

Nicola Hesketh
Project and Information Co Ordinator

Our Ref: FOI4865/NH/02
Please ask for: Nicola Hesketh
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[Name Redacted]

8th January 2018

Dear [Name Redacted]

Freedom of Information – Request for Information

With regards to your recent enquiry for information held by the Authority under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. Please find the information you requested below with reference in the box to your original enquiry for clarity where multiple answers are required.

Details of Your Request

- 1) *Details of extra funding provided to your authority by government to support new HRA duties.*
 - *How much extra funding does your council expect to receive from government to implement the act?*
 - *How will your council allocate that funding? For example: will the council engage new staff for extended HRA services (ie additional staff to provide homelessness prevention plans and to liaise with landlords to prevent homelessness as soon as section 21 notices are received)?*
 - *How many extra staff does your council plan to engage for these purposes in 2018?*
 - *What assistance will your council offer homeless households to fulfill extended duties to help secure accommodation?*
 - *Will the council outsource such services, or work in partnership with other partners for homelessness prevention?*

- 2) *Will your council enhance or create deposit and rent support schemes to help people at risk of homelessness secure tenancies (NOT counting help available through DHPs).*
 - *If Yes, please give examples*
 - *If Yes, how will homeless households access and secure this support?*

- 3) *Does your council plan to acquire extra housing stock/extend arrangements with existing social or private housing providers to increase the number of temporary and permanent properties available to homeless households which are owed new or extended duties?*

- 4) *How does the council plan to extend homelessness prevention advisory services to meet new and extended advisory duties in the act?*

- 5) *Protection of property*
What form will protection of homeless households' property take (paying for storage facilities, etc). Can the council afford to meet these requirements?
- 6) *Is your homelessness service/function contracted out in full or in part to another organisation. If Yes, please give details.*

The response to your request as follows:

1)

i) This information is considered publically available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652195/New_burdens_allocation.pdf therefore an exemption under section 21 of the FOI Act is applied to this part of your request.

ii) Currently a temporary structure is in the process of being considered to be made permanent subject to governance and the budgetary processes.

To deliver the implementation of the Homeless Reduction act, an implementation plan has been developed and as part of this plan there are plans to extend the private sector offer to help meet the additional burdens. Additionally there is currently a housing solutions fund policy in place which allows financial incentives to be accessed to help prevent homelessness or source accommodation. This policy is freely available on the following link: <http://democracy.tamworth.gov.uk/documents/s12907/Appendix%20E.pdf>.

As part of current working practices we are already liaising with landlords to help prevent homelessness and expect this to continue.

iii) Subject to budget and governance processes, the current temporary structure being considered to be made permanent incorporates 2 new positions.

iv) There is currently a housing solutions fund policy in place which allows financial incentives to be accessed to help prevent homelessness or source accommodation. This policy is freely available on the following link: <http://democracy.tamworth.gov.uk/documents/s12907/Appendix%20E.pdf>. This fund and policy is expected to continue going forward.

The council also offers the bond scheme details can be found on the website: https://www.tamworth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/housing_docs/Bond_Scheme.pdf

Additionally there are trained mediators within the service to assist with negotiation and retention of current accommodation.

v) As part of the implementation plan there has been analysis of all stakeholders and partners and work is ongoing to further develop these relationships, so that partners and other key agencies are working with the council to prevent homelessness within the area.

Additionally the Council have contracted a money advice service delivered by the Tamworth Advice Centre to help prevent homelessness. A Crisis support and intervention scheme which is aimed at preventing homelessness is also funded by the Council.

2)

i) There is a housing solutions fund policy in place which allows financial incentives to be accessed to help prevent homelessness or source accommodation. This policy is freely available on the following link: <http://democracy.tamworth.gov.uk/documents/s12907/Appendix%20E.pdf>. This fund is expected to continue going forward.

Further options regarding additional schemes are to be reviewed in the future.

3)

i) The council currently have a regeneration programme which is sourcing additional social housing through regeneration of sites, and development of former garage sites. The council is also sourcing opportunities through Section 106 for additional affordable

homes. Further information on acquisitions and regeneration is available on the councils website www.tamworth.gov.uk/housing

The council currently operates a Private sector leasing scheme which provides temporary accommodation and this is being considered for expansion subject to budgetary processes.

4)

- i) Extended advisory provisions will be considered as part of the implementation plan. More staff have been trained in mediation, training plans for staff are to be implemented to identify gaps in knowledge and wide ranging housing options will be considered.

The website is to be reviewed to offer greater self-help information and leaflets to offer further advice.

A housing options tool has also been devised to offer greater advice on wide ranging options <http://www.findingahometamworth.co.uk/content/HousingOptions/Index.aspx>

Furthermore ongoing work is establishing the main causation for homelessness in the area and pathway plans to access accommodation are being developed to also offer greater support for

- Homeless 16/17year olds
- Care leavers
- Hospital discharge cases including mental health
- Those Leaving prison and young offenders
- Service personnel homeless on leaving the armed forces

Additionally further advisory services are available through the money advice service operated by Tamworth Advice Centre and funded by the Council.

5)

- i) There are plans to consider this going forward as part of the implementation plan.

6)

- i) No, the homelessness service is not contracted out but further services are commissioned through the council to help provide early intervention (see links/info provided in q1)

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Details of Tamworth Borough Council's internal review and complaints procedure are attached, in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

Yours Sincerely

Nicola Hesketh
Project and Information Coordinator