

London Borough of Enfield

Housing Scrutiny Panel
30th September 2021

Subject: Temporary Accommodation

Cabinet Member: Cllr Gina Needs
Executive Director: Sarah Carey

Purpose of Report

1. *For information*

Relevance to the Council Plan

2. Good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods
In seeking to drive up the quality and availability of properties in the private rented sector, the service will increase the number and quality of homes available to low income households in the borough.
3. Sustain strong and healthy communities
Poor quality housing and homelessness have been identified as key factors in health inequality. Through reducing the number of households reaching crisis point and increasing the supply and quality of rented homes we will help to reduce the impact of homelessness and poor housing on the health and wellbeing of our residents.
4. Build our local economy to create a thriving place
We aim to ensure a thriving, high quality private rented sector that is accessible to low income households. By acting proactively to engage with and support landlords we aim to increase the supply of rented homes.

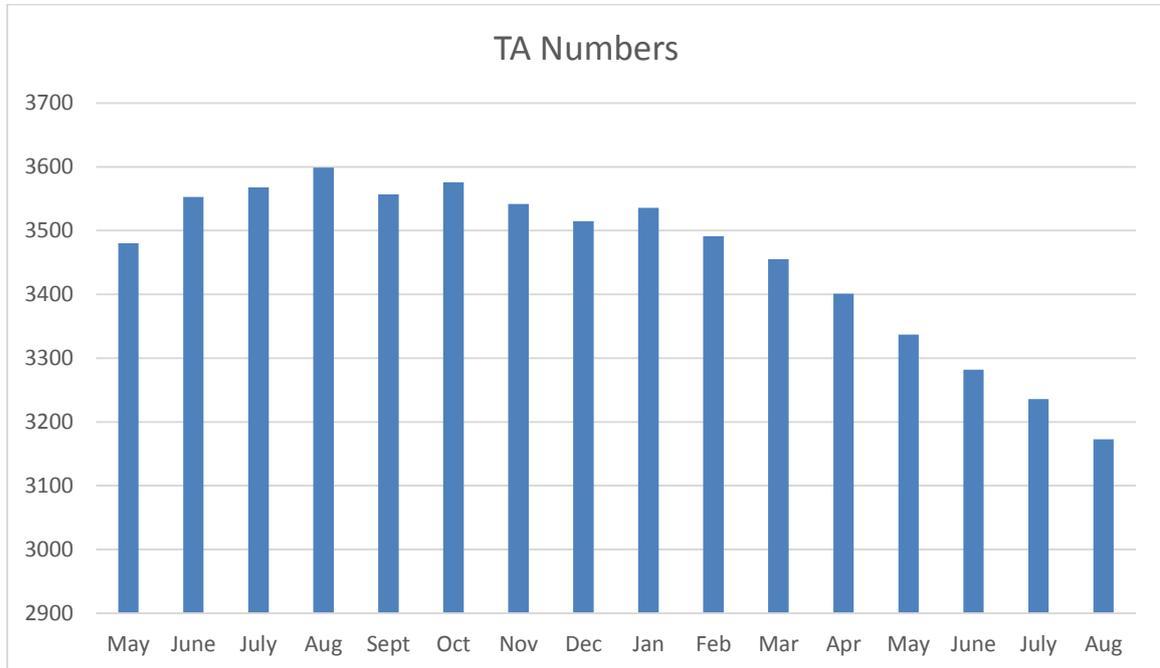
Background

5. The Council is committed to using all its resources and creativity to make the experience of homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. We are determined to enable everyone to access a stable, secure and decent home.
6. The Housing Advisory Service was established to improve the quality of service provided to residents with an increased focus on prevention. Increased staffing levels are funded through reductions in the use of temporary accommodation with the aim of reducing the number of households living in temporary accommodation to below 500 over a five-year period.

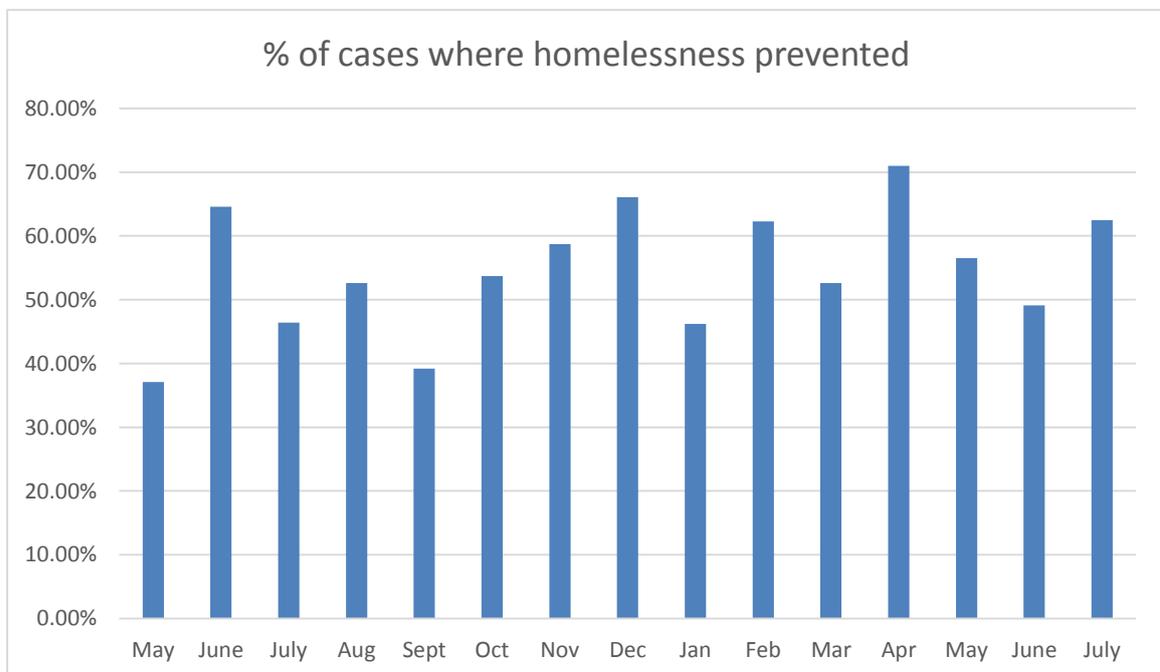
Main Considerations for the Panel

7. Total Numbers

Total numbers in temporary accommodation have dropped significantly from their height in August 2020 and are now just over 3200. We are on track to deliver on a target of 2691 households in temporary accommodation by year end.

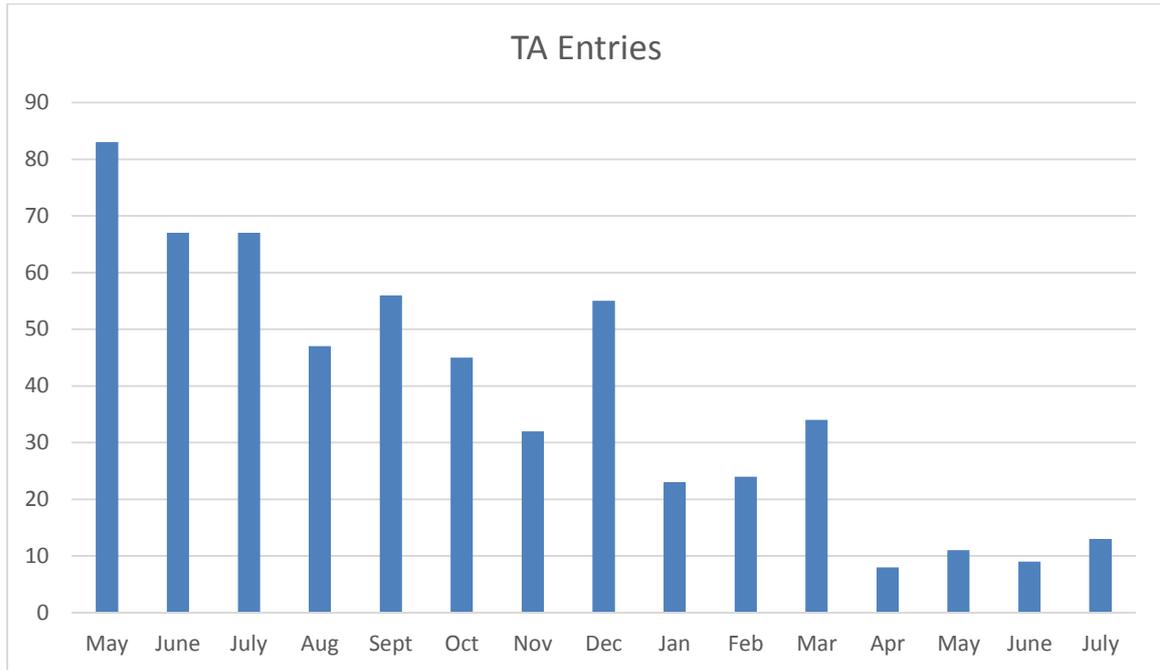


8. TA Prevention



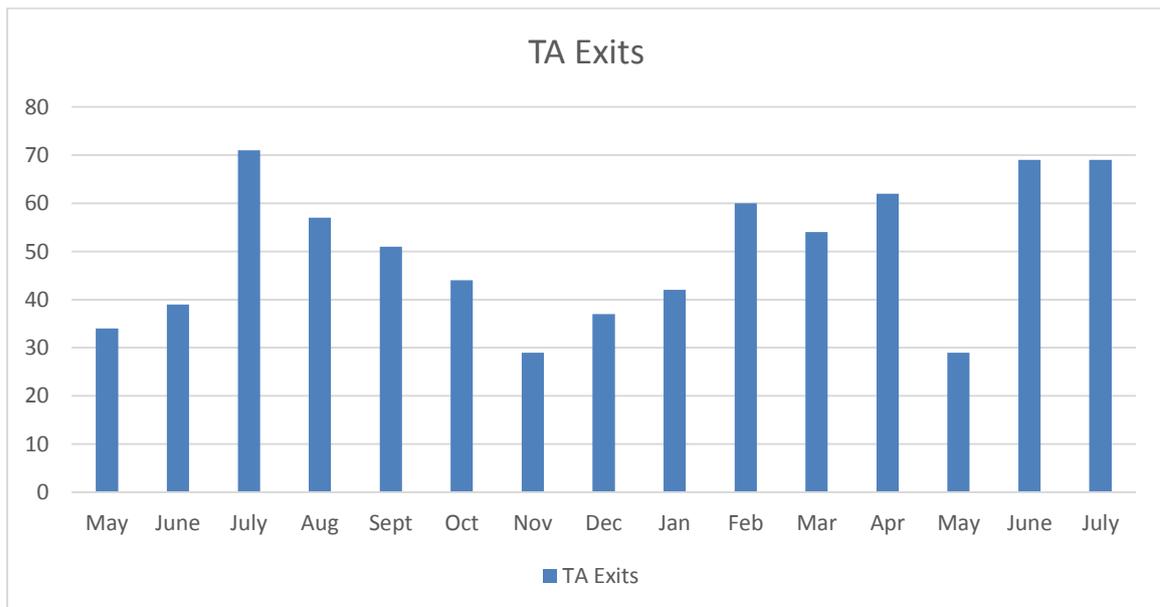
Prevention activity has continued to be at a higher rate. Prevention of homelessness includes households where we have moved them directly into alternative privately rented. This is therefore a reflection of both the prevention activity and an increased focus on PRS procurement. This is

reflected in the reduced numbers of households entering temporary accommodation.



9. TA Exits

The numbers of households leaving temporary accommodation reflects the impact of the Covid restriction on the housing market. As the Covid restrictions are lifted the numbers of people leaving temporary accommodation are increasing. The Sustainable Housing Team is working with residents to assist them in securing privately rented accommodation, using the Allocations Scheme and 'Find Your Own Home' to incentivise people to move.



The main obstacle to moving households out of temporary accommodation is staffing as residents need to be supported through this

process. The Move On Team in Sustainable Housing is currently operating at well below capacity but we are in the process of onboarding 7 new members of staff. This will enable us to increase the support to households moving out of temporary accommodation.

10. Covid Emergency Accommodation Update

The funding for Everyone In came to an end in June 2021. We have secured money for move on accommodation from the GLA for 72 people. We have 20 people still in emergency accommodation.

11. No Recourse to Public Funds

Our legal ability to offer support to single people with no recourse to public funds ended in June when the Covid measures were lifted. Earlier in the year we have over 90 people in this position and by June had managed to resolve the immigration status of most people. This left us with a cohort of 26 people in emergency accommodation. By the end of June, we had resolved a further 14 cases and the remainder were issued with notices to quit following an intensive round of checks on vulnerability, care needs and offers of voluntary repatriation. As at the end of June, two people with no recourse to public funds were accommodated and they were housed in the Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub.

12. Transformation Programme Update

Prevention and Intervention

The new service launched in October 2020 with a skeleton staff. Despite this successful prevention activities rose from 39.2% in September to 70% in April. Recruitment to front line roles is ongoing and staff are being onboarded in tranches to ensure continuity of service.

Work is underway to set up the Floating Support Team. Agreement has been reached with Adult Social Care for the Riverside staff to be collocated with the new team to enable a more coordinated approach to floating support.

Sustainable Housing

The Team cover four key areas:

- Residents in Temporary Accommodation
- Domestic Abuse & Safeguarding
- Duty to Refer and Discharge from institutions
- Street Homelessness

Managers have been appointed for each core area. Recruitment is now being completed for the front-line staff.

Market Management

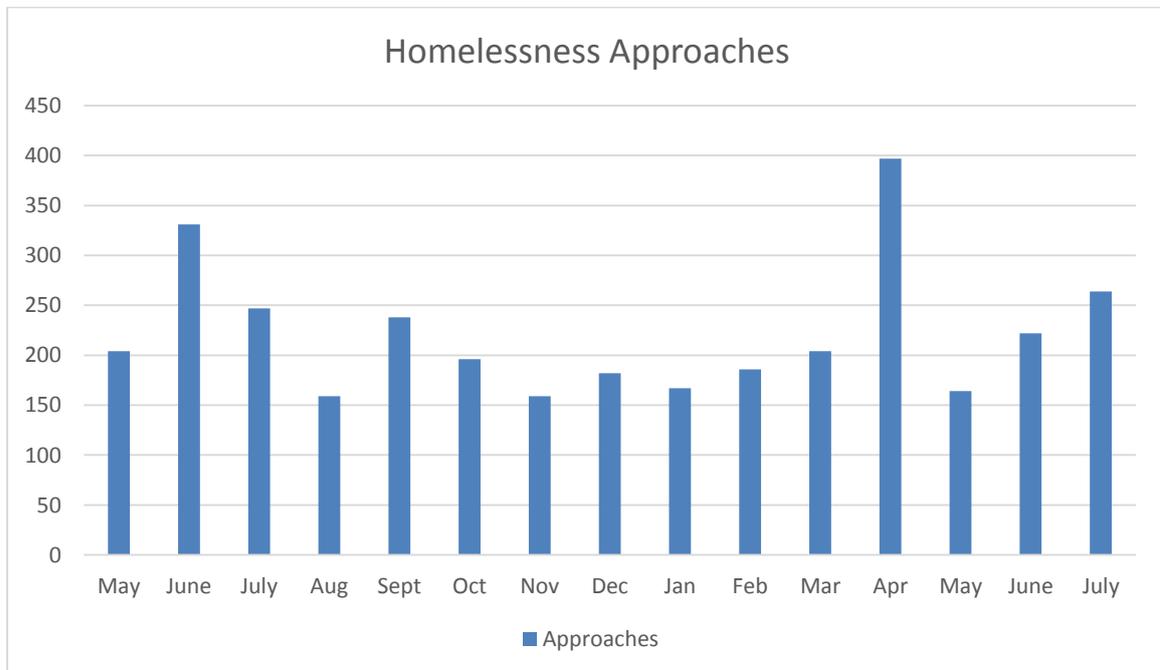
This team brings together the procurement and management of properties into a single team. The restructure is complete, and the remaining vacancies are being recruited to. This includes better management of our nightly paid portfolio to improve the quality of accommodation.

13. Future Pressures

The impact of Covid cannot be underestimated. As the lockdown measures are lifted, we are seeing an increase in the number of people approaching us for help. Budget provision has been made for a 20% increase in cases. This is particularly relevant for PRS evictions where landlords have been prevented from evicting their tenants.

The number of new cases rose dramatically in April following the end of the last lockdown. Cases have been increasing since May, driven by the lifting of the ban on evictions. The success of the service has been in intervening to ensure that people do not need to go into emergency accommodation and in assisting those in emergency accommodation to secure privately rented.

In June 58 households presented as homeless on the day and July saw another 60 households presenting as homeless on the day. Despite this we successfully managed to keep the majority in their existing accommodation rather than moving them into temporary accommodation.



14. Twelve Point Plan

The impact of Covid and successive lockdowns have impacted on our ability to deliver against the previous nine-point plan. This was drawn up at the end of the first lockdown. We have a new twelve-point plan in place to accelerate reductions in our use of temporary accommodation. We are conscious that the original five-year business plan was drawn up before Covid and that this means that the service will have a significant overspend even if the ambitious targets for reducing the use of temporary accommodation are met this financial year.

We have carried out a review of our five year business plan based on our experience over the last year. This will be presented to a future Cabinet meeting for approval.

Conclusions

15. Total numbers in temporary accommodation have dropped significantly from their height in August 2020 and are now just over 3200. We are on track to deliver on a target of 2691 households in temporary accommodation by year end.

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