

Supporting Statement – Service Management of 7-9 London Road, Widley

People can become homeless for many reasons. Increase in cost of living, job-loss, illness and injury, change in relationship or fleeing domestic violence. It can also affect people who are able to be discharged from hospital, but due to their circumstances, are unable to return home.

Homelessness isn't always visible and doesn't always mean 'rough sleeping' in a tent or on the street. It could mean someone who is 'sofa-surfing' or where their previous home is no longer suitable for their needs.

According to research carried out by Shelter, a UK charity, in December 2025 there were at least 382,000 homeless people in the UK, which is an increase of 8% in the space of a year.

Temporary Accommodation

Like many councils across the country, Havant Borough Council (HBC) is facing a significant logistical and financial challenge when it comes to providing temporary accommodation for homeless residents. One of the ways the Council is trying to address the high spend on nightly-paid accommodation (often between £50-70 per household per night, but sometimes much higher than this) is to buy our own facilities to provide this housing rather than relying on the expensive options currently provided by the private sector. In December 2025, the Council had in excess of 100 households in temporary accommodation (with a significant number of these households currently placed out of borough due to the lack of local accommodation).

Being housed out of the borough can be very difficult and disruptive, especially for families with children, as it may mean they have to move away from their support network of family and friends, but also potentially changing their child's school or nursery. The aim of this site is to help more households stay in the Borough until a permanent home becomes available.

The Council purchased 7-9 London Road in 2024 to enable us to help a number of households by making sure they have safe, good quality temporary accommodation within the area they grew up in or have a local connection to, whilst significantly reducing how much the Council is spending.

Many councils have no option than to place people in hotels or B&Bs, which would mean their accommodation comprises a single room with no cooking and laundry facilities or safe spaces for children to play (and sometimes with shared bathrooms) – we don't wish to house vulnerable residents like this. To this end, we've created a model where households can have private facilities – but also have access to a large communal area and safe, enclosed garden so that families with children are not confined to a single room in a hotel or needing to rely on expensive takeaway food.

Change of use to 'HMO'

The properties currently comprise a large, 6-bed house and attached 13-room bed & breakfast (known as Corner House B&B). This application is requesting to change the use of the properties, from their current status as a private residence and a bed and breakfast, to be re-classified as 'House

in Multiple Occupation' (HMO), the appropriate planning classification for our model of accommodation.

HMOs are often owned by private organisations and run as businesses for profit. The Council intends to run this differently. As owners, the Council will manage property and tenancies, and support households to move into sustainable, settled accommodation. While there will be financial savings, a significant benefit will be changing the way homelessness in our borough is managed by being able to reduce the recurrence of homelessness.

In the past, whilst the property was operating as a B&B, the Council often placed homeless people, predominantly single adults, in the property. There are restrictions, as defined in the 'Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 2003', for using B&Bs as temporary accommodation. They are not appropriate for families but are also only permitted for stays of up to 6 weeks. To enable households to stay in the studios for the duration of time it takes to find suitable housing means we cannot keep the legal status as 'Bed and Breakfast'. This change in classification would mean lower disruption and a lower turnover of residents than bed and breakfast accommodation.

Number of rooms and people

The floor plans have been slightly revised to clearly show which of the 15 rooms will be the office, and which 14 rooms will be used as studios (with a maximum occupancy of 24). The maximum number of adult tenants will be 14 (1 adult per room) and the maximum number of children will be 10, with the 10 x 2-bedded rooms being designed for an adult and child. The single rooms can be used for pregnant women or people with disabilities.

The internal design includes 2 single disabled suites (these are fully wheelchair accessible) providing the ability to accommodate people with disabilities, or those who are able to be discharged from hospital but may not have suitable accommodation to live in. The majority of studios are designed to be ambulant friendly with features like low-threshold showers.

Facilities in the studios

The studios will be self-contained – this means each will have a small kitchenette and a private bathroom. The kitchenette will have a fridge, sink, storage and cooking facilities such as a hob and microwave/grill. This will allow the households to be independent, however there will also be a large, shared kitchen/common space and laundry room providing extra facilities. All rooms and the number of people in them will exceed minimum space standards.

Character of area

The application does not seek to change the external size or footprint of the properties. The outside of the building will largely remain the same (with some tidying up and repairs of the exterior walls to improve the appearance) meaning the site will retain the look of being 2 large houses and be in keeping with properties in the local area. There is no intention to merge the 2 buildings, each retaining its own entrance with no internal access between them.

Bats

Early on in the process it was established that the property had features that could be suitable for bats. As a protected species, this triggered a series of bat emergence surveys which were carried out during active months of May-July 2025 (the report is included in the planning application documents). Observations were professionally carried out to understand the type and extent of bat activity.

The results show that bats are present, with the roof spaces used as an occasional day roost for a Brown long-eared bat and evidence of commuting bats. As the roof spaces are not being remodelled, the impact to bats is considered as 'negligible' and therefore a Natural England European Protected Species Mitigation Licence is not required at this stage. Precautionary measures will be taken throughout the refurbishment works to ensure no negative impact, and professionals will be consulted or involved if deemed appropriate. It is the responsibility of the 'developer', in this case Havant Borough Council, to follow legislation.

Waste management

The Council are the authority responsible for collecting waste and recycling from this property. Sufficient bins will be provided, with 2 bins store areas included in the submitted plans, and bin etiquette and use will be monitored by HBC staff with rectification measures put in place should it be required. Tenants will be provided information about recycling and encouraged to recycle where possible.

Parking and traffic

The current vehicular access to the rear of 9 London Road, accessed from Hillside Avenue, will be removed and the area fenced and incorporated into the garden. This area of road along Hillside Avenue already benefits from double yellow lines. This will reduce the car movements associated with this property coming in and out of Hillside Avenue as all vehicular access to the property will be from London Road.

Parking spaces allocated to the front of the property will most likely be used by HBC staff and maintenance contractors, however disabled bays are provided to support the accessible studios.

It is unusual that households needing temporary accommodation will be car owners. Those with the means to afford cars can usually afford to resolve their own homelessness quickly so would spend minimal time in this type of accommodation.

The Housing Services team carry out financial assessments on the households which will show if they are car owners before they are housed. The team will aim to keep the number of car owners residing in the property to the amount of parking spaces available and this will be monitored on an ongoing basis. There may be times when it will be unavoidable that more spaces are required than are allocated however this will be kept to a minimum.

7-9 London Road was in part chosen due to its proximity to regular public transport access. The number 8 'The Star' bus offers 5 buses per hour from a bus stop within a few minutes' walk, enabling people to travel easily to Waterlooville in around 20 minutes, where alternative services provide onwards travel to other locations, and in the opposite direction towards Cosham and Portsmouth city.

Management of properties and tenants

The Council own the properties and will be managing the tenants and tenancies. Various options for how best to manage the properties were investigated, including contracting this service to a management organisation, however it's believed the best way to ensure people are quickly helped into settled accommodation is for the Council to manage this process within our experienced Housing department.

Therefore, the Housing Services team will be responsible for allocating and managing tenants, who will be people who present to the Council as homeless. Relevant housing and homelessness acts and legislations will be followed in relation to who is eligible. This process includes verifying using the '5 tests of homelessness':

1. Homeless Test:
This tests the current housing situation and assesses if people are currently homeless or threatened with homelessness
2. Eligibility Test:
This tests if people are eligible for assistance. This includes verifying the right to reside within the UK. Local Councils have no powers, and are therefore not permitted, to house non-UK citizens, those in the UK illegally or those waiting assessment for the right to remain. The Home Office is the only body responsible for housing those seeking asylum in the UK. The Home Office are not associated with this property.
3. Priority Need Test:
This tests vulnerability compared to an 'average adult'. For this property households with children, pregnant women and those with disabilities may be eligible.
4. Intentionality Test:
This tests that the reason for homelessness was not intentional
5. Local Connection Test:
This tests the connection to the area. As set out in Section 199 of the Housing Act 1996, a person has a 'local connection' with the borough of Havant if they:
 - Live here now or have lived here before by choice,
 - Work here,
 - Have closely family here, or
 - Have other special circumstances linking them to the area

The Housing Services team considers the type of accommodation before placing a person or household there. For example, this property is not suitable for people who have complex needs, even if the '5 tests of homelessness' are satisfied.

The Council will be the landlord, and the Housing Services team will provide tenants with a non-secure tenancy agreement. This type of tenancy agreement is for short-term, temporary accommodation and will come with a set of conditions which the tenants must follow, this includes the acceptable behaviours both inside and outside of the property. Their placement in the accommodation will be at risk and sanctions imposed if these are not followed – which could include terminating their tenancy.

The Council will set and collect the rent, which will be charged at an affordable rate.

The Housing Services team will be actively supporting the tenants of this property to move into settled accommodation, either from the Council's Housing Register or into private rented accommodation. Following a full assessment, suitable settled accommodation will be sought – the time this takes varies depending on the individual circumstances. This can take months, although sometimes, if a specific type of property is required (such as a property with disabled adaptations) this can take longer.

If the household has belongings, such as furniture, these will be placed into storage. The rooms will be furnished with beds and storage furniture, as well as other items such as cooking equipment. This means there should be little impact and disruption as and when people move in and out.

HBC staff and partners will regularly visit the site to carry out assessments or provide 1-2-1 support for the tenants, which will help to prepare people for moving into settled accommodation. An office has been included on the ground floor of number 9.

Repairs and maintenance to the property

The Council do not have the internal resources to manage the repairs and maintenance related to the property so will be undertaking a formal procurement process to appoint a company who will work on behalf of the Council to keep the property safe and well maintained. A regular cleaning service will be provided for the internal communal facilities.

The company will be responsible for carrying out general repairs, ensuring all electrical and gas certificates are valid, cleaning the studios in between tenants and maintaining the outside spaces. They will also ensure a 24-hour call out service is in place for emergency issues such as gas and electric outages and water leaks (with all non-emergency works carried out during daytime hours).

A robust contract will be put in place with the company, and the Council will manage this contract and ensure the property is being looked after to the agreed standard.

A full building control application will be submitted to ensure the buildings comply with all building regulations. Fire safety, gas safety, drainage and waste management will be applied in accordance

with relevant regulations. Housing Health and Safety Risk Assessments will be undertaken to ensure everyone's safety.

Local service access

The majority of tenants will already be residents in the Borough, and therefore be registered to doctors, dentists and schools. It is unusual for people in temporary accommodation to change or register with different service provisions as their stay is short-term.

When allocating people, the Housing Services team makes best endeavours to place people as near to where they already live in the Borough (if appropriate based on their circumstances) and where possible, this property will accommodate people with connections to Cowplain, Waterloo, Purbrook and Crookhorn areas of the Borough. This helps with their ability to keep their children in the same schools and health providers, however this isn't always possible. The impact on local service provision is expected to be minimal.

The local community offers regular groups and activities, such as toddler groups and neighbourhood lunches could be a great way for tenants to integrate into the community and provide a vital support network.

Security, ongoing support and community inclusion

To provide assurance for our tenants, neighbours and local residents when the properties are in operation, the Council will be providing a single point of contact for the community to reach out to who will be able to address any concerns relating to the properties or tenants. We will also be working with our community partners in the area to encourage inclusion for our tenants during their stay in the property.

Security measures will be installed or implemented, such as external CCTV cameras covering the driveway. This should deter unsuitable or disruptive behaviours (these will be defined in the and agreed to within the tenancies). A comprehensive Management Plan and Allocations Policy are currently in development.

Approvals and funding for this project

The decision and financial approach for this project was approved by HBC Cabinet on 6th September 2023, and at Full Council on 20th September 2023.

Report, meeting notes and decision for Cabinet of 6th September 2023 (item 34):

[Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 6th September, 2023, 6.00 pm | Havant Borough Council](#)

Agenda and minutes for Full Council on 20th September 2023:

[Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 20th September, 2023, 5.30 pm | Havant Borough Council](#)