

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Housing & Communities Committee

3 February 2021

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Update

Report by Depute Director (Communities) (Report No. 21/16)

All Scottish Local Authorities were required to submit Rapid Re-housing Transition Plans (RRTP) to the Scottish Government by 31 December 2018. This report provides an update on progress with the implementation of the RRTP and the further development of Home First in tackling homelessness here in Perth and Kinross.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) was submitted to the Scottish Government in December 2018 and subsequently approved by the Housing & Communities Committee on 23 January 2019 (Report 19/13 refers). A copy of the RRTP is included as Appendix 2.
- 1.2 A further report providing an update on progress and details of the feedback received from the Scottish Government was approved by Housing & Communities Committee on 29 January 2020 (Report 20/34 refers).
- 1.3 Local authorities were required to submit a 'Spend and Activity Template' to the Scottish Government in June 2020. The purpose of this submission was to provide an update on progress with the implementation of the resource plan detailing how year 1 funding had been used and proposals on how Year 2 funding would be spent. A copy of this submission is included as Appendix 2.
- 1.4 Local authorities are also expected to submit a revised RRTP or an update progress report to the Scottish Government. There is no specific deadline for this submission as the Scottish Government recognises the need for flexibility, particularly around the need for Committee approval and the associated timescales.
- 1.5 A progress report on the RRTP has been prepared (Appendix 1). This provides an update on performance across a broad range of indicators for 2019/20, comparison of current performance against the RRTP baseline data from 2017/18 and benchmarking against national data published by the Scottish Government.
- 1.6 The progress report also provides details of progress against meeting the 'key challenges', assesses the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and identifies new 'key challenges' and associated improvement actions.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Responding to homelessness and the provision of suitable housing fulfils a basic need essential to meet wider life outcomes. A home, its location and its immediate environment can have a major impact on a person's health and wellbeing. We recognise that good quality housing of the right size and close to family and social networks can have a positive impact on children's development and educational outcomes. Providing suitable housing quickly minimises the duration and stigma of homelessness.
- 2.2 Perth and Kinross Council's Home First approach is a rapid rehousing system which pre-dates the requirement for local authorities to produce a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. The Home First approach was implemented in April 2017 and is now fully embedded.
- 2.3 Home First is a more comprehensive approach than rapid rehousing and seeks to achieve a balance between homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing and tenancy sustainment. Effective homelessness prevention and the sustainment of tenancies created through rapid rehousing are vital activities that effectively divert people from the homelessness system or prevent them coming back into the system if their tenancy fails. These approaches support effective rapid rehousing.
- 2.4 Home First also aims to minimise the requirement for temporary accommodation by enabling people who become homeless to move directly to settled and secure accommodation. For people who do require temporary housing, the accommodation provided is of a high standard, short-term and meets a household's needs in full.

Homelessness Prevention

- 2.5 During 2019/20 we have:
- achieved a 24% reduction in homeless presentations compared to the RRTP baseline data (2017/18) and a reduction of 19% compared to 2018/19. This is within the national context of a 4% increase in households assessed as homeless
 - reduced homeless presentations from households with children by 38% compared to the RRTP baseline
 - reduced presentations from young people aged 16-25 by 31% compared to the RRTP baseline
 - introduced a revised Common Allocations Policy which gives additional priority to people in insecure housing situations avoiding the need for them to present as homeless to get sufficient priority for rehousing
 - commissioned and implemented a bespoke homelessness support service for young people from the Rock Trust.

- 2.6 The impact of these initiatives has been to reduce the number of people entering the homelessness system which reduces the stigma and experience of homelessness for individuals and families. It also enables rapid rehousing to operate effectively for people for whom homelessness cannot be prevented, minimising the duration and experience of homelessness.

Rapid Rehousing

- 2.7 During 2019/20 we have:

- continued to operate an effective Common Housing Register (CHR) and have expanded the membership with Fairfield and Kingdom Housing Association joining the CHR in 2019
- further reduced the average homeless case duration to 89 days, a reduction of 33% compared to the baseline. Perth and Kinross Council had the shortest homeless case duration in Scotland in 2019/20 (national average was 224 days)
- significantly reduced the number of homeless households waiting for an offer of housing to around 70. This has improved year on year from a position of more than 500 homeless applicants waiting for an offer of housing in 2015/16 when we started to develop Home First.
- assisted a further 160 households to access good quality, affordable housing in the private-rented sector through the Rent Bond Guarantee Scheme and PKC Lets
- minimised the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic by maintaining a continuous throughput into secure tenancies.

- 2.8 The Home First approach significantly reduces the requirement for temporary accommodation by enabling homeless people to move directly into settled, secure accommodation. As a result of long-term investment and innovation in homelessness services, Perth and Kinross Council is the only local authority in Scotland to have a fully operating rapid rehousing system.

Tenancy Sustainment

- 2.9 During 2019/20 we have:

- maintained a tenancy sustainment rate of around 83% for previously homeless tenants (Scottish Housing Regulator definition – see page 29 of Appendix 1 for full details)
- recommissioned the Floating Housing Support service which now provides 1,020 hours of support per week with the option of intensive, wraparound support where required
- continued to support Housing Association partners through the secondment of a Support Officer to support tenants at risk of tenancy failure
- developed a range of new initiatives to support tenancy sustainment that will be fully rolled-out in early 2021 (see pages 26-30 of Appendix 1 for full details).

Temporary Accommodation

- 2.10 As well as developing and implementing a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, the national Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) which was convened by the Scottish Government in September 2017 made several recommendations about the need to transform and reduce the reliance on temporary accommodation.
- 2.11 Perth and Kinross Council's temporary accommodation transformation pre-dates the HARSAG recommendations. We had already significantly reduced our portfolio of temporary units, improved the standard of accommodation and removed the substantial service charges.
- 2.12 Our long-term programme of transformational change and redesign of homelessness services including temporary accommodation provision has resulted in an 85% reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation compared with 2010/11.
- 2.13 During 2019/20 we have:
- had the lowest prevalence of households in temporary accommodation in Scotland (0.5 households per 1,000 population)
 - achieved the lowest average length of stay in temporary accommodation in Scotland at 71 days compared to a national average of 184 days
 - avoided the need to increase our stock of temporary accommodation in response to the Coronavirus pandemic
 - seen satisfaction levels from people that have been in temporary accommodation increase from 92.5% to 100%
 - made an offer of temporary accommodation to 100% of the people who were eligible for such an offer
 - had no breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order
 - minimised bed and breakfast placements
 - reconfigured our hostel accommodation as 'supported accommodation' ensuring that it complies with the exemption category for supported accommodation in the extended Unsuitable Accommodation Order.
- 2.14 Even with a fully mature and effective rapid rehousing model, it is not possible to completely eradicate the requirement for temporary accommodation. We have however reduced the requirement for temporary accommodation by 85% and have sustained this position over the last 2-3 years, a period when many other local authorities have increased their supply.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Perth and Kinross Council's Home First approach to homelessness has transformed the homelessness system locally evidencing delivery of the HARSAG recommendations and the full implementation of a rapid rehousing system. The approach here in Perth and Kinross is achieving many 'best in Scotland' outcomes for homeless households in Perth and Kinross. The overall impact is to minimise the duration, experience and stigma of homelessness for many households.
- 3.2 It is recommended that Committee:-
- (i) notes the significant progress that has been made to further enhance Home First and deliver a sector-leading service to people experiencing homelessness in Perth and Kinross.
 - (ii) approves the updated RRTP and its submission to the Scottish Government.

Authors

Name	Designation	Contact Details
Clare Mailer Elaine Ritchie	Depute Director (Communities) Service Manager	Tel. 01738 475000 HECommitteeReports@pkc.gov.uk

Approved

Name	Designation	Date
Clare Mailer	Depute Director (Communities)	21 January 2021

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

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 There are likely to be financial implications associated with this report but there is going to be some funding available from the Scottish Government for the development and implementation of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans so the extent of any financial implications for existing Council budgets is not clear at this stage.

Workforce

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

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 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. This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

- (i) An EqIA has been completed

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. 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

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

Legal and Governance

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

Risk

- 3.5 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 implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan through a series of workshops, meetings and small working groups. Regular briefings are also prepared and circulated to advise staff of progress.

External

- 4.2 Partners and stakeholders have been involved in the implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan through a series of workshops and meetings. Regular briefings are also circulated to advise external partners and stakeholders of progress.

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 - Progress Report.
- 3.2 Appendix 2 – Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-2024.
- 3.3 Appendix 3 – RRTP Spend and Activity Template – June 2020.