

Item: 17

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 13 November 2019.

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Report by Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

1. Purpose of Report

To advise of funding received for delivering the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That, on 2 May 2019, the Council approved the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, a document which the Scottish Government required as part of its aim to end rough sleeping, transform the use of temporary accommodation and end homelessness in Scotland in a five-year period which required to be implemented by 1 April 2019.

2.2.

That the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan for Orkney had been costed at £4,996,300 over the five-year term, with the costs of year one being identified as £1,250,600.

2.3.

That feedback has been received from the Scottish Government, as detailed in section 5 of this report.

2.4.

That the Scottish Government has awarded funding, totalling £22,000, for financial year 2019 to 2020, making full implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan for Orkney unaffordable.

3. Introduction

3.1.

At its meeting held on 3 April 2019, the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee noted:

3.1.1.

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

3.1.2.

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

3.1.3.

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

3.1.4.

That a consultation had been undertaken with a range of partner agencies and that consultation would continue during the early stages of implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

3.1.5.

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

3.1.6.

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

3.1.7.

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

3.1.8.

That the Housing and Homelessness Service had strong foundations on which to build, as outlined in section 6.4 of the report by the Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.

3.1.9.

Issues with the level of resource provision particularly as regards the supply of accommodation.

3.1.10.

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

3.1.11.

That the Scottish Government had been advised of timelines for consideration of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, by both the Integration Joint Board and the 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, had agreed to a short extension.

3.2.

The Committee recommended that the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, together with the Action Plan, attached as Appendix 2 to the Minute, be approved.

4. Prioritisation and Consultation

4.1.

The cost of delivering the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan was identified as being £4,996,300 over a five-year term, with the costs of year one being identified as £1,250,600.

4.2.

It was stated in the plan that “the action plan is not currently funded and assumes that funding will be provided by the Scottish Government”.

4.3.

Equally it was recognised that delivery of the action plan in full, would be dependent on the level of funding which was awarded by the Scottish Government, over the five-year term.

4.4.

In June 2019, the annual joint seminar with Orkney Housing Association Limited focused on homelessness and the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and a prioritisation exercise was undertaken to seek views on the projects which should be prioritised over others.

4.5.

While a seminar is not a decision-making forum, there was an opportunity to identify possible priorities. Some actions were cost neutral and could therefore be progressed provided there is a staffing resource to assist.

5. Scottish Government Response

5.1.

Scottish Government provided feedback on the second iteration of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan on 13 September 2019.

5.2.

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

- Acknowledgement of close alignment with other strategies and plans.
- Positive feedback on the Council's Homelessness Prevention Policy.
- Positive response to the Council's proposal to explore the possibility of introducing a corporate policy on domestic abuse.
- Generally positive feedback relating to the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan being used to effectively replace the Temporary Accommodation Strategy.
- The Equality Impact Assessment was received positively and there was a recognition that it included island proofing.

5.3.

Areas for development were also identified and these included:

- Suggested enhancing the plan with more information on homelessness prevention in partnership with others.
- Suggested reinforcing the narrative of the plan surrounding the actions which would be delivered in partnership with other agencies.
- While the plan recognises the need to increase the level of lets from Orkney Housing Association Limited and the private rented sector, no targets or projections have been set.
- Measures to reduce time spent in temporary accommodation have been included, however targets and projections have not been set.
- Queries were included regarding the cost of "flipping" properties (converting a temporary tenancy into a permanent tenancy without moving the household) and the cost of rotating properties at £10,000 and £5,000 respectively appeared to be quite high. The suggested benchmark being £1,500.
- The cost of delivering a housing first model (heavily supported accommodation) was felt to be disproportionate and a ratio of 1 caseworker to 7 clients was suggested.
- The resource plan should be developed to identify the contribution being invested by the Council and its partners into delivering the plan.
- Capital costs were disregarded (a request had been made to use the affordable housing supply programmes funding towards 80% of the cost of a property instead of just £59,000).

5.4.

Responses have been made accordingly and it is anticipated that the responses from the Council will be used to inform funding decisions for 2020 to 2021 onwards.

5.5.

There will be ongoing discussions between the Council and the Scottish Government particularly regarding the cost of delivering various related services in an island context.

5.6.

The funding awarded for financial year 2019 to 2020 is £22,000 which means that the action plan for delivery will require to be substantially altered accordingly.

5.7.

Initially some projects will be moved to later years. However, it may be the case that these would need to be removed in the future depending on funding awards made by the Scottish Government. The original Action Plan is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

5.8.

Difficulties are also anticipated regarding the timing of the financial award and the amount of background work to be delivered relative to the time afforded.

5.9.

No certainty has been awarded as to whether the Council will receive funding for the financial year 2020 to 2021 or thereafter.

6. Priorities Identified

6.1.

At the seminar referred to at section 4.4 above, the following actions from the Action Plan were identified as priorities, which have a cost incurred:

6.1.1. Option 1

Creation of a 0.5 FTE post specifically to focus on the delivery of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan estimated at G7 (£16,600 for year 1).

6.1.2. Option 2

Creation of a specialist 0.5 FTE housing options officer estimated at G6/G7 (£16,600 for year 1).

6.1.3. Option 3

Expand the housing options guide available by investigating the potential for an interactive housing options portal (£15,000).

6.1.4. Option 4

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 (£2,000).

6.1.5. Option 5

To assess the feasibility of establishing a mediation service in Orkney to assist in the prevention of homelessness where appropriate including where there is anti-social behaviour/neighbour disputes and young people who have been asked to leave, where appropriate (£10,000 for year 1).

6.2.

Unfortunately, in general terms most of the identified priorities are unaffordable. The lack of assurance of any financial award for financial year 2020 to 2021 is an additional complexity.

6.3.

Consequently, the funding award will be redirected to seek some additional resource to focus on homelessness, deliver as much of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan as is realistic and to adjust it for the future.

7. Corporate Governance

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.

8. Financial Implications

8.1.

The Government announced that there would be funding of £21,000,000 available across Scotland, with £4,000,000 of this being available to support five city authorities who are participating in specific projects.

8.2.

An initial award of £30,000 was provided to the Council to support the development of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. 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.

8.3.

Thereafter an award of £22,000 was provided to the Council to deliver the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan for the first year. There is no information as to what level of funding may be awarded for future years.

9. Legal Aspects

9.1.

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

9.2.

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.

9.3.

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.

9.4.

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.

9.5.

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.

9.6.

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

9.7.

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.

9.8.

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:

- Those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- Those who are living in unsatisfactory housing.
- Tenants of social landlords who under-occupy their homes.

Note: in the first two cases, the applicant must have unmet housing needs that cannot be met through other options.

10. Contact Officers

James Wylie, Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, extension 2433, Email james.wylie@orkney.gov.uk.

Frances Troup, Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services, extension 2177, Email frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk.

11. Appendix

Appendix 1: Original Action Plan

Appendix 1 - 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	

DRAFT

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				
To ensure <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 	To review in greater detail the support needs of households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness	OIC, OHAC and Third Sector	2019	2019
	Explore with OHAC potential for supporting those with multiple and complex needs and potential flexibility of resource	OIC / OHAC and Third Sector	2020	

	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

DRAFT

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	
--	--	-----	------	---------	--

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.

DRAFT