



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Social Services, Housing and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee 11th October 2022

Report of the Head of Adult Services – Ms A. Thomas

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

APPROVAL AND PUBLICATION OF THE RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN 2022-2027

Purpose of the Report:

To seek approval of the draft Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Rapid Rehousing Plan (“RRP”) (Appendix 1) and to request publication of this strategic document.

Executive Summary:

Welsh Government’, (“WG”) “*Ending Homelessness – High Level Action Plan 2021-26*” places a requirement on Local Authorities to develop and publish a Rapid Rehousing Plan

The RRH sets out the steps required by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (“the Council”) to transform the homelessness services in line with WG’s expectations of all Local Authorities. It is a whole system transformation, and the plan covers a transition period of five years to enable to desired outcomes to be achieved.

Background:

WG published their *Ending Homelessness in Wales* strategy in 2021, which sets out their expectation that homelessness should be “rare, brief and unrepeated”. They have seen that the impact of the pandemic has resulted in a crisis in homelessness which requires radical change and a shift towards early preventative actions and a rapid rehousing model.

Rapid Rehousing (“RRH”) is an intervention designed to help households quickly exit a homelessness crisis, and to avoid becoming homeless again. It is a housing led solution, but is focused around the needs of the individual – a person centred approach. The ultimate objective is to offer housing that is safe, affordable, decent, and meets the needs of the individual in terms of location, proximity to family, services, access to transport and facilities such as shops and schools.

It does not require people to be “tenancy ready” before they access accommodation, and instead are offered a bespoke package of assistance, tailored to the issues they are facing in maintaining a tenancy. In this way people access permanent accommodation, reducing the risk of repeated episodes of homelessness, and the trauma that can cause.

It requires strong partnership working with housing associations, health and third sector providers in order to deliver a holistic approach to providing a home and the support each person will need to sustain their tenancy.

The RRP has been developed by looking at the current position of homelessness in the County Borough, and mapping how the current services can be transformed over the five year transition period. WG have provided a template for the report, and a spreadsheet for predicting the support needs, temporary accommodation and resources required to achieve the RRH model.

A first draft RRP was submitted to WG in June 2022 for review and comment. Feedback from WG has been incorporated into the final draft RRP located at Appendix 1. WG require the final version to be published by September 2022, with an agreed delay following the death of the Queen.

Financial Impacts:

The RRP includes a resources plan, which estimates the costs of staffing, capital expenditure and support costs required to deliver the transformation. At this stage, the figures are high level and will change over time as the details of the actions are developed.

Delivering a Rapid Rehousing approach to homelessness will require significant capital and revenue resources in relation to increasing housing supply, developing alternative models for temporary accommodation, increasing the input of specialist services and increasing the in-house preventative and rapid rehousing staff resources.

Some of this funding will come from reallocating monies from existing funding streams by decommissioning current services that do not align with the RRP, e.g., Social Housing Grant. More detailed plans around reallocating existing funding will be brought back to Members for approval once the detail has been scoped.

There will also be opportunities to redeploy of existing resources, again the detail of these plans will be brought back to Members for approval.

At this stage it is anticipated that the full costs of implementing the RRP cannot be met from current budgets and will require additional funding from WG. WG have indicated that additional investment will be made available to Local Authorities the details of which are yet to be announced.

Over the medium term, it is anticipated that implementing the RRP will result in savings for some areas of the existing homelessness budget, as the preventative nature of the RRP will result in a reduction in the use of temporary accommodation.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

An impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and presented to Cabinet as appendix 2 to the circulated report.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

The RRP is a high level document intended to meet the needs of the whole county borough including the valleys communities.

As the actions within the plan are developed, consideration of the impact on supporting valley communities will be given as part of the individual impact assessments.'

Workforce Impacts:

This is a whole system change to the way homelessness services are delivered, and will have an impact on the housing options team.

Many of the changes will be positive as the new ways of working will reflect the pressures they have had to manage during the Pandemic, with the proposed introduction of supervision in a social work model, to support staff who work on the front line to better cope with the challenges of working with vulnerable people in crisis.

Where elements of the RRP are identified as having an impact on the Council's workforce, managers will work with HR and the recognised Trade Unions to ensure that these changes are in line with employment legislation and internal policies.

Legal Impacts:

This plan will help the Local Authority to meet the legal requirements around homelessness, as this Transition Plan is a requirement of Welsh Government and relates to the LA's statutory duties to alleviate homelessness.

Risk Management Impacts:

There are related risks:

- Failure to comply with WG's requirements;
- Failure to deliver the plan will mean that NPT's homeless applicants will be adversely affected;
- The use of temporary accommodation is expensive, and resources are being wasted;

- Activity outlined in the plan should have a positive impact on crime and disorder issues such as anti-social behaviour, and will provide an opportunity to support people with very complex needs.

Consultation:

Legal advice has indicated that there is no requirement for public consultation

Recommendations:

Having given due regard to the IIA. Members are asked to approve the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Rapid Rehousing Plan as detailed in Appendix 2, to the circulated report.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

- To comply with Welsh Government requirements;
- To improve our response to homelessness, providing a more effective service to ensure that homelessness is “rare, brief, and unrepeated”;
- To support staff who are working in challenging circumstances; and
- To ensure all people presenting as homeless have both the accommodation and support they need to lead positive lives in our communities.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices:

Appendix One: Draft Rapid Rehousing Plan

Appendix Two: Integrated Impact Assessment

List of Background Papers:

None

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