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# NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

1 November 2022

## Cabinet

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**Title:** Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Progress

**Purpose:** To provide a year three update on the implementation of the North Ayrshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, and to seek approval for the priorities identified for year four of the plan.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (i) considers the progress made to date in the implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.
- (ii) agree the priorities set for delivering the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan during 2022/2023.

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### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The North Ayrshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) 2019-2024 was approved by Cabinet in March 2019, subject to Scottish Government funding.
- 1.2 Implementation of the RRTP is undertaken by a multi-agency task force chaired by the Head of Service for Housing and Public Protection.
- 1.3 There has been significant progress made in implementing the RRTP, which has resulted in the development and implementation of a range of inter-agency initiatives.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 The North Ayrshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan was approved by Cabinet in March 2019 and following review was awarded £1.196m of Scottish Government funding to deliver the five year plan.
- 2.2 The North Ayrshire multi-agency Homelessness Task Force, chaired by the Head of Service for Housing and Public Protection, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the RRTP and monitoring of the budget.
- 2.3 The table below summarises the first three years' progress in implementing the plan.

RRTP Outcome	Progress – Year 3																
<p>We will proactively prevent homelessness wherever it is possible to do so</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We have increased funding to the Community Housing Advocacy Project to support people who are at risk of homelessness as a result of the cost-of-living crisis</li> <li>▪ We are working with private sector landlords to prevent the incidence of homelessness on receipt of a Section 11 notification (which advises the Council of their intention to evict a household)</li> <li>▪ We are working with Health Improvement Scotland to understand where prevention activities could intervene within Health systems to reduce the risk of crisis, and subsequently homelessness</li> <li>▪ We are undertaking a young persons’ housing sustainability pilot within the Garnock Valley. New Council tenants under the age of 25 will be offered a package of support to improve their independent living skills, whilst ensuring that they understand the rights and responsibilities of having a tenancy. The pilot was temporarily paused as a result of COVID 19 and will resume again by March 2023.</li> <li>▪ The Violence Against Women Partnership have undertaken a range of activities within secondary schools to promote gender equality and to highlight the impact of gender-based violence</li> <li>▪ We developed a robust prison discharge protocol aligned to the national SHORE standards; implementation was delayed as a result of the pandemic, and has been rescheduled for delivery during 2022/2023</li> </ul>																
<p>We will reduce time spent in temporary accommodation</p>	<p>From January to March 2020, we undertook a pilot of increased lets to homeless households within the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Households with children</li> <li>• Households in employment</li> <li>• Women experiencing violence</li> </ul> <p>During the pandemic we extended the increased lets to all homeless households. Reducing our duration of homelessness from 26 weeks to 23 weeks.</p> <p>We have significantly reduced the time households spent in temporary accommodation as demonstrated below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="549 1794 1398 1980"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th></th> <th>Dispersed Accommodation</th> <th>Hostel Accommodation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Year</td> <td>2019/20</td> <td>109.5 days</td> <td>20.7 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year</td> <td>2020/21</td> <td>102.3 days</td> <td>16.6 days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year</td> <td>2021/22</td> <td>93.2 days</td> <td>6.7 days</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Dispersed Accommodation	Hostel Accommodation	Year	2019/20	109.5 days	20.7 days	Year	2020/21	102.3 days	16.6 days	Year	2021/22	93.2 days	6.7 days
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	<p>The time spent in dispersed accommodation has reduced by 15% and our time spent in hostel accommodation has reduced by 68% since the implementation of the RRTP.</p>
<p>We will reduce the number of hostel spaces and prioritise the use of dispersed accommodation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We have reduced Hostel Accommodation in North Ayrshire by 53 bed spaces by closing both Green Street Hostel and Victoria House</li> <li>▪ We worked in partnership with Women’s Aid to reduce shared refuge accommodation in both Irvine and Kilbirnie, replacing them with dispersed accommodation</li> <li>▪ We increased our level of dispersed temporary accommodation to accommodate the closure of both hostels, and in response to increased demand as a result of COVID-19. There is a lower rate of turnover in dispersed furnished accommodation than within hostel provision. It is therefore necessary to create a higher level of dispersed accommodation to facilitate hostel rooms being closed</li> </ul> <p>We have committed to reducing our dispersed temporary accommodation to 115 units by year 5 of the RRTP. We currently have 240 units of dispersed accommodation and due to the level of demand, have not been able to reduce accommodation levels. We are focusing our resources on prevention and early intervention initiatives in an effort to reduce homelessness. Success of these initiatives will enable us to further reduce levels of temporary accommodation provision.</p>
<p>We will implement Housing First for our most complex disadvantaged service users.</p> <p>Target by the end of year 3:</p> <p>60 Housing First Tenancies</p>	<p>Working across the Community Planning Partnership, we aim to break the cycle of homelessness for people with the multiple and complex needs of addictions, mental health issues and offending behaviour by increasing the number of Housing First tenancies available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An interagency team has been developed to deliver a coordinated response to support the above client group to sustain their mainstream accommodation and improve their life outcomes, including the objectives as detailed within our RRTP</li> <li>▪ We had committed within the RRTP to set up 20 Housing First tenancies in Year 3, taking us to a total of 60. We have exceeded this target and reached 62 by the end of 2021/2022</li> <li>▪ During Year 3, we identified 22 Housing First clients utilising the criteria detailed within the RRTP and furnished all 22 tenancies at a cost of £77,000, using the funding made available from Scottish Government for this purpose.</li> </ul> <p>Resources aligned to Housing First:</p>

- During 2021/2022 we created an additional Support Worker post as a resource to meet the demands of the increased caseload
- We have an agreement in place to consolidate the five years' funding provided by Scottish Government for the RRTP to maximise our opportunity to deliver on the full commitments as detailed within our RRTP
- We have completed recruitment of the specialist Mental Health and Addiction posts within the specialist Housing First Team
- We have procured a specialist 3rd sector advocacy and peer support service for our Housing First clients which focusses on both addictions and mental health. This contract commenced on 13th December 2021
- We have a dedicated resource within the Housing First Team providing advice and support to people who are at risk of homelessness from within Scottish prisons, identifying people who meet the criteria for Housing First on discharge and liaising with the integrated Housing First Support team to manage the transition between prison and Housing First Tenancy
- We continue to support Riverside Homes, who were awarded Scottish Government funding to enable them to provide Housing First support for families. The project which commenced in June 2021 currently provides direct support to 20 families with children, who are struggling to maintain their tenancy, or who have previously been through the homeless system
- We continue to focus on prison discharge as the main route into Housing First to try and break the link between homelessness and criminal activity (incarceration). As a result, 64% of the people being supported by the Housing First model come from a prison setting

### **Impact**

We have resettled and supported 48 males (average age 36) and 14 females (average age of 36) into Housing First tenancies. All 62 households had previously been known to Homeless Services.

Our Housing First tenancy sustainment success rate is as follows:

- Year 1 (2019/2020) 67%
- Year 2 (2020/2021) 91%
- Year 3 (2021/2022) 92%

We recognise that the ongoing improvement is as a direct result of the integrated approach adopted as we have brought on more specialist provision.

In addition, we undertook a review after year one to identify learning. This resulted in a range of work being undertaken with partner agencies to ensure we had a community planning understanding of and response to Housing First. This included:

- Work undertaken with the Safer North Ayrshire Partnership, who now have Housing First included within the Safer North Ayrshire Strategy
- Training with local housing teams to expand their knowledge and understanding of both the Housing First programme and the support services available where issues arise
- We worked in partnership with Police Scotland (locality teams) to develop a shared understanding of the outcomes to be achieved; this informed our joint approach as issues arise on an individual basis
- We undertook training with the antisocial behaviour team to ensure that we responded jointly when negative behaviour became apparent, with a focus on resolving arising issues as opposed to enforcement action
- By involving the Health and Social Care Partnership and NHS Ayrshire and Arran in the Housing First Team, we have successfully communicated the needs of this client group across our health partners.
- Work was undertaken with Scottish Fire and Rescue which resulted in the undertaking of Fire Safety assessments within every Housing First tenancy
- We work alongside voluntary organisations ensuring they are cognisant with the programme; this has resulted in their support in providing both services and goods as required
- The North Ayrshire food bank provides vouchers for our Housing First tenants
- The latest service recruited into the Housing First programme is Turning Point Scotland who offer a Peer Support service for our Housing First tenants. The service works in tandem with the existing Prevention Early Intervention and Recovery (PEAR) delivered by Addiction services

We will shift funding towards flexible floating Housing Support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We have successfully integrated the Housing Support Service previously provided by Barnardo's with the North Ayrshire Housing Support Service, ensuring a focused and consistent approach to the delivery of services in line with both the RRTP and the Local Housing Strategy</li> <li>▪ The Health and Social Care Partnership have provided funding in kind by way of specialist training for the Housing First Support Workers</li> </ul>
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2.4 The table below details the emerging priorities for year four of the RRTP.

RRTP outcome	Priorities – Year 4
We will proactively prevent homelessness wherever it is possible to do so	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We will implement the prison discharge protocol to reduce the risk of homelessness on discharge</li> <li>▪ We will work with partners to review and update the hospital discharge protocols to ensure people are not homeless on discharge</li> <li>▪ We will finalise the review of the throughcare protocol to ensure young people leaving care have pathways into housing and therefore do not become homeless</li> <li>▪ We will consider emerging best practice and review how we deliver services to reduce the risk of homelessness through prevention and early intervention</li> <li>▪ We will maximise tenancy sustainment by ensuring that new and existing tenants have access to the support they require</li> <li>▪ We will continue to work with partners to reduce the incidence of domestic violence</li> </ul>
We will reduce time spent in temporary accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We will continue to monitor the time spent in temporary accommodation and will review the factors which impact on the duration</li> </ul>
We will reduce the level of dispersed accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We will reduce temporary dispersed accommodation by 10 units by the end of year 5 of the plan</li> </ul>
We will implement Housing First for our most complex disadvantaged service users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We will increase the number of Housing First Tenancies created to 80</li> <li>▪ We will increase the support provision by recruiting one additional Housing First Support Officer post (funded by the Scottish Government RRTP funding via the Ending Homelessness Together Fund)</li> </ul>
We will shift funding towards flexible floating Housing Support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This objective has been met as detailed within the table above at 2.3</li> </ul>

### **3. Proposals**

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

- (i) considers the significant progress made to date in implementing the North Ayrshire RRTP, as detailed at para 2.3; and
- (ii) approves the year 4 priorities as detailed at para 2.4 of this paper.

### **4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

#### **Financial**

4.1 The RRTP is funded by the Scottish Government on an annual basis via the Ending Homelessness together fund.

Any reduction in the number of dispersed furnished flats will result in a reduction in rental income which will require to be offset by reduced expenditure across the service.

#### **Human Resources**

4.2 The majority of Housing First resources to date have been provided within existing housing budgets, as we have realigned staffing resources to focus on this work. Support provision will be increased with the appointment of an additional Housing First Support Officer post (funded via the Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Fund).

#### **Legal**

4.3 The Council has a statutory responsibility to prevent and alleviate homelessness. The implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan assists with the delivery of this duty.

#### **Equality/Socio-economic**

4.4 The expansion of homeless prevention activities reduces the risk of crisis for households in the most socially deprived demographic. The Housing First programme works to support people with complex needs back into training and employment, reducing the dependence on welfare benefits and improving life outcomes.

#### **Climate Change and Carbon**

4.5 None.

#### **Key Priorities**

4.6 The Housing First element of the RRTP supports the Council priority 'North Ayrshire residents and communities are safe' by breaking the cycle of homelessness and criminal behaviour, working to support households with complex issues to engage with support and wider service provision. It also supports the Council priority 'North Ayrshire has an inclusive, growing and enterprising economy' as it works to engage vulnerable people with training, education and employment opportunities.

The RRTP supports the Council priority 'North Ayrshire's residents and communities enjoy good life-long health and well-being' as it works to tackle inequality, ensuring vulnerable people have access to services, employment opportunities and housing. It also supports the Council priority 'North Ayrshire has homes that meet our residents' needs as it works to deliver sustainable housing outcomes which meet people's needs and aspirations.

### **Community Wealth Building**

4.7 None.

## **5. Consultation**

5.1 A range of consultation has been undertaken with service users, staff and partners via Homeless Network Scotland and Health Improvement Scotland and directly with the Scottish Government to inform the RRTP priorities.

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For further information please contact **Janeine Barrett, Senior Manager (Homelessness and Community Safety)** on 01294 314600

## **Background Papers**

**1 - North Ayrshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019 -2024**