RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN (RRTP) SUBMISSION 2021-22

Scottish Government Feedback

Local Authority:	Moray

Checklist	
Activities and Spend Report	**x**
Updated RRTP	**x**
Updated EQIA	**x**

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Brief overview of progress and key evidence from the local authority (LA), challenges and where there is good practice in place. Also – how does this fit with Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)/Local Housing Strategy (LHS)/ Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) etc? And read across to other local plans and strategies e.g. Local Outcomes Improvement Plans (LOIP) etc?

Current Position with Homelessness

Moray Council supplied updated RRTP, EQIA and Budget Template.

Moray Council has stated that activities have been modest to date but have ambitious plans for the next 4 year period. Moray Council states that it is unable to adopt the full Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan written in 2019 due to the lack of funding provided by the Scottish Government.

Moray Council, with the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic in March 2020, saw a significant period when the letting of housing was suspended and the demand for temporary accommodation increased. Which added further difficulties progressing their RRTP as originally planned.

It has also proved challenging for Moray Council to recruit suitable staff for the roles. Although some progress has been made, the original RRTP has now been updated to better reflect current circumstances and provides an update for year 1 of the plan.

Moray Council considered how it can transform current service provision over the next 4 years to reduce homelessness in Moray. It has also updated the resources that will be required to make the transformational change whilst taking into account the financial limitations. The Council has looked at how it can minimise costs by making homelessness a "corporate" responsibility rather than simply a "housing" problem.   Further discussions with other council services, agencies, housing associations, third sector partners and service users will help shape future services with the aim of preventing homelessness where possible.

Although the Moray Council has been unable to implement its RRTP in full, there have been areas where they feel improvements have already been made.

One area is the average time taken from receiving a homelessness application to full 'discharge of duty' which has fallen from **135** days in 2020/21 to **121** in 2021/22. One area of concern by HARSAG was the length of time it took applicants to navigate the 'homelessness process'. This has been successfully reduced, in part due to the reduced number of applications, but the aim is to further reduce this time period in 2022/23 to **100** days.

Housing First (HF)

Detail of the local authority's Housing First programme. Where Housing First has not commenced, details of the consideration to commence Housing First or a similar delivery programme.

Detail of how many Housing First tenancies have started and the average support cost of each Housing First tenancy.

Moray managed to appoint 2 Housing Support Workers enabling it to fully implement its HF project.

Moray HF project launched in June 21 and the council has 5 tenancies up and running with an aim to begin another 5 by the end of the year.

Detail of furniture packages including how the package was funded.

CF Services Ltd and Moray Fresh Start (Third Sector Organisation) currently work with Moray Council when temporary accommodation requires to be furnished or starter packs need to be provided to tenants. This has worked well to date and this arrangement will continue for those in Housing First properties.

Moray Council provides furniture packages to all HF tenants at move in stage which are supplied by CF Furnishings at a cost of £2,106 per property.

The Council also works with a local charity, Moray Fresh Start who also supply some household essentials at the beginning of a tenancy.

Housing First Partners

Moray HF partners include:

• Housing Support Service (community) and Housing Support Service (TA)
• Community Safety Team
• Money Advice, Income Maximisation, and Welfare Benefits Teams.
• Criminal Justice/Youth Justice.
• Revenues Team which incorporates Housing Benefit.
• Moray Integration Joint Board.
• Arrows (Drug and Alcohol Service).
• Advocacy Services.

Impact of Housing First/Progress to date

Moray states that the HF tenancies are "doing well" and it is an early stage in the project and it is difficult to determine the impact so far.

Future Plans for Housing First/ Mainstreaming

Moray plans to have 10 HF tenancies a year.

<u>Questions on Housing First from Scottish Government</u>

What is the average support cost of each Housing First tenancy?

What are the HF costs for 21/22?

Do you have any plans for mainstreaming HF? Are you having conversations with MIJB on this?

Housing Options works in partnership with other Council Services, Partner Agencies, the third sector and families to prevent and alleviate homelessness. Current services/partners include:

Council Services
- Housing Support Service (community) and the Support Service (temporary accommodation);
- Occupational Therapist (based in Housing Team and jointly funded by the Moray Integration Joint Board);
- Community Safety Team;
- Money Advice; Income Maximisation; and Welfare Benefits Teams;
- Children and Family Social Work Services;
- Criminal Justice/Youth Justice; and
- Revenues Team which incorporates Housing Benefit.

Partner Organisations
- Moray Integration Joint Board;
- Citizens Advice Bureau;
- Arrows (Drug and Alcohol Service);
- Advocacy Services; and
- Moray Women's Aid (includes residential support service for women experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse)
- SACRO (Residential Support Service for those with Addictions)
- SACRO (Residential Support Service for young people 16 -24)

Homelessness households continue to present to the local authority with a range of vulnerabilities. These can often become a barrier to entering permanent accommodation and extend the period of time that households remain in a homelessness situation. Housing Support is a key element of the service which can be adjusted to accommodate the level of support required by the applicant to enable households to move through the system sooner.

Detail of new preventative measures implemented from RRTP

Success/Aim of prevention measures implemented

Partnerships and engagement with Frontline Service Providers

Questions on Prevention from Scottish Government

What are your plans regarding prevention indicatives over the remaining RRTP timeframe?

What percentage of staff will be accessing the Training Toolkit?

TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION (TA)

Evidence of how the local authority has transformed their use of TA and re-provisioned to provide more settled accommodation.

Current TA Position (Type, Capacity and Average length of stay)

During 2020/21, the average time spent in temporary accommodation was **152** days. This reduced to **133** days in 2021/22. The aim is to reduce this further to **110** days in 2022/23.

At 31 March 2022, the number of temporary accommodation units within Moray was reduced to 139 with an intention to reduce this further to no more than 120 units during 2022/23. Of the 139 units, 106 were occupied. A further 33 properties were void of which 11 were waiting a new tenant.

Moray Council has regular meetings with senior staff to review temporary accommodation which needs to remain fluid. Moray's themes this year are not so focussed on flipping tenancies as much as decommissioning two of their more dated hostels.

Moray Council plan to close a 6 bedded hostel by the end of August 2022 with another 10 bedded hostel by the end of 2022/23. Both of these hostels had shared utilities for service users and have been sparsely used recently.

Moray will continue to monitor temporary accommodation needs, with an eye on potential approaches from refugees/Ukrainians.

Projections and Policies in place for reducing TA and time in TA

Moray Council proposed reductions will be achieved by improving the re-let times for void properties from its current level of 60+ days. This will assist with keeping void loss to a minimum and allow households to move out quicker enabling that property to be reused by another homeless household.

Questions on TA from Scottish Government
Moray's plans to reduce TA are well developed – do you anticipate any challenges to continuing this progress?

Current Position on Settled / Supported Accommodation

The Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) is due for review in 2022/23, the latest HNDA was carried out in 2017 and found that 1,179 affordable homes would be needed over 2018-2023, and that there was a significant shortfall in availability of affordable housing within Moray.

Moray has a high proportion of single person homeless households resulting in significant pressure on one bed social rented housing, both for temporary accommodation use and as an affordable permanent housing option. The aim was to have 30% of all new build properties as one bedroom units. This has been achieved by Moray Council since the HNDA was completed in 2017 and has eased pressure for that particular group of applicants.

The 2020 Local Development Plan affordable and accessible housing policy requires 25% of new housing developments to be "affordable" and that in the majority of cases this affordable housing is provided within the site.   Approximately half of Moray's households live in the Elgin Housing Market Area (HMA) and therefore approximately half of the Housing Supply Target provision has been assigned to Elgin HMA.

The current level of completed and projected completions of affordable housing are presented in the table below:

Completed and projected completions of Affordable Housing	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
No of Completions	72	102	109	193	**476**

Source: Moray SHIP 2022/23

The Toolkit supplied alongside the Scottish Government's guidance provides a statistical analysis of the shortfall in supply required to achieve rapid rehousing within 5 years. In Moray, the toolkit identified **a shortfall of 635 lets over 5 years (127 lets per year)** to be allocated to statutorily homeless households. Current turnover of existing and new build properties fall short of that requirement.

Activities taken forward to reposition settled / supported accommodation

Progress on lets to homeless households

During 2018/19, Moray Council allocated 46.2% of its general properties to homeless households. This increased in 2020/21 to 49.2% and again in 2021/22 to 52.6%. By comparison, RSLs allocated around 53% of their general properties to homeless households in 2018/19 increasing to around 63% and 49.6% in 2020/21 and 2021/22.

Moray Council allocates its own vacancies in accordance with its Allocation Policy from 3 separate housing lists – Waiting (32%), Transfer (18%) and Homelessness (50%).

<u>Support to Improve Tenancy Sustainment</u>

<u>Future projections with settled / supported accommodation</u>

<u>Links to other Government and Housing Strategies</u>

<u>Use of, or engagement with, the Private Rented Sector</u>

<u>Questions on Settled / Supported Accommodation from Scottish Government</u>

What plans do you have to tackle the shortfall in lets across Moray?

What are your plans to engage the PRS in solving this issue, accepting it provides a low percentage of total stock?

COST ANALYSIS

Evidence of how funding allocated through the Ending Homelessness Together Fund for RRTP Implementation has been used. Activities and Spend report also captures contributions to funding from the local authority and other funding sources.

RRTP Implementation Spend 2021/22

	£	
EHT Funding Received in 2021/22	£	**£90,000**
EHT Funding Spent in 2021/22	£	
Carried over EHT Funding from 2020/21	£	**£248,000**
Local Authority Contributions in 2021/22	£	
Other Funding Received in 2021/22	£	

Accessed additional funding of:

Funding breakdown

1 x 0.5 (fte) Homeless Projects Policy Officer (RRTP)	£20,877.00
1 x Housing Support Officer (Housing First)	£42,401.00
1 x Housing Support Worker (Housing First)	£29,843.00
Further develop and maintain training programme	£4,000.00
HF - Provide adequate furnishings for another 10 Housing First tenancies	£22,110.00
Void rent loss to the HRA for the properties which have been identified for use but not yet occupied	£2,389.00
Hardship Fund for Housing First clients	£5,000.00
Total 21/22 Spend	**£126,620.00**

Questions on Cost Analysis from Scottish Government