

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

REQUEST FOR THE USE OF EMERGENCY POWERS – CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

SUBJECT:

Authority to increase emergency accommodation provision by 25 Hotel spaces at a cost of circa £7.5k pw to meet increasing demand during the Coronavirus pandemic in line with WG guidance co-terminus with the decision of the 27th March.

1. Originating / Department / Service –

Housing & Building Services – Housing Solutions Team

2. Reason for Seeking Emergency Powers –

The Housing Solutions Team submitted an Emergency Powers for on 27th March requesting permission from CMT to block book the following hotel/B&B accommodation to enable us to provide emergency / temporary accommodation:

	B&B costs	Total costs	Dinner costs
Tadross	£30 x 16 rooms (4 x double / 4 x twin / 4 x family)	£480 per night £3,360 per week £40,320 for 12 week period	Dinner can be provided at £4 per person
Celtic International (Airport Hotel)	£35 x 15 single rooms	£525 per night £3,675 per week £44,100 for 12 week period	Dinner can be provided at £4 per person

Following agreement from CMT the Housing Solutions Team have been placing homeless individuals/households to the Celtic International and Tadross Hotels in response to the following:

- a) Potential increase in homelessness / rough sleeping due to the corona virus which could include:
- Prison leavers, people fleeing domestic violence/abuse and family/relationship breakdowns.
 - Reduction in move on from current supply of temporary accommodation / hostel accommodation / refuge accommodation due to the current requirement for people to remain at home and the lack of move on opportunities as lettings are put on hold by social landlords.
 - The potential need to have alternative accommodation for people in shared accommodation if an outbreak of the virus occurs and we are unable to ensure residents can self-isolate in line with Public Health Wales guidance.

- b) The Welsh Government had issued guidance on rough sleeping (<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-covid-19-local-authority-support-for-rough-sleepers-html>) and had outlined £10 million of funding available for local authorities to accommodate and support rough sleepers (<https://gov.wales/written-statement-coronavirus-and-local-government>.) which can be claimed via a Covid 19 Claim co-ordinated by Finance.

As of 17/04/20 we currently have the following temporary accommodation available:

- 3 emergency B&B rooms (1 in the Tadross and 2 in the Celtic International Hotel)
- 1 room available at Ty Iolo Hostel
- 3 rooms (2 shared and 1 self contained) in our usual temporary accommodation.
- 4 furnished council properties retained for use for people who have symptoms.

The Housing Solutions Team are completing checks on all those presenting as homeless before emergency temporary accommodation is offered. Alternative options are explored with an amnesty being given to all new homelessness presentations which allows them to remain on the homelessness list if they are able to find somewhere else to go to reduce use of temporary accommodation and the spread of the virus. In addition, the Housing Solutions Manager is discussing with Probation the possibilities for alternative accommodation for planned prison leavers to release the pressure on the emergency temporary accommodation.

The Housing Solutions Team are now providing a daily update for CMT on placements in B&B which includes reason for referral, vulnerability information and who made the referral, and provides a weekly update to Welsh Government on rough sleeping and homelessness which will be shared with CMT with comparison analysis from w/c 20th April to track and predict future demand. However, over the last 3 weeks we have placed an average of 10 people in B&B accommodation each week.

In addition, a Central Co-ordination Cell (CCC) for homelessness / rough sleeping has been established as per the Welsh Government guidance. The CCC meets every Wednesday via Office 365 Teams and includes representatives from Housing, Supporting People, Safer Vale, Police, Probation, Public Health Wales, RSLs and support providers. The CCC reviews supply and demand for emergency temporary accommodation.

Due to current supply of emergency accommodation being reduced to only 3 rooms as of 17/04/20, the Housing Solutions Team have been investigating options for additional accommodation, and we have the opportunity to block book the following additional accommodation:

	B&B costs	Total costs	Dinner costs
Holiday Inn Hotel, Cardiff Airport	£49.95 x 15 rooms	£749.25 per night £5,244.75 per week £62,937 for 12 week period	Sandwiches for £4.95 / £5.95 Meal and drink - £10

Celtic International (Airport Hotel)	£35 x 10 additional single rooms	£350 per night £2,450 per week £29,400 for 12 week period	Dinner can be provided at £4 per person
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Recommendation:

- Extend the number of rooms at the Celtic International Hotel from 15 to 25. The additional 10 rooms will be charged at the same rate of £35 per room per night and will cost £2,450 per week. Total cost each 4-week period for additional 10 rooms is: £9,800.
- Commission the Holiday Inn hotel for 15 rooms at the rate of £49.95 per room per night which will cost £5,244.73 per week for a 4-week rolling period. Total cost each 4-week period for 15 rooms is: £20,978.92.
- Please note that £103.85/week or £14.83/day can be reclaimed for those eligible for Housing Benefit during their placement which would significantly reduce the cost.

The main risks to consider:

- There is a risk of potential security issues if we increase the number of rooms at the Celtic International Hotel from 15 to 25 which will need to be monitored and if any issues we may need to ensure additional security either through the hotel at additional cost or provide from internal resources if available.
- If we do not book the 15 rooms at the Holiday Inn at Cardiff Airport, the establishment will close, and this could mean we will have to consider more expensive options within the Vale or consider placing vulnerable people outside the county. In addition, if we continue to place 10 individuals/households in emergency B&B accommodation each week we would require additional capacity which would be made more difficult if the Holiday Inn closes and we are unable to extend the number of rooms at the Celtic due to potential security risks.
- Significant increase of stress on staff were suitable temporary options be challenging to secure.

3. **Policy Framework and Budget** –

PLEASE INDICATE as appropriate that the matter that you are seeking the use of Emergency Powers for is a Cabinet or Council function.

Cabinet

Council

4. **Relevant Scrutiny Committee** – Homes and Safe Communities

IMPORTANT

The following sections **must** be completed **prior** to the request being submitted to the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Section for processing.

I confirm

~~(a) — That there are no financial implications and the relevant Cabinet Member, Leader and / or the Deputy Leader has been consulted and is in agreement with the use of Emergency Powers; or~~

(b) That, in view of the financial commitments, the Head of Financial Services, the appropriate Chief Officer, the relevant Cabinet Member, Leader and / or Deputy Leader have been consulted and are in agreement with the use of the Emergency Powers and that

~~(c) — For matters relating to the Planning Committee the Chairman of the Planning Committee has also been consulted and is in agreement with the use of Emergency Powers;~~

~~(d) — For matters relating to the Licensing Committee the Chairman of the Licensing Committee has also been consulted and is in agreement with the use of Emergency Powers.~~

~~(e) — For matters relating to the Welsh Church Act Estate Committee the Chairman of the Welsh Church Act Estate Committee has also been consulted and is in agreement with the use of Emergency Powers.~~

(f) For matters relating to policy the relevant Scrutiny Committee Chairman has been consulted and is in agreement with the use of Emergency Powers.

Signed: Mike Ingram..... **Date:** 20/4/20.....
(Instructing Chief Officer)

Please print name: Mike Ingram.....

I hereby approve under my Emergency Powers the attached recommendation(s) on behalf of the Cabinet (please delete as appropriate).

Signed: D.R. Thomas..... **Date:** 22/04/20.....
Managing Director

NB Should the relevant portfolio Cabinet Member be unable to be consulted only the Leader and / or Deputy Leader be consulted in their absence.

N.B. Cabinet: 23rd March, 2020 Minute No. 295