

**ITEM 11**

**Recommendation from Cabinet  
10<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**Coventry City Council  
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 10 March 2020**

Present:

Members: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)  
Councillor A Khan (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor K Caan  
Councillor P Hetherington  
Councillor K Maton  
Councillor J Mutton  
Councillor M Mutton  
Councillor J O'Boyle  
Councillor P Seaman

Deputy Cabinet Members Councillor P Akhtar  
Councillor R Ali  
Councillor G Lloyd

Non-Voting Opposition Members: Councillor J Blundell (Substitute for Councillor A Andrews)  
Councillor G Ridley

Other Members: Councillor N Akhtar  
R Lakha

Employees (by Directorate):

People: G Quinton (Deputy Chief Executive (People)), D Ashmore, J  
Crawshaw

Place: T Cowley, B Hastie, L Knight, R Moon, J Newman, G Payne,  
S Wiles

Apologies: Councillors A Andrews, B Gittins, T Khan and D Welsh

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**99. Options to Improve the Provision of Temporary Accommodation for Single Homeless People Through Property Acquisition**

The Cabinet considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which set out options to improve the provision of temporary accommodation for single homeless people through property acquisition.

A corresponding private report was also submitted to the meeting setting out the commercially confidential matters of the proposals. (Minute 105 below refers.)

The Council had legal duties to provide accommodation to homeless people who are eligible and in priority need. In recent years demands on the Housing and Homelessness service have increased with an attendant rise in the use and cost of temporary accommodation. This situation had resulted in a significant financial pressure for the Council, primarily due to the increasing demand and high cost of temporary accommodation. For 2019/20 it was forecast that the cost to the Council of households in temporary accommodation would be in excess of £9m.

The Council responded with a new Housing and Homelessness Strategy, including the recommissioning of Homelessness-related Support Service contracts, review of key policies and procedures, improvements in temporary accommodation options available for families and significant reductions in the amount paid for this accommodation.

Various schemes were underway to reduce the cost of temporary accommodation, including developments at Caradoc Hall and Frank Walsh House. Additionally, the Council continued to look at alternative forms of accommodation that could reduce the gap between the temporary accommodation cost and housing benefit subsidy grant, which is the cost met by the Council. Through negotiating better rates with existing accommodation providers, the Council had reduced costs over £1m per annum.

Although the Council no longer owned any Council houses following the housing stock transfer to Whitefriars in September 2000, it is able to own properties providing the total housing stock remains under 200 dwellings under exemption from the Secretary of State. In practice this meant that the council could develop or acquire a small amount of residential property directly, presenting new options to improve the quality and reduce the costs of temporary accommodation.

Under current housing benefit legislation, direct Council ownership of temporary accommodation attracted a higher subsidy than most other forms of temporary accommodation. To maximise the subsidy that the Council could claim and reduce the cost to the council, it was proposed to purchase properties for use as supported accommodation for single individuals.

**RESOLVED that, the Cabinet recommend that Council:**

- 1. Approve the proposals and delegate authority to the Director of Housing and Transformation, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing, to identify the properties and to agree detailed terms of the transactions and to enter into the relevant legal agreements and associated documents necessary to complete the transaction.**
- 2. Approve the addition to the capital programme of an amount outlined in the private report to meet the cost of acquisition and refurbishment of properties for use as temporary accommodation for single homeless people, funded from borrowing.**