

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability

Housing and Communities Committee: 4 November 2020

Subject: Housing Asset Management Strategy Update - More Homes Better Homes West Dunbartonshire

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report updates the Housing and Communities Committee on progress in delivering the More Homes Better Homes Housing Asset Management Strategy 2018-2023 approved by the Committee in February 2018. It also provides a summary of the stock assessment exercise which is carried out on a bi-annual basis.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the committee:

- (i) Note the progress made in the implementation of the Strategy;
- (ii) Note the results of the Asset Management Database assessment and proposed future action; and
- (iii) Invite the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability to provide an update to the Housing and Communities Committee early in 2021

3. Background

- 3.1** West Dunbartonshire Council's 2012/15 Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) Update identified 'housing maintenance and assets' as a 'significant scrutiny risk' for the council in 2012/13 and the concern of achieving the SHQS by 2015. A new Housing Asset Management Strategy 2013-2018 was developed and this was identified as a key strength by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). SHR ended any regulatory focus around the asset management of our housing stock, as a result of our robust and credible approach to strategic housing asset management.
- 3.2** The Housing Asset Management Strategy 2013-2018 was successfully implemented and in February 2018 Housing and Communities Committee approved the new 2018-2023 Housing Asset Management Strategy entitled More Homes Better Homes West Dunbartonshire.
- 3.3** The overall Aim of the Housing Asset Management Strategy 2018-2023 is:

“To ensure that through appropriate investment, maintenance and management of existing properties all homes are warm, dry and secure and build new affordable homes all of which meet the needs of tenants and residents of West Dunbartonshire”

3.4 To achieve this aim, the Housing Asset Management Strategy 2018-2023 established the following objectives:

- Manage the stock across all relevant departments to a high standard whilst meeting and aiming to exceed all specified standards
- Identify housing stock that requires intervention and carry out appropriate actions to address this
- Build quality affordable accommodation of the right size and type that is energy efficient and meets needs, including particular needs
- Ensure all actions contained in the Housing Asset Management Strategy provide best value for existing tenants and future customers and are affordable to the HRA

4. Main Issues

4.1 Following its approval in 2018, the Strategy is on its way to achieving a number of its actions and milestones including:

- Over 300 new council homes are currently under construction and despite the challenges of Covid-19 and a period of lockdown, these well needed new homes have started to be handed over and all 335 new homes within the 2016/21 programme will be complete By Summer 2021.
- An assessment of the stock has taken place through the refresh of the Asset Management Plan Database and this will be used to inform decisions on improving the stock. This is summarised within section 4.4 of this report.
- Establishment of the Better Homes Project Board to bring together key service areas to share and approve decisions made regarding council housing stock
- Extended the Buy Back Scheme

4.2 Staff across various service areas continue to work on developing and completing the actions within the strategy and progress will be reported yearly.

4.3 It should be noted that a number of milestones within Strategy have been affected by the situation with Covid-19. Milestones that were targeted for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 financial years have been impacted by the period of lockdown and following the restrictions around physical distancing. Whilst officers in their own respective areas are now working in a way that respects the restrictions and also provides a full service to tenants, the limitations to this does cause unavoidable delays. This has been reflected and noted in the Strategy progress report attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Asset Management Plan Database

- 4.4** The Council's Housing Team has recently completed an update of the Housing Asset Management Plan model which is one of the ongoing actions within the Strategy. The model gathers a wide range of information from the past three years about all council house properties at an individual level and assesses how they are performing against nine key indicators. These indicators over current maintenance and management costs, demand and future planned investment costs informed by our stock condition survey.
- 4.5** Since 2008, the modelling exercise has identified over 1000 properties of surplus stock, that is, stock which is no longer fit for purpose, unpopular and largely had been void for a number of years. This stock has now been demolished over the years and the Council's demolition programme was completed with the demolition at Clydebank East in October 2020. This programme provided a number of regeneration opportunities.
- 4.6** The information that the model provides enables the Housing Development Team to see what properties are performing well, what properties may need some further action to help them perform well and what properties are a risk to the Council and no longer sustainable as a long terms asset without some type of intervention.
- 4.7** The results of the Model refresh are summarised below in general the results of the refresh of the model outlines that the Council's housing stock is performing well overall:

| Classification | No of Properties (2020) | % of Stock (2020) |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Stock Performing Well | 8436 | 84% |
| Possible Investigation Required | 1563 | 15% |
| Poor Performing Stock | 63 | 1% |
| | 10,062 | 100 |

- 4.8** The 63 units of stock in the poor performing category are all individual units of stock and not significant clusters within any one area. There are reasons behind each of these units of stock performing poorly such as expensive, ongoing repairs or the properties required substantial void repair works.
- 4.9** This would therefore suggest that there would be no further declarations of surplus stock or demolition until a future refresh of the plan suggests otherwise. It also demonstrates that previous demolitions and interventions have had an overwhelmingly positive effect on the stock.

- 4.10** For those 15% of our properties which are identified as 'possible investigation required' through the assessment, the Council's Better Homes Project Board will be tasked to establish actions that will enable this stock to perform more successfully. There will be a range of strategic and operational interventions which will be developed for these specific property types/areas and the outcome of this exercise will be presented to the first Housing and Communities Committee in 2021.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no people implications in relation to this report.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** There are no financial or procurement implications arising directly from this

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** As mentioned above, the strategy has been impacted by the Covid-19 situation and therefore this carried risks for completion of some actions and milestones particularly if they involve contact with others. However, as this is an emerging situation and all Local Authorities are currently reacting to it, the real and ongoing impact of the risks is as yet fully unknown. These will be built into the Strategy with any possible mitigation as impacts become clearer and will be reported to a future Housing and Communities Committee.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out in November 2017 and approved. No negative impacts were identified for the protected characteristic groups and the conclusion was that the strategy should impact favourably on all tenants as the long term objectives is to ensure that there is sufficient good quality housing stock to address all types of housing need.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** There was an eight week consultation period for the Housing Asset Management Strategy. This included a survey consulting on the main objectives of the Strategy, and group session.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The Strategic Housing Asset Management Strategy sits within the Council's Asset Management Framework and will contribute to the objectives within the Council's Local Housing Strategy. The ongoing implementation of the West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy contributes greatly to all the Council's strategic priorities.

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Date: 22nd October 2020

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Appendices: Appendix 1: Housing Asset Management Strategy Progress Plan Update

Appendix 2: Asset Management Plan Summary

Background Papers: Housing Asset Management Strategy 2018-2023

Wards Affected: All