

<b>Report to</b>	<b>Audit Committee</b>
<b>From</b>	<b>Housing Options Team</b>
<b>Risk Reference</b>	<b>CR5</b>
<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Increasing demand pressures</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>For analysis and discussion</b>

### **Key Potential Impacts**

- Failure to meet Homelessness Statutory Function & Delivery.
- Further impact of Cost of Living Crisis, Afghan and Ukrainian refugee crisis additionally increasing pressure on these services.
- Failure to transform services likely result in the Council failing to meet its statutory obligations. Adults and children's care facing a significant increase in demand for services.

### **Current Position**

#### New Homelessness Strategy

- This was discussed with the Homelessness partnership in mid-September and the need to evidence the delivery of the outcomes of the associated action plan was agreed.
- Additionally, we will prioritise and review with consideration to the impact of the cost of living crisis.
- A Steering group is to be established, governed by the partnership and reviewed annually by the Council.

#### Maximising funding opportunities to increase resources and capacity

- Working with finance to have full oversight of internal and external funding streams to plan and maximise funding, particularly with the expectation of further service savings during 2023/24.

#### Robust processes and operating procedures in place

- Existing pathways within the service have been aligned to statutory duty and legislation.
- The department is currently developing new pathways and processes to meet the impact of the Ukrainian refugee crisis now and in the future.

#### Direct Let priority

- The allocations policy is to be reviewed with options for a common housing register to increase greater access to affordable and social housing within the Borough by all Housing Associations and registered social landlords.

### System and IT solutions

- Work with Agylisis has concluded for the Housing Options team
- Future work to be undertaken includes implementation of a new Choice Based lettings system to:
  - reduce back office administrative functions;
  - create capacity; and
  - improve the customer experience when accessing and bidding for properties.

### Successful implementation of the team/service re-structure with realignment of services and savings of £250k to focus on statutory and non-statutory provision

- The unexpected increase in asylum and refugee crisis over the past 12 months has impacted on the service and ability to now flex, adapt and meet the increasing demands with capacity.
- A new temporary Asylum & Immigration post is being developed to increase capacity and maximise the new and additional external funding.
- The Cost of Living crisis will further increase homelessness with the possible need for increased staffing and resources.
- Close monitoring of this situation is ongoing.

### Increase in statutory dispersed accommodation

- Despite the increase in dispersed accommodation due to the increasing demand and numbers coming through who need support and emergency accommodation, this provision is always at capacity.
- We are currently developing in partnership, new provision at Huntley House that will provide an additional 18 individual flats supported 24/7.
- This provision will not cost the service or the Council any additional amount due to the agreed arrangement with a trusted partner - funded via Housing Benefit and intensive housing management, which is subsidised via centralised Housing Benefit funding at no cost to the Council.
- The provision should be up and running for the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022.
- This will help meet our rough sleeper demands but also our statutory single homelessness accommodation needs.

### Development of Private Rented Sector (PRS) and Landlord engagement

- Appointment of a temporary PRS Development Coordinator aligned to the external ringed fenced match funding to support PRS landlords to prevent homelessness but also increase PRS properties for people on our housing register.
- The candidate is anticipated to be in post by November 2022 and will work closely with the new Empty Homes Officer to focus on the 1000+ long-term voids in the PRS and also deliver and implement the new Empty Homes Strategy.

Performance and Improvement meetings with STH established to manage KPIs and monitor their performance and outcomes

- Monthly performance meetings with STH to monitor and govern performance and KPI's.
- The meetings are Chaired by the new Housing Director.

Successful External bids

- Stepping Stones have been commissioned to provide 10 units from the PRS on a lease and repair basis over the next 3 years for our rough sleepers with support funded via RSAP (Rough sleeper accommodation programme).
- RSi5 (2022-2025) - £500k+ additional funding over the next 3 years. Funds the staffing of the rough sleeper outreach service, match funding of the PRS Development Coordinator role and 6 months additional supported rough sleeper accommodation.
- Consultation with DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) has now ended on the future HPG (Homelessness Prevention Grant) formula – the HPG grant will increase next year and the following years due to the changes in how the grant will be determined.
- Feedback from the consultation suggested local authority's that abuse the out of borough placements for their temporary accommodation are penalised financially to stop this practice (which has increased by 100% in Bury over the past 12 months and impacting on our own options in the PRS to discharge our homelessness duty.)

Asylum and Immigration

- Pathways have been developed and engagement with GMCA/ North West RSMP (Regional Strategic Migration Partnership) to support the Ukrainian refugee crisis has resulted in two routes:
  - Homes for Ukraine - sponsorship; and
  - Family visa route - approach to maximise additional funding for all services impacted.
- A new role is to be created but the main risk is the lack of social and affordable accommodation for permanent residence and resettlement.
- Successfully commissioned services have been aligned to funding in order to meet the Council's pledge to support the Afghan refugee crisis with 10 supported properties in the PRS (30/40 refugees - 10 families).
- New asylum dispersal and resettlement schemes being introduced by the Home Office:
  - Bury fully engaged in the process with all other North West local authorities with the North West RSMP and are currently coordinating a response back to the home office on the proposals.
  - It is now compulsory for local authorities to support dispersal and resettlement and should assist North West local authorities that have welcomed and supported asylum seekers within their

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Borough's, with a fairer and more transparent system across the whole of the UK.

- RSMP lobbying and recent WLT paper recommends pausing dispersal within Greater Manchester due to the current disproportionate numbers compared to other regions.
- Under the new proposed dispersal system the current projections show an increase of 135 asylum seekers into the Borough between now and Dec 2023 in addition to the 435 existing asylum seekers currently in Home office / Serco accommodation within Bury's PRS. A high percentage of this cohort will eventually come through Council homelessness statutory services once the Home office have determined their immigration status which will add further pressure on services.

### **The following actions have been identified to further mitigate the risk:**

- STH have now produced a draft Sustainment Strategy. Input from the Council and GMCA has been provided but we await further feedback from stakeholders within the Homelessness partnership. An extension of the original deadline of September 19<sup>th</sup> 2022 has been requested. This an important strategy for the Council to ensure STH reduce the number of failed tenancies and assist in preventing homelessness.
- To consider options to increase capacity within existing budgets in response to increasing homelessness, asylum seeking and immigration. Ongoing work alongside the finance team continues, in parallel to exploring all new external homeless and asylum funding streams.
- Wider work with Improving adult lives and the neighbourhoods team linked to PSR and Lets Do It! Strategy outcomes to produce the wider Council strategy in sustaining all tenancies and accommodation.

<b>Report to</b>	<b>Audit Committee</b>
<b>From</b>	<b>Operations</b>
<b>Risk Reference</b>	<b>CR11</b>
<b>Risk Description</b>	<b>Building Management (Operational Health and Safety)</b>
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>For analysis and discussion</b>

## Context

Across Bury Council buildings are managed by individual service managers, who are responsible for the safe operation and maintenance of the buildings. There is no consistency to the management of the estate and no central record of building condition and compliance.

If the council do not correctly manage and maintain our buildings, we are at risk of a breach of Health and Safety legislation, leading to prosecution under the Corporate Manslaughter Act and other Health and Safety regulations.

Council buildings, facilities and premises must provide safe and effective environments for all building occupants that use them. It has been recognised that there are steps the council needs to take to improve the management, maintenance and operation of buildings:

- **Rationalisation of the Estate** - To reduce the number of buildings the council owns and operates and understand the condition of those we will keep
- **Building Compliance** - Understand the statutory and regulatory compliance status of the buildings the council will retain
- **Establishment of a Corporate Landlord model** – To ensure the safe operation of the buildings the council will retain and to ensure one central record of building information

## Rationalisation of the Estate

The Council is currently undertaking an estates rationalisation process to assess future building requirements and condition and to recommend buildings for disposal. An Estate Transformation Board has been set up to oversee this process and a list of admin buildings were agreed for disposal by Cabinet in [July 2021](#) and December 2021 as part of the Let's Do It Flexibly transformation programme.

Progress has been made this year in relation to the disposal of the following buildings, that are no longer fit for purpose and are in need of significant repair:

- [St Marys Place](#) – This building was sold in February 2022.
- [Whittaker Street](#) – Staff consultation is currently taking place regarding the disposal of Whittaker Street, with the proposal that all staff will vacate the building no later than 4 November 2022 and the building will then be sold by April 2023.
- [Humphrey House](#) – The building is currently occupied by Pennine Care and GMMHU. Paper due to go to Cabinet in October to agree the relocation of

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Pennine Care to 3KP. Expected date of vacation is Dec 2023, there after the building will be sold for re-development.

External consultants have been employed to review a list of 75 council buildings (excludes leisure centres, sports facilities, buildings already identified on the Council's Land Disposal Programme and those buildings within the Let's Do It Flexibly Transformation Programme) and recommend which of these buildings should be disposed of, which the council should keep, and where and community asset transfers or enterprise centre model may be more appropriate.

A workshop took place on 5 September 2022 with lead council officers, to assist in the review and the understanding of building usage. The outcomes of this piece of work are due to be presented back to the council for consideration in October 2022.

A Decant Manager has now been employed to support the process of closing buildings and relocating staff as required.

### **Building Compliance**

Following an independent Corporate Health and Safety audit last year, recommendations were made to improve the understanding and compliance status of council buildings. As a result, a "Health and Safety Taskforce" with Union representation, was established to oversee delivery.

A task was set to undertake a desktop audit of buildings that will be retained by the council to assess the statutory and regulatory compliance status. Ahead of receiving a confirmed and approved council estates list of buildings being retained the following progress has been made:

- A central record of Council buildings is being compiled and classified through the work with external consultants (to be retained, for disposal, asset transfer)
- A health and safety compliance audit specification has been established for adoption by the Council, which consists of a 34 point check list which has been approved for use by the Trade Unions. The specification incorporates the necessary statutory and regulatory compliance items. Please see Appendix 1.
- A compliance audit has been completed for 6 admin buildings and remedial works have been carried out to improve the compliance status and record keeping for these buildings.
- Facilities management are undertaking a "desktop" audit of compliance across the corporate estate, starting with those buildings we know will be retained by the Council. Progress so far:
  - Bradley Fold
  - Bury Adult Education
  - Bury Library & Museum

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- Killerlea House

In addition to the above, the Trade Union have carried out an independent H&S audit at 3KP in May 2022 and at Humphrey House in June 2022 and produced a report on their findings. The inspections identified some remedial works that needed to take place, and these are now 100% complete.

A member of agency staff was recruited to support this work earlier this year but was only with the authority for a short time and we have struggled to fill this role on a temporary basis. Alternative recruitment options are being explored, along with an assessment of the need for these skills in a longer-term Corporate Landlord model.

### **Establishment of a Corporate Landlord Model**

Following the estates rationalisation process we will be left with a list of buildings the council will look to retain and a Corporate Landlord model can then be established to manage the estate the council will keep.

A Head of Corporate Landlord is in place and work is underway to develop a Corporate Landlord Model (for implementation in April 2023) and to establish the budget required to successfully operate this model.

Current working practices (Mangers responsible for own buildings) remain in place until the formal establishment and handover to a Corporate Landlord takes place.

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### Appendix 1 – Health and Safety Audit Compliance Specification

Item	Compliance Item	(S) statutory (R) regulatory (B) business	Audit Spec	
			Yes	No
1	Health & Safety Management System in line with H&S Act 1974	S		
2	Signed Health & Safety Policy Statement by CEO	R notes below *see		
3	Employers & Public Liability Insurance Certificate	R notes below *see		
4	Business Continuity plans	B		
5	Contractor / Customer / Visitor Assurance (Signing in & Out, induction, tool box talks, Contractor Setting to work, permits to work),	B		
6	HSE Law Poster - What you should know: Displayed	R		
7	Joint Employee, Union, Management Health & Safety Consultation / Risk Assessments	B		
ADD	Incident & Accident Emergency Action Plans / Procedures	R		
9	First Aid Provision	B		
10	Manual Handling Risk Assessments	B		
11	Operations & Maintenance Manuals (OEM Hard copies, Electronic copies, High Risk Equip identified)	B		
12	Asbestos survey / Risk Management Plan	S		
13	Gas Integrity / Equipment / Gas Safety Service Records/ Hot water Systems	R		
14	ICT local server room (Risk assessment / Security / Ventilation / Back up Procedure)	B		



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15	Passenger Lift Examination & Inspection Statutory LOLER (6 Monthly for Passenger Lifts, Annual for Goods Lifts)	R		
16	Legionella Risk Assessment & Calorifier (water heater descaling) (control measures & appropriate records)	S		
17	Non-Passenger Lifts, Hoists and Working Platforms Examination and Inspection:	S		
add	Building air conditioning / Ventilation (Statutory -5 yearly, Maintenance records as per OEM Good Practice (Annually))	R		
19	Fire Risk Assessment (Site-Specific) Combustible waste safely stored, fire doors marked and shut / notices visible	R		
20	Fire Alarm Test Certificate(s) Checks & Service Records & Fire precautions registrar (weekly test, 6 mth maintenance)	R		
21	Electrical Fixed Wiring Installation Inspection Certificate Statutory (5 Year, 3 Year or Annual Check)	R		
22	Structural Lightening Conducters Inspection Certificate	S		
23	Emergency Lighting Test Certificate 1 hr min (Monthly Statutory checks, Maintenance records, competent person)	R		
24	Fire Extinguishers & Fire Hydrant Inspection Records (Annual Statutory checks, Maintenance records, competent person)	R		
add	Testing of Emergency Evacuation Aid Systems (Annual Statutory checks, Maintenance records, competent person)	R		
add	Automatic Doors, Auto Shutters, Powered Gates (Annual Statutory checks)	S		
add	CCTV - Maintenance Statutory (Annually) Data Protection Act 1998	S		
add	Portable Appliance Testing & Inspection Records, (PUWER - Visual inspection & User tests)	R		
29	COSHH Assessments & Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)	R		
30	Display Screen Equipment Risk Assessments (Touchdown desks, Communal areas)	B		

31	Hazardous Waste Registration	R		
32	Noise Evaluation Records & Risk Assessments	B		
33	Working at Height, Ladder Inspection Records (Register, periodic inspections)	R		
34	commercial catering equipment with CP42 certification	R		
			0	0
			Compliance score	
			%	

### Notes:

- 1) Mansafe, Fall Protection Equipment, Inspection Records (Regulatory check) none found across 6 admin buildings so removed from Compliance audit.
- 2) On Checking the Compliance audit specification - duplication found on None passenger lifts.
- 3) A Signed Corporate Health & Safety Policy Statement by CEO (Regulatory Check) should be in place across the organisation not by individual building so not included in Compliance Audit of each estates building.

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- 4) An Employers & Public Liability Insurance Certificate (Regulatory Check) should be in place across the organisation not by individual building so not included in Compliance Audit of each estates building
- 5) Those items marked in PURPLE are recommended additions to Compliance audit Specification
- 6) Those items marked in RED are the big 5 statutory Compliance items everyone refers.