

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Communities Housing & Public Protection Committee
<b>DATE</b>	5 September 2024
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Homewards Programme Update
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	CORS/24/246
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Jacqui McKenzie
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Rachel Harrison
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	1.1.1

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Committee with an update on the Homewards Programme in Aberdeen, specifically on the formation of the Aberdeen coalition and the progress made on the development of the local action plan. The report also seeks approval for a Co-Leader to join the International Mayors Council on Homelessness.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 Note the progress made during the first year of the Homewards programme.
- 2.2 Note the programme is governed through Community Planning Aberdeen; and
- 2.3 Nominate and approve the appointment of a Council Co-Leader to join the International Mayors Council on Homelessness.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Since 2017/18 Aberdeen has been developing a response to homelessness focused on being housing led, and reducing the length of time that any households need to spend in temporary accommodation. The Aberdeen City approach is aligned to the recommendations made to Scottish Government by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) in 2018 and their subsequent request for all Local Authorities to develop a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP)
- 3.2 The 5-year RRTP (2019 to 2024) set out the actions Aberdeen City proposed to take to reduce the amount of time that a household experienced homelessness, improve temporary accommodation and attempt to stop the cycle of homelessness re-occurring through projects such as Housing First.
- 3.3 Despite the considerable focus on Homelessness aligned to the RRTP Aberdeen City experienced the highest number of homeless applications since 2010/11 due to post pandemic movements, increasing rents in the private sector and economic uncertainty in the city. There was a recognition of the need to think differently and draw on a wider range of partners to support efforts to reduce and eliminate homelessness.
- 3.4 Aberdeen's expression of interest to The Royal Foundation was led by Aberdeen City Council, alongside Aberdeen Foyer, Turning Point Scotland, and the Centre for Homelessness Impact. In it we set out how our progress to deliver the RRTP had stalled during 2022/23 and expressed some of the challenges being faced. We recognised that most homelessness in Aberdeen occurs from people being asked to leave unsuitable living arrangements with family and friends, and therefore harm is potentially already occurring, by households living in insecure arrangements before presenting as homeless. This learning had exemplified that we needed to take a more preventative approach.
- 3.5 Making an application to join Homewards was also thought to be of considerable value given proposed new Scottish Government legislation, which will place to a duty on all public bodies to Prevent Homelessness. The proposed legislative change, which is currently working through the parliamentary process, will trigger new considerations for partners in recognition that no one public body can prevent homelessness alone.
- 3.6 Prince William launched Homewards in June 2023, a new initiative from The Royal Foundation of the Prince and Princess of Wales. Homewards aims to demonstrate that it is possible to end homelessness by working in collaboration with others.
- 3.7 On 27th June 2023, Prince William visited Tillydrone Community Campus to announce that Aberdeen had been selected as one of six UK locations to participate in the 5-year programme. The other five locations are Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole; Lambeth in London; Newport; Northern Ireland and Sheffield.

- 3.8 In considering Aberdeen’s expression of interest, the expert panel established by The Royal Foundation, found that there are strong relationships and high levels of trust across both statutory agencies and the voluntary sector, from senior leaders down to frontline staff and that data sharing processes and co-location was already in place. The ability of The Royal Foundation to bring further partners into the coalition was highlighted as a key opportunity.
- 3.9 It is clear that a cross-sector and multi-disciplinary approach is required to tackle homelessness. As a result, it was determined that Community Planning Aberdeen would offer strong governance and discipline to support the programme.

### 3.10. KEY EVENTS

The table below highlights the key events that have taken place during the convening and planning stages of the programme.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>Homewards Townhall</b>	Introducing the local delivery lead and the Homewards programme to Aberdeen to gather local support across all sectors.
<b>Inaugural coalition meeting</b>	To identify organisations and partners interested in the delivery of programme.
<b>ARUP prevention workshop</b>	To bring together Chief Executives from the fields of, Health, Housing and Local Authority from the six locations to undertake a prevention mapping exercise and share learnings.
<b>LOIP Workshop</b>	To develop Stretch Outcome 12.
<b>Launch of the Homewards Fund</b>	A £500,000 fund for Aberdeen was launched, the application window opens quarterly during the 5-year period, all applications must be aligned to the activity identified and route via the project teams, with endorsement from the Steering Group.
<b>First Steering Group Meeting</b>	The first meeting of the leadership group and finalising of the draft Stretch Outcome 12 to align with Community Planning Aberdeen LOIP refresh.
<b>Initial Working Group Meetings</b>	The first meetings to bring together stakeholders securing ongoing commitment for the delivery of each key driver.
<b>Theory of Change session facilitated by Homewards evaluation and learning partner.</b>	Bringing together the leadership and senior operational group to develop the underpinning framework for the Homewards action plan.
<b>Data Stories session</b>	To support stakeholders to understand the picture of homelessness in the city, using qualitative and quantitative data trends held by partner organisations.

- 3.11 These key events have enabled those delivering the programme to:
- **Form a strong local coalition in Aberdeen** by building on strong existing partnerships and bringing new partners, some of whom are engaging with homelessness for the first time.
  - **Secure partnerships**, for example through Homebases commitment to provide Home Starter packs.
  - **Generate systems change** by shifting the focus to prevention through, for example, the delivery of a programme of webinars to share best practice and learning across the system.
  - **Work together to shift the narrative**, by improving understanding about the different forms of homelessness, partially through the upcoming launch of an exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery in August which young people from Aberdeen will be attending.
- 3.12 Through the workshop, theory of change session and existing activity in the city, Stretch Outcome 12 has been developed. By working together, we hope to: ***'Reduce Homelessness by 10% and youth homelessness by 6% by 2026, ensuring it is rare, brief and non-recurring with a longer-term ambition to end homelessness in Aberdeen City'***.  
See Appendix 1 for the full details on Stretch Outcome 12.
- 3.13 The Coalition has identified three key drivers to shape our local plans:
- **Focusing on reframing perceptions of homelessness** – recognising that there are many diverse types of homelessness, beyond street homelessness, including hidden homelessness, progressing towards developing a shared language and understanding.
  - **Universal prevention of homelessness and addressing root causes** – reaching people at an earlier stage, prior to a crisis, increasing learning and understanding about the causal factors and touch points for intervention.
  - **Ensuring adequate supply of housing across all tenures and homes are the right size, type, and location** – recognising the importance of a safe settled home and the value of choice.
- 3.14 Aligned to these key drivers are a total of nine improvement project aims, see Appendix 1 for further details, with lead partners being drawn from across the sector. Each project aims to target different populations ranging from young people to city wide and directed towards different tiers of intervention, with a key focus on early intervention and prevention.
- 3.15 The strategic oversight of the programme will be provided by the Homewards Aberdeen Steering Group (Homelessness Outcome Improvement Group) which will continue to meet quarterly. The delivery of the improvement projects will be supported by a senior operational delivery group which will be attended by the leads of the project teams who will meet monthly.

- 3.16 The Homewards Aberdeen Coalition consists of fifty-five organisations and individuals in total, including, public sector organisations, housing associations, faith networks, third sector organisations and the local football club.

### **3.17. NEXT STEPS**

Project leads are currently preparing to present their draft charters to the Homelessness Outcome Improvement group/steering group on the 17 September 2024 for consideration.

- 3.18 Project charters will thereafter be presented to the Community Planning Aberdeen Management Group on 30 October 2024 for comment and the Community Planning Aberdeen Board for final sign off.
- 3.19 The Homewards action plan for Aberdeen will be further developed and be shared with the steering group for consideration. This action plan will have areas of alignment with the stretch outcome and improvement project aims contained within, alongside potential additional areas of focus.
- 3.20 The Homewards action plan for Aberdeen will be widely published following a constructive review process with input from the wider Homewards partnership of the expert panel, sector partner and activators, by the end of October 2024.
- 3.21 Throughout the second year of the programme Aberdeen Homewards Coalition will be delivering solutions against the action plan, with a steady flow of tangible local and national impact creating optimism and shifting perceptions. Evidence and learning will continuously be produced, captured, and shared across the six locations.

### **3.22 INTERNATIONAL MAYORS COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS.**

Through the partnership with Homewards an invitation for the Co-Leader to join the International Mayors Council on Homelessness has been received on behalf of the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (Un-Habitat) and Institute of Global Homelessness (IGH). The supporting documentation specifically requested the attendance of the Council Co-Leader.

- 3.23 The International Mayors Council on Homelessness brings together high-level elected officials who are committed to preventing and reducing homelessness and creates a forum to discuss the most pressing challenges, share what works and develop recommendations and priorities for homelessness policy.
- 3.24 Representation from around the world including Finland, Canada, Brazil, and the UK are already members of the Council, representation from Aberdeen would provide an opportunity to share and learn on a global scale to continue to support efforts to tackle the issue of homelessness.
- 3.25 As a member of the Council the Co-Leader would be invited to attend virtual meetings 2-3 times a year and contribute to specific discussions within

meetings, inform recommendations developed by the Council on homeless policy and amplify social media campaigns on homelessness as relevant.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

#### 6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No negative environmental impacts have been identified.

#### 7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve.  Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H)  *Taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	No Significant Risk identified	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Compliance</b>	No Significant Risk identified	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Operational</b>	No risks identified	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Financial</b>	No risks identified	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Reputational</b>	Risk that the Council suffers reputations damage by failure of	Proactive Programme Management and strong governance arrangements in	L	Yes

	Homeward programme.	place to support progress.		
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	There are no environmental risks associated with this report.	N/A	N/A	N/A

## 8. OUTCOMES

<u><a href="#">Council Delivery Plan 2024</a></u>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<p><b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b></p> <p><u><a href="#">Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</a></u></p>	<p>This Homeward programme will support the delivery of the following areas of this policy statement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do everything in our power to end homelessness.</li> </ul>
<u><a href="#">Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</a></u>	
<p><b>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes.</b></p>	<p>The high-level action plan for the delivery of preventative activity in relation to Homelessness in the city will support the delivery of stretch outcome 12 - Reduce homelessness by 10% and youth homelessness by 6% by 2026, ensuring it is rare, brief and non-recurring with a longer-term ambition to end homelessness in Aberdeen City.</p>
<p><b>Regional and City Strategies.</b></p>	<p>The proposals within this report support the Aberdeen City Local Housing Strategy.</p>

## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
<b>Integrated Impact Assessment</b>	No assessment required at this stage. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Jacqui McKenzie, Chief Officer Housing on 1 August 2024.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Not required at this stage.
<b>Other</b>	None

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Further information on Homewards can be found on their website: <https://homewards.org.uk/>

Further information on the Institute of Global Homelessness (IGH) can be found on their website: <https://ighomelessness.org>

## 11. APPENDICES

### 11.1 Appendix 1 Stetch Outcome 12

## 12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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