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Item No: 14

Meeting Date: Wednesday 25th November 2020

Glasgow City Integration Joint Board

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Glasgow City HSCP Homelessness Services Update

Purpose of Report:

This report updates the IJB on Glasgow Homelessness Service response during the Covid-19 pandemic. The paper further sets out the context of the challenges and describes the strength of collaboration with key partners. The paper also describes how we propose to step down from the usage of city centre hotels and outlines our provision of accommodation and support during the winter period.

Background/Engagement:

Glasgow City Council has the statutory duty for the prevention and alleviation of homelessness in Glasgow. In line with government guidance a rapid response from Glasgow HSCP Homelessness Service has been required to provide emergency accommodation to people seeking assistance under homelessness legislation during the Covid-19 pandemic which extended to those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). These challenges have been significantly compounded by the national lockdown restrictions which has resulted in almost no general letting from Registered Social Landlords for the initial 5 months of the pandemic generating significant pressures on recovery planning arrangements.

Recommendations:

The Integration Joint Board is asked to:

- a) Note the contents of the report.

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Relevance to Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan:

The delivery of an effective response to the prevention of and management of homelessness is one of the key elements of the 2019-2022 IJB Strategic Plan and will continue to remain a key priority.

Implications for Health and Social Care Partnership:

Reference to National Health & Wellbeing Outcome:	This plan relates to the National Health & Wellbeing Outcomes 1,2,3,4,5,7,9.
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Personnel:	Considerable changes to resource have been required in direct response to Rapid Rehousing Transition Planning (RRTP) arrangements and the shifting priorities flowing from the Covid-19 pandemic.
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Carers:	No implications.
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Provider Organisations:	Discussions are ongoing with key Statutory and Third Sector partners to ensure ongoing support and pathways out of hotel accommodation beyond the pandemic period.
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Equalities:	The delivery of homelessness service supports the addressing of multiple disadvantage & complex needs.
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Fairer Scotland Compliance:	No implications.
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Financial:	Financial changes to RRTP have been required and subsequently approved via IJB Finance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The additional spend incurred to date as a result of Covid-19 is £8.053m, with a full year projection to 31 March 2021 of £17.957m. In the main, this relates to the additional temporary furnished flats and hotel rooms, including those for people with no recourse to public funds.
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Legal:	This paper seeks to outline our commitment to the provision of emergency accommodation in keeping with statutory responsibilities.
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Economic Impact:	Through prevention and improved response to managing homelessness services it is expected that there will be a reduction in the financial and social impact of rough sleeping and the wider homelessness agenda.
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Sustainability:	No implications.
Sustainable Procurement and Article 19:	No implications.
Risk Implications:	A multi-agency risk register has been developed to identify risks and mitigations flowing from the repurposing of City Centre Hotels to accommodate homeless households during the pandemic period. A multi-agency City Centre Risk Management team routinely meets to review risk and mitigations.
Implications for Glasgow City Council:	The repurposing of City Centre Hotels to accommodate homeless people during the pandemic period has seen significant joint working across the public and third sectors to ensure that people access support and assistance. The multi-agency working has seen a sustained reduction in rough sleeping in the City Centre and provides an opportunity to work positively with a group of people which the HSCP finds challenging to engage with.
Implications for NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde:	Further development of in reach treatment pathways and continued promotion of early intervention health improvement pathways. A strong emphasis will be to develop outreach engagement with those with the most complex needs.

Direction Required to Council, Health Board or Both	
Direction to:	
1. No Direction Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Glasgow City Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Glasgow City Council and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Purpose

1.1 To update the Integration Joint Board on delivery of homelessness services in Glasgow during the Covid-19 pandemic. The paper highlights the response of Glasgow HSCP Homelessness Service and partners in providing accommodation and support during the public health emergency. The paper further sets out the Homelessness Services approach to stepping down from the City Centre Hotels and planning for the provision of accommodation and support during the winter period.

2. Service Demand

2.1 The Covid-19 pandemic and the associated public health measures have placed unprecedented challenges on the City's Homelessness Service which have been significantly compounded by the lack of general letting during the first five months of lockdown restrictions.

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- 2.2 Throughout the pandemic period we have continued to receive high demand for Homelessness advice, support and emergency accommodation which have been set in context of Glasgow HSCP Homelessness performance reporting, and considered formally at Glasgow City IJB Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee. From the pandemic period starting on 23rd of March 2020 to 18th October 2020, Glasgow Homelessness Services received 4745 new requests for Housing Option advice and information, 3348 new homelessness applications progressed and 7342 offers of emergency accommodation were made. Drawing on comparisons with the previous year this equates to approximately 80% of normal business.
- 2.3 A consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic has been an inability to resettle people out of homelessness into mainstream social housing which has created considerable pressures on front line staffing resource. As at 19th October 2020 the service had a case load of 4907. The caseload for 21st October 2019 was 3839 depicting a 28% increase.
- 2.4 During the pandemic period the Homelessness Service has offered emergency accommodation to 99% of people seeking homelessness assistance. In the main the small number of people who were not accommodated presented out of office hours and their cases were picked up the following day by the Community Homelessness Teams.

3. Additional Support During Public Health Emergency

- 3.1 As a consequence of the impact of Covid-19 on the Social Housing System and the impact on vulnerable service users Glasgow HSCP Homelessness Services rapidly expanded its supply of emergency accommodation. Due to the limited options and time constrain a decision was taken to utilise a number of City Centre Hotels in order to ensure anyone who required emergency accommodation could access it. Hotel capacity has reached over 600 in the City Centre however with easing of restrictions and general letting re-commencing this figure has seen a slow reduction. The actions taken are in line with Homelessness Services across the UK in responding to Covid-19 and the understandable ceasing of letting activity as Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) sought to adhere to social distancing measures. This has been at a cost of £4.566m to date, with a projected cost of £11.478m to 31 March 2021 (excluding cases with No Recourse to Public Funds).
- 3.2 By taking the actions to repurpose a number of hotels we have been able to ensure that we were able to meet our duties under section 28 of the Housing (Scotland) Act; extend protections to people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) and ensure that our vulnerable rough sleeping population have been offered accommodation throughout this challenging period. Throughout the pandemic period we have sought to work with a range of partners to support service users and to maintain our public protection responsibilities. Our monitoring of rough sleeping within the City undertaken by the Simon Community on our behalf indicates a sustained reduction in rough sleeping from a cohort of 30 pre-Covid to a current figure of 5 who have active care plan arrangements in place.
- 3.3 The repurposing of the City Centre Hotels has been facilitated by strong partnership working. Glasgow HSCP Homelessness Services has worked with a range of stakeholders including Hoteliers, voluntary sector support providers, and private organisations to provide significant levels of support throughout the pandemic period.

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In order to coordinate the response to repurposing of the City Centre Hotels the HSCP has constituted a City Centre Risk Management Oversight Group. The membership includes senior representatives from Police Scotland, NHS Acute Services, NHS Homeless Health Service, Voluntary Sector Support Providers and Representatives from agencies supporting the BAME community. A City Centre Risk Matrix has been developed for all agencies to progress and sets out in detail mitigation activities being progressed by partners.

3.4 A comprehensive range of supports have been put into place for residents within the repurposed hotels. These supports have included:

- The Homeless Addiction Team (HAT) and Homeless Mental Health Team (HMHT) have significantly re positioned themselves since the commencement of the pandemic providing assertive outreach to our most complex service users. In addition they have liaised closely with Hotel staff and have provided regular training. The Homeless Addiction Team works very closely with the Sexual Health & Blood Borne Virus Teams who are also based at Hunter Street and this outreach model has included those elements of the service ensuring rapid access to treatment and support. To date the HAT have commenced an additional 160 people on treatment programmes since the commencement of Covid-19 pandemic.
- Provision of Hot Food to Hotels - In order to support people resident within bed and breakfast and the repurposed City Centre Hotels, the Homelessness Service has worked in partnership with a range of voluntary sector organisations, 1051GWR and Financial Services to facilitate the distribution of hot nutritious food. As at 19 October 570 meals are being provided daily.
- On-site support at repurposed hotels - As part of the repurposing of hotels Aspire Accommodation Support Service was commissioned to provide on-site support to people accommodated within the hotels. Aspire are currently providing a full range of supports to service users to access; help and practical support; advice and psychological support; bridging into mainstream HSCP services; and support to access move on accommodation. More recently Wheatley Care now have an in-reach service to city centre hotels and plans are underway to step up this service to create fixed on-site support service by the beginning of November. The service will support service users to move onto more appropriate accommodation in line with our decommissioning strategy.
- The Physical Health Team has continued to provide a treatment room and outreach service throughout the lockdown period. It is now focusing on the Flu Vaccine programme aiming to reach all homeless emergency accommodations, again including city centre hotels and their staff. These arrangements commenced on 8/10/20 and have administered 130 vaccines to date.
- The Women's Service which was commenced prior to Covid-19 lockdown has recently moved its clinic base to an all-female site within the city centre assisting with the increase in city centre homelessness population. This also includes the co-location with the Sexual Health Service and provided via a partnership working approach with the Routes Out project.
- A Young Person's Team was established during the pandemic working closely with locality Homeless Casework Team aiming to engage those under 25yrs. To date this service has engaged with approximately 25 highly complex individuals requiring assertive outreach via city centre accommodation.
- Additional resource has now been secured longer term via the Drug Death Task Force (DDTF) investment which will result in recruitment of additional Social Care Staff within the Homeless Addiction outreach team.

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4. Step Down from City Centre Hotels

- 4.1 In addition to the repurposing of hotels 22 of the City's Housing Associations have made over 450 of their void properties available to the Council for use as temporary furnished flats – including over 300 from the Wheatley Group. This has been at a cost of £3.051m to date, with a projected cost of £5.451m to 31 March 2021. Due to the HSCP's relationship with City Building Glasgow and RSBi we have been able to carry on work to void properties and make temporary furnished flats available for let. Without these additional units of temporary accommodation it is likely that we would have been required to commission a similar number of bed and breakfast places to meet demand.
- 4.2 As the government's social distancing measures have eased and mainstream social letting activity has recommenced Glasgow Homelessness Services are actively working to move people on from the City Centre Hotels. Since our RSL partners recommenced general letting in August we have now observed considerable momentum in our homelessness system resulting in 157 cases being progressed out of hotel accommodation during the month of September.
- 4.3 Glasgow HSCP Homelessness Services are developing plans to reduce and end our use of City Centre Hotels to accommodate homeless households. The plan will involve a gradual reduction in direct response to the increase in supply from RSL. We are committed to ensure that the people who are currently resident in the City Centre Hotels access accommodation appropriate to their needs within a supported environment or within a temporary or settled tenancy.
- 4.4 We have aligned a Principal Officer to coordinate the transition of service users to a range of more appropriate accommodation options. Governance arrangements are also in place to manage the step down from the repurposed hotels and this will be considered within the broader context of our performance framework reporting.
- 4.5 Glasgow HSCP Homelessness Services are also supporting the City Mission to open an alternative to the Winter Night Shelter that reflects the need to ensure social distancing during the pandemic period. Offering 26 residential places the Welcome Centre will operate from a repurposed hotel with en-suite facilities for each service user and will focus on rapid access to mainstream emergency accommodation and support commencing at the beginning of November.

5. Extension of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order

- 5.1 The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) 2014 Order prohibits the use of bed and breakfast type accommodation for longer than seven days for families with children and pregnant women. In 2019 the Scottish Government consulted on extending through the life of the parliament the order to prohibit the use of bed and breakfast type accommodation for longer than seven days to all households. Following consultation with stakeholders the Scottish Government intimated that it would extend the UAO to all households in May 2021. However, in May 2020 an order was laid in Parliament to extend the order to all households by 1st October this year.
- 5.2 In September, following extensive engagement with stakeholders the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning announced a delay to the extension to the

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order resulting in the renewed commencement date of 31st January 2021. The Scottish Government and COSLA have published draft guidance to support Local Authorities meeting their obligations under the revised order. The revised UAO also has a number additional types of accommodation that is exempt. These exemptions are generally framed around innovative forms of supported accommodation including: Rapid Access; Shared Accommodation; and Community Hosting.

It is likely that the Glasgow Homelessness Services will experience significant challenges in routinely complying with the order. However, we are taking a number of steps to reduce our reliance on bed and breakfast type accommodation and In doing so actively exploring the exemptions set out within the revised UAO.

- 5.3 In order to support the step down from City Centre Hotels approval has been obtained to extend its contract for the provision of private sector leased temporary furnished flats with Ypeople. Over the next twelve months Ypeople will provide an additional 300 properties for use as temporary accommodation. As part of the extension of contract Glasgow Homelessness Services will pilot the shared tenancy model.

6. **Provision of Accommodation and Support to People with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)**

- 6.1 The pandemic period has highlighted the challenges facing asylum seekers with a negative decision from the Home Office and people more widely who have no recourse to public funds.
- 6.2 During the ongoing pandemic, to support public health objectives Glasgow HSCP Homelessness Services and City partners have provided accommodation, support and food to a total of 92 people who have NRPF. At present we continue to provide this assistance to 34 people accommodated within our hotel population. This has been at a cost of £0.412m to date, with a projected cost of £0.832m to 31 March 2021.
- 6.3 In addition, the HSCP funded the Glasgow Night Shelter for Destitute Asylum Seekers to relocate to the more appropriate Hotel accommodation during the commencement of the pandemic period in March. More recently a significant number of those with NRPF have now moved on to more appropriate accommodation managed by the Glasgow Shelter for Destitute Asylum Seekers.
- 6.4 In line with COSLA guidance on supporting people with NRPF during the pandemic period and to avoid destitution, Glasgow HSCP Homelessness Service has taken the decision to provide transitional accommodation and support for up to three months. Those with NRPF will be provided with independent advice and assistance during this extended period in order to transition out of their emergency hotel accommodation.

7. **Scottish Housing Regulator Annual Assurance Statement Submission**

- 7.1 The SHR requires that an Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) setting out the Council's performance in relation to our regulatory requirements are being met. The AAS for 2020 for Glasgow City Council was submitted in September 2020. The submission was approved by the Council's City Administration Committee on [22nd October 2020](#).

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- 7.2 The AAS reflects the significantly improved situation regarding the Council's challenges in relation to the provision of temporary accommodation illustrating a sense of confidence in our ability to comply with statutory responsibilities associated with the provision of emergency accommodation.
- 7.3 The Scottish Housing Regulator carried out an inspection in regard to the Council's discharge of its duties to provide emergency accommodation which concluded in February. The report has since been published on [4th November 2020](#) following a brief consultation period with Glasgow Homelessness leadership team. Whilst the report has highlighted the challenges we faced in relation to the provision of homelessness accommodation there is an acknowledgement of the progress we have made since 2019 with specific reference to our achievements during lockdown.

8. Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Re-profiling (RRTP)

- 8.1 The Glasgow RRTP was approved by the IJB in [September 2019](#). The Glasgow RRTP sets out our vision and priorities and how City partners will work together to deliver a housing led approach to tackling and ending homelessness in Glasgow. Prior to the pandemic period the HSCP and our partners were making progress in delivering the core elements of the service reform programme designed to ensure the objectives set out within the RRTP are met over the life time of the plan.
- 8.2 Whilst the original RRTP principles remain, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant influence on Glasgow's ability to deliver on previous objectives. The emphasis is now firmly on Recovery Planning and the need to enhance frontline operational delivery. To this end, on [5 August 2020](#), during the period of temporary governance arrangements, the IJB agreed a realignment of RRTP spend to reflect the revised priorities resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. In essence the realignment sees re-profiling of RRTP spend to front-line case-holding capacity within Glasgow HSCP Homelessness Service with the creation of 13 new front-line Social Care Workers, 7 admin posts and three Temporary Accommodation Development Worker posts. An additional 3 further Social care Worker posts, an extension to the Resource Worker post plus 1 admin post will enhance the Housing First Team.
- 8.3 In the coming months the service will focus on stepping down from the repurposed City Centre Hotels and continuing to redesign our systems and processes to refocus our activities on homelessness prevention and a rapid rehousing approach to service provision.

9. Alliance

- 9.1 The tender for the Glasgow Alliance to End Homelessness was awarded in February 2020 which will include investment of £187m over the coming 10 years. Contracts with each of the organisations have now been completed and signed.

The Alliance is made up of the following organisations:

- Aspire
- Crossreach
- Loretto Care
- The Mungo Foundation
- SACRO
- Salvation Army

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- YPeople and
- GCHSCP

The Alliance Leadership Team (ALT) has been formed by senior staff members from each of the organisations with delegated decision making authority. The ALT has moved from a mobilisation to an implementation phase and is currently developing a Communications Strategy, including branding. The planning for the recruitment of an Alliance Manager post is seen as a crucial element for the ALT and discussions are underway to determine when this post should be advertised given the impact of Covid-19.

The ALT is working closely with Glasgow City HSCP, provider partners and Homelessness Network Scotland, Glasgow Homelessness Involvement and Feedback Team (GHIFT) group, in developing sustainable move-on strategies for those currently occupying City Centre Hotels and is establishing representation on all key strategic fora both nationally and locally.

More recently, GHIFT have recently carried out focus groups with hotel residents to establish views on their experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic.

10. Housing First

- 10.1 The HSCP Housing First Service continues to develop and produce key results in working collaboratively with the Glasgow City's Housing First Consortium, Registered Social Landlords (RSL) and other key statutory and third sector partners, to secure tenancies with bespoke assertive outreach support for vulnerable service users experiencing multiple complex issues.

Glasgow has achieved 133 Housing First tenancies which equates to 47% of the total 327 across the five Local Authorities who have engaged with this Programme since September 2018. The service is achieving an overall tenancy sustainment rate of 83%. A further 30 Housing First assessments have been completed and awaiting tenancy, in various categories from awaiting match to awaiting a date of entry.

Within the context of "rapid rehousing" and Covid-19 Recovery Planning, Housing First has established an assertive outreach model to health, care and wellbeing of service users accommodated in the City Centre Hotels, in conjunction with Homelessness Health Services resulting in a direct assessment approach facilitating quicker access to Housing First tenancies.

11. Recommendations

- 11.1 The Integration Joint Board is asked to:
- a) Note the contents of the report.