

## BRIEFING NOTE

Forward Plan Select Committee

14<sup>th</sup> April 2004



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**REPORT: Supply and Demand and Temporary Accommodation**

**SERVICE AREA: Housing Services**

The report provides a detailed supply and demand analysis for housing. This includes lettings performance for the last financial year, and proposed lettings targets for this financial year, which members are asked to approve. The key points of the report are outlined below.

**Lettings** - A total of 1,040 lettings (Council and RSL nominations) were expected to be made in 2003/04 (figures are being finalised at the time of writing). Of these approximately 55% were to homeless cases, 27% to applicants from the Housing Register and 18% to transfer applicants (paragraph 7.2).

**Lettings Targets 2004/05** – Officers expect to achieve a total of 1,181 lettings in this financial year. Of these 58% are targeted for the homeless, 23% to Housing Register applicants and 20% to transfer applicants. Members are asked to approve detailed lettings targets for each demand group (para. 7.3), and are advised that the allocations policy is currently being reviewed, with the outcome being reported to them at a later date (para 7.3.6).

**Supply and Demand** – a detailed analysis of demand for housing, including Housing Register, transfer and homeless applications, is provided (para 7.1). In addition, information is provided on levels of overcrowding in the borough (para 7.1.8).

**Expenditure on Temporary Accommodation 2003/04** – Total expenditure on Temporary Accommodation (TA) in 2003/04 is expected to break even against the approved budget of £6,078,000. Expenditure on TA is comprised of two elements – Temporary Accommodation costs and Housing Benefit subsidy loss incurred on households occupying hotels (para 3).

**Expenditure on Temporary Accommodation 2004/05** – The total budget for expenditure on TA in 2004/05 is £6,414,000 (para 7.6).

**Risk Factors** - The report identifies a number of wider supply and demand factors which drive expenditure and the ability to control the budget. These factors include the number of homeless approaches, the number of lettings made, and the number of HALS properties available. In addition other factors include the possibility of legal

challenges to the Council as a result of the statutory instrument banning the use of B&B accommodation for homeless households with dependant children for more than six weeks; and the impact of the recent Hillingdon judgement regarding unaccompanied minors (para 7.6.1).

**Proposed Changes to the Funding of Temporary Accommodation** – the report provides details on current proposals to change Housing Benefit subsidy arrangements for TA, and the potential financial impact for the Council (para 7.9).

**Bed & Breakfast Action Plan 2003/04** – The report provides an update on progress against the Bed & Breakfast Action Plan in 2003/04. Implementation of the plan, using grant funding from the Government's Bed and Breakfast Unit, reduced the number of households in hotel accommodation to 93 at March 2003. The original forecast predicted that without the funding numbers would rise to 1,237 (para. 7.4.3).

**Homelessness Strategy** – a summary of the aims and key initiatives contained within the Strategy is provided, as is an update on the award of grant funding to assist in implementing parts of the Strategy (para 7.11).

**Asylum Seekers** – the report provides an update on the amnesty for asylum seeking households. Around 300 such families currently supported by Brent are expected to qualify for the amnesty, and be granted Indefinite Leave to Remain. The report outlines the work officers are doing to minimise any financial impact on the Council and ensure that where possible these households remain in their existing accommodation (para 7.10).

**Date of presentation to Executive:**

The report is scheduled for presentation to the Executive at its meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2004.