

Decision Number: 11 (2023/24)

Portfolio Holder Executive Decision Statement

The Local Authority (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

Subject:

Increased demand on temporary accommodation.

Details of Decision taken

To support the District Councils Network's commitment for all councils to send a letter to the Chancellor, calling on the Government to adopt six emergency policy asks ahead of the Autumn Statement, which are:

- Raise Local Housing Allowance rates to a level that will cover at least 30% of local market rent and commit to annual uprating.
- Provide £100m additional funding for Discretionary Housing Payments in 2023-24 and an additional £200m in 2024-25.
- Provide a £150m top-up to the Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2024-25.
- Review the cap for housing benefit subsidy rate for local authority homelessness placements.
- Develop policy to stimulate retention and supply in the privately rented sector.
- Give councils the long-term funding, flexibility and certainty needed to increase the supply of social housing.

(Letter attached)

Reason for Decision

Both the Council's Housing Strategy and Local Plan are committed to supporting and enabling the delivery of social and affordable housing in the Sevenoaks District.

However, Local Housing Allowance has remained frozen since 2020 (and based on rents in 2018-19); rents in the private sector have increased and housing benefit subsidy for homelessness placements remains at 30%. These factors are having a significant impact on the

When completed a copy of this record must be sent to the Democratic Services Section by e-mail and a signed copy by internal mail

Decision Number: 11 (2023/24)

District's residents – we are seeing an increase in homelessness approaches due to affordability issues, including both affordable and market rents, alongside pressures on the Council's budget.

An unprecedented number of people are turning to the Council as the last option for support when they face homelessness. As a Council, we are proud of the help we give to people when they need it, but our situation is becoming untenable. We have had no option but to rapidly escalate our use of temporary accommodation, which may threaten to overwhelm our budgets.

All Documents considered:

[Housing Strategy \(2022\)](#)

[Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy \(2023\)](#)

[Core Strategy](#) and [Affordable Housing SPD 2011](#)

[Emerging Local Plan \(Plan 2040\)](#)

Details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the Member when making the Decision:

None.

Financial implications

None.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

None.

Equality Impacts (Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty)

The decision will be applicable to any resident of the district who is homeless or at risk of homelessness and will help to alleviate homelessness and provide support for vulnerable people.

When completed a copy of this record must be sent to the Democratic Services Section by e-mail and a signed copy by internal mail

(For Democratic Services use)

Decision Number: 11 (2023/24)

<p>Local Member (s), other Portfolio Holders and Chief Officer/Head of Service Consulted</p> <p>Cllr. Perry Cole, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health Sarah Robson, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer – People & Places Alison Simmons, Head of Housing</p>	
<p>Details of any conflicts of interest</p> <p>a) declared by any executive member who is consulted by the Decision Taker</p> <p>For transparency, executive members declared that the District Council is the guarantor of Quercus Housing Limited. The executive members sit on the Guarantor Board of Quercus Housing Ltd.</p> <p>b) and any details of dispensations granted by the Chief Executive in respect of any declared conflict</p> <p>No dispensations required.</p>	
Decision taken by:	Portfolio Holder for Housing & Health
Signed by Portfolio Holder	
Date of Decision	2 November 2023
Record made by:	Phil Magee
Date of record:	2 November 2023

When completed a copy of this record must be sent to the Democratic Services Section by e-mail and a signed copy by internal mail