

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Housing and Health Committee

24 August 2016

Home First – Rio and Tayview House Review

Report by Director (Housing and Social Work)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report seeks approval to deliver a more customer-focused, affordable way of meeting the accommodation and housing support needs of people facing homelessness through the development of Home First and the discontinuation of temporary accommodation services in Rio House and Tayview House in Perth.

1. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 In July 2015 the Council approved a report “Building Ambition: The Council’s Transformation Strategy 2015 – 2020 and Organisational Development Framework.” (Ref: 15/292). In this report the Council approved a transformation strategy and a programme of major reviews to deliver the next phase of organisational transformation. The programme focuses on adopting a proactive approach to public service reform, embracing change to maintain Perth and Kinross Council’s position of strength to meet the new and significant challenges ahead.
- 1.2 One of these transformation projects is Home First, a new model of service for homeless people which is being recommended following a comprehensive review of the current delivery and management of all temporary accommodation. The aim of Home First is to introduce a direct route for homeless people into settled accommodation, reducing the need for temporary accommodation. This reflects the fact there is no longer a need for some current types of temporary accommodation, described below.
- 1.3 The review of temporary accommodation focused in particular on two areas below: Rio House and Tayview.
- 1.4 Rio House was established in 2009 in response to a need to provide suitable temporary accommodation and a better alternative to Bed and Breakfast accommodation for homeless children and their families. The accommodation consists of 8 en-suite bedrooms with communal kitchen, laundry and living and play room facilities. It is staffed 24 hours a day by a Senior Hostel Assistant and a team of 5 Accommodation Assistants.
- 1.5 Tayview House was established in 2012 in response to a need, at the time to provide homeless young people with more suitable temporary accommodation than Greyfriars House. This provision offers 8 self-contained bedsits with en-

suite facilities and a small kitchen, a common room and a staff room. The property is leased from the Gowrie Housing Trust and a concierge service provides an overnight presence.

- 1.6 'Floating support' is available to residents of both Rio and Tayview by 3 Housing Support Officers.

1.7 Key Issues

Over the years Rio and Tayview House have provided an effective and responsive service to young people and vulnerable families facing homelessness. However, in response to service-wide improvements, welfare reform and a proactive approach to identifying and responding much more quickly to secure settled housing solutions for people, the existing service provision is no longer fit for purpose. Some of the following factors also impact on the future viability of these provisions:-

- The introduction of Universal Credit will result in the loss of financial support for service charges in temporary accommodation, potentially creating high rent arrears
- More effective waiting list management, enabling many homeless families to move straight to permanent housing, which has resulted in under-occupancy of Rio and Tayview House and therefore rent loss for these services
- Admission criteria for Tayview requires applicants to have low or medium support needs, meaning young people with higher assessed needs are unsuitable for this accommodation
- Feedback from residents indicates they would prefer self-contained accommodation
- There has been a 22% reduction in the need for all types of temporary accommodation – 974 in 2015/16, compared to 1,255 in 2014/15
- Rio House and Tayview have had lower occupancy levels over the past 2 years (70% compared to Greyfriars which achieves 98%) (occupancy **Rio** April 2013 – 98 %; Jan 2016 – 63%. **Tayview** – Jan 2013 – 99%; Sept 2015 - 83%. This has resulted in reduced income and increased running costs.
- The Lease for Tayview is due to end on 1st March 2017 and if not terminated, the Council will need to renegotiate the terms of any new agreement

Support services for vulnerable families will continue with the new model. Since the opening of Rio the 'early years' agenda has been developed and expanded which has enabled and supported Housing, Education and Children's Services and a broad range of organisations and agencies to work together with families in their own communities across Perth and Kinross.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Home First aims to introduce a direct route for homeless people to move into settled accommodation, reducing the need for temporary accommodation. By

reducing or removing lengthy and unnecessary time spent in shared or hostel type accommodation, people facing homelessness will be supported wherever possible to move directly into settled self-contained accommodation, with outreach support if required. This will enable them to settle and integrate within local communities removing the stigma of homelessness and the costs and social upheaval of having to move home.

2.2 The main objectives of Home First are to:-

- Deliver a service for homeless people that supports them, wherever possible, to move directly to settled accommodation and has built-in flexibility to respond to the multiple and complex needs of some of our more vulnerable people
- Reduce the duration of homelessness
- Deliver a service that meets our legal and statutory responsibilities
- Remove inequalities re affordability between mainstream and temporary accommodation
- Provide a better housing solution for a vulnerable group
- Offer best value to the Council and to the individual

2.3 This report summarises some outcomes of the work of the transformation project team on the existing model of service delivery at Rio and Tayview Houses, and in particular, their current operational arrangements, including occupancy levels, refusal rates, average length of stay, operational running costs and income loss.

2.4 The project team then considered 3 options for the future use of Rio and Tayview and carried out an options appraisal exercise in order to:-

- Apply a consistent appraisal and assessment mechanism across all potential options
- Thoroughly test and assess each of the potential options against the project objectives
- Ensure that each of the options was compared and evaluated in a way that was transparent and documented
- Ensure that the project team arrived at the most appropriate proposal

2.5 The 3 options are detailed below:

Option 1 - Through service redesign, support the objectives of the Home First proposal and move applicants directly to settled accommodation by discontinuing service provision at Rio and Tayview.

Housing support will continue to be provided where there is an assessed need through the Housing Support service. For highly vulnerable people, a Home First with Intensive Support model will apply.

Close partnership working with Education and Children's Services will continue and levels of service delivery to families and young persons enhanced or maintained.

This option would involve the sale of Rio and termination of the lease agreement at Tayview House.

Option 2 - Maintain the Status Quo and continue to deliver the current service

Option 3 - Lease the provisions to another provider

The table below provides an overview of how well each option met the projects overall objectives:

Project Objectives	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Deliver a service that supports a direct move to settled accommodation	√	X	X
Reduce the duration of homelessness	√	X	X
Deliver a service that meets our legal and statutory responsibilities	√	√	√
Remove inequalities re affordability between mainstream and temporary accommodation	√	X	X
Provide a better housing solution for a vulnerable group	√	X	X
Offer best value to the Council and to the individual	√	X	X

2.6 The project team identified a number of disadvantages with options 2 and 3, including:

- Failure to deliver the Home First proposal and the associated ongoing high running costs
- Unsustainable due to the additional financial pressures of welfare reform
- Current models are no longer fit for purpose and do not meet the needs of the client group

2.7 Option 1 fully met all of the projects objectives and through the options appraisal received the highest weighting. Option 1 is recommended on the basis that it fully supports the delivery of the wider Home First model enabling people to immediately move wherever possible to more suitable settled accommodation. This approach will remove many of the inequalities that currently exist between mainstream and temporary accommodation.

- 2.8 The proposal will remove the need to place families with children into a shared living environment. It will reduce the duration and stigma of homelessness and will provide immediate settled and more affordable housing solutions.
- 2.9 Subject to Committee approval of Option 1 the redesign of temporary accommodation, formal consultation will be undertaken with staff and the trades unions about the workforce implications and development of the new operational arrangements of the model.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This report highlights the Council's ongoing commitment to improve the services and outcomes for people in Perth and Kinross who face homelessness. By supporting them to move directly into settled accommodation, they will receive a better and more individually focused housing solution which removes many of the current inequalities and stigma.
- 3.2 The profile of homeless people has changed and along with it the demand for current models of temporary accommodation. Through improvement and service redesign, services are now being delivered in a different way, providing more suitable housing outcomes for people facing homelessness.
- 3.3 While both Rio House and Tayview have served an important purpose in the past, providing emergency accommodation for many young people and families, the financial, welfare and legal environment has changed over the last six years, reducing the need for this type of accommodation.
- 3.4 Committee is asked to:
- i) Approve the recommended Option 1 detailed in section 2.7
 - ii) Approve the next stage which is to formally consult with Trade Unions and staff.

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The Perth and Kinross Community Plan 2013-2023 and the Perth and Kinross Corporate Plan 2013-18 have five concurrent outcomes which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. The following are relevant to this report:-
- (i) Giving every child the best start in life
 - (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
 - (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
 - (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
 - (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 The proposals in this report, including the remodelling of existing dispersed accommodation to a smaller number of properties to be used as step up/step down accommodation, will deliver recurring revenue transformation savings of £676k for Home First as approved by full Council on 11 February 2016.

Rio House will be declared surplus and a capital receipt will be generated to reduce prudential borrowing revenue loan charges.

Workforce

- 2.2 Approval of this report will authorise officers to consult formally with trade unions and staff on the proposals and workforce implications. Detailed informal discussions have already taken place with staff and TUs. The staff affected by the service redesign detailed in the proposed option will be supported through the process using the Framework For Workforce Change, including access to learning and development opportunities to enable transition.

The Corporate Human Resources manager has been consulted on the proposals contained within the report.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 The Director (Environment) has been consulted on this report and is in agreement with the proposals. Following Committee, approval to declare Rio House as surplus to requirement, the property will be placed on the market for sale. Once a purchaser has been identified permission to sell will be sought from Property Sub Committee.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties. The Equality Impact Assessment undertaken in relation to this report can be viewed clicking [here](#).

- (i) Assessed as **relevant** and the following positive outcomes expected following implementation:-

- We aim to remodel the current service we provide to enable more equal access and inclusiveness for all our customers through consultation and engagement with those who use our service

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matter presented in this report. The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

- 3.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions. The information contained within this report has been considered under the Act. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report.

Legal and Governance

- 3.4 The Head of Legal and Governance Services has been consulted on this report with regards to the lease of Tayview and the asset management of Rio.

Risk

- 3.5 A detailed risk profile has been developed, risks have been rated in terms of probability and impact and actions to mitigate the risks have been identified and are progressing. The Project Team review project progress and risks each month.

4. Consultation

Staff and service user feedback was sought and has informed and influenced the proposals within this report. Service user feedback from Rio generally relates to the communal living arrangements, the lack of privacy and the fact that residents would prefer a self-contained home.

A workshop session with staff took place in May when staff were given an overview of the project and an opportunity to discuss the review and ask questions about timescales and how the review will impact upon them directly.

Staff were generally understanding of the need for change and discussions included about the need to ensure appropriate support for families accommodated directly into mainstream housing.

5. Communication

A detailed Engagement and Communication Strategy has been developed to support the review process and implementation of the preferred model to help ensure that these benefits are realised. It will ensure that a range of stakeholders are aware of the reasons for the review and are kept informed about its progress at key stages. The communication strategy is designed to:

- Provide regular updates to staff about progress
- Provide regular updates to elected members
- Ensure that website and other public information is updated regularly to inform a wider audience of the reasons for and benefits of the project

Stakeholders

We will communicate and engage with the following internal and/or external audiences:-

- Staff affected by review
- Wider Housing and Community Care workforce
- Wider Council workforce
- Tenants
- Third sector

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers for this report.