



REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2018

SUBJECT: RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 To inform the Committee of the requirement to develop and publish a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP), and the publication of related Scottish Government guidance.

1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III G (11) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the implementation of the Council's strategic housing plan.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee:

- (i) considers and notes the Scottish Government's requirement that local authorities produce a RRTP; and**
- (ii) notes that the Council's draft RRTP will be presented in November 2018 to this Committee for approval prior to its submission to the Scottish Government by 31 December 2018.**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was set up by Scottish Government in October 2017 to produce short and long-term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping. HARSAG have made 4 suites of recommendations, which include a requirement for "each local authority area to develop and cost a 5-year 'Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan' by December 2018". The HARSAG recommendations have been accepted in principle by the Scottish Government.

3.2 The Scottish Government requires that RRTPs aim to end rough sleeping, transform the use of temporary accommodation and end homelessness in Scotland in a 5 year period.

3.3 On 27 June 2018 the Scottish Government announced a £21m national fund to support "a transition to rapid rehousing and Housing First". Housing First

provides “ordinary permanent housing as a first, rather than last, response for people with complex needs. It recognises a safe and secure home as the “best base for recovery”. Success will be, in large part, dependent on appropriate, possibly specialist, support which is sustained for as long as necessary.

- 3.4 On 29 June 2018, Glasgow Homelessness Network (GHN) on behalf on the Scottish Government published Guidance and a toolkit to assist local authorities to develop RRTPs. The Guidance requires that homelessness should be prevented wherever possible and a Housing Options approach implemented. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, the RRTP would be implemented, which would mean:
- A settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible;
 - Time in any form of temporary accommodation kept to a minimum; and
 - Where temporary accommodation is required, the optimum type is mainstream, furnished and within a community.
- 3.5 RRTPs must be submitted to the Scottish Government by 31 December 2018. They may be submitted in draft form, subject to service committee approval. They are required to set out how the authority plans to redesign its Homelessness Service over the 5 year term.
- 3.6 The RRTP will become part of the suite of strategic documents which form the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2018-23. The Council’s approach to rapid rehousing will require to be reflected not only in the forthcoming draft LHS but also in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), and Health and Social Care Moray’s Strategic Plan and Housing Contribution Statement.
- 3.7 The Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2017 (HNDA) is the key evidence base for the LHS. The HNDA found that:
- Homelessness presentations had remained relatively stable over the last 5 years;
 - The Housing Options Approach continues to prevent homelessness;
 - Nearly half of households presenting as homeless are single persons;
 - Moray has very low numbers of rough sleepers and repeat homelessness;
 - Moray has very low and reducing re-let rates in social housing;
 - Fewer re-lets reduces the Council’s ability generally to meet housing need; and
 - Moray has a small private rented sector.
- 3.8 The annual review of the Council’s Allocations Policy considered by Communities Committee on 26 June 2018 (paragraph 12 of the draft Minute refers) showed that the Homeless List has increased by 6% over the last 5 years. Also lengths of stay in temporary accommodation have been increasing over the last 5 years. These trends are symptoms of a lack of permanent housing options which allow homeless households and others in housing need to move on timeously.

4. Development of the RRTP

4.1 Housing and Property have established a RRTP Working Group to help develop the plan. Following an initial assessment, Officers believe Moray's RRTP is likely to have implications for:

4.1.1 Policy

- The Allocations Policy – especially allocation quotas, and the New Build Lettings Plan;
- Local RSL Nomination Agreements, and the number of Section 5 referrals made; and
- Moray's LHS and Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) priorities, and the Council's new build programme.

4.1.2 Practice

- Applicants with significant housing need on the waiting and transfer lists may see their chances of being housed reduced;
- This could indirectly result in an increase in homeless applications as people perceive this as a quicker/only route into social housing;
- Housing support and provision of specialist support services accessed via Health and Social Care Moray and/or the NHS e.g. drug and alcohol, mental health, learning disability support services will need to be available for homeless households at the first point of contact. This will be challenging given the wider budget pressures across all Council services at this time; and finally
- Direct access into housing could increase the risk of tenancy failures and may require increased resources to deliver the housing landlord function.

4.2 The RRTP will seek to address both policy and practice issues. The Housing Service has strong foundations that can mitigate the potential risks associated with rapid rehousing e.g.:

- A well-established and experienced Housing Options Team
- Traditionally very low numbers of households rough sleeping
- Minimal use of Bed and Breakfast as temporary accommodation
- Generally good quality temporary accommodation
- Low levels of refusals of temporary accommodation
- Ongoing reconfiguration of temporary accommodation to meet demand
- Increased supply of 1 bed flats, suitable for single people, through new build.

4.3 Officers attended the Scottish Government engagement event on their RRTP Guidance on 15 August 2018. Following this event, the deadline for submission of RRTPs was extended from 15 December to 31 December 2018.

4.4 Perth and Kinross Council have already implemented a rapid rehousing/ Housing First model. Officers attended an Open Day hosted by Perth and Kinross Council on 5 September 2018, to gather more information around their approach to homelessness. In part, this will influence the Council's own assessment of what can be achieved in the first 5 year period of the plan.

- 4.5 On the 24 July 2018, the Head of Housing and Property attended a Northern and Islands Housing Options Hub “Heads of Service” meeting. Heads of Service from Aberdeenshire, Highland, Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland Councils were also in attendance. All authorities expressed the same concerns about the recommendations for rural areas. They also expressed concern about the unintended consequences of the RRTP and the potential for homelessness to increase due to applicants feeling that this will become the main route into social housing.
- 4.6 It is intended to present a first draft of the Plan to this Committee for approval on 20 November 2018.

5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

(a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

The Local Housing Strategy focuses on a set of outcomes that contribute to the achievement of the Council’s wider strategic aims and priorities, in particular meeting statutory obligations to homeless households.

(b) **Policy and Legal**

From 31 December 2012 the priority need test for homeless households was abolished. As a result, from this date, all unintentionally homeless households are entitled to settled accommodation.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out standards against which the Scottish Housing Regulator will assess local authorities as part of its inspection regime.

(c) **Financial implications**

There are no direct resourcing implications associated with this report.

(d) **Risk Implications**

There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

(e) **Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.

(f) **Property**

There are no property requirements/implications arising directly from this report.

(g) **Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

There are no equalities/socio economic implications arising directly from this report.

(h) **Consultations**

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure), the Head of Housing and Property, the Head of Community Care, the Housing Strategy and Development Officer, the Housing Needs Manager, the Housing Operations Manager, Deborah O’Shea (Principal Accountant), Legal Services Manager (Property and Contracts), Equal Opportunities Officer, Tracey Sutherland (Committee Services Officer) and senior

managers with Housing and Property, and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This report advises the Committee that the Council is required to develop a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) for submission to the Scottish Government by 31 December 2018. A draft Plan will be presented for approval to this Committee on 20 November 2018 ahead of its proposed submission to the Scottish Government.**

Author of Report: Fiona Geddes, Senior Housing Officer (Strategy)

Background Papers: with author

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