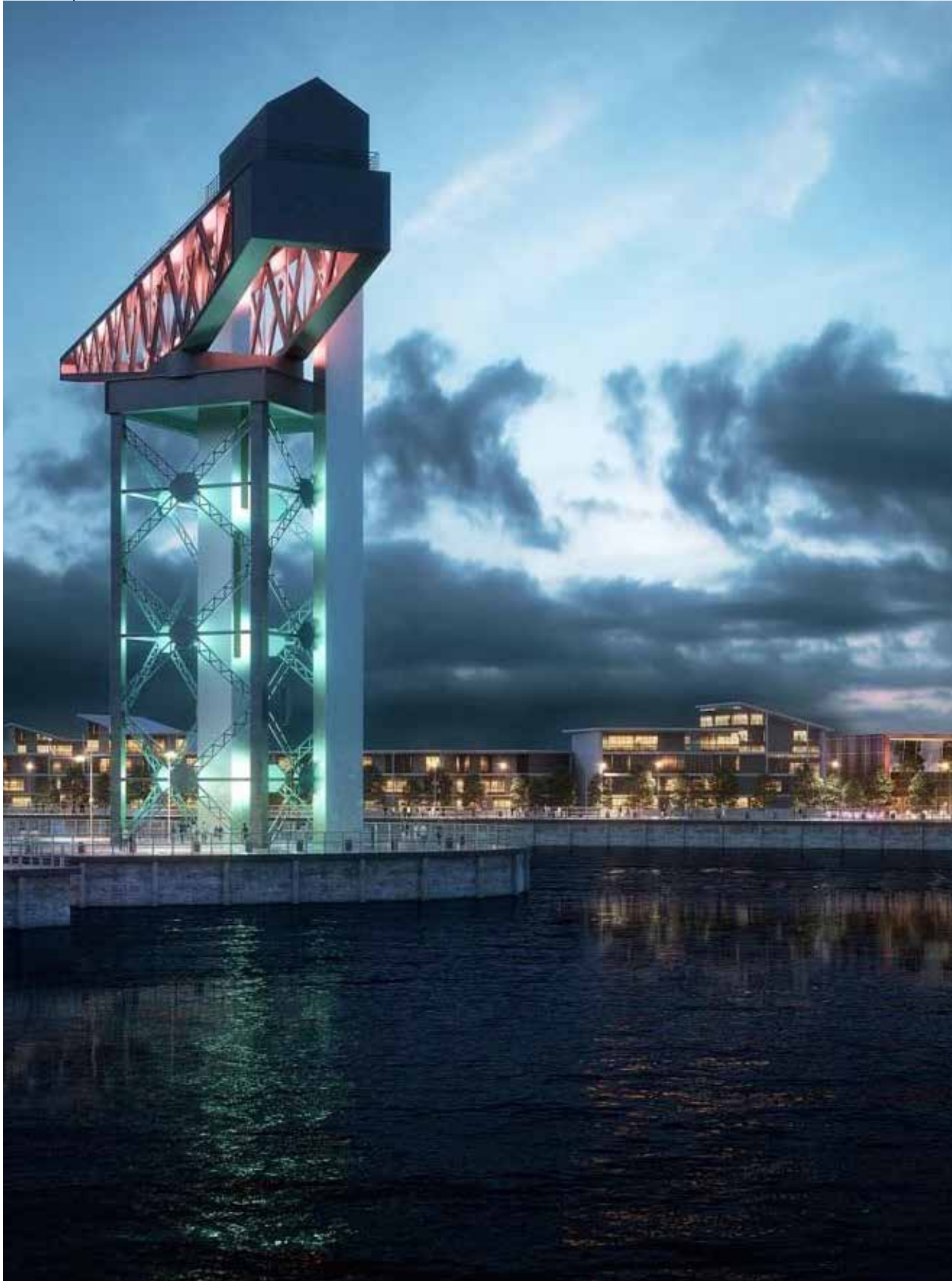


**WEST
DUNBARTONSHIRE
COUNCIL**

**More
Homes
Better
Homes
2020 -
2021**



Our Vision, Values and Ethos

West Dunbartonshire Council is delivering high quality services, led by priorities identified by the communities of West Dunbartonshire, in an open and transparent way.

At the core of what we do as a Council is a commitment to reduce inequality and tackle root causes of poverty including child poverty. The strategic priorities we have adopted are focused on improving the lives of the people of West Dunbartonshire, by promoting equality for all.

Underpinning our strategic priorities are the following key principles, which inform all the work that we do. We will be:

- **a listening Council**
- **an accessible Council**
- **a responsive Council**
- **an open Council**

Our Strategic Plan for the period 2017-2022 was approved in October 2017. It details the key commitments of the Council for the period and gives information on what will change in these key priority areas.

- **a strong local economy and improved employment opportunities**
- **supported individuals, families and carers living independently and with dignity**
- **meaningful community engagement with active empowered and informed citizens who feel safe and engaged**



More affordable and suitable housing options and delivering Value for Money

Housing is a crucial element to promoting good quality health and wellbeing outcomes, and work is ongoing to enshrine the right to good housing within human rights legislation in Scotland. Good quality, sustainable housing meeting the needs of our communities is a key cornerstone in developing a positive and prosperous West Dunbartonshire and we will invest significantly in achieving our housing ambitions.

We also have a strong commitment to keeping rents affordable and following a comprehensive and transparent rent setting consultation carried out between October 2019 and December 2019, a below inflation rise is being recommended to Council for the third successive year.

Together with our updated 30 year business plan which ensures long-term affordability and adaptability for the Housing Revenue Account, this will allow us to deliver value for money services to tenants, increased investment in our housing stock and ensure that future housing developments are sustainable, accessible and adaptable to meet the changing needs of our population.

The Local Housing Strategy for the period 2017-22 sets out the policies and proposals to address the following key objectives:

- **Housing need and demand**
- **Promoting good quality housing**
- **Homelessness**
- **Sustainable and supportive communities**
- **Addressing particular housing needs**

More Homes, Better Homes

Our More Homes West Dunbartonshire strategic approach oversees the provision of social rented housing by the Council. The Council will be a key player in delivering the 1,000 new homes target by 2021, with work in progress to deliver over 500 new Council homes in 2020/21 and investing over £80m within the new revised Housing Capital Investment Programme.

Our vision beyond the 2021 Affordable Housing Supply Target is an on-going commitment to deliver the highest quality, most efficient new homes in order to deliver the identified needs of local communities.

Location	Number of units
Second Ave/Singer St (completed April 2018)	40
St. Andrew's High School	126
Creveul Court, Alexandria	22
Aitkenbar Primary, Bellsmyre	55
Haldane Primary School	58
Clydebank East, ex MSF site	50
Queens Quay, Clydebank	60
Dumbarton Harbour	45
Buyback Programme	80

In addition to our new build programme, the Council plans to exceed the Scottish Housing Quality Standard with the introduction of our new West Dunbartonshire Housing Standard and meet the new Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) by the end of the 2020.

The ESSH aims to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland. It will help to reduce energy consumption, fuel poverty and the emission of greenhouse gases and will make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

Regenerating our Communities

The development of the ESSH sends out the clear signal that achieving greater levels of energy efficiency is one of the strategic priorities for the Council as a landlord and that energy efficiency becomes one of the main drivers for investment.

The refreshed Housing Capital Investment Programme for period 2020/25 presented to Council in March 2020 seeks approval of over £60m in investment in Council homes over the next five years. Over the period of 2020/21, we plan to:

- **improve 600 homes with new boilers/central heating systems**
- **improve 400 homes with new external insulated render**
- **improve 400 homes with new roof coverings**
- **improve 350 homes with window/door renewals**
- **improve 80 homes with kitchen renewals**
- **improve 90 homes with bathroom renewals**
- **improve 600 homes with electrical shower installs**
- **install 3000 smoke/fire detectors**
- **carry out 300 medical adaptations**
- **carry out 500 path upgrades**

In addition, our Better Homes West Dunbartonshire approach will seek to ensure we prioritise work:

- **to continue to involve tenants in the delivery of our investment and regeneration programmes**
- **explore future opportunities to make our properties low carbon**



MORE HOMES BETTER HOMES



No Home for Domestic Abuse

During 2018/19 the Council became the first social landlord in Scotland to introduce a zero tolerance policy on domestic abuse within its properties. Measures have been introduced to ensure that victims have immediate access to practical help and specialist legal assistance and support following any incident of domestic abuse.

The full scope of anti-social behaviour powers are utilised in conjunction with Housing and Matrimonial Homes Legislation to ensure that victims can remain at home, with perpetrators being legally removed, and prevented from returning.

The 'No Home for Domestic Abuse' campaign protects victims and their families by introducing a presumption that all tenancies for couples are in joint names. If an incident of domestic abuse occurs, the victim will legally be entitled to remain in the home.

The Council will also take a tough stance on tenants found guilty of committing domestic abuse by offering them only short-term tenancies and ensuring the property is at a distance from the victim.

The NHDA initiative has now helped over 200 households, providing advice and support, removing perpetrators, providing added security measures in homes and assisting people to relocate to a new tenancy where appropriate. An example of how the approach has helped people is a female tenant who suffered from domestic violence for several years. The victim contacted NHDA for support and advice and following a meeting a refuge placement was secured out-with West Dunbartonshire for safety reasons. A move was facilitated within 3 days of initial contact with NHDA with the victim being provided with a tenancy household package (carpets, flooring, blinds and white goods) when she felt confident enough to leave the refuge.

An improving housing service

- provide person-centred housing and pre-tenancy advice
- establish local lettings planning and initiatives in accordance with our revised allocations policy and legislative framework
- empty properties reduced from 390 at the end of 2015 to 119 at the end of 2019
- time taken to let empty properties reduced from 47 days in 2015 to 23 days in 2019
- reduced patch sizes, allowing Housing Officers to spend more time on the issues that matter most to our tenants
- undertaking arrears prevention activity and maximising access to employability services
- providing support to enable households to remain in their homes, helping to sustain independent living

Integrated Housing Project

We are implementing the first phase of our new housing management system. The Integrated Housing Management System (IHMS) has been designed to increase the number of ways that tenants can communicate with the Council. Reactive Repairs Operatives are now using mobile phones to receive repairs appointments. Tenants with mobile phones will also be able to get appointment reminders and a 'I'm on my way' text which will reduce the number of missed appointments. Tenants can also now complete satisfaction surveys as soon as the work is complete. When the system is fully in place, tenants will also be able to go online to apply for housing, pay rent and much more. The new technology will also mean housing staff will be easier to contact and will have better access to the information they require to deal with any tenant enquiries.

A Stronger Tenant Voice

To support our key principles of being a listening, accessible, responsive and open Council, we are committed to strengthening the tenant voice across housing services, increasing opportunities to participate and influence the provision and improvement of services.

Our Housing Management Team and Housing Convener meet regularly with tenants and tenant bodies including individual Tenant and Resident Associations, their umbrella group the West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisation (WDTRO) and the Joint Rent Group which was established with the aim of ensuring services are delivering value for money. The West Dunbartonshire Scrutiny Panel are currently working on their fifth scrutiny exercise and report directly to the Housing Improvement Board where their improvement recommendations are a standing agenda item.

During 2019/20 the areas we consulted on included the following:

- **annual rent setting process**
- **our new 5-year Strategic Housing Investment Plan**
- **the review of our anti-social behaviour and Caretaking services**
- **fire safety within multi-storey blocks**
- **the content and layout of our Charter Performance Report**
- **the content and layout of our Sheltered Housing handbook**

The implementation of our Tenant Participation Strategy and added investment in our 'Tenant Voice' structures provide continued opportunities for tenants to get involved and influence services being provided. 84% of tenants are now satisfied with these opportunities to participate, a rise of 32% since 2014. Our approach was recognised during 2019/20 when we were awarded Gold Accreditation from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service for tenant engagement activities.



Other achievements in 2019/20 include the following:

- We have implemented Year 3 of our **Local Housing Strategy** for the period 2017/22 which focuses on:
 - ◆ Housing need and demand
 - ◆ Promoting good quality housing
 - ◆ Homelessness and Housing Options
 - ◆ Sustainable and supportive communities
 - ◆ Addressing particular housing needs

- We have implemented Year 2 of our **Better Homes West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy** for the period 2018/23 which aims to ensure that we:
 - ◆ Manage the housing 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

- We have implemented Year 3 of our homelessness strategy '**More than a Roof**' which aims to ensure that:
 - ◆ People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness
 - ◆ People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices
 - ◆ Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice
 - ◆ Homeless people are provided with suitable, good quality temporary or emergency accommodation when it is needed
 - ◆ Homeless people are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to



- We have implemented Year 1 of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan **'Home at the Heart'** which aims to ensure that:
 - ◆ There is a whole system approach to the prevention of homelessness
 - ◆ Homeless households with no/low support needs access settled accommodation quickly
 - ◆ We develop interim housing options which enable independent living and tenancy sustainment
 - ◆ We implement a Housing First model which enables the most excluded service users to achieve tenancy sustainment
 - ◆ We have carried out a robust Rent Consultation with tenants and taken actions to increase transparency and value for money for the Housing Revenue Account
 - ◆ We have begun to implement our new Integrated Housing Management System which will drive the delivery of more integrated and streamlined services
 - ◆ We continue to deliver the standards and outcomes outlined in the Scottish Social Housing Charter
 - ◆ We have developed and implemented a Young Care Leavers rental project to support young care leavers in further or higher education
 - ◆ We have further reduced the number of properties that are abandoned across West Dunbartonshire

What's happening in 2020/21?

- Continue to improve housing services across all areas
- Continue to implement the our new build programme of social housing
- Review and prioritise our Housing Capital Investment Programme in partnership with tenants
- Continue to mitigate the worst aspects of welfare reform and support tenants most affected
- Further develop our Homelessness and Housing Options approach to ensure we continue to meet the needs of our communities in the spirit of our More Than a Roof strategic approach
- Continue to look at all actions that can be taken to address serious anti-social behavior and take significant actions to tackle domestic abuse

