

## **Albany Surgery Briefing – The Facts**

### **Background**

The property was on the market for 6 to 9 months before TDC showed any interest. When it first went on the market there was some commercial interest for serviced office space but this dropped away well before TDC showed any interest, due to lack of onsite parking and the difficulty and the cost of converting the building for those uses.

We were competing with a residential developer who was proposing to convert the building into small flats. His offer was more than ours but was conditional on receiving planning approval .

### **Why we are doing this -**

- Homelessness is an issue that can affect anyone at anytime – it is indiscriminate.
- Demand for temporary accommodation is rising.
- The majority of proposed residents are local and currently housed elsewhere in the Town.
- Teignbridge has a statutory duty to provide emergency and temporary accommodation for homeless households in “priority need” under the Housing Act 1996.
- Teignbridge currently has to rely on unmanaged and expensive B and B’s as there is no alternative.
- B and B is a drain of tax payer’s money.
- B and B’s are not suitable as many don’t have cooking facilities, something which makes life even trickier for those who have children to look after.
- The Ombudsman’s ‘No place like Home’ report of 2013 highlighted the human impact of Councils use of B and B accommodation and called on LA’s Government and policy makers, to learn from the experiences in the report and use them to drive up standards.
- Families or pregnant women accommodated in B and B are subject regulations which state an LA may not accommodate these households in B&B for longer than 6 weeks. The Ombudsman has been critical of LA’s use of B&B and can issue substantial fines for breaches.
- HB regulations state that LA’s can only claim the amount of subsidy for a 1 bedroom flat causing significant shortfall.

### **The Albany Street proposal -**

#### **Overview.**

The accommodation is not intended for any specific client group. The property will be occupied by single people, couples and occasionally families. Part of the building will also provide housing for residents with limited mobility as two of the flat will be wheelchair accessible.

The tenants will live in this accommodation for a short period of time whilst more long term accommodation arrangements are put in place.

The property will be managed on a daily basis to ensure the residents adhere to the terms of their tenancies.

## **Key points -**

- Is accessible in the Town centre with level access and easy transport routes.
- It is close to supporting agencies for homeless households, GPs and hospital services
- It is in a predominantly non residential area.
- Two ground floor rooms will be converted for disabled access to meet the growing needs from ex forces, hospital discharge etc.
- All 10 rooms will have en-suite facilities with microwave, fridge kettle etc and access to shared kitchen with washing facilities and living space.
- All residents will be risk assessed for suitability for the scheme prior to occupation.
- There will be strict tenancy criteria with short notice periods for transgression.
- The accommodation will provide an office to ensure there is a staff presence in the building during office hours.
- The scheme will be linked to the Council “out of hours” service outside these times
- The scheme offers value for money with a projected revenue surplus
- The scheme will have to comply with Private Sector Housing regulations regarding standards, levels of occupation etc.
- Residents won't be allowed visitors.
- Periods of residence will be short term ( up to 6/8 weeks )
- For some homeless persons this scheme will not be appropriate and alternative facilities will be used.

## **Specific Management -**

- Albany House will have a set of 'Accommodation Rules' which residents will need to abide by. Each resident will be informed of the rules during the booking in process. As part of the initial process, residents will be provided with information regarding discipline procedures and the consequences of any breaches of the rules. Accommodation rules will cover, cleanliness, security, sharing responsibilities, anti-social behaviour (including neighbours and neighbouring property) smoking, alcohol and drug use, visitors etc. All residents will be given guidance and support to settle into the accommodation.
- Teignbridge District Council will not tolerate anti-social behaviour, harassment or violence and action will be taken to ensure that Albany House is a safe place to live and work in. Any breach of the rules will result in defined procedures being followed, and if the ending of any duty to accommodate were to be necessary, swift, clear and legally compliant action can be taken.
- Residential accommodation in the private sector would not have this level of management
- If planning permission were to not be granted in respect of Albany House, TDC's legal duty to accommodate homeless households would remain and these households will continue to be placed in the private sector.