

Written response to: People Scrutiny Panel

Resolution: That the Homelessness Accommodation Manager write to the Panel setting out how the £100,000 budget pressure was to be addressed and what impact the cost of living crisis may have on the matter.

Written response from: Head of Homeless Prevention and Accommodation Services

Response: In terms of the £100,000 budget income pressure included within the 2022/23 budget, this reflects the ongoing income pressures in line with the service recovery plan and coronavirus supported emergency accommodation response.

In addition, there are a number of dispersed properties within the homeless accommodation portfolio requiring essential planned phased maintenance in 2022/23 (rewiring, redecorating, refurbishment etc) and due to delays in accessing contractors (due to additional work demands), the properties are likely to be unavailable / unoccupied for a longer period than normal – which means projected income levels and budgets will be affected in 2022/23.

The 'cost of living' considerations were not included in the budget pressure requested last year; however it is very likely to impact on services, in terms of increased utility costs, food and fuel etc. in delivering emergency accommodation services. Additionally, should demand increase as a result, there is a requirement to source additional units pending completion of planned improvement work we will seek to source this on a temporary basis with our existing housing partnerships.

The Head of Homeless Prevention and Accommodation Services wishes to reassure Members we will continue to monitor households at risk of homelessness who are adversely impacted directly as a result of the current economic climate who may be in hardship or arrears and at risk of losing their homes or being pushed into poverty; and work in an integrated way to address wider issues and provide essential timely community interventions and wider support.

The Homeless Prevention and Accommodation Services will continue to work closely with finance colleagues to look at all opportunities to utilise any underspends and external grant funding (in line with funding terms and conditions) to mitigate where possible additional cost and income pressures profiled, including utilising approved carry forwards and managing budgets to fund additional planned maintenance works.

Date: 4th August 2022