

West Dunbartonshire Council

Budget 2024-25

6th March 2024

BUDGET 2024/25

Supporting communities to thrive during the cost of living crisis is at the heart of the Council's 2024/25 budget.



Following the success of initiatives - including the **£2million** Cost of Living Fund and **£1million** Cost of Living Capital Fund – we are further strengthening our offer to ensure residents and communities can access the support they need.

In the face of the most challenging financial period in the Council's history and the cost of living crisis impacting on ever increasing numbers of our residents, we are focusing on protecting the most vulnerable, providing support to those who need it most and helping our young people to realise their potential.

It means that families, young people, carers and community groups will all receive additional

support as part of a package of measures introduced in the Council budget.

A lack of fair funding from the Scottish Government means we have no choice but to progress with some of the proposed savings options, however, we are taking steps to shield our communities as much as possible from the brunt of the financial challenge.

We have a legal obligation to balance the budget and, in order to reduce the number of savings impacting the services our residents rely upon, we have made the difficult decision to implement the Scottish Government imposed Council Tax freeze. We recognise this will have limited benefit for our residents however we could not take the risk of further reductions in our funding which is used to provide West Dunbartonshire's essential services.

FINANCIAL RISK

The Council has had significant reductions in its funding from the Scottish Government coupled with mandatory spending restrictions. It is anticipated we will continue to face further reductions in future years. COSLA continues to lobby the Scottish Government for fairer funding for Local Government. This includes contributions from the Council Leader and Chief Executive, supported by information provided by the Council's Chief Officer Resources but ultimately, decisions on the level of Local Government funding are made by the Scottish Government.

This financial risk for the Council is not expected to decrease in the medium-term with assumptions

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over future funding levels incorporated into projected budget gaps as reported in the Financial Update reports presented to Council. Discussions continue between the Scottish Government and Local Government in relation to the removal of ring fencing and their commitment to the Verity House Agreement however it is unlikely this will result in an improved position for the Council which better reflects the cost of essential services and rising financial pressures including inflation.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

The 2024/25 Local Government settlement was a real terms cut and will have a devastating impact on our core services. We had hoped, as the Scottish Parliament went through its budget process, additional funding would be made available to West Dunbartonshire.

Despite its rhetoric the Scottish Government is imposing a new wave of austerity upon our residents.

We have lobbied for the fair funding West Dunbartonshire deserves and needs. We have highlighted the issues our residents have to contend with living in an area of multiple deprivation, the health statistics including lower life expectancy, health inequalities, domestic abuse, and the highest number of young people in prison in the country per head of population. The picture for too many of our residents is stark. They need and deserve support to overcome trauma, to recover, to thrive.

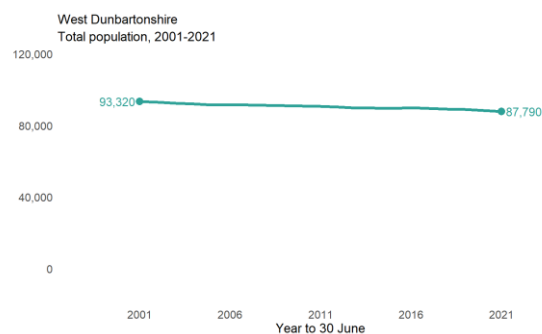
Our financial outlook has been exacerbated for a variety of reasons but primarily:

The Scottish Government has made no provision for the 2024/25 Local Government Pay Award

which leaves the Council having to absorb the impact of spiralling inflation including ongoing increases in utility costs and the impact of rises in bank interest rates. This means the 3% assumed pay award is an additional cut and if pay claims which have yet to be negotiated for 2024/25 settle above 3% then this will add to this and future year funding gaps.

In addition, the Scottish Government's claim that the Council Tax freeze will help the least well off is false. Those who get 100% Council Tax reduction do not benefit at all. In fact they will suffer as the underfunding of the Council means reduced services and jobs for local people. Furthermore, Council tenants' rent will need to increase to respond to the increased staff cost pressures within the Housing Revenue Account.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT



West Dunbartonshire is one of Scotland's smallest local authorities and accounts for 1.6% of the Scottish population. In 2021, the population of West Dunbartonshire was 87,790 (National Records for Scotland, 2022). This is a decrease of 0.6% from 88,340 in 2020. Over the same period, the population of Scotland increased by 0.25%.

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The number of births in West Dunbartonshire in 2022 was 852 which was significantly higher than the low numbers in 2020 and 2021 of 771 and 769 respectively and in contrast with a decrease of 1.7% in births in Scotland on 2021 figures.

In West Dunbartonshire, 17.4% of the population are aged 0-15, slightly higher than Scotland (16.6%), and 9.7% of the population are aged 16-24, which is smaller than Scotland (10.2%). Forty-five to 64 year olds remain the largest age group, with a population of 25,220 (28.7%). People aged 65 and over make up 19.5% of West Dunbartonshire's population, which is similar to the Scottish population.

West Dunbartonshire's overall population is in decline however, the proportion of older people within the authority is steadily increasing. From 2018-based population estimates it is predicted that the population of pensionable age and over will increase by 15.2% by 2033 and the over 75 population will increase by 34%. People are living longer with more complex health needs and therefore may require more input from health and social care services.

West Dunbartonshire also has some of the highest concentrations of poverty in Scotland. Currently our Council area ranks the third most deprived area in Scotland (equal with North Ayrshire) with 40% of data zones being among the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland. Only Inverclyde (45%) and Glasgow City (44%) have higher deprivation (Scottish Government, 2021). A summary of the WDC population and households in 2022 is below.

Reducing Population Trend

- WDC population 2011 was 90,720
 - WDC population 2022 was 88,400
- This was a reduction of 2320 (-2.6%)

Increasing Households Trend

- WDC Household Number 2011 was 42,167
 - WDC Household Number 2022 is 42,600
- This was an increase of 433 households (+1%)

POSITIVE BEST VALUE AUDIT **REPORT**

The Council was subject to a Best Value Thematic Audit during 2023/24 with the final report presented to Council in December 2023. The External Auditor's conclusion on the effectiveness of the Council's leadership (political and officer) in setting clear priorities and a sustainable approach to delivering them was:

'Administration elected members and officers worked together to agree clear strategic priorities, objectives, and measures of success. The Council needs to maintain effective leadership to continue to achieve its priorities and make the difficult decisions to respond to its challenging financial position.'

This was the most positive Best Value Thematic Audit in the Council's history. The Council was praised for the help and support provided to assist people and communities during the cost of living crisis. Auditors reflected the fact that the senior leadership team was reduced by half a Chief Officer post however recognised the Chief Executive had taken steps to redistribute the work and responsibilities across other Chief Officers. Ongoing reviews have indicated that the new structure is working effectively.

The Council has one of the leanest Senior Leadership Teams in Scotland following restructures in previous years which have reduced manager posts, modernised Council structures

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and contributed towards the Council's efficiency requirements.

COUNCILLOR'S LEGAL DUTY

The overriding duty on Scottish Councils with regard to finance stems from Section 95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act which states: "every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall secure that the proper officer of the authority has responsibility for the administration of those affairs."

It is implicit in the phrase "proper administration of their financial affairs" that the budget requires to be balanced. This requirement is also detailed in Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) codes and therefore it would, in line with advice from the Section 95 Officer (Chief Officer – Resources), be contrary for the Council to consider an "unbalanced budget" as proper administration.

Section 70 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires councils to impose a Council Tax that meets expenses not otherwise met through other means. So effectively this states that if there is a deficit after applying other funds these must be met from Council Tax – thus balancing the budget. If no savings were taken on March 6, we would need to increase Council Tax by around 26% to set a balanced budget.

The CIPFA Statement on the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government sets out recommended actions if a balanced budget is not agreed. This confirms the S95 Officer should notify the Chief Executive at an early opportunity and also consider consultation with the Council's external auditors.

A report must be submitted by the S95 Officer to full Council for consideration within 21 days. In that time period the Council cannot enter into any agreements or incur expenditure until the full Council has considered the report.

After considering the report, the full Council is required to identify and agree what action it proposes to take in response and confirm timescales.

Where a Council does not take action in response to the S95 Officer report, auditors should advise Audit Scotland so that the Controller of Audit can take the appropriate steps. This may include the Controller of Audit making a report to the Accounts Commission under section 102 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 which may lead to a hearing and ultimately could lead to suspension or disqualification of members of the Council.

No Scottish Council has ever failed to agree a balanced budget therefore the only precedence we can use to gauge the possible ramifications are based on what has happened in England. A clear example is Nottingham City Council where ministers have intervened and appointed commissioners to run the Council for a two year period, at the cost to the Council of circa £650,000.

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Struggling with the cost of living?

We're here to help.

<https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/cost-of-living/>

- Earmarking funding for a Community Clean-up to target additional resources to improve local neighbourhoods. (Spring 2023). **£50,000.**
- Increasing funding to the Antonine Sports Centre to support sports and leisure programmes for local residents over the rest of the financial year. **£25,000.**
- Free Swim, Gym, and Sports Camp for families over three school holiday periods – summer, October week; and Easter. **£45,000.**
- Introducing free all-inclusive family leisure memberships over July and August for families identified by Working4U. **£10,500.**
- Supporting the Recycling Room with rental costs for 12 months while they developed a bid to the lottery or other funders. **£8,350.**

COST OF LIVING REVENUE FUND

In June 2022 the Council set aside a **£1,000,000** earmarked revenue reserve to support cost of living initiatives. The funding included an original £400,000 cost of living fund plus an additional £600,000.

The spending committed during 2022/23 included:

- Creating an Energy Fund where households could be referred to for a **£200** grant to help with fuel bills. **£250,000.**
- Introducing a Foodbank Supplement of **£1,000** per week to be shared between West Dunbartonshire foodbanks to help with the purchase of food items to supplement donations from the public and businesses. **£52,000.**

During 2023/24 the Cost of Living Revenue Fund supported the following initiatives:

- Investing **£25,000** a year for four years in the Schools Summer Programme. **£400,000**
- Creating a four year school meal cost hardship fund. **£240,000**
- Investing **£50,000** per year for four years to support modern apprentices. **£200,000**
- Investing **£45,000** a year for four years on sport and leisure for children during holiday times. **£180,000**
- Providing **£39,000** a year for four years to support Y Sort-It **£156,000**
- Providing **£16,000** per year from 2023/2024 to 2026/2027 for family fun day events across the area. **£64,000**

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- Introducing a four year programme of creative engagement and learning focused on supporting people through recovery and improving wellbeing **£20,000**
- Providing funding to West Dunbartonshire Kinship Carers to support their activities and the costs of their new centre. **£5,000**

COST OF LIVING REVENUE **2024/25**

The remaining Cost of Living Revenue for 2024/25 is **£432,000** and the Labour Administration will commit this to help community groups as follows:

Labour Growth 1 - Community Success Fund: This **£250,000** fund will help and support community organisations impacted by Scottish Government imposed reductions in funding to give them the time to develop plans, business cases, leases or asset transfer requests and to seek alternative funding to ensure their long term future. This Success Fund can support running costs and can be used alongside the Community Asset Transfer Support Fund developed last year.

Labour Growth 2 - Youth Success Fund: The Fund of **£100,000** will provide one-off grants of up to **£5,000** to support projects, activities and services in our area which build the confidence, capacity, skills and resilience of our young people. We recognise the impact of poverty on our communities, and in particular on our young residents, and are committed to improving life chances for all. We have secured investment in projects to support our young people to thrive including through Whole Family Wellbeing support hubs and remain focused on tackling the root causes of child poverty and impact of adverse

childhood experiences. We will build on this through the creation of the West Dunbartonshire Youth Success Fund which will provide grants to assist charities and not-for-profit constituted community organisations to deliver initiatives developed with and for young people aged up to 18. In addition, to ensure the voices of our young people are heard and reflected in our service planning and decision making, we will be launching a Youth Citizens Panel to seek the views of our young residents.

Labour Growth 3 - Tontine Food Parcels: Provide funding of **£12,000** from the Cost of Living Revenue Fund to support Tontine Food Pantry. This will give the organisation **£250** a month to supplement food donations for four years.

Labour Growth 4 - Lomond Food Pantry: Commit funding of **£12,000** from the Cost of Living Revenue Fund to support Lomond Food Pantry. This will give the organisation **£250** a month to supplement food donations for four years.

Labour Growth 5 - Time for Tully: Provide **£12,000** from the Cost of Living Revenue Fund to support Time for Tully. This will give the organisation **£250** a month to support their activities for the next four years. The group was established by parents to focus on creating facilities for children in the area. In their first year of operating they arranged an Easter Egg Hunt, took around 90 Tullichewan residents to the Glasgow Science Centre, arranged for goal posts to be installed at Bannachra Crescent, hosted a Halloween Party and provided Irn Bru Carnival tickets to children in Tullichewan.

This leaves **£64,000** of unallocated funding in the Cost of Living Revenue Fund.

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COST OF LIVING CAPITAL FUND

In December 2022, the Administration committed a further **£1,000,000** to the earmarked Cost of Living Fund with the funding phased over four years from 2023/24 to 2026/27. There was also an in year underspend in the Cost of Living Fund in 2022/23 of **£558,000**. This was added to the additional **£1m** announced in December, giving a total fund of **£1.558** million. The administration allocated **£1.027m** from the fund as part of the Council budget leaving a balance of **£531,000** for future allocation. The Cost of Living Fund was used in 2023 to provide funding for a range of initiatives.

West Dunbartonshire Council agreed to make available **£1,000,000** of capital funds to help community organisations with their cost of living initiatives. The fund was launched on 31 October 2022 and the intention was to phase the funding over the next four years, allocating **£250,000** each year until 2025/26. There was significant demand and **£226,924** was awarded in year 1 (2022/23). This left **£773,076** to be distributed over years 2 to year 4. The successful funding bids for 2022/23 are set out below:

- **Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol** received **£39,644** towards double glazing, central heating, rewiring and flooring, reducing their energy costs.
- **Ben View Resource Centre** was awarded **£30,000** for a new energy efficient boiler reducing costs to support their activities.
- **Awestruck Academy** was awarded **£29,589** to upgrade nursery, kitchen, IT suite and leisure

equipment to provide a variety of services to the community in Clydebank.

- **Lomond and Clyde Care & Repair** was awarded **£22,000** to purchase a van to help with the delivery of housing repair services to private owners.
- **Faifley Community Council** was awarded **£20,000** to purchase a new van for collection and delivery of food and other donations.
- **West Dunbartonshire Community Foodshare** was awarded **£19,413** for a replacement van to support deliveries and collections of food and other donations.
- **Y Sort-It** was awarded **£15,120** to help reduce energy costs through the renewal of windows in their centre.
- **Tullochan** was awarded **£9,663** to purchase a commercial range cooker and ventilation for the Common Good Café.
- **Daniel's Wish** was awarded **£9,143** to purchase sensory equipment to help children and young people with complex needs.
- **Dalmuir Church Drop in Pantry** was awarded **£7,643** to purchase an industrial cooker, dishwashers and IT equipment
- **Clyde Shopmobility** was awarded **£6,870** to support the purchase of computer equipment, mobility scooters and mobility aids to support their services.
- **Our Warriors** was awarded **£5,000** to purchase sensory equipment for the group.
- **Clydebank Men's Shed** was awarded **£4,100** for replacement saws and ancillary equipment to support their activities addressing isolation.
- **Mini Messy Monsters** was awarded **£3,800** to purchase sensory equipment
- **Carers of West Dunbartonshire** was awarded **£3,309** to purchase laptop, projector and

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accessories to help the organisation to provide support to unpaid carers.

- **Isaro Community Initiative** was awarded **£1,000** to help with fixtures and fittings for a community drop in.

The successful capital funding bids for 2023/24 are set out below:

- **£44,000** to **Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels** to develop a kitchen and install toilets
- **£30,324** to **Clydebank Asbestos Group** to refurbish their property at Kilbowie Road
- **£29,400** to **Lomond Parish Church** to provide a community pantry
- **£27,500** for **Kinship Care** for refurbishment, IT equipment, furnishings, kitchen equipment carpets and gaming equipment.
- **£27,051** for **Haldane Youth Services** to refurbish rooms
- **£22,903** to **Lomond and Clyde Care & Repair** to purchase a second van
- **£20,846** to **Flourishing Faifley** to purchase a van
- **£20,000** for an air conditioning unit for **Golden Friendships**
- **£19,932** to **Dalmuir Barclay Church Pantry** to purchase a van.
- **£16,500** for **Clydebank Men's Shed** to install a ducted dust processor
- **£5,610** to replace a boiler for **West Dunbartonshire Community Foodshare**
- **£5,599** for **Alternatives** to expand kitchen facilities.

NEW - COST OF LIVING CAPITAL FUND 2024-25

The 2022/23 and 2023/24 Cost of Living Capital Awards total **£464,959**. This leaves a balance of **£535,041** in the fund for 2024/2025. We will use some of the funding from the Cost of Living Capital Fund to support community groups as follows:

Labour Growth 6 – Building improvements OKFP

Napier Hall: The £32,000 of building works include the supply and fit utilities gas, electricity and plumbing and are required to be completed in advance of the planned major extension project that the group are intending to do.

Labour Growth 7 – Create a £150,000 General Capital Community Success Fund:

The fund will be open to applications from community groups for capital

This would leave **£353,041** in the Cost of Living Capital Fund for 2024/25 and 2025/26. (£176,500 per year).

NEW – GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROJECTS

Labour Growth 8 - Community Sport Success Capital Fund:

The **£250,000** capital fund will be available to sports groups and organisations interested in pursuing community ownership to enhance sporting facilities in the area and support and increase opportunities for our communities to be physically active.

Labour Growth 9 - Community Sports Facility at Millburn Match-Funded Capital.

The Labour Administration is earmarking **£500,000** of capital to match-fund the proposed Community Sports Facility at Millburn. The funding commitment will assist the Vale of Leven Community Sport Hub with securing external funding from SportScotland

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and others. The project would deliver a new, thriving community and sport hub for the people of Alexandria, Bonhill and the surrounding Vale of Leven area providing a new home for a variety of local sports clubs and space for other community groups to meet, socialise and deliver activities.



Labour Growth 10 - Holm Park Community Football Academy Accessibility Project Match-Funded Capital. The Labour Administration is earmarking £75,000 of capital to match-fund the Holm Park Community Football Academy Accessibility Project. The project cost is £150,000 and the £75,000 of Match-funding commitment will assist the Holm Park Management Committee with securing external funding from SportScotland and other funders. Holm Park Community Football Academy is a community football facility that is used by 28 clubs and over 500 young people per week.

2023/24 BUDGET REVENUE

GROWTH INCLUDED

The administration identified a number of priority areas for growth in its revenue budget to support families affected by the cost of living. Some initiatives were funded in the short term as a one-off, other grants were scheduled to provide support over three years and the remainder were recurring spends. The commitments included:

- Increasing food subsidy to foodbanks from **£1,000** per week to **£10,000** per month.
- Increasing the current Education Maintenance Allowance from **£35** to **£40** per week.
- Increasing funding to Antonine Sports Centre to support the Council's sports activities over the summer, October week and Easter. **£25,000.**
- Funding the hire of an additional gully motor for targeted gully cleans at flooding hot spots over an eight week period. Treatment was to be undertaken over four weeks in Spring and four weeks in Autumn to proactively target times when there is either leaf fall or seasonal rainfall. **£25,000.**
- Introducing a Young Carers EMA supplement of additional **£10** to support young people with caring responsibilities. **£20,000.**
- Creating an earmarked Community Wellbeing Fund to support community groups with up to **£2,000** for hall and facility hire. **£20,000.**
- Reverse the Management Adjustment for Nuclear Free Local Authorities. **£1,500.**
- Reducing Environmental Health Charges by 50% for businesses with Private Water Supplies. The charges are based on cost recovery but the Council has relatively high

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costs which affect six businesses affected and this will reduce 1from £486 to £243. **£1,458.**

- Creating a Community Transfer Support Fund to help local groups in their aspirations to take on management and control of community buildings and facilities. **£60,000.**

GENERAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT

The Council will continue with its programme of investment in the General Fund and has committed tens of millions of pounds over the next 10 years including:

- **Capital Investment 1:** We will continue our investment in the new **£33.4m** Faifley Campus.
- **Capital Investment 2:** We will continue to invest in our Exxon City Deal Project with capital investment of **£30.1m** between 2023/24 and 2027/28.
- **Capital Investment 3:** We will continue to progress the regeneration of Dumbarton Town Centre. The Council's successful stage 1 bid to the UK Levelling-Up Fund secured **£19.3m** for the regeneration of the Artizan Centre, the upgrade of Glencairn House, and road and walking route improvements to better connect the town centre with Dumbarton Central Station.
- **Capital Investment 4:** We will take forward plans to invest **£20m** of levelling up funding focused on Clydebank.
- **Capital Investment 5:** We will invest **£14.7m** in implementing the Gruggies Burn Flood Prevention Scheme by end of 2026/27.
- **Capital Investment 6:** We will invest **£11.1m** in infrastructure to expand the District

Heating Network in Clydebank over the next three years.

- **Capital Investment 7:** We will invest more than **£2.5m** per annum to improve roads over the next four years.
- **Capital Investment 8:** We have committed **£8.1m** to progress plans to ensure Council depots are fit for purpose.
- **Capital Investment 9:** We have committed **£7.019m** for vehicle replacement over the next four years.
- **Capital Investment 10:** We have committed **£4.2m** for the schools estate improvement plan to be spent in 2024/25.
- **Capital Investment 11:** We have committed **£3.045m** for special needs aids and adaptations for health & social care clients over the next four years.
- **Capital Investment 12:** We have committed **£1.590m** to create a new heritage facility in Strathleven Place.
- **Capital Investment 13:** We have committed **£1.4m** to support flood risk management across the Council area over the next four years.
- **Capital Investment 14:** We are investing **£5.4m** in regeneration and local economic development.

CURRENT SPORTS, PLAY & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

During the first year of Sports, Play and Community Facilities plans, detailed designs were developed and tenders underway for eight play area upgrades. We are investing £500k in the four-year project with £900k from the Scottish Government. The following projects are expected to commence in this summer

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- Craigelea Road, Clydebank - **£55k**
- Firthview, Dumbarton - **£75k**
- Highmains, Dumbarton - **£40k**
- Kyle Terrace, Dumbarton - **£60k**
- Pappert, Bonhill - **£70k**
- Rosshead, Alexandria - **£60k**
- Stuart Avenue, Old Kilpatrick - **£40k**
- Westcliff, Dumbarton - **£65k**

Work on creating new Multi Use Games Areas at Breval Park and Goldenhill Park is set to commence in Spring.

Work on resurfacing East End Park and installing new floodlights will begin in late Summer with £200k committed from the Council and investment of £175k secured from the SFA/UK Government.

A new all-weather pitch will be created in Pappert, Bonhill with £200k committed from the Council element of the new housing development. Work is anticipated to begin in late Summer 2024.

A new allotment site incorporating 50 plots and a community growing area is being developed at Dillichip Loan, Bonhill. A total of £270k is being invested with £170k from the Council and £100k from the Vacant Land Derelict Land Fund. The project is estimated to complete in late Summer.

Proposals to develop a new bike skills track at Balloch Park are progressing. The Council has committed £200k to the project with an application being submitted to SportScotland for £400k match funding.

Milton Park Community Group is being supported to develop plans and secure funding for a new MUGA at Milton Park.

FUTURE SPORTS, PLAY & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The projects and estimates for financial year two, three and four projects are set out below:

Year 2 - Financial Year 2024/25 £336,873

- Pappert **£70,000**
- Dennystoun Forge **£7,550**
- Milton Park **£19,730**
- Lusset Park **£70,000**
- Braes Avenue **£81,116**
- Dalmuir Park **£88,477**

Year 3 - Financial Year 2025/26 £480,566

- Balloch Park Junior **£20,131**
- Balloch Park Toddler **£19,950**
- Moss Toddler Site **£49,936**
- Alexandria **£58,115**
- McColl Avenue **£20,369**
- Christie Park Junior **£5,528**
- Dalmonach **£25,345**
- Ladyton **£12,100**
- Dillichip **£11,336**
- Braeside Dr Junior **£15,860**
- Dumbarton Common **£8,200**
- Dumbarton East **£47,678**
- Bowling **£25,170**
- Thistleuek **£17,222**
- Goldenhill Park **£758**
- Langfaulds Crescent **£20,420**
- Linnvale **£12,396**
- Kirkoswald Drive Teen **£28,900**
- Kirkoswald Drive Toddler/Junior **£24,723**
- Onslow Road **£26,662**
- Stark Avenue **£3,070**
- Whitecrook Park **£36,697**

Year 4 - Financial Year 2026/27 £104,198

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- Ledrish Avenue **£4,313**
- Rosshead **£58,717**
- Christie Park Toddler **£2,285**
- Wylie Park **£11,500**
- The Cewsy **£10,000**
- East Thomson Street **£4,000**
- Vanguard Street **£2,000**
- St Helena Crescent **£11,383**

EARLY ACTION

In December 2023 the Council took early action to reduce the budget gap from **£16.9** million to **£9.3 million**. This was achieved through:

- Approving £1.352m of saving options and £0.973m of management adjustments.
- Agreeing to create a Pension Reserve and committing £5.322m per annum for four years to reduce the budget gap in 2024/25 and future years.
- Profiling capital spend which will see investment of £76.8 million in 2024/25; £59.8 million in 2025/26; and £27.5 million in 2026/27.

A further tranche of savings options were to be developed for consideration at the Council meeting on 6 March 2024.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Council agreed the strategic plan 2022/23 to 2026/27 in the knowledge the Scottish Government was unlikely to properly fund West Dunbartonshire Council. Post COVID-19 and in the midst of the greatest cost of living crisis in living memory, we recognise our residents need services and support more than ever and this was reflected

in our strategic plan. We remain committed to the delivery of our key priorities:

- Resilient and thriving communities,
- A greener future,
- A strong and flourishing economy and
- An inclusive and adaptable Council.

We will continue to commit all of our effort and make the case for West Dunbartonshire nationally to deliver for our communities and our area, and sustain our core services.

INCOME & RESERVES

The main source of income to the Council comes from the Scottish Government. West Dunbartonshire Council will receive **£227.664m** from the Scottish Government for 2024/25.

The Council's other main source of income is from Council Tax. In 2023/24 Council Tax raised approximately **£40.254m** and it is expected Council Tax income will see a modest increase to **£40.528m** in 2024/25.

Of the **46,125** properties in West Dunbartonshire, **10,447** are in receipt of full or partial Council Tax reduction. Also **18,841** households are in receipt of a 25% discount (single household). Some other households will qualify for support at 10% or lower.

The distribution of properties by Council Tax band are set out below:

- Band A Properties: **7,544**
- Band B Properties: **16,966**
- Band C Properties: **7,833**
- Band D Properties: **6,260**
- Band E Properties: **4,856**

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- Band F Properties: **1,759**
- Band G Properties: **839**
- Band H Properties: **67**

ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO BALANCE THE BUDGET

The administration has a legal requirement to set a balanced budget. As the Scottish Government has not given us enough funding to support existing services we have had to raise our revenue and reduce costs.

Had we closed the **£16.9m** budget gap with Council Tax alone it would have meant a Council Tax increase of around **42%**. If we were to close the remaining **£8.33m** budget gap using Council Tax alone, it would mean an increase of **21%** however, as the Scottish Government would withdraw £2.2m of funding for not agreeing a Council Tax freeze, it would actually require an increase of **26%**. Neither of these options are credible especially in the grip of a cost of living crisis.

If we were to attempt to close the budget gap solely using reserves, we could have balanced the budget for a single year but would have increased our budget gap for next year, adding to the financial crisis we face.

The only realistic option to balance the remaining £8.336m budget gap, after the decisions already taken in December, is a combination of increasing revenue, reducing costs and utilising some of the reserves that were created to help us manage the Council's finances over the coming years.

Although we are not increasing Council Tax for 2024/25 and we are instead accepting the

£2.219m from the Scottish Government, this does not fully fund a Council Tax freeze for West Dunbartonshire. As things stand our settlement is a real-terms reduction of £1.7m.

In addition, there is no inflationary uplift for employee pay and this adds a minimum 3% cost pressure to our funding gap meaning greater savings have to be achieved to fund staff pay awards. There remains uncertainty about any future funding as our Deputy First Minister has advised an announced £62.7m of Local Government funding is subject to and conditional upon the outcome of the UK Chancellor's budget on 6 March and on agreeing a Council Tax freeze.

The Council Tax Freeze means that areas with a higher Council Tax base that reflects their relative affluence will get a greater share of public resources. This is not based on need but based on affluence.

Locally, we have a high number of households who get 100% Council Tax Rebate and therefore will not benefit in any way from a Council Tax freeze. Instead the Council Tax freeze will mean service reductions. The £147m of funding for a Council Tax freeze is built into the base budget. So over a ten year period, the loss to Local Government is a minimum of £1.47 billion. Fundamentally, the First Minister's Council Tax freeze policy is taking money from the poorest and giving it to the rich.

PROTECTING JOBS

Assuming that the average Council FTE job costs £25,000 per year, every £1m of income would save the equivalent of 40 FTE jobs or 80 part time

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jobs. The Council is using **£9.279m** of reserves (including the pension reserve money) to help close the budget gap in 2024/25. This is the equivalent of supporting 371 full time jobs or 742 part time jobs for one year. Unfortunately, reserves are a one-off measure so the funding only secures the jobs for another single year and the £9.272m cost pressure is carried into subsequent budget forecasts. We are essentially buying time so that we can explore ways to increase Council income and reduce costs.

BUDGET REALITY

For this year the Scottish Government Budget, COSLA produced a reality document to shine a light on what it actually means for Scottish Councils. The Scottish Government budget impact is set out below:

- Local government capital budget cut by **£54.9million**.
- The Regeneration Capital Grant Fund was cut by **£16.7m**
- West Dunbartonshire Council revenue funding was cut by **£1.7m**.
- There is no provision for pay so the assumed 3% increase is a cost pressure on the council.
- There is no inflationary uplift to take account of staffing costs, energy costs, borrowing cost, and so on.
- The affordable Housing Supply Programme by **£196.1m** for budget.

CHIEF OFFICER CITIZEN, CULTURE AND FACILITIES

Citizen, Culture and Facilities incorporates a range of services including libraries, arts and heritage, communications, facilities management, the Council's contact centres and performance. The following savings have been approved. Clydebank

Town Hall is a recognised and valued asset and in order to ensure the building is sustainable for the future, we are reducing operating hours and costs saving **£30,000**. Under the option **CCF02**, the building will continue to open four days a week and can continue to be booked for events seven days a week. The libraries service has a budget of £220k for resources including books, digital and audio and systems. The option **CCF06** will mean going forward £170k will be available for materials achieving a saving of **£50,000**. Under the option **CCF11**, the Council will continue to provide the infrastructure and staffing to support the Highland Games but the **£14,000** of funding provided to the Highland Games committee will cease to achieve a saving. A review of staffing will be undertaken out with the library branches through option **CCF19** to deliver a saving of **£18,000** in 2024/25 and **£36,000** in future years. The Council spends over £1.7million a year on food to provide healthy and nutritious meals across education establishments. Under option **CCF20**, a review of menus will be undertaken to minimise waste and reduce costs while still adhering to all national nutritional requirements. This would achieve a saving of **£60,000**. Under **CCF24** and **CCF25**, bespoke funding administered by the communities team and available to community groups to apply for would reduce to deliver a total saving of **£49,000**. Within the Community Budgeting Fund £27,000 will continue to be available for groups to apply for and within the Community Engagement Fund, £22,000 will continue to be available. Finally, option **CCF26** will deliver a saving of **£87,000** through a review of operations to deliver a small reduction in the Communities team staffing and revise the delivery model.

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CHIEF OFFICER EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Educational Services covers early learning and childcare centres, primary schools, secondary schools and ASN centres as well as other services. The following savings have been approved. Under option **EDU02**, it was agreed to increase the central funding recharge for administering Pupil Equity Funding, with £3.38m still available across schools to support children and young people. This generates a saving of **£70,000**. Option **EDU05** will generate **£187,000** with the introduction of Early Start Clubs in place of Breakfast Clubs, providing childcare and breakfast at a small daily fee for families who are not eligible for free school meals. Families who are eligible for free school meals will continue to receive this service free of charge. The proposal was to close St Eunan's and Linnvale Out of School Care services (**EDU09**) due to low usage. However, the feedback from parents is that they really value the service and would be willing to pay more to retain it. Therefore, the proposed closure will not go ahead and instead the sessions will increase by £3 from April 2024. This will increase income by **£14k** in 2024/25. Thereafter, for 2025/26 Education year the fees will increase to cover the cost of the service. **EDU13** was also agreed, which will remove one Education Officer, with the remaining Officer working closely with Head Teachers to ensure their priorities are still met, making a saving of **£75,000**. In Early Learning the number of peripatetic Early Stage Teachers providing learning support for pre-school children will continue and be delivered by 11.4FTE, a change to the current 14.8 FTE. Under this option, **EDU14**, core teacher numbers required to deliver on the curriculum have been maintained with a **£219,000** saving. In addition, option **EDU15** will save **£134,000** by adjusting the number of Early

Learning and Childcare Officers to reflect the number of children in attendance at centres, rather than the maximum registration number a centre can hold. Option **EDU16** will see the additional Early Learning Lead Officer within both Bellsmyre and Dalmonach Early Learning Centres, removed due to centre numbers, saving **£62,000**. Under option **EDU17**, a **£190,000** saving will be achieved through the Collaborative Support Service (CSS) and the Interrupted Learner Service (ILS), which will continue with 352 Learning Assistants and Teachers, a reduction of 3.6 FTE from the current level. Under option **EDU18**, SMS texts will be used by schools to issue urgent messages only with other alternatives including email and free to use applications utilised for other messaging saving **£10,000**. Finally, option **EDU20** was agreed, meaning the Council will allocate primary school teachers based on the exact number of children enrolled in each school instead of the maximum potential class size, saving **£400,000**.

CHIEF OFFICER HOUSING, COMMUNITIES, AND EMPLOYABILITY

The Housing & Employability service includes housing development, homelessness services, housing operations and Working4U services. The following savings have been approved. Option **HE02** will generate **£29,000** of savings by amending the grant awarded to Y Sort-It to £87,820, and **HE06** will generate **£40,000** by providing Lomond and Clyde Care and Repair with £41,000 in grant funding.

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CHIEF OFFICER PEOPLE & TECHNOLOGY

People & Technology comprises Strategic People & Change services, ICT, Central Administrative Support Services, Health, Safety & Risk and Organisational Resilience. The following savings have been approved. **PT04** will retain a 12 month pay preservation for employees, reduced from the current 24 months making a saving of **£14,000**. Option **PT10** will save **£47,000** by removing counselling and physio for employees, and instead directing them to support via the NHS; and **PT13** will see a review of the Corporate Admin Support service tasks, saving **£112,000**.

CHIEF OFFICER RESOURCES

The Resources Service is responsible for a wide range of financial and administrative services, including Financial Management and control, Asset Management, Revenues and Benefits, and Internal Audit and Fraud. The following savings have been approved.

The Resources Service is responsible for a wide range of financial and administrative services, including Financial Management and control, Asset Management, Revenues and Benefits, and Internal Audit and Fraud. Currently the Council commits £150k Voluntary Grant funding per annum to support various community groups via West Dunbartonshire Community and Volunteering Services. The funding is not fully allocated and under option **RES02**, a saving of **£75,000** will be achieved through reducing this budget. Under option **RES09**, the team of Council Officers would reduce by one post saving **£26k**.

CHIEF OFFICER ROADS & NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Roads and Neighbourhood service includes roads operations, Greenspace, fleet and waste. The following savings options have been approved. In order to retain the school crossing service, we have accepted **RN01 Option 1**, provision of 31 crossing patrollers, bringing the service in line with current national guidance. This will save **£24,000**. Savings proposal **RN02 Option 3** has been taken which will see the introduction of a £60 fee to collect and dispose of garden waste or for residents to cease garden waste collections. This will save **£180,000**. Option **RN04** involves a review of roads support for education services with funding opportunities being reviewed to meet costs for the two posts affected. This represents a saving of **£37,000** with 2FTE affected. Option **RN18** will reduce the Consultancy Services team saving **£10,000**. Option **RN21** will see 26 of the current 29 road operatives retained saving **£80,000** while option **RN22** will see three new 4G pitches replacing six underutilised grass pitches. The saving of **£10,000** generated will comprise of increased income due to all-weather availability of pitches and a reduction in maintenance costs. **RN23** will see planned road defect repairs undertaken using hot asphalt, which lasts longer, at a saving of **£200,000**. Under **RN26**, weed killing will be undertaken once a year with a saving of **£50,000** and **£45,000** will be generated through **RN27** in which the commercial waste function will be reviewed with fees increasing by 4%. Sales, Fees and Charges. In terms of the additional increase to sales, fees and charges, an additional 6% will apply to all services with the exception of School Meals which will apply the 4% agreed at Council in December.

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CHIEF OFFICER REGULATORY & REGENERATION

Regulatory & Regeneration comprises a wide range of services including legal, licensing, procurement, business support and projects to regenerate the area. The following savings have been approved. The Council provides a small amount of funding to partners to support the Night Zone West project and in recent years this has been directed to Police Scotland to supplement its resources over the festive period.

The late night economy in the area has significantly reduced and under option **RR01** the funding will be withdrawn saving **£12,500**. Under option **RR08**, two paralegal posts will be removed and some functions would no longer be undertaken internally including enquiries relating to titles. This will save **£90,000**.

SAVINGS PROPOSALS REJECTED

The administration has rejected a number of savings proposals. Options which are not progressing in 2024/25 include:

- CCF03 Removal of staffed Citizen Services Provision at Church Street
- CCF04 Reduce or remove grant funding of Shopmobility
- CCF05 Reduce or remove grant funding of Antonine
- CCF15 Transfer Community Centres, pitches and pavilions operated by West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust back to the Council

- CCF21 Reduce Contact Centre establishment from 9 posts to 8.
- EDU01 Reduce the School Clothing Grant for primary school pupils to the statutory level of £120
- EDU03 Reduce Education Maintenance Allowance to statutory level
- EDU12 Reduce secondary school management time through reduction in Depute Head Teachers.
- HE01 Reduce or remove funding to West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau
- HE03 Reduce the funding provided to support the Modern Apprenticeship Pathway
- HE04 Reduce the Working4U services which are paid for by the Council's general revenue grant
- RES01 Remove the Elderly Welfare Grant or remove half and donate the balance to elderly charities
- RN03 Review or remove footway gritting
- RN06 Lease Bowling Clubs
- RN07 Close or reduce Dalmuir golf course
- RN08 Cease the Care of Gardens scheme
- RN09 Review levels of street cleaning in residential estates, public parks and town centres
- RN20 Review park maintenance

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INCREASING REVENUE & USE OF RESERVES

The Council Tax freeze means that our main tool for raising revenue locally has been hampered. Therefore, we are left with no choice but to accept as otherwise we risk causing further financial detriment to our local residents.



2024/25 BALANCED BUDGET

	2024/25 £,000
Budget Gap Before Any Measures to Balance Budget	16,970
Measures Agreed December 2023	(7,657)
Updated Gap After December 2023	9,313
Changes to Gap since December 2023	(977)
Updated Gap 6 March 2024	8,336
Labour Administration Measures to Balance Budget	
Saving Options	(2,751)
Management Adjustments	(1,082)
Increase in Fees	(492)
Use of Temporary Reserves	(3,077)
Use of Permanent Reserves	(934)
Surplus	0

SNP Budget 2024/25*

Projected budget gap £8,336,000

Growth Items

Comments / Instructions to Officers

HSCP pay award share	£1,256,000	The HSCP are asked to self-fund £350k of the staff pay award with the remaining £1.256m being funded by the Council.
Cancel plans to move Balloch and Parkhall Libraries	£60,000	There is no need to damage these well used services. This money will enable the libraries to continue to operate in their current locations.
In year Community Investment Fund	£403,000	This fund will be available for Council to use throughout the year (see motion text for details).
Total Growth Items	£1,719,000	
Updated Budget Gap	£10,055,000	

Balancing Items

Management Adjustments	£1,082,000	These are savings identified by officers that can be made without redundancies or detriment to service level.
CCF20 - Review EE menus to reduce waste	£60,000	Sensible option with no detriment to nutrition. Some reduced choice, but still providing healthy meals.
EDU02 - Increase use of PEF to fund support service costs	£70,000	Use of Scottish Government funding releasing Council funds to avoid cuts to the Education budget. Knowledge and skills already developed in establishments, along with other resources will be used to mitigate potential detriment.
EDU05 - Introduce Early Start Clubs	£187,000	Income generation while still providing a free service to those in low-income households. The EIA makes it clear that no child will miss out on breakfast as those who need it will be catered for by other means. Further to this, officers will bring a report to a future Council/Committee meeting with costed proposals for a multi-child family discount.
EDU18 - Reduce use of SMS text messages with schools communicating with parents using Groupcall.	£10,000	No reduction in service. This has been confirmed as simply a challenge to schools to make texts more concise to save on the cost of sending multiple SMS messages.

RN23 - New approach to road defect repairs	£200,000	Since Labour came to power and severely defunded the road and pavement repairs and maintenance budgets, the standard of our roads and footpaths have deteriorated at an alarming rate. This option from officers reflects the urgent need for change. The SNP still believe the purchase of a JCB PotholePro, ultimately cancelled by the Labour Administration, would have avoided this deterioration while saving the Council millions of pounds in the medium to long term. This option may not deliver the same quality or savings, however it will bring improvements for our residents and allow us to capitalise costs previously charged to revenue.
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Use of free reserves	£1,366,000	Labour have failed to make best use of the reserves available to Council, to provide maximum benefit to our communities. This SNP budget will use this money to protect public services and jobs.
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Part use of voluntary redundancy reserve	£3,200,000	The SNP will use all available funds to protect public services and jobs.
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Restore prudential reserve to 2%	£1,880,000	The Labour Party's decision last year to increase the reserve to 3% saw the Council put millions in the bank while making cuts to Council services. This is unacceptable. The SNP recognises the need for a prudential reserve, however we believe that the 2% reserve we have held for decades is adequate. We need to be using all the funds we have at our disposal to protect public services and jobs at a time when people are really struggling.
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Balance of Smoothing Fund	£2,000,000	The SNP will use all available funds to protect public services and jobs.
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Total Balancing Items	£10,055,000
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Remaining Budget Gap	£0
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**The SNP budget is subject to staff consultation and EIA as appropriate.*

WDC HRA BUDGET AND RENT SETTING 2024/25

March 2024

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

AS the Council's Housing Convenor, my ambition is to make West Dunbartonshire Housing service the best it can be. When I took on this role, I recognised we were facing several challenges and knew a proactive approach was required. I met with Officers and other members of the workforce to fully understand how we were implementing change, and it was immediately clear to me how motivated they were. Working with officers alongside participation and engagement with the Joint Rent Group and West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisation, I now have a great insight into how well our housing service is performing and can help identify areas for change while taking account of tenants' concern. I believe together we can lead the Housing Sector and successfully introduce more housing to meet our tenants' needs, including those with larger families and medical or health needs. Together we are working towards identifying solutions to issues faced in our area, with my focus firmly on eradicating damp and mould and addressing homelessness. Solutions are what our tenants deserve, together with the knowledge, skills and experience of our officers and input of our tenants, we can and will succeed. I have actively engaged with appropriate Scottish Government Ministers on these issues when required, including requesting additional funding to represent the best interests of our tenants.



TENANT REPRESENTATIVES

The Council and West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisation (WDTRO) successfully campaigned for social rented housing to be excluded from the Land and Building Transaction Tax Additional Dwelling Supplement. (LBTT ADS). As a result, from 1st April 2024, the Council will be exempt from LBTT ADS. The Council benefits hugely from having tenant representatives. We have forged good relationship with our representatives, and I have personally experienced how active and passionate they are in ensuring the best for the tenants. I always welcome the constructive dialogue our tenant representatives provide. I am grateful for Tenant Participation Officers who provide real support to tenant representatives, ensuring they are supported to ask questions and address tenants' needs. These representatives are engaged in the

WDC HRA BUDGET AND RENT SETTING 2024/25

Involving You Strategic Approach, which is a Tenant Participation statutory requirement. We currently have the WDTR0, 12 Independent Tenant Resident Associations and an Interested Tenants Register. We liaise with the WDTR0, Joint Rent Group; hold Pre-Housing and Communities Committee meetings to discuss upcoming reports with tenants in advance, attend the Sheltered Housing Forum, the Scrutiny Panel and Estate Walkabouts. We also distribute tenant magazine Housing News on a quarterly basis and have Consultation Frameworks in place.

CONSULTATION

The Council held meetings with tenant representatives and launched consultation to seek tenant's views on our proposals around rent. The outcome of the consultation was that 76% of respondents supported Option 1 and 24% of respondents supported Option 2. The Chief Officer's recommendation within the report reflects the feedback and as a result the Administration will also support Option 1.

Option 1: Under this option, there will be a 6.7% rent increase to maintain current level of service, deliver the capital programme, continue with the new build programme, retain a tenant priority budget of £200k, and a £150k combined tenant support fund.

ENHANCED CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME SUCCESS

The Enhanced Housing Capital Investment Programme was developed in partnership with the WDTR0 and approved by Council last year.

As part of this, work to install environmental sensors in all Council properties is underway. A minimum of 200 will be installed before the end of March and a further 2000 installed each year thereafter. The sensors will help the Council to proactively tackle any potential damp and mould concerns by monitoring air quality in homes, leading to improved living standards for tenants.

Through the Buyback Programme, the Council will add 44 new homes to its housing stock to meet identified housing need this year. The Buyback programme will secure over 300 new Council homes in the next five years.

To upgrade CCTV provision in all our multi storey homes, the Housing Service will invest £750k in 2024/25, improving safety and providing reassurance for our tenants.



WDC HRA BUDGET AND RENT SETTING 2024/25

Further capital improvements are set out under Operational Highlights below.

MORE HOMES PROGRAMME



The Council's More Homes West Dunbartonshire approach has overseen the beginning of construction of 114 high quality, attractive and net zero new Council homes in 2023/24, with a further 107 going on site later in 2024.

The Council's first fully net zero development at Clydebank East will complete in 2024/25 delivering 88 new high-quality homes.

OPERATIONAL SUCCESSES

The Housing service has significantly improved performance around void properties, reducing the number by over 250. The length of time to let properties in West Dunbartonshire is now among the best of any Council landlord in Scotland.

The Council has maintained Gold Accreditation for its commitment to tenant involvement in the delivery of housing services, placing our tenant participation activities as the best in Scotland.

In addition, the Council has implemented a sector-leading approach to eliminating damp and mould issues in its homes.

We developed a new approach to improving the living experience for our multi storey tenants.

SUPPORTING TENANTS IN 2024-25

In order to support tenants throughout the next financial year, a tenant support fund of £150k will be introduced with the aim of helping tenants successfully sustain their tenancies. In addition a Tenant Priority Budget of £200k will be available to support tenant led improvement initiatives within Council housing areas.

HRA CAPITAL SUCCESSES

There has been a range of capital improvements to our homes. As at 31st January, the HRA Capital Investments included:

- New Heating Systems - 914
- External Wall Insulations - 320
- New kitchens - 286
- Medical Adaptations - 197
- Improvements to paths and back courts -186
- New bathrooms - 84
- New showers - 85

WDC HRA BUDGET AND RENT SETTING 2024/25

The in-year works are still ongoing and we will get the final totals in April which will be confirmed in the end of year report.

PLANNED 2024/25 IMPROVEMENT WORKS

We will invest around **£18m** in improvement works to our homes in 2024/25.

- New heating systems - **850**
- EWI - **420**
- UPVC window improvements - **400**
- New roofs - **330**
- New kitchens - **300**
- Medical Adaptations - **250**
- Improvements to paths and back courts - **220**
- New bathrooms - **200**
- New showers – **200**

BUYBACK SCHEME

There is a national shortage of social housing across Scotland which has led to increases in homelessness applications and demand for social housing both locally and nationally.

In West Dunbartonshire, there is a particular need for larger family housing as well as one-bedroom properties. A dedicated officer has now been appointed to lead and progress the BuyBack programme. Empty homes officers and housing officers working in the community will also be

looking to identify properties which could be purchased by the Council.

The initiative has now been running for more than 10 years, having been approved by the committee in 2013.

WILLOX PARK



In February the Housing Committee agreed to the rebuilding of properties at Willox Park Sheltered Housing in Dumbaron. The decision follows detailed investigatory works at the properties to address dampness and mould, with environmental sensors fitted in occupied properties allowing the Council to closely monitor conditions. A thorough consultation exercise was also carried out to ensure everyone had the chance to ask questions and to share their views on how they would like to progress. Following the committee's decision, the 36 homes within the Willox Park Sheltered Housing Complex will now be designated as surplus to requirements and work will start on procurement for the delivery of

WDC HRA BUDGET AND RENT SETTING 2024/25

the redevelopment. Existing tenants will have a personalised housing plan prepared and priority given to existing tenants for the new homes being delivered at the adjacent former care home site.

STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME



The Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-2029 (SHIP) details the projects, both from Council and housing associations, which are likely to receive Scottish Government grant funding. Despite economic uncertainty and high inflation, the SHIP will deliver an ambitious programme of new build homes across West Dunbartonshire. The plan sets out the aim of developing 500 new affordable homes, and buying back 300 properties. Priority will continue to be given to regeneration areas and all projects will be required to provide at least 10% specialist or fully wheelchair accessible housing. Both the new build and the BuyBack programmes will prioritise house types which contribute to identified need including the supply

of larger family homes and preventing homelessness. The details of the priority projects within the SHIP Plan are set out below:

West Dunbartonshire Council will build a total of 546 homes

- Clydebank East **88 homes**
- Pappert **26 homes**
- Willox Park **17 homes**
- Mount Pleasant, Old Kilpatrick **19 homes**
- Clydebank Health Centre **38 homes**
- Bank St, Alexandria **22 homes**
- Bonhill Gap Sites **34 homes**
- Gilmour Avenue **2 homes**
- Acquisition Programme **300 homes**

Dunbritton Housing Association will build 8 new homes as follows:

- 19 Brown St, Haldane 1
- Golfhill Drive, Dalmonach 7

Caledonia Housing Association will build 213 new homes as follows:

- Bellsmyre Regeneration 110 homes
- Dalquhurn, Renton **75 homes**
- Bellsmyre Regeneration **28**

Knowes Housing Association will build 27 new homes as follows:

- Abbeylands Road, Faifley - 27

This level of development continues the growth of new affordable house building in West Dunbartonshire. The delivery of this ambitious plan will depend upon the support of our

WDC HRA BUDGET AND RENT SETTING 2024/25

developing RSL partners and funding from the Scottish Government.

WDC – VETERANS PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS

West Dunbartonshire Council has enhanced its support for veterans by designating two properties and associated support specifically for allocation to those who have served in the Armed Forces. A nomination agreement with Veterans Housing Scotland will mean the homes will be available each year, with the veteran also offered tailored support from both the charity and the Council.

The charity currently has 650 homes to offer veterans across the country, including eight in West Dunbartonshire.

The partnership with the Council will strengthen the support available in West Dunbartonshire, raising awareness of the challenges faced as a result of service and helping reduce the number of veterans who are facing homelessness. Veterans Housing Scotland is working with local authorities to find homes for more of the veterans they support. Many experience mental or physical challenges following time in the armed forces, and are therefore at a greater risk of experiencing homelessness.

LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY SUCCESS

West Dunbartonshire Council has exceeded targets for the delivery of new affordable housing in the area. The Local Housing Strategy 2022-27, which was created to assess housing needs and conditions in order to address any identified issues, outlined ambitions to deliver 230 homes of all tenures, with a minimum of 80 being for social rent. West Dunbartonshire is in the top ten of all UK local authorities for most social housing delivered.

DESIGN STANDARD

A refreshed Design Standard for all new West Dunbartonshire Council homes has been introduced to ensure continued high quality accommodation across the area. As well as exceeding statutory requirements for floor space, accessibility and energy efficiency, Council homes will also help address the need for larger family homes by encouraging developers to develop a better match of housing mix with identified need. In addition, the updated Design Standard will ensure all newly developed homes will be net zero; have measures which improve accessibility to bathroom and shower facilities as tenants' needs change; and have environmental sensors fitted to allow tenants to track temperature and humidity to prevent condensation. The new Standard was agreed at a Housing and Communities Committee and will be applied to any new projects receiving funding approval from the Affordable Housing Supply Programme from 1