Agenda item 8

Hertfordshire Growth Board (HGB) - Temporary Accommodation Joint project update

Report Author: Roger Barrett
Chief Executive Lead Officer (Sponsor): Claire Hamilton, Chief Executive, Dacorum Borough Council
Lead Member: Andrew Williams, Leader, Dacorum Borough Council

1 Purpose of report

1.1 This report provides an update on progress made developing the recommended options available to local authorities in Hertfordshire to better meet the housing needs for people living in Temporary Accommodation (TA), whilst achieving quality and value for money.

2 Background

2.1 The below strategic programme outcomes guide the work:
- Develop a coordinated county wide framework for provision to improve outcomes and life chances for households who are temporarily homeless.
- Secure, sustainable long-term improvements in accommodation arrangements that meets the minimum standards.
- Develop an approach to temporary accommodation across the county that can respond to local issues.
- Build on existing activity to utilise publicly owned land and assets to support delivery of homes.
- Be an exemplar county in managing use of temporary accommodation, building social and economic benefits for Hertfordshire.

2.2 The principle that local authorities are able to engage with the options that most fit with local need is maintained.

2.3 Collective work with stakeholders from all Hertfordshire local authorities and other partner organisations has continued in support of progressing work on the options outlined below. Engagement by stakeholders continues to be positive on developing new approaches to resolving

accommodation challenges faced across the county. Activity is supported through briefings to the leader reference group.

Shortlist of options for further development	
Option	**Description**
1	Development of a Hertfordshire TA Predictive Model to better understand manage future demand
2	Development of a Hertfordshire wide procedure for setting maximum rates for private sector TA
3	Development of options for the joint procurement and management of Private Rented Sector accommodation to prevent homelessness and for move on from TA
4	Development of a multi-district or Hertfordshire wide Housing First service, building on lessons from existing practice
5	Collaborative development of new build accommodation to let as PRS, TA or supported housing
6	Development or commissioning of Hospital Stepdown accommodation to aid the recovery of patients without accommodation

3   Progress made and next steps

3.1   Initially, the Heads of Housing group determined that a focus on the following three options were a priority:

a)   Development of a Hertfordshire TA Predictive Model to better understand manage future demand
b)   Development of a Hertfordshire wide procedure for setting maximum rates for private sector TA
c)   Development of a multi-district or Hertfordshire wide Housing First service, building on lessons from existing practice

Multi-district working groups were put in place to take these items forward, with programme and consultant support. As a result of activity in relation to option 2 (set out below), work on option 6 has been prioritised.

3.1.1 **Development of a Hertfordshire TA Predictive Model to better understand manage future demand (demand model)**

As a result of further research and to better reflect functionality, this option has been renamed as Development of a Hertfordshire TA Predictive, Monitoring and Control Toolset.

Objective:

The model will enable better control of TA demand (into TA) and supply (out of TA) and be able to be used as a 'live performance tool' by local authorities. The model will help focus effort through targeted interventions for managing or reducing TA numbers.

Progress Made:

The model has been developed based on best practice and use of targeted interventions by other authorities. The model has been tested and feedback gained from the Heads of Housing community. This will be supported by development of a mechanism to build a data capture process to enable better understanding of demand and the actual numbers of people who are in TA across the county – currently in development. There remains interest from all partners in this option.

Next Steps:

- Finalise the development of the data collection model.
- Develop guidance and training to support implementation of the predictive model to ensure it is embedded effectively and efficiently
- Plan for live implementation by January 2023.
- Finalise the business case and gain sign-off.

3.1.2 **Development of a Hertfordshire wide procedure for setting maximum rates for private sector accommodation for homeless households**

Objective:

To investigate the potential for agreeing maximum rates paid for privately owned accommodation to accommodate homeless households, and to establish whether there is potential to agree maximum rates in Hertfordshire and if so, how these should be tracked.

Progress Made:

As indicated in the previous update a survey was conducted across the county in relation to the number of placements, the type of accommodation utilised and location of the placement. Following analysis of the survey results, Heads of Housing group determined that the need is not sufficiently significant to warrant further work to develop a protocol for setting rates for use of private rented accommodation.

Consequently, a close down and lessons learned report was compiled and signed off by the programme Sponsor, with the learning fed into work on other options.

3.1.3 Development of a multi-district or Hertfordshire wide Housing First service, building on lessons from existing practice

As indicated in the previous update, the focus for this option has shifted slightly to working to resolve the accommodation provision for the cohort of homeless people having ultra-high level of complex needs. Whilst the numbers are small the impact of providing effective accommodation and provision of care needs in one place is both complex and costly.

Objective:

To determine the most effective model of accommodation provision through which delivery of interventions to resolve complex needs can be made.

To understand why current accommodation arrangements are unable to support homeless people with ultra-high needs.

Progress Made:

- Progress has been made to scope a new model, though further work is needed to finalise the approach, aligning with existing work to support those with complex needs across the county. Interest in this option is maintained.
- Refining data regarding the ultra-high needs cohort of people sleeping rough in Hertfordshire and identify noteworthy practice from elsewhere.
- Continued liaison with representatives of Homes England, to understand format and timing of forthcoming funding rounds that could support this work. The latest meeting held on 23 August 2022.

- Identifying available publicly owned land and assets that could support delivery

Next Steps:

- Develop further the new model for delivering an integrated accommodation and support solution to meet the defined and quantified need
- Identify sustainable sources of revenue funding for the project
- Keep under review the identified level of need across Hertfordshire, and develop further understanding of the whole-system cost to Hertfordshire of this cohort
- Explore delivery options with a range of potential delivery partners
- Develop the business case for this option with clearly defined specification

3.1.4 Development or commissioning of Hospital Stepdown accommodation to aid the recovery of patients without accommodation

As set out above, this option has now been brought forward for analysis and work is in its early stages, and summarised below:

Progress:

- Background research
- Engagement with system stakeholders, with positive response to such an initiative in Hertfordshire to resolve an identified gap in provision.
- Engagement with Kings College London, retained by government to evaluate pilot sites across the country delivering similar schemes, enhancing understanding of the impact for individuals, and on the economic value to the system of organisation involved.
- Data gathering to understand the total number of additional 'length of stay' days beyond the expected date of discharge for people who cannot be discharged from hospital due to being homeless. Whilst data collection is not finalised and validated, early figures suggest innovation in this area is worthwhile in terms of cost reduction, efficiency and improving life chances for citizens.

Next Steps:

- Finalise data collection across all acute sites, determine funding opportunities, develop a profile for how benefit would accrue across the system.
- Work has started to develop an outline of a workshop with key system stakeholders in Hertfordshire and pilot site leads to share learning across the various discharge pathways, and how a potential model for Hertfordshire could work.

4   Implications

4.1   There are no adverse legal, financial, equalities, environmental, sustainability or other implications associated with this report, which support the ongoing work and priorities of the Growth Board.

4.2   A business case for each option under consideration will be developed and will set out the legal, financial, environmental and sustainability implications to be considered and decided upon.

5   Recommendations

5.1   That the Hertfordshire Growth Board notes progress made.