



**West Lothian
Council**

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

DRAFT

December 2018

Data Label: Public

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Introduction | 4 |
| 2. Consultation | 6 |
| 3. Local Population Context | 6 |
| 3.1 Population Estimates and Household Numbers | 6 |
| 3.2 Health and Homelessness | 7 |
| 3.3 Local Economic Context | 8 |
| 4. Understanding West Lothian's Housing Market Context | 8 |
| 4.1 Housing Development Strategic Context | 8 |
| 4.2 Housing Tenure in West Lothian | 9 |
| 4.3 Need for Affordable Housing in West Lothian | 11 |
| 4.4 Increasing Affordable Housing Supply | 12 |
| 4.5 Open Market Acquisitions | 13 |
| 4.6 New Build Allocations | 13 |
| 5. West Lothian Homeless Position | 14 |
| 5.1 West Lothian Homeless Profile | 14 |
| 5.2 Demand for Temporary Accommodation | 18 |
| 5.3 West Lothian Homelessness Rehousing Position | 19 |
| 5.4 West Lothian Homeless Demand Vs Supply Gaps Analysis | 21 |
| 6. West Lothian Temporary Accommodation Provision | 23 |
| 7. Future 5 Year Plan for Temporary Accommodation | 25 |
| 8. Identifying Support Needs | 27 |
| 9. Transitioning to a Rapid Rehousing Approach in West Lothian | 29 |
| 9.1 Shifting from the Current Provision to the future vision | 29 |
| 9.2 Increase Focus on Early Intervention, Prevention and Housing Options | 30 |
| 9.3: Rehousing Options for Homeless Households | 31 |
| 9.4 Accessing the Right Levels of Support | 32 |
| 9.5 Access to Affordable Housing and Temporary Accommodation | 33 |
| 9.5.1 Affordable Housing Supply Targets | 33 |
| 9.5.2 Improving Access to Affordable Housing Options | 33 |
| 10. Communication Approach | 34 |
| 11. Resource Planning | 34 |
| 11.1 Revenue Resources Pressures | 35 |
| 11.2 New Housing Supply and Temporary Accommodation Capital Investment | 36 |
| 11.3 West Lothian RRTP Resource Requirements | 36 |
| 12. References and Further Reading – to be finalised | 41 |

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Executive Summary

This first iteration of the West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) provides context to the West Lothian housing market and homelessness position. It identifies the gaps in the supply of affordable housing against demand as well as the support required to transition to rapid rehousing.

The main challenge in West Lothian is increasing demand from households presenting as homeless for social rented housing against available supply to provide a settled housing solution. This has resulted in an increase in the use of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation to meet the council's statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation along with longer stays in temporary accommodation while households wait an offer for a suitable social rented tenancy.

There is evidence of good practice in West Lothian in relation to tenancy sustainment, quality support services and joined up working with key strategic partners. Housing Options advice has shifted to a prevention approach, with good outcomes in relation to working with the private rented sector, the Advice Shop and partner RSLs to reduce homelessness. West Lothian also has the first Housing First project being piloted for young people leaving care.

To take forward a rapid rehousing transition approach to homeless, the West Lothian RRTP outlines a dual approach to generate better flow through the homeless system while shifting focus further to an early intervention and prevention approach.

Through a partnership vision of "Working Together", West Lothian Council, West Lothian IJB, registered social landlords and the voluntary sector, we will aim to reduce homelessness through early intervention and prevention. Through the provision of consistent advice and information, we will strive to work with the person to offer a range of housing options to find a settled home with access to services and support mechanisms. Where homelessness does occur we will work with the person to ensure they are housed as quickly as possible with reduced lengths of stay in temporary accommodation.

This vision is underpinned by 4 high level actions:

- Increase focus on early intervention, prevention and housing options to stop homelessness happening in the first place;
- Improving access to affordable housing options and reducing lengths of stay in temporary accommodation by improving flow through the system diverting away from the use of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation;
- To ensure where homelessness does occur that housing options are focused on enabling households to navigate through the system as quickly as possible.
- Implement actions required to ensure peoples have access to the required levels of support.

These actions will be taken forward through four RRTP Work streams of, Early Intervention/Prevention and Housing Options, Supply and Temporary Accommodation, Support and Supported Accommodation and Health and Wellbeing.

However the partnership cannot do this alone and Scottish Government financial support and assistance will be required to transition from the current homeless position in West Lothian to a rapid rehousing approach.

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1. Introduction

It has been recognised both nationally and locally through the work of the Homeless and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) that a home is at the heart of any solution to the reduction of homelessness. People experiencing homelessness want a permanent solution as quickly as possible with fewer transitions and lengths of stay within temporary accommodation. (Jon Sparks, Chair of HARSAG, Scotland's Transition to Rapid Rehousing, June 2018)

It is also recognised that the causes of homelessness can be complicated and that local authorities and their strategic partners need to work together to prevent homelessness through early intervention and offer services which prevent people where possible from becoming homeless in the first place and enable people to sustain their home.

On the 27th June 2018 HARSAG published the final set of recommendations in response to four questions set by the Scottish Government. Four reports have been published and a total of 70 recommendations have been made. The Scottish Government has accepted in principle 64 out of the 70 recommendations and given a commitment to take forward a transformational approach with local authorities.

(<https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-rough-sleeping-recommendations/>)

The cornerstone of the recommendations is a transition to a 'Rapid Rehousing' approach by default of which the Housing First model is a smaller component. To move quickly towards the implementation of the recommendations all 32 local authorities are required to submit a 5 Year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) to the Scottish Government for comment by 31st December 2018 and to be put in action by April 2019.

RRTPs will describe how to readdress the local balance of temporary and settled housing options to align with the new national vision, initially over a 5 year planning cycle. Local authorities should set out their current temporary accommodation position, their vision and how they are going to get there. The national vision is detailed below:

National Vision: to transition to a rapid rehousing approach represents significant cultural and systems change in how we respond to homelessness and for the expectations of people affected by it. (RRTP: Briefing Statement, John Mills, Chair of ALACHO October 2018)

The vision for rapid rehousing is:

- A settled, mainstream and sustainable 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;

And for people with multiple needs beyond housing:

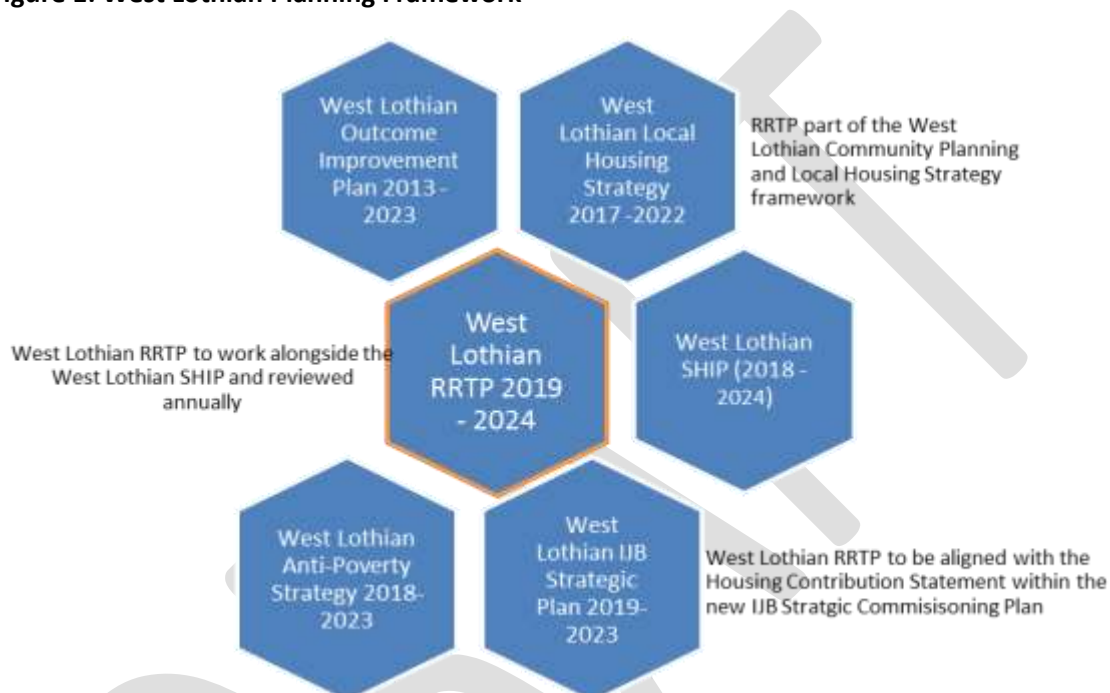
- Housing First is the first response for people with severe and multiple disadvantages;
- Highly specialist provision within small, shared, supported and trauma informed environments if mainstream housing, including Housing First, is not possible or preferable. These units may be better aligned with the broader health and social care strategy and commissioning frameworks.

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RRTPs will work alongside the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and will be reviewed annually as part of the SHIP process. They will also sit within the Community Planning Partners wider strategic planning framework of the Local Outcome Improvement Framework and Local Housing Strategy. They are to be developed closely with Health and Social Care Partnerships, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and other relevant parties such as voluntary organisations.

The Scottish Government will use the plans to assess progress towards the five year vision of rapid rehousing and assist Scottish Government in the allocation of resources for local authorities and their partners to transition to rapid rehousing. The West Lothian RRTP will be part of the West Lothian planning framework as illustrated below.

Figure 1: West Lothian Planning Framework



Transitioning to Rapid Rehousing will mean that West Lothian Council and key strategic partners will need to readdress the current balance of housing and support options that are available and how quickly they are accessed.

There also needs to be a significant shift in West Lothian to preventing homelessness from occurring in the first instance including a greater focus on early intervention.

West Lothian Council Housing Needs Service has taken the lead in the preparation of the plan which has been developed in collaboration with the RSLs, the voluntary sector, service users, West Lothian IJB and other relevant services within the council including West Lothian advice shop, Social Policy, Housing Customer and Building Services, Education and Finance. Key strategic partners are listed in Appendix 1.

A West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Board has been established with membership from across the council, West Lothian IJB, Social Landlords and the voluntary Sector. The purpose of the RRTP Board is to develop and agree collaboratively the vision of the plan as well as agree key targets and the final first iteration of the plan to be submitted to the Scottish Government. Governance arrangements for approval of the plan are set out in Appendix 2. Interim working groups were also established to collate and analyse the information required for the development of the RRTP including the baseline information required, gaps analysis, estimate of support needs of homeless households and resources.

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2. Consultation

A collaborative approach has been undertaken in the preparation and development of West Lothian's RRTP. Due to the Rapid Rehousing Transition approach being a relatively new concept a series of briefing and feedback sessions were undertaken to ensure meaningful engagement and consultation with a wide range of key strategic partners, service users, tenants and staff. The consultation approach was undertaken in four stages.

- **Stage 1:** Initial briefings on HARSAG recommendations and the principles of rapid rehousing:
- **Stage 2:** Feedback sessions on findings of baseline information and gaps analysis:
- **Stage 3:** Feedback Event held on the 31st October 2018 to inform the development of the West Lothian RRTP Vision and key elements of the plan.
- **Stage 4:** Consultation and feedback on the first iteration of the draft plan to be submitted to the Scottish Government by 31st December 2018.

Individual sessions have also been undertaken with the main providers of social rented housing in West Lothian to work towards agreeing a local target for the percentage of social lets in West Lothian required to deliver the RRTP vision. The three local social rented housing providers (Almond, Weslo and West Lothian Housing Partnership) also sit on the West Lothian RRTP Board. Appendix 3 provides further information on each of the consultation stages, the organisations involved and when they were undertaken.

3. Local Population Context

3.1 Population Estimates and Household Numbers

According to the National Records of Scotland the population of West Lothian was 181,310 on 30th June 2018 which is the 9th highest population out of all 32 council areas in Scotland. The area also has one of the fastest growing and youngest populations in Scotland, reflecting West Lothian's location within the central belt close to Edinburgh and Glasgow and its appeal as a place to invest, work and visit. Between 2016 and 2026, the population of West Lothian is projected to increase from 180,130 to 191,979 an increase of 6.6%, which compares to a projected increase of 3.2% for Scotland as a whole.

In relation to Homeless Service provision there are certain population and household trends which will influence future demand and type of service delivery. Increasing population trends could mean higher demand for services while increasing numbers of household will increase demand for housing. Trends in household type and age group will influence the housing type and size required and services to be provided. The following population and household trends may influence service delivery:

- 45 to 64 age group was the largest population in 2017, with a population of 51,086.
- 75 and over age group was the smallest, with a population of 11,981
- 16-24 age group in West Lothian is anticipated to increase by 1% between 2016 to 2026. For Scotland as a whole the population of this age group is anticipated to decrease by 9% between 2016 and 2026.
- The age group with the highest projected increase in numbers between 2016 and 2026 is those aged 75 and over at 46%.

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- The number of households in West Lothian is projected to increase by 10% between 2016 and 2026 from 76,630 to 84,262, this compares to 6.4% for Scotland.
- In 2026, the household type "One adult" is projected to remain the most common (32.7%) and the household type "Three or more adults" is projected to become the least common (8.8%) in West Lothian.

3.2 Health and Homelessness

In West Lothian, life expectancy at birth was higher for females (80.8 years) than for males (78.3 years) in 2014-16. Male life expectancy at birth has increased more rapidly than female life expectancy at birth between 2001-03 and 2014-16. In West Lothian, female life expectancy at birth is lower than at Scotland level and male life expectancy at birth is higher than at Scotland level.

It has been accepted for a number of years that there are significant links between poor health and homelessness in Scotland. The National Health and Homeless standards were published in 2005 and are designed to assist NHS Boards to continuously improve their services to homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2005/03/20774/53761>

The standards recognised that poor health is not only a consequence of homelessness but can also help to precipitate it with there being greater risk of premature deaths and morbidity amongst the homeless population than the population at large. It should also be recognised that health problems are not confined to those sleeping rough. People living in temporary accommodation, with friends or in hostels have little stability, often having to share kitchens and bathrooms with little privacy or security.

The first time a comprehensive study was undertaken to understand the links between ill health and homelessness was in 2017/18. (Health and homelessness in Scotland, June 2018, Dr Andrew Waugh)

The study compared 3 distinct groups:

- Approximately 500,000 people who had been homeless between 2001 and 2016 (Ever Homeless cohort).
- The least deprived cohort
- The most deprived cohort

The study identified that almost 1 in 10 people in the Scottish population (as of June 2015) have experienced homelessness. 50% on the homeless cohort had no health conditions relating to drugs, alcohol or mental health. This may dispel some of the myths held by the general population regarding those who are homeless. In the homeless cohort people were at the younger end of the age range of the Scottish population.

The study highlighted that there is a correlation between increasing interactions with health services immediately preceding a homeless crisis, with the peak of interactions being around the time of homeless assessment and then as the household achieves settled accommodation health interactions decrease again, however some remained at a higher level than previously.

The council has recently agreed to take part in a project with the Information Services Division (ISD), part of NHS Scotland, to collect Homelessness data and link it with existing Health and Social Care data. The work will help inform the key areas of work required to be taken forward in relation to homelessness, health and social care.

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3.3 Local Economic Context

Material poverty is still a significant issue for many households and communities. West Lothian, like many other parts of Scotland experienced the impact of the credit crunch and subsequent recession – with substantial job losses and a rise in local levels of unemployment. Although the headline unemployment level has fallen since 2013, there are still underlying issues of poverty and deprivation – with a core of individuals and households experiencing extreme hardship and wider groups experiencing financial difficulties and challenges.

Low pay as well as unemployment is a key factor. Gross wage levels for West Lothian (both residence and workplace) are below the Scottish and UK levels. An estimated 18% of West Lothian working residents earn below the living wage level of £8.25 per hour compared to 19% for Scotland as a whole.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) identifies small concentrations of deprivation across all of Scotland in a consistent way. Almost 9,000 people in West Lothian live within some of the most deprived areas of Scotland, which accounts for 5% of West Lothian's population. (Source: West Lothian Corporate Plan 2018-2023).

4. Understanding West Lothian's Housing Market Context

4.1 Housing Development Strategic Context

The scale of housing development in West Lothian is determined largely by the South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan which covers six South East Scotland local authorities (West Lothian, East Lothian, Midlothian, City of Edinburgh, Scottish Borders and the southern part of Fife council) and by the West Lothian Local Development Plan.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2011 places a statutory duty on local authorities to prepare Local Housing Strategies (LHS) supported by an assessment of housing need and demand. This forms a key part of the evidence base for the LHS and the development planning framework.

Housing Need and Demand Assessments (HNDAs) provide a framework to enable an understanding of additional and future housing estimates and help local authorities to consider the level of housing that can be realistically delivered across an administrative or wider regional area such as SESplan (South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan). The total additional future housing estimate is then used to inform the process of setting Housing Supply Targets and Housing Land Requirements.

There have been two HNDAs prepared over the past six years. The first HNDA was used as evidence for the first strategic development plan; a second HNDA was approved in 2015 to inform the second strategic development plan.

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Figure 2: West Lothian Housing Development Strategic Context

4.2 Housing Tenure in West Lothian

The pattern of housing tenure in West Lothian is similar to that of Scotland but with a higher level of Local Authority rented stock. In 2017 there were estimated to be 79,000 dwellings in West Lothian. Table 1 shows that of these 57% were owner occupation, 15% private rented, 17% local authority, 9% housing associations with 2% of the estimated stock being vacant private dwellings. The stock in the private rented sector and in the owner occupied sector is broadly comparable.

Table 1: National and West Lothian Estimated Stock of Dwellings by Tenure (2017)

(Source: <https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/Stock/>)

| Dwelling Type | West Lothian (000s) | West Lothian (%) | Scotland (000s) | Scotland (%) |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Local Authority Rent | 13 | 17% | 315 | 12% |
| HA Rent | 7 | 9% | 279 | 11% |
| Owner Occupied | 45 | 57% | 1,502 | 58% |
| Private Rented Sector | 12 | 15% | 393 | 15% |
| Vacant Private Dwellings | 2 | 2% | 97 | 4% |
| Total | 79 | 100% | 2,585 | 100% |

In 2017, West Lothian had a social rented stock of 20,845 units provided by the council and a range of national and local housing associations. (Source:

<https://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/Stock/>)

West Lothian Council's social rented housing stock was 13,355 homes in 2017 which represents 65% of the total social rented stock available.

RSLs in West Lothian social rented housing stock was 7,302 homes which represents 35% of the total social rented stock available. Table 2 show the breakdown of total RSL stock per housing provider).

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Table 2: Registered Social Landlord (RSL) Stock by RSL

(Source: Scottish Housing Regulator directory of social landlords 2017/18

<http://directory.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/pages/Landlord%20search.aspx>)

| RSL | Current Stock |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Almond HA Ltd | 2492 |
| Ark HA Ltd* | 18 |
| Barony HA | 200 |
| Bield Housing and Care* | 549 |
| Blackwood Homes & Care | 62 |
| Cairn HA* | 60 |
| Castle Rock Edinvar Ltd | 776 |
| Dunedin Canmore Housing Ltd | 345 |
| Hanover (Scotland) HA Ltd* | 223 |
| Horizon HA Ltd | 144 |
| Link Group Ltd | 131 |
| Trust HA Ltd* | 87 |
| Weslo Housing Management | 1834 |
| West Lothian Housing Partnership | 381 |
| Total | 7,302 |

*Specialist Housing Provision for Older People and Learning Disabilities

At the end of September 2018 there were 8,424 applicants on the West Lothian Housing Register (WLHR). West Lothian Housing Register is a partnership agreement between Weslo Housing Management, Almond Housing Association and West Lothian Council.

Analysis of WLHR applicants as of the end of September 2018 assessed on the council's Housing Allocations policy gave the following breakdown of reason for application. Further analysis of the 8,424, advises that 3,253 (39%) had no housing needs points.

Table 3 (Source: internal information held by WLC)

| Reason | Percentage |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Homeless Applicant | 8% |
| Transfer Applicant | 20% |
| General Needs Applicant | 46.5% |
| Unsatisfactory Housing | 19% |
| Housing with Care | 1.5% |
| Out with West Lothian | 5% |
| Total | 100% |

Private Rented Housing in West Lothian

In West Lothian, there has been an increasing trend since 2013 in the number of registered private landlords from 4,107 to 5,465 as of 17th September 2018.

The number of registered properties in the private rented sector has also increased from 7,215 at 31st December 2014 to 8,216 as of 6th November 2018.

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Private rents in West Lothian are much less than in Edinburgh. The average rent for a 2 bedroom home in West Lothian in quarter 2 of 2018 was £607 per month, whilst in Edinburgh it was £956 per month. (Source)

Table 4 demonstrates that there is a shortfall between the average monthly rent in the private sector and the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) across all property sizes. There is a significant shortfall between the average rent for a three bedroom property and the LHA. This may cause affordability issue for all households type in the private rented sector.

Table 4: Private Sector Rents

(Source: PRS rents data-people communities and places Private sector Rent statistics, Scotland, 2010-2017 Scottish Govt. LHA data- SAG publication LHA Rates 2017/2018)

| West Lothian | 1 bed | 2 bed | 3 bed | 4 bed |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Average Private Sector Rent (monthly) | £490.00 | £606.00 | £755.00 | £821.00 |
| LHA rents (monthly) | £424.84 | £509 | £580 | £781.35 |
| Shortfall (monthly) | £65.16 | £97 | £175 | £39.65 |
| Shortfall (weekly) | £15.03 | £22.38 | £40.38 | £9.16 |

Owner Occupied

The private sector housing market has shown signs of improvement in recent years. Many of the new build sites that were stalled are now starting to pick up with development continuing on a number of sites, particularly in the Core Development Areas. Private sector completions increased from 279 in 2012/13 to 477 in 2017/18.

According to the Registers of Scotland, the average house price in West Lothian in June 2017 was £158,761 and in June 2018 it was £180,788, an increase of 13.9% over a 12 month period. House prices in Scotland increased by 13.8% over the same period. In June 2018, West Lothian house prices were slightly higher than the Scottish average. In June 2018 the average house price in West Lothian was £180,788 while the average house price in Scotland in June 2018 was £178,405.

House prices in West Lothian are considerably less than Edinburgh. The average house price in Edinburgh in June 2018 was £263,500 over £80,000 more than the average housing price in West Lothian. The main areas that attract purchasers from Edinburgh are Livingston, the Calders, Winchburgh, Broxburn and Uphall. New developments in Winchburgh and Calderwood are attractive to Edinburgh purchasers due to the proximity and connectivity with Edinburgh and may make these areas less affordable to people on lower incomes.

4.3 Need for Affordable Housing in West Lothian

West Lothian Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2017-2022 identified both affordable and market housing supply targets based on Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) 2. These targets are 300 affordable homes per annum and 333 market homes per annum. Housing supply targets will be reviewed and monitored during the course of the LHS.

A target of 3,000 new affordable homes over the period 2012-2022 has been set in West Lothian and work is ongoing with RSLs to achieve this target. Over the period 2012/13 to 2017/18 a total of 1,032 affordable homes have been provided leaving a balance of 1,968 to be provided between the council and RSLs by end of 2021/22.

Data Label: Public

Table 5: All Tenure new build completions 2012/13 to 2017/18**(Source: WLC LHS 2017-2022)**

| | 2012/13-2017/18 |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| WLC New Builds | 804 |
| RSL New Builds | 228 |
| Sub Total | 1,032 |
| Private Completions | 2939 |
| Total | 3,971 |

4.4 Increasing Affordable Housing Supply

Affordable Housing Supply Summary Position

- From 2012/13 and 2017/18, there were 1,032 new build affordable completions.
- There were 228 RSL completions and 804 council completions and 2,939 private completions to 2017/18.
- 76% of WLC new build completions between 2012/13 and 2017/18 were built in the wards of Livingston North, Livingston South, East Livingston and the Calders, Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh and Bathgate.
- From 2018/19 to 2023/24 1,968 affordable completions are anticipated.
- WLC completions will reduce from 2022/23 onwards.
- Future programme beyond 2021/22 will be determined following confirmation on funding from Scottish Government.
- The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2019-2024 identifies sites for a further 906 RSL homes over the period but funding requires to be confirmed on all future sites.

The current Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2019-24 identifies sites for **2291** affordable homes over the five year period 2018/19 to 2023/24. This includes 323 properties for Mid-Market Rent and 73 for Shared Equity.

Scottish Government has provided Resource Planning Assumptions (RPAs) to support the delivery of affordable housing. The RPAs have been made available for the years 2018/19 to 2020/21. The availability of funding after 2020/21 has yet to be confirmed. Indicative figures may be available over the next year but the funding will not be able to be confirmed until after the Scottish Parliament elections in 2021

2018/19: £12.174 million
 2019/20: £12.894 million
 2020/21: £13.757 million

Table 6: Indicative Future New Build Affordable Completions**(Source: West Lothian SHIP 2019-2024)**

| | 2018/19 | 2019/20 | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 | Total |
|-----|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| RSL | 55 | 275 | 233 | 198 | 100 | 100 | 961 |
| WLC | 504 | 221 | 203 | 79 | 0 | 0 | 1007 |
| | 559 | 496 | 436 | 277 | 100 | 100 | 1968 |

*above figures exclude market acquisitions and mortgage to rent

Data Label: Public

Table 6 provides indicative future new build completions, year on year to 2023/24. These figures are assumptive based on the current and future new build programmes; current RSL new build programmes and the sites included in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2018-2024. Of the 961 RSL new build affordable housing completions, 299 units are estimated to be mid-market rent.

To meet future homeless demand it is estimated that the supply of new build affordable housing will need to be at least 300 units per annum beyond 2021/22.

At this stage no council completions are assumed beyond the period of the current council term. A conservative estimate for RSL completions is made for 2022/23 and 2023/24 as resource planning assumptions for these years are currently unknown.

4.5 Open Market Acquisitions

In addition to new build affordable housing, the council and RSLs also acquire homes on the open market.

Table 7: Profile of Open Market Acquisitions by West Lothian Council
(Source: WLC internally held data)

| Year | Number of Units |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2012/13-2015/16 | 66 |
| 2016/17 | 45 |
| 2017/18 | 38 |
| 2018/19 | 67 |
| 2019/20 | 20 |
| 2020/21 | 20 |
| 2021/22 | 10 |
| Total | 266 |

There have also been a further 21 acquisitions concluded by RSLs during 2012/13-2018/19. Over the last three years, there have been 124 open market acquisitions across West Lothian with 45 properties concluded in 2016/17, a further 38 were concluded in 2017/18 and 41 properties have been offered on or concluded for the first eight months of 2018/19.

The open market acquisitions have been successful in quickly increasing the available social rented stock. As a result, a further 26 acquisitions will be purchased in the Armadale and Blackridge ward by 2019/20 to replace units at a development site in Armadale. The total number of Open Market Acquisitions between 2012/13 and 2021/22 is projected to be 266 properties which will increase social housing stock in West Lothian.

4.6 New Build Allocations

The current West Lothian Council Allocations policy gives priority for new build housing to existing tenants who wish to transfer. This means that houses will be made available for rent when a current tenant is allocated a new build. The council can secure nomination rights to 50% of new build lets for properties built by RSLs. Some of the partner RSLs in West Lothian also implement a transfer led approach in terms of their new build supply, whilst other RSLs in West Lothian allocate based on housing needs.

Data Label: Public

5. West Lothian Homeless Position

5.1 West Lothian Homeless Profile

Summary Homeless Position 2017/18

1,530 total homeless applicants in West Lothian in the year

1,165 households where West Lothian Council has a duty to provide settled accommodation, defined here as unintentionally homeless

1,061 homeless open case with a duty to house as of 31st March 2018

165 households Sleeping Rough at least once in the last 3 months

57 households are likely to have multiple and complex support needs and **5** households are likely to require specialist accommodation provision

Increase in Homeless Applications

Table 8 below demonstrates that over the last 5 Year period between 2013/14 to 2017/18, an increase from 1,290 applications in 2014/15 to 1,530 in 2017/18 which equates to an 18.6% increase. This increase is a significantly different picture from the national position which has seen a decrease in homeless applications by 5%.

Until 2016/17 the number of homeless applications in West Lothian remained fairly static in West Lothian, but between 2016/17 and 2017/18 there was an 11% increase. It should also be noted there was a slight increase in applications nationally between 2016/17 and 2017/18 of 1%. For the first 6 month period of 2018/19 there were 779 homeless applications in West Lothian compared with 766 for the first 6 month period in 2017/18. This is an increase of 1.7%.

Table 8 (Source: Scottish government Homeless annual statistics publication 2017/18 supplementary tables)

| | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | Number | Percentage |
|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|------------|
| Scotland | 36825 | 35964 | 34939 | 34570 | 34972 | 402 | 1% |
| West Lothian | 1290 | 1336 | 1365 | 1364 | 1530 | 166 | 11% |

Age Profile and Household Composition

Since 2013/14 the majority of homeless applicants have continued to be from the age group 25-59 years, representing 62% of homeless applicants in 2017/18. This is significantly lower than the national percentage of homeless applicants aged between 24 to 59 of 70.6% and is due to West Lothian having a higher number of homeless applicants from the younger age groups with 29.9% from the 18-24 year old age group and 5.1% from the 16 to 17 year old age group. Table 9 below provide a breakdown of the age profile of homeless applicants in West Lothian and Table 10 provides the age profile of across Scotland.

Data Label: Public

Table 9 (Source: Scottish Government West Lothian specific HL1 annual reports for the years concerned)

| | 2013/14 | | 2014/15 | | 2015/16 | | 2016/17 | | 2017/18 | |
|--------------------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| | West Lothian | | West Lothian | | West Lothian | | West Lothian | | West Lothian | |
| 16 to 17yrs | 74 | 5.7% | 79 | 5.9% | 66 | 4.8% | 59 | 4.3% | 79 | 5.1% |
| 18 to 24yrs | 456 | 35.3% | 462 | 34.6% | 463 | 34% | 406 | 29.9% | 457 | 29.9% |
| 25-59yrs | 724 | 56.1% | 762 | 57% | 794 | 58.3% | 860 | 63.2% | 949 | 62 % |
| 60yrs plus | 36 | 2.8% | 33 | 2.5% | 40 | 2.9% | 35 | 2.6% | 45 | 3.2% |
| Total | 1290 | | 1336 | | 1363 | | 1360 | | 1530 | |

Since 2013/14 in West Lothian, the percentage of applicants from the 16-24 age group, has been significantly higher than the national average. In 2017/18, West Lothian had 10% more in this age range than the national average. There has however been a steady decline in applications from 16-24 year olds from the high in 2013/14 of 41% to 34.2% in 2016/17 which is a reduction of 6.8%, with 2017/18 showing a slight increase to 35%.

Table 10 (Source: Scottish government Homeless annual statistics publications, supplementary tables and charts 2017/18)

| | 2013/14 | | 2014/15 | | 2015/16 | | 2016/17 | | 2017/18 | |
|--------------------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| | National | | National | | National | | National | | National | |
| 16 to 17yrs | 1,788 | 4.9% | 1,690 | 4.7% | 1,511 | 4.3% | 1,382 | 4.1% | 1,321 | 3.8% |
| 18 to 24yrs | 9,104 | 24.7% | 8,824 | 24.5% | 8,370 | 24% | 7,805 | 22.9% | 7,563 | 21.6% |
| 25-59yrs | 24,723 | 67.1% | 24,202 | 67.3% | 23,770 | 68.1% | 23,620 | 69.3% | 24,697 | 70.6% |
| 60yrs plus | 1,204 | 3.3% | 1,230 | 3.4% | 1,275 | 3.7% | 1,293 | 3.8% | 1,391 | 4% |
| Total | 36,819 | | 35,946 | | 34,926 | | 34,100 | | 34,972 | |

Homeless applications from single people in West Lothian make up the vast majority of applications. For the 5 year period 2013/14 to 2017/18 the percentage has remained between fairly static between 84% and 86%. The majority of single person households are single person male representing 43% of households in 2017/18. Single parent households represent 22% of homeless household type. Table 11 provide a breakdown of household type of homeless applicants.

Table 11 (Source: Scottish Government West Lothian specific HL1 annual reports for the years concerned)

| Household Types | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Single Person: Male | 39% | 42% | 46% | 45% | 43% |
| Single Person: Female | 24% | 23% | 21% | 20% | 19% |
| Total Single Person | 63% | 65% | 64% | 65% | 62% |
| Single Parent: Male | 8% | 5% | 3% | 3% | 4% |
| Single Parent: Female | 14% | 16% | 17% | 18% | 18% |
| Total Single Parent | 22% | 21% | 20% | 21% | 22% |
| Total Apps Single Person Households | 85% | 86% | 84% | 86% | 84% |
| Couple without children | 7% | 7% | 6% | 5% | 7% |
| Couple with children | 6.5% | 6.6% | 6% | 7% | 8% |
| Other without children | 0.40% | 0.40% | 0.30% | 0.20% | 0.5% |
| Other with children | 0.10% | 0.20% | 0.70% | 0.30% | 0.7% |

Data Label: Public

Youth Homelessness

At 19.2 per 1,000 households, West Lothian has the third highest rate of youth homelessness in Scotland and has a history of significant numbers of homeless presentations by young people. It is recognised however that the reported figures underestimate the true picture of youth homelessness as many young people who may be “sofa surfing” do not approach the council for assistance. Table 12 below provides information on applications aged 16-25 years old.

Table 12 Homeless Applications by 16-25 years olds

(Source: Scottish Government West Lothian specific HL1 annual report 2017/18 & Scottish government Homeless annual statistics publications, supplementary tables and charts 2017/18)

| Year | West Lothian Applicants (16-25years) | West Lothian % of Homeless Applicants 16-25years | National % of Homeless Applicants 16 – 25years |
|---------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| 2013/14 | 530 | 41% | 31% |
| 2014/15 | 541 | 40% | 29% |
| 2015/16 | 530 | 39% | 28% |
| 2016/17 | 467 | 34.2% | 28% |
| 2017/18 | 536 | 30.5% | 28% |

Although the percentage of overall applications from young people has been reducing it remains higher than the national average.

Reasons for Homeless Applications

Over the 5 year period 2013/14 to 2017/18 “asked to leave” has been the most prevalent reason for people to make a homeless person application in West Lothian. “Other action by landlord” has been increasing numerically from 16 in 2014/15 to 71 in 2017/18. Relationship breakdown accounts for approximately 20% of all applications with “asked to leave”.

Homelessness and Domestic Abuse

In 2017/18 the council received 139 applications from households as a result of a “violent or abusive situation within their current accommodation”. This definition generally relates to instances where domestic violence has occurred.

The council has a Domestic and Sexual Assault Team who provide specialist support and immediate accommodation where police have been involved. Households are offered the choice to remain in their current accommodation or to be re housed. The council’s Housing Needs Service will also assist those who are fleeing domestic violence and where necessary can request the specialist provision of DASAT and Women’s Aid in order to provide specific support and accommodation.

Rough Sleeping

In 2017/18 the council recorded 165 households were sleeping rough at least once in the last three months. Although West Lothian does not have a visible population of rough sleepers the council is aware that the community is currently supporting a range of household’s who are sofa surfing.

Data Label: Public

Exact numbers are unknown but we are aware that some of those will have multiple and complex needs and would benefit from the Housing First approach.

Prison Discharge

In 2017/18 22 household's reason for application was "discharged from Prison, hospital, care or other institution". The council recognises that this official figure is under representative of the number of people who come from this type of situation. Some households will be discharged and then spend a period of time with friends or family before this breaks down and they present as homeless. In order to prevent those being discharged from prison with no settled accommodation the council has implemented the Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) standards with both Addiewell Prison and HMP Edinburgh.

Homeless Assessment Decisions and Outcomes

Homeless decisions (temporary accommodation duty) in West Lothian have remained in the region of 80% since 2013/14. 8 out of 10 households assessed are therefore entitled to temporary accommodation. Lost contact before decision has been increasing since 2014/15 and at 2017/18 accounted for 9% of all decisions.

Tenancy sustainment and Repeat homelessness

In West Lothian there is a good record in ensuring that sustainable outcomes are achieved for both households who were formally homeless and households who secure tenancies via the general needs list or transfer list. Sustainment rates for the council and the Scottish national average, for the past two years are noted in Table 13 below.

Table 13: Tenancy Sustainment

| Year | Homeless Applicants | Transfer Applicants | General Need Applicant's |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| West Lothian 2016/17 | 87% | 95% | 93% |
| National Average 2016/17 | 87% | 93% | 89% |
| West Lothian 2017/18 | 87% | 96% | 90% |
| National Average 2017/18 | 87% | 93% | 90% |

West Lothian performs well compared with the national average, particularly in relation to formerly homeless households where the council currently allows choice in selection of areas to be rehoused. In addition the council provides support to homeless households whilst in temporary accommodation and which assist with the transition into permanent accommodation.

West Lothian's good record in resettling homeless households is further evidenced by the low level of repeat homeless applications, which was 2.1% of all applications in 2017/18. Further work is required to review sustainment over a greater period of time to further influence sustainment strategies.

Data Label: Public

5.2 Demand for Temporary Accommodation

Summary Temporary Accommodation Demand Position 2017/18

1,039 homeless applicants where council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation as of 31st March 2018

552 homeless applicants living in temporary accommodation as of 31st March 2018

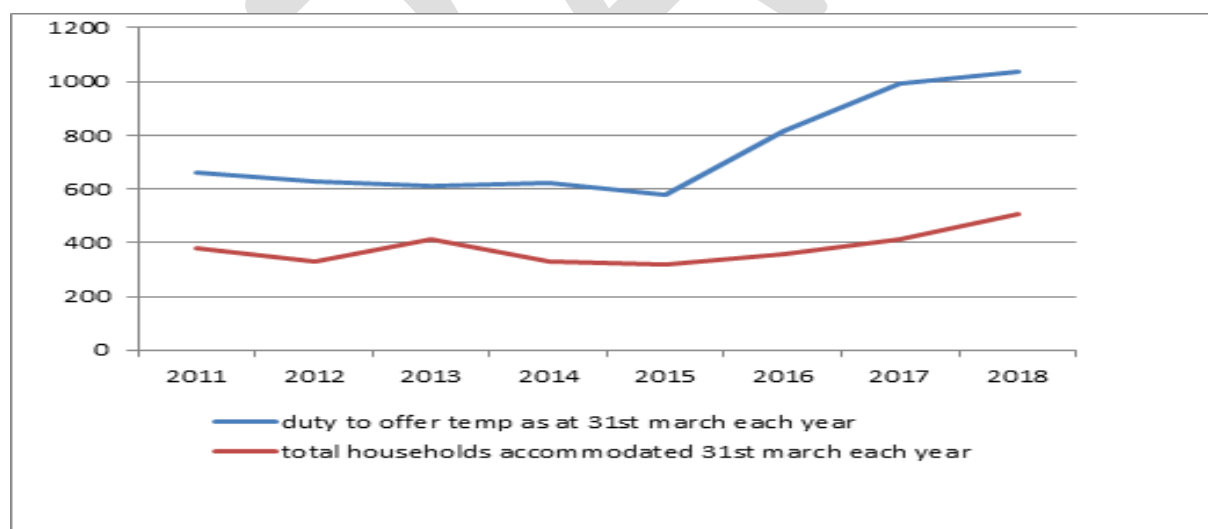
190.5 days is the average length of stay in council furnished temporary tenancies.

78% increase in the use of bed and breakfast between 31.3.2017 and 31.3.2018 with increase length of stay increasing from 20 to 30 days over the same period.

Demand for temporary accommodation has risen significantly in West Lothian since 2011/12. Due to legislative changes, the council's statutory duty to offer temporary accommodation has increased from a lowest point of 577 applicants as of 31st March 2015 to 1,039 applicants as of 31st March 2018.

There has also been a significant increase in the number of people self-accommodating while waiting for a settled housing option illustrated in the chart below. This can also be evidenced with some people moving in and out of temporary accommodation, particularly B&B Accommodation, while waiting for a permanent settled housing outcome.

Chart 1: Number of People Self Accommodation in West Lothian
(Source: Internal WLC data 2017/18)



Unless there is an increase in the current availability of permanent settled housing solutions, along with strategies delivered to prevent homelessness, it is projected that the demand and length of stay in temporary accommodation will continue to increase in West Lothian.

Between 2016 and 2026, West Lothian's population is projected to increase by 6.6% with households expected to increase in West Lothian by 10% over the same period. In 2026 it is expected that the largest household type will be 1 adult household at 32.7%.

Data Label: Public

Increasing homeless demand will continue to impact on the average length of stay in temporary accommodation and therefore increase the backlog of open homeless cases where the council has a statutory duty to provide settled accommodation.

5.3 West Lothian Homelessness Rehousing Position

Summary Rehousing Position 2017/18

1,418 total lets were available in the social rented sector which represents **6.8%** of total social rented stock

54% (766 units) of social rented lets in West Lothian were to statutory homeless

- of which 79% of social lets available to statutory homeless were by WLC
- of which 21% of the total lets to statutory homeless were by an RSL

3% (25 units) of total lets to statutory homeless were by the private rented sector

In 2017/18 there were 791 total lets available to statutory homeless in West Lothian. The majority of these lets 766 (97%) were in the social rented sector, while a very small proportion 25 (3%) were in the private rented sector.

Social Rented Lets Available in West Lothian

Table 14 below outlines available social rented lets for each year between 2015/16 and 2017/18. In 2017/18 there were 1,418 social lets available in West Lothian with 930 units (65%) council lets and 488 units (35%) RSL lets. These figures include transfer led lets. Across the social rented sector in West Lothian 766 social lets (54%) went to statutory homeless with 605 lets (43%) made by West Lothian Council and 162 (11%) by RSLs.

Table 14 Social Lets in West Lothian

| Year | 2015/16 | % | 2016/17 | % | 2017/18 | % |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| WLC Total Lets | 592 | 55% | 891 | 63% | 930 | 66% |
| RSLs Total Lets | 487 | 45% | 522 | 37% | 488 | 34% |
| Total Lets in West Lothian | 1079 | 100% | 1413 | 100% | 1418 | 100% |
| WLC lets to Homeless | 432 | 73% | 544 | 76% | 605 | 79% |
| RSLs lets to Homeless | 162 | 27% | 170 | 24% | 161 | 21% |
| Total Lets to Homeless | 594 | 100% | 714 | 100% | 766 | 100% |
| WLC lets to Homeless as % available lets | 73% | | 61% | | 65% | |
| RSL lets to Homeless as % available lets | 33% | | 33% | | 33% | |
| Total lets to Homeless as % available lets | 55% | | 51% | | 54% | |

Total available lets have increased between 2015/16 to 2017/18 from 1079 units to 1418 units. However analysis of the split between council and RSL lets shows that the council total lets available have increased from 592 units to 930 units in the same period while RSL available lets have

Data Label: Public

remained more static. This can, in the main, be explained by the council's new build 1,000 housing programme.

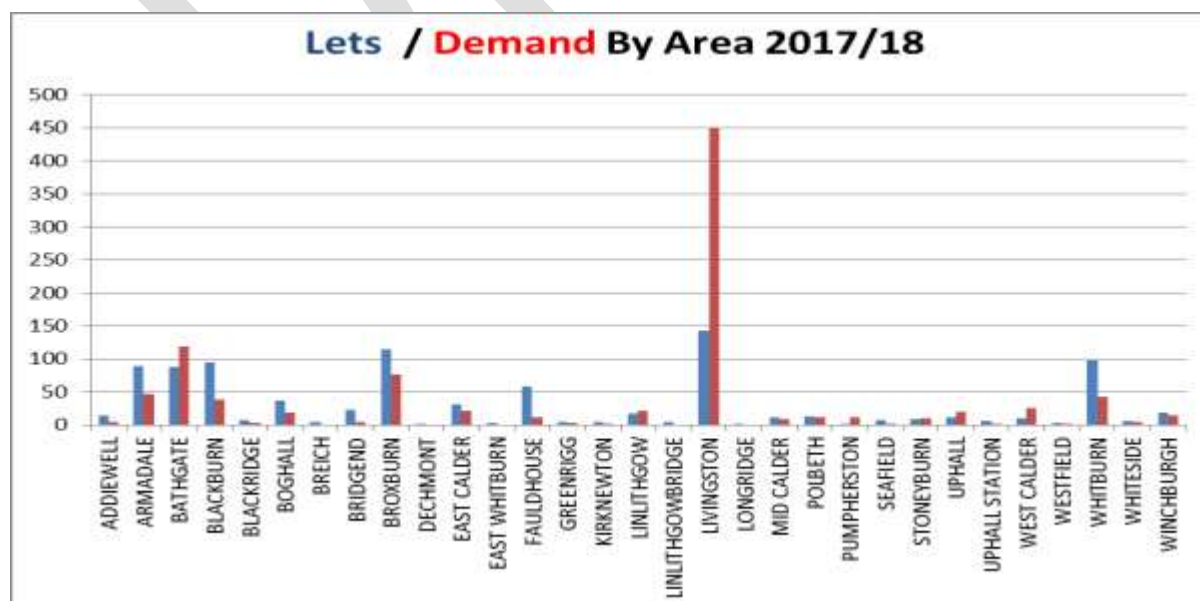
Table 15 below identifies total available social lets decrease if RSL specialist provision (older peoples housing and housing for people with learning disabilities) is excluded from the social rented lets analysis. The percentage of RSL lets to homeless households is higher than when specialist provision is excluded and overall, the total lets to homeless in 2017/18 increase from 54% to 59%.

Table 15 Social Lets in West Lothian Excluding RSL Specialist Provision

| Year | 2015/16 | % | 2016/17 | % | 2017/18 | % |
|--|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| WLC Total Lets | 592 | 63% | 891 | 69% | 930 | 72% |
| RSLs Total Lets | 349 | 37% | 397 | 31% | 360 | 28% |
| Total lets in West Lothian | 941 | 100% | 1288 | 100% | 1290 | 100% |
| WLC lets to Homeless | 432 | 73% | 544 | 76% | 605 | 79% |
| RSLs lets to Homeless | 160 | 27% | 169 | 24% | 161 | 21% |
| Total Lets to Homeless | 592 | 100% | 713 | 100% | 766 | 100% |
| WLC lets to Homeless as % available lets | 73% | | 61% | | 65% | |
| RSL lets to Homeless as % available lets | 46% | | 43% | | 45% | |
| Total lets to Homeless as % Specialist Lets | 63% | | 55% | | 59% | |

Analysis has also been undertaken to consider the homeless households preferred location of social rented housing in West Lothian against available social rented lets. Chart 2 below demonstrates that the homeless households preferred location is Livingston by a significant margin then Bathgate followed by Broxburn, Armadale, Blackburn, Whitburn and West Calder. Demand for homeless households for social rented housing in for Livingston and Bathgate outstrip demand. While the areas of Whitburn, Armadale and Blackburn the available lets are greater than demand.

Chart 2: Homeless Area Demand 2017/18 (Source: Internal West Lothian Council data)



5.4 West Lothian Homeless Demand v Supply Gaps Analysis

Summary Position Homeless Demand Vs Supply

1,165 homeless unintentional demand cases in 2017/18

1,061 homeless live cases (backlog) as of 31.3.2018

117 lost contacts and refusals

1,290 social lets available in 2017/18 (excluding RSL specialist provision)

766 (59%) social lets went to statutory homeless households in 2017/18.

For West Lothian, the transition to rapid rehousing and reducing time in temporary accommodation will require an increase in the provision of settled accommodation in the social rented sector and the private rented sector. This is due to the current levels of lets offered to homeless households not meeting new homeless demand and backlog of live cases. Increasing social lets will be challenging given the high percentages already being offered to homeless household. There is also a smaller provision of private sector properties being registered in West Lothian than compared with the national average and the city areas.

Alongside any analysis of increase in lets to homeless households there will need to be strategies with a greater emphasis on the delivery of early intervention and prevention to reduce homeless from happening in the first place.

In order to take forward discussions with RSL partners on agreeing a local target for percentage lets to homeless households, the council developed a model which considered the impact of 4 different scenarios of social letting to homeless households over the 5 year period of the plan. The model has factored in new affordable housing supply and quantified the impact of each scenario on reducing homelessness and the use of bed and breakfast/temporary accommodation over the five year period of the plan. (See Appendix 5)

A baseline position (Year 0) was developed to identify the total gap in social lets in 2018/19 of 819. This consisted off the unintentional homeless demand for 2017/18 plus the total number of open cases at the end of March 2018, less lost contacts/refusal which gave the total homeless demand of 2,109.

Table 16 Demand and Supply Gap Analysis

| Demand and Supply Gap Analysis – Year 0 (2018/19) | |
|---|------------|
| Homeless Unintentional Demand Cases in 2017/18 | 1,165 |
| homeless live cases (backlog) as of 31.3.2018 | 1,061 |
| Less Contacts and Refusals | 117 |
| Total Homeless Demand | 2,109 |
| Social lets available in 2017/18 (excluding RSL specialist provision) | 1,290 |
| Gaps in Social Lets at Year 0 2018/19 | 819 |

Data Label: Public

One of the main requirements of RRTPs is to improve flow by increasing offers of permanent accommodation to homeless households thereby reducing the backlog of open cases and improving the through put in temporary accommodation.

Four scenarios have been modelled, using certain assumptions, which quantify the impact on open cases and the use of temporary accommodation, including B&B Accommodation if social lets in West Lothian were increased from the current position of 59%. Appendix 2 provides further detail for each scenario.

Assumptions have been made on reducing homeless demand to reflect the impact of early intervention and prevention strategies over the 5 year period of the RRTP. Year 1 would remain at current levels of 1,165 homeless households where the council has a duty to find permanent accommodation. A reduction of 4% in Year 2 would be applied, 6 % in Year 3 and 5 % in Years 4 and 5.

The scenarios have assisted in developing proposed targets for meeting the RRTP vision of reducing homelessness, reducing use of B&B accommodation and reducing length of stay in temporary accommodation.

- Scenario 1: 59% lets to homeless: If the percentage of social rented lets to homeless households remains at current levels the council and its partners will not realise the vision of reducing homelessness and the use of B&B Accommodation. There will be no impact on open cases which will continue to rise over the period of the plan from 1,061 to 1,145. There will also continue to be high demand for B&B Accommodation at 146 places at the end of Year 5 of the plan.
- Scenario 2: 65% lets to homeless: Increasing the percentage of social rented lets to homeless households from 59% to 65% will have some impact on reducing the backlog of open cases from 1,061 to 649 over the 5 year period of the plan. The need for B&B Accommodation by Year 5 will have reduced from 126 places to 28 places. However there will continue to be a need for the same level of furnished temporary accommodation in the community.
- Scenario 3: 70% lets to homeless: Increasing the percentage of social rented lets from 59% to 70% will reduce open cases from 1,061 to 235 by end of Year 5 and reduce the use of B&B Accommodation by Year 3. The need for furnished temporary accommodation in the community will also reduce from 450 to 125 units.
- Scenario 4: 75% lets to homeless: Increasing the percentage of social rented lets to homeless households from 59% to 75% will stop the use of B&B Accommodation by Year 2 and open cases will have been eradicated by Year 5. If implemented Scenario 4 would meet the RRTP Vision during the lifetime of the plan.

In order to meet the West Lothian RRTP Vision, the council and its partners would need to agree that social rented lets to homeless households are increased from 59% to 75% per annum for each of the 5 years of the plan.

Whilst the council agrees that Scenario 4, 75% is the local target to be achieved to meet the RRTP vision, at this stage a local target has not been agreed and is pending the outcome from individual discussions with RSL partners and would be subject to final agreement by their perspective boards.

It is also realistic to assume at this stage that there will be a requirement for some furnished temporary accommodation by Year 5 of the plan. Therefore for resource planning requirement, Scenario 3, 70% lets to homeless households has been used as the assumption.

Data Label: Public

6. West Lothian Temporary Accommodation Provision

Summary Position 31.3.2018

61.5% of accommodation is temporary mainstreamed furnished flats/houses provided by the local authority, RSLs or PSL

80% of main stream furnished flats/houses are provided by the council

5% of temporary accommodation is hostel type accommodation

11% of temporary accommodation is supported accommodation for vulnerable people

16% of temporary accommodation is bed and breakfast, an 11% increase from 31.3.2017

6.5% of temporary accommodation is self-contained flats/shared flats at Blackburn Assessment Centre

Type of Current Temporary Accommodation in West Lothian

Between end March 2017 and end of March 2018, there has been an increase in the provision of temporary accommodation from a capacity of 515 units to 595 units. This shift has predominately been due to the increase in the use of Bed and Breakfast/Hotel type of accommodation by the council to meet its statutory duty to provide temporary or interim accommodation. This has in the main been caused by an increase in homeless presentations in West Lothian by 11% over the same period as well as slowing through put in the main stream furnished temporary accommodation provision.

Table 17 Temporary Accommodation Type

| Temporary Accommodation Type | Capacity 31.3.17 | Capacity 31.3.18 | Household Type | Length of Stay 17/18 |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| WLC Emergency Accommodation | 49 | 49 | Mixed | 65 days |
| Younger People Supported Accommodation | 20 | 20 | Single | 59 days |
| Family Homeless Accommodation | 9 | 9 | Families | 161 days |
| Younger People Supported Flats | 34 | 35 | Single | 189.5 days |
| Addictions Supported Flats | 10 | 10 | Mixed | 392 days |
| Women's Aid Refuge | 12 | 12 | Other | 180 days |
| WLC Furnished Temporary Tenancies | 306 | 293 | Mixed | 195 days |
| RSL Furnished Temporary Tenancies | 42 | 43 | Mixed | 175 days |
| PSL Furnished Temporary Tenancies | 12 | 30 | Mixed | 131 days |
| Bed and Breakfast | 21 | 94 | Mixed | 20 days |
| Totals | 515 | 595 | | |

Data Label: Public

There is currently a range of temporary accommodation provision in West Lothian. The majority of the provision (61.5%) consists of mainstream furnished flats/houses within communities provided by the council, RSLs or Private Sector Leasing (PSL). 80% of furnished tenancies are provided by the council, with 12% provided by RSLs and 8% provided through the PSL.

Prior to March 2017, the council had managed to minimise the use of B&B/Hotel Accommodation and historically had only used this type of emergency accommodation as a last resort. However, between end of March 2017 and end of March 2018 there has been 78% increase in the use of B&B/Hotel Accommodation, with a 11% increase in at the end of September 2018.

The council provides a Homeless Assessment Centre in Blackburn which consists of 10 hostel places, 18 sharing spaces and 21 self-contained flat. There is a staff team based at the centre 24/7 which provides support along with duty staff to undertake housing options. The centre was modernised and extended to provide more emergency temporary self-contained accommodation for single people and couples.

Hostel style supported accommodation is also provided for young homeless applicants provided by the council at Newlands House (6 tenancies), Open Door (10 tenancies) and Bethany Christian Trust (4 tenancies). Hostel accommodation therefore represents a small proportion of temporary accommodation in West Lothian representing 30 (5%) out of total capacity of 595 temporary accommodation units in the Table 13.

West Lothian also has in place a range of supported accommodation of varying sizes for vulnerable groups such as addictions, families, young people and people fleeing domestic violence. This tends to comprise a mix of self-contained accommodation some with shared common spaces and facilities.

West Lothian has also recently introduced its first Housing First pilot which is a joint project for Young People with care experience between Almond Housing Association and The Rock Trust. The Housing First project commenced working with 5 young people and has recently been successfully in extending this to 10 young people with Almond Housing Association agreeing to provide a further 5 tenancies.

The costs of temporary accommodation can be passed on to tenants in the form of rent and service charges. Charges in Scotland vary from £181.43 for local authority temporary accommodation, £158.60 for housing association stock and £174.10 for private sector placements. (Source: Scotland's Housing Network benchmarking Data). Table 18 below shows the weekly charge per temporary accommodation type in West Lothian and demonstrates that the charges are below the Scottish average.

Table 18 Temporary Accommodation and Affordability

| Temporary Accommodation Type | Weekly Charge |
|--|---------------|
| *WLC Dispersed Temporary Tenancy | £100.57 |
| *RSL Dispersed Temporary Tenancy | £118.00 |
| *Private Sector Leasing Temporary Tenancy | £102.64 |
| Blackburn Homeless Unit Self Contained Flats | £98.12 |
| Open Door Hostel | £104.76 |
| Quentin Court Flats | £107.07 |
| Strathbrock Homeless Unit | £143.44 |
| Newlands House | £121.88 |
| Bed and Breakfast/Hotel | £98.07 |

Data Label: Public

7. Future 5 Year Plan for Temporary Accommodation

It is predicted that there will be an ongoing demand for main stream temporary accommodation and supported accommodation for vulnerable people over the 5 year of the plan. This can be evidenced by the current demand projections for homeless presentations along with the increase in population and households trends between the period 2016 to 2026, especially for single adults, couples and young people. At this stage, it is unclear whether the rate of demand for temporary accommodation has peaked in West Lothian or has plateaued.

Alongside influence of demographic projections, it is unlikely that the impact of RRTP prevention strategies to shift demand away from people presenting as homeless will be realised in Year 1 and 2 of the RRTP.

Although West Lothian has a good provision of affordable, furnished temporary accommodation across local communities there are several issues which need to be addressed as part of the transition to rapid rehousing.

- The challenges and issues associated with the increasing reliance on the use of B&B Accommodation as temporary accommodation. For the first 6 month period of 2018/19 the average number of homeless applicants cases being accommodated in Bed & Breakfast per night is 106 with average length of stay 30 days.
- Due to the current demand pressures, homeless households are frequently being transitioned through a number of different types of temporary accommodation while waiting for a permanent settled outcome.
- Length of time spent in temporary accommodation needs to be reduced where possible.
- Younger people's hostel accommodation at Open Door and Newlands House and the Women's Aid refuge provision not meeting models as outlined in the HARSAG recommendations.

Five Year Vision for Temporary Accommodation

- Temporary accommodation is used as the stop gap it is meant to be and to reduce the use of B&B accommodation.
- When it is used it should be mainstreamed, furnished temporary tenancy in the community, with the fewer transitions the better
- Use supported accommodation more effectively by those who need it.
- Develop further housing first models for those with multiple complex needs
- Work with West Lothian IJB to establish residential models for people where independently living in the community is not possible.

Accommodation Provision

To take forward this vision, there is a need to increase throughput in the furnished temporary tenancies and ensure supported accommodation for vulnerable people is used by people who need this type of provision as a housing option. This would be done by increasing permanent lets to address the backlog and new demand while the shift to early intervention and prevention strategies are implemented.

A calculation has been undertaken to determine the impact on throughput in furnished temporary accommodation if social landlords increase the permanent lets. If available social lets were increased by 75% which equates to an additional 291 lets in year one of the plan, length of stay would decrease from 195 days per year to 141 days per year. By the end of Year 4 length of stay would have reduce to 55 days with demand for temporary accommodation being reduced.

Data Label: Public

Improving flow through furnished temporary tenancies will reduce the reliance on the need for B&B accommodation and also enable more effective use of the current temporary accommodation provision. If a local target of lets to homeless was set at 70%, it can be estimated that the current stock of furnished temporary tenancies will reduce over the life of the plan from 450 to 125.

Younger People Supported Accommodation and Flats

Accommodation in relation to younger people will be part of the 'Moving on Project' underway within the council. There will be shift in the current provision to ensure younger people are provided the appropriate housing options to prevent homelessness.

West Lothian currently has a Housing First Project for Young People leaving care offering 10 tenancies with wrap around support. The accommodation is provided by Almond Housing Association with the Rock Trust providing the support. There is likely to be additional need for this type of provision for young people who are not leaving care but at risk of homeless who have medium to multiple complex needs.

A need has been identified for at least one new build supported accommodation unit for 10-12 young people to replace Newlands House, Bathgate. The council is currently considering proposal to reconfigure Newlands House on the completion of the new build to either shared furnished temporary accommodation or main stream accommodation for 25 – 59 age group.

Women's Refuge Provision

The accommodation and the support requirements are to be reviewed as part of the Violence against Women Strategy and Safe at Home approach. It is acknowledged that the model currently used for women's refuge has not been refreshed for some time but there is a need to develop the model to ensure that women and children affected by domestic abuse can access the most appropriate forms of temporary accommodation which ensures safety and security while housing options to find settled accommodation as quickly as possible are sourced.

Data Label: Public

8. Identifying Support Needs

To transition to a rapid rehousing approach an analysis of the enhanced housing management and support needs of 1,312 homeless applicants was undertaken between 23rd August 2018 and 31st October 2018. This was undertaken to get a better understanding of the support needs to enable people to be rehoused as quickly as possible and also identify people with multiple complex/high support needs where a rehousing solution may not be suitable.

The work has prompted some initial discussion around the need to change the culture and language associated with homelessness around tenancy readiness. The analysis included people accommodated in temporary accommodation (supported accommodation, temporary tenancies, B&B Accommodation) as well as people who are self-accommodating.

The analysis was undertaken in three stages:

- Number of homeless people estimated to have no/low support, medium support, SMD/multiple complex or residential support needs:
- Analysis of support need and accommodation provision, and
- Analysis of homeless presenting issues and vulnerabilities.

The definitions used within the RRTTP Guidance for Local Authorities and Partners have been used as to estimate enhanced housing management / support requirements to transition to rapid rehousing.

| Category | Definition |
|-----------------------------|--|
| No/Low Support Needs | Proportion of current homeless cases with no/low support requirements who will easily move into mainstream settled housing with no need for specific support other than signposting and low level housing management support provided by housing providers. |
| Medium Support Needs | Proportion of current homeless cases with medium support need whether visiting housing support, or multi professional wrap around support to enable people to live independently in the community. |
| SMD/Complex Need | Proportion of current homeless cases with severe and multiple deprivation or complex needs who would benefit from intensive wrap around support and a Housing First Approach. |
| Residential Support | Proportion of current homeless cases where independent living within the community is not possible or preferable for whatever reason (safety, risk to self or others, choice) and for whom shared and supported accommodation is the preferred housing option route. |

The analysis undertaken estimated that of the 1,312 homeless cases, 76% (1,103 people) required no or low levels of support and could be moved directly into main stream housing if available. This provided a set of figures to use in collating low level support services to resettle applicants through rapid rehousing route.

18% (237 people) of homeless cases were estimated to have medium support needs to enable independent living. A smaller percentage of cases, 4.3% (57 people) were estimated to require more intensive wrap around support and would benefit from a Housing First Approach. A very small

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proportion, 0.38% (5 people) are estimated to need more shared or supported accommodation as the preferred housing options. Applicants requiring this type of accommodation were placed within residential care, specialised schooling and long term psychiatric wards.

Table 19 Support Analysis

| Support Needs | Number of People | People In Temporary Accommodation | People Self - Accommodating | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| No/Low Support Needs | 1013 | 404 | 609 | 76.40% |
| Medium Support Needs | 237 | 127 | 110 | 17.87% |
| SMD/Complex Needs | 57 | 50 | 7 | 4.30% |
| Residential Support | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0.38% |
| Total | 1312 | 581 | 731 | 100% |

Further analysis was undertaken to establish if applicants estimated to have medium and SMD/Complex needs were currently being appropriately housed in supported accommodation and to look at gaps for those self-accommodating.

Of the 1,312 applicants, 294 were categorised as either medium or complex needs. Of these a total of 206 homeless persons who met the criteria for medium, complex/SMD levels of support have been identified as not being accommodated appropriately as either living in hotels/B&B, dispersed in community in temporary tenancies or sofa surfing.

Table 20 Support Analysis and Temporary Accommodation Type

| Location | No/Low Support | Medium | SMD/Complex | Residential | Total units of accommodation |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| Blackburn Homeless Unit | 22 | 11 | 9 | 0 | 42 |
| Assessment Centre | 2 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 10 (1 void) |
| Quentin Court | 14 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 16 (1 vacant) |
| Strathbrock Family Unit | 1 | 3 | 8 | 0 | 9 (families) |
| Newlands House | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| Open Door | 0 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 10 |
| *Supported Outreach Flats | 1 | 20 | 13 | 0 | 34 |
| Temporary Furnished Accommodation | 274 | 53 | 10 | 0 | 337 |
| B&B/Hotels | 90 | 21 | 5 | 0 | 116 (variable) |
| Not in Accommodation | 609 | 110 | 7 | 0 | 726 |
| Residential | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Total | 1013 | 237 | 57 | 5 | 1,312 |

* Open Door Outreach Flats, Kharis Court, Rock Trust Supported Flats, TRFS

9. Transitioning to a Rapid Rehousing Approach in West Lothian

This section sets out how the council and key strategic partners are going to move from the current homeless position to the future vision. It also identifies the changes required to temporary accommodation along with any changes required in housing supply systems and wrap around support to address the balance of settled housing options for homeless households. Finally, it sets out how the council and partners will move homeless households into settled housing outcomes as quickly as possible.

West Lothian RRTP Vision

Working together, West Lothian Council, West Lothian IJB, registered social landlords and the voluntary sector, we will reduce homelessness through early intervention and prevention.

Through the provision of consistent advice and information, we will strive to work with the person to offer a range of housing options to find a settled home with access to services and support mechanisms.

Where homelessness does occur we will work with the person to ensure they are rehoused as quickly as possible with reduced lengths of stay in temporary accommodation.

9.1 Shifting from the Current Provision to the future vision

To shift from the current provision to the West Lothian vision, the council and key strategic partners have identified four high level actions. These are:

- Increase focus on early intervention, prevention and housing options to stop homelessness happening in first place
- To ensure where homelessness does occur that housing options are focused on enabling households to navigate through the system as quickly as possible
- Implement actions required to ensure that people have access to the required levels of support
- Improving access to affordable housing options and reducing the length of stay in temporary accommodation by improving flow through the system diverting away from the use of B&B

Appendix 6 sets out Action Plan for delivery of the West Lothian RRTP.

These actions will be taken forward through four RRTP Work streams. These are:

- Early intervention/ Prevention and Housing Options
- Supply and Temporary Accommodation
- Support and Supported Accommodation
- Health and Wellbeing

A review of the Housing Allocations Policy will dovetail with the RRTP in terms of ensuring compliance with the plan and ability to move people that are homeless through the system quickly in order to obtain a permanent let.

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At the same time a review of the council's Housing Allocations Policy will also need to make provision for persons on the mainstream housing list in order to ensure that their needs are also provided for and that homelessness is not seen to be the only route to a council house.

Targets to let to homeless will be aligned with the position set in the finalised version of the West Lothian RRTP. The main focus of the policy review will be to shift those applicants who are identified as homeless with low or no support needs away from homelessness. This will be achieved through a review of the existing points framework, reviewing points levels and introducing strategic needs categories (prevention points).

In addition, the policy review will capture allocation/referral to alternative sources of lets such as the use of the Private Rented Sector and mid-market rented sector as an option to meet general housing need for persons on the Housing List.

A key element of the success of the West Lothian RRTP will be the communication strategy not only amongst the council and its key strategic partners but also to service users and the communities of West Lothian.

It is estimated that the impact of strategies to reduce homelessness will not have effect until the end of Year 2 of the plan with a target of homeless reduction set at 4%. In Year 3 a reduction of 6% in homeless applications has been set which will be a result of outcome of changes to the council's Allocations Policy. For Years 4 and 5 of the plan a target of 5% has been set for each year. Progress will be monitored throughout each year and reported at the end of each year.

9.2 Increase Focus on Early Intervention, Prevention and Housing Options

In order to increase focus on Early Intervention, Prevention and Housing Options to stop homelessness happening in the first place we will evaluate existing prevention and early intervention activities and research and develop new approaches by 2019/20. This will ensure that we implement actions to stop homelessness occurring in the first place, improve tenancy sustainment and reduce homelessness, reviewing and renewing our focus on housing options advice through the promotion of a joint housing options approach. To achieve this we will:

- Develop and implement an Education Programme to dispel the myths of homelessness and support/mediation service for school age children experiencing homelessness either as part of a family or an individual. This will be achieved through effective use of the Risk Matrix, to identify potential homelessness in targeted groups and implementing necessary strategies to deliver high level support.
- Develop and implement a Moving on Model for young people leaving care and other vulnerable young people. Many young people are caught in the poverty trap of being restricted by single room rent rate for housing benefit and thus being unable to afford to access the private rented sector for accommodation. The Council will explore options with the Advice Shop via their access to employment programme and with third sector partners to provide employability support to young people who are at risk of homelessness.
- Identify triggers of homelessness and referral process for partners in Health and Social Care.
- Develop a mediation service in order to minimise homelessness as a result of relationship breakdown which is the main reason given from those presenting as homeless in West Lothian.

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- Develop pathway process for vulnerable people at risk of homeless including people suffering from domestic abuse, mental health issues and addictions.
- Refine roll out of the Shore Standards for people leaving prison to prevent homelessness
- Review protocols for Hospital Discharge with purpose of prevention.
- Review Health and Homeless Service to ensure early intervention and prevention.
- Ensure people have access to appropriate advice in order to maximise income and receive money advice.
- Develop a consistent joint West Lothian Housing Options approach to capture all housing options available, including mid-market rent and the private rented sector, in order to maximise opportunity and choice.
- Develop a West Lothian approach to increase the use of the private rented sector which is incorporated into the Housing Options approach.
- Review Personal Housing Planning (PHP) approach to ensure consistency across all social rented landlord partners and align housing options and allocations approached with PHPs.
- Review the council's Housing Allocations Policy to shift the balance to prevention
- Develop a resettlement service which prevents homelessness and assist with creating sustainable communities.

9.3: Rehousing Options for Homeless Households

Where homelessness does occur we want to work with homeless household's to move through the system as quickly as possible minimising time spent in temporary accommodation. To achieve this we will:

- Develop a consistent joint West Lothian Housing Options approach to capture all housing options available for homeless households including mid-market rent and private sector rent, in order to maximise opportunity and choice.
- Develop and implement an on line self-assessment, Housing Need and Homeless assessment form.
- Identify households in suitable temporary accommodation with the option of converting/flipping these tenancies to Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) where appropriate to meet the needs of the household.
- Review the roles and process within service teams to improve flow through the system for homeless households and consider options for teams to allow delivery of a more generic and flexible approach.
- Work together with RSL partners to optimise rehousing process including WLHR Partners allocating directly from WLHR Homeless Group.
- Improved communication between RSLs and the council to optimise current nomination and Section 5 agreements.

In ensuring that households can wherever possible be prevented from homelessness we will reduce demand. Where homelessness does occur by rapidly rehousing households into permanent accommodation will reduce the length of stay in furnished temporary accommodation. It is estimated that, if the local target of 75% of available lets are offered to homeless households then

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average length of stay in a WLC furnished temporary tenancy will reduce from 195 days in 2017/18 to no more than 55 days by 2023/24.

Alongside this, it is recognised that there is a need to minimise the impact of homelessness on people's health and wellbeing when they do present as homeless to the council.

- We will work with West Lothian IJB to develop standards for homeless people accessing services in line with the National health and Homeless Standards
- Review and improve hospital discharge protocols
- Develop more joined up approach between housing and health services.

9.4 Accessing the Right Levels of Support

Support analysis undertaken estimates that the largest proportion of the homeless cases, 76.4% required no or low levels of support, 17.87% of homeless cases were estimated to have medium support needs to enable independent living, 4.3% were estimated to require more intensive wrap around support and would benefit from a Housing First Approach. A very small proportion, 0.38% were estimated to need more shared or supported accommodation as the preferred housing options. 1.15% of cases were closed by the time estimate of support needs were undertaken.

This information provided has been used to determine the proportion of low level support services required to resettle applicants through a rapid rehousing route. It also provided the information required to determine the proportions requiring for medium, Housing First and Supported Accommodation requirement as detailed in the Table 20 below.

Table 20: Support Analysis and Rapid Rehousing Route

| Housing | Support | Proportion of current homeless cases | % | Number of current cases + new need annual for 5 years | Number of Cases |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--------|---|-----------------|
| Mainstream housing | None/Low (housing management based) | | 76.4% | | 1,208 |
| Mainstream housing | Medium (individual housing support/wrap around multi-service) | | 17.87% | | 283 |
| Mainstream housing – Housing First | High Level wrap around support | | 4.3% | | 68 |
| Supported Accommodation | Residential support | | 0.38% | | 6 |

*1.15% of cases were closed by the time estimate of support needs were undertaken.

To ensure appropriate action is taken to meet the support needs of households moving forward we will:

- Review current process and resource allocations for low level support and enhance housing management to enable people to transition quickly to rapid rehousing.
- Explore different models of approach for low level provision including resettlement services.
- Review current support provision within the homeless supported accommodation (Blackburn Homeless Unit, excluding 10 Assessment Centre Spaces, Strathbrock Homeless Unit and

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Newlands House) to ensure they meet the model required to transition to a rapid rehousing approach.

- Further review of medium support cases who require wrap around specialist support services against the council's new eligibility criteria in order to quantify any gaps in provision.
- Review current customer journey for assessing and access to wrap around specialist support to fast track referral process for people requiring to be rehoused quickly.
- Develop Housing First model for adults with addiction and/or mental health issues linking in to current commissioned services.
- Further enhancing Housing First model for young people as part of the Moving on Project.
- Review current model of domestic abuse refuge and develop a Housing first model which aligns with the Violence Against Women Strategy.
- Quantify with IJB the residential/support accommodation requirements for people where housing in the community would not be suitable.
- Identifying other models of support which may be required and utilising additional resources e.g. West Lothian Alcohol and Drug Partnership.

9.5 Access to Affordable Housing and Temporary Accommodation

9.5.1 Affordable Housing Supply Targets

One of the main challenges in transitioning to a rapid rehousing approach in West Lothian is the current demand for social rented housing in the area compared with available lets. There is also a high concentration of demand for the towns of Livingston and Bathgate.

Gaps analysis undertaken on homeless demand against supply has established that the number of lets until 2021/22 will meet new homeless demand plus backlog. This is due to the new affordable housing supply target of 3,000 homes over the ten year period to 2021/22. However, new affordable supply would need to be at least 300 per annum in 2022/23 and 2023/24 to meet new demand given the increasing population and household demographics for West Lothian.

9.5.2 Improving Access to Affordable Housing Options

Increasing the percentage of lets to homelessness applicants will have an impact on people applying to the council through the mainstream allocations process. Therefore it is vital that in West Lothian there are strategies in place to delivery early intervention and prevention to shift the focus from crisis and homelessness to prevention and early intervention.

In order to implement action which improves access to affordable housing options as well as reduce the length of stay in temporary accommodation we will:

- Review the council's Housing Allocation policy to shift the balance to prevention and ensure those who continue to experience homelessness reach a settled housing outcome as quickly as possible
- Agree an annual target of percentage of social lets to homeless households across all social landlords in West Lothian. It has been identified that in order to meet the West Lothian R RTP vision the Council and its partners will need to increase social rented lets to homeless households to from 59% to 75% of all social rented lets.
- Review nomination agreements and section 5 protocols

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- Develop an approach to increase the use of the private rented sector to be incorporated into the housing options approach
- Review Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (RDGS)
- Develop partnership approach with local letting agents and individual landlords including development of a referral process
- Review current approach to market acquisitions in West Lothian to ensure properties meet local housing needs.
- Review potential to 'flip' further temporary tenancies to mainstream.

A locally agreed target for the maximum time that homeless household will be living in furnished temporary accommodation in the communities to be achieved over the lifetime of the plan has been agreed at 55 days.

To transition to this target will require the current levels of furnished temporary tenancies in the community to remain at current levels 450 units for a period of 3 years. The shift will focus on reducing the number of homeless households being provided with B&B accommodation, reducing length of stay and minimising the number of transitions homeless households have in temporary accommodation.

The aim to reduce B&B Accommodation and the use of temporary accommodation over the lifetime of the plan will be dependent on the delivery of targets for percentage social lets to homeless as well as the RRTP actions aimed at reducing homeless from happening in the first place. Alongside this we will undertake a review of:

- The current voids process for temporary and mainstream tenancies to ensure properties are available to let as quickly as possible, and will review
- The use of RSL and PSL as temporary accommodation.

10. Communication Approach

A comprehensive Communications Plan will be developed to ensure that key activities and messages are communicated effectively. Work will be undertaken to segment key stakeholder groups and ensure that communications activity and resource is focussed on reaching these targeted groups. A variety of communications activities and channels will be utilised, including both traditional and digital. Where possible, evaluation of communications activity will be carried out.

11. Resource Planning

Summary of RRTP Resource Requirements

£1.9m: Multidisciplinary Housing Options and Resettlement Services including an Interim Tenancy Resettlement Services

£0.1m: Expansion of Mediation Services

£0.75m: Development and Expansion of Housing First Model

£0.25m: Business Change Resource

£3m: Total RRTP Resource Requirement

The evidence contained within this first iteration of the West Lothian RRTP identifies that the main challenge in transitioning from the current homeless position to the RRTP vision is the increasing demand for assistance with finding permanent affordable housing solutions against available supply.

Increasing demand against available supply has created a backlog of 1,061 open homeless cases as of 31 March 2018 with homeless households staying for longer periods in temporary accommodation until a suitable permanent housing solution becomes available. As a result the council has increasingly used Bed and Breakfast (B&B) Accommodation to meet its statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation.

This section will layout the resources required to deliver the vision of eradicating the current backlog of open cases while actions are implemented to redesign existing service provision and developing the collaborative approaches which focus on early intervention and prevention.

11.1 Revenue Resources Pressures

In West Lothian the total cost of the homeless service provision by the council was £3.268million in 2017/18. This includes costs associated with a range of council homeless service provisions including housing options, tenancy sustainment, supported accommodation, temporary accommodation, furniture storage, homeless transport and contributions to other service areas including, health, domestic abuse, addictions and the Advice Shop. There are three main areas of overspend to note which are related to the current homeless position in West Lothian.

- **B&B Accommodation:** As of the 31 March 2017 there were 21 people accommodated in B&B. This had increased to 94 people as of 31 March 2018. This increase generated an over spend against budgeted resources of £369,000. This trend has continued in 2018/19 with an average of 112 people accommodated per night. Current forecasted overspend on B&B Accommodation is £1.065million for 2018/19.
- **Furniture Storage:** The increase in use of B&B accommodation has also seen a subsequent rise in the need to assist people with storing their furniture while in temporary accommodation. Overspend in 2017/18 on furniture storage was £130,000.
- **Homeless Transport:** The council provides transport for pupils whose families have been accepted as unintentionally homeless, and who move to a temporary address. The increasing lengths of stay in temporary accommodation has impacted on the length of time transport is required and thus contributed to the current overspend for the Housing Services homelessness transport budget. In 2017/18 overspend on Homeless Transport was £230,000. The projected overspend in 2018/19 is £450,000.

There is also evidence that the current homeless position has had some impact on service delivery across other services areas within the council, with services shifting to a more reactive approach due to the volume of presentations and the increasing use of B&B Accommodation.

Although the council has managed to avoid over spends in these areas and continues to perform well in areas of support and sustainable outcomes, the current position is creating pressures within

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the Allocations Team, Accommodation Team and Housing Options team as well as Housing Management and Building Services.

Therefore a fundamental shift to a more early intervention and preventative approach is required to move to a refocus on taking forward an innovative housing options approach making sure people receive advice on a full range of affordable housing solutions.

The role of the RRTP key strategic partners is also crucial in the required shift from the current position. The council and key strategic partners will need to review current practice and develop new approaches which deliver consistent and more joined-up housing options at an early stage in the customer journey across West Lothian.

In 2017/18 £1.641 million was spent on externally commissioned services by the council and West Lothian IJB to provide care and support service to people in the community based on an assessment of need. These include Mental Health, Addictions, Domestic Abuse and Young People Vulnerable due to their age. Whilst these services are currently in place, the RRTP recognises that there is a need to realign these services taking into account any recent changes to eligibility criteria, to ensure services are aligned with the RRTP vision.

11.2 New Housing Supply and Temporary Accommodation Capital Investment

The council has an approved Housing Capital investment of £157million for the period 2018/19 to 2022/23 of which £81million relates to the provision of new build council houses, open market acquisitions and mortgage to rent units.

The Scottish Government has confirmed Resource Planning Assumptions (RPA) for the supply of new affordable housing as follows:

2018/19: £12.174m

2019/20: £12.894m

2020/21: £13.757m

The council has also approved a £4million capital budget in the General Services Capital Budget for the provision of a 36 single person, homeless accommodation unit to the East of West Lothian. The purpose of the unit was to help reduce the use of B&B Accommodation and provide supported accommodation to prevent young people from becoming homeless. Given the Homeless and Rough Sleepers Action Group (HARSAG) recommendations on temporary accommodation published in June 2018, the council is currently considering alternative options for the £4million investment available however, this will be insufficient funding to meet the current levels of demand.

11.3 West Lothian RRTP Resource Requirements

The first iteration of the West Lothian RRTP has demonstrated that to transition to a rapid rehousing approach in West Lothian will require 4 key actions:

- Increase focus on early intervention, prevention and housing options to stop homelessness happening in first place.
- To ensure where homelessness does occur that housing options are focused on enabling households to navigate through the system as quickly as possible.

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- Implement actions required to ensure that people have access to the required levels of support.
- Improving access to affordable housing options and reducing the length of stay in temporary accommodation by improving flow through the system diverting away from the use of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation.

The success of achieving the vision is dependent on eradicating the backlog by the end of Year 4 through agreeing a local target of lets to homeless whilst the shift to early intervention and prevention is delivered to reduce the number of people presenting as homeless to the council.

A high proportion of the social rented stock available in West Lothian is currently allocated to homeless applicants in West Lothian. In 2017/18 the council and RSL partner offered 59% of social rented lets to homeless households, 79% of which were council and 21% RSLs. Modelling undertaken has identified that continuing at the current level of 59% will have no impact in addressing the backlog and that a target of 75% would need to be agreed to meet the RRTP vision by 2023/24.

However by increasing the percentage lets to homeless households could, in turn, increase overall demand for homeless services. In West Lothian the RRTP approach must also take account of early intervention and expanding the other housing options available, including increasing supply of affordable housing to address the overall housing needs of West Lothian.

Agreeing a local target of 75% of social rented lets to homeless is ambitious and it is anticipated that the impact will be monitored and may need to be adjusted over the 5 Year period of the plan. Furthermore, any agreement to increase percentage lets to homeless, and to move away from the culture of tenancy readiness would need to be underpinned by access to the relevant support to people as they are rapidly rehoused. This is due to risks which have been raised at the RRTP Board in relation to gaps in tenancy resettlement services and support services to support sustainment and balanced communities.

Estimates of the support needs of open homeless cases undertaken in August 2018 identified that the majority of homeless households, 76.4% had no/low support needs and 17.87% had medium individual wrap around support needs. Only a small proportion 4.3% had been identified as being suitable as high level wrap around (Housing First) and 0.38% for residential support.

Alongside the implementation of the West Lothian RRTP, the council and key strategic partners will continue to deliver homeless services to meet the needs of the people of West Lothian. Therefore when outlining the resource requirements to enable the shift to a rapid rehousing approach, consideration has been given to ensuring that any impact to people needing assistance is minimised and current areas of good practice are maintained. There is also a need to build on the good practice in West Lothian as well as shifting Housing Options advice and intervention to earlier in the customer journey.

Resource gaps have been identified in the following areas:

- Early intervention and prevention to stop homelessness by Year 5 of the RRTP.
- The provision of temporary accommodation to divert away from B&B Accommodation by Year 2 of the plan and to reduce capacity and length of stay in furnished temporary tenancies by Year 4.

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- The tenancy resettlement and housing support services required to rapidly rehouse current homeless households into mainstream accommodation by Year 5 of the plan.
- Business change resource to transition to the rapid rehousing approach and coordinate the West Lothian RRTP.

At this stage, further work is required to identify any additional resources required to meet the RRTP vision particularly in relation to early intervention required through working with the IJB and the voluntary sector. There is also further work required to quantify potential resources out with the RRTP, which could be attracted through joint working with the voluntary sector that would support the plan.

- **Early Intervention and Prevention**

Generic Housing Options and Resettlement Team: To reduce demand through early intervention and prevention the current delivery of Housing Options needs to be expanded to provide a wider range of housing solutions which successfully intervene at an earlier stage. Where there is a risk of homelessness or where homelessness does occur, there needs to be greater flexibility within the current system to respond to the needs of people.

Therefore funding is required to develop and pilot a multifunctional Housing Options and Resettlement Team. The team will initially consist of people from within the current range Housing Needs Services of Tenancy Support, Housing Options, Accommodation and Allocations, but the aim to transition to a fully mainstreamed, generic Rehousing Team in West Lothian by Year 3 of the plan.

While shifting to a multifunctional approach to Housing Options and Resettlement Services, additional resources will be required to rapidly rehouse the 75.4% of open homeless with no /low level support. The resources would be required across the social rented sector and potentially the private rented sector. Further discussions are required with individual RSLs regarding the mechanism for the allocations of resources.

Funding of £1.9million would enable the team to be developed and piloted while continuing to provide statutory homeless and support services.

- **Mediation Services**

In partnership with the voluntary sector, additional resources will focus on the expansion of current mediation services available to people to prevent homeless due to being asked to leave the family home. Funding of approximately £100,000 has been identified as required.

- **Temporary Accommodation**

Temporary Tenancies: To divert away from the use of B&B accommodation will require additional capacity within furnished temporary tenancies to meet demand. The council is currently considering alternative options for the £4million approved in June 2018 for a 36 single person homeless unit.

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- **Housing First for Adults in West Lothian**

Estimates of support needs of current live cases has identified that approximately 4.3% of open homeless cases require high level wrap around services and may be suitable for rapid rehousing as part of a housing first approach to the provision of mainstream accommodation. There is currently a gap in resources for this type of model in West Lothian for adults with Addictions and Mental Health issues. To meet this gap, a total resources requirement of £750,000 has been identified. This would be used as follows:

- **Housing First Co-ordination Team:** To develop the Housing First model in West Lothian, there is a need for a Housing First Co-ordination Team. It is proposed that this model will build on the successful approach of the Syrian Refugee Service. The key remit of the team will be to identify the support packages of housing first clients, co-ordinate services, develop peer mentoring and procure SDS support services if required. Housing First Officers will take on the role of a case officer, including 6 monthly reviews and refer to Housing First Services for Addictions and Mental Health identified below as well as other relevant service such as Education, Employability and Health.
- **Housing First and Addictions:** The council currently has contracted provision of for supported flats for people with mental health and addictions. It is proposed that this contract could be part of a reconfiguration to a housing first model. Current tenancies could be flipped to permanent housing and the housing first model provided for those who are assessed as needing the service. The intensive wrap around support service provision could be funded through ADP funding which has been allocated for rapid rehousing for people with addictions. Further work is required to develop this proposal.
- **Housing First and Mental Health:** Gaps in service provision and the need for housing first will be aligned with the outcomes of the review of commissioned support services for mental health services.
- **Housing First and Domestic Abuse:** as part of the review of current refuge provision and housing models which align with the Violence Against Women Strategy, the role of the Housing First approach and capacity requirements will be quantified.
- **Housing First Service for Young People:** Building on the success of the Housing First Project for Young People provided by Rock Trust/Almond the need for an additional 10 places over three years has been identified. The funding will continue to be aimed at young people due to the prevalence of Youth Homelessness in West Lothian and would also align with the 'Moving On' project for young care leavers in West Lothian. Future funding of housing first for young people would be dependent on the success of the projects and the outcome of the Public Social Partnership which has commenced for the current contracted housing support provision for young people.

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- **Business Change and Project Management**

Business Change: The preparation and development of the plan has been undertaken within existing council resources and has been delivered within the timescales set by the Scottish Government. The Housing Needs Team has taken the lead in project managing the development of the first draft of the RRTP which has involved co-ordination of a wide range of key strategic partners, service users and relevant staff as outlined in Appendix 1. This has had some impact on the delivery of performance monitoring and project management of service development which is not sustainable over the 5 Year period of the RRTP. The success of the RRTP Action Plan and the transition to a rapid rehousing approach will require a Business Change resource to project manage and drive forward the work streams identified in the Action Plan coordinating a range of internal and external service areas. The Business Change costs would be for a fixed period of 3 years and will cost in the region of £250,000.

12. References and Further Reading – to be finalised

| | |
|---|---|
| Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Guidance for Local Authorities August 2018 | http://www.ghn.org.uk/rapid-rehousing-transition-plan/ |
| Homeless and Rough Sleeping Action Group Recommendations June 2018 | http://www.ghn.org.uk/publications/harsag/ |
| West Lothian Corporate Plan 2018 - 2023 | https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/19574/West-Lothian-Council-Corporate-Plan-2018---2023/pdf/West Lothian Council Corporate Plan 2018-2023.pdf |
| West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 | https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/9810/Policy-and-Strategies |
| Housing and Needs Demand Assessment 2 | http://sesplan.gov.uk/assets/images/HNDA/FINAL%20SESPLAN%20HNDA2.pdf |
| Demographic Information | https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/council-area-data-sheets/west-lothian-council-profile.html |
| National Health and Homeless Standards 2005 | http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2005/03/20774/53761 |
| Housing Tenure in West Lothian | https://beta.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-scotland-2018-key-trends-summary/pages/3/ |
| Scottish government homeless statistics. Contains data and analysis on HL1, HL2 HL3 and PREVENT 1 from 2009/10 to 2017/19 | https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/RefTables |

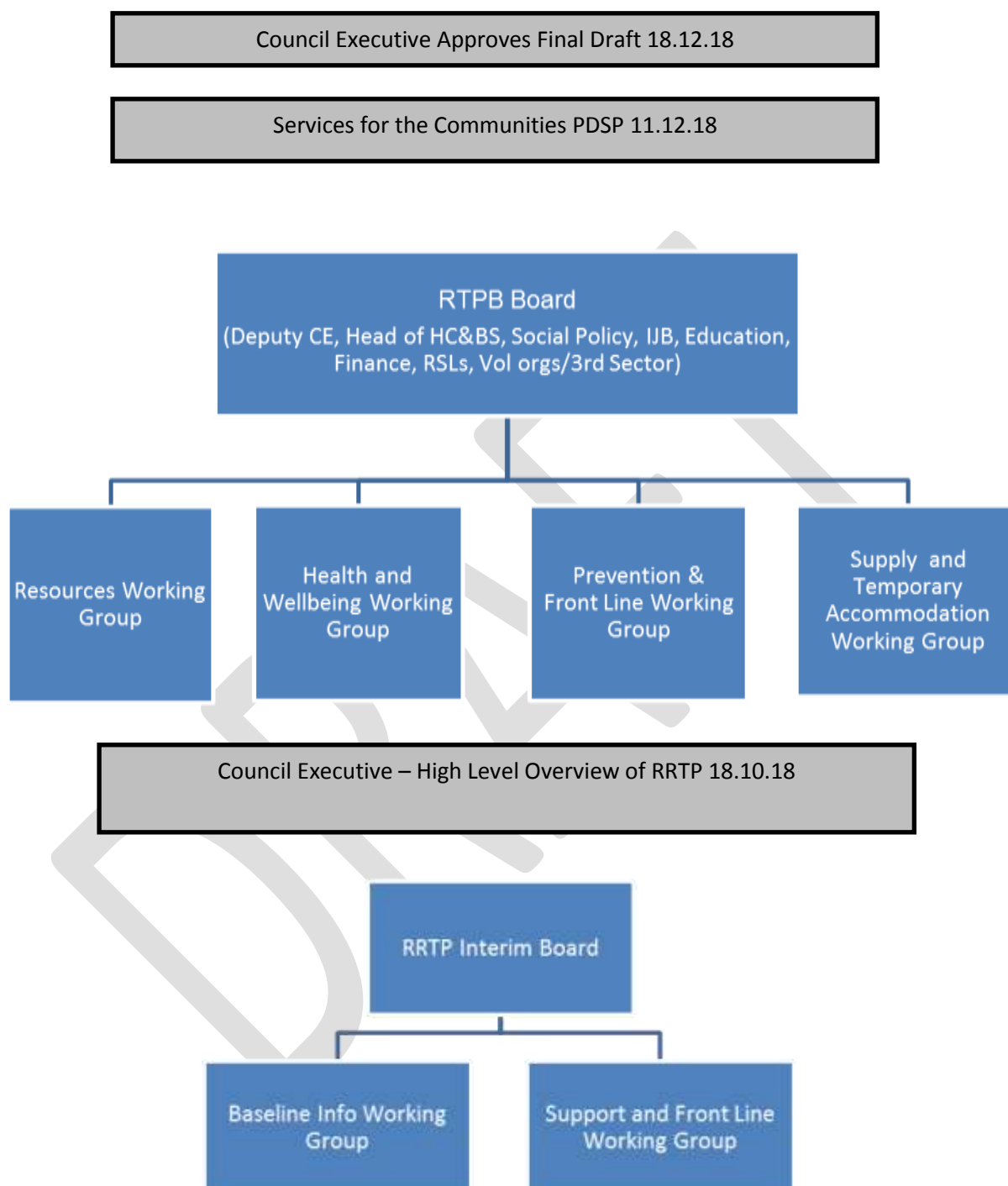
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Appendix 1: West Lothian RRTP Key Strategic Partners

| Organisation | Sector |
|---|--|
| Almond Housing Association | Social Rented Housing |
| Castle Rock Housing Association | Social Rented Housing |
| WESLO | Social Rented Housing |
| West Lothian Housing Partnership | Social Rented Housing |
| West Lothian Advice Shop | Welfare Benefits and Finance |
| West Lothian Council | Public – Children and Families, Criminal Justice, Domestic Abuse, Education, Housing, Customer and Building Services, Finance and Property |
| West Lothian Joint Integration Board | Public - Health and Social Care Adults |
| West Lothian Joint Strategy Group | Voluntary Sector |
| Action for Children | |
| Bethany Christian Trust | |
| Open Door | |
| Shelter Scotland | |
| Rock Trust | |
| The Cyrenians | |
| The Richmond Fellowship | |
| West Lothian Women's Aid | |

Data Label: Public

Appendix 2: Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan – Governance Arrangements



Data Label: Public

Appendix 3: RRTP - Consultation Approach Paper

Stage 1: Initial Briefings

| Service Areas | Date | Area |
|--------------------------------------|----------|---|
| Housing Needs Managers | 7.8.18 | Front Line Staff/Allocations |
| Housing Needs Teams | 30.8.18 | Front Line Staff/Allocations |
| Housing Managers | 10.9.18 | Housing Management |
| Weslo | 10.9.18 | RSL |
| Almond | 10.9.18 | RSL |
| Corporate Management Team | 19.9.18 | RSL |
| WLHP | 24.9.18 | RSL |
| Castle Rock/Edinvar | 24.8.18 | RSL |
| All other RSLs operating in | 16.10.18 | RSL |
| Social Policy Senior Management Team | 26.9.18 | Mental Health, Young People, Addictions |
| West Lothian IJB | 18.10.18 | Commissioner of floating support services |
| Homeless Network Group | 26.9.18 | Service Users |
| Tenants Network | 21.8.18 | Service Users |
| Joint Strategy Group | 16.9.18 | Voluntary Organisations/RSLs |
| ALL other Housing Staff | 24.10.18 | |

Stage 2: Feed Back Sessions

| Service Areas | Date | Area |
|--|--------------|--|
| Housing Needs Managers | Weekly | Sit as part of RRTP Working Group Accommodation and Allocations |
| Housing Needs Teams | w/c 8.10.18 | Front Line Staff Allocations |
| Housing Managers | | Sit as part of RRTP Working Group. |
| Housing Strategy and Development/Performance | On going | Sit as part of RRTP Working Group. |
| Weslo | 3.10.18 | RSL – targets to be agreed |
| Almond | 1.10.18 | RSL – targets to be agreed |
| WLHP | w/c 8.10.18 | RSL – targets to be agreed |
| Castle Rock/Edinvar | w/c 8.10.18 | RSL – targets to be agreed |
| All other RSLs operating in | w/c 15.10.18 | All other RSLs in West Lothian |
| Social Policy Senior Management Team | Ongoing | Mental Health, Young People, Addictions – commissioner of floating support services |
| West Lothian IJB | 18.10.18 | Health and Social Care |
| Homeless Network Group | 23.10.18 | Service Users |
| Tenants Panel | 6.12.18 | Service Users |
| Joint Strategy Group | 4.10.18 | Voluntary Organisations/RSLs |
| West Lothian Advice Shop | 23.10.18 | Welfare Benefit and Finance Advice |

Stage 3: WORKSHOP – RRTP Collaboration and Consultation 31.10.18

- Feedback on proposed vision and high level objectives
- Inform work streams required in the action plan to take forward vision and objectives

Stage 4: Draft RRTP for circulation and comment: 18.12.18