



# COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

## *Panel Report*

### Public

**Date of Meeting:** 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009

**Title:** Women and Families Replacement Homelessness  
Accommodation

**Report of:** Director of Development

**Report reference:** DS. 97/09

### Summary:

This report presents Members of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel with the report (DS 82/09) that went to Executive on 26th October 2009 that outlined to Members of the Executive the proposals to develop replacement accommodation for homeless women and families.

### Questions for / input required from Scrutiny:

Input from this committee surrounds the proposal and progress to date.

### Recommendations:

That the attached report that went to the Executive on the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2009 be considered and comments forwarded to the Executive.

**Contact Officer:** Simon Taylor

**Ext:** 7327

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None



# REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

## PORTFOLIO AREA: HEALTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Date of Meeting: 26th October 2009

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Public

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Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan:

Yes

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Inside Policy Framework

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**Title:** Women and Families Replacement Homelessness  
Accommodation

**Report of:** Director of Development

**Report reference:** DS. 82/09

### Summary:

This report provides Members of Executive with information regarding the proposal to replace the current provision for accommodation homeless women and families at the London Road hostel.

### Recommendations:

It is recommended that a funding proposal be submitted through the budget process 2010/11.

Alan Eales

**Head of Planning and Housing Services**

**Contact Officer:** Simon Taylor

**Ext:** 7327

**Note:** in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS**

- 1.1 The London Road Homeless Families Hostel accommodates 10 families/single women. It is a 3-storey building converted from two adjoining terraced houses and has communal facilities including a kitchen, laundry, bathrooms and sitting rooms. There is an office and sleep over facilities for staff. It has a large enclosed concrete yard at the rear.
- 1.2 It is not suitable for its purpose as it has no accessible accommodation for people with disabilities, requires residents to share facilities and rooms. It is unsuitable for families with children and inadequate for the needs of single women. Limitations of the building include: small rooms, inadequate communal space and the control of access to and from the building.
- 1.3 Replacement accommodation provision is needed to improve the living conditions for residents, the quality of service provided to homeless people and to address equality/accessibility issues.
- 1.4 The original proposal was for new build hostel accommodation to be provided with the 'Centre of Excellence'. However these plans were reviewed in December 2008 following representations from Cumbria police and the accommodation element withdrawn.
- 1.5 A trawl for potential sites is being carried out through by Property Services. This is looking at sites owned by the Council and external sites (private & public) including any developments that had become mothballed or unfinished due to the economic downturn.

## **2 PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 It is proposed that the replacement accommodation would not be a hostel type building but self contained apartment/house provision. There would be a communal room, play facilities and an office on the site which would allow the scheme to be managed in a different way.
- 2.2 Initial estimated costs have been obtained (based on the current brief) at £1.5 million with design fees, project management costs and a 5% contingency of approximately £300K to be added. A total estimated cost of £1.8 million. This is assuming that the replacement accommodation is on Council owned land.

- 2.3 Current funding availability includes the balance of the original project to be committed to the scheme - £690K (inclusive of a capital receipt for the current hostel building with a valuation of £450K). Also provision for any savings and underspends and left over contingencies from the Resource Centre scheme to be used.
- 2.4 As the responsibility for homelessness is a statutory requirement on the local authority no grant provision is available for accommodation. The shortfall in the funding provision to take the scheme forward would need to be from local authority resources.

## **2. CONSULTATION**

### **2.1 Consultation to Date.**

To date a Business Case for the scheme has been taken through the Corporate Capital Board. Consultation with the Portfolio Holder has been ongoing. A report was taken to Joint Management Team on 1/10/09 with further consideration at a second JMT on 15/10/09.

### **2.2 Consultation proposed.**

Significant work would need to be done with the local community through a consultation process to enable the proper design to be drawn up, for correct information to be provided and feedback received.

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that a funding proposal be submitted through the budget process 2010/11.

## **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To enable the scheme for the replacement of the current families and women's homelessness hostel to be replaced with more suitable accommodation.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

- Staffing/Resources – Staffing will be within current capacity within the housing service.

- Financial – There is currently no provision in the capital programme for this project. A revised proposal for the Resource Centre (DS68/09) has been considered by the Executive and recommended for approval by Council. If approved, a balance of £690,000 would be returned to the capital programme. This balance is inclusive of the £450,000 assumed receipt from the sale of the existing hostel on London Road.

A capital budget bid for the Hostel Replacement project (£1.8 million) will be submitted as part of the 2010/11 budget process. Due to other capital commitments, the availability of capital resources is depleting, and other sources of financing e.g. borrowing may need to be looked at.

- Legal – The Council is the Statutory Housing Authority and has obligations to the homeless pursuant to the Housing Act 1996.

The Local Government Act 2000 (Section 2) provides that the Council has the power to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area. The power may be used in relation or for the benefit of the whole or any part of the community or all or any persons present or resident in the Council's area.

The Council is able to incur expenditure and, provide staff, goods, services or accommodation to any person. In exercising the power, the Council must have regard to its Community Strategy.

- Corporate – Improvement of accommodation for homeless people is a project within the Housing Strategy Action Plan 2005 – 10 which is a corporate document.
- Risk Management – Risk management for the project has been carried out and incorporated as part of the business case.
- Equality and Disability – The authority has responsibilities to provide services in line with statutes relating to equality and diversity for customers.
- Environmental – The design of the project will adhere to the environmental standards of the authority.

- Crime and Disorder – Provision of decent accommodation for people will provide a basis on which people can help to move on with their life and have positive impacts on reducing participation in crime and disorder.
- Impact on Customers – The impact on customers of providing decent accommodation at a period in their lives when they are homeless is significant.

Alan Eales  
**Head of Planning and Housing Services**