

# Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10am, Thursday, 18 March 2021

## Homelessness and Housing Support - Revenue Monitoring 2020/21 – month nine position

Executive/routine  
Wards  
Council Commitments

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 Members of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee are asked to:
  - 1.1.1 note an overall net residual budget pressure of £13.1m for Communities and Families at month nine.
  - 1.1.2 note that this pressure includes a net residual budget pressure of £9.3m for the Homelessness and Housing Support service.
  - 1.1.3 note that the net pressure of £9.3m relates primarily to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
  - 1.1.4 note that an approved saving of £0.060m in 2020/21 has been assessed as amber and is at risk of not being delivered until 2021/22.

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# Report

## Revenue Monitoring 2020/21 – month nine position

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 The report sets out the projected month nine revenue monitoring position for the Homelessness and Housing Support service, based on analysis of actual expenditure and income to the end of December 2020, and expenditure and income projections for the remainder of the financial year.
- 2.2 The projected net residual budget pressure of £9.3m is part of an overall net residual budget pressure of £13.1m for Communities and Families, of which, £13.7m is estimated to relate to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.3 Efforts are being made to identify management action to reduce the budget pressure whilst continuing to address the public health requirements of the pandemic.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 Homelessness and Housing Support is part of the Safer and Stronger Communities service area within the Communities and Families directorate.
- 3.2 The 2020/21 net budget for Homelessness and Housing Support is £30.7m.
- 3.3 This report sets out the projected overall position for the Homelessness and Housing Support revenue expenditure budget for 2020/21.

### 4. Main report

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#### Overall Position

- 4.1 The Homelessness and Housing Support service is projecting net budget pressures of £9.3m at month nine, which is related to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is part of an overall net residual budget pressure of £13.1m for Communities and Families.

## **Budget Pressures £9.3m**

- 4.2 During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council has used significantly more temporary accommodation to support vulnerable people and ensure that the spread of the virus is minimised amongst the homeless population. The increased use of temporary accommodation has created a significant additional budget pressure, currently projected to be £9.3m.
- 4.3 The increase in temporary accommodation use is due to three main factors: the provision of additional accommodation for those rough sleeping; the provision of temporary accommodation for people who may have no recourse to public funds; and a lack of move on or settled accommodation across all tenures.
- 4.4 There is a projected 58% increase in the use of bed and breakfast/ shared house and interim accommodation provision in 2020/21 compared with 2019/20. This is an increase of 215,000 bed nights.
- 4.5 Homelessness presentations have fallen since the introduction of lockdown restrictions in March 2020, however, this has not translated into a reduction in people requiring temporary accommodation. In recent years 60% of homeless presentations result in the service user taking up temporary accommodation. Over the period of the public health crisis over 90% of those presenting for assistance have required temporary accommodation. This, combined with the reduction in availability of move on accommodation, has resulted in a net increase in the number of households being supported in temporary accommodation.
- 4.6 Due to the Covid-19 emergency the Council and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) had to stop advertising and letting homes to protect customers and staff. It was not possible for viewing of properties to take place and services such as furniture removals and utility connections were not available to enable people to move into permanent homes.
- 4.7 The number of settled homes available across all tenures is beginning to pick up, however, there are factors, which at the moment are not quantifiable, that may impact on these figures, for example expected increases in domestic abuse cases, relationship breakdowns and unemployment, and reductions in income due to the impact on the economy.
- 4.8 The financial impact in 2020/21 will depend on the number of homeless presentations as restrictions are relaxed, and how quickly allocations to permanent accommodation can be made. The net pressure forecast for 2020/21 is currently £9.3m which is primarily related to the impact of Covid-19. This is based on the number of households currently in temporary accommodation, including those previously rough sleeping or using night shelters and those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). The forecast pressure allows for an element of growth in numbers over the remainder of the financial year.

## **Savings Delivery – Approved Savings 2020/21 Budget**

- 4.9 An approved budget saving of £0.060m for Homelessness and Housing Support relates to the adoption of the Scottish Government Framework for electricity and gas. Progress in the delivery of the saving is reviewed regularly and an analysis has been undertaken in consultation with senior management. Due to delays on the part of suppliers, this saving has been assessed as amber and is at risk of not being delivered until 2021/22.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Work is ongoing to identify mitigating measures including changes to the current mix of temporary accommodation, reducing the reliance on expensive and unsuitable accommodation.
- 5.2 The service is currently developing financial plans that seek to address the current £9.3m pressure and work towards the aims of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, which fall into four broad categories:
- 5.2.1 Prevention of homelessness.
  - 5.2.2 Transforming temporary accommodation.
  - 5.2.3 Ending rough sleeping.
  - 5.2.4 Provision of settled accommodation.
- 5.3 Officers will continue to seek to identify appropriate properties for use as Home Share as instructed by members.
- 5.4 Officers will work with partners and landlords in the city to increase the availability of suitable temporary accommodation.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 The report highlights 2020/21 projected net budget pressures of £9.3m for Homelessness and Housing Support services, which are primarily related to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is included in the overall net residual budget pressure of £13.1m for Communities and Families, of which £13.7m relates to the impact of Covid-19.
- 6.2 This position is subject to active monitoring, management of risks and identification of further mitigation.
- 6.3 The service is currently developing financial plans that seek to address the current £9.3m pressure and work towards the aims of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. The financial implications will be considered in the 2021/22 budget process.

## **7. Stakeholder / Community Impact**

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- 7.1 There is no direct relevance to the report's contents. The Council undertook a budget engagement exercise when developing the 2020/21 revenue budget.
- 7.2 There is no direct relevance of the report's contents to impacts on carbon, adaptation to climate change and sustainable development. The Council's revenue budget includes expenditure impacting upon carbon, adaptation to climate change and contributing to sustainable development. In addition, all budget proposals are now subject to an upfront assessment across these areas.

## **8. Background reading / external references**

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- 8.1 None

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 None