



**REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 6
SEPTEMBER 2022**

SUBJECT: RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND
FINANCE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report is to inform the Committee of progress on development on Moray's revised Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) and seeks approval for a service development in line with the priorities.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (G) (3 & 4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the management and maintenance of the council's Housing Stock including housing for the homeless and sites for Gypsies/Travellers, and the allocation and letting of houses.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (i) considers and notes the most recent iteration of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (Appendix 1) which was submitted to the Scottish Government on 3rd August 2022.**
- (ii) agrees the service development of £46k per annum detailed in paragraph 4.1.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was set up by the Scottish Government in October 2017 to produce short and long-term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping. This group produced recommendations which were wholly accepted by the Scottish Government. One of the HARSAG recommendations required that each local authority area develop and cost a 'Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan' by December 2018.
- 3.2 Moray Council wrote its original Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan in 2019 without any indication of what funding may be made available by the Scottish

Government. Once funding levels were announced, (at around 20% of what was bid) it became clear that Moray Council could not adopt its original plan in its entirety. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, which saw a significant period where the letting of housing was paused and the demand for temporary accommodation increased, further added to the difficulties faced in progressing the RRTP as originally planned. In common with other local authorities, it has also proved challenging to recruit suitable staff for the roles. Although some progress has been made, the RRTP (**Appendix I**) has now been updated to better reflect current circumstances aspirations.

- 3.3 Of our original funding bid of £2.5 million, only £518k was received. Our revised 4-year plan has been budgeted for in accordance with our allocation. This is detailed in our budget plan (**Appendix II**).
- 3.4 The RRTP reiterates that Moray Council will continue to implement its Housing Options approach and prevent homelessness wherever possible. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, the Council would implement its Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan where appropriate. This means that homeless households would get:
- 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 At 31 March 2022, 99 units of temporary accommodation were in occupation, with zero B&B in use. We are also on course to achieve a further 10 unit reduction during 2022. This is a significant achievement as the majority of other local authorities have seen a rise in the use of temporary accommodation.
- 3.6 Another notable milestone has been the launch of our Housing First programme. After initially finding recruitment of appropriately skilled housing support workers challenging, we now have two established support workers managing our first 5 tenancies. It is anticipated that we will support a further 5 tenancies by the end of this calendar year.

4. Service Development

- 4.1 The HRA budget set by Moray Council on 22 February 2022 (Paragraph 5 of Minute refers) included provision for service developments totalling £456k for identified service priorities. Officers are now seeking approval to recruit one additional Housing Needs Officer in line with this provision.
- 4.2 The Housing Needs Officer post dually operates between undertaking statutory homeless assessments and allocating properties, not only for council tenancies, but also providing nominations to our partner Registered Social Landlords also. Additional capacity is required to efficiently undertake the additional allocations workload arising from the significant increase in the housing stock over the past decade, with a particular focus on minimising rent loss arising from void properties. In line with the precepts of rapid rehousing, it is also acknowledged that homeless assessments have become

proportionately more challenging due to the complex nature and often multiple needs of the clients who access the service and accordingly additional case management time is required to identify long-term accommodation requirements, thereby reducing offer refusals, tenancy failure and repeat homelessness, all of which come at a cost to the HRA.

4.3 It is expected that this additional resource would have a positive impact on the areas listed below:

- Allocate properties in a more timely manner, thus speeding up the voids process and limiting void rent loss. This will also lead to a further reduction in the time that clients may be required to reside in temporary accommodation.
- As we are now adopting a more focussed casework model for homeless applications, in line with our RRTP principles, Housing Needs Officers are required to be involved with our clients throughout their homeless journey.
- Housing Needs Officers will also be able to become more responsive to enquiries from elected members, the local MP and MSP, our clients and other statutory bodies who often contact our department.

5. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

The provision of new affordable housing, the maintenance of the Council's housing stock and dealing with homelessness are priorities identified within the Corporate Plan, the Council's Local Housing Strategy, the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and the Housing and Property Service Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no policy or legal implications arising from this report.

(c) Financial implications

The financial implications are detailed in para 4.1 above and will be a cost to the Housing Revenue Account in 2022/23 of £46,264 per annum.

(d) Risk Implications

The risk of not implementing the proposals within this report and agreeing to the staffing proposal are that the council will not be able to fully realise the ambitions within the RRTP and our void loss due to properties not being allocated timely, will continue.

(e) Staffing Implications

Approval of the service development detailed in paragraph 4.1 will result in a 1.0 FTE increase in the Housing Needs service. The required post will go to HR for recruitment if approval is granted by the Committee.

(f) Property

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

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

It is a statutory requirement that equality issues should be addressed in the RRTP. An EqlA has been undertaken and submitted to the Scottish Government along with the RRTP.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

There are no climate change/biodiversity impacts arising from this report.

(i) Consultations

Consultation on this report has taken place with Housing Needs Manager, Georgina Anderson (Legal Services Senior Solicitor), Lorraine Paisey (Chief Finance Officer), Grant Cruikshank (HR Manager) and Lindsey Robinson (Committee Services Officer).

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 This report provides the Committee with a revised copy of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (2022-26), with costings. The report also seeks approval to recruit a Housing Needs Officer.

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Background Papers:
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