

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

REQUEST FOR THE USE OF EMERGENCY POWERS – CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

SUBJECT: B&B Extension Request

1. **Originating / Department / Service –**

Housing & Building Services – Housing Solutions Team

2. **Reason for Seeking Emergency Powers –**

The Housing Solutions Team first submitted an Emergency Powers request on 27th March for permission to block book the following hotel/B&B accommodation 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 approval, the Housing Solutions Team has been placing homeless individuals/households to the Celtic International and Tadross Hotels due to:

- a) An increase in homelessness / rough sleeping because of the coronavirus including:
- Prison leavers, people fleeing domestic violence/abuse and family/relationship breakdowns.
 - A reduction in move on from the existing 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 and letting agents.
 - The 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.](https://gov.wales/written-statement-coronavirus-and-local-government))
 which can be claimed via a Covid 19 Claim co-ordinated by Finance.

Due the continued demand and pressure on the emergency temporary housing resources the Housing Solutions Team received further approval to increase the resources with an additional 10 rooms at the Celtic international and 25 rooms at the Holiday Inn Express.

The table contains the full list as of 3rd June 2020, 66 rooms of emergency B&B/Hotel accommodation available for the Housing Solutions Service.

| | 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 25 additional single rooms | £875 per night £6,125 per week £73,500 for 12-week period | Dinner can be provided at £4 per person |
| Holiday Inn Express, Cardiff Airport | £50.95 x 25 rooms | £1,273.75 per night £8,9162.25 per week £106,995.00 for 12- week period | Sandwiches for £4.95 / £5.95 Meal and drink - £10 |

Significant demand however continues on these resources and out of the 66 rooms as of 03/06/20 only the following B&B/Hotel accommodation is available:

- 4 rooms in the Tadross;
- 1 room in the Celtic International; and
- 1 room in the Holiday Inn Express.

In addition, the following temporary accommodation is available in our usual stock:

- 0 rooms available at Ty Iolo Hostel;
- 6 self-contained family accommodation properties;
- 1 shared room; and
- 4 furnished council properties retained for use for people who have COVID 19 symptoms.

The Housing Solutions Team is continuing to complete robust 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 can find somewhere else to go to reduce use of temporary accommodation and the spread of the virus. In addition, the Housing Solutions Manager continues to discuss with Probation the possibilities for alternative accommodation for planned prison leavers to release the pressure on emergency temporary accommodation.

However, despite these actions, over the last 3 weeks on average approximately 10 additional people have been placed in the hotel accommodation each week.

A daily update is provided to CMT on placements in hotels which includes reason for referral, vulnerability information, the referral source and weekly updates are also sent to Welsh Government.

A Central Co-ordination Cell (CCC) for homelessness / rough sleeping has been established in line with the Welsh Government guidance. The CCC meets every fortnight via Office 365 Teams and includes representatives from Housing, Supporting People, Safer Vale, Police, Probation, Public Health Wales, Registered Social Landlords and support providers. The CCC reviews supply and demand for emergency temporary accommodation.

Due to the current supply of emergency accommodation being under extreme pressure, despite the endeavours of the Housing Solutions Team to identify alternative move-on opportunities and prevention initiatives, it is requested that approval now be given to block book an additional 10 rooms in the Holiday Inn Express Hotel at the following cost.

| | B&B costs | Total costs | Dinner costs |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|---|--|
| Holiday Inn Hotel, Cardiff Airport | £50.95 x 10 rooms | £509.50 per night £3566.5 per week £42,798 up to 12-week period | Sandwiches for £4.95 / £5.95 Meal and drink - £10 |

Recommendations:

- To approve an additional 10 rooms be block booked in the Holiday Inn Express Hotel, Cardiff Airport, thus increasing the number from 25 to 35. The additional 10 rooms will be charged at the same rate of £50.95 per room per night at a cost of £3566.50 in 4 weekly blocks costing a total of £14,266.00.
- To approve the appointment of a security guard to be arranged through an agency contract that Housing & Building Services currently have in place, to be present in the Holiday Inn Express between 23:00p.m. and 07:00a.m. 7 days per week in four weekly blocks totalling £6,015.48. The provision of on-site security is a requirement set by the Holiday Inn Express Hotel if the Council block book the additional 10 rooms.
- To approve the extension of the two contracts in place with the Tadross and Celtic International Hotel for a further 4-week period following their expiry on 19th June 2020 at a cost of £37,940 for the 41 rooms.
- To approve the extension of the current contract with the Holiday Inn Express Hotel up to a further 4-weeks following expiry on 10th July 2020 at a cost of £49,931 for the 35 rooms.
- To give delegated authority to the Head of Housing and Building Services to further extend these three hotel contracts, if required, at the end of each of the 4-week periods up to a maximum of 12 weeks.

- To give delegated authority to the Head of Housing and Building Services to extend the services of a security guard at the Holiday Inn Hotel, if required, at the end of each of the 4-week periods up to a maximum of 12 weeks.

The main risks to consider:

- If we do not book these additional 10 rooms at the Holiday Inn Express at Cardiff Airport at the reduced room rate, we could lose the opportunity to a neighbouring authority. Caerphilly Council has recently block booked 10 rooms in The Mount Rooms, Barry.
- The Council's failure to comply with the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 by not providing suitable accommodation to households who become roofless.
- The risk of a Judicial Review if appropriate temporary accommodation provision is not provided to all households who become homeless in accordance with the Welsh Government COVID 19 guidance.
- The significant stress on the Housing Solutions Service if additional suitable temporary accommodation could not be sourced.

It should however be noted that £103.85/week or £14.83/day is currently being reclaimed for those service users who are eligible for Housing Benefit during their placement which significantly reduces the overall costs. In addition, the Housing Solutions Service will continue to submit claims for all additional costs to Welsh Government for as long as the funding remains available.

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.....
(Instructing Chief Officer)

Date: ...4th June 2020

Please print name: ...MIKE INGRAM.....

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

Signed: .D.R. Thomas.....
Managing Director

Date: 9th July 2020.....

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