

Business Bulletin

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Monday, 20 January 2020

Dean of Guild Court Room, City Chambers, Edinburgh

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

Convener:	Members:	Contact:
<p data-bbox="199 331 564 409">Convener Councillor Kate Campbell</p>  <p data-bbox="188 853 512 925">Vice Convener Councillor Mandy Watt</p> 	<ul data-bbox="628 327 938 712" style="list-style-type: none">• Cllr Chas Booth• Cllr Jim Campbell• Cllr David Key• Cllr Kevin Lang• Cllr John McLellan• Cllr Claire Miller• Cllr Gordon Munro• Cllr Iain Whyte• Cllr Norman Work	<p data-bbox="1118 320 1398 434">Jamie Macrae Committee Officer Tel: 0131 553 8242</p> <p data-bbox="1118 488 1414 645">Sarah Stirling Assistant Committee Officer Tel: 0131 529 3009</p>

Recent News

Types of Temporary Accommodation

The Council has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation to people who are homeless and require it. In order to fulfil these duties the Council uses a number of different types of accommodation. Each type is noted below with a brief description of the facilities provided:

Shared House – Premises are staffed 24/7 and a room is provided for a household's sole use with either shared or en-suite bathroom facilities, access to cooking and laundry facilities. Support providers are assigned to each property to work with those who require or request support.

Bed and Breakfast – Premises are staffed 24/7 and a room is provided for a household's sole use with either shared or en-suite bathroom facilities and a choice of hot or cold breakfast daily. Support providers are assigned to each property to work with those who require or request support.

House Share – Premises are unstaffed and individual's share a house/flat with up to five bedrooms. They have their own bedroom with communal bathroom, cooking and laundry facilities.

Hostel or Unit – Premises are staffed 24/7. Staff are onsite 24 hours and provide a higher degree of support to households. A mixture of types of premises ranging from individual self-contained flats/bedsits to single use rooms with shared bathroom and cooking facilities. One unit specifically for females only and one unit specifically for young people 16-24 years of age.

Dispersed Flats – A mixture of Council and Housing Association flats for immediate access. Self-contained fully furnished flats for the exclusive and sole use of a household. Regular contact from Homelessness staff and visiting support provided where required/requested.

Private Rented Interim Accommodation flats – Flats sourced from the private sector for immediate access.

Background

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Recent News

Self-contained fully furnished flats for the exclusive and sole use of a household. Regular contact from Homelessness staff and visiting support provided where required/requested.

Private Sector Leasing Properties (PSL) – Flats leased from private landlords. Self-contained fully furnished flats for the exclusive and sole use of a household on a long term basis. Households can choose whether they want to accept a PSL property. If they do there is a greater choice of areas. The criteria for securing a PSL property include no unmet support needs, no recent or unresolved antisocial behaviour issues and no unresolved rent arrears. Regular contact from the managing agent staff and visiting support provided where required/requested.

Mixed Tenure Improvement Strategy

On [7 June 2018](#), Housing and Economy Committee approved a Mixed Tenure Improvement Strategy, setting out the next steps to tackle mixed tenure repairs. The business case for the Mixed Tenure Improvement Service and the revised Scheme of Assistance is due to be considered by Finance and Resources Committee on 23 January 2020.

Meanwhile, the programme to install secure door entry systems in mixed tenure blocks to meet Scottish Housing Quality Standard is underway and on track for 200 installations in 2019/20. Work is onsite in the 95% majority owned blocks. Letters were sent to owners in the 50:50 blocks in November 2019 (287 in total) asking whether or not they wish to proceed with the installation. Once the Tenement Management scheme process has been followed, and subject to necessary majority agreement being reached, door entry systems will be installed in 50:50 blocks from January 2020.

The Council continues to liaise with owners in larger mixed tenure blocks on a project by project basis, providing support to establish Title Conditions, responsibilities, liabilities and scope of repairs where applicable. In many cases the Council is a minority

Background

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Recent News

Background

owner but keen to work with owners and support them to progress repairs and maintenance.

Private Sector Empty Homes

A dedicated Empty Homes Officer has been recruited for up to two years following HR assessment and approval of the new post. The officer, recruited internally, is based within the Regulatory Services team in the Place Directorate. The post is being match funded by the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership (SEHP) and key outcomes have been agreed with SEHP to monitor the success of the post.

Progress on achieving the outcomes will be reported to Committee.

The Empty Homes Officer will focus on managing the active empty homes cases, including further investigation around enforcement powers that could be used to help bring homes back into use. The officer will further develop the Council's proactive approach to empty homes, updating the general advice and information provided to empty home owners to encourage them to bring homes back into use.

The officer will also work closely with colleagues in Revenues and Applications teams to make best use of Council Tax data to inform proactive work relating to empty homes e.g. potentially contacting owners when their home is due to have the 100% Council Tax surcharge applied, providing information on options for bringing the home back into use. There is also scope for the officer to work more closely with colleagues in the Revenues and Applications team who deal specifically with debt recovery, working with them on empty homes cases which have high levels of Council Tax arrears.

One of the key enforcement areas that continues to be explored is the use of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers in relation to empty homes. Officers have drafted background information on several potential CPO cases and have taken advice from Legal Services on the strength of each case.

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Edinburgh Living

Edinburgh Living has successfully completed the purchase of 131 new homes across the city. Over the past couple of months this has included 86 flats and houses at Greendykes, North Sighthill and Royston, making it possible for tenants to celebrate Christmas in their brand-new homes.

The developments are part of the Council's own mixed tenure housebuilding programme where the social rent homes are owned and managed by the Council. The mid market rent homes are let and managed on behalf of Edinburgh Living by Lowther Homes, part of the Wheatley Group, who were appointed to deliver this service following a procurement process at the end of 2018. The development at North Sighthill also includes homes for private sale, constructed by Keepmoat Homes.

Edinburgh Living will start to purchase new homes for mid market rent at the Council's Dumbryden, and Pennywell phase 3 developments next year, in line with approvals from the Finance and Resources Committee in [June 2018](#) and [December 2018](#).

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Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

Consultation and engagement to inform a second iteration of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) continues. Consultation and engagement to date has included:

- Stakeholder event in October 2019 attended by 45 participants.
- Homeless Services staff team meetings to ensure staff are kept up to date with the development of the RRTP.
- Bi-monthly newsletter article circulated to staff and third sector homeless providers.
- Presentations at the Edinburgh Affordable Homes Partnership and the EdIndex Board.
- Presentation at the EVOC Childrens & Young Persons Forum.

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- Attendance and updates provided at the Housing First Governance Board and the Inclusive Edinburgh Board.
- Consultation with people currently experiencing homelessness.
- Discussions with internal and external partners regarding the pathways for people leaving hospital and prison.

Key themes from the stakeholder event included affordability, support for housing options such as house share and long term supported accommodation for people with the most complex needs and preventative work including earlier identification of people who may be at risk of homelessness and key transition points such as leaving prison or hospitals.

Consultation with people currently experiencing homelessness has shown broad support for housing options such as Housing First and long term supported accommodation as well as social housing. People were also asked about what support could help them to get or keep a home, feedback included support with benefits and budgeting, support to get to appointments, help to bid for housing and support to set up a new home.

Consultation will continue over the coming months with a second stakeholder event planned provisionally for March 2020. The Scottish Government have advised that the second iteration of RRTP should be submitted to them by 30 June 2020.