

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Housing & Communities Committee

29 January 2020

Home First (Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan) - Update

Report by Head of Housing (Report No. 20/34)

All Scottish Local Authorities were required to submit a Rapid Re-housing Transition Plan (RRTP) to the Scottish Government by 31 December 2018. This report provides committee with an update on feedback from the Scottish Government, funding arrangements and progress with the implementation of the RRTP.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was established by the Scottish Government in October 2017. The remit of the group was to make recommendations to Ministers on ways to end homelessness, rough sleeping and transform the use of temporary accommodation in Scotland.
- 1.2 One of the key HARSAG recommendations, accepted by the Scottish Government, was for a swift transition to a 'Rapid Rehousing' approach. This required all local authorities to develop and submit a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) by 31 December 2018.
- 1.3 The RRTP covers a five-year period from 2019/20 to 2023/24, and is a strategic document that forms part of the Local Housing Strategy. It was submitted to the Scottish Government in December 2018 and subsequently approved by the Housing and Communities Committee in January 2019 (Report No. 19/13 refers).

2. PROGRESS UPDATE

Feedback from the Scottish Government

- 2.1 The Scottish Government provided feedback to local authorities on their RRTPs using a standard approach. The feedback on Perth and Kinross Council's RRTP was received on 19 March 2019 and identified areas of good practice with some areas for further development.

- 2.2 In terms of good practice, the feedback noted that a good baseline plan had been presented, and that the outcomes of the Home First approach had been impressive to date. Specifically, the areas that were highlighted included:
- the savings achieved through the transformational approach
 - the improved outcomes for homeless people
 - the reduction in the use of temporary accommodation and
 - the operation of the Common Housing Register and Common Allocations Policy.
- 2.3 Our excellent performance and positive outcomes for homeless people has continued in 2019/20 with a year to date 18.9% reduction in homeless presentations. Perth & Kinross Council is also one of three local authorities not to have an engagement plan with the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- 2.4 The areas for further development related to the content of the RRTP, and with the way some information was presented, rather than the Home First model.
- 2.5 Based on the feedback, minor amendments were made to the content of the RRTP. Below is a summary of the feedback received:
- a further breakdown of the demographics of homeless households and the reasons for homelessness.
 - more information on prevention pathways for families and children, care experienced young people and veterans.
 - more evidence on partnership working both in the production of the RRTP and in the development of the prevention pathways.
- 2.6 A revised version was re-submitted to the Scottish Government on 29 May 2019. The revised RRTP is included as Appendix 1.

Development and Allocation of Funding

- 2.7 Funding for RRTPs was made available for development and implementation activities. Perth and Kinross Council received £46,000 development funding towards the end of 2018/19. This was a share of a total, Scotland-wide development budget of £2M, and has been used to fund:
- a Homelessness Research Project, focused on four key areas
 - links between health and homelessness in a local context
 - rough sleeping
 - youth homelessness
 - an evaluation of the Integrated Schools Programme
 - temporary higher duty arrangements to facilitate the development of the RRTP.

- 2.8 The allocation of the RRTP implementation funding for 2019/20 was announced in a letter from the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning dated 17 July 2019. Perth and Kinross Council received £203,000 from a total, Scotland-wide budget of £8M, in September 2019.
- 2.9 The allocation of the implementation funding for 2019/20 was based on homelessness assessments over a three year period. COSLA and the Scottish Government have recently agreed that this formula will continue for the distribution of funding for 2020/21. As a result, Perth & Kinross Council will receive £214,000 for Year 2 of the implementation of our RRTP.

Resource Plan Implementation

- 2.10 All of the Resource Plan elements that required funding in 2019/20 are either in place or in development (e.g. page 46 of Appendix 1). This has been achieved through the funding received and from the Council approving a number of pressures within the Council's budget in February 2019, and along with budget flexibility.
- 2.12 Progress on all of the elements within the Resource Plan are outlined within Appendix 2. Below are some of the key progress areas made to date. We have:
- recruited an additional Homeless Prevention Officer who has supported a continued focus on homelessness prevention activity reducing homeless presentations by 18.9%
 - implemented the Property Ready Fund and improved tenancy sustainment from 83% to 89%
 - appointed a Home First Officer to co-ordinate Home First activities and reduced the length of stay in temporary accommodation to under 68 days
 - rolled out intensive support to meet the needs of people with multiple and complex needs to ensure the number of people sleeping rough the night before they present for assistance is kept to a minimum
 - increased our engagement with the private sector and the number of people securing placements through the Rent Bond Guarantee Scheme, the number of empty homes brought back into use, and the number of properties we manage on behalf of private landlords

Outcomes for Homeless People

- 2.13 The RRTP contains locally agreed targets that are monitored to measure the effectiveness of our Home First approach. Further details can be found on page 27 of Appendix 1. The baseline data in the RRTP is from April to December 2017/18 and the table below has been updated to show the excellent performance in these and other key areas for 2018/19 and up to December 2019.

Area	April to Dec 2017/18	April to Dec 2018/19	April to Dec 2019	Target (2023/24)
Number of homeless presentations	677	687	557 ↓	No target
Number of families presenting as homeless	206	168	103 ↓	No target
Homeless households waiting for an offer of housing	168 households	100 households	97 households ↓	100 households
Average length of stay in temporary accommodation	84.35 days	70.33 days	69 days ↓	70 days
Average homeless case duration – decision to discharge of duty	103 days	97 days	76 days ↓	70 days

- 2.14 The overarching aim of Home First was to introduce a direct route for homeless people into settled accommodation, reducing the need for temporary accommodation. Our outcomes demonstrate our success in meeting this aim. We are continuing to minimise the duration, impact, stigma and cost of homelessness while ensuring the best outcomes for homeless households.

Next Steps – Year 2 of the Home First (Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan)

- 2.15 We will continue to build on the success of Year 1 by:
- expanding the Property Ready Fund
 - implementing some of the key recommendations of the research
 - working closely with key services and agencies to enhance our prevention and support options for young people
 - progressing the regeneration of St Catherine's Square

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Perth and Kinross Council is continuing to deliver and develop a successful, effective and nationally recognised rapid rehousing model through Home First. Through this transformational approach, we are continuing to achieve positive outcomes for homeless people across a range of indicators.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Committee:-
- i) notes the feedback from the Scottish Government and the revisions to the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (Appendix 1).
 - ii) notes progress to date and the further improvement in outcomes for homeless people (Appendix 2).
 - iii) approves that the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan will become part of the suite of strategic documents forming the Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021 and that further updates on progress will be provided to Committee as part of the wider Local Housing Strategy progress reporting arrangements.

Author

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Approved

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Barbara Renton	Executive Director (Housing and Environment)	17 January 2020

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

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

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 This report supports the following outcomes of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement in terms of the following priorities:

- (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

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 This report supports the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities:
- (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; and
 - (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 This report provides an update on progress including the allocation of development and implementation funding by the Scottish Government for 2019/20 and 2020/21. There will be a further allocation of funding for the implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan in 2021/22 but there is currently no information about the level of funding.
- 2.2 There may be financial implications for the Council if the funding allocated by the Scottish Government for future years reduces significantly compared to the 2020/21 allocation.

Workforce

- 2.3 There are no workforce implications associated with this report.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.4 There are no asset management implications associated with this report.

3. Assessments

- 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.
- 3.2 This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
- (i) An EqIA is required and has been completed.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.
- 3.4 This report has been considered under the Act and no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report.

Sustainability

- 3.5 There are no issues in the report in respect of sustainability.

Legal and Governance

- 3.6 The report contains no issues which would have a legal or governance impact on the Council.

Risk

- 3.7 There are no issues of risk arising from the recommendations of this report.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 Housing staff and colleagues within other services have been involved in the process of developing and reviewing the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan through a series of workshops and events. Regular briefings are being prepared and circulated to advise staff of progress.

External

- 4.2 Partners and stakeholders have been involved in the process of developing and reviewing the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan through a series of workshops and events. Regular briefings are being prepared and circulated to advise external partners and stakeholders of progress.
- 4.3 The Tenant Committee Report Panel were consulted on this report and they commented that “this report is very in-depth and shows that through multi-agency working you can achieve a balance between having the right support and rapid rehousing. It is good to see properties being put back into use.”

5. Communication

- 5.1 A detailed communication plan has been developed to raise awareness of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and to advise on progress.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2.1 No background papers were relied upon during the preparation of this report.

3. APPENDICES

- 3.1 Appendix 1 – Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
- 3.2 Appendix 2 – Home First (Rapid Rehousing Transitional Plan) Resource Plan
Progress Overview