



## **Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan – Housing First Report**

**Report by Kevin Anderson, Executive Director - Place**

### **Report for approval**

#### **1. Recommendations**

It is recommended that Council:

- (a) Approves the continuation of Housing First for a fourth year up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, and
- (b) Approves the proposals for Housing First to be considered as part of the wider Temporary Accommodation and Support Services contract from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

#### **2. Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to update Council and also outline plans for the delivery of Housing First in Midlothian in 2023/24. The objective of this proposal is to ensure continuation of the service for a further year with a view to incorporating Housing First into a revised tenancy support contract from April 2024.

**Date:** 30/03/2023

**Report Contact:**

**Name** Matthew McGlone, Housing Options Development Officer

**Tel No** 07785 440 478

**Email** matthew.mcglone@midlothian.gov.uk

### 3 Background

- 3.1 The Scottish Government published its Ending Homelessness Together- High Level Action Plan. This action plan set out how homelessness would be reduced through a shift to prevention of homelessness and a focus on a Housing First approach. Following the publication of this action plan all Scottish Local Authorities were required to publish a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) by December 2018, demonstrating how they intended to move to a rapid rehousing model over a period of five years.
- 3.2 Midlothian Council included plans to develop Housing First as part of its RRTP and incorporated a provision for Housing First tenancies to be created within its Housing Allocation Policy. *Housing First is aimed at people who have multiple and complex needs and who may have a history of rough sleeping and repeat homelessness. The Housing First approach ensures those with high support needs are allocated settled accommodation with intensive support. There is no requirement to prove 'tenancy readiness'.* Following a delay due to the Covid-19 pandemic Midlothian Council launched Housing First in June 2020.
- 3.3 Following meetings with authorities and agencies who were part of the Housing First Pathfinder, a model of Housing First was developed that could be delivered within the context of homelessness and housing in Midlothian. This included the following features:
  - Ensuring partnership working was embedded throughout the process
  - A gradual creation of Housing First tenancies.
  - Avoiding lengthy waiting lists/creation of a backlog of people moving in.
  - A focus on reducing the time from acceptance of accommodation to moving into the tenancy
  - Ensuring people are provided with a 'home' rather than an empty flat.
- 3.4 20 people were accepted for Housing First in each of the first two years of the project and remains on course to create a further 20 in year three. The Scottish Government started to collect and publish data relating to Housing First on 01/04/2021. Between 01/04/2021 and 30/06/2022 only five other Local Authorities created more Housing First tenancies than Midlothian.
- 3.5 Midlothian Council has always been clear that should the support service not have capacity to take on new service users, due to the support needs of those currently being supported, the process will be paused. This is to ensure the focus remains on tenancy sustainment and positive outcomes for those being supported rather than the number of ongoing tenancies.
- 3.6 The current contract with the Housing First support provider commenced on 01/06/2020 for an initial 12 month period. Midlothian exercised the option to extend the contract for a further 2 years (1+1). The terms of the contract were revised slightly in year 3 to increase the staffing resource and ensure sufficient capacity within the service.
- 3.7 The Housing First support service in Midlothian has been fully funded by utilising Ending Homelessness Together Funding received from the Scottish Government. Additional staffing resources to co-ordinate and monitor Housing First have been provided from existing service budgets and resources.

3.8 The Scottish Government have supported the RRTP activities of local authorities through the provision of a grant received each year.

Table 1 below shows the funding received by Midlothian Council up to Financial Year 2022/23, along with details of the projects currently being funded as reported in Midlothian's most recent RRTP and the Activity and Spend Monitoring report to the Scottish Government.

| Table1: Breakdown of RRTP funding received and projects funded to up to 2022/23. |            |   |             |            |
|--|------------|---|-------------|------------|
| Funding allocation   | Amount     | Project   | Expenditure | Remaining  |
| RRTP Development Funding   | 32,000.00  | Housing First - Year 1 Pilot (Part)                                   | 32,000.00   | 0.00       |
| RRTP funding 2019/20   | 141,000.00 | Housing First - Year 1 Pilot (Part)                                   | 8,145.00    | 132,855.00 |
|  |            | Housing First - Year 2 Pilot (Part)                                   | 12,456.80   | 120,398.20 |
|  |            | 0.5 FTE Grade 6 Temp Officer (Mayfield) 3 Years                       | 60,199.10   | 60,199.10  |
|  |            | 0.5 FTE Grade 6 Temp Officer (Shared Accommodation)<br>3 Years        | 60,199.10   | 0.00       |
| RRTP funding 2020/21   | 137,000.00 | Bunk Beds For Mayfield  | 1,350.00    | 135,650.00 |
|  |            | Furnishing Properties @ Hillside                                      | 16,720.96   | 118,929.04 |
|  |            | Housing First - Year 2 Pilot (Part)                                   | 27,814.20   | 91,114.84  |
|  |            | Homelessness Officer 2 year   | 72,011.50   | 19,103.34  |
|  |            | Housing First Year 3 (Part)   | 19,103.34   | 0.00       |
| RRTP funding 2021/22 (Extra)   | 85,000.00  | Housing First Year 3 (Part)   | 37,245.66   | 47,754.34  |
|  |            | 2 year Youth Homeless Service (part)                                  | 47,754.34   | 0.00       |
| RRTP funding 2021/22   | 127,000.00 | 2 year Youth Homeless Service (part)                                  | 127,000.00  | 0.00       |
| RRTP funding 2022/2023   | 121,000.00 | 2 year Youth Homeless Service (part)                                  | 25,245.66   | 95,754.34  |
|  |            | 1 FTE Grade 6 HML 1 year 2023/24                                      | 43,909.00   | 51,845.34  |
|  |            | 0.5 FTE Grade 6 Temp Officer (Mayfield) 1 year 2023/24                | 21,954.50   | 29,890.84  |
|  |            | 0.5 FTE Grade 6 Temp Officer (Shared Accommodation)<br>1 year 2023/24 | 21,954.50   | 7,936.34   |
|  |            | Temporary accommodation - Loanhead Families Project                   | 7,936.34    | 0          |

3.9 The Scottish Government have confirmed the funding for Midlothian in 2023/2024 will be £113,941. It is proposed that Midlothian Council uses this funding to procure a Housing First support service for a further year up to the end of March 2024. It is recommended that after this period the Housing First support service is then incorporated as a specific function within the wider Housing Support contract.

3.10 Midlothian's phased approach to roll out Housing First tenancies in matching resource to demand has been a key factor in the success of the scheme to prevent a backlog of people otherwise facing lengthy waits to move into a permanent tenancy. In the long term it is not feasible to support an increased demand without also increasing the staffing support resource, resulting in new Housing First tenancies only being created as capacity in the service allows.

## **4 Report Implications**

### **4.1 Resource**

The cost of delivering Housing First for a fourth year can be met through funding received from the Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Fund allocation 2023/24. The current Housing First contract provides 2x FTE support workers through a tendered, contracted external provider. In order to ensure sufficient resources within the service it is recommended that an additional 0.5 FTE worker is funded for 2023/24. This would create a service with 2.5 FTE support workers. The estimated cost of providing 2.5 FTE members of staff would be £70.5k. There will be sufficient capacity within the funding received to account for increases to living wage and other costs.

### **4.2 Risk**

There is a risk of negative scrutiny from external agencies such as the Scottish Government and interested third sector organisations if the Council is not seen to be engaged and delivering Housing First.

There is a risk of tenancy failure of vulnerable people with multiple/complex support needs not maintaining their tenancy if the support provided by Housing First is not continued.

### **4.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation**

Themes to be addressed in this report:

- Community safety
- Adult health, care and housing
- Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- Sustainable growth
- Business transformation and Best Value
- None of the above

### **4.4 Key priorities in the Single Midlothian Plan**

Midlothian Council and its community planning partners have made a commitment to treat the following areas as key priorities under the Single Midlothian Plan:

- Reducing inequalities in the health of our population
- Reducing inequalities in the outcomes of learning in our population
- Reducing inequalities in the economic circumstances of our population

The themes addressed in this report impact on the delivery of the Single Midlothian Plan. Particularly in relation to the delivery of affordable housing, homelessness, health and social care, improved economic outcomes and creating sustainable communities.

#### **4.5 Ensuring Equalities**

Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

An Integrated Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan ensuring all actions have taken account of the needs of equality groups in relation to homelessness.

#### **4.6 Supporting Sustainable Development**

Continuing to provide Housing First in Midlothian will support the long term development of sustainable communities in Midlothian. This is achieved by helping people remain in their current accommodation, reducing the need for multiple placements in emergency accommodation, and other moves resulting from homelessness, reducing re-offending and providing a settled base for people to address other non-housing related support needs. This is further enhanced by assisting people to establish supportive relationships in the community, and improve education and employment outcomes.

#### **4.7 IT issues**

There are no IT issues.

## **APPENDIX A – Report Implications**

### **A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan**

### **A.2 Key Drivers for Change**

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- Holistic Working
- Hub and Spoke
- Modern
- Sustainable
- Transformational
- Preventative
- Asset-based
- Continuous Improvement
- One size fits one
- None of the above

### **A.3 Key Delivery Streams**

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- One Council Working with you, for you
- Preventative and Sustainable
- Efficient and Modern
- Innovative and Ambitious
- None of the above

### **A.4 Delivering Best Value**

The project aim is to deliver Best Value

### **A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders**

Stakeholders including Midlothian Tenants Panel, Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership, and voluntary organisations have all expressed support for the aims of Midlothian Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, including the prevention of homelessness. The revised RRTP is also submitted for approval by elected members on an annual basis following submission to the Scottish Government.

During 2022 Midlothian Council completed the inaugural 'Housing First check-up' and undertook a short exercise to seek the views of service users with lived experience of Housing First. The feedback received from internal partners, service users and external agencies was largely positive. The only concern raised related to the ratio of staff to service users.

## **A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes**

Providing a Housing First service has a positive impact across a range of areas including:

- Reducing the negative impact of homelessness on a person's wider social needs
- Reducing the time spent in temporary accommodation
- Reducing the overall number of people on the homeless list
- Improving the opportunity for people to fulfil their potential and become active members of their community
- Improving wider outcomes for homeless people in Midlothian such as health and economic outcomes
- Reducing inequalities experienced by homeless people, including those related to health, education, and employment
- Improving tenancy sustainment, and reducing the number of people in rent arrears, ensuring the council provides best value to tenants.
- Contributing to the development of sustainable communities.

## **A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach**

Housing First not only prevents repeated homelessness by providing support to successfully manage and sustain a tenancy but also adopts a preventative approach to recurring issues relating to the individual's wider support needs.

## **A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development**

Not applicable