

**RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CONSULTATION WITH APPROPRIATE CHAIRMAN AND VICE- CHAIRMAN FOR URGENT ACTION  
TO BE TAKEN UNDER STANDING ORDER 42**

**To: Cllr M Nuti & Cllr J Hulley  
Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Housing Committee**

**Date: June 2023**

**Report Author: Andy Vincent**

**Report Title: Use of temporary accommodation -  
Parkside**

SO42 Proforma number: 1024

**1. Synopsis of Report.**

A number of properties have been used on the Parkside and Braeside areas of New Haw as temporary accommodation since 2010.

Using the units as temporary accommodation was designed to assist with the regeneration of the Parkside area, by enabling the properties to be emptied quickly.

Occupants of temporary accommodation units also do not have the Right to Buy entitlement or access to a statutory home loss payment if required to vacate the property.

There has been a steady reduction in the use of temporary accommodation by Runnymede Borough Council. Currently 57 (May 2023) households are in temporary accommodation compared to 73 in December 2020.

It is proposed that excess units are let on a longer-term basis. In March 2021 Housing Committee members agreed to 12 properties being used by Accent Housing Association.

The purpose of this report is to seek permission for additional empty units, no longer in use as temporary accommodation, in the Parkside/Braeside area of New Haw to be let to the local NHS to be used for key worker accommodation.

Many of the properties are family size units and would be underoccupied as temporary accommodation.

**2. Reasons why this matter cannot wait for a Committee Decision.**

A number of preliminary conversations have been had with the NHS accommodation service to establish whether they are interested in the accommodation.

Rental income is being lost through the accommodation not being occupied (at over £1,500 per week). Also, Runnymede Borough Council are incurring costs maintaining and securing the properties and gardens while they are empty.

A swift decision will enable the properties to be let and rental income being generated.

### **3. Recommendations.**

- i. Approval is sought for some of the empty HRA properties in the Parkside/Braeside area of New Haw to be let to the NHS accommodation service locally to be used as key worker accommodation – while the future of the Parkside regeneration scheme is considered.**

### **4. Context of report.**

Historically Runnymede Borough Council has used a significant number of units for temporary accommodation. As the authority has become more successful in preventing homelessness fewer units are required.

12 units of former temporary accommodation in the Parkside/Braeside area of New Haw have been passed to Accent Housing Association (see March 2021 Committee report [Minutes-10-March-2021-Housing-Committee \(runnymede.gov.uk\)](#)).

It is proposed in this report that a further 12 units are passed to NHS accommodation services to be used for key worker accommodation.

This will work to ensure Runnymede Borough Council maximises its rental income and gives the Council some flexibility depending on decisions regarding the future of the Parkside regeneration project.

It is important that the Council is not perceived to allow the area to deteriorate or become an estate with a transient population of homeless households whilst the development plans are progressed impacting on quality of life and the value of properties.

### **5. Report and, where applicable, options considered**

The purpose of this report is to propose that temporary accommodation located on the Parkside/Braeside area of New Haw that is now empty and not required to accommodate homeless households is used to accommodate key workers while the long-term future of the area is considered.

If the decision is taken that no regeneration activity is to take place in that area, a further report will be drafted proposing that the accommodation is relet in the normal way through the Council's Housing Allocations Policy.

Letting the accommodation ensures that rental income is generated by the authority and ensures that key workers within the borough are accommodated.

Using the accommodation for key workers via NHS accommodation services also enables shorter term tenancies to be used with fixed end dates; enabling access to the site for regeneration more easily than lets made via traditional council tenancies.

Also, occupants of the site would not have the Right to Buy or rights to statutory home loss payments should the decision be made to proceed with the redevelopment.



## 6. Policy framework implications

The proposals outlined above support the objective outlined within the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan of 'Maximising income and efficiencies'.

The business plan refers to: -

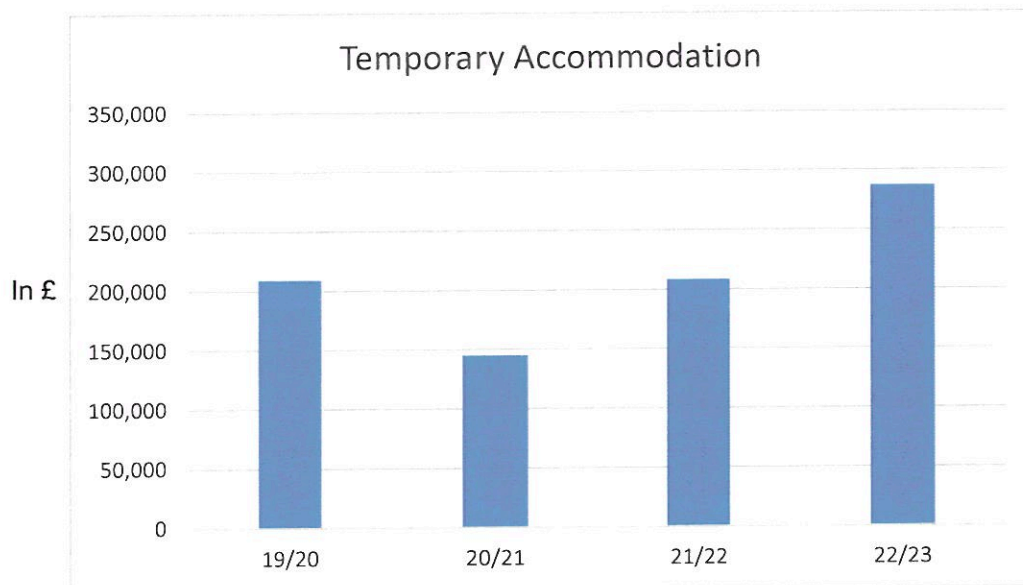
"Some HRA stock is utilised as temporary accommodation for the Homelessness Service enabling households to be placed temporarily in good quality accommodation within the borough if we are unable to prevent them from becoming homeless. Properties which are designated for redevelopment may be utilised as Temporary Accommodation during the planning stage to maintain an income and ensure vacant possession at the appropriate time."

Parkside currently is not designated for development – so it is appropriate that the accommodation previously utilised as temporary accommodation is returned to longer term use.

## 7. Financial and Resource implications

Several years ago some HRA properties were being used as temporary accommodation. With the increase in the purchase of dedicated temporary accommodation properties being purchased in recent years (through Grant income) these HRA properties are now being left void and the HRA is left with the void costs to pay.

The amount of rent being lost to the HRA from empty temporary accommodation has increased in recent years – partly as a result of the organisation getting better in preventing homelessness, meaning that these properties are left vacant. The following chart shows the rent that could have been received by the HRA if these properties were used:



Rental Charge – Runnymede Borough Council intends to charge the NHS accommodation service an affordable rent at 60% of market. The service will be responsible for the rent for the term of the lease which is estimated to be £148,512 per annum which is a reduction to the void rent loss.

Runnymede Borough Council (HRA) will retain repairing and improvement liabilities – due to the legal requirements placed on the landlord (Right to Repair, Decent Homes, Gas and Electrical Safety obligations etc.).

Despite the need to retain the repairing and improvement liabilities renting these properties to the NHS will reduce the ongoing net deficit to the HRA.

## 8. Legal implications

The starting point in any consideration of the disposal of Housing land is the Housing Act 1985. That piece of legislation grants local authorities discharging the function of Housing Authorities the power to acquire and hold land for Housing purposes. The legislation accepts there will be occasions on which land held for Housing purposes has to be disposed of and the power to dispose of such land is contained in section 32 Housing Act 1985.

In summary the section states a local authority have power by virtue of that section, and not otherwise, to dispose of land held by them for the purposes of providing housing. The section goes on to state a disposal under that section may be affected in any manner but shall not be made without the consent of the Secretary of State.

To make life easy for Housing Authorities in 2013 the Secretary of State issued a series of what are called General Consents relating to the disposal of land held for housing purposes to avoid the need for Housing Authorities to keep seeking specific consents. One of those consents relates to the general disposal of housing land and is titled General Consent A The General Consent for the Disposal of Land held for the purposes of Part II of the Housing Act 1985 - 2013.

General Consent A states at paragraph A4.2.1 'Subject to paragraphs 4.2.2 and 4.2.3, a local authority may dispose of a short tenancy of land which is not let on a secure or introductory tenancy, where a short tenancy is-

- (a) the grant of a lease for a term not exceeding seven years; or
- (b) the assignment of a lease with a term which at the date of the assignment has not more than seven years to run.

Paragraphs 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 do not prevent the proposed disposal as the Council will be granting a lease of the land for a period of less than seven years.

Thus, the Council will dispose of the land in question by granting what is termed a short tenancy in the form of a lease for a period of less than seven years.

It should be noted that the Council will only be able to grant a further 'short tenancy' at the expiry of the one currently proposed if it waits for a period of one year from the end of the first tenancy i.e., Tenancy one is for the period 01/01/2023 to 31/12/2025 Tenancy two can only start on 01/01/2027.

## 9. Equality implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed and reviewed by the Council's internal Equalities Group prior to lettings commencing with the NHS accommodation service.

## 10. Other implications


None

## 11. Background papers

[Minutes-10-March-2021-Housing-Committee \(runnymede.gov.uk\)](#) see item 491.



12. **Chief Officer(s) Decision**

Signature of authorised officer ..... 


I have been consulted and am in agreement with the above

Signature(s) and position(s) of  
other relevant Chief Officer, Corporate Heads, or authorised representatives

.....  ..... CORPORATE HEAD OF FINANCE .....

**NB:** this must include the Assistant Chief Executive or their authorised representative where the decision involves expenditure, loss of income, or future implications for budget or financial forecast.

13. **Chief Executive's Decision**

Signature of Chief Executive  .....

I have been consulted and am in agreement with the above

14. **Chairman and Vice-Chairman Comments**

I concur in the Chief Officer's decision.

Signed 

Date 28 JUNE 2023

Signed 

Date 20/7/2023

I have the following further comments:

Further information may be obtained from Andy Vincent – Corporate Head of Housing

The completed copy is to be returned by the Councillors to the Corporate Head of Law and Governance (Mario Leo) who will send a copy to the Chief Officer and report to the relevant Committee for information.