of the person, where necessary on a multi-agency basis, to fully understand all the issues and consequently

ensure that the accommodation and support solution provided is appropriate to the individual.

- To move away from a “staircase” approach to rehousing where clients move from supported accommodation to independence in stages. The new model will have separate pathways for clients who are able to move rapidly into independent housing via housing first or community housing with intensive support as appropriate. The model will also have a separate pathway for those with lower need with support to move on quickly into the private rented sector together.
  - For those with the most complex needs the model recognises that longer term specialist accommodation will be required but that this will be good quality, self-contained accommodation that can provide a home environment in a supported setting.
21. The vision for Cardiff is very much in line with Welsh Government’s new guidance. In May 2020 a further allocation of £20 million was announced for 2020/21 to assist in funding solutions to homelessness in the longer term – described as a “No Going Back” approach. All Council’s in Wales have been asked to put forward a phase 2 homelessness plan to set out how this will be achieved in their local authority area and to make a funding bid to support this. The Welsh Government has been clear that they do not wish to see a cliff edge but want a continuation of current arrangements while the move to longer-term solutions is achieved.
22. To ensure that accommodation remains available for single homeless people in the short term, immediate action has been taken to extend the arrangements with the 2 hotels: until September in the case of the OYO and December in the case of the YHA. In addition, to allow for the immediate need to meet the increased demand from single homeless people, a decision has been made to enter into a partnership arrangement with POBL to use a 42 unit student housing block on Newport Road, further information on this scheme is provided below.

### **Next Steps - Delivering the Vision**

#### **Assessment Centre / Triage**

23. Considering the experience of other UK and European cities the need for an appropriate assessment and triage centre for single homeless individuals is essential. The centre would be available for 24-hour access for referrals by trusted partners and would be a fully multi-disciplinary provision. The centre would provide good quality emergency accommodation for short term use and which will also allow clients to stay longer if needed for them to stabilise and for their needs to be fully assessed.
24. The centre would become a co-ordination point for our multi-disciplinary complex needs services including street and hostel outreach. The

success of our multi-disciplinary approach has been considerable. This grant funded team already includes the following members:

- Social workers
- Mental health workers & mental health social worker
- Housing support workers ( SAIL)
- Advocate
- Primary care nurse
- Substance misuse workers
- Probation Officers
- Rapid prescribing service
- Therapeutic outreach workers & psychological services
- Counsellors
- Peer mentor co-ordinator
- Police Street Safe Officer

25. Some funding already exists to increase the resources on the team, particularly the counselling and therapeutic services which have been in high demand during the crisis. A bid will be made to build on the membership of the team to include some time from the following:

- Occupational Therapist
- Psychiatrist
- Psychologist
- Key support workers

26. Following the assessment process, the team would allocate individuals to the most appropriate accommodation solution, from immediate rehousing to complex needs supported accommodation, with the appropriate level of on-going support in place.

27. Agreement has been reached with Taff Housing Association for a further lease of Hayes Place in Riverside for up to 10 years, to provide the assessment and triage centre. This building which has been leased by the Council for some time was most recently used as the one stop shop for domestic abuse and violence against women services. The building is suitable for the multi-disciplinary triage service with some minor building adaptations necessary. Grant funding will be sought from the Welsh Government to make these changes.

28. The emergency accommodation will be provided to the rear of the building. A modular solution to the provision of on-site accommodation units has been procured. An Officer Decision has been made to direct award the contract for these modular units, due to the pressing need to ensure that this provision is in place urgently. It is estimated that the service will be operational by January 2021.

## **Good Quality Supported Accommodation**

### **Shorter Term Accommodation**

29. As mentioned above, to ensure the immediate need for additional supported housing is met, a decision has been made to enter into a partnership agreement with Pobl group to secure a 42 unit block of flats on Newport Road. The units were previously used as student accommodation. This scheme will meet the pressing need for additional self-contained accommodation. The site is available for the longer term and once the immediate needs of the crisis have been met will provide supported accommodation for those with medium support needs. Funding for some changes to the building will be sought from the Welsh Government, while revenue costs for the operation of the building can be met through Housing Benefit and existing grant funding.
30. The 16 self-contained units in Countisbury house in Llanrumney have been secured for a 12-month period initially, also from Pobl Group. Should the scheme prove successful the intention will be to secure the facility for the longer term for continued use as a move-on / halfway house provision for those with medium to low level support needs. Funding for this scheme is currently being met by a combination of Housing Benefit and Welsh Government Covid 19 grant

### **Specialist Supported Accommodation**

31. Following the research and site visits undertaken prior to the pandemic it has been possible to identify the key features of good quality specialist supported accommodation. The main factors are that the units must be self-contained, that there is support on site 24/7, that health and other essential services are available to the clients in the facility rather than relying on individuals attending for outpatient appointments elsewhere. Counselling and therapeutic services are available in the facility along with education and work experience opportunities.
32. The current level of need for this type of specialist accommodation in Cardiff is estimated to be 200 units.
33. Following consideration of options and taking advice from a wide range of partners, including Health services and the Police the preferred solution to deliver this high quality facility is to refocus and existing facility in Adamsdown.
34. This facility is owned by United Welsh Housing Association and it currently provides temporary accommodation for a mix of 74 families and individuals. There is also an opportunity to repurpose neighbouring flats for more settled long-term accommodation. The integrated facility would comprise approximately 103 self-contained units with intensive support on site 24/7 on the main site and an additional 49 flats for longer term more settled accommodation. There would be space for health and therapeutic services. Into-work, educational and diversionary activity could also be

provided on site and the building would have 24-hour security, support staff and CCTV.

35. The core services on site will be delivered directly by the Council with significant input from health and other partners. It has been agreed that the arrangement currently in place between United Welsh Housing Association and the Council will be strengthened into a more formal arrangement, to reflect the longer-term nature of this project. Considerable capital investment will be needed for this scheme, including the provision of health suites and significant communal spaces. Funding is being sought from the Welsh Government for these building changes, from the £20 million being made available to address the Covid 19 recovery. This work will be carried out on a phased basis with some occupation of the building possible by the autumn.
36. The revenue costs of the scheme are significant and are set out in Appendix 2. Funding for this will be sought from the Welsh Government.

### **Existing Accommodation**

37. The experience of the pandemic has shown that with lower numbers of clients in existing hostels considerable improvement to outcomes for individuals can be achieved. Our partners have delivered outstanding work during the crisis as they have adapted their provision to meet the new challenges. This has included a move towards increased provision of services for residents in the hotels and hostels, rather than drawing clients into other facilities where the congregation of a large number of clients can lead to antisocial behaviour.
38. The intention is to build on this success by making a permanent change to the delivery of services. This will impact particularly on the operation of the services at Huggard Buildings on Dumballs Road. Currently there are two hostels on this site and a day centre. One of the hostels is operated by the Council and one by the Huggard, a third sector organisation. The Huggard also runs the day centre.
39. During the crisis, the day centre service has been changed to focus only on identified clients and has moved away from a drop in approach. This has reduced the number of individuals that are drawn into the area.
40. The important services delivered by the Huggard such as the substance misuse harm reduction services and the welfare advocacy service have been delivered on a mobile basis in the hotels and hostels. It is proposed to continue and build on this success going forward. The management of the whole site will be reviewed to ensure that services can operate in an effective and controlled way.
41. The services will focus on clients that have been identified through the Assessment process as in need of intervention. Wherever possible services will be provided directly into projects where the clients are living, rather than in the Huggard buildings. Work is ongoing with the Huggard and with Health colleagues to fully design this new model of service.

42. It was noted in a previous cabinet report that some existing second stage projects which offer accommodation in shared community housing without full time support on site have proved less successful in meeting the increasingly high level of client needs. This results in high rates of eviction and abandonment. Move on from these projects is also very slow, even where intended for lower needs clients. Research from across Europe and the USA has shown that different levels of supported accommodation prove less successful than a rapid rehousing approach with intensive support. It is intended therefore to move away from the staircase model whereby service users move through several projects in their journey towards independence, towards a rapid rehousing approach with appropriate support based on individual need. This support will be more flexible than the current accommodation based support, allowing it to be tailored to individual needs.
43. Cardiff has a considerable amount of this second stage provision with 220 units of accommodation. It is proposed to phase this provision out over a 3 year period commencing in April 2021. This will release a significant level of resource that can be used to fund the new model of service, however this will not be immediately available and discussion with the Welsh Government on longer term transitional funding is ongoing.
44. There is also a need to review the abstinence /substance misuse pathway projects in conjunction with partners in Health. This review will be undertaken over the coming year. Again where possible the model will be to move away from long periods in supported housing. The specific needs of women will also be reviewed, all new projects will where appropriate offer separate accommodation for women and the requirement for specialist services for women with support needs will be considered as part of the review.

### **Funding Arrangements**

45. As stated above the revenue cost of providing services to the complex needs client group is very high and while some existing schemes can be phased out this will take 3 years to achieve.
46. Appendix 3 sets out the estimated costs of the schemes and the funding that can eventually be released. The Welsh Government has made available funding for this year and an application has been submitted to cover these costs. While there is no commitment to make further transition funding available in future years it is anticipated that this will be the case.
47. Failure to take immediate action would mean that there would be no alternative accommodation to replace the hotels when they close. It is therefore necessary to commit to the development of the schemes set out above before confirmation of future years funding.
48. The majority of the costs of the schemes relate to the additional staffing and security required to provide services to this client group. Should



additional funding not be forthcoming the schemes could be used to house lower needs clients at considerably reduced cost. These lower costs are also set out in appendix 3 and represent the actual level of contractual commitment that is being entered into at this stage.

49. Representations will be made to the Welsh Government to make clear that continued funding will be required if services are to remain in place for the clients with highest needs and if the progress made to date in addressing homelessness is to be maintained.

### **Impact of Covid 19- Temporary Accommodation for Families**

50. The impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on family homelessness has been different to that experienced in relation to single individuals.
51. The temporary ban on evictions in both the public and private rented sector, along with mortgage holidays for owner occupiers in difficulties has seen fewer families presenting as homeless. The Council and most Housing Associations continued work on vacant properties during the crisis and as a result move on from temporary accommodation for homeless families has remained effective. This was particularly important as 20 family units of temporary accommodation in shipping container units located in Ely and Butetown were repurposed for self-isolation and access to them has proved essential during the crisis.
52. Currently Cardiff has 555 units of family temporary accommodation. These are made up as follows:
  - 161 hostel and supported accommodation
  - 394 Leased accommodation
53. 72 of the supported housing units are in the facility in Adamsdown mentioned above, the location in the city centre is not ideal for family homelessness and it is proposed that this building is used for single person accommodation in future. Other hostel accommodation while providing the opportunity to deliver intensive support for families, offers smaller accommodation units, which are not ideal for long stays or for larger families.
54. While the leasing schemes have proved very successful in the past in preventing the use of bed and breakfast for homeless people, they do lead to long stays in temporary accommodation, which can be disruptive to family life and the education of children.
55. The council will adopt the Welsh Governments leasing scheme which has set out terms and provisions for Local authorities to follow adopting model lease documents issued by Welsh Government.
56. There are two temporary accommodation leasing schemes in Cardiff, operated by a Housing Association and Temp To Perm. The Housing Association has recently approached the Council to advise that their scheme, the larger of the two, is no longer financially viable without

additional input from the Council. The financial contribution made by the Council to this scheme is already considerable.

57. Due to the above pressures a review of family homeless accommodation has also been carried out. The future vision for family homeless is similar to that for single person homelessness:

- **Prevent homelessness** – homes are rescued if possible, if not as many families as possible are rehoused at this stage. Where prevention is not possible to ensure that ***homelessness is rare, brief and not repeated.***
- **Assessment / Triage Approach** - Properly identify need, taking a multi-agency approach where necessary, and provide appropriate tailored solutions for each individual family.
- **Good Quality Emergency / Supported Accommodation** - short stay for most, some families will stay longer while they receive more support.
- **Focused support to achieve successful move on** - Move away from the staircase approach

58. As stated above a number of the hostel units are located at the Adamsdown facility and the move to use this to provide longer term supported accommodation for single people will mean that alternative family accommodation is needed. It is proposed to both facilitate this change and achieve the more appropriate alternative model of delivery for families by creating 3 centres for family homelessness. The locations for these centres will be:

- Briardene on North Road, a Cardiff Living Scheme due to deliver by the end of this financial year (39 units)
- Harrison Avenue in St Mellons (a United Welsh building) (19 units)
- The Gasworks – a new build site at the former gasworks site in Grangetown (50 units)

59. These centres will offer good quality family accommodation with staff on site during the day. The staff will promote rapid move on while also addressing any support needs the family may have. Other services will be provided on site including Early Help services such as Flying Start, health visiting and parenting provision. The aim would be to move families quickly from this accommodation directly into a settled home. Once fully operational this model would reduce the need for leased properties. Further work is needed to fully develop this new rapid rehousing model, which will include improved use of the private rented sector in both Cardiff and the surrounding area.

60. The Council has recently agreed to become a pilot for a Welsh Government Scheme to lease directly from the private rented sector. The scheme will provide a 5-year lease giving households more stability over the medium term. Cardiff will be able to take on 66 properties under the

scheme. The terms of the leases have been set and the Welsh Government will meet the costs of the scheme. It is proposed that the decision making processes for entering into leases for domestic properties are streamlined, with delegation being given to the Assistant Director Housing and Communities to enter into such leases following advice from Strategic Estates.

61. Discussions are on-going with the main leased accommodation provider, to identify a way forward for the current scheme. If a solution cannot be found it is proposed that the schemes transfer into the Council and operate alongside the longer term leasing scheme while options for the future of the scheme is considered. This will ensure that it continues to operate effectively while a new model of provision is put in place.
62. Funding to support the transition to the new family homelessness model is being sought from the Welsh Government.
63. The changes set out above offer the opportunity to considerably improve homeless accommodation options for both single people and families. There is a need to move quickly to put in place the changes to the facility in Adamsdown to address the pressing need to find alternative accommodation for those currently living in the hotels. The projects for the replacement of the family accommodation in Adamsdown therefore need to be brought on line as a matter of urgency. While current demand from families is low this is likely to change when the lockdown measures are over and the restriction on evictions are lifted, therefore the family accommodation to replace the Adamsdown property needs to be fast tracked to ensure that this gap is filled as soon as possible. In the meantime it is proposed that social housing lets continue to focus on homeless cases and emergency moves to create the capacity needed to facilitate this change.

#### **Meanwhile use of sites for the provision of purpose built temporary accommodation**

64. This report sets out the range of schemes being proposed to offer long-term and sustainable housing options for homeless families and single people. Furthermore, the extreme urgency to deliver longer-term solutions for Temporary Accommodation to replace the leased hotels has been explained.
65. Speed of delivery is therefore critical and by using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), we will be able to provide completed homes in a much faster period making meanwhile use of vacant council sites already benefiting from services.
66. The Housing Minister has been clear that homeless people should not have to go back to the street following the pandemic and eradication of street homelessness is a key objective of Welsh Government. As such Welsh Government have repurposed what would have been Innovative Housing Funding Year 4 for the provision of immediate homeless housing solutions using MMC. These projects have been discussed directly with

Welsh Government who are supportive of this approach and have indicated that they will provide grant funding for our projects. A further grant submission is being made for Welsh Government Capital Grant covering Covid 19 related homelessness recovery plans the deadline for which is the end of June 2020. The plans must be deliverable by the year end 20/21.

67. Two sites have been identified as suitable to deliver new-build Temporary Accommodation as a meanwhile use.
68. Site 1 at Hayes Place will provide 19 new modular homes using the Beattie Passive 'Haus4studio' pods. These pods have been specifically designed to provide single person units providing warm, safe and comfortable overnight accommodation for single people. The site also benefits from an existing office building which can be used to provide critical support to homeless individuals as detailed previously. The decision to direct award to Beattie Passive has been approved under a separate Officer Decision Report.
69. Site 2 at the Gasworks site, Grangetown will provide 50 flats as temporary accommodation for homeless families made up of 12 x 1 bed flats, 12 x 2 bed flats and 26 x 3 bed flats. The site has recently been acquired by the council for inclusion within the Housing Development programme and benefits from existing services.
70. In order to meet the required timescales for delivery and for the developments to be eligible for Welsh Government Homelessness phase 2 grant, a direct award is required as the scheme must be delivered by year end to be eligible. Furthermore, we must be in contract with the developer by year end for the IHP4 grant. As such we are seeking approval for this approach using the Cabinet Office Procurement Policy Note (Responding to COVID-19) PPN 01/20 – direct award due to extreme urgency (regulation 32(2)(c) under the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
71. It is believed that this route is suitable as;
  - We are reacting to a current situation that is a genuine emergency - not planning for one. The Covid 19 pandemic was obviously unforeseen and has resulted in the Council taking some immediate and swift measures to provide the support needed for both street homelessness/single person homelessness and the potential increase in family homelessness. We now have over 140 homeless people being housed in short-term hotel provision. In order to ensure that long-term and sustainable solutions are in place to prevent homeless people returning to the streets the various solutions outlined in this report are being proposed. The continuation of the leases is not an option that can be taken forward as owners of the hotels are expecting the market to improve and are anticipating operating the buildings as hotels again in the near future. It is imperative that the Council is able to have a longer term solution. If we are unable to deliver the modular schemes the risk is that many homeless people will return to the streets.

- Insofar as is strictly necessary where, for reasons of extreme urgency brought about by events unforeseeable by the contracting authority, the time limits for the open or restricted procedures or competitive procedures with negotiation cannot be complied with. As set out in this report we are working within very strict timeframes. Firstly to ensure that long-term sustainable homeless provision is in place at the time that the short-term hotel provision is scaled back/removed and to ensure the remodelling of the Adamsdown property can take place, thus preventing people from returning to street homelessness as set out clearly by the Housing Minister. Secondly to ensure that we can meet the requirements of Welsh Government Capital grants that are available. There is no time to run an accelerated procurement under the open or restricted procedures or competitive procedures with negotiation in order to achieve a project completion by year end.
  - There is no suitable framework or dynamic purchasing system available to us that will enable us to meet the timeframes we are working to. In order to comply with the grant requirements and deliver the schemes before year end we must be able to place orders to begin the manufacture of the modular units in July. The lead-in time to prepare for manufacture is such that not being able to place the orders in July will prevent us meeting the timescales. Furthermore, both parties must be able to enter into a suitable building contract for the projects. Contract negotiations are on-going to ensure documents can be agreed by July 2020. In this case we are using the JCT 2016 D&B form of contract. Again, this means we are unable to run a mini-competition to a framework as even with a reduced tender period we still need time to negotiate the form of contract required.
  - The Beattie passive system is already fully certified, compliant with all Welsh Regulations and they are able to deliver the modular units for both schemes within our required timescales. Furthermore, the Beattie Passive system offers a unique standard in the form of being fully PassivHaus compliant, ensuring that the costs of heating the homes are extremely low for tenants and sustainable and the system is fully demountable and can be moved elsewhere in the future if required. The costs of both projects can be benchmarked against the MMC projects we have already delivered to show value for money. The costs and benchmarking of costs against schemes already delivered are provided in Appendix 1.
72. Furthermore, in response to the exceptional challenges presented by from COVID-19, the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2020 (“the Amendment Order”) came into force on 30 March 2020.
73. The Amending Order inserts a new Part 12A (Emergency Development by Local Authorities) into Schedule 2 to the GPDO, permitting local authorities to undertake any form of development, as defined by section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, on land owned, leased, occupied or maintained by the local authority for the purposes of:

- a) preventing an emergency;
  - b) reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of an emergency; or
  - c) taking other action in connection with an emergency.
74. Part 12, A.2 confirms that development in relation to homelessness is one of the types of development permitted by the new amendment. Part 12, A.1 effectively limits the use of development that is permitted under the amendment for a period of 12 months, after which the land must be restored to its former condition.
75. In summary, there is no need to apply for planning permission for development for temporary housing for people made homeless in connection with the Covid 19 emergency, because it is permitted under the amendment. However, if the temporary housing is to remain in situ for longer than 12 months, a planning application should be submitted to allow its use beyond the 12 months.
76. Both schemes must be delivered before the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and in order to achieve this orders must be placed for the construction of the accommodation units before the end of July 2020. If this can be achieved it should be possible that scheme 1 can be completed by December 2020 and scheme 2 no later than March 2021. As eluded to above this leaves no time to use normal procurement procedures.
77. Therefore approval is sought to procure 50 units by direct award to Beattie Passive for the Gasworks site. The combined value of both Beattie Passive schemes and benchmarking are provided in Appendix 1.
78. Should Welsh Government Capital grant funding not be approved for Hayes Place and Gasworks site future development schemes in the Housing Development programme will be slipped or removed to fund these projects

### **Local Member consultation**

79. Local ward member consultation has taken place for all sites covered in this report. The ward members for Adamsdown noted the change to the focus of the building current used for family accommodation, and have asked to be involved in the designs to ensure that impact on the community can be minimised. It should be noted that the Adamsdown members did express concern about the Newport Road repurposed student accommodation due to its location and to the issues in the immediate area.
80. Due to the pressing need for additional accommodation and the lack of other available options, it has been necessary to proceed with this site however work is ongoing to mitigate the concerns raised by members, including 24 hour security presence, extended CCTV and close working with other supported housing schemes nearby. Officers will work closely with the police and other key partners to identify and mitigate any potential issues ahead of the opening of the new facilities. A multi-agency

review will also be carried out to identify the wider issues in the area and any action that that can be taken to address these.

81. The ward members for Riverside were consulted about the use of Hayes Place as a homeless assessment centre. They raised concerns about the overall level of homeless provision in Riverside and the impact this was having on the community. Assurances were given that the provision for single homeless people in the OYO hotel in Riverside would cease as soon as alternative provision is put in place, this is expected to take place early in September 2020, well before the planned date for the opening of the homelessness assessment centre. There are no plans for the future use of the OYO site for further services.
82. Assurances were given that the services proposed for the former Transport Club will no longer go ahead, in addition the review of the second stage community houses will have a positive impact on Riverside and should overtime achieve a net reduction in supported housing services in the area. Again officers will work closely with the police and other key partners to identify and mitigate any potential issues ahead of the opening of the Hayes Place facility. Riverside ward members also expressed concern about the location of the needle exchange facility in the area, discussions have commenced with Public Health colleagues regarding a new approach to needle exchange and the possible relocation of this facility, initial talks regarding these changes have been positive and a group is being established to take this work forward. Ward members will be kept informed of the progress of this group.
83. Local Ward members have been consulted with regarding the proposal for the meanwhile use at the Gasworks site and are supportive of the scheme.

### **Scrutiny Consideration**

84. The Council's COVID19 Scrutiny Panel is due to consider this report on 14 July 2020. Any comments received will be reported to the Cabinet meeting.

### **Reason for Recommendations**

85. To set out a range of measures being take to address homelessness in Cardiff.

### **Financial Implications**

86. The report proposes a number of interventions that have financial implications. It is important to note collectively these interventions rely on WG grant as well as Council funding which at the time of writing have no notified approval from WG in terms of certainty, terms and conditions nor longevity. Accordingly the report identifies that where continued WG funding is not confirmed, proposed schemes may have to be repurposed to lower needs schemes with significantly reduced operational costs.

87. In addition, officers are currently reviewing existing grant funded homelessness schemes with a view to phasing them out over a 3 year period commencing in April 2020/21 and to release resources to part fund the proposed new model of service.
88. This will inevitably be a complex process of transitioning between schemes which will require close monitoring of all revenue commitments in order to ensure that expenditure is within available resources and does not impact adversely on the Council revenue budget.
89. The report proposes entering into a number of management agreements, leases, or operating arrangements for various additional properties. When considering such proposals, as well as the ongoing operating costs of the buildings and services to be provided, it is important to consider the VAT implications, initial capital expenditure implications as well as any dilapidation obligations at the end of the period of use.
90. Provision for future liabilities will need to be made as appropriate and fully captured within the budget setting process for these services over the period of any agreements. Any potential impact on the Council revenue budget needs to be identified and immediately addressed in order to ensure that this is limited and contained.

### **Revenue Implications**

91. Appendix 3 sets out the estimated revenue costs and funding streams for the proposed homelessness strategy as detailed within the report.
92. This identifies costs of circa £6.4 million per annum from 2021/22 which will be partly met by Housing Benefit receipts and one off grant funding estimated at £683,000. This leaves a potential funding gap of circa £2.7 million per annum for which Welsh Government funding is currently being sought.
93. At this stage, Welsh Government have not confirmed that this funding gap can be met and there is no certainty of continued funding or the period for which any funding will be made available.
94. Accordingly, there is a significant element of uncertainty in terms of risk mitigation, financial exposure and ongoing sources of funding for the proposed homelessness strategy. The report identifies that schemes may need to be modified to lower needs schemes to match available funding and other schemes phased out in order to release funding for this new model of service. It is essential that these service developments and changes are monitored closely to fully understand the financial impact and funding sources as the strategy develops.

### **Capital Implications**

95. Appendix 4 sets out the Capital costs of the strategy proposed. Some of the cost is to be incurred by external partners, whereas costs in respect of Briardene have already been considered by Cabinet in June 2020 as part



of a report on the acquisition of additional properties from the Cardiff Living Scheme.

96. The proposals rely on the Council receiving £11.454 million of grant from WG grant funding sources, with partners receiving £2.390 million. Whilst bids have been submitted, no confirmation exists whether formal or informal as to approval or otherwise of any requests for funding. In the event that the level of grant funding assumed is not available, funding identified in the budget for new build schemes will be reduced or relevant sites be deferred to future years.
97. In the event that additional costs have to be incurred in moving the modular units from the gas works site, consideration will need to be given to any additional costs arising and the risk of abortive costs. Any such costs, if required to be incurred will need to be managed within the approved budget for new build schemes in the Capital programme or within the Housing Revenue Account budget as appropriate.

### **Legal Implications**

98. The Council has general power under s.120 of the Local Government Act 1972 to acquire land, including leases for any of its functions; or for a purpose which benefits, improves or develops the area of the Council. The Council's Disposal and Acquisition of Land Procedure Rules requires the decision maker to have regard to advice from the Council's valuer.
99. A local housing authority has duties to the homeless under Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. A local housing authority must carry out a homelessness review for its area, and formulate and adopt a homelessness strategy based on the results of that review.
100. They must carry out an assessment of a person's case, if the person has applied to a local housing authority for accommodation or help in retaining or obtaining accommodation, and it appears to the authority that the person may be homeless or threatened with homelessness.

### **Equality Duty.**

101. The Council has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties) – the Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED). These duties require the Council to have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of 'protected characteristics'. The 'Protected characteristics' are: • Age • Gender reassignment • Sex • Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality • Disability • Pregnancy and maternity • Marriage and civil partnership • Sexual orientation • Religion or belief – including lack of belief.

## **Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

102. The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act') places a 'well-being duty' on public bodies aimed at achieving 7 national well-being goals for Wales - a Wales that is prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, has cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, and is globally responsible. In discharging its duties under the Act, the Council has set and published well being objectives designed to maximise its contribution to achieving the national well being goals. The well being objectives are set out in Cardiff Council's Corporate Plan. When exercising its functions, the Council is required to take all reasonable steps to meet its well being objectives. This means that the decision makers should consider how the proposed decision will contribute towards meeting the well being objectives and must be satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken to meet those objectives.
103. The well being duty also requires the Council to act in accordance with a 'sustainable development principle'. This principle requires the Council to act in a way which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Put simply, this means that Council decision makers must take account of the impact of their decisions on people living their lives in Wales in the future. In doing so, the Council must:
- Look to the long term
  - Focus on prevention by understanding the root causes of problems
  - Deliver an integrated approach to achieving the 7 national well-being goals
  - Work in collaboration with others to find shared sustainable solutions
  - Involve people from all sections of the community in the decisions which affect them
104. The decision maker must be satisfied that the proposed decision accords with the principles above; and due regard must be given to the Statutory Guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers, which is accessible using the link below: <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/statutory-guidance/?lang=en>

### **General**

105. The decision maker should be satisfied that the approach is in accordance within the financial and budgetary policy and represents value for money for the council.
106. The decision maker should also have regard to, when making its decision, to the Council's wider obligations under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards.
107. It is understood that grant funding has been applied for. The council will need to comply with any grant conditions associated with such funding.

108. Exempt legal implications are provided in Appendix 2

### **HR Implications**

109. An overview of the staffing requirements for these schemes has been set out in the body of the report. Any new posts or additional staff that are required will be created and recruited in line with corporately agreed council policies and procedures. There will be full Trade union consultation on any staffing matters.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is recommend to:

1. note the steps already taken to secure additional permanent homeless accommodation to replace temporary provision and ensure that no service user will experience a reduction in service availability as lockdown measures are relaxed.
2. agree the way forward for homeless services as set out in the report including the need to make representations to Welsh Government for ongoing funding to ensure the “No Going Back” strategy for single homeless people is sustainable.
3. note that in the event grant funding is not at the levels assumed within the report, options for schemes will need to be reviewed and revised to achieve lower operational costs and within available budgets, this will impact significantly on the overall effectiveness of the approach.
4. approve a direct award contract to Beattie Passive to deliver 50 temporary accommodation units at the Gasworks site for the reasons outlined in this report.
5. delegate responsibility for the leasing of private domestic properties under the Welsh Government Leasing Scheme to the Assistant Director for Housing and Communities following appropriate advice from Strategic Estates.

<b>SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>Sarah McGill</b> <b>Corporate Director People &amp; Communities</b>
	10 July 2020

*The following appendices are attached:*

- Appendix 1 – Costs associated to Gasworks & Hayes Place (confidential)
- Appendix 2 – Exempt legal implications (confidential)
- Appendix 3 – Revenue Costs
- Appendix 4 – Capital Costs (confidential)
- Appendix 5 - Equalities Impact Assessment