

# Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Executive Summary 2022 to 2027

Carmarthenshire County Council

September 2022



[carmarthenshire.gov.uk](http://carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

Cyngor **Sir Gâr**  
**Carmarthenshire**  
County Council



# Foreword



Our vision for Carmarthenshire is that ***Life is for living, let's start, live and age well in a healthy, safe and prosperous environment***. I believe a good quality affordable home is central to this vision and vital for each citizen to be able to live well.

Over recent years we have faced considerable challenges which have impacted on the ability of some to live well. The Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis have meant that some have found themselves excluded from society, unable to secure employment or training, unable to secure vital services and at risk of ill health. The threat of homelessness can be a result of any of these factors and whilst some are able to resolve this themselves others cannot and turn to the council for help.

We are seeing people turning to us for help in greater numbers than ever before and we are committed to help everyone who needs us and uphold the Welsh Government commitment that no one is left out. This increased demand, however, requires the right services and resources to meet it effectively.

This plan outlines how we intent to transform our homelessness services so that they are fit for purpose to meet current and future need and create an environment where homelessness is rare, brief, and unrepeatd. To deliver on this plan, we intend to:

- Review the allocation of social housing
- Develop the housing related support offer by streamlining support assessment and referral processes
- Develop the right temporary accommodation that meets current and future need
- Review our existing plans to develop settled accommodation to ensure that they support the vision for Rapid Rehousing
- Develop longer term plans to provide settled accommodation to support the vision for Rapid Rehousing
- Review Housing Support commissioned services so that they are fit for purpose and support the vision for Rapid Rehousing
- Develop and commission the right housing related support services to support the Rapid Rehousing vision

Although the responsibility to publish this Plan lies with the Council, there are a wide range of partners involved, including Housing Associations, support and accommodation providers, service users, advice agencies, the Health Board, the third sector and local authority services such as Housing, Social Services and Commissioning. I am grateful to each of these partners for their contribution to the development of this Plan and their commitment to take it forward.

The extent and complexity of the issues that face the Council and its partners over the next five years should not be under-estimated. However, we will strive to face these challenges in partnership, ensuring that the people of Carmarthenshire are able to access safe, secure, and sustainable accommodation.

I have great pleasure in presenting this Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. It shows great ambition and commitment between ourselves and our partners. It provides an exciting opportunity for us all ***working together to end homelessness in Carmarthenshire by providing homes and support at the right time.***

**Diolch yn fawr iawn,**



**Cllr. Linda Davies Evans Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing**

# Contents

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<b>Section 1: Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Section 2: Homelessness Data and Analysing Need...</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Section 3: Assessing Support Needs .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Section 4: Temporary Accommodation supply .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Section 5: TA Transformation .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Section 6: Rapid Rehousing Transitional Plan .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Section 7: Resource Planning .....</b>	<b>19</b>

# 1: Introduction



## National Context

Welsh Government has maintained a consistent focus on tackling homelessness in the context of broader UK Government policy such as austerity and welfare reform. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 prescribed new duties for Councils in relation to homelessness. Prior to its implementation, the legal duties for Councils focussed on those priority households who became homeless and then only if they passed a number of ‘tests’ that would determine if they were legally entitled to assistance. Since the Act, Councils have the duty to assist all households who face homelessness, regardless of the need to ‘fit’ into the priority need categories.

The Homelessness Action Group (HAG) was set up by the Welsh Government Minister for Housing and Local Government in June 2019 to answer 4 key questions related to the prevention and alleviation of homelessness in Wales.

- *What framework of policies, approaches and plans is needed to end homelessness in Wales? (What does ending homelessness actually look like?)*
- *What immediate actions can we take to reduce rough sleeping between now and the winter of 2019/20, and to end rough sleeping altogether?*
- *How do we put the delivery of rapid and permanent rehousing at the heart of preventing, tackling, and ending homelessness?*
- *How can we ensure joined-up local partnerships and plans are put in place to prevent, tackle and end homelessness throughout Wales?*

[Terms of reference: Homelessness Action Group | GOV.WALES](#)

Recommendations from this group helped form the Welsh Government Action Plan [Ending homelessness in Wales: a high level action plan 2021 to 2026 \(gov.wales\)](#) which requires all local authorities in Wales to develop and submit a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) by September 2022 and deliver on this plan as part of its Housing Support Programme Strategies.

## Rapid Rehousing

Rapid Rehousing is an internationally recognised approach designed to provide people experiencing homelessness with secure, settled, and self-contained housing as quickly as possible. Rapid rehousing includes the following characteristics:

- A focus on helping people into permanent accommodation at the same time as, rather than after, addressing any other support needs.
- No requirement to be assessed for 'housing readiness' in order to access accommodation.
- Offering a package of assistance and multi-agency support, specially tailored to individual needs where this is required.
- Helping people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness with lower or no support needs, and in doing so preventing complex needs or chronic problems from occurring or escalating.

Rapid rehousing recognises that the vast majority of people who have experienced homelessness, even those who have been severely marginalised and homeless for a long time, are able to maintain their tenancies in self-contained housing, with the right level of support. Providing a home as quickly as possible will help avoid the destabilising and marginalising effects of prolonged homelessness or prolonged stays in emergency or temporary settings while remaining homeless.

If rapid rehousing can be widely adopted then the need for many forms of temporary accommodation should diminish, although the Welsh Government recognises that there will continue to be a need for temporary housing solutions at times. [Ending homelessness in Wales: a high level action plan 2021 to 2026 \(gov.wales\)](#)

The development of Rapid Rehousing clearly places an emphasis on the provision of housing as a fundamental element of recovery from homelessness, homelessness cannot be resolved with just housing alone. For Rapid Rehousing to work, we must work in partnership with key services such as health and criminal justice. We must also harness both the third sector and voluntary organisations who provide services that support and help tenants build confidence and a connection within a community.

### ***Our Corporate vision***

Our vision and principles for preventing and alleviating homelessness are grounded in the framework of our Corporate Strategy, "**Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire**".

Our vision for the County states that:

***'Life is for living, let's start, live and age well in a healthy, safe and prosperous environment'***

These remain challenging times and we recognise we need to be prepared for increasing numbers of people, with increasingly complex needs, who will need help with housing. The

Housing Support Programme (HSP) Strategy 2022-26 established three high level strategic priorities which will help respond to the growth in demand

*Strategic Priority 1: Preventing Homelessness*

*Strategic Priority 2: The right accommodation for people who become homeless*

*Strategic Priority 3: The right support for people who become homeless*

## ***Our vision for Rapid Rehousing***

Through engagement with a range of stakeholders and partners we have developed a shared vision for Rapid Rehousing based on robust intelligence. It is important that this statement is both aspirational and realistic. The importance of a person-centred approach and improved process was noted.

***“Working together to end homelessness in Carmarthenshire by providing homes and support at the right time”***

## ***Our approach***

The pandemic has seen an increase in the number of people in TA. Increasing the number of people who are owed full housing duty.

The demand for TA presents itself during challenging times in a housing market where affordable and available accommodation are in limited supply and support for people to access accommodation in the private sector reduced.

A collaborative approach will be vital for rapid rehousing to have the necessary impact reducing the need for TA, also reducing any stigma, cost, and experience of homelessness.

The restructure of the homes and safer communities has resulted in a move from the reactive stage to prevention of homelessness, with housing hwb services providing essential front-line work resulting in steps forward to the implementation of rapid rehousing and ensuring early intervention and prevention.

The aim is to ensure homelessness is rare brief and unrepeated.

## ***Governance arrangements***

A collaborative approach is necessary to successfully implement this strategy. We will work closely with the Mid and West Wales RHSCG. And the local CCG/HSG Board which is responsible for approving local spend in relation to the Housing Support Grant and the Children and Communities Grant. The Regional partnership board (RPB) provides a

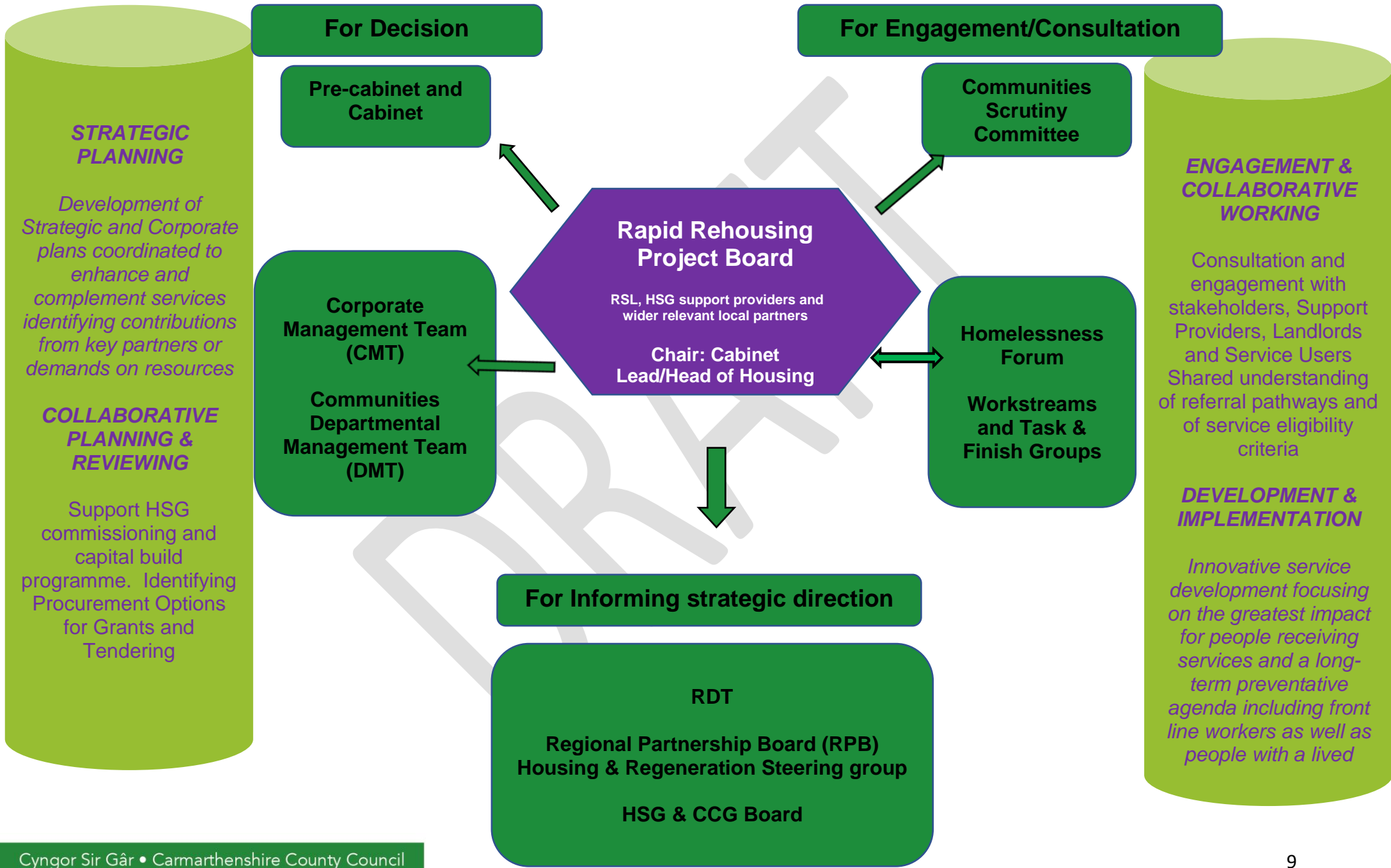
mechanism for engaging with partners responsible for delivering care and support in the county. Links will also be maintained within a multitude of areas to ensure the transitional plan is delivered through the alignment of services and approaches to support as well as optimise available resources.

The recently established Rapid Rehousing Project Board provides further governance for the work. Made up of senior members of the local authority, Housing Associations and support providers. The group will provide oversight for the delivery plans of the Rapid Rehousing Action Plan.

The ***governance structure*** showing how the transition fits within the structure of the Housing Division and within the wider local authority service provision and local partners is shown over.

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## 2: Homelessness data and analysing need



Carmarthenshire is a semi-rural county with 3 main urban areas. It has an aging population with a large proportion of Welsh speakers. The Council and Housing Associations are building a significant number of homes for social rent but there continues to be a need for social housing across the county particularly 1-bedroom homes.

The local authority currently operates a choice-based lettings system to allocate social housing with applicants “Banded” according to their need. The number of people awaiting housing indicates demand outstrips supply, particularly those needing 1-bedroom housing. Supply is particularly low for people under 55 years needing 1-bedroom accommodation.

There has been a growing proportion of single person households becoming homeless. The number and proportion of single person homeless households has spiked during the pandemic, for Section 73 cases, with outcomes generally worse for each duty when compared with multiple person households.

In 2020/21, compared with preceding years, there is a clear trend of more people progressing through from relief duty to final duty, which is reflected in other local authorities in Wales. In addition, there is a far higher proportion of people being positively discharged compared with the proportion of successful prevention or relief duty outcomes.

There is an increase in the number of households presenting because of a s21 Notice. Many private landlords state that they are selling their properties and so these tenancies are being lost from the market.

More young people are at risk of homelessness, many with complex needs, who will find it difficult to access and then sustain accommodation. Prison leavers are a significant group that present as homeless to the Local Authority often presenting several times and having multiple duties.

Substance Misuse does not feature highly in the stated needs of people referred but stakeholders state that mental health and substance misuse co-occur so frequently it should be assumed. People with co-occurring needs still get bounced between mental health and substance misuse services. The need for a ‘wet house’ in the County has been identified and by 2040 it is projected that 10 units of supported housing will be needed for people with complex needs/dual diagnosis, with stakeholders suggesting this may be an underestimate.

## 3: Assessing Support Needs



More than a third of single homeless people presented with support needs that required intensive support even if for a short period of time.

There are some individuals with complex needs who have presented as homeless several times.

Substance misuse and mental health are emerging as more significant challenges

The needs of younger people (16-25) are more complex.

Current data capturing processes do not allow for in-depth, accurate reporting on support needs or outcomes achieved.

There are a range of services funded by HSG that deliver the Housing First model, provide supported accommodation and floating support.

Many HSG services are legacy Supporting People contracts and have not been reviewed for some time.

There is uncertainty around how efficacious or strategic the existing commissioning arrangements are.

A significant proportion of HSG is used to support people with dementia via a floating support model compared to other local authorities.

There are multiple local referral systems making it difficult to gain an overall picture of referrals through data.

A review of data collection and analysis is required.

A review of referral pathways is required.

Significant numbers of young people were referred into the Youth Accommodation Panel, further analysis is needed of the outcomes from this panel.

The Mental Health Accommodation Panel only requests referrals when a vacancy arises in a supported accommodation project. Therefore, it does not give an indication of demand or waiting list for the service. It was also noted that many tenants stay in the accommodation for longer than intended, possibly indicating that longer term accommodation solutions are needed.

There was insufficient information to understand the outcomes for Learning Disability HSG funded services

## 4: Temporary Accommodation Supply



There was growth in the need for temporary accommodation, which peaked towards the end of the summer 2020. Need has since dropped but remains elevated compared with pre-pandemic levels, with close to 120 households in temporary accommodation. This represents an increase of 70% in the total number of households in temporary accommodation compared with prior to the pandemic, suggesting that need remains (and will continue to remain) at an elevated level.

Due to the current housing market, the role of the Private Rented Sector in providing temporary accommodation has decreased and it appears likely that it will continue to play a smaller role in the future.

### Baseline

Temporary Accommodation Type	Baseline Capacity (Units as at 31/03/22)	Groups accepted – any exclusions	Onsite services available	Service charges (Y/N)	Notes
Triage Centres	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Temporary Accommodation	212	All groups accepted	Floating support provided	Yes	Some units have CCTV
Refuge accommodation	15	Women only	Intensive support	Yes	
Supported Accommodation	112	Needs led	Housing related support	Yes	
B&B/hotels	31	All groups accepted	Floating support provided	Yes	Provision has on-site security

Table 23 Baseline provision of temporary accommodation in 2022

# 5: Temporary Accommodation Transformation



## Context and vision

In the context of this plan the vision and priorities for temporary accommodation (TA) in Carmarthenshire are:

- The need to move away from the significant use of B&B particularly following the Covid years
- Reducing the length of stay for households in temporary accommodation
- Lessening the impact of hardship, particularly in the interest of our clients; and
- Ensuring financial stability of the service

Our use of B&B:

- should be for emergency placement where no other options are available
- should be for a short period of time, amounting to days not weeks or months; and
- should avoid placing families in such accommodation, favouring more stable/ suitable accommodation in areas that are convenient to them

All as outlined in the '[The Homelessness \(Suitability of Accommodation\) \(Wales\) Order 2015](#)'.

## Transformation Plan

There is an urgency to revisit plans associated with single person Temporary Accommodation and disperse it to the wider area of Llanelli and other two townships Carmarthen and Ammanford.

The initial plan was concerned with increased single person TA in the Llanelli area due to the effects it was having on vulnerable people and their ability to manage tenancies.

The plan was aimed at delivering a 'like for like' in terms of numbers but across a wider geographical area within a certain radius of the Llanelli Town Centre, close to services.

A tender pack was put together with a service specification and key performance indicators on the provision of new, dispersed TA stock.

Following the Covid-19 pandemic and changes to Welsh Government guidance a review of the number of units required is necessary including where these need to be located, the

services to support this accommodation provision. The timescales for delivering this plan need to be carefully considered. This is dependent on learning from the revised allocation process. The need for a triage assessment centre has also been identified. The funding for this transformation relies on the reviewing of existing short-term housing related support accommodation and remodelling or decommissioning and recommissioning of services. Housing and HSG colleagues will work together to develop the justification and specification for this service in conjunction with partners. The provision of a triage centre means a needs assessment can be completed whilst still accommodated people in the short term. Ensuring that the right accommodation is sourced first time means repeat homelessness is reduced, and people have a home that meets their needs.

Three refuges are currently funded delivering women only provision. These settings are supporting those with complex needs and those experiencing domestic abuse. The new service being commissioned that integrates prevention, early intervention, support, and protection to ensure a holistic approach for people experiencing domestic abuse may go some way to respond to this. We currently have four short term supported accommodation projects for young people. Monitoring of these projects continues to ensure the right support is provided and for young people to live independent when they are ready.

The remainder of our short term supported accommodation provision is for those with mental health or complex needs plus one specialist dry provision. It has been mentioned in consultation both for the HSP strategy and for this plan that we lack a provision for people who are continuing to use substances or following a harm reduction approach.

## 6: Rapid Rehousing Transformation Plan



### **Vision**

To fulfil our vision “Working together to end homelessness in Carmarthenshire by providing homes and support at the right time”, our high-level priorities for the next 5–10-year transitional period will be to:

1. Review the allocation of social housing
2. Develop the housing related support offer by streamlining support assessment and referral processes
3. Develop the right temporary accommodation that meets current and future need
4. Review our existing plans to develop settled accommodation to ensure that they support the vision for Rapid Rehousing
5. Develop longer term plans to provide settled accommodation to support the vision for Rapid Rehousing
6. Review Housing Support commissioned services so that they are fit for purpose and support the vision for Rapid Rehousing
7. Develop and commission the right housing related support services to support the Rapid Rehousing vision

These high-level priorities will form the basis of our work to transition to Rapid Rehousing and will be delivered in conjunction with partners through detailed delivery plans which will be agreed and monitored by the Project Board.

### **Rapid Rehousing transformation**

In delivering the high-level actions within this plan we know we will face hurdles and are committed to work in partnership to overcome these.

Reviewing the allocation policy will need support from a range of partners both within and outside of the local authority, to develop a scheme that is fair and equitable. We are committed to deliver this to make homelessness brief for those who experience it  
Our development of the Gateway and the reviewing of services is aimed at providing the best housing related support

Input from partners and good communication is vital throughout the process to ensure full understanding and what is developed is fit for purpose

We need to work closely with all agencies to ensure referral routes are efficient, accessible and help is offered at the right time

There are potential cost implications to reconfiguring our TA, due to a possible period of doubling up on provision. This will be managed to mitigate unwanted costs and ensuring the best use of resources

Challenges will be face whilst plans are being reviewed and working in collaboration with partners and government is necessary to find and carry out solutions so delivery of the plans can continue

Currently we are seeing tenancies in the private rented sector ending on a scale never seen before and it is a challenge which needs facing to mitigate this loss and increase the level of supply from the private rented sector. We will continue to work with landlords and other partners to do this.

### ***Accommodation model***

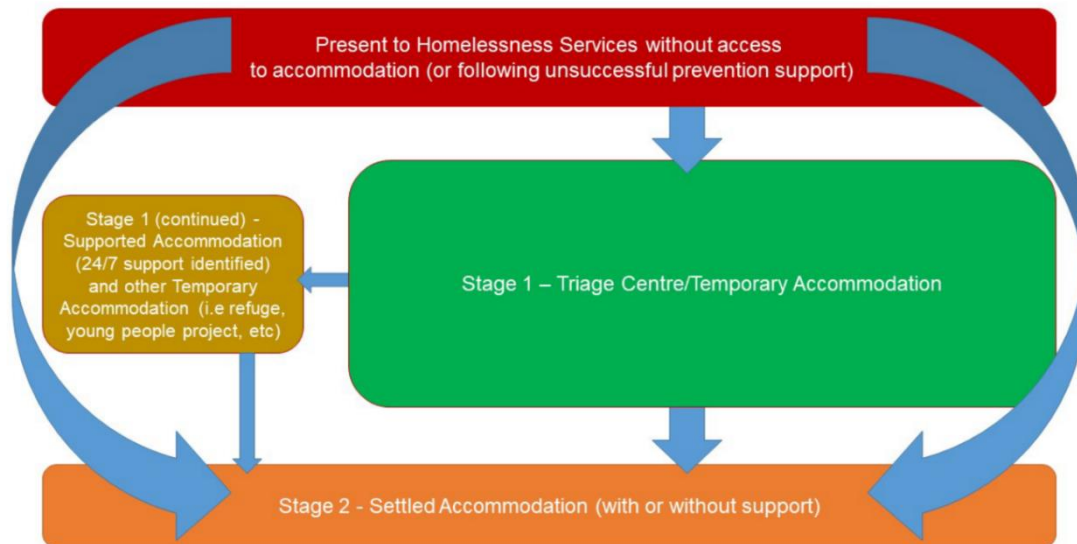
Following our Rapid Rehousing transformation, we envisage a pathway to settled accommodation that moves people in housing need quickly into a home that meets their needs with the support to maintain that home.

- Temporary accommodation maybe provided, if settled accommodation unavailable, on completion of a support needs assessment with the Housing Hwb service
- An emergency triage centre may be appropriate dependant on the level of support needed
- Refuge provision may be required if the person is experiencing domestic abuse. Appropriate support will be provided and always aim for settled accommodation asap.
- TA will be provided by a range of partners and support provision will be delivered by third sector partners and Local Authority managing the accommodation
- Settled accommodation will be sourced meeting the needs of the individual. Provided from the social or private sector and support can continue for as long as it is required.
- Support will be commissioned via HSG to be flexible to meet the need of the client and will be outcomes-based to allow for a person-centred approach.
- Support will be provided both by in-house support officers and external housing support providers. If the support needs of the individual are assessed as high, then Housing First may be the most appropriate option.



Individuals whose support needs are intensive might be best placed in long-term supported accommodation which would be sourced to meet their individual need. Independent settled accommodation will always be the main aim. Our accommodation model will follow that outlined in the Welsh Government Guidance.

*Figure 5 Rapid Rehousing model of Accommodation*



## ***Pandemic response***

The Covid-19 pandemic brought about changes to the statutory homelessness guidance which resulted in a considerable amount of people being newly eligible to be housed by the Council from March 2020. The situation is currently unchanged, meaning that all who present are effectively in 'priority need'. This is also referred to as the 'No one left out' policy. A clear trend, which is mirrored across Wales, is the growing proportion of single people presenting to us as homeless.

This change in policy increased the number of people requiring temporary and emergency accommodation. The need for temporary accommodation peaked towards the end of the summer in 2020 and remains high compared with pre-pandemic levels.

The HAG recommendations emphasise the need for prevention of homelessness whenever possible. Our first duty is always to consider how we can help people to prevent them from becoming homeless and avoid the need to be re-housed. With an increase in demand our existing services need to develop to ensure they continue to focus on prevention and avoid people moving into housing crisis.

During the Covid-19 pandemic the Welsh Government introduced legislation to halt the serving of s21 Notices. Since the lifting of this ban, we have seen a large increase in the number of Notices served and the presentation of people to the Local Authority threatened with homelessness.

To tackle this increase in presentations due to s21 notices we are using a range of measures including liaising with landlords to understand the reasons for Notices and to negotiate extensions of stay and using discretionary homelessness funding to assist with arrears, extensions, and potential court costs. We will continue to deploy these and other measures to prevent and relieve homelessness as a potential impact of the pandemic.

### ***Initial socio-economic/equalities impact assessment***

As each major policy change is taken forward, we will carry out detailed Equality Impact Assessments and publish any impacts and mitigations identified.

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## 7: Resource Planning



The resources detailed in this chapter have been identified to deliver this Action Plan. However, should any future grant funding not be available we may need to revisit our current priorities.

### *Existing resource*

During the last 3 years we have used a range of resources to support the work of homelessness prevention, alleviation, and housing related support within Carmarthenshire. These include The Revenue Support Grant, Housing Revenue Account and The Housing Support Grant. We have also drawn on the Covid Phase 1 Funding and latterly the No One Left Out funding to support this function and add to our capacity.

We have also been able to draw on the Phase 2 funding and Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme to boost our stock of temporary and settled accommodation. The capital funding element of Phase 2 funding was targeted at increasing the housing stock available to us from the private sector.

### *Staffing*

There are several teams directly involved in the provision of services that prevent or relieve homelessness.

**The Housing Hwb Service** comprises a front-end triage and assessment team offering advice and assistance, a prevention team, a Housing Options team dealing with homeless applicants, a support worker team and a pre-accommodation team supporting people to settle into new tenancies. This team will be further developed to meet the actions within this plan, specifically, **reviewing the allocation of social housing and developing the housing related support offer by streamlining support assessment and referral processes**, to enable a rapid rehousing approach to homelessness prevention and relief.

**The Temporary Accommodation Team** procures and allocates temporary accommodation and manages the stock, turning over vacant properties swiftly to reallocate. As we fulfil the Action to **develop the right temporary accommodation that meets current and future need** this staff resource may change, however current demand requires that this level of staffing is needed to run this service well.

**The Private Sector Development Team** is focused on engagement with PRS landlords ensuring the sustainability of our PRS Leasing Scheme as well as the quality of PRS accommodation in

the County. The success of this team will impact on the supply of properties available to let and the extent to which we can accommodate households in the private rented sector.

Within ***the Investment and Development Service*** there is a team of staff dedicated to the development and delivery of affordable homes. This element of the team will be crucial in delivering on the Actions to **Review our existing plans to develop settled accommodation to ensure that they support the vision for Rapid Rehousing** and to **develop longer term plans to provide settled accommodation to support the vision for Rapid Rehousing**.

The Action to **Review Housing Support commissioned services so that they are fit for purpose and support the vision for Rapid Rehousing** may have some bearing on how the commissioning, monitoring, and reviewing of HSG services is taken forward in the future. The ***HSG commissioning team*** will need to work closely with the Housing Hwb team to review the current services and to **develop and commission the right housing related support services to support the Rapid Rehousing vision**.

## ***Priorities***

Our priorities will be based on our high-level actions outlined in this plan.

- Review the allocation of social housing
- Develop the housing related support offer by streamlining support assessment and referral processes
- Develop the right temporary accommodation that meets current and future need
- Review our existing plans to develop settled accommodation to ensure that they support the vision for Rapid Rehousing
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Following the publication of this Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan detailed delivery plans will be created to outline the work that will be carried out to achieve each of these high-level actions. These delivery plans will be working documents, subject to change as the priorities, policy drivers, and demands on the services change and develop.

## *Resource plan*

Once the detailed delivery plans have been developed a detailed table which illustrates how the financial resources will change during the five-year transition period and link to activities and themes will be produced and will be monitored by the Rapid Rehousing Project Board over the next 5 years.

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