

Agenda Item	8.
Report No	CLH 30/19

## HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Care, Learning and Housing

**Date:** 29 May 2019

**Report Title:** Homelessness: Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Update

**Report By:** Director of Community Services

### 1 Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the revised Highland Council Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan which was submitted to the Scottish Government on 5 April 2019 subject to Member approval.
- 1.2 This report also provides an update on:
- national policy objectives in regard to homelessness;
  - performance against the Unsuitable Accommodation Order;
  - Scottish Government consultations on homelessness;
  - a review of the Homeless Appeals process; and
  - re-tendering of supported accommodation to meet Audit requirements.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are invited to:
- approve** the updated Highland Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and associated Action Plan as attached at **Appendices 1 and 2**;
  - note** that Scottish Government phase 2 funding is now anticipated for confirmation from August 2019;
  - note** that a further report will be presented to Committee with details of progress against the Action Plan once funding is confirmed; and
  - note** that a further report will be presented on the homeless appeals process.

### **3 Background**

3.1 The Care, Learning and Housing Committee received an update on homelessness initiatives in December 2017 and again on 15 March 2018.

3.2 The Care, Learning and Housing Committee Policy Development Group considered homelessness at their meetings on 19 September 2017 and on 11 September 2018. Key points arising from the discussion were:

- continuing the work to supply affordable houses in the communities where they are most needed;
- improving outcomes for households with a person-centred approach to their housing options to include use of the 'homeless at home' element of the allocation policy and converting temporary tenancies into secure tenancies where appropriate;
- managing the aspirations and expectations of the many households and organisations who lobby for a move to Inverness in preference to solutions in their existing area which may meet their needs; and
- further partnership working is required to develop a Housing First model appropriate to Highland and to ensure partner services can provide the intensive holistic support required to make this work.

3.3 The main areas of work on homelessness over the last two years have involved:

- increasing use of Council houses / Housing Association stock as temporary furnished accommodation;
- re-tendering our temporary accommodation framework with private sector providers to try and achieve better value and improved quality; and
- developing our Housing Options approach to homeless prevention in line with national guidance.

3.4 In Highland, the number of people presenting as homeless has been relatively stable at around 1,100 cases a year over the last 5 years, but the number of households in temporary accommodation has increased. This is largely due to the lack of suitable housing available to make offers of permanent accommodation.

3.5 Currently over 550 households are in temporary accommodation in Highland. The average time households spend in temporary accommodation is 9 months for families and 11 months for single people /couples without children. This waiting time increases to 12 and 17 months for the Inverness City area.

3.6 As previously reported, the Council provides temporary accommodation through a mix of our own housing stock, property leased from individual private landlords, or through a framework contract with a range of accommodation providers. We currently use a high proportion of private sector Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) rooms with shared facilities as temporary accommodation, although we have a planned programme for reducing our use of this type of accommodation.

3.7 Under the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004 (amended 2007) accommodation with shared facilities can only be used in exceptional circumstances when temporarily housing families with children or pregnant women. Since October 2017 there has been a cap of 1 week on its use which has resulted in 21 breaches in Highland in 2018-19 compared to 7 in the

previous year and 3 in 2016-17. Breaches of the Order are reported quarterly to the Scottish Government. The efforts to minimise the impact of homelessness for children was detailed in a report to this Committee on 30 May 2018.

- 3.8 Breaches of the unsuitable accommodation order were almost exclusively in Inverness and were a direct result of the lack of family sized temporary furnished accommodation to meet increasing pressure arising from families becoming homeless. We have taken a number of measures to increase our ability to respond to this need in order to prevent future breaches of the order, and there have been no breaches this year to date.

## **4 National Policy Objectives**

- 4.1 As previously reported, the Programme for Government includes the following commitments to tackle homelessness in Scotland:

- set a clear national objective to eradicate rough sleeping, recognising that it requires more than just the provision of housing;
- implement the recommendations of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) to develop responses on the actions and legislative changes required to transform the use of temporary accommodation; and
- create an 'Ending Homelessness Together' Fund of £50 million over a five year period to support anti-homelessness initiatives and pilot solutions to drive faster change.

- 4.2 The Scottish Government accepted the majority of recommendations of the HARSAG in June 2018. This included the recommendation that all local authorities produce Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans to document how they would tackle homelessness.

- 4.3 Where homelessness cannot be prevented, Rapid Rehousing is defined as follows:

- a settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible;
- time spent in any form of temporary accommodation reduced to a minimum, with the fewer transitions the better; and
- when temporary accommodation is needed, the optimum type is mainstream, furnished and within a community.

- 4.4 For clients with multiple and complex support needs beyond housing, a Housing First model is recommended. Housing First is based on the following premises:

- housing is a basic human right, not a reward for an applicant demonstrating that they are ready and able to sustain a secure tenancy; and
- once the chaos of homelessness is eliminated from a person's life stabilisation occurs faster and is more enduring.

- 4.5 The HARSAG recommendation is that plans will become an integral part of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and be reviewed annually as part of the SHIP process. Highland's SHIP 2019-2024 was approved at the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee on 8 November 2018. This proposes a target of building 500 new affordable homes each year for the next five years. Increasing the supply of the right type and size of affordable housing in Highland is essential to tackling homelessness.

4.6 The Scottish Government issued updated guidance for local authorities use to develop Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans in October 2018. Highland was awarded £61k to develop its Plan and Committee on 6 December 2018 approved the appointment of a temporary post to develop the Highland Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan during the calendar year 2019. This lead officer is now in place.

## 5 Highland Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

5.1 A first iteration of a Highland Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) was approved by this Committee on 6 December 2018 and was then submitted to the Scottish Government ahead of their 31 December 2018 deadline. The plan provided strategic context an analysis of homelessness in Highland and the capacity to deliver rapid rehousing within the current patterns of housing need and demand.

5.2 As part of the national assessment process, Highland received feedback from The Scottish Government in February 2019 requested that we expand on a number of themes and issues contained in the original submission, specifically:

- to provide further analysis of the costs involved and funding required to deliver the action plan;
- to provide more detail on how we will address the shortfall in housing supply;
- to demonstrate a greater emphasis on homeless prevention;
- to set out how we intend to meet the challenges involved in discharging homelessness duties out-with an applicant's preferred areas;
- to detail how we intend to continue to reduce the reliance on HMO-type temporary accommodation;
- to submit an Equality Impact Assessment; and
- to provide more details and evidence of partnership working and consultation.

5.3 Following further discussion with staff, partners and the Scottish Government, an updated RRTP was submitted to The Scottish Government on 5 April 2019 in line with their agreed timescale. Highland was the first local authority in Scotland to submit its updated RRTP. This is attached as **Appendix 1**, with the Action Plan shown as **Appendix 2**.

5.4 The Scottish Government has produced a template for recording baseline information and 5-year projections towards achieving a rapid rehousing approach. Highland's summary baseline position along with other background documents relating to this report are available at: [Rapid Rehousing](#)

5.5 It should be noted that a number of the actions identified have been ongoing for some time and that others require significant support from other public bodies as well as the Third Sector.

5.6 An Equality Impact Assessment is being undertaken and will be submitted to the Scottish Government in June 2019.

5.7 Recent discussions between COSLA and the Scottish Government have indicated that funding for RRTP initiatives is unlikely to be released until August 2019 at the earliest. Progress against some of the actions in the Highland plan is dependent on funding.

5.8 It should be noted that a number of actions on the RRTP are dependent on

reviewing our HHR allocation policy and how we allocate housing to those in highest housing need. A review of the Highland Housing Register is underway and this will be reported to Members at this Committee.

## **6 Housing First in Highland Council**

- 6.1 On 6 December 2018 the Committee approved a review into the potential development of Council-owned specialist accommodation for clients with high support needs. Subsequent to this, the Council's Internal Audit team recommended that the supported accommodation provision be put out to tender by 31 March 2019 in order to comply with procurement legislation. This was reported to Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 27 March 2019.
- 6.2 The tendering process has taken place and tenders are currently being evaluated. Officers will continue to review the potential for an in-house provision which, if appropriate, would come into place once the new contract is complete.
- 6.3 Separate to this, the Highland Drug & Alcohol Partnership has been allocated funding from the NHS for its Housing First project as highlighted in the Good News Section of this Committee.
- 6.4 The project will be maximised if it receives funding from The Scottish Government as set out in our Plan. Once operational the project team will carry a caseload of 20 open cases at any one time and will house 35 homeless service users each year through a Housing First tenancy outcome in the Inner Moray Firth.

## **7 Scottish Government consultations**

- 7.1 In January 2019 The Scottish Government issued a consultation on changes to the local connection and intentionality provisions in the homelessness legislation.
- 7.2 Local authorities currently have the power under section 33 of The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 to refer homeless households who do not have a local connection with them to another local authority where they do have such a connection. In 2017-18 this happened on 47 occasions in Highland.
- 7.3 The Scottish Government has proposed that the local connection provision is suspended. It is anticipated that suspending local connection referrals will result in an increase in presentations in Highland, and particularly to Inverness, as increased public awareness of the provision will make people more likely to present in areas where they aspire to live, but to which they do not have any connection or community ties.
- 7.4 The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 states that a person is intentionally homeless if they deliberately did or failed to do anything which led to the loss of accommodation which it was reasonable for them to continue to occupy. Twenty-nine applicants were found to be intentionally homeless in Highland in 2017-18.
- 7.5 The Scottish Government has proposed a change in the wording of intentionality provisions under section 28 of the 1987 Act in order to give local authorities a discretion, rather than a duty, as to whether to investigate whether or not a household is intentionally homeless. There is concern that the removal of the intentionality test will remove the incentive for some households to take positive actions such as engagement with support services, or money advice services, in

order to prevent them becoming homeless.

- 7.6 A copy of the Highland response to this consultation is attached at [https://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/downloads/file/7288/consultation\\_on\\_local\\_connection\\_and\\_intentionality\\_provisions\\_in\\_homelessness\\_legislation\\_-\\_2nd\\_draft\\_9419](https://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/downloads/file/7288/consultation_on_local_connection_and_intentionality_provisions_in_homelessness_legislation_-_2nd_draft_9419) This was submitted in time for the deadline of 25 April. The Highland response is similar to the responses issued by many other local authorities in that while the Council is determined to remove barriers to homelessness, there are concerns that any further changes to legislation will result in an increased pressure on services.
- 7.7 The Scottish Government has also signalled its intention to consult in Summer 2019 on extending the seven-day restriction spent in unsuitable accommodation to all households experiencing homelessness. The Scottish Government also intend to consult on the introduction and enforcement of new standards for all types of temporary accommodation.

## 8 Homeless Review process

- 8.1 Highland has a homeless decision review process and Members who have undergone training are invited to be involved in the 2nd stage of the review into decisions on homelessness assessments. The process is summarised at **Appendix 3**. Cases are heard by a Homelessness Review Panel consisting of:
- Director of Community Services; or Head of Housing; or Housing Manager with no prior involvement in the case;
  - Council Solicitor;
  - Senior Officer from Care and Learning in cases involving households with children;
  - And, if possible, an Elected Member.
- 8.2 In 2018-19 there were 11 Stage 2 Appeals of which 6 had the original decision upheld following the review hearing. Based on current experience it is recommended that the process is reviewed and proposals for a revised process will be submitted to a future Committee. Specifically the review will consider whether we should continue to have Member involvement in case reviews and, if so, how Members are trained and supported in this sometimes challenging role.

## 9 Implications

- 9.1 Resource - Delivering a Rapid Rehousing approach to homelessness will require significant resources in relation to: increasing housing supply; developing alternative models for accommodation services; increasing the input of specialist services; increasing in-house preventative and rapid rehousing staff resources. Delivering the Plan will be partly determined by the extent to which Highland receives resources via the Scottish Government's 'Ending Homelessness Together Fund'.
- 9.2 Legal – Consultation is ongoing or planned on potential changes to legislation, but there are no immediate, specific legal implications arising from this report.
- 9.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) - Preventing and responding to homelessness has a significant impact on individuals and communities. Our overall strategy for homelessness aims to tackle current health and other inequalities. Although case numbers are concentrated in Inverness we recognise that there are

different challenges in rural communities. As set out in the plan if rapid rehousing of homeless applicants is prioritised and a higher proportion of housing allocations are made to homeless applicants a lower proportion will be made to other housing needs groups, including people with medical issues. A full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken and submitted to the Scottish Government in June 2019.

- 9.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever - There are no implications arising from this report.
- 9.5 Risk - There are financial and regulatory risks associated with delivering the Rapid Rehousing Plan and in Housing First approaches, which require to be managed during implementation.
- 6.6 Gaelic - There are no implications arising from the report.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 20 May 2019

Author: Brian Cameron, Housing Policy and Investment Manager

Background Documents: Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Action Group Report;  
Scottish Government Guidance on Rapid Rehousing  
Transition Plans;  
Data returns of homelessness trends.

Background documents available at:  
[Rapid Rehousing](#)

### The Highland Council

#### Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan: 2019-2024

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was established by the Scottish Government in October 2017. The Scottish Government accepted the majority of recommendations of the HARSAG in June 2018. This included the recommendation that all local authorities produce Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans to document how they will tackle homelessness.
- 1.2 The overall aim of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is to set out the Council's approach to achieve rapid rehousing where homelessness cannot be prevented. Rapid rehousing is defined as:-
- Providing a settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible;
  - Time spent in any form of temporary accommodation reduced to a minimum, with the fewer transitions the better;
  - When temporary accommodation is needed, the optimum type is mainstream, furnished and within a community.
- 1.3 For clients with multiple and complex support needs beyond housing, a Housing First model is recommended. Housing First is based on the following premises:-
- Housing is a basic human right, not a reward for clinical success; and
  - Once the chaos of homelessness is eliminated from a person's life, clinical and social stabilisation will occur faster and be more enduring.
- 1.4 This is the Council's second iteration of our 5-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and has been submitted for review by the Scottish Government. The action plan accompanying this document at **Appendix 1** commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, however some of the actions listed in that document are subject to a transitional funding award from the Scottish Government. This RRTP and accompanying Action Plan will benefit from ongoing review over the course of the 5 year transition period.

#### 2. Strategic Context

- 2.1 The Council's Local Housing Strategy was approved in December 2017. The main objectives are:-
- Increase the supply of housing in Highland so that we have enough homes in the right places to meet housing needs-
  - People are supported to live independently for as long as possible in their own homes and communities;
  - Prevent and respond to homelessness and make sure people have the right



- help to let them make decisions on their housing options; and
- Improve the Quality and condition of the housing stock and minimise fuel poverty.

2.2 In relation to homelessness our strategic approach is:-

1. Prevent homelessness wherever possible;
2. Improve and increase access to housing advice and information services;
3. Enable access to the right type of housing;
4. Provide support to enable people to develop and maintain their capacity to live independently;
5. Ensure that housing support services focus on achieving positive outcomes and sustainable solutions for clients;
6. Work towards providing the majority of temporary accommodation in Council-owned properties;
7. Ensure rents in temporary accommodation are affordable for people on low incomes and within the welfare benefits system;
8. Reduce the time people spend in temporary accommodation;
9. Continue to implement a protocol on accommodation for looked after children to prevent homelessness;
10. Review partnership / interagency approaches to clients with complex needs;
11. Aim to minimise the use of large scale HMO accommodation for younger single homeless clients;
12. Review the future options for temporary accommodation; and
13. Review and considering future specialist accommodation models linked to consideration of Housing First type approaches.

2.3 The Scottish Housing Regulator published a national report on its enquiry into housing options and homelessness prevention services in May 2014. The Scottish Government published national guidance on Housing Options on March 2016.

2.4 The Highland Council undertook a review of our homelessness services in 2014 to ensure that they:-

- are person centred and focussed on achieving outcomes that meet peoples' needs;
- prioritise early intervention and integrate prevention and homelessness assessment rather treat these as separate functions / activities;
- provide balanced and appropriate case specific advice and information;
- focus on a person's needs rather than the homelessness process; and
- identify and respond to support needs.

2.5 We have undertaken an extensive training and development programme for our staff to establish a cultural shift in how we view homelessness services. We will continue to develop a housing options based, preventative homelessness service.

2.6 Even with the best trained and committed staff our ability to deliver on our homelessness objectives depends on an adequate supply of affordable housing. The Local Housing Strategy estimated housing need based on a "continued growth" scenario, with the housing need figures by Housing Market Area as

follows:-

**Additional Housing Units by Tenure and Housing Market Area, Five Years**

	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>Below Market Rent</b>	<b>Private Rented Sector</b>	<b>Buyers</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Badenoch &amp; Strathspey</b>	156	62	134	86	438
<b>Caithness</b>	89	41	35	89	254
<b>East Ross</b>	238	93	112	135	578
<b>Inverness</b>	1,096	378	727	703	2,904
<b>Lochaber</b>	193	68	65	112	438
<b>Mid Ross</b>	256	84	173	131	644
<b>Nairn</b>	138	44	79	87	348
<b>Skye and Lochalsh</b>	149	56	81	64	350
<b>Sutherland</b>	80	37	35	52	204
<b>West Ross</b>	75	33	54	31	193
<b>Highland</b>	2,469	895	1,494	1,491	6,349

Source: Highland Council Analysis using HNDA Tool, continued growth scenario

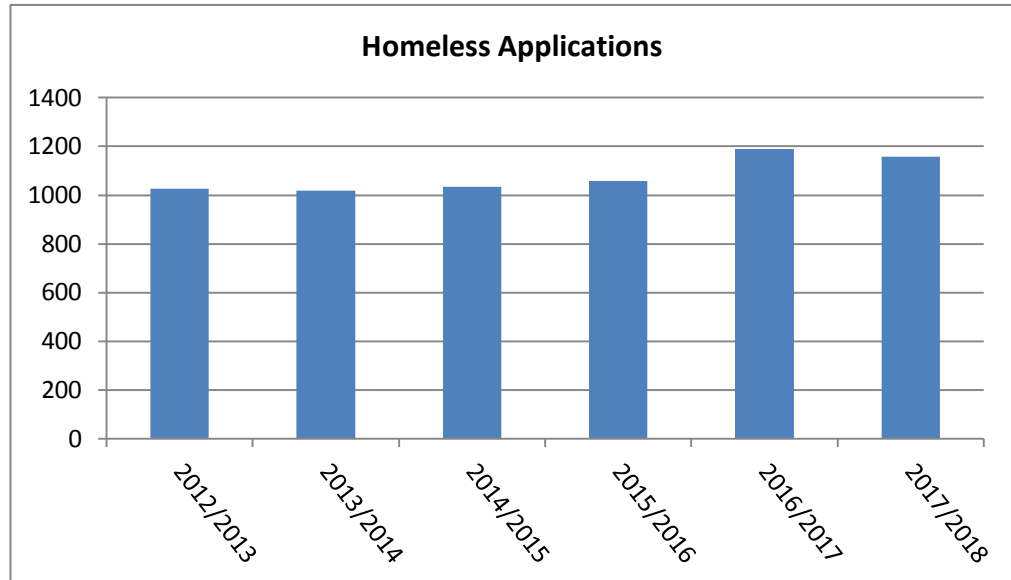
- 2.7 This indicates that over 6,000 new houses, across all tenures, need to be built over the next 5 years to house all those who will want to make a new home for themselves.
- 2.8 Forty five percent will be required within Inverness and the surrounding area. In terms of meeting housing need it has been established that there is a requirement for around 500 social rented houses a year over the next 5 years.
- 2.9 The Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2019-2024 was approved on 8 November 2018. The strategic targets for affordable housing provision contained in the SHIP tables are fully consistent with our current Local Housing Strategy targets of around 500 units per annum.

<b>Housing Market Area (HMA)</b>	<b>Target % of Investment</b>	<b>Estimated Investment (£m)</b>	<b>Unit Approvals per year</b>	<b>Unit Approvals 5 years</b>
<b>Badenoch &amp; Strathspey</b>	<b>6</b>	9.9	30	150
<b>Caithness*</b>	<b>4</b>	6.6	20	100
<b>Inverness</b>	<b>44</b>	72.6	220	1100
<b>Lochaber</b>	<b>8</b>	13.2	40	200
<b>Nairn</b>	<b>6</b>	9.9	30	150
<b>East Ross</b>	<b>10</b>	16.5	50	250
<b>Mid Ross</b>	<b>10</b>	16.5	50	250
<b>Wester Ross</b>	<b>3</b>	4.9	15	75
<b>Skye and Lochalsh</b>	<b>6</b>	9.9	30	150
<b>Sutherland</b>	<b>3</b>	4.9	15	75
<b>Highland</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>165.0</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>2500</b>

\* The target for investment in Caithness is based on the need for regeneration activities to address low demand e.g. using the existing stock.

### 3. A Profile of Homelessness in the Highlands

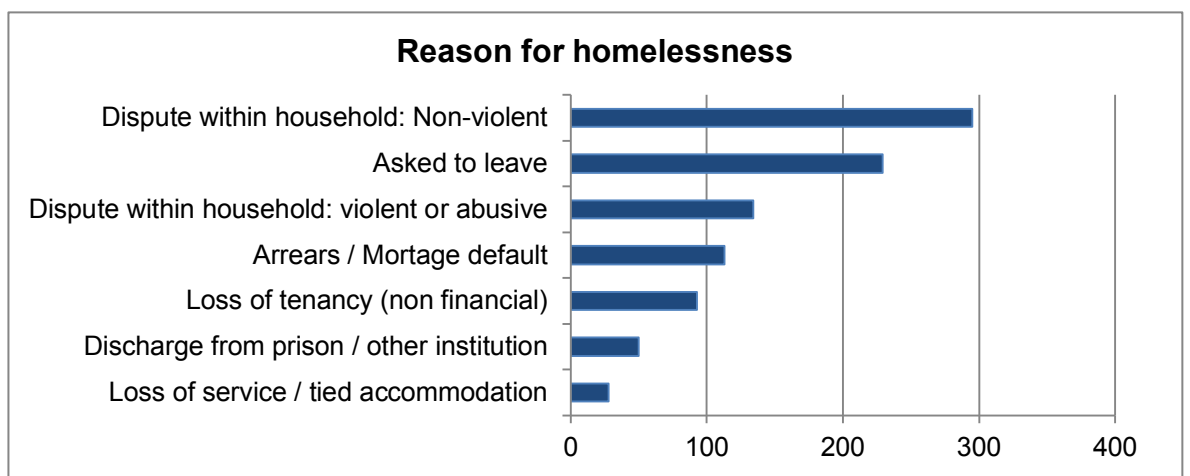
3.1 Since 2012/13 we have seen homeless applications at a relatively stable level of between 1,000 and 1,200 per year. There was an increase in applications from 1187 in 2016/17 to 1160 in 2017/18.



3.2 The age categories of homeless applicants have remained relatively stable since 2012/13. The single biggest group of homeless applicants are in the 26 – 59 years of age category and have accounted for around 65% of applicants on an annual basis. This compares to around 3% of applicants for the 16 - 17 years of age category, and 25% for the 18 – 25 years and 7% the 60+ years categories.

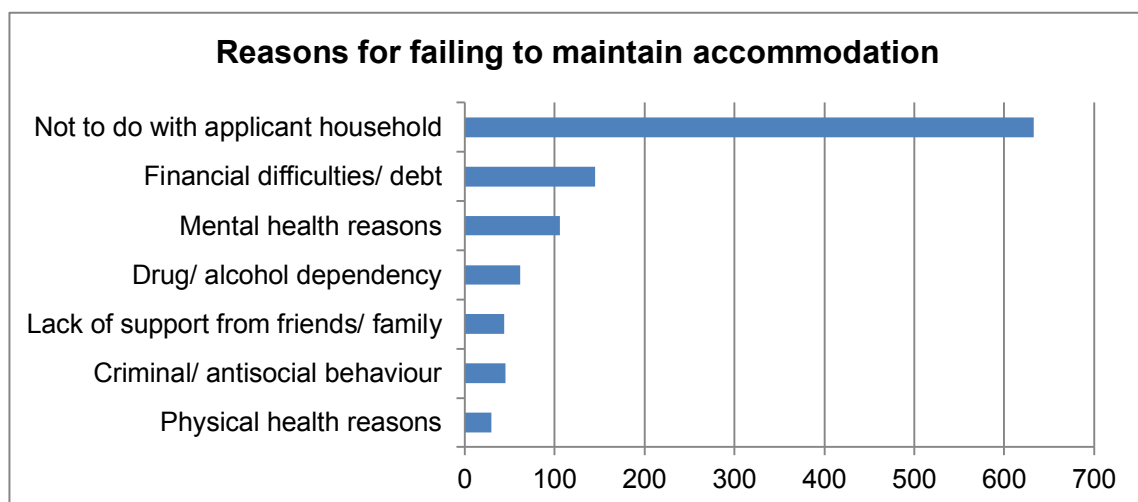
3.3 The gender mix of homeless presentations has been fairly stable since 2012/13 with the average proportion being around 45% female and 55% male.

3.4 The main reasons for people becoming homeless during 2017/18 are shown in the chart below:-



3.5 Most people become homeless due to being asked to leave current accommodation often due to relationship breakdown or disputes, whether with a partner or parent.

The main factors that applicants identify themselves as having contributed to their homelessness are:



3.6 This shows that in most cases homelessness is not due to any specific factor / underlying issue. For most people homelessness can be resolved with a housing outcome without the need for additional support / professional intervention.

3.7 On average around 9% of people who present as homeless report having slept rough at some point in the last 3 months prior to presentation and around 6% on the night before presenting.

3.8 Around 7% of homeless applicants have been looked after children. In 2017/18, 62 people had left care 5 or more years ago and 21 within the last 5 years.

3.9 Around 4% of homeless applicants are ex-forces personnel. In 2017/18, 36 people had left the forces 5 or more years ago and 8 within the last 5 years.

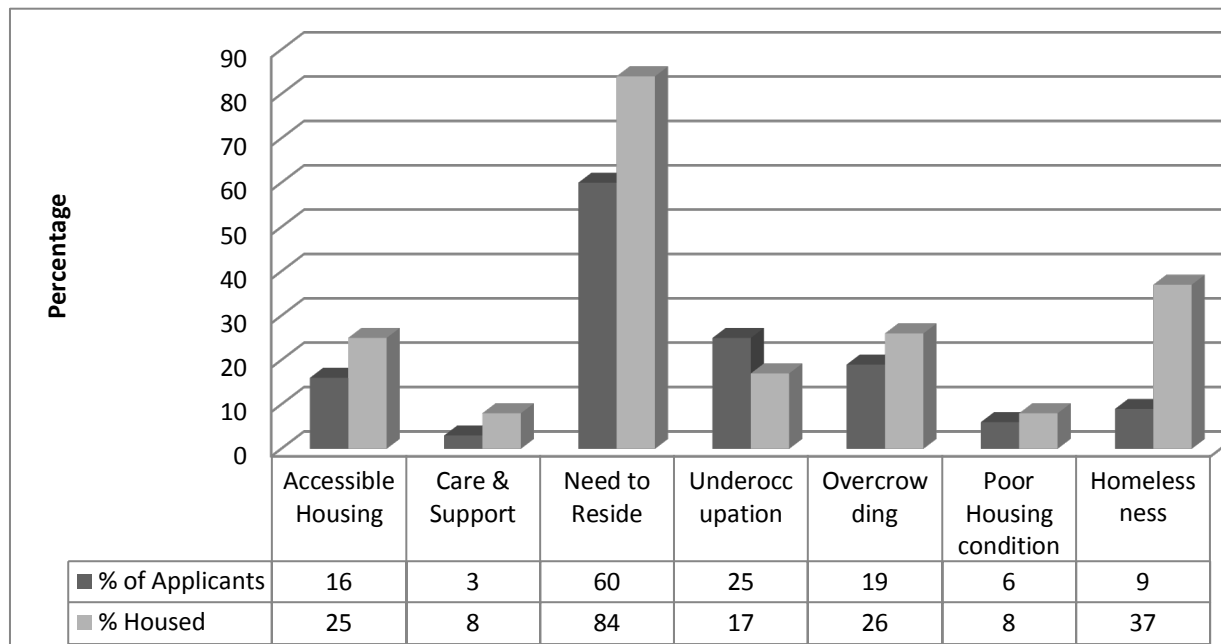
#### 4. Local housing supply and demand issues

4.1 The Council operates a Common Housing Register and shared Housing Allocations Policy with the main Registered Social Landlords in Highland. This is called the Highland Housing Register.

4.2 We undertake an annual monitoring report on the Highland Housing Register. At the end of 2018 there were 7,890 applicants on the housing register. There is an upward trend in applications held. The Highland Housing Register allocations policy is needs based, with points awarded to applicants according to housing needs categories. We operate a choice based letting scheme in Caithness where there are specific low demand issues.

4.3 The table below shows the main housing needs points categories and the

proportion of people housed last year with these needs:



4.4 In developing and implementing this Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan the Council needs to balance the needs of homeless households to achieve permanent housing outcomes as quickly as possible with the need to address other categories of urgent housing need, such as those relating to people with urgent medical conditions or those living in overcrowded or poor quality private sector housing. We also need to consider areas where we cannot achieve rapid rehousing for all cases within the current housing market.

## 5. Prevention

### 5.1 Care Experienced Young People

5.1.1 A partnership approach is taken to managing the housing needs of care experienced young people in Highland through a 'Housing Options Protocol for Care Leavers'. This partnership approach involves all Highland Housing Register partners, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector support provider Ypeople, the national charity Barnardos as well as the Highland Health & Social Care Partnership and the Council's Housing Options Team.

The fundamental principle of this protocol is to prevent homelessness within this service user group.

Our current Protocol has been in place since October 2018, this document replaced our previous Accommodation Protocol which been in place for several years. Around 43 care leavers over the last 3 years of the previous Protocol were housed across Highland.

5.1.2 The new Protocol sets out our roles and responsibilities which will make sure that, by working together, Highland's care leavers access the most appropriate accommodation and the right support (for as long as they need it) to sustain their own home. It focuses on young people aged 16-25 years who are 'Care Leavers'

who were looked after away from home.

5.1.3 Access to a safe secure home is crucial to making a successful transition to adulthood. Support to develop independent living skills, sustain a tenancy, and help prevent issues which might lead to homelessness is also crucial. National research evidences this need as care leavers are particularly vulnerable when making the transition to adulthood and are frequently over-represented in homeless statistics.

5.1.4 **Aims/Purpose**  
Through the Protocol we are aiming to achieve successful stable independent living in the community. We are committed to ensuring a co-ordinated response so that none of our care leavers become homeless on leaving care or lack support to achieve independence and stability in the community.

5.1.5 **Outcomes & Principles**  
We will ensure that care leavers when leaving care receive:

- a consistent service;
- a completed pathways assessment which includes their views;
- effective information and advice on housing and their options
- access to appropriate accommodation (if possible, in an area of their choice);
- appropriate help and support during their transition to independence
- access to an appeals and resolution process.

5.1.6 Through this preventative approach it is hoped that all care experienced young people will experience: improved health and wellbeing; improved social networks; increased opportunities; increased employment prospects; and improved confidence. The protocol will ensure that an appropriate multi-agency planning model is in place to prevent care experienced young people becoming homeless.

5.1.7 **Young Person's Views and Young Person Planning**  
All young people who are looked after by the Highland Council will require an assessment of their future requirements and aspirations in relation to accommodation, support, training employment etc. This will be undertaken before they leave care. This is a young person centred activity that will enable their ambitions and support needs to be outlined and understood. The Highland Council is committed to improving outcomes for care leavers including accommodation, health and education and so supporting a Young Person's Plan is a corporate responsibility.

5.1.8 **Enabling Successful and Sustainable Tenancies**  
If a care-leaver's tenancy comes to an end (excluding transfers), housing officers will in all cases ensure that their tenancy file includes clear information on the reason. Unless the young person has moved on positively, where a tenancy ends within 24 months, a case review is carried out by the local housing team to identify issues or improvements.

## 5.2 Homeless Family Mediation

5.2.1 As shown above at section 3.4 the main reasons for homelessness in Highland

during 2017/18 relate to relationship breakdown of one kind or another, HL1 data that year shows high numbers of homeless applicants stating the reason for their homelessness was being asked to leave following a non-violent dispute within their household.

- 5.2.2 A considerable proportion of these will have involved young people leaving the family home for the first time.
- 5.2.3 Figures from Highland's HL1 return for 2017/18 show that 332 of the homeless applications received that year were made by persons aged between 16 and 25 and a large proportion of those would have either been homeless from the family home or recently after leaving the family home. The role for family mediation in preventing homelessness is therefore potentially significant and could be used as a means to help prevent young people from becoming homeless following a relationship breakdown at home.
- 5.2.4 It is intended that a 'test of change' trial to deliver Homeless Family Mediation services on a spot purchase basis will be developed with Relationships Scotland. Thereafter it is intended that homeless family mediation will be offered as one of our homeless prevention interventions for young people as part of our housing options casework.
- 5.2.5 Homeless Family Mediation will be offered to young people who have presented as homeless following a non-violent / abusive relationship at home, however in recognition that relationship breakdowns have often passed the point of mediation by the time a young person makes a homeless presentation, a further follow up mediation offer will be made again 3 weeks after they have been offered homeless accommodation in the hope that the situation may have stabilised and the parties more receptive to an offer of mediation.
- 5.2.6 Trial Objectives  
Trial Objectives will be established with Mediation Scotland in the run up to the trial, however these objectives will be based around
- Testing the success of Homeless Family Mediation with existing and new homeless cases
  - Raising awareness of mediation as a Housing Option with the Council's Housing Options Officers
- 5.2.7 Trial Outcomes  
This test of change trial will identify 10 cases for Homeless Family Mediation each year over years 1 and 2 of the RRTP. The cases will be taken from both new homeless presentations received and also from existing homeless applicants resident in temporary accommodation.
- 5.2.8 At the end of the 24 month 'test of change' trial, the project will be evaluated and an options appraisal carried out to consider future provision of homeless family mediation services beyond 2019/20.
- 5.2.9 It is accepted that leaving home is a part of becoming independent and mediation is not seen as a way to keep young people living with their parents but rather to

allow them sufficient time at home in a stable environment to allow them to plan to leave home.

### 5.3 Digital Housing Support Model for Young People/ Leaving Home Planning

5.3.1 The North & Islands Hub are working in partnership with the Calman Trust to develop a digital delivery model of housing support aimed at supporting young people in a way they will find easy to engage with which provides them with support and solutions around leaving home information/planning.

5.3.2 This pilot support model is designed to address the situation whereby the risk of homelessness is disproportionately high amongst young people aged 16-25, who are least prepared to achieve a settled home. It provides a two-pronged approach, comprising the delivery of practical support and advice through the HasAnswers digital tool to young people experiencing housing difficulties, combined with the offer of homelessness prevention sessions covering practical leaving home learning and advice for school leavers, the latter to be delivered in consultation with the Highland Council Education (Guidance team).

5.3.3 The digital application, HasAnswers, which will go live this year, offers an early intervention 'triage' service to young people experiencing difficulties in the transition into independent living. Accessible to young people by smartphone or on PC, this will be linked to an actual support worker who will provide real time practical support to individuals asking for help, whilst also ensuring that the content is up to date and adapting to the changing concerns and experience of young people.

5.3.4 Concurrently, through delivery of leaving home sessions in Secondary Schools, where they will be introduced to HasAnswers, young people will leave school with an awareness of the practical challenges of finding and keeping a home, and with an app on their phone that gives direct access to local support and advice before things go badly wrong, to avert further breakdown.

5.3.5 Research indicates that if young people can learn to access assistance early, they are more likely to overcome their difficulties, averting future crisis and the underlying expectation that nothing can be done until circumstances completely break down.

5.3.7 This will operate initially as a pilot project, to test the use of digital technology through HasAnswers as a means to providing support, it is anticipated that 50 young people will use this service during the pilot year. These 50 cases will be examined at the conclusion of the pilot to evaluate the project based on positive advice case outcomes.

5.3.8 Thereafter if successful the model will be used to inform and develop future housing support provision in Highland from 2021/22 onwards.

### 5.4 North & Islands Hub Enhanced Section 11 Project

#### 5.4.1 Overview

From 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019 for a 6 month period, four local authority homelessness /Housing Options Teams and seven housing associations with stock in the N&I



Hub area have agreed to participate in a six months pilot project during which enhanced activities in relation to the serving of, and responding to, section 11 notices will be trialled. The overall objective will be to prevent homelessness and where that is not possible, to manage as smooth a transition as possible towards a positive housing outcome.

#### 5.4.2 Outline

Housing association landlords would:

- a) issue the section 11 notice to the local authority Homelessness/Housing Options Team at the same time as serving Notice of Seeking Possession on the tenant, although Cairn, Grampian and Langstane HA's agreed only to maintain the statutory practice of issuing the section 11 notice when possession proceedings are started;
- b) share the following information relating to the case, additional to the information statutorily required as part of the section 11 notice, with the Homelessness/Housing Options Team, using a specific form that will be developed and shared prior to the project start date:
  - i. contact details for the tenant;
  - ii. knowledge of the best means of contacting the tenant;
  - iii. contact details of the housing association officer responsible for the case;
  - iv. the composition of the household;
  - v. the employment status of household members;
  - vi. housing benefit/Universal Credit housing payments details for the tenancy;
  - vii. any known vulnerabilities or risk factors within the household;
  - viii. the reason for possession being sought, i.e., arrears or antisocial behaviour;
  - ix. what minimum response on the part of the tenant the housing association would require in order for the possession action to be suspended;
- c) inform the Homelessness/Housing Options Team if and when a case reaches court, and work collaboratively with the staff of the Homelessness/ Housing Options Team in order to prevent homelessness wherever possible

#### 5.4.3 Following receipt of a section 11 notice, the staff of local authority Homelessness/Housing Options Teams would:

- a) keep the housing association officer informed of what actions are being taken by the team in relation to the case, e.g., attempts to make contact, appointments and meetings with the tenant, outcomes achieved, etc, and
- b) work collaboratively with the staff of the housing association whenever it is felt that this may have a positive effect on preventing homelessness.

#### 5.4.4 As well as sharing more information and more communication between the housing association and the local authority Homelessness/Housing Options Team, activities that might be conducted jointly by staff of the housing association and local authority, where it is considered that this may contribute towards preventing

homelessness, would include meetings with the tenant, either at their home or elsewhere, at which behaviours that would lead to tenancy sustainment and housing options in the event of the tenancy not being sustained could be discussed.

#### 5.4.5 Evaluation/Review

Project meetings will be held involving participating partners at the mid-point and end of the project to consider progress, review project objectives and discuss barriers and early learning.

Following the conclusion of the project, a full evaluation will be conducted to establish how successful the project has been to prevent homelessness by evaluating the Section 11 cases which have been referred over the duration of the project.

If successful guidance will be developed from the project learning with full rollout to all Highland Housing Register RSL partners.

#### 5.5 Council Tax / Non Domestic Rates Bankruptcy Notices

5.5.1 The Highland Council's Revenues Team currently raise proceedings to petition for bankruptcy as part of recovery action in cases of Council Tax or Non-Domestic Rates arrears. These cases can place households at risk of homelessness as recovery action of this kind is usually taken by the Council when a debtor is known to own a significant asset.

5.5.2 There have been some recent instances of cases in Highland where Accountant in Bankruptcy Trustees have been successful in gaining re-possession orders and eviction decrees against such households.

5.5.3 During 2017/18 two homeless presentations were made to the Council in respect of these cases when recovery action had resulted in the loss of a family home. The cases were not highlighted through Section 11 processes as the properties had been owned outright and no lender was involved.

5.5.4 Although low volumes of these cases are seen, they can be high impact cases due to vulnerabilities within the household which have led to the non-engagement with Revenues processes. The final outcome of both cases in 2017/18 resulted in statutory homelessness.

5.5.6 Corporate arrangements for referrals between the Council's Revenues and Housing Options Teams are being reviewed to ensure that all appropriate Revenues recovery cases are highlighted to the Council's Housing Options Team.

5.5.7 This referral process will be in place from 2019/20. Specific monitoring of these case referrals will be put in place to evaluate the success of this process in preventing homelessness.

#### 5.6 Move on Project

5.6.1 The Highland Move on Project is funded jointly by European Social Fund (ESF) / The Highland Council and aims to provide a co-ordinated approach to supporting service users who face multiple barriers and find it difficult to engage with services

on a regular basis. The lead organisation for the delivery of project is the NHS Highland.

5.6.2 The project will target individuals with multiple barriers where individual mainstream services are not sufficient to address complex needs and sustain improvement and is aimed at service users who are often unwilling or reluctant to engage with services before reaching crisis point. These service users are likely to be known to services and expected to be resource intensive to support to the point of positive engagement with services.

5.6.3 The Project will provide a person centred approach providing a generic key-worker to work with individuals tailoring supports to address individual's needs and preventing repeat reactive engagement/non-engagement with services. Move on Officers delivering the Project will provide planning, co-ordination and have a facilitation role, they will not provide an advocacy service.

5.6.4 Ongoing assessment will be critical to tailor support to the service user and their needs and will aim to provide a holistic approach to those experiencing the greatest barriers to

- Reduce Homeless Presentations & increase tenancy sustainability
- Maximise incomes
- Develop financial capability
- Build resilience and life skills
- Eventually move towards positive employment

Project outcomes in relation to these headings will be evaluated throughout the lifetime of the project in line with ESF funding guidelines.

5.6.5 To be eligible for the service, users must meet one of the following criteria:

- Workless
- Lone parent
- On a low income

The project is overseen by a Partnership Steering Group which reports to the Community Planning Partnership board.

5.6.6 Any service or lead professional can refer to the Move on Project if they are experiencing difficulty in engaging with service users.

The Move on Project have received 67 case referrals since the project started became operational during October 2018. Due to the early stages of the project no project outcome data is available.

5.6.7 Housing Options Officers will make referrals to the Move on Project for homeless service users with complex housing support or residential/supported accommodation needs.

## **6. Temporary Accommodation & Housing Support**

### **6.1 Pressures**

6.1.1 The table below sets out numbers of homeless applications made in Highland where a positive determination has been made and a duty to house permanently has been established. A duty also exists for these cases to provide Temporary Accommodation whilst a permanent housing outcome is identified.

<b>Number of Homeless Presentations Made 2017/18 (From HL1) where a duty to house has been established. Broken down by Area Office &amp; Bedroom</b>							
<b>Household Bedroom Need</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5+</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
Alness	58	11	8			77	6.6
Badenoch & Strathspey	30	15	9	1		55	4.7
Dingwall	127	35	21	6	1	190	16.4
Inverness	363	79	31	3	1	477	41.2
Lochaber	117	22	9	2		150	13.0
Nairn	30	12	6	1		49	4.2
Portree	77	21	7	1		106	9.2
Sutherland	10	4		1		15	1.3
Thurso	16	1		1		18	1.6
Wick	16	3	1	1		21	1.8
	<b>844</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1158</b>	

6.1.2 This distribution of cases has been relatively static over the last 5 years. This shows that 62% of the households in temporary accommodation in Highland are currently in temporary accommodation in Inverness while awaiting an offer of housing in Inverness.

6.1.3 Wider housing pressure also has an impact on the length of time people spend in temporary accommodation. The table below shows the average length of stay in temporary accommodation by area for temporary tenancies that ended in the last financial year through re-housing through the Highland Housing Register:-

	<b>Family</b>		<b>Singles &amp; Couples</b>	
	<b>Number of Households</b>	<b>Average Months</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>	<b>Average Months</b>
<b>Badenoch &amp; Strathspey</b>	8	7	10	5
<b>Caithness</b>	4	5	16	8
<b>Inverness</b>	141	12	109	17
<b>Lochaber</b>	21	4	30	4
<b>Nairn</b>	12	7	6	9
<b>Ross &amp; Cromarty</b>	79	7	67	9
<b>Skye &amp; Lochalsh</b>	14	7	31	5
<b>Sutherland</b>	3	6	2	5
<b>Highland</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>11</b>

6.1.4 On average a household will stay for around a year in temporary accommodation. The lack of social rented housing where it is most needed remains the single

biggest barrier to reducing the duration of homelessness.

6.1.5 Higher average length of stay in temporary accommodation is directly related to the availability of social rented housing. Generally the areas where we have the highest numbers of homeless cases and the longest average stays in temporary accommodation are the areas where we are allocating the highest proportion of social rented housing to homeless households.

6.1.6 It means that in Inverness City, households spend far longer living in temporary accommodation compared to other areas. In other parts of Highland, where there are more houses available, they are able to be helped out of homelessness much more quickly.

6.2 Current Provision

6.2.1 Historically the Council has relied on privately rented single rooms or bed and breakfast type shared accommodation, with less than a third provided through the Council's own stock. The pattern of temporary accommodation has also varied across areas, with most private sector provision in Inverness.

6.2.2 Since 2014 we have had an active programme of shifting the balance of accommodation towards the uses of Council owned, self-contained furnished accommodation, with a target of increasing this provision by 50 units a year.

6.2.3 The table below shows our temporary accommodation provision by area as at the end of Quarter 1, 2018/19:-

	<b>Council</b>	<b>B&amp;B / HMO</b>	<b>Leased</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Badenoch and Strathspey</b>	17	-	2	19
<b>Caithness</b>	15	-	-	15
<b>Inverness</b>	111	169	91	371
<b>Lochaber</b>	5	12	20	37
<b>Nairn</b>	10	-	8	18
<b>Ross &amp; Cromarty</b>	71	24	17	112
<b>Skye &amp; Lochalsh</b>	21	-	12	33
<b>Sutherland</b>	1	-	1	2
<b>Highland</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>607</b>

6.2.4 **Hostel Provision**

The Council currently has three 'hostels' for use as temporary accommodation in rural areas, Woodside Hostel and Hamilton House in Skye, and, Badenoch House in Badenoch and Strathspey. Woodside Hostel and Badenoch House are owned by the Council however Hamilton House is leased by the Council from Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association.

6.2.5 These small unsupported hostels provide emergency accommodation in high pressure areas, where it is very difficult to source alternative private provision.

Each of these homeless hostels operate under a House of Multiple Occupancy Licence (HMO). Woodside Hostel currently has 4 single rooms and 1 self-contained flat, Hamilton House has 3 single rooms and 1 self-contained flat and Badenoch House has 6 rooms.

6.2.6 In light of the pending review of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and the likely impact that this review will have on the use of HMO accommodation as temporary accommodation going forward, the Council's Housing Development Team will carry out a feasibility study into the development potential of these buildings as self-contained accommodation.

6.2.7 The feasibility study will also look at future use options and will consider, Temporary Furnished Accommodation (TFA), Shared TFA, supported accommodation, as well as developing the properties as permanent housing outcomes / self-contained flats.

6.2.8 This feasibility study will be carried out within the lifetime of the current HMO licences which are in place for these buildings, the expiry dates of each licence are:  
 Badenoch House – 22/01/2020  
 Woodside Hostel – 24/02/2020  
 Hamilton House – Lease expires 2020

6.3 Affordability of Temporary Accommodation

6.3.1 Rent affordability is a critical factor in temporary accommodation. This generally has to be viewed in the context of rent subsidy available through the welfare benefit system.

6.3.2 Rents for current temporary accommodation in Highland are summarised below:-

Type of accommodation	Average Monthly Rent (including service charges)
Council Owned furnished accommodation	£384.00
Property leased from housing association	£544.00
Property Leased from private landlords	£588.00
Supported accommodation	£1968.00
Private sector HMO / B&B	£744.00

6.3.3 Generally housing benefit is restricted to Local Housing Allowance rates which are set out in the table below:-

Property size	LHA 2015-2020	Broad Rental Market Area rents		Advertised rents
	per month	Lower quartile (monthly)	Median quartile (monthly)	Monthly
1 bed shared rate (applicable to <35s)	£236.00	n/a	n/a	n/a
1 bedroom	£367.00	£400	£475	£550
2 bedrooms	£443.00	£500	£550	£685
3 bedrooms	£520.00	£595	£695	£790

4 bedrooms	£641.00	£693	£825	£1,100
------------	---------	------	------	--------

- 6.3.4 **Rent Arrears in Homeless Accommodation**  
In recognition of the affordability issues with the PRS models of HMO temporary accommodation in use in Inverness, the Council is working to develop an approach to rent arrears and arrears recovery which in effect sets rent levels in temporary accommodation in line with Local Housing Allowance Rates (LHA) rates.
- 6.3.5 This approach will ensure that rent levels are affordable for all homeless applicants and do not cause a barrier for homeless applicants in employment preventing them from being able to access temporary accommodation. The new proposed approach will also ensure that service users in temporary accommodation can actively seek employment and pursue their employability options without the fear of being caught in a poverty trap of unaffordable rent.
- 6.3.6 A draft Rent Charging and Arrears Management Policy has been developed on this basis which will be subject to consultation with Elected Members, Service Users and Third Sector partners during 2019.
- 6.4 **Future Temporary Accommodation Provision**
- 6.4.1 The Council's long term strategy for temporary accommodation is to increase the use of self-contained, furnished Council or Housing Association property, and reduce the reliance on private sector property. This provides the best quality for clients at the least cost to the Council.
- 6.4.2 The Community Services Committee agreed in April 2016 that we should move to a model where the majority of temporary accommodation is provided in Council owned (Housing Revenue Account) properties. We currently have 251 HRA properties used as temporary accommodation, an increase of almost 40% since April 2017.
- 6.4.3 We aim to continue to increase the use of HRA furnished accommodation by 50 units a year over the next 5 years (total 250 units). This will eliminate the use of PRS HMO accommodation for anything other than emergency / crisis response.
- 6.5 **Shared Temporary Furnished Accommodation Trial (TFA)**
- 6.5.1 Given the shortage of non HMO 1 bed temporary accommodation in Inverness, the Council has trialled an approach in Inverness which enables 2 people to share a Temporary Furnished Accommodation (TFA) 'scatter flat'.
- The trial has taken potential sharers from the existing Housing Options Caseload who were previously resident in HMO temporary accommodation. Service users with medium to high support needs were avoided for this pilot as this model of temporary accommodation is not seen as an alternative to Supported Accommodation or Housing First models but rather as a temporary accommodation option for homeless applicants with low / zero support needs, or those in employment.
- 6.5.2 The properties used for the trial were all 2 bedroom self-contained flats taken from

mainstream HRA stock which have been furnished as temporary accommodation and meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standards. All parts of the flats are shared apart from the bedrooms, which have locks added to the doors to ensure security and privacy for the homeless applicants.

A Council Tax exemption was obtained in respect of the properties used on the basis that they are shared supported accommodation. Prepayment energy meters are installed in the properties and sharers are encouraged to take turns 'topping up' the prepayment cards for the meters.

- 6.5.3 The gross rent levels charged in the trial shared "scatter flats" in Inverness was £52.35 which was based on one half of the standard HRA rent for the property with homeless service charges added in respect of furnishings etc. The comparable rent for a single PRS HMO room purchased through the Council's contract framework agreement is £168.21 per week.

Currently the main alternative for single homeless applicants in the Inner Moray Firth area of Highland is PRS HMO accommodation, the benefits of this Shared TFA model are significant in terms of quality and affordability.

- 6.5.4 **Trial Outcomes**  
There are currently 9 shared temporary homeless properties in Inverness which during 2018 provided 16 instances of temporary homeless accommodation to single homeless applicants.

During the course of the Trial, 5 low level housing management type complaints were received in respect of these 16 temporary tenancies, all reported issues were resolved positively apart from one complaint which resulted in a terminated temporary tenancy.

The rent arrears balances at end of these 16 temporary tenancies were as follows:  
6 tenants zero balance  
2 tenants balance less than £100  
4 tenants balance between £100 and £500  
4 tenants balance between £500 and £800

- 6.5.5 A Matching Process and a Tenancy Induction have been developed to identify and match potential candidates for sharing and set expectations for sharers, this process has been based on the Sharer's Toolkit developed for use in Scotland by Crisis titled 'A Shared Approach Setting up and Supporting Tenancies in Shared Houses'. An Occupancy Agreement has also been drafted for use by the Council's Legal Team.

These documents set out expectations and 'ground rules' for sharing, they have been reviewed based on the feedback above from the 16 initial shared temporary tenancies in the trial.

- 6.5.6 The staff resources required to develop and implement the trial then manage the TFA Shares in the trial were 0.5FTE Housing Management Assistant. Key tasks included the sharer matching process, signup and benefits processes and turnover



of voids. This post also dealt with low level ASB and 'breach of tenancy' type tenancy issues. 0.3FTE Caretaker was also used to assist with void turn over and physical resettlement tasks.

Casework time required to deal with any in depth ASB or other breach of tenancy issue was dealt with by the Housing Options Officer case holder for the service user concerned as part of their generic case holder role.

## 6.6 Further Implementation of Shared TFA – Inner Moray Firth

6.6.1 The 2 main barriers to creating more shared TFA provision in Highland is staffing and stock availability. The stock availability issue will be addressed over the course of the next 5 years through the Highland SHIP as outlined elsewhere in this RRTP

6.6.2 The staffing resources will be required to roll out Shared TFA are set out below and have been calculated on the basis that 1FTE Housing Management Assistant (HMA) and 0.5FTE Caretaker (CT) will be required to manage and turn over a patch of 30 Shared TFA units.

6.6.3 Currently in Inverness there are in the region of 170 HMO rooms per night being used as temporary accommodation for single homeless applicants in the city, it is projected that 150 individual Shared TFA units in the Inner Moray Firth area will be required to remove the need for HMO use in Inverness as temporary accommodation based on the expected successes of other preventative measures detailed in this RRTP.

6.6.4 This projection will be reviewed and monitored over the 5 year lifetime of the RRTP to measure the impact of Rapid Rehousing and adjust temporary accommodation provision taking account of any changes in demand arising from the provisions in this RRTP.

### 6.6.5 Resources Required

To create an Inner Moray Firth TFA Share Team, the following staffing resources will be required:

1 FTE TFA Share Team Leader

5FTE Housing Management Assistants

2.5FTA Care Takers

6.6.6 The costs associated with TFA Share furnishings and void costs will be covered from within existing resources and service charges applied to the temporary tenancy rent. This Shared TFA team will be self-funding by year 5 of this RRTP using savings made from a reduction in spot purchase HMO contract rooms.

## 6.7 Skye Temporary Accommodation Provision

6.7.1 As detailed above there is a significant proportion of temporary accommodation in Skye delivered through HMO hostel provision, there is also a significant unmet need in Skye. This is a particular challenge for that Housing Options Team during the summer months.

6.7.2 This can result in temporary homeless duties being met through the offer of temporary accommodation elsewhere in Highland until temporary accommodation

can be sourced on Skye.

6.7.3 Similar to the Inner Moray Firth model above, it is proposed to create a stock of Shared TFA properties on Skye for use as temporary accommodation to address this unmet need and also to develop temporary accommodation provision on the island which is not reliant on a HMO based approach.

6.7.4 It is forecast that 10 TFA share properties are required on Skye to address this unmet temporary accommodation need on the island. These 10 units will be managed on the same basis as outlined above however due to the smaller numbers involved there will be a requirement for 1 FTE Housing Management Assistant and 0.5 FTE Caretaker posts to carry out all functions relating to the operation and turnaround of these Shared TFA units.

6.7.5 It is expected that these posts will be self-funding by year 5 of this RRTP using savings made from a reduction in spot purchase HMO contract rooms in Inverness.

6.8 Housing Support Provision

6.8.1 Housing support is important to reduce homelessness and increase tenancy sustainment. There is a legal requirement to assess and provide access to housing support where needed for all homeless and potentially homeless people.

The Council is currently retendering for Housing Support and Supported Accommodation Services in Highland, it is expected that new contract arrangements will be in place by October 2019.

6.8.2 Support services for homeless clients in Highland are delivered through a framework of independent providers with a total budget of £1.5m annually.

6.8.3 There are, on average, around 300-400 households receiving short-term housing support at any one time. This includes around 40 people in specialist supported accommodation services.

6.8.4 We currently estimate that housing support needs fall into the following categories:-

<b>Levels of Housing Support Need</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>No of Homeless Applications / Referrals 2017/18</b>	<b>% taken up support</b>
No support needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial Housing Support Assessment did not identify any support need</li> </ul>	277	N/A
Low support needs 1 – 2 Hours Per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meets one or two of the Prescribed Housing Support Services</li> <li>No other health, well-being or issues identified</li> </ul>	334	81%
Medium support needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meets two or three of the Prescribed Housing Support Services</li> <li>May have other health, well-being or identified</li> </ul>	409	80%

3 – 4 Hours Per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>issues.</li> <li>Client under the age of 25 that may need additional life skills.</li> </ul>		
Complex needs  6-10 Hours Per Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meets three or four of the Prescribed Housing Support Services</li> <li>May have other health, well-being or identified issues.</li> <li>Client under the age of 25 that may need additional life skills.</li> </ul>	79	78%
Residential / Supported Accommodation  10 – 16 Hours Per Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as Complex Needs – but additional requirement for Supported Accommodation.</li> </ul>	59	54%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1158</b>	<b>69%</b>

6.8.5 We are also developing our approaches to dealing with clients with multiple / complex needs and our homelessness strategy is now more closely aligned with NHS Highland through the Strategic Commissioning Group.

6.8.6 Currently Short Term Housing Support is provided through a ranked Framework agreement, divided into seven lots across the Highland geographical area. Overall five Providers operate across the different lots, these include; New Start Highland, Salvation Army, Y People, Gateway (Highland Homeless Trust) and Birchwood Highland.

6.8.7 Prior to April 2017, Short Term Housing Support was block funded in Highland with limited focus on outcomes and contract monitoring. The Framework Agreement introduced a greater focus on identified outcomes across four key areas including; Resettlement, Finance, Tenancy Management and Signposting with Providers submitting regular reviews detailing progress in each of the identified areas.

6.8.8 We regularly consult with all key stakeholders regarding the Framework contractual requirements and service delivery. Our most recent consultation highlighted a number of key areas that are currently under review, these include:

- adopting a more holistic and multi-disciplinary approach for the more complex cases;
- assisting service users to access specialist services as required;
- providing earlier intervention when support outcomes are not being delivered;
- ensuring service users are motivated to engage with support;
- Introducing exit strategies that will help to minimise long term dependency on support.

One of our key aims is to enable service users to live more independently by enhancing their resilience to vulnerability factors and enabling them to manage

personal risk.

- 6.9 Ensure homeless households can access the right type of support
- 6.9.1 In moving to a position of rapid rehousing, a critical part of the shift will be to remove the “tenancy readiness” culture and language. The majority of households experiencing homelessness have no, or low support needs and will move into mainstream housing with day-to-day housing management advice and assistance.
- 6.9.2 We have identified an initial need for three Rapid Rehousing Officers to be recruited using the Scottish Government funding. This resource will be crucial in ensuring clients in temporary accommodation are “moved on” as quickly as possible and that person-centred permanent outcomes are identified in discussion with client and support/health providers. It is estimated that these officers would be targeted with achieving a 10% reduction in time spent in temporary accommodation annually.
- 6.9.3 We are also developing our approaches to dealing with clients with multiple / complex needs. The Council’s Homelessness Strategy is now more closely aligned with NHS Highland through the Strategic Commissioning Group.
- 6.9.4 We are reviewing our approach to specialist accommodation. This is currently provided through supported accommodation within the Third Sector. We are currently reviewing and considering future needs, linked to consideration of Housing First type approaches.
- 6.10 Trauma Informed Events (TIE) / Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) - Training for Housing Options Teams
- 6.10.1 The North & Islands Hub has commissioned Glasgow Housing Network to deliver training on Trauma Informed Events (TIE)/ Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE). The training will support Housing Options staff to improve their skills for working with people with Complex Needs.
- 6.10.2 Topics covered will include;  
psychological awareness,  
engagement skills,  
motivational interviewing,  
solution focussed practice,  
adding Reflective Practice to staff support & development meetings,  
what trauma is and how it impacts people,  
how to recognize the signs of trauma in an individual.
- 6.10.3 Learning Outcomes  
The objective of these sessions is to develop an evidence-based understanding of the challenges faced by Housing Options staff when carrying out their casework and also develop an understanding of key TIE & PIE theories and how they translate into daily practice in their role when working with service users with complex support needs.
- 6.10.4 Guidance will be given to housing options staff to put the skills & knowledge into practice, e.g. considering building in peer group support sessions to staff

development arrangements. GHN have also committed to supplying a guidance with the training on setting up and running reflective practice.

## 7. Settled / Supported Accommodation

### 7.1 Supported Accommodation

7.1.1 Current Supported Accommodation provision in Highland is split between two 3<sup>rd</sup> sector providers. Case referrals to this service are made by Housing staff using the housing support case referral form which includes an initial assessment of support needs and expected support outcomes. This document is fluid and subject to regular review by both the provider and case referring officer.

### 7.2 HMO Based model

7.2.1 This supported accommodation is provided from within 4 private rented sector HMO properties which the Provider leases. One property is located in Invergordon and the other 3 are in Inverness. Across all 4 properties the Provider can provide up to 35 supported accommodation rooms at any one time, 32 of which are in Inverness.

7.2.2 The Housing service has a spot purchase contract arrangement in place with the Provider in respect of this model which funds the support element of it. The rent and property management costs are recouped through the rent charges applied to the rooms. Although service users are responsible for these costs they are usually covered through Housing Benefit claims.

7.2.3 During 2017/18 a supported accommodation service was provided to 72 homeless service users. Broad case outcomes for these cases are provided below:

Case Outcomes 2017/18	Example outcome
12 Negative case outcomes	Prison Breach of house rules Non-engagement/ refusal of service
14 Neutral	Not using accommodation Sourced own alternative accommodation
14 Positive	Social tenancy Residential drug/alcohol rehab
32 Open	Ongoing at year end

### 7.3 Shared / Flat Model

7.3.1 This supported accommodation is provided from within a mix of single occupancy and shared properties. There are 10 properties in total, 6 are single occupancy and are 4 shared 2 bedroom properties. Two of the properties are leased from an HHR RSL partner and the rest are leased from the Council. In total there are 14 supported accommodation units provided by the Provider in this model, none of which require an HMO licence.

7.3.2 The support element for this model is funded by the Council through the mainstream housing support contract detailed above. The rent and property management costs are recouped through the rent charges applied to the

properties. Although service users are responsible for these costs they are usually covered through Housing Benefit claims.

7.3.3 During 2017/18 a supported accommodation service was provided to 26 homeless service users, broad support outcomes for these cases are provided below:

Case Outcomes 2017/18	Example outcome
7 Negative case outcomes	Prison Breach of house rules Non-engagement/ refusal of service
3 Neutral	Not using accommodation Sourced own alternative accommodation
13 Positive	Social tenancy other supported accommodation
3 Open	Ongoing at year end

7.3.4 The long term nature of the open cases listed above indicates that these service users could benefit from a Housing First model as an alternative approach to address their long term support needs. Positive outcomes appear to be achieved quicker in the non HMO model, however this could also be attributable to individual service user needs.

#### 7.4 Increasing Supply of Social Housing in Highland

7.4.1 A detailed analysis of homelessness in Highland is provided at **Appendix 2**, this sets out the social housing supply challenges in Highland by providing an analysis of:

- The number of homeless presentations received during 2017/18 where a positive decision has been made and a permanent duty to house has been established.
- The number and percentages of allocations made to HHR applicants with homeless priority points, broken down by property size, geographical area and social landlord.
- the number of Highland Housing Register (HHR) waiting list applicants with homeless priority points as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 broken down by property size and geographical area.

7.3.6 The data contained in **Appendix 2** indicates that the numbers of homeless presentations across Highland are relatively stable and that the numbers of tenancies becoming available for allocation across Highland has the potential to meet homeless demand by increasing the percentage lets to homeless households in particular areas.

7.3.7 The data also shows that there are areas within Highland where housing supply does not meet homeless demand and although there appears to be capacity to increase the percentage of lets to homeless applicants in lower demand areas, it is unlikely that this would be considered to be a reasonable offer in some households circumstances given some of the distances involved.

7.3.8 For example offering a single homeless applicant with a family support network in Inverness a permanent outcome to their homelessness in Wick, 110 miles away is

unlikely to be considered a reasonable offer. However offering them one in Nairn at 16 miles away or Alness at 20 miles away may be reasonable in some circumstances.

7.3.9 The data also indicates that there are areas of high homeless demand in in the Inner Moray Firth in Highland where there is potential to increase the percentage lets to homeless households in Nairn, Dingwall and Alness by some landlords to alleviate some of the pressure in Inverness, the same options are not available to ease the homeless pressures shown in Portree.

7.4.1 The data in **Appendix 2** will be used to inform the mix of properties developed through the delivery of the Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan. This will ensure that the Local Housing Strategy targets of around 500 units per annum will be built according to meet the identified homeless demand in high pressure areas.

7.4.2 This data has also been used to consider the need to review the HHR Allocations Policy in view of the Rapid Rehousing approach. The data demonstrates that there are specific homeless pressures and priorities within high demand areas in Highland that will be challenging to meet more rapidly within the current allocations policy.

7.5 Highland Housing Register Review

7.5.1 A review of the Highland Housing Register (HHR) allocations policy is underway to revise the policy to allow it to better meet current housing need in Highland. The review began in February 2018 and has a clear focus on ensuring that all the partner landlords meet their statutory and regulatory obligations.

7.5.2 There are several aspects of our current HHR allocations policy affecting lets to homeless applicants. These are being reviewed as part of the HHR review to consider their impact on Rapid Rehousing in Highland within the 5 year transition plan period and beyond. Specific allocation policy areas for review relating to homelessness are set out below.

7.5.3 **Homeless at Home Status**, currently only applies to applicants who have lived independently then returned home before becoming homeless. Current allocations policy states:

'Homeless at home' status applies to households who either; share facilities with another household; are overcrowded; remain in accommodation they have no right or title to occupy 'Homeless at home' status does not apply to households who have never lived independent of the family home.

With 'Homeless at Home' status applicants get actual homeless points and points for time in temporary accommodation. Currently, young people who are homeless from the family home but have never lived independently are not eligible for this status so would only receive actual homeless points. To receive time in temporary accommodation points these applicants would need to live in Council temporary accommodation which potentially incentivises people moving into temporary accommodation to obtain time in temporary accommodation points.

7.5.4 **Time in Temporary Accommodation Points.** Current policy states:

If you are awarded the 70 Homeless Points and the Council has arranged temporary accommodation for you or you have been given the status of 'homeless at home' you will receive 2 additional points each full month you spend in this situation.'

These points currently disadvantage certain groups of homeless applicants who are ineligible for them, as without these points applicants can be 'overtaken' on the housing list by other homeless applicants entitled to these points, for example:

- Service users found to be homeless from the family home who have never lived independently prior to becoming homeless are unlikely to reach an allocation without these points.
- Homeless applicants who have been sentenced to a prison stay will be overtaken by other homeless applicants, resulting in them waiting a longer length of time to be housed as these points are switched on and off as they go in and out of prison. This is particularly relevant to applicants with chaotic lifestyles/ patterns of repeat offending behaviour.

**7.5.5 % Lets to Homeless Applicants.** The data in **Appendix 2** shows that there are variations in the proportion of allocations made to homeless households and that this may be disadvantaging homeless applicants, especially if they wish to live in the most pressured locations in Highland, such as the Inner Moray Firth area and Skye areas.

The review will consider whether the use of annual, locally focused allocation quotas or targets could help ensure not only a consistent approach between partner landlords but that the proportion of allocations made to homeless applicants supports the desired outcomes of the RRTP. In so doing, the targets would also recognise the important homelessness prevention role that general and transfer allocations can play in meeting overall housing need.

**7.5.6 Managing HHR geographical preferences of homeless applicants.** As for general or transfer list applicants, homeless applicants currently select their preferred lettings areas using the standard HHR application process.

Applicants can choose up to 10 lettings areas in Highland and there are associated concerns that this may be creating unmeetable expectations, especially for those in urgent housing need. As part of the current Housing Options process, homeless applicants are required to expand the number of areas they have selected if their initial choices reduce significantly their chances of being housed. Nevertheless, the current approach makes it more difficult to make a reasonable offer of housing if that offer is not at close proximity to an area the homeless applicant had initially selected.

The allocation policy review will consider how the current approach to area choices is hampering the partner's ability to make reasonable offers to homeless applicants and other applicants in significant housing need. It will recognise that a balance needs to be struck between offering choice and increasing the likelihood of finding a home for homeless applicants.

Initial discussions have identified the creation of larger lettings areas (effectively by



merging two or more of the current lettings areas into one) as a possible way forward. This approach may be particularly relevant to the Inner Moray Firth, which is currently divided into 38 letting areas, despite covering a relatively small geographical area by Highland standards at least.

7.5.7 **Potentially Homeless Points.** Currently the allocations policy states: 'If it has been assessed that you are likely to become homeless within the next 2 months and unintentionally so, you will be awarded 50 points. Applicants with homeless or potentially homeless points are not eligible for certain other housing needs points'

The weighting of these points as well as the eligibility for other categories of housing need points is being reviewed. Currently applicants with potentially homeless points are unable to compete for allocation with applicants who have actually homeless or general needs applicants who receive points in a number of the housing needs categories recognised through the current policy. The current level of pointing for potentially homeless applicants makes it very unlikely that they will be made an offer of permanent housing in any of the higher demand areas and before homelessness can be prevented.

The review will consider how the very considerable advantages to both applicants and the housing system of taking a preventative approach should be balanced with the need to find homes for those who are already homeless or in significant other housing need.

7.5.8 **Housing First.** There is currently no mechanism to allocate Housing First tenancies within the HHR allocations policy, the review will consider what policy changes are required to fairly and transparently allocate Housing First tenancies, using a mix of stock from all HHR partner landlords.

7.5.9 As with all aspects of the review, any proposed policy changes relating to the issues above will be subject to discussion and agreement with our RSL partners and elected members following a points modelling exercise. It is planned that a revised HHR Allocations Policy will be operational from 1st April 2020, year 2 of the Council's RRTP.

## 7.6 Private Rented Sector (PRS)

7.6.1 In 2011, the Council's Homeless Prevention Team carried out a series of meetings with private landlords and lettings agents to foster a closer working relationship with them. This was part of our approach to achieving positive homeless prevention outcomes for households. Consultation efforts with the PRS were successful and led to the review of the Council's Deposit Guarantee Scheme, a closer working relationship and informal referral process quickly followed.

7.6.2 Although a success initially, a number of challenges which the sector faced over the following years led to a decline in cases referred to the PRS:

### 1. Universal Credit Pilot

In November 2013, the UK Government launched the test pilot of 'Live' Service Universal Credit (UC) in the Highlands. Universal Credit aimed to simplify the welfare benefit system by rolling the six main means tested

benefits for working age claimants into one monthly payment. Initially new UC claimants were not eligible to any benefit entitlement during the first 7 days of their claim, this alongside monthly assessment periods meant that most recipients were waiting around 7 weeks for their first benefit payment.

Over the last five years the DWP's continuing 'test and learn' approach to implementing Universal Credit has continued to impact on levels of rent arrears putting a strain on landlords income streams due to the uncertainties about the payments.

Ongoing lobbying by the social housing sector since 2013 has helped improve the involvement of landlords in the overall Universal Credit process, but the same support and engagement has not been provided to landlords in the PRS.

This public and contentious change to the DWP benefits system very quickly dissuaded PRS landlords from accepting potential tenants on UC.

2. The Private Housing (Tenancies) Act 2016 introduced a new tenancy regime for private sector tenancies, providing much greater security of tenure. The duties on landlords have also been increased in relation to property condition. Unfortunately affordability and landlord / letting agent attitudes to tenants who rely on the welfare benefit system to pay rent remain key constraints in relation to the use of the private rented sector as a tool to achieve rapid rehousing.
3. Lack of a dedicated PRS liaison resource to maintain our relationship with the sector in the face of these two significant challenges, prevented the Council from responding positively with the sector and developing our liaison/referral approach accordingly. Ultimately landlords shied away from working with the Council mainly in reluctance to consider a tenant on UC due to the negative press around potential impact on rent arrears.

7.6.3 The Council is currently working with the national homelessness charity Crisis to improve housing options in and around Inverness and the wider Moray Firth area. Crisis is carrying out a survey of the PRS to challenge the stereotypes around homelessness and explore the potential to work more closely with the sector to achieve positive housing options outcomes for homeless service users.

7.6.4 It is anticipated that full survey results will be completed by 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019, this piece of work is intended as a first step in the process of cultivating a positive working relationship with the PRS.

Although full survey results will not be available until later this year, some positive interim feedback from has been obtained from Crisis which is attached at **Appendix 3** to this report.

7.6.5 Once full findings of the PRS survey are available we intend to carry out a study of the sector in the Inner Moray Firth area to explore the full potential of the survey feedback and begin to develop a closer working relationship with the PRS in

Highland.

The study will also examine existing known issues around the PRS in Highland including:

- The need to review and update the Council's Deposit Guarantee Scheme to explore potential for the scheme's development.  
For example when a landlord won't accept a guarantee, could DGS pay a cash deposit, or could a guarantee also cover the month's rent in advance, or cost of certain furniture items, or whether the DGS could also cover landlord incentives such as payment of registration fees / gas safety certificates.
- Explore the potential for HC social tenancy insurance scheme to be widened to PRS tenancies
- Ability of PRS tenants/landlords to access housing support
- A need for a referral process between PRS landlords and Health & Social Care Team for urgent referrals.
- Explore potential for rollout of 'Enhanced Section 11 Project' with partner PRS landlords
- Difficulty communicating / disseminating information to the PRS in Highland due to the large number of 'accidental' /small scale landlords in the area.

7.6.6 Thereafter, it is intended that an Inner Moray Firth landlord forum is established to be used as a means to liaise with the sector in recognition of the high volume of accidental and small scale landlords operating in the area. Referral processes will be developed through the forum taking account of the know issues and survey feedback.

7.6.7 It is anticipated it will take around 9 months to carry out this piece of work including the review of existing processes and the agreement of referral arrangements. This period will also involve the drafting of a Housing Plan template for potential PRS service users to use when accessing the PRS. A Housing Coach (1xFTE) will recruited for lifetime of this RRTP, thereafter the post will be self-funded from savings made from within our homeless resources budget as a result of an expected reduction in homeless presentations and temporary accommodation use.

7.6.8 Thereafter, from around month 10 onwards the Housing Coach will spend one third of their working week maintaining our relationship with the sector through proactive liaison / active listening to address issues and development issues arising with the sector. The other two thirds of the Housing Coach's working week will be spent taking case referrals from Housing Options Officers in Highland and sourcing PRS tenancy outcomes for them using the referral processes developed during months 1-9.

7.6.9 Service users working with the Housing Coach will have a housing plan laying out all housing options open to them. The Coach will help service users navigate and make choices in the social housing system, explore Mid-Market Rent and consider low-cost home ownership through access to Help to Buy ISAs or the Scottish Government's shared equity scheme etc.

The Coach will also support clients to understand their rights and responsibilities as

a tenant, think about what to say when they speak to a landlord and how to behave at a viewing. They will also help them to access any support they need through a network of signposting and assistance.

The Coach will work closely with the Council's Deposit Guarantee Scheme and other PRS tools developed during the initial phase of their appointment. The Coach will also offer landlords advice on leases and compliance, and support tenants throughout their tenancy.

## 7.7 Housing First in Highland

7.7.1 The number of homeless cases with Residential/Supported Accommodation support needs who would benefit from a Housing First approach to rehousing is expected to be around 128. Currently there is no Housing First provision in Highland, as detailed above this need is currently being met through the provision of supported accommodation.

7.7.2 Introducing this model of intensive support will ensure households with complex needs can access personalised, open-ended, flexible support to end their experience of repeat homelessness and address their wider needs.

7.7.3 Further discussion is required at both an officer and provider level to ensure that the most appropriate Housing First model is adopted in Highland. Initial estimated costs would indicate that staff funding alone for the proposed Housing First projects will be £244k per annum. We have been working with the Highlands Alcohol and Drug Partnership (HADP) on a project outline and funding model for a Highland pilot. HADP have committed 50% of this funding per annum to the project which will operate initially in the Inner Moray Firth area on a pilot basis.

## 7.8 Housing First Pilot - Inner Moray Firth (50% match funded by the Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership (HADP)).

### 7.8.1 **Overview**

The project will be delivered as part of a package of measures to prevent and reduce drug and alcohol related harm and support recovery. It will work in tandem with other service developments that will improve access to opiate substitution therapy (OST), trauma-informed practice, community integration offenders, and evidence-based interventions for people with learning disabilities and autism.

The key partners are NHS Highland Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service, Highland Council Housing Service, HADP and the Third Sector. An integrated service model underpinned by Housing First principles is being developed that will target hard to reach people with complex needs (drug, alcohol, mental health and homeless problems). Priority will be accorded to people at higher risk of drug and alcohol related death. Assertive outreach approaches will be used to engage people that albeit vulnerable, can be challenging to work with due to chaotic lifestyles. The service will also facilitate access to health and social care services, conduct needs assessment and devise and support recovery plans.

### 7.8.2 **Funding**

It has been confirmed that HADP will fund 50% of the resources required to operate this project. The total funding required for the project is listed below.

50% of these costs are being sought from the Scottish Government RRTP funding. Beyond the 5 year transition period RRTP funding will not be required, savings made from the Council's homeless resources and housing support budgets as a result of the measures contained within this RRTP will be used from then on.

**Resources Required (per year)**

<b>Post</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Nurse	2FTE	£101,286
Housing Officer	2FTE	£80,494
Support Worker	2FTE	£63,026
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£244,806</b>

Once operational the project team will carry a caseload of 20 open cases at any one time and will house 35 homeless service users each year through a Housing First tenancy outcome in the Inner Moray Firth.

Based on the costs above the project will deliver Housing First outcomes at a yearly unit cost of £6,994 per case.

**7.8.3 Project Plan - Summary**

**Aim**

The aim of the project is to deliver an integrated multi-agency team of locally responsive assertive outreach services practising Housing First principles that reach, engage and support; people with problem drug and alcohol use and complex needs, particularly those at high risk of death.

**Access**

Access to the service will be via the Housing Service, with rapid access to a multi-agency and integrated pathway.

**Activities**

The multi-agency team will deliver; group work, 1-2-1 support, assertive outreach / active engagement, high / low intensity/flexible and personalised support, drug and alcohol treatment, harm reduction, psychological interventions / mental health / multiple and complex needs support, housing support, tenancy readiness / retention, overdose awareness, practical support with (budgeting, welfare rights, property maintenance), accessing general and specialist services, establish multi-agency / integrated pathways.

**7.8.4** The partnership is currently working through shared governance structures and operating processes. Recruitment for project staff is underway. A project steering group and service level agreement (SLA) will be in place by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.

Project funding is to recruit a Housing Officer, Harm Reduction Nurse and Support Worker. Funding for furniture packages will be found from within existing resources within the Social Welfare Fund and the Council's existing Homeless resources budget.

It is intended that once critical support outcomes for Housing First service users have been achieved, the housing element of service delivery will transfer from the Housing First team to the Council's mainstream Tenancy Management Team. Before this takes place a transition plan will be agreed with each service user which sets out how their support needs will continue to be met in their tenancy.

### 7.8.5 **Outputs**

Integrated multi-agency network of locally responsive assertive outreach services  
 Embed Housing First principals  
 Engage hardest to reach with complex needs  
 Prioritise support to people at higher risk of death  
 Establish interagency pathways/protocols/ standard operating procedures  
 Embed Trauma-informed practice  
 Deliver integrated / interagency support for complex needs (i.e. drug / alcohol problems, mental/physical health, homelessness)  
 Evidence of long-term and sustainable housing solutions

### **Outcomes**

Increased numbers of hard to reach housed / engaged in treatment  
 Improved integrated support for complex needs  
 Reduced drug/alcohol deaths  
 Reduced homelessness / use of temporary accommodation  
 Improved tenancy sustainability  
 Improved access to and engagement in treatment services  
 Increased use of advocacy services

### 7.8.6 **Performance Management**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Collection</b>	<b>When</b>
Nos. housed / in treatment	Spreadsheet	Quarterly
Sustainability of housing / treatment	Spreadsheet	Quarterly
Improved outcomes (mental, physical health and wellbeing)	Recovery Outcomes (RO) Tool	Quarterly
Service user experiences	Survey / focus group	Annually
Nos. drug and alcohol deaths	NDRDDB / alcohol mortality	Annually
Integrated pathways	Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)	Annually

- 7.8.7 The Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership is developing an evaluation model which all projects funded through HADP's Investment Plan must comply with to allow consistent feedback to HADP. The Housing First project will benefit from that evaluation model which will be used to ensure critical indicators are being met and project outcomes are being delivered.
- 7.8.8 In addition, it has recently been confirmed that Ruth Robin, Portfolio Lead (Place, Home & Housing), Health Improvement Scotland has offered to support HADP to evaluate our Housing First project.

## 8 Partnership Working & Consultation/ Engagement

- 8.1 Partnership Working  
Initial discussions have taken place with key partners regarding Rapid Rehousing in Highland, these discussions have involved the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector partners, HHR Partners, the Health & Social Care Team and HADP.
- 8.1.1 A programme of further partner consultation around RRTP will begin with a North & Islands Hub RRTP event in 2019. This is being developed through the North and Islands Hub in partnership with the Scottish Housing Network. This spring event will involve, Community Mental Health, Care & Learning, Health & Social Care Partnership, The 3<sup>rd</sup> sector, Highland Housing Register Partners, the Private Rented Sector.
- 8.1.2 Specific RRTP partnership working arrangements will be developed thereafter in respect of the following:
- **Housing First Steering Group**  
Development and implementation of a partnership Highland Housing First Steering Group. The initial meeting of this is expected to take place by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 and will involve key contacts from the Highland Alcohol & Drug Partnership. The Steering Group will include involvement from former service user/s.
  - **Highland RRTP Working Group**  
Highland's RRTP Working Group is in place and an initial meeting took place during February 2019, this meeting comprised of key HC Housing staff, however attendance will be widened to involve the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and other key partners as informed by the North & Islands Hub RRTP event outlined above.  
  
It is expected that sub groups of the working group will be developed involving key partners which will focus on specific outcomes and projects within the Highland RRTP.
  - **Highland Charitable & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector**  
There will be specific consultation and engagement developed in respect of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector in Highland. Beginning with RRTP discussions at  
-Inverness Foodstuffs (Homeless Charity), Conversation Café event on 5th April 2019  
-Homeless Action Inverness (3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Forum), Management Group

meeting on 7 May 2019

- **Private Rented Sector**

Inner Moray Firth landlord forum, to be set up upon conclusion of the Crisis PRS consultation exercise, will involve PRS landlords, lettings agents as well as key HC Housing and Licensing contacts. The third sector will also be invited to take part in this

There will also be discussion on RRTP at the Highland Landlord Forum taking place in Inverness on Sat 29<sup>th</sup> June

- **Highland Housing Register Management Group**

Consultation is ongoing with the HHR Management Group in respect of the allocations policy review and the potential impact that Highland's RRTP will have on the review. There will be regular RRTP updates and discussion at the Management Group.

- **Highland Housing Development Hub**

Discussions with Highland's Housing Development Hub relating to RRTP have begun. Regular updates will be given to the Hub in respect of RRTP actions and outcomes to ensure that the Council's homeless housing need and demand is reflected in the development mix of Highland's SHIP.

## 8.2 Service User Consultation/Engagement

8.2.1 The Council is currently working with Engage Scotland on a service user consultation exercise targeting homeless service users in homeless accommodation in Highland, this is part of the Scottish Housing Regulator's work with their National Panel of Tenants and Service Users.

8.2.2 A mix of temporary accommodation service providers and service users will be consulted as part of this which will take the form of 10-15 interviews. It is hoped that a mix of services users in dispersed and supported temporary accommodation in Highland as well as some who have been re-housed via the homeless service will be involved.

8.2.3 Once this initial consultation exercise has been concluded it is intended that a wider Housing Options service user engagement exercise will commence, coordinated by our Tenant and Customer Engagement Team. This will:

- Review existing Temporary accommodation Satisfaction Survey and widen it to cover experiences of housing options and homeless prevention measures as well as housing support provision.
- Review the timing and method of carrying out the survey, the current survey is completed with housing staff when a service user signs up for permanent allocation. In future this will be carried out face to face by the Tenant Participation team 2 to 4 weeks after a service user moves into temporary accommodation. This will allow referrals for housing support, money advice and signposting to other support organisations to have been made.
- Develop regular drop in sessions for homeless clients with a Third Sector Partner, in an informal setting where service users can come in for a hot drink or a bowl of soup and discuss any issues they may have. These



sessions will be led by the Tenant Participation team involving tenants who have come through homelessness. Partnership attendance at these drop in sessions will be developed to include Health & Social Care professionals, CAB, Money Advice and the NHS harm reduction team. The purpose of this will be to provide a point of access for homeless service users to seek assistance from partner agencies.

- Initially this approach will be piloted in the Inverness area during a 6 – 12 month period, following evaluation consideration will be given to rolling the approach out Highland wide.
- Scottish Government RRTP funding is required for this, however it is expected that this model will be self-funding from year 3 of the RRTP using savings made from Highland’s housing support and homeless resources budgets.

8.2.4 It is intended that the results of these consultation and engagement exercises will help inform ongoing transformation within temporary accommodation in Highland as well as inform the development of housing options and homeless prevention measures contained within this RRTP.

## 9 Highland’s Rapid Rehousing Baseline Position

9.1 The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is designed to be a working tool and it is anticipated that this plan will continue to evolve over the transition period. An Action Plan is set out at **Appendix 1** and this focuses on key priorities for Highland. It also provides resource assumptions required to meet the priorities.

9.2 The following table summarises the Scottish Government RRTP Funding which is being sought to implement this plan:

Measure	Years	Funding Per Year
Homeless Family Mediation	1 & 2	£4,000
Digital Housing Support for Young People	1	£13,500
Rapid Rehousing Officers	1-5	£124,000
Shared TFA - Inner Moray Firth	1-5	£262,389
Skye Temporary Accommodation Provision	1-5	£44,165
Private Rented Sector Housing Coach	1-5	£41,556
Housing First	1-5	£122,403
Homeless Service User Engagement	1 & 2	£20,569

9.3 It should be noted that a number of the actions identified have been ongoing for some time and that others require significant support from other agencies.

9.4 The Council is committed to meeting the objectives set out in this RRTP to tackle homelessness in Highland by transforming our homeless service provision to

- Prevent rough sleeping in Highland,
- Transform our temporary accommodation and
- Permanently house households facing homelessness in Highland as rapidly as possible

The Council's 5 year RRTP is intended to modernise our homeless service provision to fit with the priorities highlighted by HARSAG, the Council looks forward to working closely with the Scottish Government to meet the objectives set out within our RRTP.

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019/20 – 2023/24: Action Plan

Priority action	What actions are underway / planned?	When will this be completed?	Existing strategy / action plan?	Indicators	Baseline	2024 target	Resources required
Increase focus on prevention to stop homelessness happening in the first place	Re-focus on homeless prevention	Ongoing throughout plan period	Local Housing Strategy	Reduced homeless presentations	1160	1098 (5% reduction)	No additional resources required
	Maintain current levels of tenancy sustainment	Ongoing throughout plan period	Annual Scottish Social Housing Charter	% tenancies sustained for 12 months	89.4%	90%	No additional resources required
	Review and implement a revised protocol for prisoners in line with the Sustainable Housing On Release for Everyone (SHORE) National Standards	30/6/2019	Highland Community Justice Plan	No of homeless assessments where previous accommodation was prison	40	Not applicable	No additional resources required
	Review the delivery of services aimed at preventing homelessness for women and children experiencing domestic or sexual abuse	30/6/2019	Highland Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)	% of homeless assessments where reason for homelessness is relationship breakdown (violence / abuse)	134	Not applicable	No additional resources required
	Review partnership working arrangements to ensure correct focus on RRTP	30/06/2019	Local Housing Strategy	Local Housing Strategy	Not applicable	Not applicable	No additional resources required
	Provide training and awareness raising on new tenancy regime and tenancy rights for Housing staff (including use of first-tier tribunal powers)	31/6/2019	Local Housing Strategy	% of homeless assessments where reason for homelessness is action by landlord/ lender	113	90	Use of existing Scottish Government funding for the North & Islands Housing HUB

Priority action	What actions are underway / planned?	When will this be completed?	Existing strategy / action plan?	Indicators	Baseline	2024 target	Resources required
Increase focus on prevention to stop homelessness happening in the first place	Homeless Family Mediation	2020/21	Local Housing Strategy	-Reduction in use of temporary accommodation by young people -Numbers of Cases Mediated -Development of service Delivery model beyond year 2	HL3 2017/18	5% reduction  10 homeless Mediation Cases each year, years 1&2	Scottish Government RRTP funding for test of change trial. 20 mediation cases @ £400 per case £8,000 over two years.
	Development and implementation of Section 11 and Council TAX/ Non Domestic Rates Referral processes	2020	Local Housing Strategy	Reduction in homelessness	HL1	1%	No additional resources required
	Review of Housing Options Protocol for Care Leavers	2021	Local Housing Strategy	Prevention of homelessness for care leavers  Monitoring of referrals / tenancy sustainment / numbers of HAs received	NA	5 new secure tenancies per year of	No additional resources required
	Digital Housing Support Model for Young People/ Leaving Home Planning	2019/20	Local Housing Strategy	Numbers of service users positively engaged by digital support platform	Not applicable	50 young people during 2019/20	Scottish Government RRTP Funding for test of change trial £13,500 during 2019/20

Priority action	What actions are underway / planned?	When will this be completed?	Existing strategy / action plan?	Indicators	Baseline	2024 target	Resources required
Reduce Time Spent on Temporary Accommodation	Renew focus on housing options advice to make best use of existing housing stock	31/3/2019	No	Analysis of staffing resources and caseloads required	Not applicable	Not applicable	No additional resources required
	Review households currently occupying temporary accommodation and provide intensive casework to achieve permanent outcomes more quickly	31/3/2020	No	Reduce length of stay in temporary accommodation	10 months	6 months	Scottish Government funding for 3 Rapid Rehousing Officers HC7 £124k per year of RRTP
	Shared Temporary Furnished Accommodation (TFA) Inner Moray Firth	Ongoing throughout RRTP	Local Housing Strategy	-Reduction in temporary accommodation use generally and end of HMO use -Creation of 150 Temporary Furnished Properties (TFA) in Inner Moray Firth	HL3 reporting & HMO Contract monitoring	End of HMO use in Highland  Creation of 150 additional TFA Units in Inner Moray Firth	Scottish Government RRTP Funding for 1xFTE Share Team Leader (HC7) 5FTE x Housing Management Assistants (HC5) 2.5FTE Care Takers (HC3)  £262,389 Per Year of RRTP
	Housing Support & Supported Accommodation Review	2021	Local Housing Strategy	Review housing support /supported accommodation provision based on RRTP outcomes and feedback  Tailor to fit with Housing First principles	NA	NA	No additional resources required

Priority action	What actions are underway / planned?	When will this be completed?	Existing strategy / action plan?	Indicators	Baseline	2024 target	Resources required
	Review Affordability of Temporary Accommodation	2019/20	Local Housing Strategy	Implementation of Draft 'Rent Charging and arrears management Policy' in temporary homeless accommodation	n/a	n/a	No additional Resources Required
	Skye Temporary Accommodation Provision	Ongoing throughout RRTP	Local Housing Strategy	-Reduction in temporary accommodation use generally. Reduction in Hostel provision on Skye. -Creation of 10 Temporary Furnished properties (TFA) on Skye	HL3 reporting	50% reduction in Hostel provision on Skye by end of RRTP  Creation of additional 10 TFA Units on Skye	1FTE x Housing Management Assistants (HC5)  0.5FTE Caretaker (HC3)  £44,165 per year of RRTP
Identify making maximum use of existing housing	Review operation of Highland Housing Register in relation to allocations to homeless applicants and provision of properties for use as temporary homeless accommodation	31/12/2019	Local Housing Strategy	% lets to homeless households  Reduction of HMO temporary accommodation use in Inner Moray Firth	37%  N/A	Subject to HHR review & consideration of quotas  10 properties per year from HHR for temporary	No additional resources required

Priority action	What actions are underway / planned?	When will this be completed?	Existing strategy / action plan?	Indicators	Baseline	2024 target	Resources required
						accommodation use	
	Complete assessment of engagement with private rented sector	31/03/2019	Local Housing Strategy	% of homeless applicants able to source private rented accommodation	Not applicable	Not applicable	Crisis to commence engagement project with private landlords in Inner Moray Firth
	Private Rented Sector (PRS) Housing Coach.	31/03/2024	Local Housing Strategy	-PRS tenancies used to house homeless/potentially homeless households -Establishment of Landlord Forum -PRS referral processes developed -Deposit Guarantee Scheme reviewed and updated Reviewed	Not Applicable	100	Scottish Government RRTP Funding of £41,556 required per year of RRTP
Ensure homeless households can access the right type of support	Review of housing support arrangements	30/9/2019	No	% tenancies supported for 12 months	89.4%	90%	No additional resources required
	Housing First	31/3/2020	No	Number of service users supported	0	35 cases each year of RRTP	Scottish Government RRTP Funding of £122,403 required per year of RRTP

Priority action	What actions are underway / planned?	When will this be completed?	Existing strategy / action plan?	Indicators	Baseline	2024 target	Resources required
	Carry out options appraisal of future use / development potential of current Hostel provision on Skye	2021	Local Housing Strategy	Reduction in use of HMO accommodation	Not applicable	Not applicable	No additional resources required
	Delivery of TIE/PIE training to Housing Options Officers	2021	Local Housing Strategy	Numbers of HOOs trained	0	30	No additional resources required.
Increase affordable housing supply to meet needs of homeless households	Deliver 500 new affordable homes per annum in the priority areas identified through the Local Housing Strategy / Strategic Housing Investment Plan	31/3/2024	SHIP/Local Housing Strategy	Number of new homes developed	500 per year	2,500 additional homes  Targeting areas of high homeless need and demand.	Existing Housing Development funding totally estimated at £165m
Partnership Working & Consultation/ Engagement	Homeless Service User engagement	2019/20	Local Housing Strategy	Number of service users consulted	Not applicable	50 per year of RRTP	Tenant Participation Officer (HC6) 0.5FTE £18,169  Drop in costs – hire of venue and refreshments £2,400  £20,569 Per annum, Years 1 & 2 of RRTP



## Homelessness Procedures: Review Process

### Flowchart of process showing who should action and timescales

