

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability

Housing and Communities Committee: 22 November 2023

**Subject: More Homes West Dunbartonshire – West Dunbartonshire Council
Affordable Housing Supply Delivery Programme**

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This purpose of this report is to provide the Housing and Communities Committee an update on progress with West Dunbartonshire's More Homes Programme which oversees the delivery of the Council's new home building programme.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Housing and Communities Committee:

- (i) Note the content of the report and the progress made to date in the delivery of the Council's More Homes West Dunbartonshire approach; and

3. Background

- 3.1** In West Dunbartonshire the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) is delivered through a More Homes West Dunbartonshire strategic approach which has successfully delivered over 1000 new affordable homes in West Dunbartonshire to date and includes the Council's own ambitious New House Building Programme.

- 3.2** The Council's last practical completion took place at the Queens Quay development in September 2022 delivering 29 new Council homes in a key regeneration area as part of a wider development which has delivered 146 new social rented homes. The homes were the first residential properties to be heated from the Council's Queens Quay District Heating Network. This development has been recognised at recent national housing sector awards winning the following:-

- Best Residential Regeneration Project – Herald Property Awards
- Inside Housing Best Residential Development (Scotland)

- 3.3** These 29 new homes, are in addition to the completion of the Council's first fully dementia designed development at Creveul Court, Alexandria and other exemplar developments in Haldane, Aitkenbar, Bellmsyre, Dumbarton Harbour and St Andrews, Clydebank. The Council have now completed 12

new build developments since 2013 and are the largest developer of social homes in West Dunbartonshire delivering 496 new homes and 101 acquisitions through our buyback scheme to date as outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Completed Council New Build and Acquisitions

Project	No. of Units	Completion Date
Granville Street (Phase 1), Clydebank	24	July 2013
Miller Road, Alexandria	15	October 2013
Granville Street (Phase 2), Clydebank	9	February 2014
Central Bellsmyre, Dumbarton	36	December 2014
Hillstreet Square, Dumbarton	37	August 2015
Second Avenue, Clydebank	40	April 2018
Creveul Court, Alexandria	22	April 2021
Aitkenbar Primary School	55	July 2021
Haldane Primary School	58	August 2021
St Andrews, Clydebank	126	October 2021
Dumbarton Harbour, Dumbarton	45	December 2021
Queens Quay, Site B, Clydebank	29	August 2022
Buyback Acquisitions	101	Ongoing
Totals	597	

- 3.4** The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2023-2027, outlining West Dunbartonshire's Affordable Housing Supply Programme through the More Homes West Dunbartonshire approach was approved by the Housing and Communities Committee in November 2022. The SHIP outline plans to meet the Council Administration's aim of delivering 2500 new affordable and social rented homes over the next 10 years. The Council has received positive feedback from the Scottish Government in respect of our SHIP. The development of the new SHIP is now complete and will be submitted to the Housing and Communities Committee in November 2023 for approval.

4. Main Issues

More Homes West Dunbartonshire - Delivery Programme

- 4.1** Building new affordable homes has an important role to play in revitalising local economies and assisting with post-pandemic and economic recovery plans, negating the impacts of the current cost of living crisis and combatting poverty including child poverty. It is also clear that the need for affordable homes has and will increase in the current ongoing economic environment. Our More Homes West Dunbartonshire approach is an ambitious plan that aims to continue the positive momentum of the delivery of much needed Council homes in West Dunbartonshire and will significantly assist the Council's aim to deliver 2500 new social and affordable homes by 2032.
- 4.2** As the biggest affordable housing developer in West Dunbartonshire, the Council has identified a number of future development sites for new council homes to address existing and new housing need. The design of these homes will further develop, improve and exceed current best practice, providing sustainable homes using innovative technology and delivering on our low

carbon ambitions including passivhaus and other net zero carbon opportunities.

- 4.3** The Strategic Housing Investment Plan and HRA Capital Plan outlined the plans the Council have for meeting their new build ambitions. Some of the initial plans were and continue to be impacted as a result of global issues revised new build targets for the Council are outlined below:

Table 2: Council New Build Programme

Site/Developer	Number of Units	Number of Specialist Provision	Est Site Start	Est Completion Date
Clydebank East, Clydebank	88	9	On Site January 2023	Spring 2025
Pappert, Bonhill Alexandria	26	3	February 24	Winter 2024/25
Willox Park	17	17	Spring 24	Winter 2024/25
Bonhill Gap Sites*	34	4	Spring 24	Winter 2024/25
Mount Pleasant	19	19	Spring 24	Spring 2025
Queens Quay Site C	100	10	Spring 24	Spring 2025
Clydebank Health Centre*	38	5	Spring 24	Spring 2025
Bank Street, Alexandria	22	22	Summer 24	Spring 25
Dennystoun Forge	20	20	Summer 24	Winter 2024/25
Clydebank Gap Sites* (Gilmour Avenue)	50	10	Summer 24	Summer 2025
Silverton Regeneration	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
Buyback Scheme (60 per year)	300	36	2023/24	2027/28
714 units		155 units		

*Current Planning figures

- 4.4** Updates for each site are noted below:

Clydebank East:

Works commenced on this development on 23 January 2023, as reported to the Housing and Communities Committee in February 2023 the initial

programme is for the remedial works and external drainage and this being progressed in close collaboration with the Council's wider regulatory role, a construction site start will commence in early August. The total programme for the works will be 116 weeks.

This development will deliver 88 new homes and has been designed to meet the housing need within the wider West Dunbartonshire area, the table below shows the housing mix:

House Type	Sustainability Standard	Number of New Homes
Wheelchair Bungalow 3bed/4person	Net Zero	3
House 3bed/5person	Net Zero	15
House 4 bed/7person	Net Zero	12
House 4 bed/9 person	Net Zero	8
Cottage Flat 1 bed/2 person	Net Zero	4
Cottage Flat 2 bed/3 person	Net Zero	4
Flat 1 bed/2person	Net Zero	16
Flat 2 bed/4 person	Net Zero	24
Wheelchair Flat 1 bed/2person	Net Zero	2

All houses are designed to the Housing for Various Needs Standard (HfVN). There will be 9 fully Wheelchair (WCH) accessible properties. The 4 and 5 bedroom homes will all have ground floor double bedrooms.

The development at Clydebank East will see the completion of a major housing led regeneration of a key priority area identified in the Local Housing Strategy and will be the Council's first fully zero carbon housing development and marks a significant milestone in our transition to net zero approved at the August 2022 meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee. Publicity is planned to mark the significant milestone on terms of a site start.

We are still currently engaged with the Scottish Government in terms of finalising the grant award, as reported previously we have sought above benchmark grant and our submission is currently being assessed by the Scottish Government's technical team. Our request is proportionate based on the high levels of remediation costs but in terms of context our ask is comparable with the grant awards made to the 2 housing association who partnered the Council in the delivery of the new housing at Queens Quay.

Pappert, Bonhill

Following the review of the design proposals for the Pappert development the housing mix is as follows:-

House Type	Sustainability Standard	Number of New Homes
House 3bed/5 person	Passivhaus	6
House 3bed/5 person	Net Zero	6

House 4bed/6person	Net Zero	4
House 4bed/7person	Net Zero	1
Flat 2bed/3person w/c	Net Zero	3
Flat 1 bed/2person	Net Zero	6

Planning permission for this development was granted at the Planning Committee of 20th September 2023, enabling a site start in February 2024.

Willox Park, Doveholm, Dumbarton

The development of 17 new homes to be delivered at the former care home site continues within the design phase towards a full planning application in November.

The net zero heat strategy will be delivered by ground source heat pump, as it was felt that this solution to be preferable than an air source heat pump for each home. The development will also utilise PV panels and a MVHR system.

There has been positive dialogue in terms of the current plans with both the Willox Park residents and also planning officers. Ongoing engagement will be maintained with the current Willox Park residents throughout the delivery process.

Bonhill Gap Site Strategy

The pre-planning application process has commenced on the development of the 3 separate gap sites which are contained within this wider development. We have now procured engineering consultants as we move closer to a full planning application.

We have altered some of the initial design plans to incorporate a number of adaptable 6/7 bed homes within the development to meet identified housing need.

Bank Street, Alexandria

The Council is currently developing a proposal for 22 sheltered/amenity housing units in partnership with the HSCP. This will include an options appraisal in terms of the existing provision within the local area.

The delayed appointment of the design team and engineering consultants have pushed back the anticipated timescales of a planning application being submitted to April 2024.

Mount Pleasant, Old Kilpatrick

The demolition of the former care home at the site completed in December 2022 ahead of schedule.

CCG have been appointed as the main contractor following the Tendering Committee in September, having been directly appointed from the Scotland Excel Framework. We await planning permission which will allow the intended site start of March 2024 to be achieved.

Queens Quay, Site C, Clydebank

The Council has been developing a design to deliver a projected 20 units on this site to complement the housing mix within sites A and B. This development will also be designed to meet low/zero carbon principles and linked to the Queens Quay district heating network

Pre-planning response was received on the 25 February highlighting concern of the WDC development proceeding in isolation. We have adopted a proactive response to this issue and have developed masterplan diagrams incorporating the surrounding sites and have carried out valuations on the adjacent site to Queens Quay C with a view to purchasing additional land to deliver more affordable housing in the Queens Quay regeneration site. If this is achieved we would seek to develop a mixed tenure approach to any expanded development site delivering 100 new affordable homes. We are urgently seeking discussion with CRL (Clydeside Regeneration Limited) to progress the possibility of acquiring this additional land and will be able to draw down Scottish Government grant to enable this.

Clydebank Health Centre

Our appointed design team are doing some feasibility work based on a housing mix of 20 units of sheltered housing and 20 units to be a mix of family housing and cottage flats within the development site.

This is in advance of the demolition of the buildings within the site which is currently scheduled for March 2024.

Dennystoun Forge Gypsy/Traveller Site

A submission was made to the Scottish Government for support funding from their Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Fund for significant improvements to the Dennystoun Forge site, including new energy efficient chalet type accommodation following a consultation exercise with site residents.

However, we were notified that this submission was unsuccessful at this point. We have since engaged the Scottish Government following the outcome of this and have provided additional information to the Scottish Government in support of the application.

In another positive development the Council's Housing Development Team has been providing support to the tenants within the Dennystoun Forge site to establish a registered tenants association, the absence of a recognised tenants group and ongoing site presence was seen as a relative weakness in terms of the initial submission.

We anticipate that following the new information provided to support our application for funding Scottish Government officials will reassess the application before the end of 2023.

Queen Mary Avenue, Clydebank (Clydebank Gap Sites)

The transfer of the site at Queen Mary Avenue, Clydebank with vacant possession at the cost of £140,000 from the Council's General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account for the delivery of new Council homes was approved at the February meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee and has now been concluded. We are preparing a demolition programme to allow the site to be cleared as soon as is practically possible following the recent departure of Council staff teams who were using the premises. The plans for demolition will run in parallel with a feasibility study in terms of the future development.

Gilmour Avenue, Hardgate (Clydebank Gap Sites)

As part of the wider development of our Clydebank Gap Site strategy we identified a HRA gap site in the Hardgate area at Gilmour Avenue. The site was previously the location of timber garages on concrete bases. These have long since been demolished and the site has been beset with fly tipping issues for a number of years. The proposed development would see two three bed semi-detached homes to be delivered utilising modular construction methods. A planning application has been submitted and we await approval.

Silverton Regeneration

Discussions are ongoing which will allow the Council to purchase the last remaining privately owned property in the defective surplus blocks this will allow us to demolish and consider opportunities to deliver new housing within the Silverton area. We will highlight proposals in future update reports to the Housing and Communities Committee.

Buyback Programme

The Council's buyback programme which incorporates the Mortgage to Rent Scheme purchased 16 new homes in 2022/23. In 2023/24 to date we have already 22 new homes at an average purchase cost of £100,000.

In 2023/24 and following approval of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan by the Housing and Communities Committee in November 2022 and subsequently the decision by West Dunbartonshire Council in March 2023 to deliver an enhanced Housing Capital Investment Programme including additional funding for buyback purchases we are now scaling up ambition around our buyback programme. In 2023/24 and in each of the subsequent years up to and including 2027/28 we plan to deliver 60 new homes each year meaning a minimum of 300 new Council homes to meet identified need.

The additional funding that was approved by the West Dunbartonshire Council meeting of 1 March 2023 will target larger family homes to meet this specific need. To meet these defined targets we will add additional resources within the Housing team, and we will also refresh our Buyback Policy. This update policy will be submitted to the meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee in February 2023.

- 4.5** The Housing Development Team are continuously looking for opportunities to provide additional new build council homes and will bring any potential site to the Housing and Communities Committee with as much information as possible as part of the regular More Homes update paper.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** An additional Senior Housing Development Officer role is required to deliver the increase and scaling up of the Council's buyback programme. This will be met within the existing resources.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

Financial

- 6.1** On 1 March 2023 Council approved the Housing Capital Programme 2023-2028 which saw significant resources committed to the delivery of new council homes in West Dunbartonshire. An expenditure budget of £155m for the affordable housing supply programme is factored into the HRA Capital Programme this will be updated to reflect the income and expenditure highlighted within this report. As it currently stands, it is anticipated that this programme will complete on project life budget.
- 6.2** The uprated Affordable Housing Supply Programme grant benchmark assumptions were put in place during 2023/24. The new benchmark assumptions are highlighted below:-

RSL social rent	£91,182 (3 person equivalent)
Council social rent	£83,584 (3 person equivalent)
RSL mid-market rent	£62,542 (3 person equivalent)
Council mid-market rent	£57,281 (3 person equivalent)

6.3 In addition the following benchmark grant levels are available for additional quality measures as follows:-

Delivering homes to Section 7, Silver Level, of the 2019 Building Regulations in respect of Energy for Space Heating (that is, full Bronze Level plus Aspect 2 of Silver Level).	£2,338 per home (3 person equivalent benchmark)
Provision of balconies within flatted developments to enable people to sit outside, where the provision of private or communal outdoor space cannot otherwise be accommodated	£4,676 per home (3 person equivalent benchmark)
Provision of space for home working or study – to note that this benchmark does not apply to projects meeting current Housing for Varying Needs standards. In all other circumstances, grant applicants should demonstrate that additional space is necessary to deliver this measure in order for this benchmark to apply i.e. it is not possible to incorporate this within the design of the homes under current space standards.	£4,092 per home (3 person equivalent benchmark)
Digitally-enabling – when a tenant gets the keys to their home they should be able to arrange for an internet connection to ‘go live’ without the internet service provider having to provide additional cabling to the premises.	£351 per home (3 person equivalent benchmark)
Installation of ducting infrastructure for electric vehicle charge point connectors.	£585 per connector(3 person equivalent benchmark)
Installation of electric vehicle charge points (excluding installation of ducting infrastructure)	£585 per connector(3 person equivalent benchmark)
Installation of automatic fire suppression systems.	£3,507 per home (3 person equivalent benchmark)

Installation of heating systems which produce zero direct emissions at the point of use.	£4,676 per home (3 person equivalent benchmark)
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- 6.4** Notwithstanding the expected increase in benchmark assumptions Housing and Finance Officers will continue to assess the ongoing affordability of future developments within the context of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

Procurement

- 6.5** All new development sites will be subject to new detailed procurement strategies and the opportunities highlighted within 4.4 of this report will continue to be prioritised.
- 6.6** Where the contract award is less than £213,000, authority is delegated to the Chief Officer in consultation with the Procurement Manager to instruct the award of contracts for the planned revenue and capital spend detailed in this report to suppliers providing the most economically advantageous offer to the Council.
- 6.7** All procurement activity carried out by the Council in excess of £2m is subject to a contract strategy. The contract strategy for new housing development within the HRA Capital Programme will be developed by the Corporate Procurement Unit in consultation with Housing Development Officers. The contract strategy will include, but is not limited to; contract scope, service forward plan, the market, procurement model and routes – including existing delivery vehicles, roles and responsibilities, risks, issues and opportunities and on-going contract management. Opportunities to maximise the positive social, economic and environmental impact for the Council through the relevant procurement processes will be developed in line with procurement policy.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** All Council new build projects have their own Risk Register which highlights the risk within and out-with the project team's control. These are maintained and adjusted on an on-going basis.
- 7.2** With any new build project there is a risk that as the projects develop the cost increases beyond the estimated contract cost. Any additional borrowing requirements, or conversely, cost savings will be reported to future meetings of the Housing and Communities Committee. However, this is mitigated through a target cost model approach in our current contract arrangements within the Scottish Procurement Alliance (SPA) framework and Scotland Excel.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** The proposal does not alter any existing policy or pattern of service delivery and so is not considered to require an equalities impact assessment.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** As part of our previous rent consultation exercise, 92% of respondents indicated their support for the Council's ambitious plans to deliver the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) new council house build programme. In addition, there was positive support for the wider delivery of new build housing as part of the recent Local Housing Strategy. Regular updates on new build development are provided to the West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisation at the bi-monthly liaison meetings.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The Local Housing Strategy is the overarching document setting out the strategic direction for housing across all tenures and informs the future investment in housing and related services across West Dunbartonshire.
- 10.2** Having considered all the Council's strategic priorities, this report and the provision of new supply social housing for rent contributes greatly to all strategic priorities.

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Date: 8 November 2023

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Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	West Dunbartonshire Council's Local Housing Strategy Local Housing Strategy, Health Inequalities Impact Assessment
Wards Affected:	All