


Business Bulletin

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 14 May 2024

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

Convener:	Members:	Contact:
<p>Convener: Councillor Jane Meagher</p> 	<p>Councillor Graeme Bruce Councillor Jack Caldwell Councillor Stuart Dobbin Councillor Pauline Flannery Councillor Euan Hyslop Councillor David Key Councillor Ben Parker Councillor Tim Pogson Councillor Susan Rae Councillor Iain Whyte</p>	<p>Jamie Macrae Committee Officer 0131 553 8242</p>

Housing Emergency Action Plan Update

The plan has been finalised and is due to be published with a foreword by the Convener.

The governance structure for overseeing the delivery of the plan is established with a Senior Responsible Owner identified for each of the six main themes. The performance monitoring dashboard has been completed and this will form the basis of tracking delivery over the lifetime of the plan.

Void properties:

The work on void properties continues and as the Cyclical Performance report shows, performance is strong but behind target with 1,222 void properties on 6 May 2024, against a target of 1,124.

As shown in the Housing Service Improvement Plan, the average void turnaround time for Q4 in 2023/24 was 145 days, and the average across the financial year was 135 days. Appendix 1 to the Cyclical Performance Report contains further information on void performance, including void duration. The graph on void duration shows that there has been good progress in reducing the number of void properties that have been void for over 18 months. While this is positive, it does mean that the average turnaround time has increased.

At the previous Committee meeting, officers were asked for information on the feasibility of issuing decoration vouchers to tenants. The issuing of these vouchers has been commonplace for a significant time, and figures are provided below for the previous financial year:

2023/24	Total Spend	No of packs
CITY CENTRE HOUSING MANAGEMENT – HRA	£552.96	8
NORTH WEST HOUSING	£3,172.86	38

Contact: [Derek McGowan](#),
Service Director, Housing and Homelessness Service

MANAGEMENT HRA		
SOUTH EAST HOUSING MANAGEMENT HRA	£4,774.46	56
SOUTH WEST HOUSING MANAGEMENT HRA	£7,386.91	105
Grand Total	£15,887.19	207

Homelessness:

There were 5,084 homeless households on 6 May 2024, the highest number recorded by the Council. This has coincided with new temporary accommodation becoming available, meaning that while the total number has increased, the occupancy rate for available accommodation has remained stable.

Support for private tenants:

A key action in the Housing Emergency Action Plan is around the support provided to tenants at risk of homelessness in the Private Rented Sector.

Currently the Council full funds a team, which has a financial inclusion officer embedded within in to meet all of these households needs.

This team also provides support through a flexible fund, which can assist tenants who are having difficulty meeting their rent costs as an alternative homelessness, whilst we work provide ongoing support.

DHP also plays a key part in the support provided to tenants and currently officers are working with colleagues in transactions to understand how reductions in the availability of DHP may impact on PRS tenants.

Over the next 8 weeks officers will assess the supports in place currently and consider projected demand and

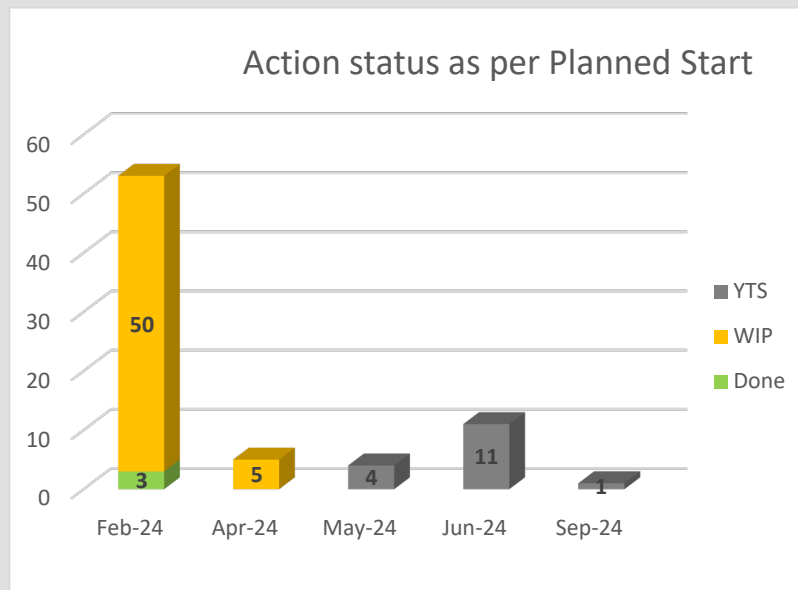
provide an update to committee, including a business case highlighting additional support that may be required to continue to prevent homelessness wherever possible, if appropriate.

Affordable Housing Supply:

As Committee will hear today, the £11.7m reduction in Affordable Housing Supply grant received from the Scottish Government means that officers are currently reassessing the viability of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

Recruitment is underway for a Project Manager for the Allocation Policy and Rent model reviews. These are two significant pieces of work, and it is appropriate to have a colleague focussing solely on them.

The chart below illustrates progress of HEAP actions against planned start dates:



Accessible Housing

The Accessible Housing Sounding Board had identified allocation of accessible/wheelchair homes and support for people bidding for homes as areas of work that should be prioritised.

This will be explored further in the EdIndex report scheduled for Committee in August (responding to the

Contact: [Lisa Mallon](#), Housing Manager

Recent News

Background

actions agreed by Committee on 5 December 2023). A pre-briefing for Committee Members is also scheduled for 5 June 2024.

The wider review of allocations, an action in the Housing Emergency Action Plan, will also provide an opportunity to review the overall approach but this will be a longer-term piece of work that will include engagement with EdIndex partners and other key partners.

Local Housing Strategy 2025/30 Update

Work continues to develop Edinburgh's Local Housing Strategy (LHS).

An officer steering group has been established to oversee the project. The group agreed that the LHS will act as the overarching strategy for housing and related services, bringing together much of the work done across service areas. Part of this will focus on ensuring there are clear links with other key pieces of work, including the Housing Emergency Action Plan, The Strategic Housing Investment Plan and City Plan, as well as the recently published Housing (Scotland) Bill.

Developing the LHS provides an important opportunity to engage colleagues, tenants, the public and key partners in planning for the next five years of housing provision across all tenures. It also offers the chance to review and celebrate what has been achieved to date. Initial engagement is getting underway, with a meeting held with Edinburgh Tenants Federation in April providing early feedback on the proposed project themes and planned engagement.

The project team have developed five draft key themes/ outcomes to help structure the strategy. Feedback will be sought in the early consultation stages.

- Housing supply and affordability across all tenures;
- Supporting people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness;
- People live in vibrant and connected communities;
- People live in suitable homes with the right support to meet their needs; and
- People live in modern, warm and sustainable homes.

Contact: [Robyn Barrie](#), Senior Housing Development Officer

The following initial project timeline has been developed:

Date	Action
Apr – Jun 2024	Information and data gathering stage
May 2024	Public online consultation 1: early engagement on housing priorities
Jun – Oct 2024	Promote and hold targeted engagement with colleagues, stakeholders and the public via workshops, existing meetings and forums and other events. Link with partners and their networks as appropriate to promote, join and host engagement opportunities.
October 2024	First draft of the LHS completed
Dec 24 – Feb 25	Public online consultation 2: feedback on the draft strategy
Mar- Apr 2025	Revisions to the strategy to take onboard feedback from engagement sessions and online consultations to produce the final strategy
May 2025	Submit the final version of the strategy to Housing Homelessness and Fair Work committee and the Scottish Government

Councillors will be invited to feed into and help shape the strategy through Committee workshops/ briefings and will be kept updated through Business Bulletin updates and committee reports. The LHS officer steering group will initially meet on a monthly basis to oversee project progress.

Temporary accommodation for Asylum seekers and 'Hotel Maximisation' Policy Change

Contact: [Alistair Dinnie](#),
Refugee and Migration
Programme Manager

Recent News

Background

As of 1 April 2024, 143 asylum seekers are being hosted in the two Edinburgh hotels. Oversight meetings, bringing together representatives from the Council, NHS Lothian, the Home Office, Mears Group and Police Scotland, have been held since the first hotel opened and are scheduled monthly. The standard agenda covers occupancy levels and new arrivals, health services, organised activities and any issues of community cohesion. To date no significant issues have arisen. In addition to attending these oversight meetings, Mears Group is an active participant in the Edinburgh New Scots Steering Group.

The Home Office has recently concluded a first tranche of streamlined asylum decisions. Whilst overall the Council has seen an increase in homelessness presentations from people with positive asylum decisions during this period, presentations from the Edinburgh hotels have remained in the low single figures.

NEST Programme Project Update

The Council has been informed that All Cleaned Up have agreed to terminate their provision of services under the Council's Network for Employment Support and Training (NEST) programme, funded by the Scottish Government's No One Left Behind (NOLB) initiative. The project, which was to deliver a cleaning skills academy, targeting those furthest from the labour market including individuals with experience of the criminal justice system and older adults, specifically individuals over 50, was unable to deliver its agreed outcomes, despite working with the Council's contracts and grant manager Capital City Partnership (CCP) to try and address areas of concern.

All Cleaned Up have subsequently ceased trading but the Council and CCP continue to work in partnership with their parent company, Apex Scotland, to create and maximise opportunities for people with barriers to employment.

As the NEST programme is in its last year of delivery, and coproduction is about to commence to determine

Contact: [Elin Williamson](#),
Head of Business Growth and
Inclusion

Recent News	Background
<p>the needs of a potential next programme, no replacement service will be commissioned and the funds will be reallocated to further the delivery of NOLB through the Council's in-house provision.</p>	
<p>Place Based Investment Programme allocations for 2025/26</p> <p>The Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) is a ring-fenced capital grant to local authorities from the Scottish Government for “place based” investments. The PBIP is expected to run from 2021/22 to 2025/26.</p> <p>On 8 August 2023, Committee agreed that “a call for projects to be funded in 2025/26 be issued to all councillors, supplemented by engagement on a locality basis, with the outcome brought back to Committee for a decision on 2025/26 funding”. There is expected to be £1.213m of funds for the PBIP to disburse in 2025/26.</p> <p>Officers staged a call for projects from October 2023 to March 2024. The responses to the call were compiled into a schedule of potential projects. This schedule has been circulated to Committee members to consider in advance of a report to Committee on 13 August 2024.</p>	<p>Contact: Kyle Drummond, Programme Development Officer</p>