

Report

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| Report to: | Housing and Technical Resources Committee |
| Date of Meeting: | 30 June 2021 |
| Report by: | Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) |

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| Subject: | Annual Review of the South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2020/21 |
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ update Committee on the completion of the second annual review of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) 2019-2024.

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 2020/21, attached as Appendix 1, be noted;
- (2) that the proposed revisions to the RRTP, detailed in section 5, be approved; and
- (3) that the key priorities to be progressed in 2021/22, detailed in section 7, be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. In October 2017, the Scottish Government established the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) to develop solutions to ending homelessness and rough sleeping across Scotland. Included in their recommendations was the requirement for local authorities to each develop a five-year RRTP.
- 3.2. HARSAG was reconvened in June 2020 to make further recommendations on actions required to end homelessness during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond, recognising the increased demand on homelessness services and maintaining a focus on the prevention of homelessness.
- 3.3. South Lanarkshire's RRTP was developed in collaboration with a wide range of partners and stakeholders. The first annual review, covering the period 2019/20, was submitted to the Scottish Government on 31 August 2020. The review was approved by the Housing and Technical Resources Committee on 16 September 2020 and reported to the Community Planning Partnership Board on 21 October 2020.
- 3.4. Initial analysis, carried out in 2019, to inform the financial requirements to significantly reduce homelessness and achieve rapid rehousing in South Lanarkshire, resulted in a bid being submitted to the Scottish Government. Since 2019, the total sum awarded from the Ending Homelessness Together Fund has been £1,741,000.
- 3.5. Given the level of funding provided, a number of strategic areas were revised to focus on key priorities, with other actions set aside for future consideration.

- 3.6. The co-ordination and implementation of the RRTP is directed and monitored by the Homelessness Strategy Group, a subgroup 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.
- 3.7. The first annual review of the RRTP was carried out in advance of the full onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Following conclusion of the review, further consideration was given to the impact of the pandemic on the objectives and actions to be pursued during 2020/21 and this was reflected within the Annual Review report. The second Annual Review report also notes that it will be necessary to closely monitor progress and further revise the strategic priorities and actions during 2021/22, in response to the impact of the pandemic on homelessness and service requirements. This includes monitoring any adverse impact on demand for homelessness services as government supports in relation to Covid-19 come to an end, such as the furlough scheme and the moratorium on repossession action.

4. Annual Review 2020/21

- 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 'blue', 'green', 'amber', and 'red' depending on the progress made against them.
- 4.2. During 2020/21, positive progress was made, with over 96% of the indicators on or only slightly behind target to achieve the projected outcomes within the identified timescales. Table 1 below, details the categorisation of the 52 indicators.

Table 1: Categorisation of RRTP indicators 2020/21

| Status | Measures | Actions | Total | % |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Blue | 0 | 4 | 4 | 8% |
| Green | 7 | 24 | 31 | 58% |
| Amber | 12 | 3 | 15 | 30% |
| Red | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2% |
| Report later/Contextual | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2% |
| Totals | 20 | 32 | 52 | 100% |

- 4.3. Table 1 shows that, in terms of Year 2, four indicators are complete, 31 are progressing well and on target, 15 show minor slippage and one indicator has been categorised as off target. The red indicator relates to a measure that is no longer appropriate and which is proposed to be removed from the action plan (see section five).
- 4.4. The Covid-19 pandemic significantly impacted on the way in which homelessness services and supports have been delivered over the last year and partners have had to adapt and transform services in order to respond to the pandemic.
- 4.5. During Year 3, partners will continue to work together to make positive progress in relation to the achievement of the RRTP targets. It will, however, be necessary to continue to monitor the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on all indicators.
- 4.6. The second annual review has, however, confirmed that the Council and its' partners have made good progress towards delivering on the agreed RRTP Year 2 priorities. A summary of key highlights and achievements in relation to each of the five priority objectives for 2020/21 (Year 2) is provided in the Table 2 below.

Table 2: Summary of RRTP Year 2 Achievements

| RRTP Priority Objective | | Achievement |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. | Prevent homelessness occurring and significantly reduce homelessness | 339 additional homes for social rent were delivered across South Lanarkshire. This included 286 new build properties and an additional 53 homes secured through the Council's Open Market Purchase Scheme. |
| | | 80% of Housing Options cases were closed with support being provided by the Integrated Housing Options Team to prevent homelessness from occurring. This represents an increase of 17% on the previous year. |
| | | New approaches were established to assist in homelessness prevention and tenancy sustainment by providing financial assistance and support to Council tenants and tenants in the private rented sector experiencing hardship. |
| | | 41% reduction in long term homelessness from 95 households living in temporary accommodation for more than 1 year in 2019/20 to 56 in 2020/21. |
| 2. | Significantly reduce time spent by households in temporary accommodation and minimise moves before moving to a settled home | 27 homeless households had their temporary tenancies converted (or flipped) to a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST), providing the household with a permanent home and avoiding the need for further moves. This exceeded the target of 20 per year. Since the introduction of the RRTP a total of 53 properties have been "flipped" to SSTs |
| | | Permanent lets to homeless households increased across social housing in South Lanarkshire to 61% of Council and 41.6% of RSL lets during 2020/21, compared to 51.4% and 36.9% respectively in 2019/20. |
| 3. | Improve and increase the provision of housing support for households to live independently within communities | The HomeStart team continued to provide support and assistance to all new tenants, including those who may be at most risk of homelessness. In 2020/21, 217 starter packs were provided to new tenants. Since full rollout of the service in 2019, a total of 464 starter packs have been provided to new tenants to help with sustainment and prevent repeat homelessness. |
| | | Commissioned services with The Salvation Army, Blue Triangle Housing Association and YPeople continue to deliver tailored packages of intensive support to service users with multiple and complex needs. |
| 4. | Expand the scope of Housing First and capacity of our | 11 additional individuals engaged in the Housing First programme which offers intensive support and aids access to settled housing as a foundation to build upon |

| RRTP Priority Objective | | Achievement |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| | Housing First approach to be the first response for households with multiple complex needs | <p>addressing support needs. Since 2019, 24 individuals have engaged in the Housing First Programme.</p> <p>The sustainment rate for the Housing First cases housed during the year is 100%.</p> |
| 5. | Enhance integration of partnership working to embed RRTP through a whole systems approach | <p>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.</p> <p>Two Directions relating to health and homelessness included within the Health and Social Care Partnership's Strategic Commissioning Plan continue to be progressed in partnership with Housing and Technical Resources.</p> |

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.
- 5.2. It is proposed that eight amendments are made to the RRTP action plan. These amendments relate to one new proposed action, four actions which completed in 2020/21 and three actions/measures that have been revised.
- 5.3. Table 3 below details a proposed new action to be added to the RRTP action plan. Table 4 details the proposed revisions to the RRTP and sets out the existing actions/measures to be removed and the proposed corresponding replacement actions/measures, where appropriate. Subject to approval, all revisions will be incorporated into the RRTP action plan for 2021/22.

Table 3: Proposed new action for inclusion in RRTP action plan

| RRTP Reference | Proposed new action | Context |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| A1.8 | Continue to develop and implement approaches to support victims of domestic abuse and prevent homelessness | New action building upon the development of the housing pathway for victims of domestic abuse and taking into account legislative changes and good practice |

Table 4: Proposed revisions to RRTP action plan

| RRTP Ref. | Current action/measure | Status | RRTP Ref. | Proposed replacement action/measure (where appropriate) |
|------------------|---|---------------|------------------|---|
| A1.5 | Re-commission and expand Rent Deposit Scheme to support implementation of RRTP | Complete | A1.5A | Monitor progress of the expansion of the Private Sector Access and Sustainment Service administered by YPeople |
| A1.6 | Explore option to provide financial support to private rented tenants to achieve affordability and prevent homelessness | Complete | A1.6A | Monitor the effectiveness of the Private Sector Innovation Fund administered by YPeople for providing financial support to private rented tenants to prevent homelessness |
| A1.7 | Develop Housing Options Framework for young people | Revised | A.1.7A | Continue to develop and implement approaches to prevent youth homelessness, with a particular focus on pathway approach to meeting the needs of care experienced young people |

| RRTP Ref. | Current action/measure | Status | RRTP Ref. | Proposed replacement action/measure (where appropriate) |
|-----------|---|----------|-----------|--|
| A2.1 | Develop procedure for converting temporary accommodation units to SST | Complete | A2.1A | Maximise the potential for converting temporary accommodation to a Scottish Secure Tenancy where the property meets the needs of the household |
| M3.2 | Percentage of homeless households provided with Housing Support Officer assistance | Revised | M3.2A | Percentage of homeless households who require support, provided with Housing Support Officer assistance |
| M4.2 | Number of discharge planning cases handled through multi-professional joint working arrangements in hospitals/prisons and the community | Revised | M4.2A | Number of Housing First planning cases handled by health professional led multi-agency care management approach |
| A4.3 | Review provision of refuge accommodation for female victims of domestic abuse to ensure it is adequate across all divisions | Complete | A4.3A | Complete development of the Temporary Accommodation Strategic Plan and progress implementation |

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, ensuring the delivery of critical services to vulnerable customers. The impact of Covid-19 has been closely monitored throughout 2020/21, with local authorities and partners working together to share their experiences and understanding of the impact of the pandemic on homelessness services and the delivery of the RRTP.

6.2. Covid-19 resulted in an increase in the level of homelessness presentations received by the Council, from 2,090 in 2019/20 to 2,225 in 2020/21. The most common reasons for homelessness were:-

- Parents/friends can no longer accommodate (27%)
- Relationship breakdown (non-violent) (21%)
- Fleeing non-domestic violence (4%)
- Relationship breakdown (violent) (15%)

6.3. Across Scotland, the pandemic significantly increased the demand for temporary accommodation from homeless households and limited throughput to settled accommodation. Between September 2019 and September 2020, across Scotland there was a 24% increase in demand for temporary accommodation. The national

position was broadly reflected in South Lanarkshire, where a 28% increase in demand was experienced during 2020/21.

- 6.4. The letting of suitable accommodation to homeless households continued to be prioritised by the Council and its RSL partners, however, the restrictions arising from Covid-19 significantly limited the availability of both permanent and temporary accommodation. This resulted in some use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation for very limited periods of time and in out of area placements, particularly during the early stages of the first lockdown.
- 6.5. In response, there has been a significant increase in the supply of temporary accommodation in South Lanarkshire, with an additional 105 temporary furnished properties delivered by the Council, RSL partners and private sector landlords in 2020/21.

In addition, 54 First-Stop/ Rapid Access accommodation places were secured as an interim response to the pandemic through innovative partnership working between the Council and the University of West of Scotland, where vacant student accommodation in Hamilton was used to enable increased emergency placements. It is expected that this accommodation will continue to be utilised until September 2021.

- 6.6. It is anticipated that throughput from temporary to permanent accommodation will continue to be constrained during 2021/22 and optimising the supply of temporary accommodation will continue to be a particular priority during the year.
- 6.7. Partners recognise that, during the year ahead, the RRTP 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 continuing optimum supply of suitable temporary accommodation due to the pandemic has been highlighted in the annual review report.
- 6.8. The annual review report incorporates a section which highlights the impact of Covid-19 on homelessness and homelessness services.

7. National and Local Policy Agenda

- 7.1. The annual report highlights recent national and local policy changes.
- 7.2. During 2020/21 the Scottish Government reconvened the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) and in October 2020 made a further 35 recommendations. The 'Ending Homelessness Together' Action Plan was subsequently revised to take account of the learning from the pandemic.
- 7.3. The Homeless Persons Unsuitable Accommodation (Scotland) Order 2014 was extended in May 2020, to cover all homeless households. Due to the ongoing Covid19 pandemic, temporary exemptions to the Order were put in place until September 2021.
- 7.4. Housing 2040, the Scottish Government's route map for the housing sector for the next 20 years was published in March 2021.

- 7.5. Linked to South Lanarkshire's RRTP and the national agenda around temporary accommodation standards, the Resource reviewed the supply and demand for temporary and supported accommodation. A Temporary Accommodation Strategic Plan is being developed which sets out the objectives and actions required for the short, medium and longer-term to ensure optimum supply of suitable accommodation across a range of service user needs. Actions include reshaping and updating the provision of temporary and supported accommodation in some localities.
- 7.6. Building on the strong partnership approach between the Council and Women's Aid South Lanarkshire and East Renfrewshire, work to further develop responses to domestic abuse is being undertaken. A housing pathway for victims of domestic abuse, which aims to prevent homelessness, has been developed and implemented during 2021. This approach links to wider objectives of the South Lanarkshire Gender Based Violence Partnership and takes account of recent developments including the publication of 'Domestic Abuse: A good practice guide for social landlords'; changes in legislation; and internal revisions linked to the Chartered Institute of Housing 'Make A Stand' pledge which Housing and Technical Resources has signed up to.
- 7.7. Work is ongoing to further develop the existing partnership approach between Housing and Technical Resources and Social Work Resources to create alternatives to homelessness for care experienced young people. Dedicated support provided by Officers within both Resources and the implementation of a revised person-centred pathway will ensure that there is a planned and supported approach in place for young people moving on from care. The revised approach will also move forward the introduction of supported accommodation and the planned expansion of the supported carer network to meet a wide range of accommodation and support needs.

8. RRTP Priorities for 2021/22

- 8.1. A key aspect of the annual review process is 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.
- 8.2. The review of progress in Year 2 of the RRTP noted that, under very challenging circumstances, significant positive indicators of success have been achieved. Covid-19 has, however, impacted on the ability to fully progress certain actions and, consequently, the review group expressed support for Year 3 of the plan to broadly mirror Year 2, to allow actions which had commenced to be further developed, monitored and reviewed.
- 8.3. As a result of Covid-19, the current focus remains on delivering critical and essential services and meeting need. There remains, however, a commitment to delivering RRTP priorities both in the short term and to ensure the longer-term objectives of the plan.
- 8.4. Year 3 priorities will build on key learning points from the initial two years of the plan and also on the progress achieved by working in partnership to deliver services which are focussed on preventing homelessness and minimising the impact of homelessness where crisis cannot be avoided.
- 8.5. Detailed below is a summary of the key priorities to be progressed during Year 3 of the plan (2021/22):-
 - Responding to the ongoing impact of Covid-19
 - Complete development of the Temporary Accommodation Strategic Plan and progress implementation
 - Continue to deliver affordable homes for social rent

- Ongoing focus on prevention of homelessness, particularly in relation to households with children
- Continue to reduce long-term homelessness
- Sustain or increase the proportion of social housing lets directed to homeless households
- Further progress the homelessness Directions contained within the Strategic Commissioning Plan
- Continue to maintain and develop links to the Local Child Poverty Action Report
- Monitor implementation of specific pathways for victims of domestic abuse and young care leavers
- Continue to implement specific pathways for individuals released from prison
- Continue to focus on pathways and a Housing Options approach for young people
- Monitor the Private Sector Access and Sustainment Service
- Continue to expand the Council's HomeStart service for new tenants
- Continue to expand the Council's Housing First approach
- Continue to convert temporary units to permanent accommodation
- Commence review of housing support services and commissioning arrangements for implementation of any new model by 2023

9. Next Steps

- 9.1. The RRTP Annual Review 2020/21, attached as Appendix 1, will be submitted to the Scottish Government by the required timescale of 30 June 2021 and, thereafter, published on the Council's website.
- 9.2. The outcomes from the RRTP Annual Review 2020/21 will be presented to the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership Board for noting on 15 September 2021.
- 9.3. 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.
- 9.4. The impact of Covid-19 will be closely monitored, and strategic approaches and priorities adjusted to reflect emerging issues and requirements. This will continue to be reported as part of the annual review process.

10. Employee Implications

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

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1. The RRTP confirmed the level of resources required to be directed towards the prevention and alleviation of homelessness. The Scottish Government has provided £1,741,000 in funding to assist in the development and implementation of the RRTP. This includes £440,000 to support the continued implementation of the RRTP in 2021/22.
- 11.2. As part of the ongoing RRTP monitoring and review process, consideration is given by all partners on how to further embed RRTP activities into mainstream services. At the same time, partners will continue to identify opportunities to access additional funding, which is required to meet not only RRTP objectives, but also to support achievement of national objectives detailed within the Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan.

12. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 12.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy which impacts on the natural environment, climate change or sustainability.

13. Other Implications

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

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

14. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

14.1. 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.

14.2. 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.

14.3. The RRTP was developed and co-produced with a range of key partners and stakeholders. 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 progress of the plan.

Annette Finnan
Head of Housing Services
(Housing and Technical Resources)

7 June 2021

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.
- Annual Review of the South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Plan 2019/21. Housing and Technical Resources Committee Report, 16 September 2020.

Contact for Further Information

If you would like further information, please contact:-

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