



OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report Title	Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness Prevention
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Meeting Date:	20 June 2018
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Councillor Stephen Hibbert

1. Introduction

1.1 After considering the Council's performance for Quarter 3 of 2017/18 (the Quarter ending 31 December 2017), the Overview & Scrutiny Committee has requested more information about two of the Homelessness Performance Measures:

- **HML01** – Total number of households living in temporary accommodation
- **HML07** – Number of households that are prevented from becoming homeless

1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with additional information about the number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation and the number of households prevented from becoming homeless.

2. HML01 – Total number of households living in temporary accommodation

2.1 During the Quarter, the Council continued to receive a high number of homelessness applications and requests for temporary accommodation.

2.2 As a result of this high demand and the shortage of affordable housing that homeless households living in temporary accommodation were able to move into, the overall number of households in temporary accommodation increased during Quarter 3:

- **October 2017: 203**
- **November 2017: 225**
- **December 2017: 217**

2.3 Although the number of households living in temporary accommodation continued to rise, improvements were made to the living conditions of the households living in temporary accommodation – including families with children – because the number of households residing in Bed & Breakfast was reduced by 31% and the number of households placed outside of the borough was reduced by 57%.

3. HML02 – Number of households that are prevented from becoming homeless

3.1 During Quarter 3, the Housing Options & Advice Team prevented a total of 186 households from becoming homeless:

- **October 2017: 80**
- **November 2017: 63**
- **December 2017: 43**

3.2 Of the households that are prevented from becoming homeless, approximately half are helped to remain in their existing home while the other half are helped to secure suitable alternative accommodation.

3.3 There are three main ways in which the Housing Options & Advice Team is able to help people to remain in their existing home:

- Where a household has been served with notice to leave their private rented accommodation but that notice has not been served correctly, the Housing Options Officer will negotiate with the landlord and tenant, providing legal advice and problem solving to ensure that the landlord revokes the notice, enabling the household to remain in the accommodation
- Where a family is breaking down and a young person or non-dependant adults and their children are being asked to leave, the Housing Options Officer will help the families to work through their problems and find a way to continue as a family unit
- Where a household has fallen behind with their rent and/or are in debt, the Housing Options Officer or Money Adviser will provide them with debt advice and help them to address their arrears and enter into repayment agreements with landlords

3.4 There are three main ways in which the Housing Options & Advice Team is able to help people to secure suitable alternative accommodation:

- They can help them access supported housing, such as Oasis House
- They can help them join Northampton's Housing Register and bid for properties until they are offered a suitable council or housing association home
- They can help them to secure suitable, affordable private rented accommodation

3.5 Preventing homelessness – especially when it involves the loss of private rented accommodation - continues to be very difficult. This means that the Housing Options Officers are having to be even more creative in their approach to homelessness prevention casework, drawing upon the support and involvement of other services and organisations, attending multi agency meetings and, wherever possible, ensuring that people leave hospital and prison in a planned way.

3.6 It is hoped that, as a result of the changes being made in response to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, all services and organisations (including the Council) will intervene earlier, providing more opportunities to prevent homelessness.

Phil Harris
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