Freedom of Information – Response –28130

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding the council's expenditure on interim temporary accommodation and related costs, as well as the measures being taken to reduce such expenditures.

Please provide the following information:

1. Homeless Applications and Interim Accommodation:

- Over the past twelve months, how many people have made a homeless application to the Council?
- Over the past twelve months, how many people have been provided with interim accommodation pursuant to Section 188(1) of the Housing Act 1996?
- Over the past twelve months, how many people have been provided with interim accommodation pursuant to Section 189(b) of the Housing Act 1996?
- Over the past twelve months, what was the total cost of providing interim accommodation?
a) What proportion of this cost was paid to Travelodge and/or any of its parent companies/subsidiaries?
b) What was the total amount paid to Travelodge and/or its related entities over the past twelve months?

2. Temporary Accommodation Expenditure and Associated Costs:

- What has been the total expenditure on interim temporary accommodation (e.g., Travelodge, B&Bs) for homeless individuals over the past three financial years?
- Please provide a breakdown of these costs by location, including the number of placements made outside the borough.
- What has been the total expenditure on affiliated costs such as storage, taxis, and other related services for individuals placed in temporary accommodation outside the borough over the past three financial years?
- Please provide details of these costs by category (e.g., storage, transportation, etc.) and location.

3. Protection of Personal Property for Homeless Applicants:

- Over the past twelve months, how many homeless applicants have had their personal property protected by the local authority?
- What is the average length of time that a homeless applicant's personal property is stored by the local authority?
- What is the average cost of storing a homeless applicant's personal property while they are in interim accommodation?
- Under what circumstances does the local authority protect the personal property of homeless applicants?
- As part of the homeless application process, does the local authority expressly ask the homeless applicant whether they need their personal property protected?
- If not, please state the reasons why this question is not asked.

- Please provide copies of the local authority's policies regarding homeless applications.
- Please provide a copy of the local authority's policy regarding the protection of the personal property of homeless applicants.
- Please disclose a copy of the council's homeless procedures manual or policy document followed by housing solutions officers at its homeless service centres/homeless persons offices.
- Over the past three years, how many complaints have been made by homeless applicants regarding the council's failure to protect their personal property?

4. Proactive Measures to Reduce Temporary Accommodation Costs:

- What specific measures has the council taken to reduce the reliance on temporary accommodation outside the borough, such as Travelodge and B&Bs?
- Has the council developed or initiated any programs to increase the availability of local temporary accommodation, particularly through the use of empty properties or land within the borough? If so, please provide details.

5. Utilisation of Empty Properties and Land:

- How many empty properties and parcels of land are currently owned by the council that could potentially be used for temporary accommodation?
- Has the council considered or initiated any compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) to acquire vacant properties for conversion into temporary accommodation? If so, please provide details, including the number of properties targeted, the outcome, and associated costs.
- What steps has the council taken to encourage community/ non-profit groups or social enterprises to make use of disused land or buildings via adverse possession for temporary accommodation or support services? Please provide examples, if any.

6. Comparative Models and Best Practices:

- Is the council aware of successful models such as Calderwood House in Cumbria, where an empty property (a former police station) was transformed into temporary accommodation and support services? If so, has the council explored similar initiatives within the borough? Please provide details of any discussions, plans, or actions taken.
- Has the council considered offering similar arrangements, such as a peppercorn rent, to community groups or social enterprises willing to repurpose empty properties for temporary accommodation or support services? If not, what are the reasons for not pursuing this option?

7. Support Services for Individuals in Temporary Accommodation:

What support services does the council currently provide for individuals placed in temporary accommodation outside the borough, particularly in terms of maintaining their connection to local support networks, healthcare providers, and other essential services?
Are there any programs in place to assist individuals in transitioning from temporary accommodation outside the borough to permanent housing within the borough? If so, please provide details on the nature of the support provided, outcomes, and costs.

8. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Complaints:

How does the council monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its temporary accommodation placements, particularly those made outside the borough? Please provide any available data on the impact of these placements on residents, including any assessments of detriment or distress caused.
Has the council conducted any cost-benefit analysis comparing the current expenditure on temporary accommodation outside the borough with potential savings from investing in local solutions (e.g., repurposing empty properties)? If so, please provide the findings.
We are writing to advise you that, following a search of our paper and electronic records, it has been established that the information you requested is not held by Suffolk County Council. The Council does not own or manage any housing.

If you have not already done so, then you may wish to write to the Borough and District Councils of Suffolk:

- Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council

Freedom of Information - Babergh District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk

- East Suffolk

FOI and EIR making a request | East Suffolk Council

- West Suffolk

Freedom of information

- Ipswich Borough Council

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