

Report to: Community Protection Panel

Date: 12 November 2007

Subject: Accommodation Information Regarding Offenders

Report of: Director of Environmental Services & District Manager
Greater Manchester Probation Services

Contact officer: Ian Harrison – 01942 827915

Purpose/summary: To provide information about the accommodation needs of offenders under Probation supervision within the Borough.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended:

Recommendation/decision: To note this report

Key Decision:

Risks/Implications:

Financial:	N/A
Staffing:	N/A
Policy:	Crime and Disorder Strategy
Equal Opportunities - has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage however equality and diversity implications have been considered.
Wards affected:	All

Property – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council's asset base or its occupation?

No

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Has the Director of Legal and Property Services confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council's Constitution? **Yes/No***

Has the Director of Finance and IT confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council's budget? **N/A**

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **Yes/No***

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only:

Categorisation of the report:	x		
Discussion leading to a decision		Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
Community Protection 12 Nov 07			

There are no Background Papers to this Report within the meaning of Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Proper Officer Martin Kimber

Date 30 October 2007

1. **Background:**

- 1.1. Amongst those factors critical to the success and effectiveness of the rehabilitation of offenders is the reliance of timely access to stable and secure (and sometimes supported) accommodation, which, according to research, can significantly reduce the risk of relapse and re-offending. In fact, according to the Social Exclusion Unit, it can reduce the risk of reoffending by over 20%.
- 1.2. Nevertheless, offenders do face barriers to accessing advice, accommodation and support and for this reason there are a plethora of initiatives and programmes designed to address this. Successful delivery of these programmes is dependent upon close collaborative working between criminal justice agencies and a wide range of other statutory and non-statutory agencies which will be called upon to play a crucial role in the criminal justice/rehabilitation process.
- 1.3. In 2002 the categories of homeless applicants who qualify as having a priority need for housing were extended. These include those deemed 'vulnerable as a result of' having been remanded or having served time in custody. The Homelessness Code of Guidance (July 2006) explores this in more detail. Local Authorities cannot have blanket policies and must consider the 'vulnerability' on an individual basis.

2. **Probation Service Clients**

- 2.1. At the start of all orders of the court and those released from prison on licence the Probation Service is required to complete a comprehensive risk and needs assessment. This is called OASys – Offender Assessment System. It is used nationally by prison and probation. All the areas assessed are known to affect offending and reoffending. They are:
 - a) Offending Information
 - b) Analysis of Offences
 - c) Accommodation
 - d) Education, Training & Employability
 - e) Financial Management & Income
 - f) Relationships
 - g) Lifestyle & Associates
 - h) Drug Misuse
 - i) Alcohol Misuse
 - j) Emotional Well-being
 - k) Thinking & Behaviour
 - l) Attitudes
 - m) Health & Other Considerations
 - n) Risk of serious harm assessment and risk management plan, where required

2.2 On average 3-4% of our offenders are of no fixed abode (NFA) – in a year this amounts to about 50. A further 10% are in transient/short term accommodation – about 160 in a year. See table below.

	NFA		Transient		Accommodation linked to reoffending (for all offenders, not just those who are NFA or in short term/transient accommodation)	
Yr April 05 – Mar 06	51	3%	56	10%	274	18%
¼ Oct-Dec 2006	10	3%	46	12%	72	19%
¼ Jan - Mar 2007	16	4%	39	9%	113	26%

2.3 The last column relates to all offenders when where they live is assessed as contributing to their risk of reoffending.

2.4 Most offenders within the Borough live in the most deprived areas with little opportunity to relocate.

2.5 The Probation Service has a close working relationships with WALH who have been helpful in cases where there is eligibility for accommodation and a need to provide this in order to be able to manage the risk of serious harm. However if anyone has been accommodated and is subsequently recalled to prison or receives a prison sentence for a new offence, they can be at risk of losing their home and there is no obligation on the part of WALH to offer anything but advice.

2.6 There is no direct access provision in the borough and the so called revolving door begins or perpetuates. We do have a Bond scheme to assist those in need of accommodation to secure private rented accommodation and there are tenancy support staff who assist offenders manage a tenancy, both in terms of budgeting and also being a responsible tenant and neighbour.

3. Conclusions

3.1 There are unmet needs for accommodation for some of those with an offending history within the Borough however several schemes and initiatives are in place in an attempt to deal with them. The Community Safety Partnership will continue to explore opportunities to improve the range of provision.