



**West Lothian
Council**

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-2024

Update

2021/2022

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1. Executive Summary

The provision of a 5-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) for each of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities covering the period 2019-2024 was regarded as a key pillar in the delivery of the Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Plan.

Recognising that RRTPs and their actions are locally owned by the council and its partners and is seen as a dynamic living document, the Scottish Government have sought an update of the RRTP on an annual basis. This report provides the annual update for the year 2021/2022.

The progress on the delivery of the RRTP has been collaborative, both at strategic level through the quarterly meetings of the West Lothian RRTP Board and at an operational level through the associated working groups.

This annual update provides a review of the key factors impacting on homelessness locally, an update on the key statistics for 2020/21, and undertakes analysis of comparisons with 2018/19 and 2019/20.

A comparison of the outturn position for 2020/21 against RRTP modelling is included, in addition to a review of the successes and challenges during 2020/21. An updated RRTP action plan for 2021/22 is also included.

The plan has been prepared against the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020 which has resulted in unprecedented demand for emergency accommodation and record numbers of people in temporary accommodation both locally and nationally. The council and its RRTP partners have been required to significantly change their approach to service delivery during the pandemic. It is recognised throughout the plan that the consequences of the pandemic will continue to impact on the overall delivery during 2021/22 and beyond. In addition, the plan reflects the pressures anticipated in meeting the amendments to the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014, UAO which now comes into effect on 30th September 2021.

The plan seeks to reflect the update of the Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan which included 98 actions, published by the Scottish Government in October 2020.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-september-2020/>

As part of the process HARSAG, the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group, commissioned work on a number of areas including prevention of homelessness and this work has recently been reported in February 2021 <https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244558/preventing-homelessness-in-scotland.pdf>

The Scottish Government have also published a report into improving Housing Outcomes for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse in December 2020.

[Housing Outcomes for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse](#)

A report on the Youth Homeless Prevention Pathway was also published in March 2021. <https://www.awayhomescotland.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2021/03/YHPP-for-All-Young-People-1.pdf>

The above publications and the Scottish Governments response to them will help inform future updates of the RRTP, as prevention of homelessness for all age groups but particularly young people

and improving the housing outcomes for women and children experiencing domestic abuse are key priorities for the RRTP locally.

Over the last 18 months the council has undertaken a full review of its mainstream Housing Allocation Policy, including extensive consultation with partners, customers and other stakeholders. A revised Housing Allocation Policy has been agreed by the Council Executive and became operational from March 2021.

The revised Housing Allocation Policy has been designed to give applicants increased housing options and choices and help increase homelessness prevention activity by seeking to meet their housing needs before a homeless situation arises.

All of these significant factors will require ongoing re-engineering of the RRTP in 2021/22.

To reflect COVID-19, the UAO and revised Housing Allocations Policy, adjustments have been made to the original modelling assumptions for year 3 of the RRTP in terms of increase in demand for housing assistance and increasing demand for temporary accommodation. Over the same period, assumptions have been made to reflect the expected increase in new build completions across the housing sector as well as an expected increase in the available social lets during 2021/22 as the sector comes out of lockdown. Recognising the financial pressure associated with increased use of emergency accommodation the council as part of its budget setting in March 2021 have committed an additional allocation of £700,000 in 2021/22 and £500,000 in 2022/23

During 2021/22 the RRTP will seek to strengthen homelessness prevention by improving the Housing Options offering across all partners, developing personal housing plans, and by greater engagement with the private sector. We will continue to maximise the lets to homeless through achieving agreed targets and sustain our Housing First provision.

2. Introduction and Purpose

The RRTP sets out the vision, strategic direction and detailed action plan for the delivery of a rapid rehousing approach to homelessness.

Through a partnership vision of “Working Together”, West Lothian Council, West Lothian IJB, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and the voluntary sector, aim to reduce homelessness through early intervention and prevention. Through the provision of consistent advice and information, we will strive to work with people 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 people 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 the flow through the system diverting away from the use of B&B Accommodation;
- 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 people have access to the required levels of support.

The RRTP set out the case for £3million investment from the Scottish Government over the lifetime of the five-year plan, to support the transition through the Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Fund. To date funding allocations for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 have been awarded as shown in Table 1. Funding has been considerably lower than requested which has resulted in the council and partners having to reprioritise activity and significantly reduce the actions required to fully deliver the plan.

Table 1: RRTP Funding request to the Scottish Government 2019/20-2023/24

	Year 1 (2019/20)	Year 2 (2020/21)	Year 3 (2021/22)	Year 4 (2022/23)	Year 5 (2023/24)	Total
Request	£746,000	£955,000	£952,000	£290,000	£57,000	£3,000,000
Awarded	£302,000	£313,000	£314,000	TBA	TBA	£929,000
Funding Shortfall	£444,000	£642,000	£638,000	£290,000	£57,000	£2,385,000

The purpose of this update of the West Lothian RRTP 2021/22 is to review overall progress of Year 2 of the RRTP against targets. The update will provide:

- A review of the key factors impacting on homelessness locally,
- Updates on the key statistics and undertake analysis of comparisons with 2018/19 and 2019/20,
- Compare the outturn position for 2020/21 against RRTP modelling,
- Consider the impact on homelessness services as a result of COVID-19 and
- Review and update the action plan for 2021/22.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health, housing and the local economy cannot at this stage be fully quantified however it is has placed unprecedented significant additional pressure on scarce resources in several policy areas including affordable social housing and increased requirement for

emergency accommodation and temporary accommodation. This is also reflected in the national figures. Alongside this COVID-19 has resulted in major changes in the operational delivery of services with significant part of the services impacted on RRTP being delivered online by the council and its partners. The focus of delivery has been targeted at vulnerable people in the local community including homeless people and ensuring they had access to food, working in partnership with community organisations.

It is recognised that the imbalance between affordable supply and demand of social housing lies at the root cause of homelessness in West Lothian. To support the delivery of the RRTP changes to the councils housing allocation policy have been approved and were implemented from March 2021.

3. Economic Context

Material poverty remains a significant issue for many households and communities locally. West Lothian, similar to other parts of Scotland recovering from the impact of the credit crunch and subsequent recession with substantial job losses and a rise in local levels of unemployment, now has to deal with the economic impact of COVID-19.

Unemployment at local authority level is measured by the proportion of working age people not in work. In West Lothian this is 5.6% for March 2021 up from 5.5% in February 2021, compared to 6.1% in Scotland and, in the previous year, 3.0% for March 2020.

It is worth noting the significant impact of COVID-19 lockdown on the numbers claiming unemployment benefit since March 2020 (6,570 claimants in March 2021, compared to 3,450 claimants in March 2020).

All of the economic projections on the impact of COVID-19 anticipate continued rises in unemployment during 2021/22.

West Lothian Council Economic Development service recently estimated a potential rise to 7.0% unemployment for May 2021 (8,189), remaining around the same rate until September 2021 (6.9% 8,072) and then slow decline in unemployment going into 2022. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme providing furlough support has been extended until 30 September 2021, after which, if the support is not extended may have further impact on employment levels.

Headline unemployment level has risen since March 2018 from 1.9% to 5.6% in March 2021 and 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.

Youth unemployment figures for West Lothian in March were 1,385 (9.8%), higher than Scotland (8.6%) and UK (9.1%). They are a higher rate than February 1,315 (9.4%), and higher than January 1,265 (9.0%). The latest increase is attributable to the ending of the seasonal period. Young people continue to bear the brunt of the crisis, amid large-scale job losses in sectors such as hospitality and retail. Across the UK, people under 25 year olds accounted for more than half of the payroll jobs lost in the year to March 2021 (53.7%). Additionally, job vacancies in the UK over the last year were at the lowest levels since the ONS vacancies survey began in 2001. These figures may contribute to the increased levels of youth homelessness being experienced in West Lothian.

Low pay as well as unemployment continue to be key factors influencing the RRTP. Gross wage levels for West Lothian (both residence and workplace) are below the Scottish and UK levels. An estimated 13.5% of West Lothian working residents earn below the living wage level of £8.72 per hour compared to 15% for Scotland as a whole. The West Lothian Anti-Poverty strategy 2019-2024 identifies that 25% of all households have an overall income of less than £16,000 per annum and 38% have an overall household income of less than £20,000 per annum. This will increasingly drive people to regard council and RSL housing as the main affordable options for this significant cohort of people.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) identifies small concentrations of deprivation across all of Scotland in a consistent way. From the latest 2020 SIMD, there are now 21 West Lothian data zones in the 15% most deprived in Scotland, an increase of 5 from 2016. Therefore, the total population living in data zones in most deprived 15% is now 15,700 which accounts for 8.7% of the total West Lothian Population.

Factors influencing the RRTP

3.1. 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 2018 there were estimated to be 79,000 dwellings in West Lothian. Table 2 shows that of these 62% were owner occupation, 11% private rented, 17% local authority, 9% housing associations with 2% of the estimated stock being vacant private dwellings. The overall housing stock between 2017 and 2018 is broadly comparable at 79,000 dwellings. However, there are some significant changes within overall figures in that the private rented sector has declined from 12,000 to 8,000, a 33% decrease compared to a 5.5% decrease nationally over the same period. The owner occupation sector has grown from 47,000 to 49,000 houses, an 8% increase compared to 2.5% increase nationally.

Table 2: National and West Lothian Estimated Stock of Dwellings by Tenure (2018)

Dwelling Type	West Lothian (000s)	West Lothian (%)	Scotland (000s)	Scotland (%)
Local Authority Rent	13	17%	314	12%
HA Rent	7	9%	282	11%
Owner Occupied	49	62%	1,541	59%
Private Rented Sector	8	11%	371	14%
Vacant Private Dwellings	2	2%	97	4%
Total	79	100%	2,585	100%

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

In 2019, West Lothian had a social rented stock of 21,375 units provided by the council and a range of national and local housing associations.

West Lothian Council's social rented housing stock was 14,016 homes as of December 2019 which represents approximately 66% of the total social rented stock available.

RSLs in West Lothian social rented housing stock was 7,359 homes which represents 34% of the total social rented stock available.

3.2. Applications for Housing

At the end of March 2021 there were 10,326 applicants on the West Lothian Housing Register compared to 7,998 at the end of March 2020, an increase of 28.7%. Table 3 below provides a breakdown of priority group for housing applications and changes since the first RRTP was finalised. Some of the categories shown in Table 3 have been affected by the introduction of the new housing allocation policy in March 2021.

As shown in Table 3 below, between September 2018 and March 2021, Homeless applicants have risen from 6% to 9% with unsatisfactory housing reducing from 21.5% to 19%. Further analysis of the 10,294 advises that 3,438 (33%) had no housing needs points (this includes homeless applicants as they don't have points) or 2,792 (35%) which does not include homeless applicants.

Table 3: Reason for Housing Applications (2018/19-2020/2021)

Group	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
Homeless Applicant	498	6%	560	7%	909	9%
Transfer Applicant	1,578	19%	1,440	18%	1,851	18%
General Needs Applicant	3,901	47%	3,519	44%	4,987	48%
Unsatisfactory Housing	1,785	21.5%	2,079	26%	1,877	19%
Housing with Care	124	1.5%	80	1%	84	1%
Outwith West Lothian	415	5%	320	4%	618	6%
Total	8,301	100%	7,998	100%	10,326	100%

Source: internal information held by WLC

3.3. Private Rented Housing in West Lothian

In West Lothian, there has been a mixed pattern in the private rented sector. Between 2013 and 2018 the number of registered private landlords rose from 4,107 to 5,465. However, since 2018 the number of private registered landlords has reduced to 5,099 as at March 2020. During 2020/21 the number of private registered landlords has increased to 5169 registered landlords. The number of registered properties in the private rented sector has followed a similar trend, increasing from 7,215 in 2013 to 8,216 in 2018, however this reduced to 7,520 properties at March 2020. During 2020/21 the number of registered properties has increased to 7,957 properties.

3.4. 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. As at 31 March 2021 a total of 2,254 houses have been completed with a further 429 due to complete by 31 March 2022.

Table 4: All Tenure new build completions 2012/13 -2017/18 and 2018/19-2020/21

	2012/13-2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
WLC New Builds	800	361	315	35
RSL New Builds	288	55	110	43
Sub Total	1,088	416	425	78
Private Completions	2,939	631	683	470
Total	4,027	1,047	1,108	548

Source: WLC LHS 2017-2022

3.5. Increasing Affordable Housing Supply

The current Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2021-26 identifies sites for up to 2,532 affordable homes over the five-year period 2021/22 to 2025/26. This includes 320 homes for mid-market rent and 19 for shared equity. The Scottish Government has provided Resource Planning Assumptions (RPAs) to support the delivery of affordable housing. The RPA for 2021/22 is £17.889 million. Funding levels for future years may be available later in 2021. In developing the RRTP it is clear that significant additional affordable housing supply will be required by 2025 to meet local demand. Due to a lack of Scottish Government long term commitment to new build provision and grant funding this requires to be considered a major risk to the delivery of the RRTP.

Table 5: New Build Affordable Completions and Projections

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
RSL	55	110	43	261	168	637
WLC	361	315	35	116	188	1,015
Total	416	425	78	377	356	1,652

*above figures exclude market acquisitions and mortgage to rent. Source: WLC internally held data

3.6. Open Market Acquisitions

In addition to new build affordable housing, the council and RSLs also acquire homes on the open market. Table 6 below identifies that between 2012/13 to 2020/21, 287 homes have been acquired by the council through open market acquisitions, with a further 52 projected during 2021/22.

Table 6: Open Market Acquisitions by West Lothian Council

Year	Number of Units
2012/13 - 2015/16	66
2016/17	45
2017/18	38
2018/19	73
2019/20	35
2020/21	34
2021/22 (projected)	52
Total	343

Source: WLC internally held data

The open market acquisitions have been successful by increasing the available social rented stock to reflect housing needs in communities such as Livingston, and Bathgate, and assisting larger family properties as well as properties to meet medical needs.

In addition to the open market acquisitions shown on Table 6, there have also been a further 20 acquisitions concluded by RSLs during 2012/13-2020/21.

3.7. Summary

It is anticipated that the council and its RSL partners will complete 90% of the 3,000 affordable social housing target by 31 March 2022.

4. West Lothian Homeless Position

4.1. West Lothian Homeless Profile

Summary Homeless Position 2020/21

1,464 total homeless applicants in West Lothian in the year

1,186 households where West Lothian Council has a duty to provide settled accommodation, defined here as unintentionally homeless

939 homeless open case with a duty to house as of 31st March 2021

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

The following section provides a breakdown and analysis of key homeless statistics from 2018/19 to 2020/21 to provide a homeless position since Year 1 of the West Lothian RRTP. It should be noted that the information for Quarter 4 in 2020/21 has yet to be validated by the Scottish Government with figures being obtained from internal council reports and may be subject to amendment.

4.2. Homeless Applications

Table 7 below demonstrates that over the past year there has been a 0.7% reduction in homeless applications where by applications have fallen from 1,474 in 2019/20 to 1,464 in 2020/21. Since 2018/19 there has been a 3.5% reduction in homeless applications. This compares to an 11% increase in applications over the period 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Table 7: West Lothian Homeless Applications 2018/19 – 2020/21

Homeless Applications	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Number change 2019/20 – 20/21	% change 2019/20 – 20/21
Total	1,517	1,474	1,464	-10	-0.7%

Source: HL1 report

4.3. Age Profile and Household Composition

Table 8 below shows that between 2019/20 and 2020/21 there has been an increase in the number of young people (16-25 years of age) presenting, compared to a reduction in homeless application from those aged 26 and over. Table 8 shows that the largest group of applicants continues to be from 26-59 year olds reaching 60.9% of all applicants in 2020/21 compared to 64.1% in 2019/20. The 25s and under age group remains the second largest group of applicants accounting for 30.4% in 2020/21 compared to 27.6% in 2019/20. A more detailed analysis of youth homeless is provided in Section 4.11

Table 8: Age Profile of Homeless Applicants 2018/19 – 2020/21

	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		Number change 2019/20 – 2020/21	% change
	West Lothian		West Lothian		West Lothian			
16 to 17 yrs	72	4.7%	71	4.8%	82	5.6%	+11	+0.7%
18 to 25 yrs	401	26.5%	407	27.6%	445	30.4%	+38	+2.6%
26 to 59 yrs	991	65.4%	945	64.1%	891	60.9%	-54	-3.7%
60 yrs plus	53	3.5%	51	3.5%	46	3.1%	-5	-0.3%
Total	1,517	100%	1,474	100%	1,464	100%	-10	-0.7%

Source: HL1 report

Homeless applications from single people in West Lothian continue to make up the vast majority of applications as highlighted in Table 9 below. In 2020/21 homeless applications by single people accounted for 72% of all homeless applications compared to 65.9% during 2019/20. It should be noted that there has been a 14.8% increase from single men presenting as homeless with a decrease of 6.1% in applications by single females. Single parents make up the second largest group of applicants consisting of 18.6% in 2020/21 compared to 22.1% in 2019/20. There has been a reduction in applications from single parent females, single parent males, and couples with and without children as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Household Composition of Homeless Applicants

Source: HL1 report

Household Types	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	No change 2019/20 – 2020/21	% change
Single Person: Male	704	679	780	+101	+6.9%
Single Person: Female	285	293	275	-18	-1.2%
Total Single Person	989	972	1055	+83	+5.6%
Single Parent: Male	44	60	48	-12	-0.8%
Single Parent: Female	286	266	225	-41	-2.8%
Total Single Parent	330	326	273	-53	-3.6%
Total Apps Single Person Households	1,319	1,298	1,328	+30	+2.0%
Couple without children	89	86	70	-16	-1.1%
Couple with children	91	80	59	-21	-1.4%
Other without children	6	4	5	+1	0.07%
Other with children	12	6	2	-4	-0.28%

4.4. Reasons for Homeless Applications

Household Dispute (non-violent/non-abusive) is the most prevalent reason for people making homeless application accounting for 34.4% of all homeless applications during 2020/21, increasing from 20.6% in 2019/20, as shown in Table 10 below. Asked to Leave accounts for 29.7% of homeless applications during 2020/21 compared to 40.8% in 2019/20. The majority of the changes between 2019/20 and 2020/21 can be attributed to the fact that extensive staff training was carried out on the

quality of recording which took place in November 2019 and are reflected in the 2020/21 figures. Table 10 provides a breakdown of the top 3 reasons for homelessness.

Table 10: Reasons for Homelessness

Reason West Lothian (Top 3)	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Asked to leave	903	54.8%	600	40.8%	434	29.7%
Household Dispute (non-violent – non-abusive)	153	13.3%	302	20.6%	503	34.4%
Household Dispute (violent – abusive)	139	10.6%	187	12.7%	181	12.3%

Source: HL1 report

4.5. Rough Sleeping

West Lothian traditionally does not have any visible street rough sleepers however applicants will advise that during the 3 months prior to their application they may have slept in a car, stairwell or factory for example. Table 11 provides a comparison of applicants who have stated they slept rough at some point 3 months prior to their application and or the night before their application. Both indicators show an increase of 11.3% for those who slept rough in the last 3 months and 28.9% increase for those who slept rough the night before.

The Housing Need Service will be embarking on a forthcoming Housing Options campaign to raise awareness of homelessness and housing options to encourage applicants to seek early assistance and highlight where assistance can be sought to anyone who might find themselves either at risk of homelessness or homeless.

Table 11: Rough Sleeping in West Lothian 2018/19 – 2020/21

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Number change 2018/19 – 2019/20	% change
Rough Sleepers 3 months	157	186	207	+21	+11.3%
Rough Sleepers Night Before	100	114	147	+33	+28.9%

Source: HL1 report

4.6. Prison Discharge

Table 12 shows that there has been a 52.4% percentage increase in prison leavers presenting as homeless. The council continues to work with prisoners prior to release to discuss their housing options and works in partnership with the Scottish Prison Service and Criminal Justice to prevent homelessness in line with the national approach.

Table 12: Prison Leavers presenting as homeless 2018/19 – 2020/21

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Number change 2019/20 – 2020/21	% change
Prison Leavers	10	21	32	+11	52.4%

Source: HL1 report

4.7. Homeless Assessment Decisions and Outcomes

As discussed in section 4.2, homeless applications have seen a modest decrease from 1,474 in 2019/20 to 1,464 in 2020/21, Table 13 below shows a similar modest increase in those applicants found to be homeless and therefore where there is a duty to provide temporary and permanent accommodation. Applicants found to be unintentionally homeless have increased by 1.5% whereas those assessed as intentionally homeless have decreased by 67.2% and lost contact before decision has increased by 11.8%.

Table 13: Homeless Assessment Decisions 2018/19 – 2020/21

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Number change 2019/20 -20/21	% change
Assessments – Unintentional	1,056	1,168	1,186	+18	1.5%
Assessments – Intentional	67	58	19	-39	-67.2%
Lost Contact Pre-decision	156	93	104	+11	11.8%

Source: HL1 report

4.8. Homelessness Case Duration

Over the period 2019/20 to 2020/21 the average case duration of a homeless (unintentional case) has increased from 39.8 weeks to 45.2 weeks as shown in Table 14, this reflects the impact of the pandemic.

Table 14: Homeless Case Duration 2018/19 - 2020/21

Average HL1 Case Duration (weeks)	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Homeless Unintentional	48.8	39.8	45.2

Source: HL1 report

4.9. Tenancy Sustainment and Repeat Homelessness

West Lothian traditionally benefits from a high rate of sustainability and achieves good positive outcomes by offering high standards of permanent accommodation and appropriate housing support where required. Table 15 below provides a breakdown of sustainment between 2018/19 -2020/21, and shows that in 2020/21 there was a slight improvement in sustainability across all housing applicant groups when compared with 2018/19 and 2020/21.

Table 15: Tenancy Sustainment 2018/19 – 2020/21

Year	Homeless Applicants	Transfer Applicants	General Need Applicants
2018/19	87%	96%	86%
2019/20	89%	98%	94%
2020/21	94%	99%	95%

Source: Insight Reports

4.10. Repeat Homelessness

West Lothian has traditionally had a low level of repeat homeless and this continues as can be seen in Table 16. During the period 2019/20 to 2020/21 repeat homelessness has increased by 22.7%.

Table 16: Numbers of repeat homeless cases 2018/19 – 2020/21

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Numbers of repeat homeless	7	22	27

Source: HL1 report

4.11. 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 17 below provides information on applications aged 16-25 years old. Although the percentage of overall applications from young people has been reducing it remains consistently higher than the national average and one of the key priorities for the West Lothian RRTP.

Table 17: Homeless Applications by 16-25 years olds

Year	West Lothian Applicants (16-25 years)	West Lothian % of Homeless Applicants 16- 25 years	National % of Homeless Applicants 16 – 25 years
2018/19	473	31.2%	24%
2019/20	478	32.4%	23.3%
2020/21	527	36%	TBC

Source: Scottish Government West Lothian specific HL1 annual reports and Scottish Government Homeless annual statistics publications, supplementary tables and charts

The predominant proportion of youth homeless is from single males aged 18-24 which makes up 36.5% of all applications in 2020/21 followed by single females aged 18-24 at 22.7% of all applications in 2020/21. This has been a consistent trend over the last four years. It is not possible to compare this level of detail based on applications made against national statistics as this data is not available.

Table 18: Applicant by Age and Type

	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
Single female 16–17	37	7.8%	39	8.2%	32	6.1%
Single male 16–17	48	10.2%	31	6.5%	41	7.8%
Single female 18-24	117	24.8%	133	28.1%	119	22.7%
Single male 18-24	184	38.8%	185	39.1%	191	36.5%
Lone parent female 16- 24	61	12.9%	62	13.1%	70	13.4%
Lone parent male under 16-24	3	0.7%	3	0.7%	6	1.1%
Other Household	23	4.8%	20	4.3%	65	12.4%
Total Youths	473	100%	473	100%	524	100%

Source: West Lothian Council internal reporting small disparity in numbers due to classification errors

Asked to leave and dispute within the household: violent and nonviolent are the main reasons for youth homelessness nationally and locally.

During 2020/21 the service re-provisioned supported accommodation for young people through an increase from 6 units to 15 units at Quentin Court Livingston.

4.12. Domestic Abuse

West Lothian has seen a significant rise in the numbers of domestic abuse cases up 17% in 2020/21. This increase has not been reflected in the homeless presentations as a result of Household Dispute (violent- abusive) where presentations have reduced by 3.7% in 2020/21. The council and partners are undertaking work to assess future needs, considering the recommendations from the recently published Improving Housing Outcomes for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse.

4.13. Homelessness Prevention and Homeless Outcomes

Prevention of homelessness is fundamental in the delivery of the RRTP and reducing homelessness. During the period 2019/20 to 2020/21 homeless prevention cases have reduced by 42.3% as shown in Table 18. This activity has been significantly impacted upon as a result in the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Increasing the level of homeless prevention cases will be a key action in 2021/22 and during the remainder of the plan period.

Table 18: Homeless Prevention 2018/19 – 2020/21

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Prevent1 Approaches	1,127	772	445

Source: HL1 Insight reports

The most common prevention outcomes are ‘Remained in Current Accommodation’, which has increased from 51.5% in 2019/20 to 57.7% in 2020/21. ‘Made Homelessness application to LA’ which has reduced from 31.8% in 2019/20 to 24.4% in 2020/21. It should be noted that there has been a significant reduction in the overall number of homeless prevention outcomes, as a result of the pandemic.

The top 5 prevention outcomes are shown in Table 19.

Table 19: Top 5 Homeless Prevention Outcomes

Prevent1 Outcomes	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Remained in current accommodation	347	30.8%	385	51.5%	199	57.7%
Made homelessness application to local authority	562	49.9%	238	31.8%	84	24.4%
Moved-in with friends/relatives	42	3.7%	46	6.1%	28	8.1%
Private Rented Assured Tenancy	4	0.4%	12	1.6%	10	2.9%
LA Tenancy	22	2%	9	1.2%	10	2.9%
Total	1,127		748		345	

5 West Lothian Homeless Demand v Supply Gaps Analysis

Summary Position Homeless Demand Vs Supply

1,314 homeless unintentional demand cases in 2020/21

939 homeless live cases (backlog) as of 31/03/2021

125 lost contacts and refusals in **2020/21**

850 social lets available in 2020/21

572 (67%) social lets went to statutory homeless households in 2020/21

The number of live homeless cases was 939 at the end of March 2021 which is higher than what was projected within the original RRTP (772) and also within the revised version of June 2020 (760). There are two significant reasons for this increase which are an increase in the number of homeless unintentional cases throughout 2020/21 and a decrease in the number of available social lets throughout the year. Both of these have been directly affected by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The demand in Year 2 of the RRTP was nearly 12% higher than what had been projected when the plan was revised in June 2020 and there were 7 fewer presentations in 2020/21 compared to the previous year.

The number of applicants achieving a permanent outcome to their homeless application throughout the year was 572, which was 324 less (36%) than the original projection made for 2020/21. The main reason for this was the decrease in the availability of permanent lets both from the council and RSL partners. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the turnover of properties, void performance and new build programmes had a significant detriment on the numbers of properties being available for letting to homeless applicants.

Both the council and RSL's, achieved an overall 67% lets to homeless which was higher than last year (65%) but still lower than the 69% agreed in the revised RRTP.

Appendix 1 shows the full performance vs target figures for year 2.

A baseline position (Year 0) was developed to identify the total gap in social lets in 2018/19 of 819. This consisted of the unintentional homeless demand for 2017/18 plus the total number of open cases at the end of March 2018. Using the outturn figures for end of 2020/21, Table 20 shows that compared with baseline position from 2018/19, the position below shows a gap in social rented stock of 1,291 at the end of March 2021.

Table 20: Demand and Supply Gap Analysis

Demand and Supply Gap Analysis	Year 0	2020/21 Projections	2020/21 Actual
Homeless Unintentional Demand Cases	1,165	1,130	1,314
Homeless live cases (backlog)	1,061	686	674
Less Contacts and Refusals	117	161	125
Total Homeless Demand	2,109	1,655	1,863
Social lets available	1,290	981	572
Gaps in Social Lets	819	674	1,291

Let's to Homeless

The RRTP identified that to address the demand for accommodation the four main providers of social rent housing agreed a minimum RRTP percentage lets to homeless over the plan period as shown in Table 21.

Table 21: Target Minimum Percentage Lets to Homeless 2019-2024

	2019-20 Target	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Target	2020-21 Actual	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
WLC	75%	71%	75%	70%	64 %	50 %	50 %
Almond HA	60%	58%	60%	61%	60 %	50 %	50 %
Weslo	50%	63%	50%	74%	50 %	50 %	50 %
WLHP	50%	52%	50%	77%	50 %	50 %	50 %
Other RSLs	50%	42%	50%	48%	50 %	50 %	50 %
Total	69%	65%	69%	67%	55 %	50 %	50 %

Let's to homeless have increased from 54% in 2017/18 to 65% in 2019/20 and increased again to 67% in 2020/21, which is recognised as being some of the highest in the country. However, the target of 69% was not achieved for the 2nd year in a row which equated to a shortfall of 53 units across the first two years of the RRTP. In 2019/20 the council let 396 houses, 70% of its available stock to homeless compared to 71% in 2018/19 and 72% in 2017/18. In comparison RSLs let an average of 61% of their available properties to homeless applicants in 2020/21, compared to 48% to homeless in 2019/20 and 21% in 2017/18.

Revised Position

One of the main requirements of RRTP's is to improve flow by increasing offers of permanent accommodation to homeless households thereby reducing the number of open cases and improving the throughput in temporary accommodation.

Updated scenarios have been modelled, for 2021/22 as shown in Appendix 1. This includes the following assumptions, some of which will still be being impacted as a result of COVID-19.

- Homeless presentations and demand are expected to mirror 2020/21.
- The number of open cases, 939 will reduce in 2021/22 as the availability of permanent lets will increase from 2020/21
- Mainstream lets to homeless will increase in the 1st quarter of 2021/22 compared to last year as COVID-19 restrictions are eased.
- The revised new build programme will result in more new properties being available in years 3 – 5 than originally projected.
- Increase in use of private sector as a permanent outcome for applicants
- RSL partners to continue with their agreed percentage of lets to homeless.

These projections will be monitored on a monthly basis and reported to the RRTP Board quarterly. They will assist 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.

Currently there are not enough lets to meet new and current demand. A revised set of projections for Year 3 onwards have been developed as shown in Appendix 2.

Revised Modelling and Projections

The revised projections for years 3 to 5, take into account the current number of open homeless cases 939, and assume that demand in year 3 will match the demand seen in year 2 as the service continues to feel the impact of COVID-19. Demand is likely to be impacted when the Government's furlough scheme ends as well as a general impact on unemployment rates and also the ban on evictions is lifted.

The council has introduced a new Allocations Policy which is designed to meet applicants housing need sooner and over time this is expected to have a positive impact on homeless demand. However, it is projected that this will not be fully seen until years 4 & 5 of the RRTP and this has been factored into the projections accordingly.

The availability of permanent lets from both the council and RSL partners is expected to increase in Year 3 as COVID-19 restrictions ease and property turnover increases. New Build programmes are also likely to deliver significantly more properties than in Year 2.

Let's to homeless:

WLC: Increase target to 70% in Q1 of 2021/22 and then 62.5% for the remainder of the year; 50% for 2022-24.

RLS: Target of 55% for 2021-22 and 50% for 2022-24.

As a way of limiting the use of emergency Bed & Breakfast accommodation, the council will look to increase the number of dispersed Temporary Tenancies throughout years 3 – 5. The 2 main initiatives to achieve this will be through the introduction of 60 sharing spaces – providing an additional 60 temporary accommodation spaces and also by increasing the number of properties from the private sector to 150. Doing this will have no detrimental effect on the stock available for permanent lets.

Table 22: Revised Minimum Percentage Lets to Homeless 2019-2024

	2019-20 Target	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Target	2020-21 Actual	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
WLC	75%	71%	87.5%	70%	64 %	50 %	50 %
Almond HA	60%	58%	60%	61%	60 %	50 %	50 %
Weslo	50%	63%	50%	74%	50 %	50 %	50 %
WLHP	50%	52%	50%	77%	50 %	50 %	50 %
Other RSLs	50%	42%	50%	48%	50 %	50 %	50 %
Total	69%	65%	69%	67%	55 %	50 %	50 %

6. West Lothian Temporary Accommodation Provision

Summary Position at 31 March 2021

77.1% of accommodation is temporary mainstreamed furnished flats/houses provided by the local authority, RSLs or PSL

57.5% of main stream furnished flats/houses are provided by the council

7% of temporary accommodation is hostel type accommodation

9% of temporary accommodation is supported accommodation for vulnerable people

13.5% of temporary accommodation is bed and breakfast

5% of temporary accommodation is self-contained flats/shared flats at Blackburn Assessment Centre

Table 23 below shows that between 31 March 2019 and 31 March 2021, there has been an increase in the provision of temporary accommodation from a capacity of 638 units to 738 units. There has been an increase in Local Authority temporary stock over the last 3 years as well as accommodation from the private sector and RSL.

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 there has been a rise in the use of this type of accommodation over the last three years with a peak coming in 2020/21 when an average of 100 B&B rooms were used through the year.

Pre COVID-19 there had been progress through the delivery of RRTP actions from April 2019 to March 2020 - reducing the need for emergency B&B accommodation and increasing private sector leases and the introduction of sharing spaces for use as temporary accommodation. The changes to the Unacceptable Accommodation Order by the Scottish Government, now due to come into force end of September 2021 will have significant implications for the RRTP and is anticipated will require additional temporary accommodation as well as greater use of the private sector.

At the start of the COVID-19 initial lockdown in March 2020 the council increased the number of dispersed temporary accommodation properties from mainstream voids by 62 and throughout the year added an additional 33 private sector properties and secured 9 properties for use as temporary accommodation from RSL partners.

In order to maintain the current mainstream stock going forward the council will look to increase its suite of temporary accommodation through turning more existing two-bedroom temporary tenancies into shared accommodation and providing an additional 50 units by the end of March 2022. Furthermore, the council is also looking to increase the stock of private sector leases to 150 by the end of Year 3 of the RRTP.

The ongoing availability of suitable temporary accommodation will allow the council to better meet the requirements of the UAO and reduce the need for B&B accommodation. Increasing the number of temporary accommodation spaces will assist with this but the continued availability of permanent outcomes, throughout the year, is key to achieving a consistent turnover of temporary accommodation. Despite this, the modelling (Appendix 2) demonstrates that the council will require to continue to use B&B as emergency accommodation for the remainder of the RRTP plan period.

Table 23: Temporary Accommodation Type and Length of Stay

Temporary Accommodation Type	Capacity 2018/19	Capacity 2019/20	Capacity 2020/21	Length of Stay 2018/19	Length of Stay 2019/20	Length of Stay 2020/21
WLC Ordinary Dwelling	403	404	424	244.2 days	182 days	238 days
Housing Assoc/RSL	48	54	63	283.9 days	217.3 days	202 days
Private Sector Lease	38	49	82	242.8 days	168.2 days	210 days
Hostel WLC Owned	50	44	69	89.5 days	66.4 days	97 days
Bed and Breakfast (Ave per night)	99	71	100	30.3 days	25.8 days	28 days
Totals (all)	638	622	738	98.2 days	88.2 days	93 days

Source: HL3 report

To improve the temporary accommodation available for young people, the council is committed to providing of a new, purpose built supported unit. The intention is for the facility to provide self-contained accommodation and on-site support for 12 young people plus outreach support and self-contained accommodation for a further 12 to 16 young people nearby. The accommodation will be situated close to local support services, training, education and employment opportunities as well as amenities and transport links.

Along with the overall downturn in available permanent properties for applicants, as explained previously, the lack of large bedroom houses, 4,5 and 6 bedroom continues to mean a small number of larger families are living in temporary accommodation for longer than acceptable periods of time. Over the last three years the average time in temporary accommodation for a 5-bedroom property is 728 days and 407 days for a 4-bedroom property compared to 250 days for 3 or less bedroom properties. During the remainder of the plan period the council and its partners will explore options to address this, learning from good practice elsewhere in Scotland.

Table 24: Applications from large families 2019/20 to 2020/21

	2019/20 Presentations	2019/20 Duty to accommodate	2020/21 Presentations	2020/21 Duty to Accommodate
Couple with 4 children	1	0	2	2
Couple with 5 children	5	4	1	1
Couple with 6 children	0	0	1	1
Couple with 7 children	1	1	0	0
Total	7	5	4	4

Source: Internal WLC data

7. Identifying Support Needs

The delivery of effective enhanced housing management and support needs are considered to be important measures in the transition to sustained tenancy management and encouraging tenants to achieve an improved quality of life within the RRTP framework.

An analysis of the enhanced housing management and support needs of 1,312 homeless applicants was undertaken between August and October 2018 as shown in Table 25. This was to achieve 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 analysis for West Lothian generated similar results as the national figures which indicate that approximately 77% of all homeless people across Scotland have no/low support needs.

Table 25: Homeless Support Need Analysis

Support Needs	Oct 2018	Percentage
No/Low Support Needs	1,013	77.2%
Medium Support Needs	237	18 %
SMD/Complex Needs	57	4.4%
Residential Support	5	0.4%
Total	1,312	100%

Through the current housing support practices, tenancy sustainment has increased from 87% to 89% between 2018/19 and 2019/20, and levels of repeat homelessness have reduced by 40% over the same period. Due to COVID-19 an update on the homeless support needs analysis has not been provided due to work on an agreed definition of high, medium and low being delayed.

As part of the RRTP Action Plan, work is underway to review the current supported accommodation provision in West Lothian as well as community-based tenancy support. This will include improving the support assessment process of homeless people and this is included in the RRTP Action Plan. The completion of this will allow a comparison to be undertaken with the data shown on Table 25 in a future update of the RRTP.

8. Housing First

West Lothians Housing First Model, was developed by the council in partnership with NHS Lothian, and the third sector during 2019/20 with the establishment of the Housing First Co-ordination and Assessment Team which has been developed from the success of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Service. The service was initially funded through the West Lothian Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP), and has recruited a Manager and Support Worker. Funding has been agreed through the RRTP to continue provision until June 2022. Ongoing funding will be subject to an evaluation, and available resources.

The Housing First packages were developed through a Public Social Partnership (PSP) approach with the Cyrenians as the lead agency providing the service. A Memorandum of Understanding was agreed with all key partners, and a project team has been established reporting to a high-level Strategic Governance Group chaired by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services with a wide range of strategic partners including Police Scotland, DWP and West Lothian IJB and members of the ADP.

The aim of the service is to provide a Housing First service to people with addictions and mental health issues. Up to sixteen people can be supported by the project focussing on the needs of people with Mental Health/Addictions which commenced in the final quarter of 2019/20. During the 2021/22 plan period the service will be evaluated and options developed to allow the continuation of Housing First, as it is recognised that long term funding for the service has yet to be agreed.

There is also funding available for the continuation of Housing First for Young People. At present this is an eleven-person project delivered through the Rock Trust and Almond Housing Association and has been operational since 2017. The project has benefitted from a positive external evaluation. It was agreed prior to COVID-19 lockdown that this will progress as part of the Public Social Partnership for Young People who are Vulnerable Due to their age with the Rock Trust being agreed as the Lead Agency for developing the service.

The partners wish to scope the option of the establishment of a future Housing First project as part improving Housing Outcomes for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse, to be developed over the plan period.

9. Partnership and Governance

Delivery of the RRTP is dependent on effective partnership working at a local level and the process of preparing and implementing the RRTP has given a renewed focus on homelessness across partners and also engaged new partners.

The West Lothian approach to collaboration and engagement including representatives across the council, health and social care, RSLs and the third sector and is recognised as good practice in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans: A Scottish Overview 2020.

During 2021/22 the partners will consider opportunities to strengthen and widen partner links including with the private sector, as part of an approach to maximise the contribution of the private sector.

Engagement with service users and consulting/ co-producing services with service users is at the heart of the council's policy development. The RRTP will continue to strengthen the links with service users both in the development of actions and evaluation of pilot activity.

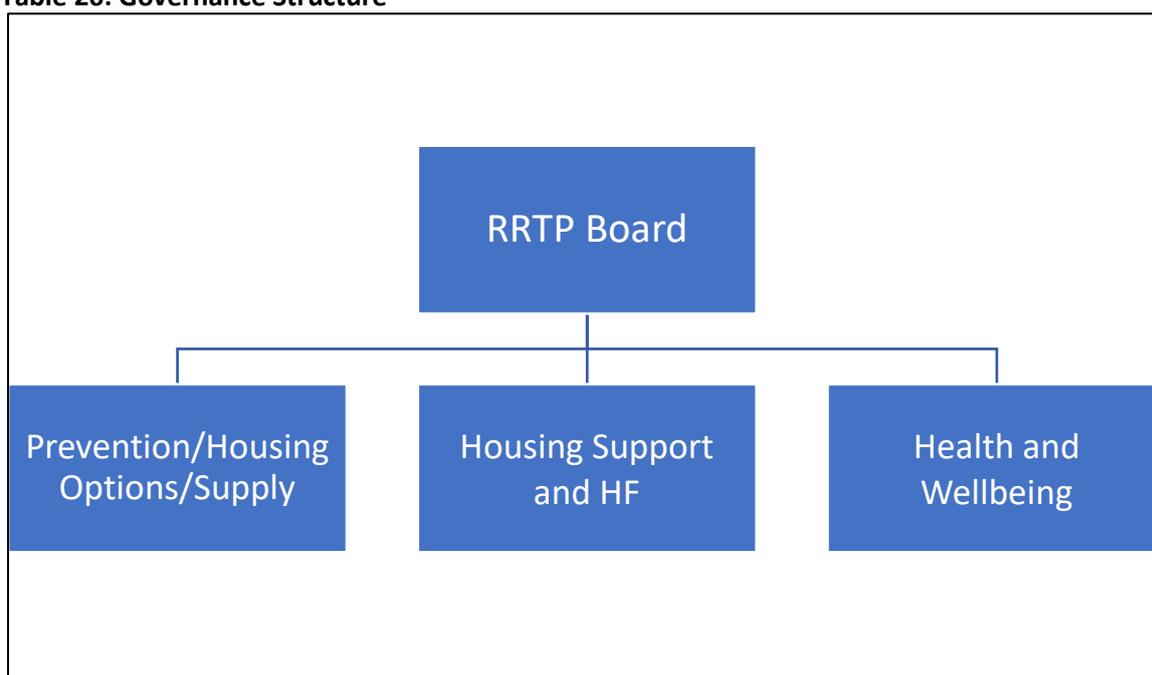
During 2020/21 West Lothian RRTP Board moved to a three working group approach as shown on Table 26. During the year all meetings of the Board and working groups which all meet quarterly have continued on an online only basis and this will be reviewed with partners during 2021/22.

During 2021/22 the partners will consider the synergies between the Housing Support and Housing First Working group and the Health and Wellbeing Working Group and will explore linking the two working groups.

During the first quarter of the 2021/22, the performance indicators for monitoring the RRTP will be enhanced by additional PIs covering homelessness prevention, use of temporary accommodation, and open homelessness cases.

Table 26 shows the RRTP Governance structure.

Table 26: Governance Structure



10. Performance and Achievements

10.1 Performance Year 2

As part of the monitoring of RRTPs, the Scottish Government through the provisions of the National Rapid Rehousing Sub-Group commenced the process of developing a suite of indicators to measure progress on an annual basis and this is attached as Appendix 3. Whilst this work has yet to be concluded at a national level, it is considered worthwhile to include in this update. The pandemic has significantly impacted on the majority of the positive achievements which were gained in Year 1 of the RRTP however a number of important in year achievements have been made including:

- 0.7% reduction in homelessness presentations between April 2020 and March 2021.
- 2% increase in the percentage of social rented available lets to homeless between 2019/20 and 2020/21.
- 112 new/additional affordable social let properties added by the council and RSLs (78 new build and 34 acquisitions)
- In response to the pandemic and the need to meet the UAO, set up an additional 109 suitable temporary accommodation places during 2020/21 taking the total number of places from 530 to 639
- 67% Increase in Private sector leases up from 49 in April 2020 to 82 in March 2021
- Increase in sharing spaces up to 18 sharing temporary spaces
- 67% lets to homeless people (WLs 70%, RSLs 62%)
- Establishment of Housing First for adults with mental health/addictions
- Establishment of the Rapid Resettlement team
- Implementation of the allocations policy
- Completion of housing options pilot for young people and people with addictions

The service has commenced the re provisioning of the Housing Options service moving to a drop-in service approach with locations in Bathgate and Livingston. The delivery of this new model has been affected by COVID-19 and will be fully operational later in 2021 as part of the recovery planning for the service.

10.2 Challenges

It has been recognised that all of the RRTPs across Scotland require a cultural shift to achieve their full potential. During 2019/20 this process started in West Lothian however the impact of COVID-19 and meeting the terms of the Unacceptable Accommodation Order and the other guidance and measures issued by the Scottish Government to prevent homelessness during 2020/21 will require the pace of this culture shift to increase across all partners.

The impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of the RRTP cannot be overestimated. From an operational perspective, the lockdown restrictions and ongoing impact on service delivery has significantly impacted on homelessness prevention, and this will be addressed as we gradually come out of the pandemic.

The economic conditions locally coupled with the economic impact of the pandemic on many of our communities most vulnerable citizens, will continue to impact during 2021/22 and the remainder of the plan period, and will require sensitive and creative solutions.

At the end of March 2021, similar to Scotland overall, West Lothian has record numbers of households in temporary accommodation. In response to the demand for temporary accommodation in 2020/21, the council has had to rely on the use of B&B accommodation with an average of in excess of 100 homeless households per night in B&B accommodation. Due to the decrease in available permanent lets during the pandemic, lengths of stay in B&B have also increased and will continue to require the council and its partners to focus on the physical and mental health impacts to support vulnerable households during and beyond the pandemic.

As discussed in section 4.11 the challenge of increased levels of youth homelessness is an area where the council and its partners recognise the need for innovative holistic solutions involving improved joint working across the partners.

The imbalance between demand for affordable housing, in particular affordable social housing compared to supply, remains the greatest challenge for the delivery of the RRTP. Whilst the council have seen 0.7% reduction in homeless presentations, there is a record number of people in emergency and temporary accommodation.

Work has been undertaken to determine the likely impact of the extended UAO. The council has identified that there are significant challenges ahead in its ability to meet the UAO which is likely to have a detrimental impact on the council. This is despite good progress within the RRTP action plan and is a result of the continued imbalance between supply and demand which has been further exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19. Additional measures are being taken to increase supply and create further throughput however there will remain a continued reliance on the use of B&Bs which is likely to last beyond the duration of the RRTP. This brings risks of the council breaching the UAO and also increases the financial risk for the council.

It is clear that the success of the RRTP is highly dependent on wider council and CPP strategies which impact on the social and economic conditions locally.

There are no short-term solutions to these challenges which will take time, resources and more effective joint working to address during the remainder of the plan period.

11. Key priorities for 2021/22

The overall vision and aims of the five-year RRTP is to shift to a prevention approach to homelessness through the provision of a housing options, personal housing plans, and support at an earlier stage. For people who do become homeless, the RRTP aims to support people to find a permanent outcome as quickly as possible while minimising the length of stay and number of transitions in temporary accommodation and in turn reducing the use of B&B accommodation.

The key funding strategic priorities identified in the RRTP are:

- Homelessness Prevention
- Improved Housing Options
- Housing First

The significant shortfall in funding allocated in comparison to the bid requested has resulted in the prioritisation of RRTP activity. Subsequently there has been less investment in some areas of prevention activity and dealing with the high level of open cases/backlog, engagement with the private sector as a way of expanding choice, and the culture change necessary to deliver sustainable improvements.

The priorities for 2021/22 required to be considered against the backdrop of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which has impacted across the partners. A range of updates and new guidance from the Scottish Government including the update of the Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan, Preventing Homelessness in Scotland, Improving Housing Outcomes for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse, Youth Homeless Prevention Pathway and the changes required to comply with the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.

It is recognised that the culture changes necessary to deliver sustainable improvements is a key area for the remainder of the plan period and resources will be developed to support this.

The voice of the service user is crucial in the delivery of RRTP and during 2021/22 the service has engaged with Shelter Scotland and will seek to strengthen the links with those who are or have experienced homelessness. During the remainder of the period of the plan the council and its partners will strengthen the role of service users in the development, and the evaluation of RRTP actions.

The following actions will be prioritised for 2021/22.

- Continue the shift to a prevention of homeless approach through the roll out of the new allocations policy with a refocused and consistent approach to Housing Options and the introduction of personal housing plans, aligned with a targeted communications campaign.
- Continue high percentage social rented lets to homelessness in West Lothian during 2021/22 to address the increase in the back log of homeless households experienced during the pandemic
- Implement projects to increase number of dispersed TT's and sharing accommodation.
- Modernise supported accommodation delivery and the tenancy support service.
- Develop an enhanced holistic approach to addressing youth homeless
- Develop a sustainable funding model for Housing First.
- Identify future supply requirements of new build affordable housing stock to meet local housing needs for Years 4 and 5 of the plan.
- Maximise the contribution of the private sector.
- Seeking to address the issue of large families through better use of stock, and use of open market acquisitions.
- Monitor the implementation of updated housing allocations policy

- Develop pathways for vulnerable groups in transition to inform collaborative working, including young people, people with addictions and mental health and people experiencing domestic abuse

12. Funding and Resources

The RRTP identified the need for £3million of additional Scottish Government transition funding to support the delivery of the plan over the period 2019-2024. The Scottish Government have provided three main awards for the delivery of the RRTP, £302,000 in 2019/20, £311,000 in 2020/21 and £312,000 for 2021/22. An additional £195,000 redetermination was provided in 2020/21.

All of these allocations have come as single year funds which can create challenges for medium term planning and recruitment/retention of key staff.

In addition to the Scottish Government resources, the West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Partnership have provided £240,000 as one-off funding towards the provision of the Housing First project for people with mental Health/Addictions. The RRTP has committed funding to continue the service until June 2022, and longer-term funding will be dependent on the results of the evaluation on the Housing First outcomes and available resources.

Supplementing the ADP and Ending Homelessness Together fund allocations, there are commissioned resources through West Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) and voluntary sector which impact on the delivery of the RRTP to the value of £2.5million.

The majority of resources are being utilised to support additional staff and services including youth homelessness, Housing First, and a resettlement service and actions to support a homeless prevention approach.

The expenditure planned for 2021/22 will support staff delivering priorities agreed by the West Lothian RRTP Project Board as follows:

- Housing Options and Resettlement Provisions – including resettlement officers to support the transitions to temporary and permanent accommodation
- Resources to support an improved offering to address youth homelessness which is under development
- Resources to support additional tenancies through the private sector and sharing spaces and meeting the requirements of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.
- Project Management and Service Development – including a Project Manager and Quality Development officer

Recognising the pressures financial and social pressures associated with an unacceptably high number of homeless people in emergency accommodation the council as part of its budget setting in March 2021 committed a further £700,000 in 2021/22 and £500,000 in 2022/23 to addressing homelessness.

13. Action Plan 2021/22

An updated action plan for the RRTP is attached as Appendix 4

Appendix 1

	Original Year 2 (as updated April 2020)	Year 2 Actual
Open Cases	674	674
New Demand	1,203	1,314
Resolved Homelessness		-328
Less loss contacts and refusals	- 120	-125
Total Demand	1,757	1,696
Private Rented Sector Lets to Homeless	30 966	24 572
Total Supply	996	596
Open Cases	760	939
Temp Tenancies - Council	491	444
Temp Tenancies - RSL	65	58
Temp Tenancies - PSL	75	74
B&B	23	143
Self Accommodation	106	221
Total	760	993
(a) New demand reduction	-5%	-5.0%
(b) Less loss contacts and refusals	10%	10%
(c) Mainstream Lets		
WLC Lets	807	566
RSL Lets	353	284
Total Available Lets	1,193	850
(d) Homeless Mainstream Lets		
WLC Homeless Lets	702	402
RSL Homeless Lets	194	170
Total Available Homeless Lets	896	572
WLC OMAS - New Stock		34
WLC New Build	37	35
RSL New Build	103	43
Total	140	112
New build secondary Lets to Homeless	70	22
Total Lets to Homeless	966	572

Appendix 2

Year 3 & Beyond - Revised Modelling

Add an additional 68 PSL properties for Temp Accommodation

Add an additional 50 TTs through sharing spaces

WLC % Lets to Homeless (64% Year 3, 50% Year 4 & 5)

RSL % Lets to Homeless (54% Year 3, 50% Year 4 & 5)

No change to planned New Build Programmes

Demand based on 5 year average with decreases/increases included for various factors

Temp Accommodation Numbers include increase in Sharing Spaces and PSL properties (Void factor now included)

**Figures for Years 4 & 5 are based assumptions on the availability of permanent outcomes, including new build programmes*

	Revised Year 3	Revised Year 4	Revised Year 5
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Open Cases	939	908	919
New Demand	1,290	1,161	1,045
Resolved Homelessness	179	174	157
Less loss contacts and refusals	-129	-	104
Total Demand	1,921	1,779	1,703
Private Rented Sector	36	30	30
Let's to Homeless	977	829	755
Total Supply	1,013	859	785
Open Cases	908	919	1,356
Temp Tenancies - Council	482	482	482
Temp Tenancies - RSL	59	59	59
Temp Tenancies - PSL	135	135	135
B&B	68	56	53
Self Accommodation	165	388	189
Total	908	919	918

Appendix 3

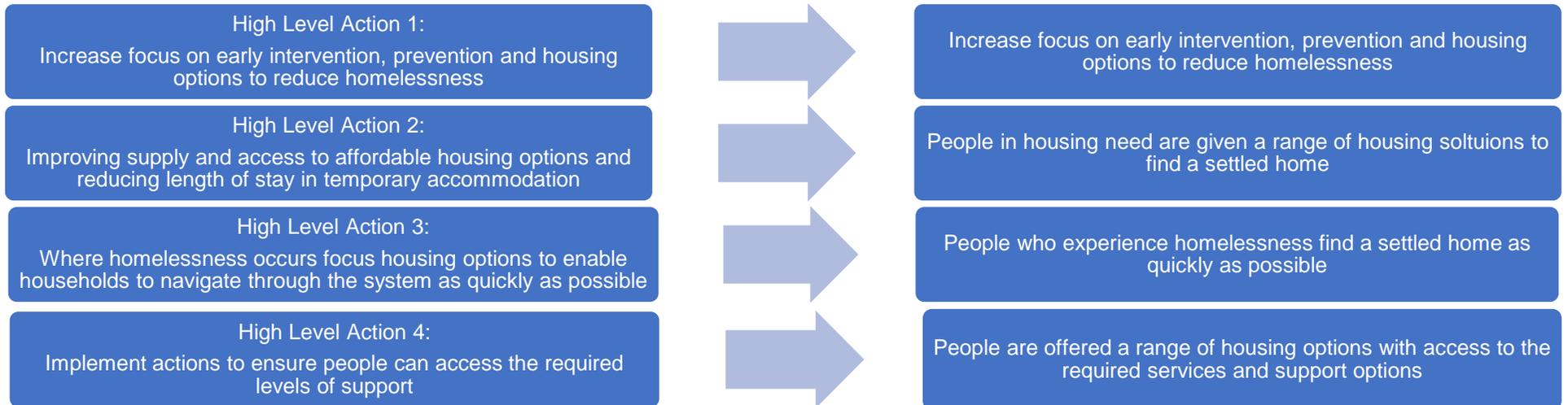
As part of the monitoring of RRTP's, the Scottish Government through the provisions of the National Rapid Rehousing Sub-Group has developed a draft suite of indicators to measure progress on an annual basis. Progress on this has been affected as a result of the pandemic.

	Indicator	Source	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
1	Time to close case	HL 1	48.8 wks	39.7 wks	45.2 wks
2	Length of stay in TA	HL 3	98.2 days	88.2 days	100.5 days
3	Number of homelessness referrals that result in a let	SHR 23	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	Number of lets to statutory homeless	SHR C2	701	752	402
5	Households entering TA in year	HL 3	1955	1829	1783
6	Households exiting TA in year	HL 3	1965	1849	1490
7	Households leaving TA by length of stay	HL 3	N/A	N/A	N/A
8	Housing Options approaches in year	Prevent 1	1,127	767	445
9	Outcomes for households assessed as unintentionally homeless	HL 1	1,115	1,272	810
10	Outcomes for households through Housing Options	Prevent 1	1,076	776	398
11	Tenancy sustainment of statutory homeless lets	SHR Ind 16	87%	89%	94%
12	Repeat homeless presentations	HL 1	7	22	27
13	Number of placements in TA per household	HL 3	1.81	1.65	1.64
14	Use of Housing First approach	To be confirmed	N/A	N/A	N/A

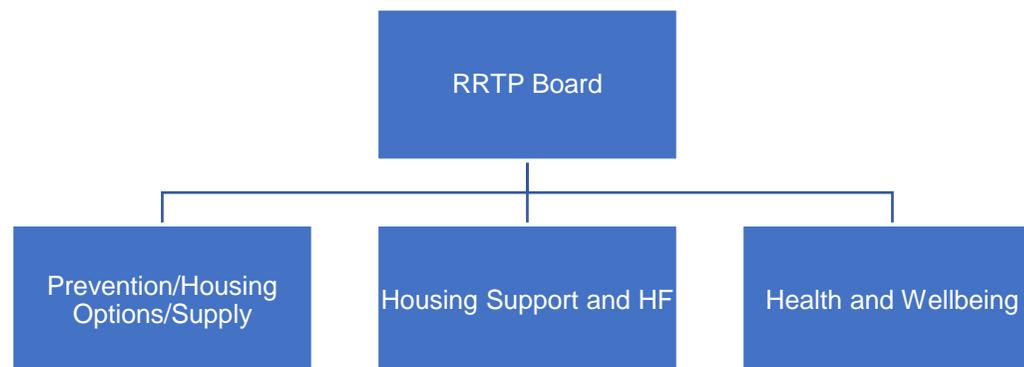
Appendix 4

West Lothian RRTP Action Plan 2021/22

High Level Actions



Governance



	KEY ACTION	HIGH LEVEL ACTION	LEAD	TARGET DATE
Prevention/Housing Options and Supply Working Group				
1.	Review the wider Housing Options/Homelessness Prevention and develop a new approach to delivering this service.	1	Housing Need/RSL	30.12.2021
2.	Develop the Housing Options website and supporting media communication	1 and 3	Housing/Communications/RSLs	30.12.2021
3.	Develop plans to ensure where possible the council meets the requirements of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order	2	Housing Need	30.09.2021
4.	Complete the review of the youth housing options pilot and working with partners, develop a new holistic model for identifying and supporting young people at risk of homelessness.	1	Housing Need/Education	31.03.2022
5.	Develop and deliver Education Programme to raise awareness of homelessness within schools and colleges.	1	Housing Need/Education	31.03.2022

	KEY ACTION	HIGH LEVEL ACTION	LEAD	TARGET DATE
6.	Expand mediation/conflict resolution services for young people and their families	1	Housing Need	31.03.2022
7.	Implement a Choice Based Letting approach to Housing Allocations	2	Housing Need	31.12.2022
8.	Refine the Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone (SHORE) standards and improved joint working with Criminal Justice	1	Soc Policy /Housing Need	30.09.2021
9.	Review the access to financial advice through West Lothian Advice Shop to focus on early intervention and prevention	1 and 3	Anti-Poverty Team/Housing Need	31.03.2022
10.	Improve services between the councils Access2employment service and third sector partners to provide employability support to young people and others who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	3	Housing Need	31.03.2022
11.	Complete the balance of the 3,000 new affordable houses targeted over the period 2012 – 2022 ensuring alignment with RRTP with SHIP.	2	Housing Strategy/RSLs	31.03.2022
12.	To seek government grant in 2022/23 and 2023/24 to ensure that a minimum of 300 new affordable homes can be completed each year.	2	Housing Strategy	31.03.2024
13.	Ensure target lets to homeless are achieved through the development of stronger partnership and monitoring arrangements with RSLs	2	Housing Need/RSLs	31.03.2022
14.	Increase PSL furnished temporary accommodation to 150 by March 2022	2	Housing Need	31.03.2022
15.	Increase shared temporary accommodation to 60 properties by March 2022	2	Housing Need	31.03.2022
16.	Develop a partnership approach with local lettings agents and individual landlords. Enhance pathways into PRS as a means to discharging duty or preventing homelessness, by maximising the contribution of the private sector	1	Housing	31.03.2022

	KEY ACTION	HIGH LEVEL ACTION	LEAD	TARGET DATE
17.	Maximise the contribution of the private sector and explore the establishment of a West Lothian Empty Homes Partnership	2	Housing Need/Strategy	31.12.2021
18.	Develop additional performance indicators for monitoring the RRTP covering homelessness prevention, use of temporary accommodation, and open homelessness cases.	1	Housing Need	30.06.2021
Housing Support and Housing First				
1.	Evaluate and seek to sustain the Housing First Service for 16 people with addictions through a new long-term funding model.	4	Housing Need	30.09.2021
2.	Evaluate and seek to sustain the Housing First project for 5 young people and ensure closer alignment with the enhanced approach for preventing Youth Homelessness.	4	Housing Need	30.09.2021
3.	Evaluate and prepare options for mainstreaming the work of the rapid resettlement team providing low level support to create faster throughput to permanent housing and higher sustainability.	4	Housing Need/Hsg Management	30.09.2021
4.	Implement a new support process for homeless households and existing households at risk of homelessness to focus assessment on individual needs.	4	Housing Need/Hsg Management	31.03.2022
5.	Explore models of provision for low level support/enhance housing management/increase sustainability required to prevent homelessness across housing services. Identify capacity within existing teams to transition to new approach	4	Housing Need/Hsg Management	31.03.2022
6.	Review all homeless cases estimated as needing 'medium' support including mental health/addictions, against the new social care eligibility criteria to quantify gaps in provision.	4	Housing Need/Soc Policy	31.12.2021
7.	Review and reconfigure current support provision within the council's homeless units at Blackburn and Strathbrock to meet support accommodation requirements	4	Housing Need	31.03.2022
8.	Review the accommodation and service provision provided for people fleeing domestic abuse and assess if accommodation meets the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and services align with the	4	Housing Need/Soc Policy	31.03.2022

	KEY ACTION	HIGH LEVEL ACTION	LEAD	TARGET DATE
	violence against women's strategy, and the Scottish Governments Improving Housing Outcomes for Women and Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse.			
9.	Review current customer journey for assessing wrap around specialist support to fast track referral process for people requiring to be rehoused quickly	4	Housing Need	31.12.2022
10.	Deliver the £4M new build supported accommodation provision for young people.	1, 2 and 4	Housing Strategy/ Housing Need	31.03.2023
Health and Wellbeing Working Group				
1.	Review and update Health and Homeless Standards for homeless people accessing health services	3 and 4	NHS	31.12.2021
2.	Complete project with ISD to collate and align homeless data with health and social care data	3 and 4	NHS	31.12.2022
3.	Develop pathways for vulnerable people in transition at risk of homelessness	1	Housing Need	31.03.2022
4.	Identify triggers of homelessness and referral process for people accessing health and social care services	1, 3 and 4	NHS/ IJB/ Housing	31.12.2021
5.	Promote community-based responses to homelessness and prevention of homeless	1, 3 and 4	Housing	31.12.2022
6.	Review Health and Homeless Service and implement changes	3 and 4	Housing/IJB	31.03.2022
7.	Quantify the residential accommodation requirements for adults where housing in the community would not be suitable including Addictions, Domestic Abuse and mental Health	2 and 4	Housing/Soc Policy/Health	31.03.2022