

Item: 13

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 3 April 2019.

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Report by Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

1. Purpose of Report

To advise of the outcome of consultation and consider the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan for Orkney.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That the Council are required to produce a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan for Orkney, to cover a 5-year term.

2.2.

That the draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan was required to be completed inside a short timescale with a draft submitted to the Scottish Government by 31 December 2018.

2.3.

That the Scottish Government provided feedback on the first draft of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan in late February 2019.

2.4.

That a consultation has been undertaken with a range of partner agencies and that consultation will continue during the early stages of the rapid Rehousing Transition Plan's implementation.

2.5.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan should be implemented by 1 April 2019 and be fully costed.

2.6.

That the Scottish Government requires that Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans aim to end rough sleeping, transform the use of temporary accommodation and end homelessness in Scotland in a 5-year period.

2.7.

That the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan requires to be aligned with various strategic documents including the Local Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy, Strategic Housing Investment Plan and Housing Contribution Statement.

2.8.

That the Housing and Homelessness Service has strong foundations on which to build as outlined at paragraph 6.3 below.

2.9.

That there will be issues with the level of resource provision particularly as regards the supply of accommodation.

2.10.

That the draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, together with the Action Plan, attached as Appendices 1 and 2 respectively to this report, was submitted to the Scottish Government by the deadline of 1 April 2019.

2.11.

That the Scottish Government have been advised of timelines for consideration of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, by both the Integration Joint Board and Education, Leisure and Housing Committee, with ratification by Council on 2 May 2019, and that the documents submitted by the deadline may be subject to amendment and, on that basis, have agreed to a short extension.

It is recommended:

2.12.

That the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, together with the Action Plan attached as Appendices 1 and 2 respectively to this report, be approved.

3. Introduction

3.1.

At its meeting held on 12 September 2018, the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee noted:

- That, in October 2017, the Scottish Government set up the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group with the intention of producing short and long-term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping in Scotland.
- That, in March 2018, the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group published 20 recommendations, as detailed in section 3.3 of the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.
- The requirement for all councils to lead development of a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan by December 2018.

- That the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan was a significant document with wide ranging implications for housing.
- That it was anticipated that costs attached to the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan may be as diverse as additional social housing and housing support services, which could not be determined ahead of production of the document.
- That there was no clarity in respect of the level of funding, if any, which may be awarded to Orkney in support of the Scottish Government initiative relating to homelessness and rough sleeping.

3.2.

It is recommended:

- That the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing should lead preparation of a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan for presentation to the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee in due course.
- That the Chair of the Committee should write to the Scottish Government indicating that the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan may not be as effective in Orkney and may require some island proofing.

4. Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

4.1.

The timescale for the production of a draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan was extremely short with submission to the Scottish Government being required by 31 December 2018. This submission was to be developed for each Local Authority area and be fully costed. It should cover a 5-year term.

4.2.

Production of such a document is challenging generally but this was particularly pronounced within those timescales and given the level of resource available.

4.3.

Some funding was made available to each Council by the Scottish Government and this allowed local authorities to consider seeking some outside assistance with the production of the document.

4.4.

Orkney sought assistance with the initial production of the document and with running a consultation event to include a broad range of partner agencies crossing the statutory and voluntary sectors.

4.5.

A short extension on the submission date was also negotiated and the draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan was submitted in mid-January 2019.

5. Outline of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

5.1.

The Scottish Government requires that Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans aim to end rough sleeping, transform the use of temporary accommodation and end homelessness in Scotland in a 5-year period.

5.2.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is intended to be aligned closely particularly with each Local Authority area's Local Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy and also with the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

5.3.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is intended to be a document which bridges professional divides across housing, health and other partners. A briefing note was prepared for both the Integration Joint Board and Education, Leisure and Housing with the final draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan presented to the Integration Joint Board on 27 March 2019.

5.4.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan has been drafted to align with the Scottish Government's guidance on production of these plans.

6. Development of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

6.1.

An initial consultation event was held which included members from across the statutory and voluntary sectors including various Council Services, Orkney Housing Association Limited, Orkney Citizen's Advice Bureau and Ypeople.

6.2.

This, coupled with statistical information on the Council's response to homelessness, enabled the first draft of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to be developed.

6.3.

Following completion of a draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, there was a process of consultation including a broad range of agencies crossing the statutory and voluntary sectors.

6.4.

The Housing and Homelessness Service has strong foundations that can assist with mitigating the emerging risks associated with rapid rehousing including:

- A generally well established and experienced homelessness team who also provide housing options advice;

- Traditionally low numbers of households sleeping rough;
- Minimal use of Bed and Breakfast as temporary accommodation;
- No breaches of The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014;
- Good quality temporary accommodation;
- Low levels of refusals of temporary accommodation; and
- The average time from homeless presentation to completion of duty is comparatively short.

6.5.

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans are required to deliver a settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible. The Council's Lettings Policy allows a balanced approach to awarding a gold priority to homeless households and also to other households in high levels of housing need including those with significant medical needs or those living in substandard accommodation. While predominantly this process will remain broadly the same, there is a need for the Council's Lettings Policy to be reviewed as a result of both the introduction of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan also as a result of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. Therefore, a review will be progressed in due course.

6.6.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan's approach will be to seek to reduce the length of stays in temporary accommodation in the first instance. This approach will be kept under review as the Plan evolves over its 5-year term.

6.7.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan includes a range of commitments including to develop a very small Housing First model on a supported satellite that's to assist young care leavers or others with complex needs. The likelihood is that the numbers of households who would fall within the remit of a Housing First service is very small making provision challenging.

6.8.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition plan includes a range of actions including enhancements to staffing, development of a housing options portal and a programme of acquisition.

6.9.

While some actions in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan are cost neutral, those with significant costs attached will require specific funding from Scottish Government.

6.10.

Given that the Council has reduced the size of its build programme significantly there will be issues with being able to address homelessness swiftly given the size of the current resource and representations will require to be made to the Scottish Government accordingly. While significant levels of development funding are available, it is the balance of funding relative to cost of provision which is prohibitive.

7. Consultation

7.1.

Initially consultation included an event for a broad range of agencies across the statutory and third sector, which was organised ahead of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan being drafted.

7.2.

Following consultation, the updated draft document was sent as a briefing note to members of both the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee and also the Integration Joint Board.

7.3.

The draft document was also sent to a broad range of partner agencies including those within the statutory and third sectors.

7.4.

Meetings and discussions have been held with a small number of key partner agencies.

7.5.

Comments received have been taken forward into the revised version of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

7.6.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and wider homelessness agenda will be the topic of an annual seminar between the Council and Orkney Housing Association Limited.

7.7.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is to be a fluid document and will be required to be reviewed on an annual basis by the Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation and will continue to grow and develop over the coming years.

8. Feedback from the Scottish Government

8.1.

The Scottish Government provided feedback on the draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan on 28 February 2019.

8.2.

Accordingly, a meeting took place with the Scottish Government on 6 March 2019 to discuss the feedback in more detail.

8.3.

Feedback was detailed and included reference to good practice as follows:

- The Council's project on Empty Homes bringing a number of empty properties back into use.
- The Council monitoring Bed and Breakfast accommodation and removing any where concerns are raised.
- Minimal usage of Bed and Breakfast accommodation.
- Temporary accommodation being predominantly furnished tenancies.
- Any hostel type accommodation is supported accommodation.
- Households with children spend less time in temporary accommodation than households without children.

8.4.

Areas for development were also identified and these included:

- The need for the plan to be fully costed.
- A suggestion of using a thorough breakdown of demographics and the reasons for homelessness being used to inform specific prevention strategies.
- More detail being required on current prevention strategies and the outcomes of housing options interventions.
- Additional evidence regarding who provides frontline support and how good joint working is achieved.
- More detail on how low/medium/high support needs are addressed.
- Queries regarding why households with children spend less time in temporary accommodation.
- Projections regarding future usage of temporary accommodation.

- Queries raised regarding why temporary accommodation isn't converted to permanent accommodation.
- Queries were raised regarding the identification of a need for 1-2 Housing First properties, the suggestion was significantly higher.
- There was a need for more detail on partnership working and how partner agencies had been involved in the development of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans.
- Detail on partner agencies role in prevention pathways, means of increasing available housing stock and plan for supported accommodation, Housing First and additional support needs.
- Queries regarding clarity in certain areas.

9. Next Steps

9.1.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan has been updated following the outcome of consultation and feedback from the Scottish Government.

9.2.

The updated draft Rapid Rehousing Transition plan, together with the Action Plan, attached as Appendices 1 and 2 respectively to this report, together with the associated equalities impact assessment, attached as Appendix 3, required to be submitted the Scottish Government by the deadline of 1 April 2019.

9.3.

The Scottish Government have been advised that due to the timelines for consideration of the Rapid Rehousing Plan, by both the Integration Joint Board and the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee, with ratification by Council on 2 May 2019, that the documents may be subject to amendment and consequently the Scottish Government have agreed to a short-term extension.

9.4.

In line with Scottish Government guidance, the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan was implemented on 1 April 2019 and the now fully costed document was submitted to the Scottish Government.

9.5.

Thereafter, the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan will require to be aligned with the Local Housing Strategy which is currently undergoing a significant review. It will also require to be aligned with the Homelessness Strategy which is scheduled for a review during 2020 and the Strategic Housing Investment Plan. In addition, there will be a need to update the Housing Contribution Statement which forms part of the Integration Joint Board's Strategic Commissioning Plan.

10. Equalities Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 3 to this report.

11. Links to Council Plan

This report relates to governance and procedural issues and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

12. Financial Implications

12.1.

The Government has announced that there will be funding of £21,000,000 available across Scotland, and that £4,000,000 of this will be available to support five city authorities who are participating in specific projects. As yet there is no clarity as to how much each Council will receive.

12.2.

An initial award of £30,000 was provided to the Council to support the development of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. Some of this funding has been used to purchase some outside assistance with the cost of facilitating a consultation event and producing the initial draft of the document.

12.3.

A detailed business plan is scheduled for completion by April 2019 which will allow some consideration of future levels of development.

12.4.

Until the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan has been developed it is difficult to quantify what the precise costs may be.

12.5.

Homelessness is funded from the Council's general fund as is the provision of temporary accommodation, but the provision of permanent accommodation is funded from within the Council's Housing Revenue Account.

13. Legal Aspects

13.1.

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The statutory definition of homelessness is given below.

13.2.

In terms of section 24 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, a person is homeless or threatened with homelessness if there is no accommodation in the UK or elsewhere, which he, together with any other person who normally resides with him as a member of his family or in circumstances in which the local authority consider it reasonable for that person to reside with him:

- Is entitled to occupy by virtue of an interest in it or by virtue of an order of a court.
- Has a right or permission, or an implied right or permission to occupy, or in England and Wales has an express or implied licence to occupy.
- Occupies as a residence by virtue of any enactment or rule of law giving him the right to remain in occupation or restricting the right of any other person to recover possession.

13.3.

Further, a person shall not be treated as having accommodation unless it is accommodation which it would be reasonable for him to continue to occupy.

13.4.

Regard may be had in determining whether it would be reasonable for a person to continue to occupy accommodation, to the general circumstances prevailing in relation to housing in the area of the local authority to whom he has applied for accommodation or for assistance in obtaining accommodation.

13.5.

In terms of Section 24(3), a person is also homeless if he has accommodation but:

- He cannot secure entry to it.
- It is probable that occupation of it will lead to [abuse (within the meaning of the Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2001 (asp 14)), or it is probable that occupation of it will lead to abuse (within the meaning of that Act) from some other person who previously resided with that person, whether in that accommodation or elsewhere.
- It consists of a movable structure, vehicle or vessel designed or adapted for human habitation and there is no place where he is entitled or permitted both to place it and to reside in it.
- It is overcrowded within the meaning of section 135 and may endanger the health of the occupants.
- It is not permanent accommodation, in circumstances where, immediately before the commencement of his occupation of it, a local authority had a duty under section 31(2) in relation to him i.e. a local authority is satisfied that an applicant is homeless.

13.6.

A person is threatened with homelessness if it is likely that he will become homeless within 2 months.

13.7.

For the purposes of subsection (3)(e), “permanent accommodation” includes accommodation:

- Of which the person is the heritable proprietor.
- Secured by a Scottish secure tenancy.
- Secured by an assured tenancy that is not a short assured tenancy.
- Where paragraph 1 or 2 of schedule 6 to the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (asp 10) is satisfied in relation to the person, secured by a short Scottish secure tenancy, i.e. has been evicted previously and therefore tenancy has been granted as a short Scottish secure tenancy.

13.8.

As regards the allocation of Council housing, Section 20(1) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended, requires that, in selecting tenants for their houses, all local authorities and Registered Social Landlords must give reasonable preference:

- To persons who:
 - Are occupying houses which do not meet the tolerable standard.
 - Are occupying overcrowded houses.
 - Have large families.
 - Are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions.
- To homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness (within the meaning of Part II of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003).

13.9.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 is currently being implemented and this will lead to some adjustments to the reasonable preference groups.

14. Contact Officers

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15. Appendices

Appendix 1: Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Appendix 2: Action Plan.

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment.



**Orkney Islands Council:
Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019 – 2024**

DRAFT

	DOCUMENT REF	REV	ISSUE DATE	REASON FOR ISSUE	REVIEWER	SIGN
	HDSTRAT126	Draft	10.1.19	NEW	HEAD OF HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS AND SCHOOLCARE ACCOMMODATION SERVICES	

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Introduction

Over recent years a number of organisations expressed concerns about the levels of rough sleeping in Scotland. In their 2017 to 2018 Programme for Government the Scottish Government set a national objective to eradicate rough sleeping and establish a homelessness and rough sleeping action group (HARSAG) which was tasked to identify actions, services and legislative changes which would be required to end rough sleeping and to transform the use of temporary accommodation

The HARSAG has published four sets of recommendations, 70 in total and the Scottish Government has accepted the vast majority of them. The recommendations included how to eradicate rough sleeping and ways to transform the use of temporary accommodation.

The Scottish Government has asked local authorities and their partners including health and social care partnerships and other social housing providers to develop 5-year plans setting out their proposals to endeavour to reduce homelessness and to reduce the time homeless households spend in temporary accommodation and they have to be costed. This represents a significant cultural change for homelessness services and a programme of change will be implemented over the coming months.

Housing Context

Orkney is Scotland's smallest local authority and lies off the north-eastern coast of Scotland.

Orkney consists of approximately 100,000 hectares spread over 70 or so islands and skerries, 19 of which are inhabited. Orkney does not share a boundary with any other area.

On 30 June 2017, the population of Orkney Islands was 22,000. This is an increase of 0.7% from 21,850 in 2016. It is estimated to drop to around 21,400 by 2041. Over the same period it has been estimated that there will be rise in the proportion of the population aged 65 and over which is currently 23% (5,178) to around 33% (7,011). Conversely it has been forecasted that there will be a drop in the proportion of the population aged between 16 and 64 years from 61% (13,201) to 53% (11,331). These demographic developments are likely to pose challenges to the provision of housing provision including the ability to keep, and attract, young people to Orkney necessary for the economic and social well being of the Islands.

The main population centre is Kirkwall where approximately one third of Orkney's population (around 7,500) live. The second largest town is Stromness with a population of around 2,500 people. There are also some villages and settlements of various sizes dispersed throughout the Orkney mainland and isles.

There are two social housing providers in Orkney being the Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd (OHAL). Between the two there is a lettable stock of approximately 1628 properties.

The Council began a programme of building additional social rented houses in 2009 to 2010 and by 31 March 2018 had completed 230 new houses representing an increase in stock of 31.6%. While this programme was planned for, it resulted in a significant strain on the Housing Revenue Account which had previously been debt free. The level of debt is currently in the region of £14m and in turn impacts on the level of rent charged to the Council's tenants. Continuing to build would increase the strain on the Housing Revenue Account and therefore negatively impact on the affordability of rental charges.

In an island context the sheer number of available properties is important, regardless of tenure. An action taken to enhance one sector can have an impact on another and therefore potentially cause an unintended consequence. If for instance, the Council were to seek to acquire properties by buying back ex-Council properties, this would impact on the number of properties available for young people to purchase in the area and potentially result in higher numbers of young people requiring to be housed by the Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd.

The private rented sector plays an important if relatively small role in housing provision.

During 2018 to 2019, the development of a new hospital has resulted in the private rented sector coming under significant strain and has led to a lack of available accommodation in this sector. At the same time the changes impacting on the private rented sector which include but are not limited to the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016 and enhanced fire safety requirements appear to have led to a reduction in the size of the sector. During 2018 to 2019 117 private sector landlords discontinued their registration and consequently 84 fewer private rented properties are available than was the case three years previously. It is anticipated that this may be exacerbated once the new hospital is completed and workers leave Orkney. Given that Orkney is also a popular tourist destination, Air B & B is also a growth area which is impacting on the availability of private sector accommodation. Anecdotally employers regularly report that staff they have recruited from outwith Orkney, have turned down employment offers due to a lack of available accommodation.

The table below provides additional detail on the level of properties by tenure,

Estimated stock of dwellings by tenure Orkney: 2017

Total number of dwellings (000s)	Owner occupied	Rented privately or with a job/business	Vacant private dwellings and second homes	RSLs	local authorities
11,000	67%	8%	10%	6%	9%

As the table above illustrates, Orkney has a high level of vacant properties and holiday homes (6.7% and 3.6% respectively) totalling 10.3% of the housing stock (being 1151 properties in September 2017). This compared with the Scottish average of 4.1% (1% and 3.1% respectively).

The Council's Empty Homes Service has been running for almost eighteen months and so far it has been successful in bring 23 properties back into use. This has been through a combination of means including being sold into owner occupation, AirB&B and renting privately. The Empty Homes Strategy (2018-23) has a target of bringing 20 properties a year back into use. While this is extremely valuable it is not necessarily the case that empty properties are situated in the areas of greatest demand. Housing demand and homelessness are most pronounced in the main population centres of Kirkwall and Stromness. In comparison the level of empty properties by area is as follows:

- Kirkwall and St Ola 128
- KW16 postcode, including Stromness 91

Of the empty properties in Kirkwall and Stromness 23 and 13 respectively are former Council properties which would suggest that some acquisition of these properties may be worthy of consideration. However, acquisition of older properties does add an additional challenge in that it is unlikely that such properties will meet the energy efficiency requirements to meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing and consequently significant additional resources would require to be invested in the property given that Orkney is not on the gas grid.

The average rents in the private sector are higher than a person can claim through the Local Housing Allowance. This is particularly true for shared properties and one-bedroom properties. This means that for many, including homeless households, living in the private sector is not affordable particularly in the medium to long term.

Weekly rent levels in 2018

Size of property	LHA	Average Highland & Islands ¹	OIC	OIC Temporary Accommodation
Shared	£59.04	£85.61	-	£126.05
1 bed	£91.81	£108.61	£67.99	£148
2 bed	£110.72	£134.53	£80.70	£155.9
3 bed	£126.92	£163.84	£80.52	£177.96
4 bed	£160.38	£203.53	£94.30	£185.7

¹ Private sector rent statistics: 2010 - 2018 Scottish Government November 2018

The rent levels illustrated above compare to a small number advertised on the Council's website (at the end of 2018) and cannot necessarily be seen as representative of rents throughout Orkney (1 bedroom £96.98, 2 bedroom £110 and £113).

Allocations

The Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd operate a common housing register though the Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd have separate allocations policies.

Under the current allocations system, the Council operates a priority pass system and homeless households are awarded a gold pass along with other groups in high levels of housing need such as medical reasons, those who are overcrowded and those living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.

Orkney Housing Association Ltd uses a Choice Based Lettings system to allocate their properties. The Council is currently undertaking a lettings review as a result of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 and as part of this process will consider the level of choice available as part of the allocations process. This may include introducing a Choice Based Lettings system and there is a current Council decision to progress on this basis. We will monitor and evaluate the new Choice Based system, particularly in relation to homelessness to ensure that homeless households are not disadvantaged or that its operation does not impede other Council aims such as reducing the time in temporary accommodation and the ability to possibly house some applicants straight into mainstream housing.

The number of applicants on the Common Housing Register reflects the social rented house building programme where in 2010 the number on the Register peaked at 750 applications and decreased to around 500 in 2016. The number of applicants registered for social housing has been increasing again as the new build programme has been predominantly completed. It was originally anticipated that completion of a sizeable development programme would lead to a reduction in the level of housing need over a period of time. However, on the 14th December 2018 there were 624 applications on the register of which 203 had priority passes and within those there were 30 homeless households with gold priority passes. This highlights the continuing demand for social housing in Orkney and a need to continue to develop social housing.

The Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA) undertaken in 2016 projected a five-year requirement for 287 social rented properties. This includes a backlog of 164 households, 105 of which desire housing in the Kirkwall area.

Since the development of the HNDA in 2016 the Council has reduced the scale of its housebuilding programme significantly. The social housing waiting list has risen from 505 households in 2016 to 642 in January 2019. This is below the peak levels of 750 households seen in 2011, just prior to the first Council houses being developed. However, there are fears that as a result of the reducing social housing build programme across both the Council and Orkney Housing Association, which will involve only a small number of new build properties being completed each year, that the waiting list may well rise back towards 750 households over the coming years.

This will also impact on the length of time homeless households spend in temporary accommodation.

House building has been reduced as a result of affordability aspects for the organisations concerned. Proportionally the Council has delivered a sizeable build programme but does not have the economies of scale to enable it to continue both in respect of the level of borrowing and the impact on rent levels.

As part of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme, the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (2019 to 2020 - 2022 to 2023) aims to deliver 443 affordable housing units across Orkney these would be comprised of:

- 231 social rented and low-cost home ownership properties to be delivered by the Council and Orkney Housing Association Limited comprising, 194 social rented properties and 37 low cost home ownership properties. 148 of the social rented properties would be developed in Kirkwall where the main pressure for social housing is with approximately 63% on the register having Kirkwall as their first choice. The 46-remaining social rented properties are to be across Orkney's Mainland areas and the Orkney islands
- 212 low cost home ownership properties delivered by the private sector and partners including islands development trusts among others.

Organisational Context

Orkney Islands Council's Housing Service is relatively small and staff who undertake the homelessness assessment, homelessness prevention, housing options and the registration of private sector landlords represent 3.5 full-time equivalents.

The Housing and Homelessness Service has strong foundations that can assist with mitigating the emerging risks associated with rapid rehousing including:

- A generally well established and experienced homelessness team who also provide housing options advice;
- Traditionally low numbers of households sleeping rough;
- Minimal use of Bed and Breakfast as temporary accommodation;
- No breaches of The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014;
- Good quality temporary accommodation;
- Low levels of refusals of temporary accommodation; and
- The average time from homeless presentation to completion of duty is comparatively short.

Homelessness context

The level of homelessness presentations across Orkney is detailed below.

Number of applications under the Homeless Persons legislation

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Applying as homeless	106	81	97	124	116
Assessed as homeless	82	64	77	98	95

(HL1 figures)

Homeless presentations decreased in 2017 to 2018 compared to the year before and there has been some fluctuation over the past five years although the number is still some way below the peak in presentations in the last fifteen years which was 237 presentations in 2006 to 2007.

In 2017 to 2018, there were 85 households where the Council had a duty to secure settled accommodation and at the 31st March 2018, there were 37 households.

While homelessness can occur in any community across Orkney, in general terms most homelessness presentations originate from the main towns of Kirkwall and Stromness.

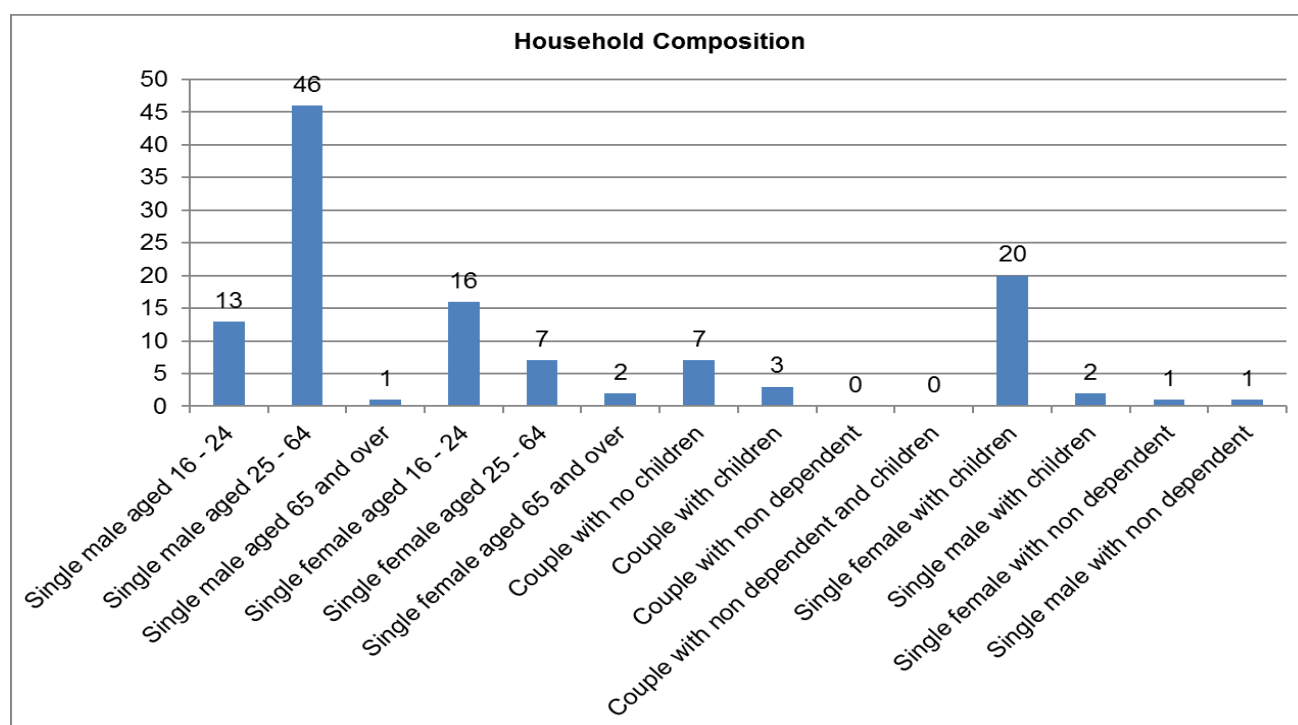
The type of homelessness is predominantly rural homelessness. The level of rough sleeping is very low as is the level of repeat homelessness.

Households

As with other local authorities, the majority of those presenting as homeless were single people comprising 71% (85) of all applications and this has remained fairly constant over time.

- Single male households made up half of the total applications and 72% of all single person applications. Single women made up 19% of all applications and 28% of single person applications.
- Almost a quarter (24%) of all applications came from young single people (16 to 24 year olds) with young women applying at a slightly higher rate (16 applying) than young men (13 applications) though this has not been the case over the last five years. The proportion of young people presenting as homeless has decreased slightly to its lowest level in the last five years.
- 21% (25) were applications from households with children and of those; the vast majority were single parent households being 20 out of 23 households (87%).

Household composition of applicants – 2017 to 2018



The main reasons given for leaving accommodation have been relatively consistent over a number of years. The most common reason cited has been dispute within the household/relationship breakdown of which non-violent dispute accounted for 31% in 2017 to 2018 and violent dispute at 5% (this is a low number compared to other years and is not necessarily seen as typical). The next most common reason is 'being asked to leave' at 17%.

The last two years have seen an increase in the number of people presenting as homeless due to harassment/abuse outwith the home with 12% presenting for this reason.

In 2017 to 2018 there was one application (0.8%) as a result of leaving prison / hospital / care or some other institution, compared to seven (6%) in 2016 to 2017.

Reason for presenting as homeless 2013 to 2014 – 2017 to 2018

	2013 - 14	2014 - 15	2015 - 16	2016 - 17	2017 - 18
Mortgage default /rent arrears	2	1	2	3	3
Other action by landlord	2	1	3	5	5
Secure accommodation given up	5	5	2	8	3
Loss of service / tied accommodation	0	0	3	1	1-
Discharge from prison / hospital / care / other institution	2	3	3	7	1
Emergency (fire, flood, etc.)	4	3	1	1	0

Forced division and sale of matrimonial home	0	0	0	1	0
Dispute within household: violent or abusive	26	17	19	15	6
Dispute within household / relationship breakdown: non-violent	21	23	28	30	37
Harassment/abuse outwith the home	6	2	2	8	13
Overcrowding	0	0	0	0	1
Asked to leave	19	6	21	25	20
Other reason	21	26	15	23	29
Total	108	87	99	127	119

(OIC figures)

The level of repeat homelessness is very low which would indicate that responses to homelessness are effective. Over the last two financial years, there have been a total of 3 repeat homelessness cases. While repeat homelessness can be difficult to counteract if someone becomes caught in a cycle of homelessness, the figures would indicate there is not a particular issue with this in Orkney which is encouraging.

There are relatively low numbers of recorded rough sleeping within Orkney. There are times when someone presenting as homeless in Orkney may have slept rough outwith Orkney during the 3 months prior to their presentation. The Council has not identified long term rooflessness within Orkney as a problem. In addition the Council endeavours to take a direct approach towards anyone rough sleeping providing they are aware of the issue.

Homelessness presentations where the applicant slept rough 2014 to 2015 – 2017 to 2018

When	At least once during the last 3 months				The night before			
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
No	5	10	10	10	5	10	5	5

In 2017 to 2018, the Council had a duty to secure settled accommodation for 70% of households who were found to be homeless or threatened with homelessness. And, at 31st March 2018, there were 37 households where there was a duty to house in settled accommodation being an increase from the previous two years.

Open homeless cases with a duty to house as at 31st March

Year	No of cases
2014	37
2015	43
2016	25
2017	34
2018	37

The Council tries to ensure that we carry out assessments of homeless applicants as quickly and thoroughly as possible and the average time taken is within the 28 day target. The amount of time taken has been slowly decreasing apart from 2017 to 2018 where there was an increase of two days. The shorter the time taken to reach a decision on an applicant's homelessness status should mean less time spent in temporary accommodation.

Average time taken between presentation and homeless assessment

Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Days	21.2	20	19.8	17.3	19.4

The average time taken to discharge the Council's duty towards homeless households has fallen sharply from five years ago though 2017 to 2018 saw a slight increase, this may reflect the increase in housing supply in these two years which is now coming to an end. It is anticipated that the amount of time taken to discharge duty will increase further given that the build programme has now predominantly ended. Steps will be taken to mitigate this including increasing the proportion of social lets being made to homeless households and further preventative measures being introduced.

Average time from homeless presentation to completion of Council's duties

Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Weeks	29.1	26.1	14.6	14.1	16.1

Prevention of Homelessness

Our Homelessness Strategy and Homelessness Prevention Policy focus on a range of preventative services. Our Advice and Information Strategy provides additional information regarding the provision of advice services in Orkney. In addition we have a Homelessness Prevention Policy.

Our Homelessness Strategy is available from:

http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/Housing/Housing%20Options/Housing%20Strategy/Homelessness_Strategy.pdf

Our Homelessness Prevention Policy can be found at:

http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/Housing/Housing%20Options/Housing%20Policy/Prevention_of_Homelessness_Policy.pdf

Our Advice and Information Strategy is available from:

http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/Housing/Housing%20Options/Housing%20Strategy/Advice_and_Information_Strategy.pdf

The number of people receiving housing options advice and information has increased slightly in 2017 to 2018 to 58 households, this was from a noticeable dip in the previous year to 50 households, being 34 less than in 2015 to 2016.

Number of households receiving housing options/advice and information

Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Number	153	80	84	50	58

The Council is committed to further focusing on providing comprehensive housing options alongside our partners to assist in the prevention of homelessness and resolving housing and related difficulties and is keen to explore any new developments in this area. The Council has an online housing options guide providing detailed information on housing options but will investigate the potential for an interactive housing options portal.

The Council has recently completed the Scottish Legal Aid Board’s reaccreditation for Type 1 & 11 in the National Standards for Housing Information and Advice. The Council has held this accreditation since 2008 and supported other partners to achieve a similar accreditation. The Council is keen to see other partners consider their role in the provision of advice and information as one of the means of preventing homelessness.

More generally the Council and partners view it as important that staff across a range of services are able to identify and respond effectively to those who may be at risk of homelessness through training and development.

Partnership Working

Orkney Islands Council’s Housing Services works closely with a broad range of partner agencies.

Part Four of the Profile of Homelessness in Orkney, which underpins our Homelessness Strategy looks at the services currently available to those finding themselves homeless in Orkney. This is available from:
http://www.orkney.gov.uk/Files/Housing/Housing%20Options/Homelessness/A_Profile_of_Homelessness_2014_2019.pdf

In 2002, when our first Homelessness Strategy was being developed, a robust assessment of service provision was undertaken which allowed the identification of gaps, from there a means of filling each gap was explored, whether by expanding existing services or the creation of new ones.

Since then service provision and joint working have moved on significantly. Although there are still few services which are specifically dedicated to homelessness, many agencies play a key role in the prevention and alleviation of homelessness in Orkney, including assisting with the provision of temporary accommodation. Many

agencies offer services across a range of disciplines but for ease of reference we have split the range of services offered into the areas of:

Emergency / Temporary Accommodation
 Advice & Information Services
 Housing Support
 Health Services (General Provision)
 Mental Health Services
 Drug & Alcohol Services
 Relationship Breakdown
 Services for 16 – 25 year olds
 Children's Support Services
 People with Particular Needs
 Other

It is acknowledged that many agencies in Orkney take on much broader roles with generic services than would be likely to be found in more urban areas. It is essential that the Homelessness Strategy continues to harness this willingness to be flexible and adaptable. Only by agencies being willing to look beyond initial remits and continuing to be open to a range of possibilities, can we ensure that assistance is available to the broadest possible cross section of our communities.

The Council provides some support to a range of partner agencies through our Homelessness Strategy. This includes:

Organisation	Service Provision
Advocacy Orkney	Provision of independent advocacy services
Employability Orkney	Funding towards the co-ordinator's role to ensure provision of employability services
Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)	Funding towards service in respect of the highest risk cases of domestic violence and above
Orkney Alcohol Counselling and Advisory Service	Provision of counselling services to assist with addiction issues and other counselling requirements
Orkney Citizens' Advice Bureau	Independent housing / homelessness advice
Relationships Scotland	Provision of relationship counselling and support
Restart Orkney	Provision of a furniture recycling project for homeless households
Starter Packs scheme by Kirkwall Council of Churches	Provision of Starter Packs to homeless households
Womens' Aid Orkney	For outreach services and the provision of supported accommodation to women and their children (if any) who have experienced domestic abuse
Ypeople	Tendered service to provide housing support to young homeless people who are placed within the Council's supported accommodation

Temporary Accommodation

The Council previously produced a Temporary Accommodation Strategy. However, the development of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan has presented an opportunity to amalgamate these two documents appropriately.

In the main, the Council's temporary accommodation comprises furnished tenancies from within the Council's general needs stock. There is more specialist provision aimed at specific groups including young people with support provided by YPeople, refuge and support services provided by Women's Aid Orkney for women and their children (if any) fleeing domestic abuse and those involved in the Criminal Justice system with support provided by Criminal Justice social work.

Levels of stock held

Our Stock as at 1 March 2019:

Our stock available as emergency accommodation was 64 as of March 2019. The stock can be broken down as follows:

- 13 owned by the Homelessness Account
- 47 leased from Housing Revenue Account stock
- 4 leased from OHAL

Furnished properties

The main type of temporary accommodation is properties from within the Council's mainstream stock which are fully furnished and equipped. Of those the largest number is in Kirkwall. There is no temporary accommodation available on the Isles though if it were to be required, an appropriate option would be secured on an ad-hoc basis.

We currently hold 2 properties, both in Kirkwall, which are level access though some other properties have additional adaptations. Where a household requires specific adaptations or a particular property type, appropriate arrangements/adaptations will be made quickly while working closely with relevant partner agencies. Where required we may acquire a particular property if this is more suitable or cost effective than carrying out adaptations.

We endeavour to provide accommodation in a range of locations to ensure ease of access to households' arrangements for schooling, employment etc. Our emergency accommodation is sited in different locations throughout Orkney as detailed below:

Location of temporary accommodation at March 2018

Location	Number of properties
Kirkwall	44
Stromness	13
St Margaret's Hope	5
Finstown	2

The properties range in size from bedsits to a 4-bedroom property. One bedroom properties make up the largest number of temporary accommodation with thirty available. The same temporary accommodation properties have been in use for a number of years. The Council does not have a policy of rotating properties which is predominantly due to the fact that they are fully furnished and equipped. If properties were rotated on a general basis, this would result in a significant additional financial cost to the Council. The ownership of the properties would also impact on the Council's ability to flip the property in question.

The Council will review its policy in this area to assess the potential for rotating properties and also how this might fit with the possibility of converting a homeless household's temporary accommodation into their stock of settled accommodation. The practice of converting ('flipping') properties has been done on occasions and the Council will investigate any barriers which may exist to increasing this practice and how they may be overcome.

Costs of providing temporary accommodation:

The current cost of leasing properties totals £187,392 and this is broken down as follows:

Cost of leasing from Housing Revenue Account was £170,079 during 2017 to 2018

Cost of leasing from OHAL £17,313

No properties are currently rented from the private rented sector.

The cost of Bed & Breakfast accommodation from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 was £2351.69 for 51 nights. This has risen in financial terms since financial year 2016 to 2017 when it amounted to £1868.00, though referred to 62 nights. This will have been affected purely by the availability of accommodation given Orkney's role in the tourism sector.

Rent is charged on all accommodation, based on its size and location. This generally varies from £126.05 per week for a bedsit to around £185.76 per week for a four bedroom property. Where property is leased from another source an additional sum is charged each week to cover furnishings etc, on top of the rent we pay to the landlord. Bed & Breakfast accommodation is charged at the rate of

£131.71 per week. A separate policy document covers the charging of rent on Bed & Breakfast and Self Catering accommodation.

Bed and Breakfast

The Council strives to keep the use of Bed and Breakfast to a minimum. When it is used, this is for as short a period as possible. The average length of time in Bed and Breakfast accommodation has ranged from 6 to 3 days over the last two financial years. Figures regarding its usage are outlined in the table below, on the length of time in temporary accommodation.

The Council does not have any contracts with establishments though there is a list of ones which can be used and this includes local hotels. The Council monitors the Bed and Breakfasts used and if any concerns arise they are removed from the list. Bed and Breakfast may be used by the Homeless Out of Hours Service.

Given the size of Orkney's tourist industry, we do not have Bed & Breakfast establishments which limit their market to homeless households. Instead we use Bed & Breakfast establishments who have achieved Visit Scotland accreditation and therefore have been subject to their quality assurance checks. We also maintain close links with the establishments concerned to keep abreast of facilities offered for example the use of cooking facilities.

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment will be carried out in tandem with the homelessness interview to assess whether Bed & Breakfast accommodation is suitable for a particular client. In some instances there may be health issues, addictions or social issues which would indicate that this may not be suitable whilst considering the needs of the individual concerned and other occupants of the accommodation.

Supported Accommodation

The Council does not use traditional hostels in addressing homelessness and takes full account of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004.

The Council has access to a small stock of supported accommodation for those with specific needs.

Women fleeing domestic abuse

There is a women's refuge which is delivered from a property owned by Orkney Housing Association Ltd and managed by Women's Aid Orkney. There are three flats one of which is adapted for women, and or children, with disabilities. Support is provided 'on site'.

There are a further four 'satellite' houses which the Council leases from Orkney Housing Association Ltd and is again managed by Women's Aid Orkney. These

houses can be used as move on accommodation from the refuge, or in some cases, a household can move into one directly. Support is on a floating basis.

Young People

There are two young person's supported accommodation services for young people aged between 16 and 25 years. One service is in Kirkwall which comprises three supported flats with a shared kitchen. In addition there are 6 move-on flats outwith the main property. There is support on site in the evenings and weekends, a sleep-in service is provided also. The properties are owned by the Council and managed by Ypeople who provide the support.

In Stromness there are four supported rooms, one of which is en-suite, with a shared kitchen and living area. A fifth room is en suite and is used as a base for the care worker. Support is provided by Ypeople and in the same way as the Kirkwall service.

The young persons' supported accommodation service works to equip young people within the facility with appropriate independent living skills as a result of an appropriate training programme.

Both young person services are also available to young people who have experienced care and who have been assessed as requiring that particular support though they do not go through the homelessness system to access the service. Options are limited for those with more pronounced or complex support needs.

Ypeople are developing a Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) approach in their services to young people in Orkney. The Council will discuss the progress of PIE with Ypeople and consider expanding this approach to other services.

In general terms young people who are care experienced do not go through the homeless route. We have a joint protocol with Orkney Health and Care to ensure a joint working approach to young care experienced people. In addition a priority pass equivalent to that available for homeless households, is available through our lettings policy.

Offenders and those at risk of offending

Orkney Islands Property Developments Ltd which is a private sector landlord have developed four, one bedroom flats in one location for offenders or those who are at risk of offending. While those accessing this service are often homeless this is not a service exclusively for those who are homeless. The Council's Criminal Justice Service provides visiting/floating support.

Quality of Temporary Accommodation

The quality of our temporary accommodation is high. All properties are decorated to a clean standard, carpeted and furnished throughout. The provisions will be

functional, carpets will be entire and furnishings will meet appropriate legal standards. The properties will be fully equipped. The result is an excellent overall standard of accommodation which includes all appliances and utensils required.

In order to achieve this, an Officer conducts an inspection at the end of each tenancy to determine the level of work required before the property is relet. Generally this involves arranging for the property to be cleaned and minor repairs carried out, replacing bed linen, towels etc. In some cases remedial works required are higher and may include replacement of furniture, carpets or redecoration. We have an appropriate relet standard which is included in our Voids Policy.

Where we lease a property for use as temporary accommodation, the property would be subject to a thorough check by our Team Leader (Housing and Homelessness) and a Building Inspector. This ensures that the property meets equivalent standards as the Council's existing stock and any remedial work is attended to prior to the property being taken over.

In the event that the property is leased for a short period of time, this allows the Council to have detailed records of the condition of the property when it was leased and a commitment is made to return it in an equivalent condition.

We operate a system of customer satisfaction surveys which are intended to assess views on the quality of emergency accommodation from the start of a tenancy and also to assess wider aspects of the homelessness service when the service user moves on. This information is used to inform future development of the service through our Service Delivery Plan for Homelessness and Housing Advice Services.

Length of time in temporary accommodation

During 2017 to 2018 there was a slight increase in the length of time homeless households remain in temporary housing. However, in general over the last 5 years we have seen an overall decline in the length of time a household is in temporary accommodation. As regards time spent in Bed & Breakfast accommodation, the time spent in such accommodation has almost halved.

Average length of time in (days) in emergency/temporary accommodation

Type of accommodation	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Ordinary local authority dwelling	186.06	108.95	119.99	126.72
RSL dwelling	0	57.43	93.5	191.43
Local authority owned hostel	114	102.2	61.17	90.25
Other hostel	0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Bed and Breakfast	5.09	4.33	6.1	3.25
Women's refuge	79.67	58.53	109.8	98.33
Other	134.9	75.8	0.0	0.0
All types	141.64	87.26	103.70	110.61

(ARC figures)

The length of stay in temporary accommodation can be affected by a number of factors, the most common being housing supply - the availability of settled accommodation. The impact of new developments coming on stream in Orkney can be seen on the length of stay in temporary accommodation. The average time in temporary accommodation in 2015 to 2016 fell to 12.5 weeks compared with 20.2 weeks in 2014 to 2015 and 26.7 weeks in 2013 to 2014². This is mainly due to 1 and 2 bedroom new build properties becoming available, throughout the year. As would be expected, given the household composition of those presenting as homeless, the greatest demand is for one bedroom properties - both as temporary and settled accommodation.

The slight rise over the last two years may also be due to particular circumstances concerning some of the applicants.

Ensuring applicants can choose areas in which they want to be housed can cause delays in both the most popular areas and where there is little social housing and low turnover. A shortage of properties of the right size can delay housing into settled accommodation. The Council does not put a limit on the length of time an intentionally homeless household can stay in temporary accommodation while they seek alternative housing that can result in more lengthy stays.

Overall households with children spend less time in temporary accommodation than those households without children. Single parents are the group that spend the least time. This is directly related to the profile of stock held relative to demand. The Council has a deficit of smaller properties.

Average length of time in temporary accommodation for different household types during 2017 to 2018

Household type	Days
Single person	148
Single parent	87
Couple	156
Couple with children	147
Other	166
Other with children	256
No HL1	42
All	138
Households with children	112
Households without children	149

(HL1 figures)

There were 30 households in temporary accommodation on the 31st March 2018. This compares with 35 the year before and 25 in 2016. Over the past five years the

² Orkney Islands Council's Annual Return on the Charter

numbers have varied between 25 to 35 households. Of those in temporary accommodation five were households with children.

Households in temporary accommodation at the 31st March 2014 to 2018

Households	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
All Households	35	25	25	35	30
Households with children	10	10	15	10	5

(HL1 figures 2017/18)

The majority of these households were in furnished properties within communities with some households in more specialist provision including refuge provision and young person accommodation.

The pressure for one bedroom properties is illustrated clearly. Of the 31 households in temporary accommodation (in the second week of December 2018) where the Council has a duty to secure settled accommodation, 30 are waiting for one bedroom properties.

The table below highlights the fact that the continuing demand for one bedroom properties is greater than other house sizes. This unsurprisingly accords with the main size of household that presents as homeless.

Demand by house size from homeless households

	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/ 2018
One bed	37 HH	42 HH	33 HH	31 HH	43 HH
Two bed	19 HH	8 HH	25 HH	16 HH	29 HH
Three bed	7 HH	2 HH	6 HH	7 HH	5 HH

(OIC figures)

Currently the Council only offers single homeless applicants one bedroom properties which overall is the size in greatest demand from homeless households and from the common housing register. There are some applicants who would be willing/prefer a two bedroom property but this is not on offer. By taking a more flexible approach the Council could relieve some of the pressure on the demand for one bedroom properties.

The amount of rent charged for temporary accommodation ranges from £126.05 a week to £185.76. The rents relate to bedroom size.

Rental charges for temporary accommodation

Size	1 apartment/bedsit	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4 bedroom

Rent	126.05	148.13	155.90	177.96	185.70
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The rents in the Council's temporary accommodation are high, this reflects additional costs associated with their provision including the supply of furniture and higher housing management costs. The rents increase annually at the Council's standard rate of increase for fees and charges.

The Council recognises the difficulties faced by homeless households who are in work in meeting the costs of temporary accommodation and, that this can act as a barrier to seeking employment while staying in temporary accommodation and may lead to arrears being built up. This concern is reflected in feedback from some of those staying in temporary accommodation and high rents can act as a barrier to accessing temporary accommodation to those in work. In seeking to address issues of affordability the Council will consider a moratorium on rental increases for its temporary accommodation.

Outcomes

The vast majority of homeless households who required settled accommodation, were housed within the social housing sector. These total 83% in 2017 to 2018 compared to the private rented sector which plays a minor role housing 6% of households.

Outcomes for households assessed as unintentionally homeless or unintentionally threatened with homelessness

	LA tenancy	RSL	Private rented tenancy	Returned to previous / present accommodation	Moved-in with friends/relatives	Other (known)	Total
2015/16	37	24	2	4	5	7	79
2016/17	40	15	0	0	5	5	65
2017/18	40	35	5	5	5	5	90

The number of lets to going to homeless households in 2017 to 2018 was 32% being slightly higher than the previous year. While the number of households housed by Orkney Housing Association Ltd increased in 2017 to 2018 compared to the previous two years, the Council is still conscious of the need to increase the number of lets made to homeless households within the social rented sector. The Council has protocols on Section 5 Referrals and Nominations with Orkney Housing Association Ltd which have been in place for a number of years. While the Council was building properties an agreement was reached to temporarily reduce the level of Section 5 referrals. Now that the Council's build programme has declined, the proportion of Section 5 referrals will again increase.

At present there is little rehousing of homeless households into the private rented sector though the homelessness services provides comprehensive advice and information to prevent homelessness occurring from that sector.

The Council's online Housing Options Guide advertises some private lets which are currently available through Orkney lets and it has a positive relationship with Orkney Islands Property Developments Ltd which registered as a letting agency in 2017.

The private rented sector plays a small part in housing those who received housing options advice from the Council. The private rented sector was the housing outcome for five people who received advice and information through housing options. This has been a consistent picture for the last three years.

The Council runs a rent deposit scheme where a month's deposit is paid to the landlord. This can be accessed by homeless households and others in housing need.

Outcomes achieved by Housing Options 2014 to 2015 – 2017 to 2018

	2014/15	2016/17	2017/18
Local Authority or RSL Tenancy	-	5 (11%)	5 (20%)
Private Rented Sector Tenancy	5 (13%)	5 (11%)	5 (20%)
Lost Contact/ Not known	15 (38%)	15 (33%)	10 (40%)
Remained in Current Accommodation	5 (13%)	5 (11%)	-
Made Homelessness Application to Local Authority	10 (25%)	15 (33%)	10 (40%)
Case still open	5 (13%)	-	-

While the numbers are low generally, proportionately the number of initial approaches where the outcome is either not known or contact is lost, is relatively high. It is generally assumed in such cases that the applicant has addressed their own housing issue following the advice they received. We will also consider any actions or changes to this process which could be made to address any identified shortcoming which could act to prevent homelessness occurring in the future.

Housing Support

The Council's Housing Support Service is available to tenants to assist with tenancy sustainment and to homeless households who are assessed as being in need of housing support.

Team Leader (Housing Support)

The Team Leader (Housing Support) is a qualified Social Worker who works closely with services users, providing significant support to help sustain tenancies and therefore prevent homelessness.

This post provides vital assistance in cases where someone has relatively high support needs. The post provides an important link between social work services and housing support services. There is generally good joint working between the Housing Service and other services / organisations.

The Team Leader (Housing Support) also line manages staff within the Housing Service's small, dedicated housing support service.

Support needs are assessed in the first instance by our Staff in the Homelessness Section who complete a single shared assessment. Support is then provided quickly to help the household to maintain their tenancy. Low level support may be provided by homelessness staff or more in-depth support by our specialist housing support staff, or a combination of both.

In providing support we ensure we meet the National Care Standards for Housing Support Services determined by the Care Inspectorate. These recognise that services must be accessible and suitable for everyone who needs them. Our Accessibility Policy and Equalities Policy provide the structure for this.

As mentioned previously, through the Council's homelessness strategy, a range of partner agencies are funded to provide key services in respect of the prevention and alleviation of homelessness. This includes various support providers including Ypeople and Womens' Aid Orkney.

Over a six month period in 2016 the Homelessness Service undertook 29 support assessments under the Housing Support Regulations and Support was provided to 10 households this compared to 35 assessments during the same period in 2017 with support provided in 15 instances.

Homeless household assessed under the Housing Support Regulations

Period	Assessed	Provided with support
April/Sept 2016	29	10
April/Sept 2017	35	15

Of those with recorded support needs in 2017 to 2018 44 applicants (46.3% of those assessed as homeless/threatened with) had at least one support need identified and of those half (22) were for basic housing management/independent living skills

Reasons for support needs 2017-18

	Mental health problem	Learning disability	Physical disability	Medical condition	Drug or alcohol dependency	Basic housing mgmt/ ILS	At least 1 support need identified
16-24							
<i>single person</i>	4	1	1	1	2	10	12
<i>single parent</i>	1	0	0	0	0	4	4
Couple woch	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
Couple wch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other wc	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25 – 59							
<i>single person</i>	11	0	2	3	7	5	17
<i>single parent</i>	1	0	1	2	1	1	4
Couple woch	1	1	0	0	0	1	3
Couple wch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other woch	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
Other wch	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
60+ yrs							
<i>single person</i>	2	0	2	1	0	1	2
Total	21	2	7	9	10	22	44

(OIC figures)

(woch denotes without children; wch denotes with children)

Over a fifth of applicants assessed as homeless/threatened with homelessness reported support needs relating to mental health problems and 10 (10.5%) applicants with a drug or alcohol dependency. Over a five-year period from 2013 to 2014 to 2017 to 2018 this has been the case for the support needs identified.

There is no resident psychiatrist in Orkney and this has been highlighted as a concern by a number of organisations and more generally there is a need to the need to review how some services are delivered to see if a more flexible approach to the delivery of services can be developed - including mental health and addiction services.

The Homelessness Service carries out a housing support assessment, in line with the legislation, of all unintentionally homeless households and intentionally homeless households where there is an identified support need. As part of this process it will consider in greater detail any support needs identified and if and where there are any difficulties in accessing and engaging with appropriate support services.

The Council is conscious that the estimates regarding support requirements need to be refined and along with our partners including Orkney Health and Care will analyse

assessments to enable the level and type of support needs to be quantified. This will allow for better planning and resourcing identified need.

No/low support needs

Over a half of homeless household would fall into the no or low support category and will be in temporary furnished properties. In general needs housing the proportion of homeless households coming under this category is estimated to be approximately 45% - 50%.

The support needs of this group are predominantly met by appropriate staff within the Housing Service with potential additional support from relevant agencies who are supported through our homelessness strategy including Ypeople and Women's Aid Orkney.

Medium support needs

Approximately 35% to 45% of homeless households would be assessed as having medium support needs. These households would require a variety of support services. While many households will be in dispersed furnished accommodation, receiving floating support predominantly through Housing Services but with potential additional support from a variety of services, others will be in specialist accommodation specifically for the relevant client group such as Women's Aid's supported accommodation or accommodation for offenders or those at risk of offending.

Complex needs

A relatively low proportion of homeless households have complex needs and this varies over time. It may be as much as 10% of all homeless households but more commonly would be fewer than 5%.

Provision of Housing Support to households with complex needs is likely to be provided through the Team Leader (Housing Support) and specialist support services as relevant.

There can be greater challenges in managing complex and multiple needs in an Orkney context purely because of relatively small numbers raising complexities in respect of service provision. It is very difficult to provide a specialist service to one needs group when there may not be a constant demand from the group in question.

At the moment for instance there is no Housing First provision in Orkney. There are few homeless households with severe and multiple disadvantage or complex needs. There is a very small number where Housing First may be the most appropriate provision - it is estimated at two to three individuals. One potential group are those young people who have experienced care and who have complex needs. The Council would wish to explore this further with Orkney Health and Care, specifically Through Care and After Care Services as well as investigating if there are other households where this would be the most suitable type of provision.

Residential Support

There are a few specialist services providing 'on site' support including Women's Aid refuge and supported accommodation for young people. The proportion of homeless households is estimated at around 15%. Generally these households would be included in the categories of low or medium support needs as outlined above.

Consultation

A detailed process of consultation has been central to the development of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Initially a pre-consultation event was set up to actively involve key partners across the statutory and voluntary sectors in the development of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. This event was well attended.

Individual meetings / discussions were held with key partner agencies.

Feedback was sought from a broad range of partner agencies on the draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and an article was published in our Tenants' Newsletter.

In addition consultation will be continuing during the early stages of implementation. A joint seminar has been arranged for June 2019 with Orkney Housing Association Ltd to allow an opportunity for elected Members of the Council and Board Members of Orkney Housing Association Ltd to discuss ongoing implementation.

Views will be taken forward into future iterations of the document.

Orkney's Key Priorities

As a result of national and local political priorities, assessment of data and listening to the voice of our partner agencies we have identified and developed our key housing priorities relevant to the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Our vision for the next 5 years is to continue to provide a good quality Housing Options service and to prevent homelessness as much as possible. Where this is not possible we will aim to move to a position where homeless households move through Council services as quickly as possible; where time spent in temporary accommodation is kept to a minimum, while ensuring the housing stock we use as temporary accommodation provides a broad range of options, of good quality, of a size/type and in a location which match demand and minimise disruption to the daily lives of those experiencing homelessness.

The following Action Plan which gives some detail as to what the Council and our partners would wish to happen over the 5 years such as:

- keeping the use of temporary accommodation to a minimum while at the same time ensuring there is available some temporary supported accommodation services for those who require/wish it
- when temporary accommodation is used that time spent is kept to a minimum and to increase the proportion of lets to homeless households
- explore other options to temporary accommodation including Housing First
- reviewing support provision to ensure it is meeting people's needs and developing different approaches where appropriate including PIE
- to keep and increase the focus on prevention by good quality advice and information and timely interventions, where possible, and that other services and organisations are trained and provided with appropriate information to enable them to assist in the prevention of homelessness
- continue to seek to increase the supply of social housing while seeking to maintain the affordability of the Housing Revenue Account and working with Orkney Housing Association Ltd to deliver a small programme of new build and acquisition
- in delivering the above there is a need to recognise that this will require some staffing enhancement in order to enable the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to be effectively delivered.

The action plan is not currently funded and assumes that funding will be provided by the Scottish Government.

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Appendix 2 - Action Plan

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Start	Completion / active
General Delivery of Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan				
To actively deliver and implement the aims of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan	To create a 0.5 FTE post specifically to focus on the delivery of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan at G7	OIC	2019	

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Objective	Action	Responsibility	Start	Completion / active
Prevention of Homelessness				
To undertake a project of meeting with applicants on the housing waiting list to determine whether their housing needs could be met by other housing options	Creation of a specialist 0.5 FTE housing options officer at G6/G7	OIC	2019	
To maintain a housing options approach to homelessness prevention, improve the prevention of homelessness and increase the number of people who are diverted from homelessness	Expand the Housing Options guide available by investigating the potential of an interactive housing options portal	OIC and OHAL	2019	2021
	Maintain the accreditation in the National Standards for Housing Advice and support other organisations to maintain their accreditation accordingly	OIC, OHAL, CAB	2019/20	2020
	Increase the range of staff across relevant services who are able to identify and respond effectively to those who may be at risk of homelessness through training and development	OIC, OHAC, Third sector, Fire and Police Services	2019	2021

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Start	Completion / active
	To assess the feasibility of establishing a Mediation Service in Orkney to assist in the prevention of homelessness where appropriate including where there is antisocial behaviour / neighbour disputes and young people who have been asked to leave, where appropriate	OIC, Third sector	2020	2021
	To endeavour to reduce the level of homelessness presentations by 5% as a result of prevention activities outlined above	OIC, Third Sector	2021	
	To explore the possibility of introducing a corporate policy on domestic abuse.	OIC / OHAC / Third Sector	2021	2022

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Start	Completion /active
Temporary Accommodation				
Undertake assessment of time spent in temporary accommodation	To undertake an assessment of time spent in temporary accommodation relative to available lets	OIC	2019	
To minimise the use of and time spent in temporary accommodation.	Evaluate the possibility of converting some temporary tenancies into mainstream tenancies and identify any necessary replacement properties	OIC /OHAL	2020	Ongoing
	Consider potential to flip properties while considering the cost.	OIC	2020	
	Consider rotating the properties used as temporary accommodation	OIC, OHAL	2019	
	Review the operation of Choice Based Lettings in relation to the impact it has on housing homeless household including from temporary accommodation	OIC and 3rd sector	2020	2020

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Start	Completion / active
Housing Support				
<p>To ensure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the right type of support is available to households who are homeless and threatened with homelessness who require it. • that there is greater flexibility on how support services are delivered • that barriers to accessing support are addressed 	<p>To review in greater detail the support needs of households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness</p>	<p>OIC, OHAC and Third Sector</p>	<p>2019</p>	<p>2019</p>
	<p>Explore with OHAC potential for supporting those with multiple and complex needs and potential flexibility of resource</p>	<p>OIC / OHAC and Third Sector</p>	<p>2020</p>	

	Discuss with support providers, barriers to accessing support, how and when support is delivered including the of introducing PIE approach	OIC / OHAC and Third Sector	2020	
	Discuss with throughcare and aftercare services the potential for developing a Housing First model for those young people who have experience of care services and have complex needs	OIC , OHAL and OHAC's Through and Aftercare services	2019	2022

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Objective	Action	Responsibility	Start	Completion /active	Resources
	Explore potential to undertake pilot of housing first (5FTE x members of staff at G5)	OIC , OHAL and OHAC's Through and Aftercare services	2019	2022	
	Assess if this model is appropriate for any others	OIC, OHAC and Third sector	2021	2021	
	Delivery of two number of supported satellite flats to assist with young care leavers / other young people with complex needs (5 FTE x 5 members of staff at G5)	OIC, OHAC and Third Sector	2021		
	Review the local effectiveness of the SHORE Standards, continue to ensure proactivity in support of the client and introduce any changes that would lead to improvements	OIC, Criminal Justice, SPS	2020		

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Start	Completion /active
Permanent Accommodation				
Empty Homes Project to consider social rented housing	Assessment of ability of empty homes project to deliver additional social rented housing for Orkney while considering the additional costs incurred in the energy efficiency agenda	OIC	2019	
Physical provision of accommodation	To lobby the Scottish Government to allow flexibility in respect of use of Affordable Housing Supply Programme funding to facilitate a benchmark which equates to at least 80% of cost of property in line with the findings of the business plan	OIC	Ongoing	
Consider a programme of acquisition	To consider a programme of acquisition of 5 additional properties while considering the cost of energy efficiency measures	OIC	2020	
	To consider reviewing the policy of only offering one bedroom properties to single people and develop the necessary criteria where that policy did not apply	OIC, OHAL	2019	2019
	Increase the number of lets made by OIC to homeless households	OIC	2019	Ongoing

Work with OHAL to increase the number of lets available to homeless households	Work with OHAL to increase level of lets through lettings policy	OHAL	2019	Ongoing
	Revisit the section 5 and nominations agreement with OHAL to increase the number of homeless households housed through the housing association	OIC, OHAL	2019	2023
	Consider the ability to allow for additional choice in lettings which may include CBL	OIC	2019	
	Work in partnership with private sector re delivery of low cost home ownership schemes	OIC	2019	Ongoing
	Work in partnership with Development Trusts re rural and islands fund	OIC	2019	Ongoing

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Start	Completion /active	Resources
To explore options for the private sector to provide some assistance	Discuss with Orkney Islands Property Developments Ltd their role in the provision of private rented properties and as a letting agency and potential role in homeless prevention and supply of properties to rent.	OIC and OIPDL	2020	2020	
	Discuss with Orkney Housing Association Ltd whether there would be a potential for their subsidiary to assist with increasing provision of private rented properties by acting as a letting agency	OIC and OHAL	2020		
To ensure that rent levels do not create a barrier to employment or put households in debt	The Council will consider a moratorium on temporary accommodation rents to endeavour to improve affordability	OIC	2019	2020	

To ensure that standards in temporary accommodation are maintained at a high level	The Homelessness Service will continue to ensure that all temporary accommodation is thoroughly inspected and any defects, repairs etc are remedied before the household moves in.	OIC	2019	ongoing	
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Objective	Action	Responsibility	Start	Completion / active	Resources
Increase supply of social housing relets	Maintain small development programme inside HRA's affordability	OIC	2020	ongoing	
	Work in partnership with Orkney Housing Association Ltd re delivery of sustainable development programme inside affordability levels	OIC and OHAL	2020	Ongoing	

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Resource Request

Projected Costs	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Additional 0.5 FTE - delivery of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan at G7 rising by 3% pa	£16.3k	£16.8k	£17.3k	£17.8k	£18.4k	£86.6k
Additional 0.5 FTE housing options officer at G6/7 rising by 3% pa	£18.3k	£18.8k	£19.4k	£20.0k	£20.5k	£97.0k
Interactive Housing Options Portal	£15.0k					£15.0k
Prevention of Homelessness Training for a Range of Staff	£2.0k		£2.0k		£2.0k	£ 6.0k
Establishment of Mediation Service	£10.0k	£10.0k	£10.0k	£10.0k	£10.0k	£50.0k
Cost of flipping 5 properties per annum at £10k each for decorating, furnishing and equipping replacement property	£50.0k	£50.0k	£50.0k	£50.0k	£50.0k	£250.0k
Cost of rotating 5 properties per annum at £5k each for decorating and carpeting replacement property	£5.0k	£5.0k	£5.0k	£5.0k	£5.0k	£25.0k
Psychologically Informed Environment Training for Staff	£2.0k		£2.0k		£2.0k	£ 6.0k
Provision of one unit of Housing First to be built (1 x £135k x 80%)	£108.0k					£108.0k
Housing First Staff Costs (5FTEs x G5 rising by 3% pa)	£144.0k	£148.3k	£152.8k	£157.4k	£162.1k	£764.6
Housing First staff's training to meet SSSC requirements 5 x £1500		£7.5k				£7.5k
Provision of two supported satellite properties to assist with young care leavers / other young people with complex needs (2 x £135k x 80%)	£216.0k					£216.0k
Provision of two supported satellite properties from Rendall Road (5FTEs x G5 rising by 3% pa to cover two properties)	£144.0k	£148.3k	£152.8k	£157.4k	£162.1k	£764.6k
Increase proportion of Affordable Housing Supply	£520.0k	£520.0k	£520.0	£520.0k	£520.0k	£2,600k

Programme funding available for acquisition of 5 properties per annum assuming £130.0k purchase price						
Increase proportion of Affordable Housing Supply Programme funding available for building of additional 10 properties per annum assuming a						
Total	£1,250.60k	£924.70k	£931.30k	£937.60k	£952.10k	£4,996.30k

- There is a need to increase the proportion of the affordable housing supply programme funding available for both the acquisition of housing and building of properties.

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Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a function, policy or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

1. Identification of Function, Policy or Plan	
Name of function / policy / plan to be assessed.	Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
Service / service area responsible.	Housing Services
Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details.	Frances Troup, Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services Ext 2177 E-mail frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk
Date of assessment.	30 January 2019
Is the function / policy / plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	Existing

2. Initial Screening	
What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan?	Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans aim to end rough sleeping, transform the use of temporary accommodation and end homelessness in Scotland in a 5 year period.
Is the function / policy / plan strategically important?	The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan links strategically with the Local Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy and Strategic Housing Investment Plan.
State who is, or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how.	Homeless applicants and also non-homeless households who are applying for social rented housing.

<p>How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function / policy / plan?</p>	<p>A consultation event was undertaken to include all partner agencies across the statutory and voluntary sectors which allowed an opportunity for them to contribute their views. This event was facilitated by someone external to the Council and therefore neutral.</p> <p>A briefing report has been circulated to the Integration Joint Board as well as our Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.</p> <p>Key stakeholders have been involved throughout the process of transforming the initial draft RRTP into a final version of the document.</p>
<p>Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).</p>	<p>Certain groups are more prevalent amongst homeless households particularly single men. There is also a greater predominance of people with certain issues including mental health issues and drug / alcohol dependencies amongst the homeless population. A broad range of research exists in this respect.</p>
<p>Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See The Fairer Scotland Duty Interim Guidance for Public Bodies for further information.</p>	<p>There is significant research indicating that homeless households suffer socio-economic disadvantage and this is intensified if they are rough sleepers. The provision of housing or lack of it is recognised as being intrinsically linked to a range of indicators related to health, wealth and educational achievement.</p> <p>The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has produced a range of research focussing on poverty and disadvantage and the links between this and housing and homelessness. Research such as this relates directly to the introduction of the Fairer Scotland Duty.</p>
<p>Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality strands?</p>	<p>(Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons).</p>
<p>1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and</p>	<p>No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society.</p>

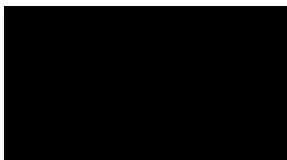
nationality.	
2. Sex: a man or a woman.	While clients may come from any group within society, single males are more significantly represented in homelessness statistics than single females or families.
3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society.
4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.	No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society. We recognise the potential for young transgender people to present as homeless due to family tensions but would anticipate numbers to be small.
5. Pregnancy and maternity.	No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society.
6. Age: people of different ages.	No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society.
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society.
8. Caring responsibilities.	No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society.
9. Care experienced.	No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society. Other policies are in place to endeavour to house young people coming through the care route without them having to present as homeless.
10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society.
11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	No not specifically. Clients may come from any group within society. Properties which are suitably adapted for homeless people with disabilities are very limited and this may require to be kept under review in case of any impact as a result of limited supply.
12. Socio-economic disadvantage.	Socio-economic disadvantage is likely to be more prevalent amongst homeless households than other groups within society. The RRTP is intended to assist in addressing this.
13. Isles-proofing.	The RRTP is intended to be developed at a local level allowing the ability to ensure island proofing within that. However, the national policy is about reducing time in temporary accommodation and Orkney's main issues include the physical lack of accommodation and affordability issues preventing the Housing Revenue Account

	<p>continuing to build new supply or acquire additional housing by any other means.</p> <p>As well as housing homeless households, there is also a need to house other groups within society where the Council has a statutory requirement. In addition there is a need for the Council to ensure that sufficient housing is available for other groups particularly young people who will be the future of the islands' economic stability and also its current workforce. There is in general very limited ability to live outwith the local authority area if working in Orkney.</p>
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3. Impact Assessment	
<p>Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?</p>	<p>Yes there is a greater impact identified on male homeless households but this will be addressed through delivery of the RRTP as will socio-economic disadvantage to some extent. There is a potential for gender reassignment / transgender issues to result in slightly increased levels of presentations. Care leavers are housed through alternative policies. There is the potential for increasing pressures on accessible properties.</p> <p>The remaining differential impact is as addressed under island-proofing.</p>
<p>How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts?</p>	<p>The RRTP has been used in order to refer to the need for additional housing in Orkney and the fully costed version will refer to this.</p> <p>Currently it is unaffordable to continue to develop / acquire additional housing and therefore this will impact on the length of time homeless households will spend in temporary accommodation. It will also impact on the length of time it takes to house other groups within society.</p>
<p>Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?</p>	<p>Yes</p>

4. Conclusions and Planned Action	
<p>Is further work required?</p>	<p>No.</p>

What action is to be taken?	N/A
Who will undertake it?	N/A
When will it be done?	N/A
How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans).	N/A



Date: 18 March 2019

Signature:

Name: Frances Troup

(BLOCK CAPITALS).

Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send a copy to HR and Performance. A Word version should also be emailed to HR and Performance at hrsupport@orkney.gov.uk