

Report

Report to:	Housing and Technical Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	16 September 2020
Report by:	Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

Subject:	Annual Review of the South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019/2020
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ Update the Committee on the completion of the first annual review of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) 2019 to 2024.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the progress made in delivering the RRTP objectives, as set out in the RRTP Annual Review 2019/2020, attached as Appendix 1, be noted;
- (2) that the revisions to the RRTP, detailed in section 5, be approved; and
- (3) that the key priorities to be progressed in 2020/2021, detailed in section 6, be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. In October 2017, the Scottish Government established the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) to develop short-term and long-term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping across Scotland.
- 3.2. In June 2018, HARSAG produced a final report with recommendations that included a requirement for local authorities to each develop a five year RRTP. 'Rapid rehousing' is defined as a housing-led approach for people that experience homelessness with a focus on ensuring they reach a settled home as quickly as possible, whilst limiting the amount of time spent in temporary accommodation.
- 3.3. In June 2018, the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning wrote to all Scottish local authorities advising of the requirement to prepare a RRTP and submit it to the Scottish Government by 31 December 2018.
- 3.4. South Lanarkshire's RRTP 2019-2024 was developed in collaboration with a wide range of partners and stakeholders and was submitted to the Scottish Government by the required timescale. The final plan was approved by Housing and Technical Resources Committee on 23 January 2019 and reported to the Community Planning Partnership Board on 19 June 2019.
- 3.5. In May 2019, the Scottish Government provided positive feedback on the plan, highlighting the strength of the partnership approach which is in place locally.

- 3.6. Initial analysis carried out to inform the financial requirement to significantly reduce homelessness and achieve rapid rehousing in South Lanarkshire resulted in a bid being submitted to the Scottish Government for £7.18 million.
- 3.7. To support the initial development and implementation of the RRTP, the Scottish Government provided funding of £105,000 to the Council. This was primarily used to fund the appointment of an Officer, for a fixed period of 18 months, with responsibility for working with partners to co-ordinate the implementation of the plan. In July 2019, a further award of £461,000 was received from the Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Fund, to support the implementation of actions during the first year of the RRTP.
- 3.8. Following confirmation that the actual level of funding to be provided would be significantly below that detailed in the RRTP proposals, a number of key strategic areas were revised to focus on key priorities, with other actions set aside for future consideration.
- 3.9. The co-ordination and implementation of the RRTP is directed and monitored by the Homelessness Strategy Group, a sub group of the Local Housing Strategy Steering Group, and has representation from key partners including; Health and Social Care, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Third Sector organisations.

The Homelessness Strategy Group was responsible for overseeing the annual review, including evaluating progress against actions and measures, considering the appropriateness of the actions, and identifying priorities to be progressed during 2020/2021.

- 3.10. The review of the RRTP was carried out in advance of the on-set of COVID-19. Following conclusion of the review, further consideration has been given to the impact of the pandemic on the objectives and actions to be pursued during 2020/2021 and this has been reflected within the review document. The review document also notes that it will be necessary to closely monitor progress and further revise the strategic priorities and actions during the year as a fuller understanding of the impact of the pandemic on homelessness and service requirements becomes known.

4. Annual Review 2019/2020

- 4.1. The RRTP is structured around five high level priority objectives. There are 52 indicators against which the Council and its partners monitor progress, comprising 32 actions and 20 measures. In accordance with wider reporting arrangements across the Council, these indicators are categorised into 'green', 'amber', and 'red' depending on the progress made against them.
- 4.2. During 2019/2020, positive progress was made, with 83% of the 52 indicators on, or slightly behind target, to achieve the projected outcomes within the identified timescales. Table 1 below, details the categorisation of the 52 indicators.

Year	Green	Amber	Red	To be reported later	Total
2019/20	37	6	0	9	52

Table 1: Categorisation of RRTP indicators 2019/20

- 4.3. No indicators were categorised as red with 9 indicators to be reported later. In general, these indicators relate to actions that were intended to be progressed during future years of the plan, or measures where the data is not yet available.
- 4.4. Six indicators, comprising four measures and two actions, have been categorised as amber, representing minor slippage against the target within Year 1:-
- ◆ M1.1 Number of homelessness presentations
 - ◆ M1.2 Number of homeless households
 - ◆ M2.7 Percentage of all homeless presentations which are repeated (within 12 months)
 - ◆ M3.2 Percentage of homeless households provided with Housing Support Officer assistance

During Year 2, partners will continue to work together to make progress and positively impact on the achievement of the targets. It will, however, be necessary to monitor the impact of COVID-19 in respect of these measures.

- ◆ A3.8 Complete a Wellbeing Assessment for all children and young people who are homeless
- ◆ A5.1 Work with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to further develop use of discretionary support funding for homeless households to undertake appropriate training to develop skills and resilience to improve access to employment.

In relation to action A3.8, during Year 1 of the RRTP, Shelter Scotland's South Lanarkshire Families Project were unable to commit resources to facilitate the completion of wellbeing assessments for children and young people affected by homelessness. This action has been carried forward for consideration in 2020/2021, however due to the impact of COVID-19, all funding not already committed will be subject to review to align with revised priorities.

While further development of partnership working in relation to A5.1 will be a priority focus in Year 2 of the plan, this will be progressed taking account of the focus which the DWP has had to place on providing income to vulnerable customers during the pandemic.

- 4.5. The annual review has confirmed that the Council and its' partners have made good progress towards delivering on the agreed RRTP year one priorities. A summary of key highlights and achievements in relation to each of the five priority objectives for 2019/2020 (Year 1) is provided below:-

RRTP Priority Objective	Achievement
Prevent homelessness occurring and significantly reduce homelessness	284 additional homes for social rent were delivered across South Lanarkshire. This included 60 homes secured through the Council's framework for Open Market Purchase.
	An increase in the number of homeless households whose housing needs were met in the private rented sector, through the expansion of the South Lanarkshire Rent Deposit Scheme.

	New approaches were established to assist in homelessness prevention by providing financial assistance and support to council tenants and tenants in the private rented sector experiencing hardship.
Significantly reduce time spent by households in temporary accommodation and minimise moves before moving to a settled home	A 6% reduction was achieved in the number of families with children in temporary accommodation from 252 in 2019 to 238 in 2020.
	A 7% reduction was achieved in the average time households spent in temporary accommodation from 200 days in 2018/19 to 186 days in 2019/20.
	A 34% reduction in long term homelessness from the baseline position of 145 households waiting more than 1 year to be housed to 95 households in 2019/20.
	26 homeless households had their temporary tenancies converted (or flipped) to a Scottish Secure Tenancy, providing the household with a permanent home and avoiding the need for further moves. This exceeded the target of 20 per year.
	Permanent lets to homeless households increased across social housing in South Lanarkshire to 51.4% of Council and 36.9% of RSL lets during 2019/20 compared to 49.2% of Council and 29.4% of RSL lets in 2018/19.

RRTP Objective	Achievement
	Engagement took place with individuals and service user groups to develop a better understanding of rough sleeping in South Lanarkshire. This work resulted in the development of a dedicated Ending Rough Sleeping Action Plan. The plan, which was co-produced with service user groups, will be fully implemented in 2020/21.
Improve and increase the provision of housing support for households to live independently within communities	The HomeStart team was established to provide support and assistance to all new tenants, including those who may be at most risk of homelessness. Since full roll out in September 2019, the HomeStart team have assisted 649 new tenants and provided 247 starter packs.
	In January 2019, specialist support provision, led by Blue Triangle, was introduced to improve access to health and social care services. This intensive support service has already achieved positive outcomes for households facing extremely complex challenges.
	An improved partnership working approach to supporting households with complex needs was established.

	A complex case panel was introduced in April 2019, to review the most complex needs in homelessness cases. The panel involves a range of partners and ensures a multi-agency approach to identifying appropriate options and pathways and works towards positive outcomes for those involved.
Expand the scope of Housing First and capacity of our Housing First approach to be the first response for households with multiple complex needs	A further 10 homeless households moved into settled accommodation through a Housing First approach involving wrap around support, from a combination of services. The sustainment rate for the Housing First cases has been 100%
	Improved joint working to prevent homelessness for people leaving prison. Working with the Scottish Prison Service and HMP Barlinnie, a pilot took place to implement Sustainable Housing On Release For Everyone (SHORE) standards for people entering and exiting prison, with a priority focus on short-sentence prisoners on remand. The pilot evaluated well, and a specialist Housing Officer has now been appointed to further develop partnership working in this area.

RRTP Objective	Achievement
Enhance integration of partnership working to embed RRTP through a whole systems approach	The Homelessness Strategy Group has collective responsibility for developing and delivering RRTP outcomes, taking account of the voice of lived experience. The group meet quarterly to ensure the actions identified within the RRTP are being progressed in partnership.
	Partner Contribution Statements (PCS) are a key feature of the RRTP and are prepared by each partner to support the RRTP by setting out the specific contributions they intend to make towards delivering the five priority objectives. PCS's are 'live' documents and as such are subject to continuous monitoring and review, to ensure that the work being undertaken is appropriate and continues to contribute towards the delivery of shared priorities.

5. Proposed Revisions to the RRTP

- 5.1. In addition to reviewing the progress made against the actions and measures set out within the RRTP action plan, the annual review also provided the opportunity to re-examine the RRTP in general to ensure that priority objectives, actions and measures remain appropriate, relevant and measurable. As part of this process a small number of amendments to the RRTP have been made.

5.2. It is proposed that the following minor revisions be made to the RRTP.

RRTP Reference	Summary of revision	Context
Priority Objective 1	Amend the description of the priority objective to include prevention of homeless, as follows: “Prevent homelessness occurring and significantly reduce homelessness”	Feedback from the Scottish Government on the RRTP highlighted that there was a need to draw out more clearly the emphasis placed on prevention of homelessness within the plan. The amendment to the description of priority objective 1 clarifies that prevention is a focus of the RRTP.
Measure 2.7	Remove measure under Priority Objective 2 of the action plan.	It has been identified that this is a duplicate of measure 2.4 and consequently there is no need to report on both.
Action 1.7	Add new action to develop Housing Options Framework for young people	Building upon development of housing pathway plan for care experienced young people and taking account of broader youth homelessness and most prominent reason for homelessness (parents/relatives can no longer accommodate) with a view to increasing homeless prevention opportunities for young people.

6. COVID-19 and homelessness

- 6.1. During the initial months of the pandemic, the Council and its’ partners focused resources on providing an emergency response and ensuring the delivery of critical services to vulnerable customers.
- 6.2. While the review of the RRTP was carried out prior to the on-set of COVID-19, discussions have continued with partners to consider the impact of the pandemic on homelessness services and on the delivery of the RRTP.
- 6.3. To date, COVID-19 has had little impact on the level of homeless presentations, 656 as at 24 July 2020 compared to 652 in the same period in 2019/20. The most common reason for homelessness remains that parents/friends can no longer accommodate at 24%, and the most common household type remains single male between 25 to 59 years of age at 37%. This compares to 20% and 33% respectively in 2019/20.
- 6.4. While the letting of suitable accommodation to homeless households has continued to be prioritised by the Council during lockdown, the restrictions have significantly limited the availability of both permanent and temporary accommodation, and resulted in the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation, particularly during the early stages of lockdown.

- 6.5 To date, the most significant impact of the pandemic on homelessness services has been the pressure on temporary accommodation with restricted movement from temporary onto settled accommodation. There were 241 placements into temporary accommodation during the four week period commencing 1 May 2020, this represented an increase of 61% from the same period in 2019/20.
- 6.6. Subsequently, since the commencement of the COVID-19 restrictions, South Lanarkshire has significantly increased the supply of temporary accommodation with an additional 83 temporary furnished properties delivered by the Council, RSL partners and private sector landlords. This is an increase of 11.3% in the total number of units available for households in crisis.
- An additional 54 1st Stop accommodation places have also been secured through a lease agreement with the University of West of Scotland to use vacant student accommodation in Hamilton which has allowed emergency placements in response to the pandemic.
- 6.7. It is anticipated that throughput from temporary to permanent accommodation will continue to be constrained during 2020/21 and optimising the supply of temporary accommodation will be a particular priority during the year.
- 6.8. Partners recognise that during the year ahead, the plan will require to be sufficiently flexible to ensure resilience against the uncertainty presented by the pandemic. To date, this has been most clearly demonstrated by the requirement to increase the supply of suitable temporary and emergency accommodation to meet the increased demand from homeless households. While this is contrary to the long term objective of the RRTP to move away from significant use of temporary accommodation, the provision continues to be essential to meet the specific needs arising from pandemic, and the Council's statutory obligations. The need to ensure the optimum supply of suitable temporary accommodation due to the pandemic has been highlighted in the annual review document.
- 6.9. The annual review document incorporates within it a section which highlights the impact of COVID-19 on homelessness and homelessness services, and also considers recent changes in the national homelessness policy agenda arising from Covid-19, specifically the recent recommendations of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) and the amendment to the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG)

- 6.10. HARSAG was reconvened in June 2020 to make recommendations to Scottish Ministers on actions required to end homelessness during the pandemic and beyond. The recommendations from HARSAG, published on 14 July 2020, have been accepted in principle by the Scottish Government.
- 6.11. In continuing to progress actions set out in the national Ending Homelessness Together action plan, it has been important to consider the HARSAG recommendations within the annual review document. With increased demand on homelessness services, maintaining focus on prevention of homelessness as far as possible, provision of good quality temporary accommodation when required, and minimising timescales involved in homelessness, is key.
- 6.12. Work will continue to end the low level of rough sleeping reported annually in South Lanarkshire through implementation of the Ending Rough Sleeping Action Plan, co-produced by those with lived experience.

Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order Amendment 2020

6.13. A report to Housing and Technical Resources Committee on 17 June 2020 confirmed that on 5 May 2020 the Scottish Government extended the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014 to cover all households. Previously the order required that families with children and pregnant women were not placed in unsuitable accommodation such as Bed and Breakfast for more than seven days. The Order, with some exemptions, is expected to commence from October 2020.

6.14. To ensure the Council remains well placed to meet demand during this uncertain time, the review document also considers the expansion of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and the impact this may have on the provision of temporary accommodation.

Exemption from the Order now includes the use of Rapid Access cluster accommodation models, Community Hosting, and Shared Tenancies, which may over time maximise the options for suitable temporary accommodation for particular groups.

6.15. In planning to meet the range of accommodation and support needs, in particular for young people, young care experienced, and those fleeing domestic abuse, the Council will continue to work with key partners including Health and Social Care and Women's Aid South Lanarkshire and East Renfrewshire. This will ensure appropriate provision of suitable accommodation and support to meet needs and respond to any increase in demand.

7. RRTP Priorities for 2020/2021

7.1. A key aspect of the annual review was to consider the appropriateness of the actions identified in the RRTP, with a particular focus on those to be progressed during the future years of the plan.

7.2. The Homelessness Strategy Group co-ordinated the review of progress in year one of the RRTP and noted significant positive indicators of success, and confirmed that no significant changes were required to the plan for year two. The group expressed support for year two focus to broadly mirror year one, to allow actions which had commenced to embed and be further developed, monitored and reviewed.

7.3. As a result of COVID-19, the current focus is on delivering critical and essential services and meeting need. There remains, however, a commitment to delivering RRTP priorities both in the short term, in response to the impact of the pandemic, and to ensure the longer term objectives of the plan.

7.4. Detailed below is a summary of the key priorities to be progressed during Year 2 of the plan (2020/21):-

- ◆ Ensure the supply of temporary accommodation is optimised to meet need & statutory responsibilities and continue the Council's long standing compliance with the extended Unsuitable Accommodation Order (see section 6)
- ◆ Continue to deliver affordable homes for social rent in South Lanarkshire.
- ◆ Continue to reduce the number of children affected by homelessness and minimise the impact for those affected.
- ◆ Ensure links between the RRTP and Local Child Poverty Action Report 2020 are in place to support and improve outcomes for homeless households with children
- ◆ Continue to reduce long-term homelessness.
- ◆ Prioritise the reduction in the use of Bed and Breakfast as emergency accommodation.

- ◆ Continue to update and enhance Partner Contribution Statements and work closely with RSL partners to ensure priorities are delivered.
- ◆ Ensure 'Directions' relating to homelessness are incorporated into the Strategic Commissioning Plan 2019-22 and implemented.
- ◆ Continue to support victims of domestic abuse and provide refuge through dedicated services provided by Women's Aid and other partners.
- ◆ Develop housing options approach for young people.
- ◆ Progress actions within the Ending Rough Sleeping Action Plan.
- ◆ Continue to implement approaches to assist homelessness prevention by providing financial assistance and support to council tenants and tenants in the private rented sector experiencing hardship.
- ◆ Continue to expand the Council's HomeStart service, with additional resources provided to increase support and assistance to new tenants.
- ◆ Continue to develop the Council's Housing First approach.
- ◆ Progress plans to convert temporary units to permanent accommodation. While the original target was 20 units per year over the five years of the RRTP, it is expected that this number will increase in 2020/21, in light of the increase in the provision of temporary accommodation.

8. Next Steps

- 8.1. The RRTP Annual Review 2019/20, attached as Appendix 1, was submitted to the Scottish Government by the required timescale of 31 August 2020 and will be published on the Council's website.
- 8.2. The outcomes from the RRTP Annual Review 2019/20 will be presented to the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership Board on 21 October 2020.
- 8.3. The Homelessness Strategy Group will continue to meet regularly throughout the year to ensure that the RRTP priority actions are being delivered and to monitor and report on progress made. The group will also coordinate the Partnership's response to the new recommendations from HARSAG, as they are more fully developed.
- 8.4. The impact of COVID-19 will be closely monitored, and strategic approaches and priorities will be adjusted to reflect emerging issues and requirements. This will be reported as part of the next annual review process.

9. Employee Implications

- 9.1. There are no employee implications as a result of this report.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1. The RRTP confirmed the significant level of resources required to be directed towards the prevention and alleviation of homelessness. To date, the Scottish Government has provided £1,019,077 in funding to assist in the development and implementation of the RRTP, this includes £453,000 to support implementation of the RRTP in 2020/21.
- 10.2. It is recognised that additional funding will be required in order to deliver the strategic objectives of the RRTP. Consideration will also be required in relation to how mainstream services and budgets can contribute towards helping to deliver RRTP priorities.

11. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 11.1. There are no climate change, sustainability or environmental implications as a result of this report

12. Other Implications

12.1. The content of this report will contribute to the evidence to support the requirements of the Annual Assurance Statement.

12.2. There are no additional risks associated with this report.

13. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

13.1. An equality impact assessment was carried out on the RRTP. The assessment confirmed that the plan will make a positive contribution to the promotion of equalities.

13.2. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) pre-screening determination was completed as part of the development of the RRTP 2019-24. This confirmed there is no requirement for a separate SEA to be carried out for the RRTP.

13.3. The RRTP was developed and co-produced with a range of key partners and stakeholder groups. These groups have confirmed their commitment to work together to ensure the delivery of the priority outcomes. Through the Homelessness Strategy Group, these partners have been involved in monitoring and reviewing the plan.

Daniel Lowe

Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

27 August 2020

Link(s) to Council Values/Objectives

Focused on people and their needs

Protect vulnerable children, young people and adults

Deliver better health and social care outcomes for all

Improve the quality, access and availability of housing

Work with communities and partners to promote high quality thriving and sustainable communities

Support our communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation and supporting aspiration

List of Background Papers

South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-24, Housing and Technical Resources Committee Report, 23 January 2019.

Contact for Further Information

If you would like further information, please contact:-

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