

Agenda

Housing and Communities Committee

Date: Wednesday, 2 February 2022

Time: 14:00

Venue: Video Conference

Contact: Gabriella Gonda, Committee Officer
Email: Gabriella.Gonda@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Dear Member

Please attend a meeting of the **Housing and Communities Committee** as detailed above.

The Convener has directed that the powers contained in Section 43 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 will be used and so Members will attend the meeting remotely.

The business is shown on the attached agenda.

Yours faithfully

JOYCE WHITE

Chief Executive

Distribution:-

Councillor Diane Docherty (Chair)
Councillor Ian Dickson (Vice Chair)
Councillor Gail Casey
Councillor Karen Conaghan
Councillor Jim Finn
Provost William Hendrie
Councillor David McBride
Councillor Jonathan McColl
Councillor Iain McLaren
Councillor John Millar
Councillor John Mooney
Councillor Sally Page

All other Councillors for information

Chief Executive
Chief Officer - Housing & Employability
Chief Officer - Regulation and Regeneration
Chief Officer - Supply, Distribution and Property

Date issued: 20 January 2022

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HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2022

AGENDA

1 STATEMENT BY CHAIR – AUDIO STREAMING

The Chair will be heard in connection with the above.

2 APOLOGIES

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are invited to declare if they have an interest in any of the items of business on this agenda and the reasons for such declarations.

4 RECORDING OF VOTES

The Committee is asked to agree that all votes taken during the meeting be done by roll call vote to ensure an accurate record.

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 7 – 12

Submit, for approval as a correct record, the Minutes of Meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee held on 3 November 2021.

6 OPEN FORUM

The Committee is asked to note that no open forum questions have been submitted by members of the public.

7 MORE HOMES WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE – WEST 13 – 21 DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY DELIVERY PROGRAMME

Submit report by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability providing an update on progress with West Dunbartonshire's More Homes Programme which oversees the delivery of the Council's new home programme.

8/

- 8 WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE HOUSING ALLOCATON POLICY REVIEW 23 – 71**
- Submit report by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability seeking approval of changes to the Housing Allocations Policy resulting from a full review of the policy that was carried out during 2021 and which was the subject of a formal consultation which ended in autumn 2021.
- 9 WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2022-2027 – MORE HOMES BETTER HOMES WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE 73 – 123**
- Submit report by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability presenting and seeking final approval of the Council's new Local Housing Strategy (LHS) for the five year period 2022 to 2027.
- 10 “HOME AT THE HEART 2019-24” WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE'S RAPID RE-HOUSING TRANSITION PLAN UPDATE AND NEW APPROACHES TO HOMLESSNESS PROGRESS REPORT 125 – 134**
- Submit report by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability:-
- (a) providing an update in terms of the progress and challenges in delivering Year 3 of “Home at the Heart”, our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP), and outlining the key findings from the review of our residential supported accommodation; and
 - (b) providing an update regarding the Scottish Government funding and our local response to the recommendations made by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG).
- 11 EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE PROVISION 135 – 141**
- Submit report by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability providing an update on the progress of the delivery of employability programmes and support that is set within the context of ‘No One Left Behind’, a new approach to employability services that requires partner input to services.
- 12 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2021 (PERIOD 9) To Follow**
- Submit report by the Chief Officer, Resources providing an update on the financial performance to 31 December 2021 (Period 9) of the HRA revenue and capital budgets for 2021/22.

13 FINANCIAL REPORT 2021/22 AS AT PERIOD 9 143 – 153
(31 DECEMBER 2021)

Submit report by the Chief Officer, Resources providing an update on the financial performance to 31 December 2021 (Period 9) of those services under the auspices of the Housing and Communities Committee.

14 SCRUTINY REPORTS

(A) POLICE SCRUTINY REPORT 155 – 156

Submit report by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland providing Members with an update.

(B) FIRE AND RESCUE SCRUTINY QUARTER 3 REPORT 157 – 166

Submit report by Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing appropriate performance data measured against priorities in the West Dunbartonshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

At a Hybrid Meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee held in the Civic Space, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 3 November 2021 at 10.05 a.m.

Present: Councillors Gail Casey, Karen Conaghan, Ian Dickson, Diane Docherty, Jim Finn, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Iain McLaren, John Miller, John Mooney and Sally Page.

Attending: Peter Barry, Chief Officer – Housing and Employability; Angela Wilson, Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property; John Kerr, Housing Development and Homelessness Manager; Nicola Pettigrew, Housing Operations Manager; Martin Feeney, Building Services Manager; Alan Young, Housing Asset and Investment Manager; Janice Rainey, Finance Business Partner; Michelle Lynn, Asset Co-ordinator; Sally Michael, Principal Solicitor; and Gabriella Gonda, Committee Officer.

Also attending: Chief Inspector Coleen Wylie and Superintendent Claire Dobson, Police Scotland; and Area Commander Joe McKay and Watch Commander Allan Gemmel, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Apology: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Provost William Hendrie. An apology was also given for Chief Superintendent John Paterson, Police Scotland.

Councillor Diane Docherty in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR – AUDIO STREAMING

Councillor Docherty, Chair, advised that the meeting was being audio streamed and broadcast live to the internet and would be available for playback.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest in any item of business on the agenda.

RECORDING OF VOTES

The Committee agreed that all votes taken during the meeting would be done by roll call vote to ensure an accurate record.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee held on 1 September 2021 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

OPEN FORUM

The Committee noted that no open forum questions have been submitted by members of the public.

MORE HOMES WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE – WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY DELIVERY PROGRAMME

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability providing an update on progress with West Dunbartonshire's More Homes Programme which oversees the delivery of the Council's new home programme.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the content of the report and the progress made to date in the delivery of the Council's More Homes West Dunbartonshire approach including the practical completion and handover of the full projects at Creveul Court, Aitkenbar, St Andrews and Haldane this year;
- (2) to note the success of the Council's Creveul Court development being shortlisted for the Scottish Housing Awards in the Affordable Housing Development Category as the third national recognition that this exemplar development has received; and
- (3) to note that a refreshed More Home West Dunbartonshire delivery programme will be submitted to the February 2022 meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee.

MORE HOMES WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2022/23 TO 2026/27 UPDATE REPORT

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability seeking approval for the More Homes West Dunbartonshire Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) for 2022/23 to 2026/67 which requires to be submitted to the Scottish Government.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) the draft SHIP 2022/23 to 2026/27 as appended to the report, designed to assist in the delivery of an ambitious programme of new affordable homes as contained in the new West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2022-27; and
- (2) to invite the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability to fully implement the investment plan in partnership with relevant stakeholders, notably the Scottish Government.

BETTER HOMES WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE – BRUNSWICK, MONTREAL & QUEBEC HOUSES, CLYDEBANK

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability providing an update on the consultation exercise with tenants of Brunswick, Montreal and Quebec Houses over the future of the three blocks as part of the Council's Better Homes West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the content of the report and the actions that have been taken to consult with the residents of Brunswick, Montreal and Quebec Houses, North Mountblow, Clydebank;
- (2) to designate all 78 properties within these three blocks as surplus to requirements;
- (3) to invite the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability to take the next steps with remaining tenants:-
 - (a) to ensure that all tenants have a live and current housing application and are provided with the necessary priority identification through the Council's Allocation Policy; and
 - (b) to discuss and authorise Home Loss and Disturbance Payments with all tenants;
- (4) to authorise the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability to commence the procurement of a demolition contractor at the appropriate time during the re-housing process; and
- (5) to delegate to the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability, to investigate options for future use of the land and report back to a future meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee.

HOUSING AND EMPLOYABILITY DELIVERY PLAN 2021/22: MID-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability setting out progress to date in delivery of the actions detailed within the Housing and Employability Delivery Plan 2021/22.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and the progress achieved at mid-year.

SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER/REGULATION OF SOCIAL HOUSING IN SCOTLAND PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability providing benchmarking information relating to how the Council has performed against the Scottish Social Housing Charter indicators and updating on how we are meeting the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report recognising the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the 2020/21 performance;
- (2) to note that a Charter Improvement Plan had been developed based on a comprehensive assessment of performance and had informed the production and publication of our annual Charter Performance Report;
- (3) to approve our Annual Assurance Statement and for this to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator as per the regulatory requirement;
- (4) to note that a full annual progress report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter would be submitted to the September 2022 meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee; and
- (5) to note that the Council's approach to promoting active tenant scrutiny had been recognised nationally through being nominated in the Excellence in Tenant Scrutiny at the forthcoming Scottish Housing Awards.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE DRAFT LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2022-2027

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability seeking approval for the draft Council's new Local Housing Strategy (LHS) for the five year period 2022-2027.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the draft West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027 as appended to the report;
- (2) to invite the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability to submit the final draft version to the Scottish Government by the end of November 2021; and
- (3) to note that an update report would be presented to the Housing and Communities Committee at its meeting in February 2022.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2021 (PERIOD 6)

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability providing an update on the financial performance to 30 September 2021 (Period 6) of the HRA revenue and capital budgets for 2021/22.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that the revenue analysis showed a projected annual favourable variance of £0.006m; and
- (2) to note the net projected annual position in relation to the capital plan was highlighting an in-year variance of £1.649m which was made up of slippage of £1.999m (4.14%) and overspend of £0.350m (0.72%) as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2021/22 AS AT PERIOD 6 (30 SEPTEMBER 2021)

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability providing an update on the financial performance to 30 September 2021 (Period 6) of those services under the auspices of the Housing and Communities Committee.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report which showed the revenue budget forecast to overspend against budget by £0.028m (0.83%) at the year-end, of which £0.039m is COVID-19 related;
- (2) to note the net projected annual position in relation to relevant capital projects which was showing no projected variance; and
- (3) to note the progress on efficiencies incorporated into budgets for 2021/22.

SCRUTINY REPORTS

(A) POLICE SCRUTINY REPORT

A report was submitted by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland providing members with an update.

After discussion and having heard from Superintendent Dobson, Police Scotland, the Committee agreed to note the update given on progress against the Local Police Plan.

(B) FIRE AND RESCUE SCRUTINY QUARTER 3 REPORT

A report was submitted by Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing appropriate performance data measured against priorities in the West Dunbartonshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan.

After discussion and having heard from Area Commander McKay, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service West Dunbartonshire Council Year to Date Report.

The meeting closed at 12.03 p.m.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability****Housing and Communities Committee: 2 February 2022**

**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 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 including the practical completion and handover of the full projects at Creveul Court, Aitkenbar, St Andrews, Haldane and Dumbarton Harbour within 2021; and
 - (ii) Notes that a refreshed More Home West Dunbartonshire delivery programme will be submitted to the February meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee

3. Background

- 3.1** In West Dunbartonshire the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) is delivered through a More Homes West Dunbartonshire strategic approach which was initially tasked with delivering over 1000 new affordable homes in West Dunbartonshire by the end of 2021 and includes the Council's own ambitious New House Building Programme.
- 3.2** The Council's latest practical completion has taken place at the Dumbarton Harbour development delivering 45 new homes for social rent in a town centre. This, is in addition within 2021/22 to the completion of the Council's first fully dementia designed development at Creveul Court, Alexandria and other exemplar developments in Haldane, Aitkenbar, Bellmsyre and St Andrews, Clydebank. The Council have now completed 11 new build developments since 2013 and are the largest developer of social homes in West Dunbartonshire delivering 467 new homes to date as outlined in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Completed Council New Build

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
Totals	467	

- 3.3** The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2022-2026, 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 2021.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** The Strategic Housing Investment Plan and HRA Capital Plan outlined the plans the Council have for meeting their new build ambitions. The initial plans have been impacted as a result of the pandemic and the revised new build targets for the Council are outlined below:

Table 2: Council New Build

Site/Developer	Number of Units	Est Completion Date
Queens Quay, Site B, Clydebank	29	August 2022
Clydebank East, Clydebank	88	August 2023
Pappert, Bonhill Alexandria	27	August 2023*
144 units		

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

St Andrews School:

The site reached practical completion in October 2021, which seen the completion of 126 new homes. 125 of the homes are now tenanted and households are enjoying their new homes. The remaining property is the assisted living unit which will be leased to the Health and Social Care Partnership. An external care provider has now been appointed and the property will now be operational from February 2022.

Dumbarton Harbour:

The final handovers for this site were completed in December 2021 and 45 tenants are now enjoying their new homes. As practical completion has now been achieved the Council is in the process of submitting the final cost information to the Scottish Government to secure additional grant funding previously reported to Committee

Clydebank East:

The demolition of 339 properties was completed in October 2020. Design of 88 new build council properties has been underway with CCG and architects Anderson, Bell and Christie. A consultation event with tenants and residents, Ward Members and Council took place in February 2021. All feedback and questions were extremely helpful and influenced the final design. A Pre Planning Elected Members briefing took place on 30 March 2021 and planning approval was sought for this project and was heard at the October 2021 Planning Committee. However, Planning was continued as committee were concerned at the parking provision provided. As a result, the design team have been progressing looking at the option of providing additional parking provision at the expense of the current open space and play provision and this will again be submitted for Planning. The additional design requirements of the Planning committee decision has somewhat negated the planned site start date of January 2022 and this will lead to increased costs which will be reported to the next Housing and Communities Committee together with a revised programme. This is intended to be the Council's first fully zero carbon housing development and marks a significant milestone in our transition to net zero.

Queens Quay, Site B, Clydebank:

A partnership with Wheatley Group and Clydebank Housing Association, the Council will deliver 29 out of the 146 properties currently on-site. As a result of a delay in securing the materials required to develop Titan Boulevard the delivery of the new Council homes has been delayed from the anticipated date in March 2022 now to August 2022. The delay is replicated for the new homes being delivered by Clydebank Housing Association and Lorretto Housing Association and no new homes will be delivered until completion of Titan Boulevard which is expected to be completed on 22nd July 2022.

Pappert, Bonhill

The Special Housing and Communities Committee in January 2022 approved the appointment of the award of the contract through the Scotland Excel framework for Pappert, Bonhill – Passivhaus / Net Zero Pilot New Build Development to CCG (Scotland) Ltd. As reported to that Special Housing and Communities Committee, the housing mix has been altered from what was previously reported to the Housing and Communities Committee and will now deliver 27 new homes comprising 7 Passivhaus homes and 20 homes meeting the net zero standard

House Type	Sustainability Standard	Number of New Homes
House 3bed/4 person	Passivhaus	4
House 3bed/5 person	Passivhaus	3
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

Buy Back Scheme:

Since 2015 the Council has operated a Buy Back Scheme that assists the Housing Team in purchasing properties of formerly Council homes that were sold through the Right to Buy Scheme. Not only does this Scheme assist with tackling homelessness and housing need and some common capital works, it also contributes towards the More Homes agenda by adding additional stock to the Council's portfolio that is the right type and size and in the right location. The Scheme continued following lockdown with social distancing and virtual viewings still in place. However the Council did manage to complete 15 purchases in 2020/21 providing new homes to household in housing need. So far this financial year, the Council has purchased 11 properties (as at December 2021) at a total cost of £768k. It is anticipated that the use of purchasing properties in the open market to meet our strategic housing objectives will increase over the next few years and this is reflected in the recently published Housing to 2040 strategy by the Scottish Government.

- 4.3** Our dementia friendly development at Creveul Court received the commendation award at the Homes for Scotland Awards 2021 in the Development of the Year. This award recognises excellence in the creation of new homes and place-making across the country with finalists and was chosen by an independent judging panel. The 22 homes at Creveul Court have been designed to make independent living easier for tenants with dementia. The development has also been shortlisted for the Association Public Sector Excellence (APSE) Margo Blair Innovation Award, celebrating outstanding local councils that use innovative ideas and solutions to tackle the current challenges facing their frontline services.

Future New Build – West Dunbartonshire

- 4.4** Building new affordable homes has an important role to play in revitalising local economies and assisting with post-pandemic recovery plans. It is also clear that the need for affordable homes has and will increase. *Future New Build – West Dunbartonshire* is an ambitious plan that aims to continue the positive momentum of the More Homes West Dunbartonshire programme.
- 4.5** As the biggest affordable housing developer in West Dunbartonshire, the Council has identified potential future 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. We have identified the Pappert development site as the optimum site to develop our planned Passivhaus pilot. In addition, as agreed at the Special meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee in January we are preparing a paper for the next Housing and Communities Committee which will provide an option for all future council new build developments to achieve as a minimum zero carbon standards.

- 4.6** The ongoing pandemic has highlighted that housing and health outcomes are interconnected. We must build on our recent progress if we are to address health inequalities within our communities. As early adopters of the Dementia Framework at Creveul Court, West Dunbartonshire Council are at the forefront of Dementia Design best practice. The fundamentals of Dementia Design have been embedded in West Dunbartonshire's Design Standard as a further commitment to respond to the varying housing needs of our residents.
- 4.7** Our Design Standard already incorporates the following elements which the Scottish Government are planning on making mandatory conditions of any future grant from the Affordable Housing Supply Programme
- all new homes will offer a private or communal outdoor space (this could include a private garden, patio, roof terrace or balcony, or a communal shared garden or courtyard);
 - all new homes will space for home working or study (this could be located in a circulation space and could occupy a room by itself or could form part of another room);
 - all new homes to be digitally-enabled (when a tenant gets the keys to their home this would mean that they are able to arrange for an internet connection to 'go live' with any internet service provider available in the area without the internet service provider having to provide additional cabling either within the premises, or as importantly, to the premises from the relevant Cabinet); we are currently looking at opportunities to further improve this and ensure future new homes are fully connected; and
 - The installation of automatic fire suppression systems in new homes; and
- 4.8** One of the ambitions through the future new build plan is to address housing inequalities, tackle fuel poverty, child poverty and improve health outcomes for future generations within West Dunbartonshire.
- 4.9** In order to contribute to future new build, the Housing Development team have been working on investigating potential sites that affordable housing can be developed on. In addition to the developments highlighted at 4.1 of this report:

Queens Quay, Site C, Clydebank

The Council is currently developing a design to deliver a projected 20 family type homes 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.

Willox Park, Doveholm, Dumbarton

This site was transferred in March 2021 to the Housing Revenue Account for £220k after being approved by the Housing and Communities Committee in November 2020. The acquisition was fully funded by additional grant funding from the Scottish Government.

Further and more detailed discussions with HSCP is now taking place as the new properties will also be additional sheltered housing and the design of the project will be progressed.

Bank Street, Alexandria

This site has now been transferred to the Housing Revenue Account from the General Services account at a cost of £194k; the acquisition was supported by an additional £150k of grant funding from the Scottish Government. There are a number of constraints within the site and the costs of remediating these issues will be shared by both the General Services and Housing Revenue Capital budgets. Work on designing the site will now progress and be fed back to the next Housing and Communities Committee.

Mount Pleasant, Old Kilpatrick

This site was also purchased along with Bank Street and Willox Park at the end of the financial year. A number of surveys have been instructed prior to the planned demolition of the existing building. While planning in terms of this development is at an early stage we would seek to deliver a similar development to the recent Creveul Court development this is supported by a housing needs assessment.

Dennystoun Forge

We have engaged with the existing Gypsy Travellers community at Dennystoun Forge seeking to provide additional accommodation to meet the current and future needs of the existing residents. Our initial plans have formed an application to the recently introduced Scottish Government funding opportunity through the Gypsy Travellers Accommodation Fund. However, it was not taking forward by the Scottish Government at this stage; however we plan to continue the design and consultative process in terms of this project.

Gap Site Strategy

An exercise is currently underway to assess the viability of a number of gap sites for future housing development within the ownership of HRA. The outcomes will be reported back to the next meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee with proposals to inform the development of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan

- 4.10** The provision of much needed new housing has contributed to positively regenerating local communities in line with the ambitions set out within the Local Housing Strategy.
- 4.11** In addition, other initiatives through our Better Homes approach, such as the implementation of the Housing Asset Management Strategy, housing management initiatives and the HRA Capital Programme carrying out significant works on existing stock have all contributed positively to the overall regeneration of these priority areas.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no people implications from this report.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

Financial

- 6.1** In March 2021 Council approved the Housing Capital Programme 2021-2026 which saw significant resources committed to the delivery of new council homes in West Dunbartonshire. An expenditure budget of £83.393m for the affordable housing supply programme is factored into the HRA Capital Programme. The additionality in the costs highlighted for the Pappert development can be met from this existing budget; however we would anticipate additional grant funding would be made. As it currently stands, it is anticipated that this programme will complete on project life budget.
- 6.2** Influenced by Brexit, the current Covid-19 pandemic and other issues, the emergence of supply issues and subsequent cost increases has begun to be felt within not only our existing and future sites, but sites across Scotland and the UK. Whilst the impact of these is still being examined, it is prudent to mention this as early as possible in order to provide more detailed information at a future Committee. We have seen an impact in Dumbarton Harbour and we are likely to see this impact on our future development sites including Clydebank East. Housing Development Officers and Finance will continue to assess the impacts in the context of affordability of developments.

Procurement

- 6.3** All new development sites will be subject to new detailed procurement strategies and the opportunities highlighted with 4.9 of this report will continue to be prioritised.

Community Benefits

- 6.4** As part of each project, the contract has incorporated an element of Community Benefits that can support a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits for communities including jobs, apprenticeships and local charity and community initiatives. A summary of the community benefits

achieved through the first phase of the More Homes West Dunbartonshire approach is outlined in the table below:-

Community Benefit Value	Total
Work placement opportunities (16 plus years) – no. individuals	30
Construction Curriculum support activities – no. individuals	16
Graduates - no. individuals	1
Apprenticeship starts - no. individuals	17
Existing Apprenticeships - no. individuals	17
Apprenticeships completed - no. individuals	22
New jobs created on construction project - no. individuals	16
Community Engagement/Investment	£83k

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.
- 7.3** Risk associated with the impact of and ongoing Covid-19 pandemic will be incorporated within the Risk Registers going forward.

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 recent 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. Regular updates on new build development are provided to the West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisation at the bi-monthly liaison meetings. As detailed at 6.4 above, each project will have their own element of Community Benefits. This will provide opportunities for the community to become involved and participate whether this is pupils at the local school or interested community members.

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. 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.

Peter Barry
Chief Officer, Housing and Employability
Date: 19 January 2022

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

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability****Housing and Communities Committee: 2 February 2022**

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Housing Allocation Policy Review**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** This report seeks approval for changes to the Housing Allocations Policy resulting from a full review of the policy that was carried out during 2021 and which was the subject of a formal consultation which ended in Autumn 2021.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Housing and Communities Committee:
- (i) Approves the proposed changes to the West Dunbartonshire Council Housing Allocation Policy and updated policy attached as Appendix 1, and ;
 - (ii) Requests that the Chief Officer Housing and Employability ensures the effective implementation of the updated Housing Allocation Policy including an appropriate communications plan.

3. Background

- 3.1** Following the introduction of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, a review of our Housing Allocations Policy was undertaken and was approved by the Housing and Communities Committee (HACC) in November 2017.
- 3.2** We committed to carry out a further review of the policy in 3 years (by Nov 2020), however the Covid-19 pandemic delayed this work and a report to the HACC in November 2020 proposed some small technical changes to the policy and outlined that a fully reviewed policy would be brought to a future HACC for approval.
- 3.3** The current Allocations Policy was updated to take account of the changes introduced by the 2014 Act. It largely reflects good practice and has not been the focus of large number of complaints. However, a number of issues had been raised including through discussion with tenant representatives which required some aspects of the policy to be reviewed and updated.
- 3.4** This review also provided the opportunity to improve the existing Allocations Policy so that it more adequately meets the aspirations of those in housing need, aligns with our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and fully takes account of the Scottish Government best practice guidance published in February 2019.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1 The review process identified several areas where it was felt the policy could be improved and in June 2021 the Housing Improvement Board (HIB) agreed to consult with tenants, housing applicants and wider stakeholders on specific proposals to make changes to the policy.

Under-occupation of existing Council properties

- 4.2 **Issue:** Low numbers of existing council tenants who are currently under-occupying properties are applying for a transfer to a smaller property and few of these are actually being rehoused. Points currently being awarded for under-occupancy are not an adequate incentive to encourage more of our existing tenants to downsize and free up properties for larger families in housing need and on the housing list.
- 4.3 **Consultation and feedback:** We asked the following question - How supportive are you of the proposal to award more points to current and future transfer applicants who are under-occupying their properties? Feedback from the consultation showed clear support for this proposal with 73% of respondents being either very supportive or supportive.
- 4.4 **Proposal:** It is therefore being proposed that we increase the points awarded for under occupancy for tenants applying to be rehoused to 20 points for each spare bedroom.
- 4.5 **Benefits:** Increasing the number of transfer applications from households who are currently under-occupying and increasing the number of these households that are rehoused will free up more of the larger properties within our stock, which will enable us to better meet the evidenced need and demand currently on the housing list.

Doing more to increase access to housing for young people at risk of homelessness

- 4.6 **Issue:** Youth homelessness is a key challenge and West Dunbartonshire is noted as a “youth homelessness hot spot” within the Scottish Government’s statistics. Young people aged 16 to 24 make up 9.8% of the population in West Dunbartonshire, yet this age group accounted for 32% of all homeless presentations during 2020/21 (compared to a Scottish average figure of just 24%).
- 4.7 **Consultation and feedback:** We asked the following question - How supportive are you of the proposal to create a recognised pathway into housing for young people within our Allocations Policy? Feedback from the consultation showed clear support for this proposal with 64% of respondents being either very supportive or supportive.

4.8 Proposal: That young people at risk of homelessness are created as an additional group given a reasonable preference within the Allocations Policy and a certain proportion of available properties is allocated to this group (this would be similar to our provision for Young Care Leavers and the expectation is that they would be sourced from live cases at risk of homelessness and that are engaging with the Council's Housing Options Service). This quota will be reviewed and updated annually as is the case with other groups given reasonable preference within the policy.

4.9 Benefits: This would be a key system change in terms of initiatives to tackle youth homelessness and would align to our wider policy objectives outlined in our Local Housing Strategy and Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. Our Care Leavers Housing Protocol has been cited as an example of best practice winning a COSLA Excellence Award in 2019 and if adopted will fundamentally positively impact in addressing the housing needs of young people. As with young people housed through a homelessness application we will ensure that the Homelessness and Housing Options service provide full resettlement support to young people also housed through this group and this would require to be resourced appropriately.

Awarding of Medical Needs and Disability points

4.10 Issue: The review of the Allocations Policy carried out looked closely at the issue of those with a medical need and their access to housing. The current approach is providing adequate access to housing for those applicants with a high and medium award, whilst those with a low award get little benefit in terms of being able to access housing. The review also highlighted that some Medical C awards have stipulations or recommendations such as 'applicant would benefit from a garden' or 'applicant would benefit from ground floor housing', however the subsequent points awarded is not adequate to secure this type of housing in a number of situations.

4.11 Consultation and feedback: We asked the following question - How supportive are you of the proposal to remove the low medical point category from our Allocations Policy? Feedback from the consultation for this proposal showed that more were supportive than unsupportive with 48% of respondents being either very supportive or supportive and 25% being either unsupportive or very unsupportive.

4.12 Proposal: Whilst feedback showed that more were supportive of the proposal than were unsupportive, it is being proposed following discussion with tenant representatives that this should be implemented as part of a wider review of how we identify and allocate properties based on medical need. No policy change is therefore being recommended at this time but this wider review will be taken forward and recommendations for changes will be made at a future meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee.

Social/Relocation Points

- 4.13 Issue:** Our Allocations Policy currently awards Social/Relocation points including Incoming Worker points for applicants experiencing difficulty in travelling to work and living more than 30 miles from their place of work in West Dunbartonshire. Feedback suggests that the current requirement to live more than 30 miles from a place of work, means that many people working in West Dunbartonshire and looking to live in West Dunbartonshire do not qualify for these points but still face difficulties in terms of time and expense travelling to work.
- 4.14 Consultation and feedback:** We asked the following question - How supportive are you of the proposal to remove the radius restriction for anyone who already works in West Dunbartonshire but doesn't live in the area? Feedback from the consultation showed support for this proposal with 47% of respondents being either very supportive or supportive and 21% being unsupportive or very unsupportive.
- 4.15 Proposal:** That the 30 mile qualifying criteria be removed and that all applications from those living outside of West Dunbartonshire are awarded Incoming Worker points.
- 4.16 Benefits:** This would support the wider Council objective of attracting more working people to live within the area, positively boosting the local economy and reducing travel time, costs and carbon impact for those who would benefit from such a change.

Points for living in a multi-storey flat

- 4.17 Issue:** The current allocations policy awards points for households who live in a multi storey flat and have children under the age of 16 and wish to move to alternative accommodation. This does not reflect any housing need and suggests that this house type in itself is not suitable for households with children. Given that multi storey flats account for around 14% of our housing stock, that many households with children live in this house type and that multi storey flats continue to be allocated to households with children, it is felt that this is not reasonable and does not align with a needs based policy.
- 4.18 Consultation and feedback:** We asked the following question - How supportive are you of the proposal to stop awarding the 10 points given to families in multi storey flats who wish to move out? Feedback from the consultation showed support for this proposal with 44% of respondents being either very supportive or supportive and 33% being unsupportive or very unsupportive.
- 4.19 Proposal:** That points awarded solely for living in a multi storey flat are removed from the policy. This change would not be applied retrospectively, meaning that this would only apply for new applications and that those applications on our housing list with these points would retain them and would not be adversely affected.

- 4.20 Benefits:** Removes the suggestion that this house type in itself is not a reasonable housing option for households with children and is consistent with the development of our High Rise Home Strategy which aims to ensure that this house type is a positive housing destination for our citizens. All households currently living in a multi storey flat and applying for rehousing will continue to have their application assessed and pointed according to the wider policy.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no direct people implications from this policy as implementing and meeting the requirements of the policy will be delivered from resources within Housing and Employability funded from the Housing Revenue Account and the ongoing review of these to ensure successful delivery.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** There are no direct financial or procurement implications as a result of this policy.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** The reviewed and updated Housing Allocations Policy provides the Council with the opportunity to improve the existing system and more adequately reflect the demand for housing and the need to use flexibilities available to ensure that tenancies are as sustainable as possible.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** The updated policy has been subject to a full Equalities Impact Assessment and no significant issues were identified, this is available as a background paper to this report.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** The review of the allocations policy was undertaken in close consultation with waiting list applicants, tenants and key internal and external partners.
- 9.2** The process included early consultation with waiting list applicants to find out about their knowledge of the Allocations Policy, their awareness of points they had been awarded, their likelihood of being rehoused and the review process we have in place to see if improvements could be made in any of these areas.
- 9.3** Staff representing relevant areas of the HSCP were involved in key staff working groups looking at areas of the policy that could be improved and contributing to the development of the proposals consulted on.
- 9.4** The formal consultation received 1615 responses (866 from WDC tenants, 465 from waiting list applicants, 216 from WDC residents, 51 from staff and 11 from partner organisations). Feedback from the consultation is outlined above

and shaped the proposed policy changes being recommended. A full summary of the consultation exercise is attached as Appendix 2.

- 9.5** An elected member session was held on the 12th January, allowing members a further opportunity to comment on the wider review in advance of this paper being presented to the Housing and Communities Committee.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The Housing Allocations Policy sets out how the Council intends to let its houses. It lays out a hierarchy of need, in order to best allocate a limited supply of housing and has a crucial part to play in promoting sustainable communities, in which people will want to live and work.
- 10.2** Having considered the Council's strategic priorities, this report and the subsequent positive outcomes will support all of the Council's key strategic priorities.

Peter Barry
Chief Officer Housing and Employability
Date: 19 January 2022

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Appendices: Appendix 1 – Draft Allocations Policy
Appendix 2 – Allocations Policy Review Consultation Summary Document

Background Papers: Equalities Impact Assessment

Wards Affected: All

Housing Allocations Policy

Reviewed 2021

Draft November 2021



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This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format on request.

Arabic

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.

Hindi

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

Urdu

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

Chinese (Cantonese)

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

Polish

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formie audio.



British Sign Language

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This Allocations Policy sets out how the Council intends to let its houses. It lays out a hierarchy of need, in order to best allocate a limited supply of housing. It aims to ensure the best use of housing stock in terms of meeting housing need and deliver transparency for applicants in relation to their housing options. The allocation of properties has a crucial part to play in promoting sustainable communities, in which people will want to live and work. The Allocations Policy ties in with objectives from the Local Housing Strategy, the Homelessness Strategy and the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to provide a holistic approach to addressing housing need in the area.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to:

- Let homes to those who are most in need;
- Make the best use of housing stock;
- Promote sustainable communities; and
- Meet statutory requirements and reflect good practice guidance outlined in the Allocations Practice Guidance and other sources.

Our key objectives are to:

- Provide all applicants with detailed advice and information about their housing options, the allocations process, including their prospects for re-housing;
- Allocate properties based on a consistent assessment of housing need, applied in a fair and equitable manner;
- Allocate housing to applicants with different housing needs in order to achieve balanced and sustainable communities;
- Make the best use of the housing stock and promote tenants' rights such as the right to exchange homes;
- Maintain clear audit trails of the allocations and lettings process;
- Let houses against quality housing standards ("our re-let standard") and in line with targets to minimise rental income lost due to properties being empty;
- Provide support to applicants to maximise tenancy sustainment;
- Reviewing our policy every three years in consultation with tenants, housing list applicants and other relevant stakeholders;
- Ensure that the policy doesn't discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, transgender, sexual orientation, marital status, ethnic origin, faith or religious belief, disability, or age; and,
- Ensure that there is an open and transparent appeals process.

2. Legal Framework

2.1 Housing Act 2014

The allocation of social housing in Scotland is governed by the provisions within the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and again by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. The legislation sets out the principles that should guide the practice of social landlords in relation to holding and managing a housing list, the extent to which circumstances and needs should be assessed and the applicant characteristics that should be prioritised in the assessment of housing need.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 changed certain aspects of the law on social housing allocations and management:

- The Right to Buy was abolished for all social housing tenants in Scotland by this Act;
- The Act made changes to allocation rules for social landlords, to increase flexibility and allow them to make best use of their stock; and
- The Act allows landlords more flexibility to use Short Scottish Secure Tenancies (SSSTs) to address anti-social behaviour.

The other legislative provisions surrounding the allocation of social housing in Scotland relate to meeting the needs of homeless households set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003.

2.2 Applicable Legislation

There is a framework of rights based legislation which also influences the allocation of housing and with which the Councils must comply with. These are:

- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection)(Scotland)Act 1981;
- Children Scotland Act 1995;
- Civil Partnership Act 2004;
- Immigration & Asylum Act 1999;
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997;
- Domestic Abuse (Scotland) 2011;
- Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Act 2005;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007; and
- Data Protection Act 2018.

2.3 Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter), sets out the outcomes and standards that all social landlords should be delivering for their tenants and other customers.

The first Charter came into effect on 1 April 2012 and following a review in 2016. A revised Charter was approved by the Scottish Parliament and came into effect from April 2017.

Scottish Ministers consulted the Scottish Housing Regulator; tenants in social housing and their representative bodies; social landlords; homeless people; and other stakeholders about the Charter's contents to ensure that the outcomes in the Charter:

- Describe the results that tenants and other customers expect social landlords to achieve;
- Cover social landlords' housing activities only; and
- Can be monitored, assessed and reported upon by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The Charter does not replace any of the legal duties that apply to social landlords, but in several cases the outcomes describe the results social landlords should achieve in meeting their legal duties.

The Council has to report on these outcomes annually to the Scottish Housing Regulator and makes this information available to the public each year, in October.

The following Charter Outcomes are of direct relevance to the allocations policy and practice:

Outcome 1: Equalities

Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that:

- *Every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.*

This outcome describes what social landlords, by complying with equalities legislation, should achieve for all tenants and other customers regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. It includes landlords' responsibility for finding ways of understanding the rights and needs of different customers and delivering services that recognise and meet these.

Outcome 2: Communication

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- *Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.*

This outcome covers all aspects of landlords' communication with tenants and other customers. This could include making use of new technologies such as web-based

tenancy management systems and smart-phone applications. It is not just about how clearly and effectively a landlord gives information to those who want it.

It also covers making it easy for tenants and other customers to make complaints and provide feedback on services, using that information to improve services and performance, and letting people know what they have done in response to complaints and feedback. It does not require landlords to provide legally protected, personal or commercial information.

Outcome 3: Participation

Social landlords manage their businesses so that:

- *Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.*

This outcome describes what landlords should achieve by meeting their statutory duties on tenant participation. It covers how social landlords gather and take account of the views and priorities of their tenants, other customers, and bodies representing them such as registered tenant organisations; how they shape their services to reflect these views; and how they help tenants, other customers and bodies representing them such as registered tenant organisations to become more capable of involvement – this could include supporting them to scrutinise landlord services.

Outcomes 7, 8 and 9: Housing options

Social landlords work together to ensure that:

- *people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them*
- *Tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.*

Social landlords ensure that:

- *People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.*

These outcomes cover landlords' duties to provide information to people looking for housing and advice for those at risk of becoming homeless. This could include providing housing 'health checks' for tenants and people on housing lists to help them review their options to move within the social housing sector or to another sector.

Outcome 10: Access to social housing

Social landlords ensure that:

- *people looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and on their prospects of being housed.*

This outcome covers what social landlords can do to make it easy for people to apply for the widest choice of social housing that is available and suitable and that meets their needs. It includes actions that social landlords can take on their own and in partnership with others, for example through Common Housing Registers or mutual exchange schemes, or through local information and advice schemes.

Outcome 11: Tenancy sustainment

Social landlords ensure that:

- *Tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.*

This outcome covers how landlords on their own, or in partnership with others, can help tenants who may need support to maintain their tenancy. This includes tenants who may be at risk of falling into arrears with their rent, and tenants who may need their home adapted to cope with age, disability, or caring responsibilities.

Outcome 12: Homeless people

Local councils perform their duties on homelessness so that:

- *Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed; and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.*

This outcome describes what councils should achieve by meeting their statutory duties to homeless people.

3. Equal Opportunities

The Council is committed to fulfilling the three key elements of the general equality duty as defined in the Equality Act 2010:-

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not ; and
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race, this includes ethnicity, colour and national origin;
- Religion or belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation; and
- Marriage/civil partnership (for which only the first duty applies)

Everyone has 'protected characteristics', but it is the treatment individuals and groups receive, the level of autonomy they have, and the positive or negative outcomes for them, that are our focus. Therefore we will:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics;
- Meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; and
- Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

As well as being legal requirements, these steps contribute to fairer, more efficient and more effective services. Therefore the Council will:

- Take effective action on equality;
- Make the right decisions, first time around;
- Develop better policies and practices, based on evidence;
- Be transparent, accessible and accountable; and
- Deliver improved outcomes for all.

As well as being legal requirements, these steps contribute to fairer, more efficient and more effective services. The policy has been equality impact assessed.

4. Other Related Policies

4.1 Local Housing Strategy

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) sets out how West Dunbartonshire Council and its partners plan to address housing and housing related issues over the five year period from 2022/2027.

The LHS is a wide ranging and all tenure document covering:

- Housing ;
- Homelessness and Housing Options;
- Housing Support Services; and
- Fuel Poverty.

The Allocation Policy has a vital part to play across a number of policy areas to help in the delivery of the LHS outcomes. The strategy highlights how local lettings planning and other demographic tools can help to make best use of our housing stock to achieve individual tenancy and broader community sustainment and social cohesion. Some of the key themes included within the new LHS are climate change, energy efficiency and health/wellbeing and the wider impact of Housing in parallel with the national ambitions with Housing to 2040.

4.2 Homelessness Strategy

Our current approach to homelessness is outlined in the Council's first Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-2024 entitled "Home at the Heart". The plan acknowledges that challenges exist in terms of developing appropriate Accommodation and Support Pathways which work for homeless households and has the following four key outcomes:

- Deliver a Whole Systems approach to the prevention of homelessness;
- Enable service users with low or no support needs to access settled housing quickly;
- Develop interim housing options which enable independent living and housing sustainment; and
- Implement a Housing First model which enables the most excluded service users to achieve housing sustainment.

The Council has a duty to provide settled accommodation for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and our Allocations Policy gives a reasonable preference to households who are homeless and are at the point of securing settled accommodation (see Section 5).

The Council is committed to developing a housing options approach as an action under the homelessness strategy which will improve access to housing for all applicants. A person centred approach will be created and all different options for housing will be looked at to allow applicants to make an informed choice about their living situation.

5. Allocation of Houses

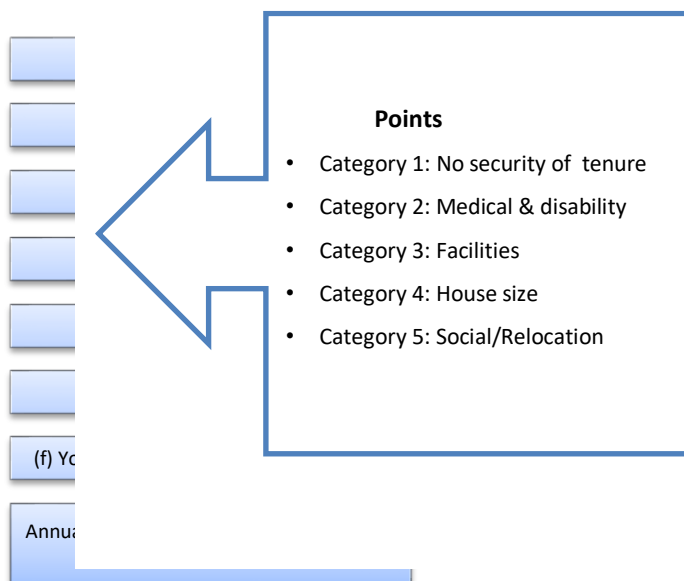
5.1 Stock Profile

The total Council housing stock has at the end of 2020/21 numbered 10,153 properties and rose for the first time in many years. This was due to the Council's bold new build programme and Buy Back Scheme.

The Council's housing stock is split into three main population areas - Clydebank, Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven. Around 51%, of the Council's housing stock is located in Clydebank, 29% is located in the Vale of Leven area and 20% is located in Dumbarton. The terms of size, 2 bedroom properties account for around 45% of the total stock, 1 bedroom and 3 bedroom properties account for around 25% each and 4 bedroom properties make up around 3%, with relatively few numbers of bedsits and larger sized homes. Across the whole of the West Dunbartonshire area, flatted accommodation accounts for around 72% of the total housing stock, with houses accounting for around 28%. Our flats are a mix of four in a block accommodation, tenement flats, multi-story accommodation, maisonettes and duplex flats, with four-in-blocks make up around 30% of the total housing stock. Sheltered accommodation accounts for around 2% of the stock provision. Up to date stock information is available via the Council's website [here](#).

5.2 Groups plus points system

Groups plus points system



Reasonable preference refers to a level of priority given to applicants under certain circumstances. Our Allocation Policy must give a reasonable level of priority to those applicants who fall within one of the reasonable preference groups.

The 2014 Act amended section 20 of the 1987 Act and sets out three categories of applicants who should be given reasonable preference in an allocation policy.

These are:

- Homeless persons and persons threatened with homelessness and who have unmet housing needs;
- People who are living under unsatisfactory housing conditions and who have unmet housing needs; and
- Tenants of houses which are held by a social landlord, which the social landlord selecting its tenants considers to be under-occupied.

The Council uses a group plus points system to allocate its properties, which recognises these applicants that should be given reasonable preference and also other groups identified as being in specific housing need.

This breaks the housing register down to clearly defined groups. A housing needs assessment based on the application is carried out and then the applicant is placed in one of the following groups and pointed accordingly. If an applicant shares the same level of points with another applicant within that group, the applications will be prioritised based on the date of application.

The relative priority given to each of the reasonable preference groups will depend on the profile of identified housing need. Our allocation lettings quotas are reviewed annually and established for each group given a reasonable preference within the policy. This exercise recognises that other groups being prioritised for allocations will not dominate the policy in terms of letting activity, at the expense of the three reasonable preference groups in the 2014 Act.

The annual lettings target for homeless households is influenced by West Dunbartonshire Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP), which is updated annually, taking account of the previous years' letting activity and the level of homelessness within West Dunbartonshire. The percentage target agreed for homeless lets is not intended to be a rigid figure however, and any agreed target can be exceeded.

(a) Homeless persons

The Council has a statutory duty to secure permanent accommodation for applicants who have been assessed as being homeless or threatened with homelessness and homeless households are given reasonable preference within our Allocations Policy as per legislation. We have a robust homeless assessment process which ensures that all homeless applicants are treated fairly and equitably.

The policy aims to make sure that the needs of homeless households are met as quickly as possible and does not give homeless people any lesser preference than the other specified groups. This means that the weighting given to homeless households reflects our obligation to make a reasonable proportion of overall lets available to homeless households, having regard to the urgency of their individual circumstances, their housing and medical needs and the constraints of current stock availability.

(b) General Housing List Applicants

All other applicants including those living under unsatisfactory housing conditions and who have unmet housing needs.

(c) Transfer Applicants

All current WDC tenants including those under-occupying their current property.

(d) Strategic Housing Need/Redevelopment Applicants

All WDC tenants and tenants of landlords working in partnership with the council, affected by regeneration/redevelopment programmes.

(e) Young Care Leavers

In Scotland the Staying Put Scotland Guidance (2013) and Housing Options Protocols Guidance (2013) were produced to inform and share best practice and bring consistency to the options and support available to care leavers. Policy and legislation recognises and highlights the fundamental importance of safe, secure and sustainable accommodation in helping care leavers attain and achieve.

In addition, West Dunbartonshire Council is a supporter of the Scottish Care Leavers Covenant which includes a section dedicated to Housing and Accommodation. A key action within the Covenant is that, *"Corporate parents must take action to ensure that care leavers do not have to make a 'homeless application' in order to access suitable accommodation/housing"*.

Therefore, the Council gives priority status to young care leavers. This also links in with the Homelessness Strategy, as it has been highlighted that in West Dunbartonshire Council youth homelessness continues to account for over a third of all incidences of homeless. Part of the vision is to change the approach to how young care leavers are dealt with regarding housing; this is also in line with GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child).

Recognising young care leavers as a group means that this group does not have to always access housing via the homeless route. Young care leavers are any looked after or accommodated child within West Dunbartonshire. The Throughcare team work very closely with each young person and will create a pathway plan to support young people's transition from care into their own tenancy to achieve maximum tenancy sustainment.

Should you wish to read more information on this you can see our Young Care Leavers Protocol which lays out in detail the accommodation pathway options available to young care leavers working with Throughcare.

(f) Young people at risk of homelessness

Youth homelessness is a key challenge and West Dunbartonshire is noted as a "youth homelessness hot spot" within the Scottish Government's statistics. Young people aged 16 to 24 make up 9.8% of the population in West Dunbartonshire, yet this age group accounted for 32% of all homeless presentations during 2020/21 (compared to a Scottish average figure of 24%).

Therefore, the council has given priority status to young people at risk of homelessness and have created an additional reasonable preference group within the Allocations Policy, similar to our provision for Young Care Leavers. The young people will be sourced from live cases at risk of homelessness and who are engaging with the Housing Options Service. This quota will be reviewed and updated annually, as is the case with other groups given reasonable preference within the policy. This system change aims to tackle the high levels of youth homelessness in West Dunbartonshire and aligns with our wider policy objectives outlined in our Local Housing Strategy and Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

5.3 Matters to disregard when selecting applicants

The Council must disregard certain matters when selecting. These are:

- The length of time that applicants have resided in our area;
- Any debt related to a tenancy not owed by the applicant, as a tenant or former tenant, or any housing debt since paid back;
- Any outstanding debt not attributable to the tenancy, for example, council tax arrears (this also applies to anyone else that it is proposed will reside with the applicant);
- The age of the applicant unless a) housing has been designed or substantially adapted for persons of a particular age or b) the housing is for persons who are, or will be, in receipt of housing support services for a particular age group; and
- The income of applicants, including income of other household members.

The law now does enable Councils to take property ownership into account in certain circumstances. However, the Council is not taking account of any property owned by applicants or their family members when selecting tenants. The policy is based on housing need and applicants may have various forms of housing need irrespective of home ownership.

When letting houses, the Council must also take no account of whether or not an applicant resides in our area if they:

- Are employed, or have been offered employment in our area;
- Want to move into our area to look for employment and we are satisfied that this is their purpose;
- Want to move into our area to be close to a relative or carer;
- Have special social or medical reasons for being re-housed in our area; and
- Want to live in our area to avoid harassment or runs the risk of domestic abuse and wishes to move into the area.

In law, there are specific conditions that the Council cannot impose, namely:

- Applications must be active for a minimum period before considering applicants for housing (except if that tenant has been informed that their application has been suspended);
- A judicial separation or divorce should be obtained, or dissolution of a civil partnership or a decree of separation of civil partners be obtained; and
- That applicants should no longer be living with, or in the same house, as someone else before they can be considered for housing.

When letting houses, the Council must also disregard any arrears or other tenancy related debt which is less than one twelfth of the annual rent amount payable. Therefore any rent arrears of less than one month will not stop an offer of housing being made.

If rent arrears are more than one month's rent this will not stop an offer of housing being made if applicants:

- Agree an arrangement with the Council to repay the debt
- Pay the amount as agreed for at least three months; and
- Continue to pay this amount;

All cases however will be considered on a case by case basis and outstanding arrears should not stop an offer of housing where the applicants is at risk of homelessness.

5.4 Mutual Exchanges

A tenant that is looking to swap their Scottish Secure Tenancy with another tenant of the Council, any of the Local Housing Associations within West Dunbartonshire or anywhere else in the UK, can register with Homeswapper to exchange their property. Homeswapper is an online service that holds details of mutual exchanges within WDC and elsewhere.

Reasonable grounds for refusing a mutual exchange can include:

- The property is subject to a proceedings of recovery;
- The exchange would mean that a property designed or adapted for occupation by someone with special needs was no longer occupied by a person with these needs;
- The mutual exchange would lead to overcrowding, under occupation or one household living in a property that is not suitable to their needs;
- Failure by the tenant to adhere to existing tenancy terms such as anti-social behaviour;
- Having rent arrears or any other housing related debt where there is no arrangement in place to repay the debt;
- The condition of the property is unacceptable;
- Failure by all joint tenants to apply for an exchange; and
- The property is a tied house that has been provided by the landlord for employment purposes.

The above list is not a definitive list and each case will be considered and other reasons may exist for refusing exchange applications. The tenant will have to have been in the tenancy they wish to consider swapping for a year before they will be granted a mutual exchange, unless there are medical reasons for requiring a swap. Instances such as this would be considered on a case by case basis. The Council will aim to give you a response on a decision no longer than one month after the application is received.

5.5 Subletting

Existing WDC tenants may apply to sublet their property. However, before a tenant can sublet their home they must apply in writing to the Council's housing department and get written consent. Tenants must also notify the Council's housing department of any proposed rent increase. The rent cannot be increased if the Council does not consent to the increase.

The 2014 Act makes the following change:

- The tenant must have had the tenancy for the past 12 months immediately before they apply for permission to sublet.

A request to sublet can be for a variety of reasons and can include tenants who have received a custodial sentence for less than one year. Notification of a tenant receiving a custodial sentence can be received from Criminal Justice/Prison Social Worker/tenant/or a representative for the tenant themselves. The actual time likely to be spent in custody should be established, as generally sublets are not granted for more than one year.

If the tenant has indicated that they wish to return to their tenancy on their release, the Housing Officer can consider their application to sublet their tenancy for the duration of the tenants' time in prison. They can liaise with the Resettlement Officer to ensure they know when the tenant is due for release.

5.5.1 Grounds for Refusing a Sublet

The Council will only refuse an application to sublet a tenancy if it has reasonable grounds for doing so.

Each application must be considered on its own merits to determine whether it is reasonable to grant the request. Some specific reasons where it may be reasonable to refuse consent are listed below:

- An eviction process has been served that specifies any of grounds 1 to 7 in Schedule 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001;
- An eviction order has been made against the tenant;
- The rent proposed is not deemed to be reasonable by West Dunbartonshire Council;
- The deposit proposed is not deemed to be reasonable;
- The subletting would cause statutory overcrowding;
- Proposed works by the landlord that would affect the accommodation to be used by the subtenant, or other person living in the house as a result of the transaction;
- Where the tenant is leaving for an indefinite period and unable to specify when he/she will return. In this case, each application should be considered on an individual, circumstantial basis;
- Where another person's occupancy rights are likely to be adversely affected if permission is granted;
- Where the sublet would lead to substantial under occupation;
- Where the subtenant is unable to understand the terms of the sublet;
- The sub-tenancy is likely to be problematic, due to previous anti-social behaviour of the proposed subtenant that is likely to continue if the sublet is granted;
- Where the proposed subtenant has an unsatisfactory reference for former tenancies, both WDC & Non WDC;
- Where the property would not be deemed suitable for the subtenant for medical reasons.

5.5.2 Withdrawing Permission

The Council has the right to withdraw permission if there are complaints of anti-social behaviour as a result of the property being sublet.

5.6 Assignment

Before a tenant can assign their home to someone else, they must apply in writing to the Council's housing department. Once a tenant assigns their interest in the tenancy they no longer have a contractual relationship with the Council. The tenancy is transferred to the assignee and they take on all the responsibilities and liabilities of the tenancy, including any debt related to the tenancy.

Section 12(2) of the 2014 Housing (Scotland) Act makes the following changes:

- The house must have been the tenants only or principle home during the 12 months immediately prior to the tenant applying for written permission to pass their tenancy on to someone else;
- The person the tenant wishes to pass their tenancy on to (assignee) must have lived at the property as their only or principle home for the 12 months prior to the application; and
- The tenant, joint tenant or person the tenant wished to assign the tenancy to must have notified the Councils (Housing Officer) that they are living in the house that they wish to take the tenancy over for. The 12 month period does not start unless the landlord has been told that the person is living in the property as their only or principle home.

The Council can refuse permission to assign a tenancy if it is reasonable to do so. Each case will be assessed individually and consent will not be withheld unreasonably. Specific grounds where it is reasonable to withhold consent are as follows:

- Where the house has been adapted and the person wishing to take over the tenancy does not require these adaptations.
- A notice of proceedings has been served on the tenant under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2002;
- Where the Council is seeking to regain possession of the property;
- The assignation would lead to statutory overcrowding;
- The Council proposes to carry out work to the building that would affect the accommodation to be occupied by the assignee;
- Where the assignee would not be given reasonable preference under the Allocations Policy;
- Where the assignation would result in the property being under occupied;
- Where the proposed assignee(s) have arrears/former tenancy arrears or other housing related debt and an arrangement to pay has not been kept to in accordance with the Allocations Policy;
- Where the existing tenant(s) have arrears (and no Notice/Court order is in place) and an arrangement to pay has not been kept to in accordance with the Allocation Policy;
- Where the proposed assignee(s) have an unsatisfactory tenancy reference;
- Non consent of a spouse with occupancy rights;
- Other legal orders in force, for example an anti-social behaviour order which does not permit the proposed new tenant to be in the area.

5.7 Joint Tenancies

All applicants may apply to have a joint tenancy with someone who is staying with them. (Intention to stay removed due to the 12 month clause) Applications should be made in writing to the Council's housing department. The person the tenant wishes to add as joint tenant must have lived at the property as their only or principle home for the 12 months prior to the tenant applying for them to become a joint tenant. The Council must also have been notified that the person wishing to apply for a joint tenancy has been living in the house. Again, the Housing Officer should be informed

of this. The 12 month period does not start until the Council has been told that the person has been living there as their only or principle home. An existing joint tenant can terminate their interest in the tenancy by providing the Council and the other joint tenants with 4 weeks written notice. The Council with regard to notification of occupancy is considered to be Housing Operations as the landlord of the property.

The Council must consent to an application for a joint tenancy unless there are reasonable grounds for refusing. Possible grounds for refusal would be:

- Where agreeing to the joint tenancy would lead to the household being overcrowded;
- Where the proposed joint tenant would not be granted a tenancy under the Allocations Policy for reasons such as anti-social behaviour or housing related debt; and
- Where the existing tenant had rent arrears and no suitable arrangement was in place for repayment.

5.8 Succession

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 introduces a 12 month qualifying period and notification requirement before qualifying persons have the right to succeed to a Scottish Secure Tenancy on the death of the tenant. A succession can only take place where a tenant dies and there is a relevant qualifying person who wishes to succeed to the tenancy. Two rounds of succession can take place.

On the death of a Scottish Secure Tenant, the tenancy passes to the qualifying person. On the death of a qualifying person who succeeded to the tenancy after the first death, the tenancy then passes to another qualifying person; this would be the second succession. There is no qualifying period under the new rules for the tenants spouse, civil partner or joint tenant provided that the house in question was that persons only or principle home at the time of the tenant's death.

The new rules apply to the following 'qualifying persons' where the house has been their only or principle home throughout the 12 months prior to a tenant's death:

- Partners (cohabitants of either sex, including same sex cohabitants);
- Members of the tenants family aged 16 and over; and
- Carers aged 16 or over who have given up a previous or principle home.

Under the new Act the 'qualifying person' must also have notified the Council (Housing department/Housing Officer) that they are living in the property as their only or principle home. The qualifying period does not start until the Council has received this notification. If the property has been adapted for the needs of the tenant who is deceased, and these adaptations are not required by the person wishing to succeed to the tenancy, a like for like property will be sought for this person to ensure that adaptations are available for those tenants who have a medical need for them.

5.9 Suspensions from The Housing Register

A suspension is where a new or transfer applicant will not be eligible to be offered accommodation for a defined period of time. The Council cannot suspend people from applying for a house and joining the housing list but can from receiving offers of accommodation. This section highlights specific circumstances where it is legitimate for WDC to suspend offers.

Suspensions should only occur in instances relating to conduct or eligibility of applicants and are only used as a temporary measure.

Reasons for a suspension are as follows:

- Anti-social behaviour, or applicant currently has a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST) on antisocial related grounds in place - the Council may seek to suspend an applicant on the basis of anti-social behaviour if the applicant or a member of their household has engaged in anti-social behaviour, including in the vicinity of the house; harassment of others or anti-social behaviour towards a Council employee when applying for housing;
- Has a conviction for using their home for immoral or illegal activity or any other offence punishable by imprisonment committed in the locality of their home, this can also apply to someone who has resided with the applicant;
- Has had a court grant an eviction notice against the applicant;
- If an applicant has previously abandoned a tenancy or neglecting a let property. A suspension can be put in place where an applicant's house was previously repossessed due to abandonment or where a house was repossessed due to abandonment of a joint tenant or where a property was repossessed due to neglect and ill treatment. The Scottish Secure Tenancy requires tenants to leave a tenancy in a clean and tidy condition and make sure it is in good decorative order at the end of a tenancy. However, this does not have to occur throughout the tenancy and is not a breach of tenancy condition unless there is a nuisance or hazard caused. Suspensions due to tenancy condition should therefore only be used for a serious breach of tenancy and the tenant's ability to maintain the property should also be taken into consideration with this;
- Where there have been rent arrears or other tenancy related debt. Unless the debt is not more than one month's rent and the applicant has made an arrangement to repay the debt and has maintained this arrangement for more than 3 months. Historic debt that had previously been written off by the Council can be taken into consideration also; and
- Where there has been a false statement made on an application for housing. This will be looked at on a case by case basis according to whether this information was intended to be misleading for fraudulent purposes or was a simple omission on the applicant's part.

Suspensions, when in place, will be for a period of a year but each case will be reviewed in case the circumstances of the tenant change, i.e. rent arrears being paid off or an arrangement made and maintained. The council cannot vary a suspension where it would increase its length and applicants have the right to appeal.

5.9.1 Three Reasonable Offers

The number of reasonable offers of housing an applicant can receive before their application is suspended from receiving further offers of housing has been limited to three. If a tenant refuses three reasonable offers their application will be suspended for 12 months. On the refusal of one or more offers of housing the applicant should be contacted to review their preferences in terms of area choice and house type, to ensure they are up to date.

5.9.2 Managing and Monitoring Suspensions

A person's behaviour will only be considered back as far as 3 years. In exceptional circumstances the Council can consider behaviour back as long as 5 years ago but the reasons for doing this would have to be justifiable. The Council however wishes to minimise/prevent homelessness and provide services for all, so the use of suspensions should be minimal and alternative approaches will be considered wherever possible.

The Council aims to provide a service that is inclusive and accessible for all and to help those who are vulnerable. Therefore any applicant who has been assessed with a critical housing need with an A medical award will not be prevented from receiving suitable offers of housing that becomes available even if they fall into a category which would warrant a suspension. The Council will work with these applicants to take a proactive approach to manage the problem.

The Council will monitor and manage all cases that have been suspended and anyone who falls into one of the suspensions categories will be informed of their suspension, the length of time it is in place, reasons for the suspension and how this suspension will have an impact on them, i.e. no offers of housing for 12 months.

5.10 Removal from the Housing Register

The Council will only cancel applications for the following three reasons and remove applicants from the Housing Register for the following reasons:

- Death of an applicant – if notification of death of an applicant is received the application will be removed from the housing list;
- At an applicant's request – the Council will require notice from an applicant that they wished to be removed either via telephone, email or in writing; and
- Failure to Re-Register – the Council will carry out an annual review of its housing list. This review will ask applicants to confirm that the information on their application form is still correct and that they would like to remain on the housing list. If an applicant fails to respond to this review, a reminder letter will be sent and if no response the applicant will be removed. A letter confirming their removal from the list will then be sent.

5.11 Short Scottish Secure Tenancies

The Council generally lets its properties as Scottish Secure Tenancies (SST's) wherever possible, to maximise the rights which tenants can enjoy. However in specific circumstances it may not be appropriate to offer a SST. The Council has a SSST policy which defines the circumstances, the Council can offer a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST). The SSST policy clearly identifies the 9 statutory grounds where the power to use a SSST can be considered and outlines how these would operate.

Tenants with a SSST have less tenancy rights than those with a SST. These restrictions include:

- No provision for succession;
- More limited security of tenure; and
- Limited rights to assign and sublet the tenancy.

More information on SSST's can be found in our SSST policy.

5.12 Economic Migrants and Persons Subject to Immigration Control

Anyone aged 16 and over and from the UK is eligible for housing. This position is more complex for individuals from out with the UK. Legislation sets out who is and is not eligible, eligibility can depend on a number of factors such as:

- Nationality;
- Economic activity of the applicant and their family members;
- Immigration status and rules around asylum and immigration; and
- Entitlement to public funds

An EEA (European Economic Area) national who has the right to reside is eligible for housing and homeless assistance (which is classed as 'entitlement to public funds') from the Council however some will need to satisfy the habitual residency test meeting certain conditions before they can access certain benefits.

Local authorities are subject to the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. Asylum seekers are permitted to join the Councils housing waiting list, however, we do not have a duty to provide full or short Scottish secure tenancies in these instances. A person's status can change and these cases would be reviewed regularly.

Generally a person is not disqualified from entitlement to public funds (and therefore housing and homelessness assistance) if he/she is:

- A British or Irish citizen;
- Is a person who is a citizen of a commonwealth country with a 'right of abode';
- Falls within one of the prescribed exceptions set out in immigration regulations;
- Has indefinite leave to remain (also known as 'settled status') including an EEA national with EU settled status;
- Has been granted leave because of their refugee status;
- Has been granted humanitarian protection;
- Has discretionary leave (assuming as is almost always the case, that their leave is not subject to a public funds condition) OR
- Has been granted temporary leave under the destitution domestic violence concession.

As housing and homelessness assistance is classed as a public fund, anyone who holds a visa with no recourse to public funds is generally prohibited from accessing it. However, as a local authority we are bound by Human Rights Law and should provide support where failure to do so would result in a breach of an individual's human rights.

This is likely to arise where someone would be destitute and cannot return to their home country or where children are involved.

When the Council is dealing with these cases we therefore are often required to make an assessment of an individual's circumstances, and whether there is a potential claim for leave to remain, to see what services we can provide to the individual. We cannot however provide individuals with immigration advice and given the complexity of these cases it is recommended that all individuals seek their own legal advice.

5.13 Applicants Serving in the Armed Forces

Applications from people serving in the armed forces will be reviewed and processed on receipt of written confirmation from either the applicant or their commanding officer that they will be leaving the armed forces by a specific date. If an applicant has been seriously injured and requires adapted housing, the application will be assessed and points awarded accordingly. Applicants in these circumstances can also apply directly to Homeless services. The Council has also signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant - <https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/>. The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who served or have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly.

5.14 Housing References

When applying for housing with the Council, references will be sought from previous landlords for the past 3 years. Tenancy references are sought to establish whether the applicant, or anyone wishing to be housed with them, has been subject to an Anti-Social Behaviour Order or has a history of anti-social behaviour, has any previous housing related debt with no repayment arrangement in place or has breached other tenancy conditions. If any of these is the case, the application will be suspended – see section 5.9 on Suspensions for more information on this.

5.15 Tenancy Conditions

When a tenant is offered and accepts a WDC house, a legally binding contract is signed between the tenant and the Council. This is known as a Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement (SST). This tenancy agreement sets out the tenants' rights and responsibilities and the Councils as a landlord. The Council makes every effort to fulfil its part of the agreement and expects tenants to do the same. If a tenant fails to keep to this agreement, action can be taken to have them removed from the property.

5.16 WDC Tenants with less than 12 Months Tenancy

Applicants who have a tenancy with the Council must demonstrate that they have maintained their current tenancy in a satisfactory manner for a period of 12 months. Unless there are exceptional circumstances applicants will not be considered for another offer of housing, a mutual exchange or a nomination to another housing provider until they have been in their tenancy for 12 months and received a satisfactory tenancy reference from their Housing Officer.

6. Points Categories & Points Structure

6.1 Points Categories

Category 1- No Security of Tenure

Points will be awarded for those with no security of tenure which will include the following circumstances:

- People applying from the family home and those currently living somewhere else with no tenancy agreement of their own;
- Notice to Quit - points can be awarded to an applicant if the landlord has served a valid notice to quit.
- Tied Accommodation – points can be awarded to applicants if they reside in a house that is part of their conditions of employment. This is known as a tied tenancy. If an applicant who resides in one of these tenancies employment ends, it is recognised that they no longer have a right to reside in this tenancy, and points are therefore awarded in the following circumstances:
 - If they are a tied tenant retiring on ill health grounds or having to leave tied accommodation through loss of employment
 - If they are the spouse or partner of a tied tenant who has died in service and you are required to move out of the tied accommodation.
- Regeneration – points will be awarded to applicants if they are required to move to allow redevelopment or demolition works to take place. These points will however only apply to comprehensive redevelopment schemes approved by West Dunbartonshire Council, or where the Council has agreed to rehouse applicants if they are displaced by other landlords working in partnership with the Council.

Category 2 - Medical Needs and Disability

- Medical Needs and Disability – points can be awarded to applicants if they have a permanent or long lasting medical condition or physical disability which is made worse by their current accommodation. A disability is a physical or mental condition, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on normal day to day activities. This is not an assessment of the severity of the medical condition or disability but an assessment of the need for another house that would alleviate the medical condition or disability. These points can be awarded to the applicant or any member of their household. A separate medical application form will need to be completed to be considered for this award. Application forms are available from local housing offices.

The process is one of self-assessment. A number of questions are asked regarding health problems. Applicants are not required to submit a letter from their doctor, however, can submit any other information considered appropriate, such as a letter from a consultant, clinic or support provider. Applicants will also be required to supply evidence of any disability benefits, medication or treatment received. Upon receipt of the application, a member of the housing operations team or the occupational therapist may call you to discuss the application and assess the property.

If it is determined that their medical condition may change, the application will be reviewed after an appropriate period determined by a medical professional.

Medical awards will be removed if the condition has improved to the extent that the applicant's current accommodation is no longer medically unsuitable.

Once your application has been assessed by the occupational therapist housing staff, a letter will be sent from the housing operations team advising whether medical points have been awarded and if so, the number of points awarded.

If the applicant is dissatisfied with the category of medical priority, or the medical award has been refused, they can appeal against this decision.

If an applicant wishes to defer their housing application, their medical award will be removed, unless due to circumstances out with their control they need to defer, i.e. hospital admittance. If they wish again to be considered for offers of housing, a new medical assessment form will be required to be completed.

Medical and disability points will be awarded based on the medical needs of each household. A single award of points will be made to the applicant with the most severe medical condition. This is to ensure that applicants with the greatest medical need are matched to suitable accommodation. Medical awards are split into 3 categories:

- Medical Award A: (Urgent) – Current accommodation is causing extreme aggravation to medical condition or disability
- Medical Award B: (Serious) – Current accommodation is causing serious aggravation to medical condition or disability
- Medical Award C (Significant) – Current accommodation is causing significant aggravation to medical condition or disability.

Category 3 – Facilities

- Sharing Amenities – Points can be awarded if an applicant is sharing amenities with anyone other than the people listed on their application to be rehoused with them, as they are considered as the direct household. You should not have to share amenities with anyone other than those in your direct household. Applicants who share amenities – bathrooms and kitchens with other members of their household - do not receive sharing amenities points, nor does it apply to applicants who have sublet part of their property or have taken in lodgers. Points will be awarded to sub-tenants, lodgers, or if an applicant is living with parents, friends or relatives; and
- Lacking Amenities – points can be awarded to applicants if they lack basic amenities – i.e. a bathroom and a kitchen located within the household. This is defined by current housing legislation and these facilities should be available to all occupants. Points will be awarded if an applicant does not have access to these facilities to reflect the fact that their accommodation is below tolerable standard.

Category 4 - House Size

- Overcrowding – points can be awarded to applicants if they are living in accommodation which is too small for their needs. This is calculated by how many bedrooms an applicant should have for the household and how many bedrooms the applicant has at their current location.

Living rooms are not considered suitable for sleeping accommodation, although some applicants may have to use these rooms due to the level of overcrowding in their present homes.

Children over 10 or older will be assessed as needing a room of their own, regardless of gender. A physically disabled child or children should have their own bedroom irrespective of age.

Different generations (grandparent, children, and grandchildren) living together should have separate bedrooms. Expectant mothers will be assessed as 2 persons from 3 months prior to the expected date of birth.

Overcrowding points will be given if a household member has a medical condition that requires an extra bedroom to accommodate an overnight carer or considerable medical equipment.

- Under Occupation – points will be awarded if an applicant who is under-occupying a property wishes to move to smaller accommodation that is more suitable to their needs. Applicants will be awarded under occupation points if they are occupying a property that has more bedrooms than needed to accommodate themselves and members of their household. Points will be awarded for every spare bedroom.

The Council can provide help to remove any barriers existing tenants face by offering incentives to move to smaller accommodation, such as assistance to move items and decoration packages. Tenants can speak to their Housing Officer to access this resource in a way that would suit their specific requirements best.

Category 5 - Social/Relocation Points

- Relationship Breakdown – points can be awarded to applicants if they have suffered a relationship breakdown and are having to move house as a result of this;
- Social/Family support – points can be awarded to applicants if they require to be near family member/social network to give or receive support. Applicants will be required to provide evidence from the person giving or receiving the support; and
- Incoming Worker – points can be awarded to applicants if they currently work in West Dunbartonshire but do not live in the area and are experiencing difficulty in travelling to their place of work.

6.2 Points Structure

Categories	Circumstances	Points
Category 1 Insecurity of Tenure	Applying from the family home	25
	Living somewhere with no tenancy agreement	25
	Notice to Quit	25
	Tied Accommodation	25
	Regeneration	25
Category 2 Medical and Disability	A award	100
	B award	60
	C award	10
Category 3 Facilities	Lacking Amenities	
	○ No bathroom	10
	○ No kitchen facilities	10
	Sharing Amenities	
	○ Kitchen	10
Category 4 House Size	○ Bathroom	10
	Overcrowded by 1 bedroom	20
	Overcrowded by 2 bedrooms	25
	Overcrowded by 3 or more bedrooms	30
	Under Occupying by 1 bedroom	20
	Under Occupying by 2 bedrooms	40
	And 20 points further for any further rooms	60+
Category 5 Social / Relocation	Relationship Breakdown	25
	Social / Family Support	10
	Incoming Worker	10

6.3 Verification of Information

To ensure that applications are correctly assessed, applicants will be required to provide information to verify your circumstances. It is recognised that in some cases the information required may be sensitive and of a personal nature, so in these circumstances a position of belief and trust will be adopted. The application form will highlight to applicants what information is required to be evidenced.

6.4 Eligible House Size

The Council aims to make best use of its housing stock and applicants will be eligible for a particular size of house based on the size of their household.

Household Size	Accommodation Size
Single person	Bedsit or 1 Bedroom property
Couple	1 or 2 Bedroom property
Single parent or couple with one child	2 Bedroom Property
Single parent or couple with two children	
- both aged under 10	2 Bedroom property
- one or both aged 10 or over	3 Bedroom property
Single parent or couple with three children	
- if two able to share a room (under 10)	3 Bedroom property
- none able to share a room	4 Bedroom property
Single parent or couple with four children	

- if all children are able to share rooms	3 Bedroom property
- if two children able to share a room	4 Bedroom property (maximum size available)
Expectant Mother	
- treated as two or more dependant of number of unborn children	2 Bedroom property

Where a member of your household is temporarily living away from home, for instance in further education or in the armed forces, they will be included as part of the household, if the individual provides written confirmation that they intend to live with you.

Each application will be considered on an individual basis, however, in order to make best use of housing stock and maximise tenant's choice, there are circumstances where a larger house maybe allocated.

These are listed as below:

- Where there is a medical reason for requiring a separate or additional bedroom. This will be considered on an individual basis;
- Where a separated spouse has access rights to child/children. An additional bedroom will generally be allowed to be used by the child/children during the access period;
- Where children are close to the threshold of requiring their own bedroom. This is to maximise tenancy sustainment, larger properties to accommodate the growing household will be considered; and
- Where there is no stock of a suitable size. In some areas where there are no properties of a suitable size, households can be considered for the next suitable size.

7 Sheltered and Adapted Housing

7.1 Allocation of Adapted Housing

WDC wants to move towards effective allocation of adapted housing, to aim to tackle the inequality experienced by disabled people in accessing suitable housing. An adapted property would be one that would enable a person(s) with a disability to live independently at home for as long as possible. Necessary adaptations help a tenant achieve personal independence and good use of adaptations can have a major impact on a tenant's wellbeing and quality of life. They can make daily tasks easier and help tenants stay in their home for longer.

To achieve this, the Council needs to make best use of existing stock, while meeting the needs of tenants. Instances where adaptations are removed from void properties as no tenant has required the adaption should be avoided. Carrying out adaptations for tenants in properties which would not be suitable for their longer term housing needs, will also be avoided.

Where tenants live in properties with adaptations which are no longer required, the Council will support these tenants to find a mutual exchange, if they are in agreement. The Council will not take possession back of adapted housing for those who have no need for it, but simply highlight the importance of the adaptations being for those in most need of them and encourage an exchange where possible.

Due to the changes in the Housing Act, the Council has the flexibility to make better use of adapted properties as short term temporary accommodation, where at the point of allocation there is no applicant requiring the adapted property. Adapted properties would therefore only be allocated to those applicants who need them and if no applicant on the list requires that adaption at that point, to avoid creating lengthy void times for adapted properties, they will be held and utilised for temporary accommodation until a suitable applicant is on the list.

The Council will therefore keep a record of how many properties it has that are adapted and where they are. Moving forward, these properties will flag up as adapted and can be ring fenced for allocation this way. The Council will also explore alternatives to adaptations, as adapting an existing property for the tenant may not always be the best long term housing solution.

When a tenant requires a major adaptation to their household, the Housing Occupational Therapist can work together with the Housing Officer and tenant to explore the housing options available and whether a move to an already suitably adapted property would be the best option. The Housing Occupational Therapist will understand the long term prognosis of the tenant's illness and the impact this will have on their future housing needs. The Housing Occupational Therapist will also be able to assess adapted stock which becomes void and identify people who would be suitable for the adaptations and ensure that the allocation of adapted housing meets the long term needs of the tenant, thus minimising the need for future rehousing.

If a tenant or residents current house does not meet their particular needs there maybe aids or adaptations that can be made to their existing house to enable them to remain there, if that is their preference. Owner Occupiers can request an assessment from Occupational Therapy or the HSCP. The request can be made personally, by family, GP or hospital etc. An assessment will then be carried out by the Occupational Therapist which, if needed, will result in a referral for equipment or an adaptation or both. Referrals for adaptations are then sent to Care and Repair who carry out the full grant application process, this is then sent to Private Sector Housing Grants Section for assessment.

7.2 Allocation of Sheltered Housing

Sheltered Housing is the name given to grouped housing particularly aimed at people of retirement age or for those with a disability approaching retirement age who would benefit from this type of housing. Anyone of retirement age, or anyone with a disability who is approaching retirement age and would benefit from this type of accommodation, can apply. To apply for sheltered housing, applicants can complete a sheltered housing application form. This form will consist of general housing questions and questions relating to the applicants current circumstances and level of mobility etc. An information leaflet is available on the Sheltered Complexes, which details the facilities they all have and support that they can offer.

The layout of each complex is very varied so applicants should consult the information leaflet when completing an application form to see if the needs that are wished/ required can be met by the applicants preferred complex.

Based on the information within the sheltered housing information leaflet applicants should then make their choices depending on which housing complex best suits their needs and rate them in order of preference. The supply of sheltered housing is limited within West Dunbartonshire and demand outstrips supply. The community alarm

service is an option that is available for residents within their own current home. It is not just specific to properties within sheltered complexes, so may work for those who simply would like to reassurance of help being at hand. Applicants should take this into consideration when completing the form and matching their needs with the complexes.

The allocation of sheltered accommodation and adapted houses will therefore be made on the recommendation of qualified HSCP (Health and Social Care Partnership) professionals and/or Occupational Therapists in order to achieve the best match possible according to the assessment process and will not be determined solely by the number of points awarded. More information can be found in our Sheltered Housing Policy.

8 High Risk Offenders

The Council has a duty to consider the housing requirements of all applicants over the age of 16 but procedures are in place to manage and minimise the risk posed to communities by high risk offenders. The Council adopts a multi-agency approach to housing high risk offenders and works with a number of different agencies such as Police Scotland, Criminal Justice Social Work and the Scottish Prison Service. Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA's) are in place, where all agencies decide jointly on risk management.

The Council and RSL's in the area do not therefore carry the principle responsibility of managing risk relating to high risk offenders. An information sharing protocol is in place, which sets out the processes for information sharing and co-operation. The information sharing helps to assist with the management of risk but it cannot eliminate it entirely. All available properties are profiled to ensure their suitability before an offer would be made.

9 Gypsy Travellers Site

West Dunbartonshire has one travelling person's site located at Dennystoun Forge in Dumbarton. The site has a total of 20 bays and is open all year round. To apply for a pitch, applicants can complete a standard waiting list application form. Applicants simply tick the box option 'Gypsy Travellers Site' under the heading 'House Type'. Applications will be assessed and placed in the appropriate group based on their present housing circumstances, and points will be awarded accordingly. Gypsy Travellers, on receipt of a housing application, will be referred for a Housing Options interview to the Homelessness and Housing Options Team.

The facilities for each pitch includes:

- A hard standing for a caravan;
- Fixed and maintained utilities to Caravan;
- Fenced and gated inclusive to Pitch;
- Space to park a car or other vehicle;
- Toilets, showers and baths;
- A mailbox; and
- A designated Housing Officer for the area.

10 No Home for Domestic Abuse

No Home for Domestic Abuse is housing services' zero tolerance approach to domestic abuse occurring within our properties. It provides victims/survivors of domestic abuse with access to practical help, legal assistance and support to allow them to remain, if this is what they want.

Council tenants who are victims of domestic abuse are offered a range of housing advice based on their circumstances to support them. This includes:

- Supporting victims to remain in their own home – including transferring the tenancy into their own name where possible. Support includes making the victim feels safe and security measures such as lock changes;
- Supporting victims to gain legal information and advice;
- Supporting victims to access specialist domestic abuse support; and
- Providing suitable alternative safe and secure accommodation via the homeless service

The Council:

- Will use the full scope of Anti-Social Behaviour powers in conjunction with Housing and Matrimonial Homes Legislation to legally remove perpetrators if we need to; and
- Recognises that in order to support victims to stay in their own homes and to make them feel safer we must also address the housing needs of perpetrators. Those found guilty of committing domestic abuse will be offered short-term or permanent tenancies dependant on their circumstances, appropriately distanced from the victim.

This aligns with the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021.

11 Housing Support

Housing support services are defined by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 as including any service that provides support, assistance, advice or counselling to an individual with particular needs, with a view to enabling that individual to occupy or continue to occupy their home.

If it is felt that a tenant requires support in sustaining their tenancy they can be referred to our registered housing support service, who will assess their needs and, if appropriate, provide support services to enable them to remain living in their tenancy.

Tenants can also be signposted to HSCP services and referrals can be made to HSCP when it is felt that there is a vulnerable adult or child in the tenancy.

Tenants can also be referred to Working 4 U if they are experiencing financial difficulties. Working 4 U can offer support with benefits and money/debt issues and assist people overcoming barriers to entering employment.

12 Lettings Plans & Initiatives

Lettings Plans and Letting Initiatives are tools to help support strategic priorities and tackle the issue of empty properties and to combat other signs of neighbourhood decline.

Lettings Plans refer to how properties are allocated, whilst Lettings Initiatives refer to incentives to stimulate or increase demand for particular properties or areas.

12.1 Lettings Plans

Lettings Plans can be an important tool to enable the Council to respond to and tackle a range of specific circumstances in specific lettings areas and support wider strategic objectives initiatives.

These could include:

- Making best use of our available housing stock to meet evidenced need supported by our Local Housing Strategy;
- The need to ensure stable communities;
- The desire to improving community stability and cohesion;
- Tackling low demand areas and difficult to let properties; and
- Tackling antisocial behaviour

The Council will ensure that houses are let strategically in a way which gives reasonable preference to those in housing need, makes best use of existing stock, reflects the local needs and circumstances that have been identified and contributes to more sustainable communities.

The Council will use triggers to highlight the need for a local Lettings Plan to be developed and will ensure that tenants, residents and other relevant stakeholder groups are consulted with as appropriate in the preparation of any such plan. The Council can be flexible in their approach for considering the best applicant for a void property by utilising the three lists that are available to them and also by optimising the Homeless and Young Care Leavers and Young people at risk of homelessness lists.

12.2 Lettings Initiatives

Lettings Initiatives are a reflection of best practice to tackle areas where there are high levels of empty houses, small or non-existent housing lists, high refusal rates and low levels of tenancy sustainment.

Where the Council needs to intervene to help to promote sustainable communities and generate demand for areas, a range of initiatives will be available at a local level to address help tackle this.

Such initiatives or incentives could include:

- Advertising of properties on Rightmove for prospective tenants to view; and
- Offering of incentives such as decoration allowances, white goods or carpets.

The success of Lettings Initiatives used will be monitored and assessed to ensure that the aims outlined are achieved. In areas where a lettings initiative is in place, allocations via the allocations policy will be suspended, to allow any prospective tenant interested in a void by the range of initiatives offered to be allocated a property, regardless of their points or place on the waiting list.

13 Exceptional Circumstances

Whilst our Allocations Policy is designed to reflect local housing need, it is important that it is flexible enough to deal with instances of exceptional circumstances, where the Council considers it appropriate to make an offer of housing to an applicant out-with the core policy.

We have an established Allocations Panel to deal with such cases. When exceptional circumstances arise and warrant an offer of housing out-with this policy, the Allocations Panel will review the case and decide the priority of the referral and, where necessary, can also decide on the size, type and location of the property to be offered through the Panels priority decision.

All referrals to the Allocations Panel will be monitored, decisions recorded and best practice will be adopted, including a clear audit trail when discretion has been used and reasons for an allocation.

Exceptional circumstances cannot be predicted but having the Allocations Panel in place provides a mechanism for such cases to be assessed in a fair and transparent manner. The Panel will focus on the following points:

- Applicants having exceptional level of need where circumstances are so unusual that the allocation policy cannot adequately assess and prioritise; and
- The number of cases being presented to the panel must be minimal, and individual cases will be monitored to highlight any growing patterns.

Examples of circumstances which may be considered by the Allocations Panel would include instances where Police Scotland recommended that someone moves home because they are being harassed and asks a landlord to help rehouse the person immediately or for applications to support kinship care arrangements which are supported by the Health and Social Care Partnership. All such applications will be considered on a case by case basis.

14 Monitoring and Review

14.1 Review of Policy

We will review the Housing Allocations Policy every three years or earlier if required, for example to comply with any legislative changes. We will consult tenants, applicants and other relevant stakeholders when carrying out a review. The percentage quota of the groups will also be reviewed annually and will change depending on the analysis of patterns of housing need and demand to ensure that all groups receive an equitable share of all allocations. We have also committed to provide applicants with annual lettings information and to recommence the annual reviews of all applications.

14.2 Appeals Process

Complaints can be made to the service area directly and an applicant can appeal any decision made during the processing of the housing application in writing, by telephone and/or in person. An area co-ordinator who has not been involved with the initial decision will investigate the appeal and send a written reply within 14 days.

If not satisfied with the outcome of the above or if an applicant does not feel comfortable going directly to the service area, complaints can be made to the Customer Relations Team. See the 'How to Complain' section of the Councils website, where online forms can be completed or alternatively contact Customer Relations by phone or email on the details provided on the website.

Complaints can relate to the way in which an application for housing has been dealt with, staff conduct, any aspect of the allocations of particular properties, or on the Council policy relating to the allocation of housing within West Dunbartonshire.

The Complaints Handling Process has 2 stages:

- Stage 1 allows five working days or less to respond to the complaint, unless there are exceptional circumstances; and
- Stage 2 deals with complaints that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation. Complaints handled at Stage 2 should be responded to within 20 working days.

If after receiving the Councils final response at Stage 2, a complainant is still not happy they have the right to ask for the complaint to be independently reviewed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Their contact details will be provided in the Councils final response.

Queries about the Complaints Handling Procedure or any aspect of the above information should be directed to the Council's Customer Relations Team.

15. Satisfaction Monitoring

The Council itself also has the following performance monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure that a quality service is delivered across all aspects of the allocations and lettings service.

The Council therefore monitors numbers of the following issues under the headings below.

Access to the housing register

- Applicants on the housing register, including tenants seeking to transfer or exchange houses;
- New applications to the housing register, including processing applications against set timescales; and
- Deletions from the housing register.

Offers and lets of accommodation

- Numbers of offers to applicants, including information on accepted and refused offers;
- Offers suspended and reasons, as well as appeals against suspensions and outcomes; and
- Allocations to each housing group against targets.

Equality monitoring

- Equality information to identify applications, offers and lets by reference to factors such as age, disability, ethnicity and race and gender.

Appeals and complaints

- Numbers of appeals and complaints, including outcomes.

Other monitoring

This type of monitoring includes activities such as:

- The quality of our verbal advice and information about allocation matters; and
- The quality of our public information relating to written and electronic formats.

This includes meeting corporate quality standards such as producing information, as appropriate, that is:

- Accurate;
- In plain language; and
- Accessible to the needs of individual service users.

We also monitor specific issues to inform practice such as reasons why tenants are seeking to transfer to other houses or to exchange homes with other tenants.

16. Working with other Housing Providers

The Council has Nomination Agreements with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) within West Dunbartonshire. These arrangements provide the Council with the right to nominate applicants from the housing waiting list for vacancies that arise within RSL housing stock. However, these arrangements do not give the Council the right to allocate such vacancies and any allocations are made in accordance with individual RSL's allocations policies and procedures.

Within the terms of the homelessness legislation, the Council has a Section 5 protocol in place with local RSL's. This provides the formal framework within which the RSL's, in partnership with the Council, provide permanent accommodation for homeless people within West Dunbartonshire.

RSL's agreed to a letting target for section 5 referrals that assists with the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan "Home at the Heart" aims to house people as quickly as possible reducing times in temporary accommodation. For more information on our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan please see section 4.2 -Homeless Strategy.

17. Role of Councillors

The role of Councillors in making decisions about housing is restricted by the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. Councillors are responsible for approving the Allocations Policy and monitoring its effectiveness but this Act excludes Councillors from being involved in any decisions relating to allocating a property (or a property where the Council had nomination rights). Councillors are, however, entitled to provide information in support of an application on the applicant's behalf.

18. Allocations to Members of the Council and Housing Staff

The Housing Application form will ask if the applicant is a member of staff, elected member or are related to either. To ensure transparency in the allocations procedures, approval from the Allocations Panel will be sought in instances where a house is being allocated to any member of Council staff, elected members or members of their immediate family. Where this is the case, the member of staff concerned should play no role in assessing the level of points to be awarded or in making any offers of housing. Any such allocation will be processed by an Area Co-ordinator and approved by the Allocations Panel. A record will also be kept of why the applicant was awarded the points given and why any specific offer of housing was made.

19. Publicity

The Council will publish details of the Allocations Policy and how it assesses priority for housing. The policy published on the Council's website and will be circulated to other Council departments, registered residents and tenants associations, external partner organisations and other relevant stakeholder groups.

20. Access to Information on Applicants

If an applicant would like to check the details held on their application at any time they can contact their Housing Officer. Only the applicant is allowed access to the information held under the terms of data protection legislation. If, however, a tenant appoints a representative information can be passed on to them. Applicants should be aware when accessing information on their position on the lists, that the allocations policy is a needs based policy and that therefore positions can change.



Housing Services

Allocations Policy Review Consultation Summary Document

Housing and Employability, Housing Development

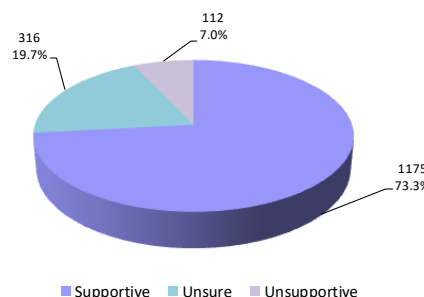
Person responsible: Kathryn Irvine, Senior Housing Development Officer

Consultation Start date: March 2021 – September 2021

1.	The name of consultation / participation exercise?	Allocations Policy Review Consultation
2.	Its aims and objectives?	<p>Background</p> <p>Our Housing Allocations Policy was updated in 2017 to take account of the Housing Land Act 2014. Whilst it largely reflects good practice and has not been the focus of any detailed criticism, a commitment was made to carry out a review of the policy.</p> <p>The review provided the opportunity to improve the existing policy so that it more adequately meets the needs of those in housing need, aligns with our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and fully takes account of the SG best practice guidance published in February 2019.</p> <p>Consultation – Stage 1</p> <p>The aim of Stage 1 of the consultation process was to seek the views of those on housing waiting list to help inform the scope of the review itself.</p> <p>Specifically we wanted to ask our waiting list applicants questions around their knowledge of the Allocations Policy, the points they had been awarded, their likelihood of being rehoused and the review process we have in place to see if improvements could be made in these areas.</p> <p>Consultation – Stage 2</p> <p>The aim of Stage 2 of the consultation process was to seek the views of all key stakeholders on proposals to</p>

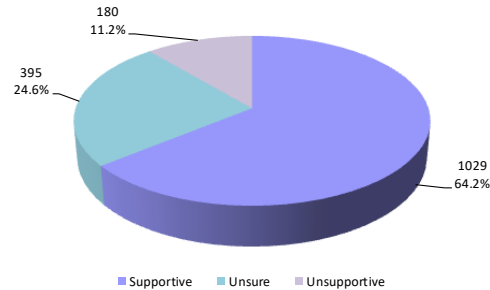
	<p>make changes to the Allocations Policy that had emerged from the review process itself.</p> <p>Specifically we asked the following 5 questions:</p> <p>How supportive are you of the proposal to award more points to current and future transfer applicants who are under-occupying their properties?</p> <p>How supportive are you of the proposal to create a recognised pathway into housing for young people within our Allocations Policy?</p> <p>How supportive are you of the proposal to remove the low medical point category from our Allocations Policy?</p> <p>How supportive are you of the proposal to remove the radius restriction for anyone who already works in West Dunbartonshire but doesn't live in the area?</p> <p>How supportive are you of the proposal to stop awarding the 10 points given to families in multi storey flats who wish to move out?</p>
3.	<p>Who did you invite/include? (e.g. all tenants, tenant from the interested tenants register, RTOs, staff)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation – Stage 1Waiting list applicants <p>Consultation – Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenants and Residents Groups and the WDTRO • All West Dunbartonshire Council tenants • Waiting list applicants • Local RSL's • The West Dunbartonshire Equalities Forum • Elected Members.
4.	<p>What methods did you use to promote/invite stakeholders</p> <p>Consultation – Stage 1</p>

	<p>to get involved? (e.g. letters, posters, website)</p>	<p>Text to 5100 waiting list applicants with link to online survey.</p> <p>The Councils website and social media were used to advertise the consultation.</p> <p>Consultation – Stage 2</p> <p>Survey link sent directly to the WDTRO, TRAs, Equalities Forum & Community Planning to encourage their participation.</p> <p>Article included in the summer edition of Housing News publicising the consultation and making paper copies available from lead officer.</p> <p>The Councils website and social media was used to advertise the consultation.</p> <p>Text sent to all WDC tenants and waiting list applicants</p>
5.	<p>Who actually took part?</p> <p>(Number of individuals and or number of tenant organisations represented)</p>	<p>Consultation – Stage 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey link text to 5100 applicants • 791 responses to initial survey <p>Consultation – Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12,000 text with survey link sent to tenants & applicants, link promoted on Facebook also • 1615 responses to main survey, 866 from WDC tenants, 465 from Applicants, 216 from WDC residents, 51 from staff and 11 from partner organisations
6.	<p>What method(s) did you use to obtain their views? (e.g. focus/working group, newsletter, survey)</p> <p>Why did you choose this method(s)?</p>	<p><u>Consultation Stage 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey used to gain insight about applicant views on main issues to be addressed in review such as how easy current policy is to understand • Method chosen as seen as the best way to capture the views of as many respondents as possible <p><u>Consultation – Stage 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey to gather views on specific proposals. Method chosen as seen as the best way to capture the views of as many respondents as possible

7.	What good practice or minimum standards can you evidence as part of your consultation?	A wide variety of advertising methods were used both in early consultations and when consulting on the draft to promote the surveys. Both consultation periods ran for 8 weeks. Plain English was used and the survey was promoted by text and online to make it as accessible as possible. Paper copies were also available.												
8.	What was the outcome of the consultation?	<p>Consultation – Stage 1</p> <p>Feedback from Stage 1 of the consultation showed that whilst there was good awareness of the Allocations Policy among waiting list applicants, many said they were not very aware of the likelihood of being made an offer and many reported that they had not been contacted about reviewing their application.</p> <p>As a result of the feedback from Stage 1 of the consultation changes were made to the policy to add commitments to provide applicants with annual lettings information and recommit to annual reviews of all applications.</p> <p>Consultation – Stage 2</p> <p>Feedback from Stage 2 of the consultation showed that we had a good level of support for the 5 proposed changes.</p> <p>The consultation results were as follows –</p> <p>Under-occupation of existing Council properties</p> <p>The consultation showed clear support for this proposal with 47% of respondents being very supportive, 26% supportive, 20% unsure, 4% unsupportive and 3% very unsupportive.</p>  <table><tr><th>Response Category</th><th>Count</th><th>Percentage</th></tr><tr><td>Supportive</td><td>1175</td><td>73.3%</td></tr><tr><td>Unsure</td><td>316</td><td>19.7%</td></tr><tr><td>Unsupportive</td><td>112</td><td>7.0%</td></tr></table>	Response Category	Count	Percentage	Supportive	1175	73.3%	Unsure	316	19.7%	Unsupportive	112	7.0%
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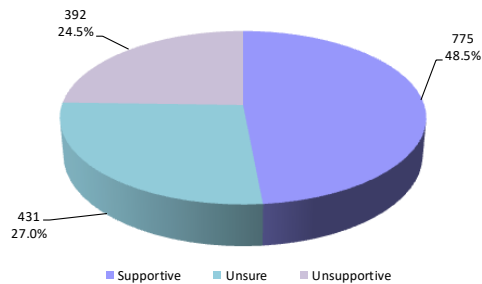
Going further to address access to housing for young people and tackling youth homelessness

The consultation showed clear support for this proposal with 31% of respondents being very supportive, 33% supportive, 25% unsure, 7% unsupportive and 4% very unsupportive.



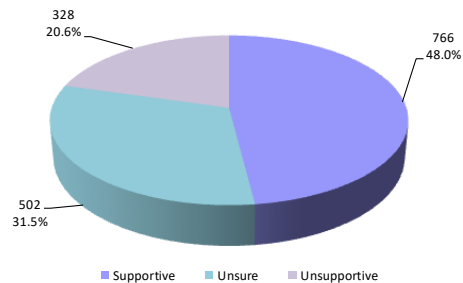
Medical Applicants

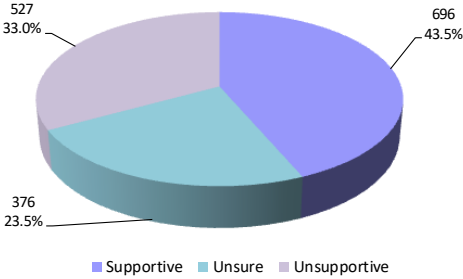
The consultation for this proposal showed that more were supportive than unsupportive with 27% of respondents being very supportive, 21% supportive, 27% unsure, 14% unsupportive and 11% very unsupportive.



Social/Relocation Points

The consultation for this proposal showed that more were supportive than unsupportive, with 20% of respondents being very supportive, 27% supportive, 32% unsure, 13% unsupportive and 8% very unsupportive.



	<p>Points for living in a multi storey flat</p> <p>The consultation for this proposal showed that more were supportive than unsupportive, with 19% of respondents being very supportive, 25% supportive, 23% unsure, 18% unsupportive and 15% very unsupportive.</p>  <p>Based on feedback from the consultation all the proposals are being taken forward with appropriate recommendations being made to the Housing and Communities Committee.</p>
9.	<p>How did you feedback to participants the outcome?</p> <p>Following the meeting of the Housing and Community Committee meeting on 3rd November 2021 we will highlight the outcome of the consultation and subsequent policy changes to tenants in a Housing News article and to waiting list applicants.</p>
10.	<p>How did tenant involvement influence your consultation?</p> <p>Paper going to HAAC outlines the consultation results and the final Allocations Policy is based on the views of tenants, applicants and staff .</p>
11.	<p>Are you able to demonstrate this? Yes</p>
12.	<p>How have you demonstrated to tenants that involvement made a difference?</p> <p>Yes, feedback from Stage 1 consultation helped to shape the service that the Council would adopt keeping tenants more involved in the allocation processes and consultation in Stage 2 on proposed changes fed into the draft policy that was developed.</p>
13.	<p>Did you check with participants that they were happy with the opportunities given to make their views known and that they felt that we listened and acted upon them?</p> <p>Not directly but it was highlighted to them the changes that were made following consultation and how the changes would affect the policy.</p> <p>Lead officer details were made available for anyone to contact to discuss the survey and no negative comments were received</p>

What worked well, what didn't work well – or any other comments you have.

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West Dunbartonshire Council

Report by Chief Officer, Housing and Employability

Housing and Communities Committee: 2 February 2022

**Subject: West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2022 – 2027 –
More Homes Better Homes West Dunbartonshire**

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to present and seek final approval for the Council's new Local Housing Strategy (LHS) for the five year period 2022 – 2027.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Housing and Communities Committee:
- i) Approve the final West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027 as appended to this report;
 - ii) Note the establishment of the Local Housing Strategy Delivery Board which will oversee the implementation of the Local Housing Strategy; and
 - iii) Note that an Annual update report will be presented to the Housing and Communities Committee in May of each year.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 ('the 2001 Act') places a statutory requirement on local authorities to produce a LHS that sets out its strategy, priorities and plans for the delivery of housing and related services.
- 3.2** This plan builds on the success of its predecessor More Homes Better Homes West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2017 – 2022, approved by Housing and Communities Committee on 2 November 2016, and seeks to address emerging housing challenges.
- 3.3** The LHS is the Council's overarching strategic document on housing and housing support issues and has a key role to play in the effective integration of health and social care. The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) sets out how West Dunbartonshire Council and its partners plan to respond to the housing and housing related opportunities and challenges over the next five year period 2022/2023 – 2026/2027

3.4 It demonstrates the local authority's strategic approach to dealing with key housing related issues such as:

- Delivering high quality housing and housing related services across all tenures
- Setting out its contribution to the effective integration of health and social care
- Showing how the LHS is supporting the Scottish Government National Outcomes and Targets, whilst reflecting the needs and priorities of the local authority area.

3.5 The Scottish Government also requires local authorities to submit a biennial Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) indicating how investment in affordable housing will be directed over the five year period with a view to achieving the LHS outcomes.

3.6 Increasing the supply of new housing is a high profile national priority. The Council welcomed the Scottish Government's 50,000 new affordable homes target by 2021 under the More Homes Scotland banner and supports the continuation of the social house building programme which sets a target of 110,000 new homes, 70% of which will be affordable, across Scotland by 2032. The annual Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) links to the LHS and details the new affordable housing priorities in West Dunbartonshire.

4. Main Issues

4.1 Strategic Policy Framework

4.1.1 The Local Housing Strategy is set within, and contributes to, a wider strategic policy framework at both a local and national level. The LHS sets out the Strategic Policy Framework, both locally and nationally, and outlines the contribution it will make to the delivery of key strategies, in particular the following:

Housing to 2040

Housing to 2040 sets out the Scottish Government's ambition for everyone to have a safe, good quality and affordable home that meets their needs in the place they want to be. It is the overarching policy paper on Housing and related issues.

West Dunbartonshire Council Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022

The WDC Strategic Plan sets out the vision and direction for Council services over a five year period and details priorities and outcomes. The plan is accompanied by a scorecard showing progress made on the priorities.

West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2019 – 2022

This plan outlines the vision for the delivery of integrated health and social care services across West Dunbartonshire.

West Dunbartonshire Equalities Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report 2021 - 25

This report sets out how West Dunbartonshire Council will fulfil its obligations under the general duty as defined in the Equalities Act 2010. It contains details of Equality Outcomes and performance indicators showing what progress has been made

A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People Delivery Plan (2016 – 2021)

The aim of this plan is to remove the barriers that isolate, exclude and so disable the individual and instead promote an independent living model in which all disabled people are able and supported to live their lives with freedom, choice, control and dignity, participating equally alongside other citizens in their families, communities, workplaces and wider society.

Race Equality Framework and Action Plan (2016 -2030)

The Scottish Government is determined to show leadership in advancing race equality, tackling racism and addressing the barriers that prevent people from minority ethnic communities from realising their potential.

Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

GIRFEC is the Scottish Government's policy supporting families by making sure children and young people can receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people.

Tackling Child Poverty Action Plan (2018 – 2022)

This plan details the measures being taken to eradicate child poverty in Scotland through partnership working. Housing has a vital role to play in its delivery.

Health Inequalities Reform Programme 2018

To improve Scotland's health and wellbeing we need to work together to shift our focus towards preventing ill health, reducing inequalities and working more effectively in partnership.

The Scottish Government's Autism Strategy 2011

Autism is a national priority.

Good Mental Health for All – NHS Scotland 2016

'Good Mental Health for All' is an initiative developed by Public Health Scotland and endorsed by the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities which sets out a vision to improve mental health and wellbeing

4.2 The Consultation Process

- 4.2.1** Local authorities have a statutory duty to involve, consult and engage with as wide a range of their residents as possible. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to consult on the preparation of their LHS.
- 4.2.2** The Covid-19 pandemic inevitably impacted on our consultation process and required that we carried out the exercise in new ways. For example in person meetings were replaced by virtual ones and instead of running two surveys we decided to run a single, more detailed survey reflecting the more online nature of consultation.
- 4.2.3** The consultation process included:
- An invitation to comment to all relevant organisations on the Council's corporate Community Group Distribution List, together with an offer to speak directly to the group
 - Two consultative sessions with the West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisation
 - Presentations were made to the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Housing Providers Forum which brings together all the RSLs operating locally
 - The draft LHS was shared with neighbouring Local Authorities through the umbrella Glasgow City Region Housing Market Partnership
 - A range of social media outlets including the Council's website, twitter and Facebook
 - Local press, the Council's *Housing News* quarterly periodical, library and other noticeboard outlets.
- 4.2.4** A series of eight thematic workshop consultation events were held in August 2021 followed by a special meeting of the Housing Solutions Partnership. These generated good discussion constructive feedback on the consultative draft LHS
- 4.2.5** A very successful online survey was carried out which resulted in 130 returns. A report on the consultation exercise has been posted on the Council's LHS web pages.

4.3 Five Key Themes

- 4.3.1** The LHS 2022 – 2027 is organised under 5 key themes:

- Housing need and demand
- Promoting quality homes
- Homelessness and housing options

- Place and community
- Supported, Specialist and Particular Needs housing.

4.3.2 The LHS details the issues around each of the five key themes. Each section concludes with a series of key actions for inclusion in the performance management Action Plan, which is appended to the LHS.

4.4. Main Issues by Key Theme

4.4.1 Housing Need and Demand

This chapter focuses on issues around population and household projections and what these mean for housing and future supply in West Dunbartonshire. The main points include:

- i) The projected housing need and demand for West Dunbartonshire over the next five years as set out in the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA). The HNDA is the tool we use to define the housing supply base for the Local Housing Strategy and the Housing Land Allocation for the strategic and local development plans. It provides estimates of the amount, and likely tenure, of additional housing required to meet existing and future demand. The HNDA analyses the need for social rented housing at a local authority level. Meanwhile, the demand for private sector (owner-occupation and private rented) houses were considered within a framework of housing market areas which reflect the way the private market operates across the eight local authorities within the Glasgow City Region Housing Market Partnership and expressed in its Clydeplan HNDA.
- ii) Conclusions: The Housing Need and Demand Assessment demonstrates both a clear need and demand for housing in West Dunbartonshire. Demographics play an important part in these trends and this was supported by our survey responses and HIIA findings which show that young and older people, along with single adult households have particular challenges accessing housing which meets their needs and is affordable.

4.4.2 Promoting Quality Homes

This chapter focuses on the physical quality of the properties in West Dunbartonshire, across all tenures, and issues such as energy efficiency and fuel poverty. Key points include:

- i) This chapter provides detailed information of the nature of the housing stock composition across West Dunbartonshire and on its condition and energy efficiency.

- ii) Conclusions: Quality homes are the foundation of many of our ambitions including reducing our impact on the environment, reducing fuel poverty and supporting the health and wellbeing of our residents. Achieving these goals will require effort, not only from ourselves, but also our strategic partners, home owners and private landlords. In order to help everyone contribute towards these ambitions, education is important. Our survey identified that 70% of people did not know that we offered an energy advice service. Therefore we will look to promote the energy advice service to our residents and enable the energy advice officer to link in with colleagues in housing operations and Working4U to ensure that households are helped to increase their incomes.

4.4.3 Homelessness and housing options

Tackling homelessness has been a focus of Scottish Government policy. While significant measures have been taken to address issues around homelessness, there is an ambition to do more to ensure that people experiencing homelessness can access the accommodation and support they need. This ambition focuses on preventing homelessness in the first place and then preventing it from recurring through the provision of supportive pathways. Key points include:

- i) Homelessness remains a serious issue in West Dunbartonshire, especially among young people aged 16-24, and details our response particularly through a Rapid Rehousing Approach.
- ii) Conclusions: Prevention of homelessness has, and will continue to be, our focus. We have already put in place a number of policies and pathways to support people and households at risk of homelessness to understand their housing options. We understand that as the HASARG recommendations come into place other public sector bodies such as education and health services will have a responsibility to prevent homelessness. We know that making the right information available including on tenant rights can be crucial in preventing homelessness and averting crisis. Therefore, as more information about the Prevent duty is available we will work with our partners to develop a joint approach to helping them fulfil this duty. We already have a good working relationship with a number of partners and this action will build on those relationships.

4.4.4 Place and Community

Our places, our towns, and communities are where many of the ambitions of this strategy intersect. The physical buildings, which provide us with homes, sit within and help create places and therefore we must work to make these places the best that they can be. This section considers our

contribution to creating high-quality places which are safe, vibrant, and community-focused and are home to people who are healthier and happier. Such communities will encourage people to take fewer car journeys and instead travel safely and pleasantly by foot, bike or public transport, bringing individual health and wider sustainability benefits.

Key points include:

- i) Placemaking is a public health priority for the Scottish Government. High-quality places and design is also a priority for the Council and our Local Development Plan 2 sets out how we will promote such initiatives, including through 20-Minute Neighbourhoods. This section outlines housing's contribution to delivering on these ambitions.
- ii) In preparing the LHS, housing regeneration areas were designated where a degree of prioritisation would be given to projects in specific areas, linked to wider social and economic outcomes. The new LHS proposes that for the period of the plan, the following areas will be considered as housing regeneration areas:
 - Haldane, Balloch
 - Bonhill, Alexandria
 - Bellsmyre, Dumbarton
 - Brucehill, Dumbarton
 - Westcliff, Dumbarton
 - Castlehill, Dumbarton
 - Mountblow, Clydebank
 - Dalmuir, Clydebank
 - Drumry, Clydebank
 - Faifley, Clydebank
 - Clydebank East, Clydebank.
- iii) Conclusions: Places and communities are vitally important to both our resident's health and well-being and our ambitions to reduce our impact on the environment. Indeed, our survey findings suggest strong support for the idea of 20 minute neighbourhoods and the opportunity they present to improve our places. However, housing is only one part of our places and we do not have control over every element of our places but we will endeavour to work with colleagues in other teams for example roads and their active travel strategy ensuring that our homes contribute the best they can. We will commit to carrying out at least one 20 minute neighbourhood review per year with our colleagues and communities where appropriate.

4.4.5 Supported, Specialist and Particular Needs Housing

- i) Housing has an important role to play in health because homes can impact on people's health in a way that few other factors can. Homes are where people spend a significant portion of their time and the links to physical health are clear but homes also invoke feelings of safety and security and therefore have important connections to mental health too.
- ii) Having access to the right housing can deliver positive mental and physical outcomes and this is particularly the case for those who require specialist accommodation, support to live independently or have housing requirements that vary from other groups.
- iv) Conclusions: This chapter sets out how we plan to ensure these groups have access to the housing and support they require. This will require close working across Council services and in particular with our colleagues in the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP).

4.5 Launch and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

4.5.1 After approval of the draft strategy by the Housing and Communities Committee on 3rd November 2021 it was submitted to the Scottish Government as required. Whilst the Scottish Government have acknowledged receipt and made some initial positive comment, the impact of the increased Scottish Government resilience planning around the pandemic has delayed the intended peer review that was planned for late 2021. It is now anticipated that the peer review will take place in the Summer of 2022 and we currently await confirmation of this. The outcome of the peer review will be discussed at a future meeting of the soon to be established Local Housing Strategy Delivery Group, and will inform a future update report to the Housing and Communities Committee.

4.5.2 Outline actions have been drawn up and are incorporated into all five key themes within the Local Housing Strategy and a more detailed Action Plan has been developed to include indicators measuring performance against agreed timescales. It has also been proposed that the Local Housing Strategy steering group be maintained as the Local Housing Strategy Delivery Board and will meet on a quarterly basis and be chaired by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability to ensure the successful implementation and monitoring of the Local Housing Strategy.

4.5.3 Progress on the delivery of the LHS outcomes will also be monitored through:

- An annual Progress Report to Housing and Communities Committee and Health and Social Care Partnership Board around May of each year;
- Annual presentation and update to WDTRO (West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Association); and

- Quarterly progress updates to housing association partners and the Scottish Government at the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Housing Providers Forum.

4.5.4 Elements of the LHS form part of the Scottish Social Housing Charter and will be components of the Annual Return of the Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

4.5.5 The Local Housing Strategy is the overarching strategic document for housing and housing support issues across West Dunbartonshire, it is proposed that following final approval by the Housing and Communities Committee, the strategy is formally launched and the Council's corporate communications team will ensure that this is achieved in the most appropriate way.

5. People Implications

5.1 There are no people implications associated with this report.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications in relation to this report, although the delivery of the LHS will entail bringing together a number of resource streams from the Council and partner organisations.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 This strategy has been drawn up in a volatile policy environment and where there continues to economic and political uncertainty, including around Brexit. The strategy will be subject to regular scrutiny and annual review.

7.2 The outcomes contained in this strategy will be dependent upon ongoing resource commitments from a wide range of partners in both the public and private sector.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

8.1 A series of Health Inequality Impact Assessments were carried out on each of the 5 themes of the Strategy which concluded that its impact would be overwhelmingly positive. A summary report is available as a background report and has been posted on the Council's website as a background paper to the LHS. This also incorporates the Equalities Impact Assessment. The introduction of the Health Inequality Impact Assessments to the development of a LHS is a first across Scotland and as such we anticipate some national interest in such a positive approach.

9. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

- 9.1** A Strategic Environmental Assessment pre-screening report has been carried out which has determined that a SEA is not required as the LHS sits within the framework of the Clydeplan SDP and the West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (Proposed Plan) 2015. The SDP defines the spatial strategy while the LDP allocates specific sites to meet identified demand. Strategic Environmental Assessments have been carried out in respect of both these plans.

10. Consultation

- 10.1** The widespread consultation involved in preparing the LHS is summarised at 4.2 above. A Consultation Summary report has been posted on the Council's website.

11. Strategic Assessment

- 11.1** The Local Housing Strategy is the overarching strategic document for housing and housing support issues across West Dunbartonshire. It supports all the Council's key strategic priorities.

Peter Barry
Chief Officer Housing and Employability
20 January 2022

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Appendices: 1. West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2022 -2027

Background Papers: HIIA summary report
Local Housing Strategy EIA
SEA Screening
LHS Consultation Summary

Wards Affected: All



**WEST
DUNBARTONSHIRE
COUNCIL**

Local Housing Strategy 2022 - 2027

Foreword by Councillor Diane Docherty



Councillor Diane Docherty,
Convenor of Housing and Communities Committee

I am delighted to introduce West Dunbartonshire's new Local Housing Strategy, which sets out our vision for Housing and Housing Support services across West Dunbartonshire for the period 2022 – 2027.

The aim of this strategy is to focus on the five key themes of Housing Need and Demand; Promoting Good Quality Homes; Homelessness and Housing Options; Place and Community; and Supported, Specialist and Particular Needs Housing.

We know that good quality housing is an essential feature of any thriving community and as a Council, we are committed to ensuring that our residents have housing which not only meets their needs, but is safe, secure and desirable.

This strategy will allow us to build upon the existing work the Council has already undertaken to improve Housing provision across West Dunbartonshire, with renewed focus on our new build housing programme

More Homes West Dunbartonshire; maximising energy efficiency in all our homes; encouraging locally-focused lifestyles; and promoting and sustaining equality and inclusion.

Furthermore, the strategy demonstrates our commitment to continue to make progress with enhancements to housing provision locally, while also supporting national efforts. I look forward to joining forces with our communities and partners to see our plans progress.



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Introduction

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) sets out how West Dunbartonshire Council and its partners plan to address the housing, and housing related opportunities and challenges, over the next five year period 2022/2023 – 2026/2027.

This new plan aims to build on the significant progress made on the issues identified in the previous LHS 2017-2022 and to address newly arising housing matters particularly in response to the Covid crisis.

The **Housing (Scotland) Act 2001** ('the 2001 Act') places a statutory requirement on local authorities to produce a LHS that sets out its strategy, priorities and plans for the delivery of housing and related services.

It should demonstrate the local authority's strategic approach to dealing with key housing related issues such as:

- **Delivering high quality housing and housing related services across all tenures.**
- **Setting out its contribution to the effective integration of health and social care.**
- **Showing how the LHS is supporting the Scottish Government National Outcomes and Targets, whilst reflecting the needs and priorities of the local authority area.**

The 2001 Act requires the LHS to be supported by an assessment of housing provision including the need and demand for housing and related services, that it must be submitted to Scottish Ministers, and that local authorities must keep their LHS under review. Local authorities are encouraged to report on progress annually as part of the monitoring process, employing an Outcome Action Plan to gauge progress.

The Scottish Government issued **guidance** in September 2019 to assist local authorities in the preparation of their strategies.

The Scottish Government expects the LHS to be developed in collaboration with stakeholders, including residents and tenants with equality issues embedded throughout including in housing advice, homelessness, procurement, new build and refurbishment, specialist housing services, housing management services, allocations and private sector housing.

The LHS is a corporate document, agreed and supported by all relevant local authority departments with the Housing Development team of the Council's Housing Services leading on its development. The development of the LHS has been taken forward in association with colleagues from the West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership, demonstrating the vital role housing has to play in the integration of health and social care services.

This plan builds on the success of its predecessor, the **More Homes Better Homes West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2017 – 2022**, and seeks to address emerging housing challenges.

Strategic Framework

The Local Housing Strategy is set within, and contributes to, a wider strategic policy framework both local and national. While this strategy is being written at a particularly fluid period in terms of strategic planning, it notes the key policy documents influencing our direction over the next five years.

The LHS will be influenced by and help to deliver on the following principal background policy documents:

Housing to 2040:

Housing to 2040 sets out a Vision for Housing in Scotland to 2040 and a Route Map to get there. It aims to deliver the Scottish Government's ambition for everyone to have a safe, good quality and affordable home that meets their needs in the place they want to be.

Housing to 2040 is the culmination of an extensive consultation with stakeholders carried out by the Scottish Government, which included the publication of a discussion paper in 2018 and a draft vision in 2019. It sets out the drivers of change that will impact the housing system over the next twenty years, including population and health (noting an ageing population across the country and depopulation in some rural areas), technology, energy and climate change. It outlines the route map to take housing policy forward.

The key ambitions detailed in Housing to 2040 align with those of West Dunbartonshire Council and the paper will help inform our housing policies and delivery plans as contained in this LHS. The route map is presented in four parts:

More homes at the heart of great places:

Sets a target to deliver an additional 110,000 affordable homes by 2032, with at least 70% of these to be for social rent and of a higher standard, especially in terms of energy efficiency, connectivity and outdoor space.



target to deliver
an additional
110,000
affordable homes by
2032

Placemaking and community involvement, including around town centres, is promoted, with the Planning system encouraging the idea of 20-minute neighbourhoods to encourage well-being.

Affordability and choice:

Here the Scottish Government outlines its commitment to delivering equality in housing around themes such as ending homelessness, improving accessibility, and ensuring the housing system operates fairly across all tenures including the private rented sector.

Affordable warmth and zero emission homes:

All new social housing is to be zero emissions by 2026. The energy efficiency and de-carbonisation agenda will also apply to existing homes. The value of modernising construction methods, building up supply chains and growing the skills required to deliver on these ambitions is emphasised.

Improving the quality of all homes:

No matter what tenure, everyone who wants to is enabled to live independently in comfort in their own home. Standards will be tenure neutral and the importance of connectivity recognised.

West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2019 - 2022:

This plan outlines the vision for the delivery of integrated health and social care services across West Dunbartonshire. It contains a Housing Contribution Statement which sets out the role and contribution of the local Housing Sector – through West Dunbartonshire Council in its role as a strategic housing authority - in meeting the outcomes and priorities identified within the Strategic Plan.

As such, the Housing Contribution Statement acts as the 'bridge' between the Local Housing Strategy and the Strategic Plan for West Dunbartonshire. Chapter 5 Particular Housing below provides more detail on our plans for the role of housing in the integration of health and care.

A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People Delivery Plan 2016 - 2021:

The aim of this plan is to remove the barriers that isolate, exclude and so disable the individual and instead promote an independent living model in which all disabled people are able and supported to live their lives with freedom, choice, control and dignity, participating equally alongside other citizens in their families, communities, workplaces and wider society.



Race Equality Framework and Action Plan 2016 - 2030:

The Scottish Government is determined to show leadership in advancing race equality, tackling racism and addressing the barriers that prevent people from minority ethnic communities from realising their potential. The Race Equality Framework for Scotland sets out how the Scottish Government aims to progress this ambition over a 15-year period from 2016 to 2030.

Getting It Right For Every Child:

Tackling GIRFEC is the Scottish Government's policy supporting families by making sure children and young people can receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people. The aim is to help them to grow up feeling loved, safe and respected so that they can realise their full potential.

Tackling Child Poverty Action Plan 2018 - 2022:

This plan details the measures being taken to eradicate child poverty in Scotland through partnership working. Housing has a vital role to play in its delivery.

Health Inequalities Reform Programme 2018:

To improve Scotland's health and wellbeing we need to work together to shift our focus towards preventing ill health, reducing inequalities and working more effectively in partnership. This will require a different way of working that supports everybody as part of a whole system to move towards a shared vision for public health. Success will be judged against the major public health challenges facing Scotland:

- **Scotland's relatively poor health.**
- **The significant and persistent health inequalities.**
- **Unsustainable pressures on health and social care services.**

The Scottish Government and COSLA agreed six Public Health Priorities in June 2018. These are intended to support national and local partners across Scotland to work together to improve healthy life expectancy and reduce health inequalities in our communities.

- **A Scotland where we live in vibrant, healthy and safe places and communities.**
- **A Scotland where we flourish in our early years.**
- **A Scotland where we have good mental wellbeing.**
- **A Scotland where we reduce the use of and harm from alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.**
- **A Scotland where we have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all.**
- **A Scotland where we eat well, have a healthy weight and are physically active.**

The Scottish Government's Autism Strategy 2011:

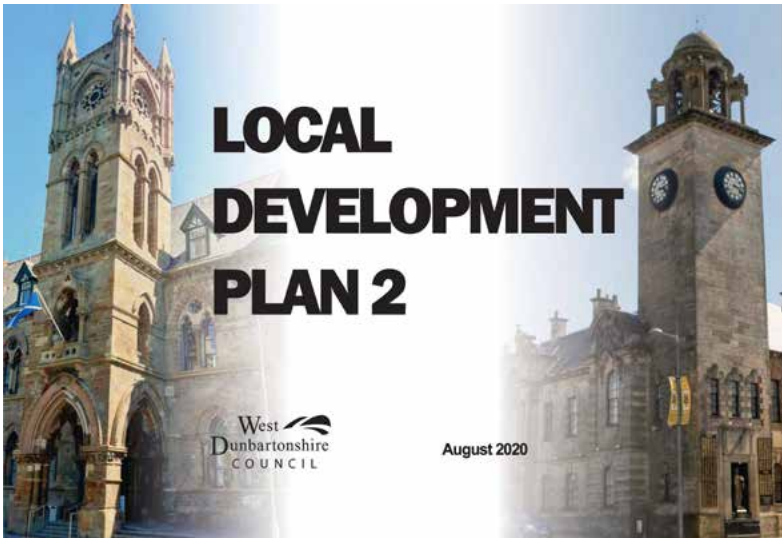
Autism is a national priority. Given the importance we all attach to this agenda, the development and creation of a new Scottish Strategy for Autism is vital to ensure that progress is made across Scotland in delivering quality services.

Good Mental Health for All – NHS Scotland 2016:

'Good Mental Health for All' is an initiative developed by Public Health Scotland and endorsed by the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities which sets out a vision to improve mental health and wellbeing. It links to the Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy and encourages action at national, local and community levels. Housing is recognised as an important factor influencing a person's mental health.

Proposed Local Development Plan 2:

West Dunbartonshire Council's proposed Local Development Plan 2 provides the strategic spatial framework for this Local Housing Strategy and puts green infrastructure at the core of good places.



Consultation process

We consulted as widely as possible on the draft Local Housing Strategy in order to gather as many different opinions and perspectives as possible. The pandemic made this more challenging than in previous years when in-person events and sessions could be held. Nevertheless we have taken a multi-pronged approach using a survey to allow people to engage at a time and date that suits them and workshops to allow for more detailed discussion on key topics. We offered some groups such as WDTR0 and Housing Solutions Partnership their own workshop to discuss the local housing strategy and the potential challenges and opportunities from their perspectives.

Survey

In a change from previous years where we have had two surveys, one detailed and one high level, we ran a single survey this year. The survey was mid-level of detail and designed to allow us to gain an understanding of our resident’s thoughts and priorities for housing over the next five years.

The survey was available on West Dunbartonshire Council’s website consultation page and in addition to this the survey was shared through the Citizen’s Panel, social media platforms, Tenants and Residents Organisation mailing lists and various mailing lists of interested people.

We received 130 responses to the survey which exceeds previous years’ responses and many responders took the time to leave comments and thoughts which has given us good qualitative insight into their thoughts.



Workshops

We hosted a number of thematic workshops to discuss the key topics in the Local Housing Strategy which allowed us to delve into these topics in a more detailed way than the survey allows.

The workshops were open to anyone who wished to attend and promoted as part of the wider consultation with people able to sign up via Eventbrite. The workshops provided a number of good discussions in particular around homelessness, the private rented sector and particular needs housing.

How our consultation has shaped the strategy

We have woven the findings of the survey into our strategy and particularly into our actions ensuring that are focusing on the area’s our respondents identified as priorities. For example respondents to our survey made it clear that new homes were important to them and they should be designed to cater for a variety of needs. There was also strong support throughout our consultation responses for both energy efficiency measures for both new and existing homes and survey respondents would like more information on how to ensure their property is energy efficient.

Connected to this survey respondents were very supportive of twenty minute neighbourhoods and the majority thought this improved their neighbourhood and over 50% thought it would encourage them to walk or wheel places more. Finally, support for specialist, supported or particular needs housing was strong and survey respondents recognised the vital role this type of housing can play.

Equalities

West Dunbartonshire Council’s approach to impact assessment already goes beyond the statutory minimum and has done for a number of years. For this Local Housing Strategy our approach to our equalities monitoring has utilised a Health Inequalities Impact Assessment model. This brings a number of benefits because it takes a cross cutting approach to think about inequalities and allows us to consider our duties across a number of key areas.

What is a Health Inequalities Impact Assessment (HIIA)?

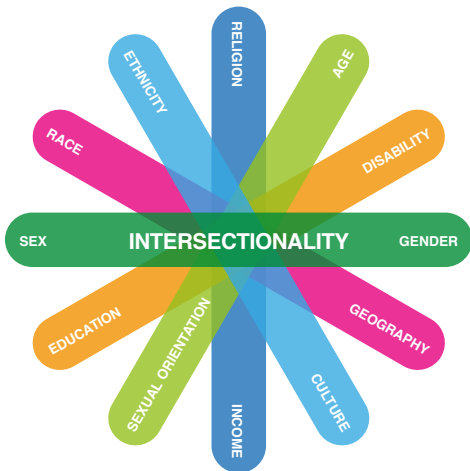
Health Inequalities Impact Assessment (HIIA) is a tool to assess the impact on people of applying a proposed, new or revised policy or practice. HIIA goes beyond the public sector’s **legal duty of the Equality Act 2010** to assess impact (EQIA) by assessing the impact of the strategy:

- On health inequalities
- With regard to protected characteristics
- On human rights
- On socioeconomic circumstances.

In April 2018 legislation came into force called the **Fairer Scotland Duty**. It asks public bodies to ‘pay due regard’ to how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage. The Scottish Government guidance is still in the interim stage of a three year implementation period. However, we believe the HIIA considers potential financial and social impacts to meet this ‘due regard.’

The HIIA prompts thinking about potential differential impacts based on income, employment, social and cultural status.

For more information see the Equality and Human Rights Commission Guide



How are we carrying out our HIIA?

Prior to consultation, we carried out HIIA scoping sessions on each of our chapters using guidance from Public Health Scotland and in collaboration with colleagues from HSCP, the Health and Social Care Partnership.

During this scoping exercise we sought to identify if there was an impact, whether the impact was positive or negative and the discussions which took place and these helped to inform the survey questions and workshop areas.

In our appendices you will find an accompanying report which combines a summary of the discussions we had in the scoping workshops with the findings of the survey to demonstrate that we have considered the impact of the Housing Strategy, maximising the positive impacts and seeking to mitigate the negative ones whilst acknowledging that some of the biggest impacts could occur due to lack of action.

How has our HIIA shaped the strategy?

As noted we carried out a HIIA on each of the chapters in this strategy, this was important to ensure that we dealt with each topic in a manageable way but it also gave us an opportunity to delve into the potential impact of this strategy in a more detailed way.

Whilst some of the discussion were very specific to the chapter we have identified five key findings which came up throughout the process and these have had the biggest impact of shaping the strategy as a whole. These are set out below and along with how these findings involved out strategy:

1.
High quality homes benefit everyone:
this helped to reinforce the importance of making sure that all homes in West Dunbartonshire are the best they can be for example investing in our social homes and helping our owner occupiers and private landlords to do the same. It also highlighted that we need to mitigate against some of the structural challenges which make it harder for people to access high quality housing suitable to their needs e.g. young people just starting out.
2.
New homes offer an opportunity:
compared to existing homes which can be challenging to retrofit or adapt new homes offer an opportunity to ensure that all new homes added to our housing stock are energy efficient and designed to suit a variety of needs and in particular cater to those with specialist or particular needs e.g. wheelchair or dementia friendly homes. This is reflected in our design standard and ambitions for homes of all tenures in West Dunbartonshire.
3.
Places need to be many things to many people:
Our homes sit within places and communities and it is important that these contribute to health and wellbeing and the recent Covid-19 pandemic has shown how important these local amenities such as greenspaces are. The HIIA demonstrated the importance of taking an inclusive approach to our places and reinforcing the need for and feeling of safety for everyone.

4.
Conscious about our communication:
Our HIIA process identified that communication processes such as engaging residents about new developments, or when organising repairs to tenant’s homes or dealing with people on a day to day basis is an area where there is always room for improvement. The HIIA process identified in particular the importance of easy to complete forms to help people access housing, support or information should be prioritised. This also means we must practice listening and as such opportunities for tenant and resident engagement are vital.

Therefore we have taken an action which covers all of the local housing strategy to review our approaches to communicating with our tenants and residents intending to take feedback to reflect how they want to be communicated with.

Action:
Review our communications e.g. forms, processes, documents to ensure they are inclusive, supportive and reflect how our tenants want to be communicated with. This will in the first instance include a review of our housing webpages to ensure they provide clear and accessible information
5.
Develop information, raise awareness and offer training:
Our HIIA process identified that there are a number of areas where we do not have information or we would like to increase our own and our team’s awareness and understanding.

Therefore there are a number of areas highlighted throughout the strategy where we would like more information and intend to gather this or carry out research. We have also identified a need for training for example around mental health, autism and LGBTQI+ communities and may identify more during the lifetime of this strategy.



Housing Need and Demand

1



About West Dunbartonshire

West Dunbartonshire Council is a Local Authority in the West of Scotland, sitting between Glasgow and the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park. It is one of eight local authorities which form Greater Glasgow City Region, Scotland's largest conurbation of 1.8 million people.

Yet, West Dunbartonshire is a small Council both in terms of population and land coverage; the population was 88,930 in 2020 and it covers an area of 159 square kilometres (NRS, 2019).

There were 45,357 dwellings in West Dunbartonshire in 2020 and these can primarily be found in the three urban areas; Clydebank, Dumbarton and Vale of Leven and within each, are smaller communities and neighbourhoods.

Urban areas account for approximately 16% of land in West Dunbartonshire with the remaining classified as accessible rural, reflecting the wealth of green spaces, moorland, and woodland the local authority enjoys including the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park.

Housing need and demand assessment

This section considers the projected housing need and demand for West Dunbartonshire over the next five years, the lifetime of this strategy.

The Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA) is the tool we use and it defines the housing supply base for the Local Housing Strategy and the Housing Land Allocation for the strategic and local development plans.

The HNDA provides estimates of the amount, and likely tenure, of additional housing required to meet existing and future demand. The HNDA analyses the need for social rented housing (including Below Market Rent) at a local authority level. Meanwhile, the demand for private sector (owner-occupation and private

rented) houses were considered within a framework of housing market areas which reflect the way the private market operates across administrative boundaries.

An HNDA was undertaken as part of the preparation of the Clydeplan Strategic Development Plan and completed in 2015. It was prepared by the eight local authorities in the Housing Market Partnership (HMP) area. The Glasgow and the Clyde Valley HMP prepared the assessment of housing need and demand based on the 2014 HNDA guidance and using the new HNDA Tool produced by the Scottish Government's Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA).

The Tool, which was populated with national data, allowed the quick and easy testing of a range of different scenarios and assumptions. The results from the revised HNDA were confirmed as being robust and credible by the CHMA in May 2015.

The outcome is a shared and agreed evidence base for housing need and demand across both the City Region and West Dunbartonshire. It provides the basis for the Housing Supply Targets for both the Local Housing Strategy and the Local Development Plan.

Clydebank falls within the Greater Glasgow North and West housing sub-market area, and private housing supply and demand are considered within this wider area, whereas Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven is considered to be a discrete housing market area.

West Dunbartonshire is unusual in that the planning function is split between the Council and the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. For practical reasons, the results from the HNDA cover the whole of West Dunbartonshire Council, although some data has been extracted for the area within the National Park.

Housing Estimates

The first stage of the 2015 HNDA produced Housing Estimates, split by tenure, at local authority level. These comprise the net increase in housing numbers by tenure, taken from the CHMA Tool, plus internal estimates of existing need. Households were only assessed as being in existing need if they generate a requirement for an additional dwelling but not if the need can be addressed using in-situ housing management solutions.

A range of assumptions in terms of future household formation, income, and house prices were considered within the Tool, before an agreed set of initial Housing Estimates under the Planning Scenario were produced for the periods 2012-2024 and 2024-29, reflecting the number of additional houses required by tenure.

Figure 1
Table showing initial Housing Estimates (new homes required) in West Dunbartonshire 2022-2027

	2012-2024	2024-2029
Private	557	-32
SR/BMR	748	-21
Total	1,305	-53

Source: Fig 5.4 HNDA²

² These figures have been extrapolated from the HNDA period 2012-2024 and 2024-2029 by annualising the total figure for the period and multiplying by the years of the LHS.

Over the city region as a whole, the 2015 HNDA estimates suggest more muted growth in the private sector and more significant growth in the Social Rented/Below Market Rent sector compared with the previous HNDA.

The initial estimates for the private sector required to be adjusted to reflect demand and supply across the housing market framework, by apportioning an element of mobile demand and comparing all demand with all stock. This has resulted in a significant increase in the private housing estimates, as shown in figure 2.

Figure 2
Table showing adjusted Housing Estimates for West Dunbartonshire 2012-2029

	2012-2024	2024-2029
Private	1,229	321
SR/BMR	748	-21
Total	1,977	300

Source: Fig 5.13 HNDA³

³ These figures have been extrapolated from the HNDA period 2012-2024 and 2024-2029 by annualising the total figure for the period and multiplying by the years of the LHS.

Housing Supply Targets and their workings

The Adjusted Housing Estimates are used as a starting point for the development of the Housing Supply Targets (HSTs). These are a policy view of the number of homes the authority has agreed will be delivered.

The factors taken into consideration to do this were:

- Environmental factors
- Social factors
- Economic factors
- Capacity within the construction industry
- Inter-dependency between delivery of market and affordable housing
- Availability of resources
- Likely pace and scale of delivery based on completion rates
- Recent development levels
- Planned demolitions
- Housing brought back into effective use.

The availability of resources, likely pace of development and recent development levels were considered the most relevant of these factors for West Dunbartonshire. Taking these into consideration, the following HSTs have been set, and agreed, by the Council in August 2015. For both sectors, they have increased from the adjusted housing estimates produced by the 2015 HNDA. They are considered to be both realistic and deliverable.

It is assumed that the social rented housing supply target will be split equally between the housing sub-areas of Greater Glasgow North and West and Dumbarton/Vale of Leven. The private sector target is 150 units p.a., whilst the social rented target is 80 units p.a.

Figure 3
Table showing Housing Supply Targets for West Dunbartonshire 2012-2029

	2012-2024 total	2024-2029 total	2012-2029 per annum average
Private	1,800	750	150
SR/BMR	960	400	80
Total	2,760	1,150	230

Source: Clydeplan Schedule 7

Factors which may impact on the delivery of the Housing Supply Targets:

The Capacity of the Construction Industry: The delivery of housing does not rely solely on the allocation of appropriate land in the development plan and Councils are advised to take into consideration the capacity of the building industry and the functioning of the housing market. The slowdown in the construction industry over Covid may have a knock-on effect and there remains a risk that operative or material issues, in part as a result of Brexit, will be a feature of the programme going forward.

Wider Strategic, Economic, Social and Environmental Policy Objectives: Increasing the number of new affordable houses and a growing economy are strategic priorities for West Dunbartonshire as set out in the Council Strategic Plan 2017-2022 and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

Representations to Local Development Plan 2: There was a general recognition in the responses that the current economic climate was having an impact on the deliverability of new housing. Some respondents questioned the effectiveness of the housing land supply and promoted new locations for housing development.

Funding Availability: The availability of support funding is the key determinant of the number of new affordable housing being produced. As noted above, the changes to funding arrangements will be a major determinant of the supply of new housing.

Aspirations for Growth: The Council supports the Scottish Government’s goal of increasing the housing supply to 2040. Also the relocation of staff to Faslane and the expansion of the Golden Jubilee may increase demand for housing in West Dunbartonshire.

Affordable Housing Policy

Local Development Plan 2 does not contain an affordable housing quota policy. Instead, the Local Development Plan seeks to balance the future tenure requirements by specifically identifying sites for either affordable or private housing. It is intended however that flexibility will be applied regarding these housing opportunities.

West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan

The West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (LDP2) will seek to ensure the Housing Supply Target is achieved by identifying sufficient land for housing development. To ensure this, the Clydeplan Strategic Development Plan, in line with Scottish Planning Policy, sets a Housing Land Requirement, which equates to the Housing Supply Target plus a 15% generosity allowance, and requires Local Development Plans to make provision for this.

Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and National Planning Framework 4 The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduces changes to how housing land is calculated. The National Planning Framework (NPF4) will set minimum all tenure housing land requirements for all planning authorities, including West Dunbartonshire.



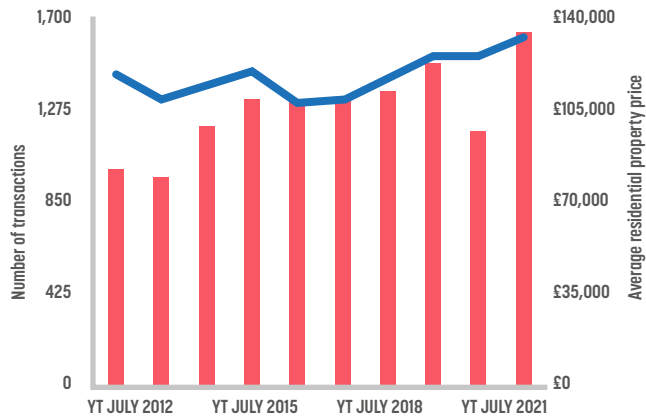
Local demand analysis

For sale market

The average transaction price in West Dunbartonshire has been increasing and averaged £131,922 during the 12 months to July 2021, this is 5% higher than the same period the previous year. The number of transactions has also been increasing over the years and during the 12 months to July 2021 there were 1,635 transactions, a ten year high.

The price increase is being driven by the price of detached, semi-detached, and terraced homes which saw average prices increase 10% during the same period.

Figure 4
Chart showing the number of transactions and average property price in West Dunbartonshire over 10 years



Source: Registers of Scotland (July 2021)

This reflects a common trend of the recent Covid pandemic which has encouraged people who have the means to seek out larger homes and homes with outside space, which can typically, but not always be found with houses rather than flats, and this trend is set to continue.

Many of our survey respondents expressed frustration that the private housing market was very competitive and they would like to see more affordable housing options available, particularly for younger people starting out. Therefore we propose to carry our research into alternative tenure options such as shared ownership to help consider whether this can help more people access the homes they want.

For private rent market

As the chart below shows the median rents in West Dunbartonshire have remained relatively stable over the past decade.

However, four-bedroom homes have witnessed significant increases in rent values between 2017 and 2019 and have since fallen but remain 9% higher than the ten-year average. However, it should be noted that the sample size for four-bedroom properties was relatively small.

The other exception is one-bedroom shared properties reflecting the changes in Welfare Reform for under 35s covered in Chapter 3. Despite being relatively steady, rents for three-bedroom properties have been creeping upwards, particularly for those in the upper quartile suggesting that high-quality homes for rent are in demand and command a premium.

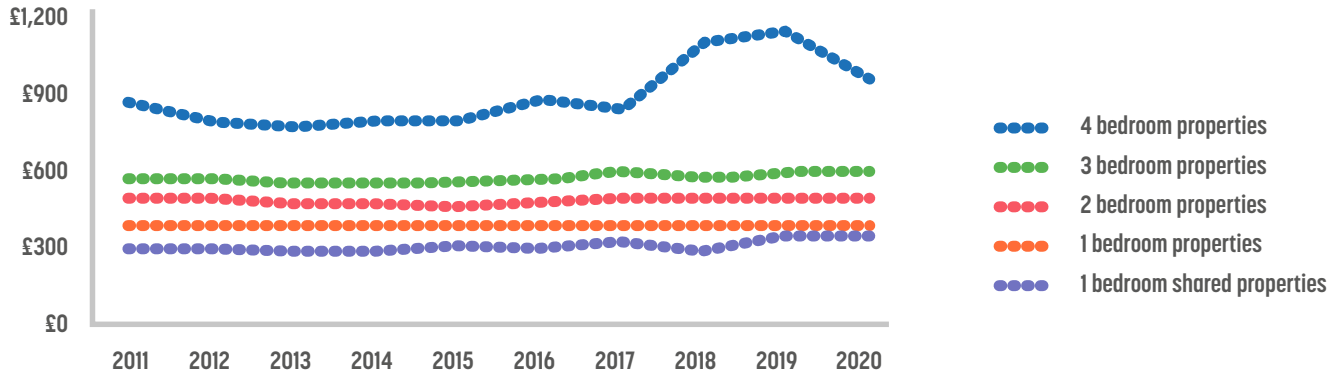
Local Demand Conclusions

There is strong demand for housing for both sale and private rent within West Dunbartonshire. These statistics also demonstrate that demand for certain types of properties including larger properties, attractive for families, has been growing as people seek out extra space during the recent pandemic.

These statistics do not provide localised statistics and instead are high-level but we are aware that many different markets operate within West Dunbartonshire; Clydebank is heavily influenced by the market in Glasgow which is a significant employment hub and Scotland's largest city. Meanwhile Dumbarton and Leven Valley are considered more discretionary markets, located further away from Glasgow these areas are more influenced by local trends such as changes in local employment rather than region-wide trends.

Ultimately, within the West Dunbartonshire Council area there are a number of micro markets operating some of which are more desirable, and therefore command a premium, compared to other areas. The premium might be linked to the types of homes available for example houses with gardens or proximity to local amenities such as schools or transport links.

Figure 5
Chart showing median rental monthly statistics for West Dunbartonshire over the past ten years.



Source: The Scottish Government

Tenures

Different tenures can fulfil different housing needs and aspirations and as the HNDA and HST have demonstrated there is a need for homes of all tenures within West Dunbartonshire. Different tenures result in differing housing costs and responsibilities, for example who needs to organise maintenance and repairs; owner-occupiers are liable for all repairs but that responsibility lies with landlords in the private and social rented tenures.

Owner Occupiers

Owner-occupiers are those who own their home, some own their property outright others own theirs with a mortgage. Just over 23,000 homes in West Dunbartonshire are owner-occupied, 53% of all households. This is lower than the Scottish figure of 62% of households.

50% of owner occupiers own their properties outright and the remaining half with a mortgage (SHS,2018). This is broadly similar to Scotland as a whole.

Those aged over 60 account for 40% of all owner-occupiers, just under 10,000 households, and this group primarily owns their properties outright and a third under occupy their home by three or more bedrooms. The second-largest group is those aged 45 to 59, with only a small number of owner-occupiers aged under 45.

This highlights that over the coming decades, as the population overall ages, the number of older owner-occupiers will also increase. Some households may find that their needs change, or their home may no longer be suitable. We have taken this into consideration in our housing strategy, see chapter 5 to see our support for remaining at home and our strategy for adaptations.

Having a high-quality owner-occupied sector is important and in Chapter 2 we discuss the quality of the owner-occupied sector including our strategy for reducing fuel poverty, improving energy efficiency, and supporting households to maintain their properties.

Private Rented Sector & Build to Rent

3,000 homes in West Dunbartonshire are privately rented (SHS, 2018). This equates to approximately 7% of all households. This is almost half the Scottish figure of 14% of households but the share of renting households in West Dunbartonshire has fluctuated significantly over the past decade reflecting the relatively small size of the sector and its ability to expand and contract based upon changing economic conditions.

The small size of the sector also means that we have limited details about the characteristics of this tenure, however, we do know that two-thirds of our renters are aged under 35, just under 2,000 households. A further 25% are aged between 35 and 59 (SHS, 2018).

Tenants in the private rented sector include a diverse range of households from single people, couples, families, and retirees. The recent changes to rental legislation under the Private Tenancies (Scotland) 2016 Act has provided tenants with more security and support but we appreciate that like any other households their needs may change and they may need support to stay at home, information about our housing support strategy is detailed in Chapter 5.

We recognise that private rented landlords are also a diverse group with some having just one property and others operating portfolios of homes. We will continue to work with landlords to help them maintain their properties, improve their energy efficiency and respond to changes in legislation, more details in Chapter 2.

Social Rented Sector

39% of households in West Dunbartonshire live in the social rented sector, this includes those who live in West Dunbartonshire Council’s housing and those who live in properties owned and managed by registered social landlords.

The number of households living in the social rented sector in West Dunbartonshire is significantly higher than in Scotland as a whole, where only 23% of households live in the social rented sector.

54% of social rented households are single-person households compared to 31% of owner-occupiers. However, it is notable that 29% of households in the social rented sector have children compared to 15% of owner-occupied households.

5,000 households in the social rented sector are headed by someone over the age of 60, approximately 40% of all households, 55% are aged between 35 and 59, the remaining 5% are aged under 35.

Living in the social rented sector brings many benefits including the security of tenure through Scottish Secure Tenancies (SST) which gives tenants certain rights such as information about rent setting and social landlords, including West Dunbartonshire Council and our Strategic Housing Partners, are regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator. Through the regulator, tenants can access information about their landlord’s performance including areas such as repairs and maintenance, time to respond to repairs, and other governance measures.

This level of security and accountability combined with affordable rents makes social rented properties highly attractive to a range of household types and we have approximately 5,000 households on our waiting lists.

The size of the social rented sector in West Dunbartonshire has grown in recent years reflecting the role new developments, alongside Empty Home and Buy Back strategies, have played in increasing supply to meet some of this demand.



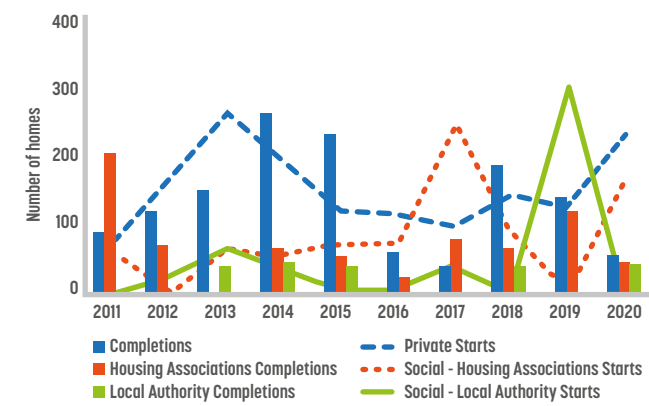
New Development

There were 144 new build homes completed across all tenures in West Dunbartonshire during 2020, a decline of 55%, or 116 homes, on the previous year. This is demonstrated in the chart below which shows the number of completions over the past ten years. The significant decline reflects the shutdown of development sites during the first covid-19 lockdown which delayed both starts and completions.

However, you can see from the chart that local authority completions increased. The large number site starts made in 2019 start to appear as completions and we anticipate these will increase again when the 2021 statistics are available.

This means the decline in completions was driven by the private and housing association sectors but they did see starts increase and we anticipate that these will convert to completions during 2021/ 22.

Figure 6
Chart showing number of new homes completed by tenure



Source: The Scottish Government

We promote high quality design in all new homes built in West Dunbartonshire, in particular through our Design Panel and our WDC Design Standard for Affordable Housing, which requires an enhancement on building standards including high levels of energy efficiency and design features, such as home office and study spaces.

Build to Rent opportunity

Build to rent or BTR is a development model which initially emerged from investors buying portfolios of properties for rental or buying excess stock from developers but more recently they have moved towards purpose building properties for the rental market. Development has primarily taken place in London and other urban centres but in recent years there has been an increase in the development of suburban, family homes for rent which are catering to a significant share of the population which do not have the means or desire to buy, for example due to temporary employment in an area, relationship breakdown or lack of deposit.

Our rented sector is small when compared to other larger, often more urban local authorities but there may still be an opportunity to develop homes for rent and as a local authority keen to see housing need met across all tenures we would support this type of development should it deliver high quality, energy-efficient homes which are professionally managed and rent at reasonable levels.

Self-build Opportunities

The Scottish Government recognises the important role that self and custom build housing can play in providing homes, sustaining communities and supporting smaller building companies in both rural and urban areas.

West Dunbartonshire Council supports these ambitions but has thus far identified little interest for self-build within the area likely due to challenges which the wider development industry faces including decontamination costs for brownfield sites and in some areas viability concerns that constrain access to finance.

That said, there are some individual building plots with planning in the local authority area and these will form the beginnings of our self-build register, which will be available on our website going forward. The list will include the

location and size of sites alongside information about available amenities and highlight any relevant planning guidance. We will also consider adding to this list with sites owned by the Council, where appropriate to do so.

Interested parties will be able to register their interest using an online form, this will allow us to gather information about the type and location of demand for a self-build plot which will inform how we support interested parties and landowners to deliver suitable plots.

We will ensure our list remains up to date by contacting interested parties periodically to confirm they wish to remain on the list and when sites become available, providing opt-in-out options. We will also develop supporting documents and advice which will be updated regularly.

Conclusions

The Housing Need and Demand Assessment demonstrates both a clear need and demand for housing in West Dunbartonshire. Demographics play an important part in these trends and this was supported by our survey responses and HIIA findings which show that young and older people, along with single adult households have particular challenges accessing housing which meets their needs and is affordable.

Action 1.1
We will continue to monitor the supply of new homes, both private and social sector against housing supply targets.

The growth in transactions, prices and rents, particularly for larger properties and the increasing number of households on our waiting list (5,000) suggests that new housing will be vital for West Dunbartonshire going forward. Our survey respondents (76.8%) voiced strong support for more affordable housing which was in the right location and suitable for occupant needs.

Action 1.2
We will continue to deliver new high quality, well designed and future proofed affordable housing and support our strategic housing partners to do the same, building upon the success of the More Homes Programme 2016-2021.

We know that many our residents aspire to own their own home. As such we have identified a need to explore alternative tenure options within West Dunbartonshire to meet the needs of two main groups; younger households trying to access their first home and for older households looking to ensure they have both have access to housing options which meet their needs and are attractive.

Action 1.3
Carry out research into alternative tenure options for both younger and older households to ensure they have housing options which meet their needs and are attractive.

For some people building their own home would be a very attractive proposition, particularly if they have specific needs or ambitions and as such we will support households to do this by the creation of self-build register of plots in West Dunbartonshire and make this available publicly. We will do this in partnership with our colleagues in planning (both West Dunbartonshire Council and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

Action 1.4
We will establish the self-build webpage and register in the first year of the strategy and over the strategy's lifetime we will develop supporting information for interested parties, including how to register interest in self-build and commonly asked questions.

Promoting Quality Homes

2



The Scottish Government’s vision set out in the Housing to 2040 strategy, is that all homes, regardless of tenure, age or location are well designed, easily maintained, and have low running costs.

There is a wealth of evidence demonstrating the negative impact of poor housing conditions on residents’ health and well-being. Poor quality housing can cause accidents, respiratory problems and can impact the mental health of the people who live there. Therefore, quality housing for our residents continues to be an ambition for West Dunbartonshire Council and this chapter sets out how we intend to work towards achieving that.

Whilst we recognise that quality housing goes beyond the physical building this is the focus of this chapter. We will cover places in Chapter 4 and specialist housing in Chapter 5.

About our housing stock

There are around 45,804 homes within West Dunbartonshire and by 2050 these same homes will account for approximately 88% of homes we are living in, based upon development increasing the number of homes by 0.5% and removal of 0.05% of the stock (historic trend since 2000).

Therefore the homes we have now will be predominately the homes we will be living in 30 years’ time and only 12% will have been built in the years in between.

Flats:
52% of all homes in West Dunbartonshire are flats

- 45% of flats were built between 1950 and 1983
- 13% of flats were built before 1919
- 50% of flats are owned by West Dunbartonshire Council and its Strategic Housing Providers (RSLs)

Houses:
48% of all homes in West Dunbartonshire are houses

- 54% of houses were built between 1950 and 1983
- 6% of houses were built prior to 1919
- 81% are owned by owner occupiers and private landlords.

Climate change

Responding to the Climate emergency is a top priority for the whole housing sector. The recent **Climate Change Strategy** and action plan demonstrates that our climate has been becoming wetter and warmer. This is forecast to continue with extreme weather conditions such as flooding becoming more commonplace.

These changes in our climate are impacting our housing stock; for example on the lifespan of roofs and beyond, preparing our homes for the changing climate we need to make them more energy-efficient, reduce their impact on the climate, and reduce energy costs for residents.

Heating homes and hot water currently accounts for 31% of UK carbon emissions (Energy Savings Trust, 2017). We need to reduce the amount of energy needed to heat our homes and move towards more sustainable sources of power such as electricity, which is predominately generated by wind turbines. This represents both a challenge and an opportunity.

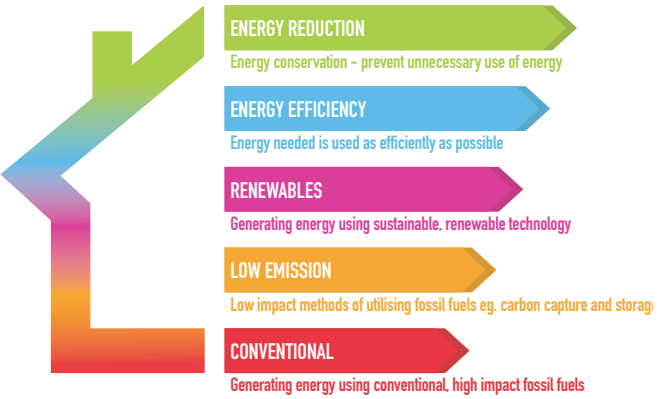
The impact of climate change will be felt by all, but it will be vulnerable groups such as those who live in flood-prone areas, have health conditions, or are on low incomes who will be impacted the most by these changes to our climate.

In the next sections, we will set out how we will continue to invest in our stock, and demonstrate the support we will give to our strategic housing

partners, private landlords, and owner-occupiers to help them prepare and improve their homes.

Our approach

In alignment with the **Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan** this Local Housing Strategy will follow the principles of the energy hierarchy (see graphic below) developed by the Scottish Government.



This approach first looks to reduce the amount of energy consumed before employing more advanced techniques and technologies, such as renewables, to reduce the amount of energy needed.

The most cost-effective way to reduce emissions is to reduce the amount of energy used in the first place, which helps to target fuel poverty too.

Fuel Poverty

The impact on households living in fuel poverty, as with any form of poverty and hardship, are complex. Recent research has shown that cold properties impact health; cold homes can aggravate respiratory illnesses such as asthma and reduce dexterity, increasing the likelihood of falls or accidents. In addition to physical impacts, fuel poverty and cold homes can impact mental wellbeing and in 2014 it was estimated that fuel poverty cost the NHS £80 million per annum⁴.

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fuel-poverty-target-definition-strategy-scotland-bill-fuel-poverty-strategy/pages/8/>

National Context

Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition, and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019 established a new two-part definition whereby a household is considered fuel poor if:

- after housing costs have been deducted, more than 10% (20% for extreme fuel poverty) of their net income is required to pay for their reasonable fuel needs
- after further adjustments are made to deduct childcare costs and any benefits received for a disability or care need, their remaining income is insufficient to maintain an acceptable standard of living, defined as being at least 90% of the UK Minimum Income Standard (MIS).

The 2019 Act also introduced a new statutory target for reducing fuel poverty that:

- by 2040, as far as reasonably possible, no household, in any Local Authority area, in Scotland is in fuel poverty
- in any event, no more than 5% of households, in any Local Authority area, in Scotland are in fuel poverty
- no more than 1% of households in Scotland are in extreme fuel poverty
- the median fuel poverty gap of households in fuel poverty in Scotland is no more than £250 in 2015 prices before adding inflation.

The act also set interim targets of a maximum of 15% of households are in fuel poverty by 2030 and 10% by 2035, with those in extreme fuel poverty reducing to a maximum of 5% and 3% respectively.

A finalised Fuel Poverty Strategy was due to be released in 2020 but has yet to be published but we understand it will be released by the end of 2021. However, the draft strategy sets several ambitions and goals and demonstrates clearly that tackling fuel poverty should be a priority.

Fuel Poverty in West Dunbartonshire

28% of households in West Dunbartonshire are in fuel poverty. This equates to around 12,000 households. This is marginally higher than the national figure of 25% (Scottish House Condition Survey-SHCS, 2018).

SHCS estimate that West Dunbartonshire Council households in fuel poverty will require a median amount of £440 uplift in income to take them out of fuel poverty, this is almost £200 more than the target identified by the Scottish Government (£250, based on 2015 figures).

- 28% of older households are fuel poor - similar to Scotland
- 30% of other household types are fuel poor - similar to Scotland
- 24% of families are fuel poor - similar to Scotland

Extreme Fuel Poverty

Of those in fuel poverty in West Dunbartonshire, one-third (4,000 households) are estimated to be in extreme fuel poverty of which 50% are owner-occupiers.

Why are households fuel poor?

Using data from the Energy Saving Trust, which uses EPC data to estimate fuel bills and fuel poverty we can identify trends.

Social rented properties, both Local Authority and Housing Association owned, typically have fuel bills which are on average below the median. This reflects the investment made into improving energy efficiency in these homes under the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) and demonstrated by the higher SAP (energy efficiency) scores.

In comparison, fuel bills are typically higher and energy efficiency scores lower in the owner-occupied and private rented sectors but the likelihood of fuel poverty, whilst lower remains relatively high.

The major cause of fuel poverty is low household income and this likely applies across all tenures. For example, we know that 50% of our owner-occupiers are over 60 and therefore many are likely to be retired and reliant on a pension, and pension levels can vary significantly.

Thus, promoting energy efficiency measures across tenures could help reduce fuel poverty by reducing the gap particularly so in owner occupied and private rented homes.



Figure 7
Table showing number of properties, probability of fuel poverty, and average of fuel bill compared to median and average energy efficiency (SAP) rating.

Tenure	Total number of properties	Average of probability of fuel poverty (fuel bill >10% of income after housing)	Average of probability of extreme fuel poverty (fuel bill >20% of income after housing)	Average of fuel bill comparison to median (estimate)	Average of current energy efficiency (SAP) rating estimate
Housing Association	4,816	36%	11%	95%	71.53
Local Authority	11,247	43%	13%	96%	69.90
Owner Occupied	26,347	21%	8%	110%	64.50
Privately Rented	3,309	21%	7%	109%	65.05

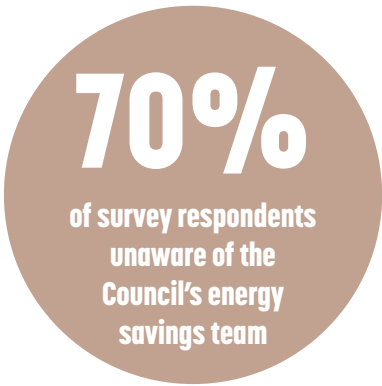
Source: Energy Saving Trust, January 2021 data

Ultimately, the levels of poverty in West Dunbartonshire mean that low household income will continue to result in fuel poverty even in the most energy-efficient homes therefore we need to work with our colleagues in other teams to help people maximise income, for example fuel bill support for older households.

In the first instance, we will seek to promote the support and advice offered by our energy savings team which is available for free to all residents and can help them improve their properties.

70% of survey respondents did not know the Council offered this service therefore we must work to promote it and when asked what information would be helpful, survey respondents demonstrated support for the following and therefore these will be the focus of the service going forward:

1. Information about how to reduce my fuel bills e.g. energy saving advice
2. Information about finance e.g. loans, grants to fund upgrades
3. Technical information about how to make my home more energy efficient



In addition, the energy savings advisor and housing teams will continue to work with colleagues in Working4U to help people increase their incomes, this is particularly important for those on low incomes because the property could be very energy efficient but if they don't have the income to heat it then they may also be limited in other areas such as food, clothing and furniture.

However, a major challenge remains around electricity and its cost. Electricity continues to be an expensive way to heat your home but it is increasingly the most renewable and energy-efficient thus there will be pressure to use more electrical systems. We are hopeful that the UK Government will review the costs of electricity and the corresponding taxes but in the meantime we will continue to tread carefully.

Quality homes across all tenures

Social rented homes

Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) sets energy efficiency standards for social rented homes in Scotland. Introduced in March 2014 the standard introduced energy efficiency standards for properties with a deadline of December 2020.

This has been broadly achieved, see below table demonstrating compliance by ourselves and our strategic registered social landlord (RSL) partners.



Figure 8
Chart showing percentage of properties meeting EESH



Source: Scottish Housing Regulator
ARC submissions 2019/2020

Achieving EESH has been expensive, with the investment funded from landlord rental income. It has also at times been challenging particularly in some housing types or in mixed tenure blocks when owners or landlords are not able, or willing, to invest in upgrading their property.

The deadline for EESH has now passed and the Scottish Government has set new significant climate change targets. As a result, more onerous energy efficiency standards are being placed on social landlords going forward, known as Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing post-2020 (EESH2).

The new standard requires that properties become as “energy efficient as possible”, with a target of having as many properties as possible rated EPC band B or higher, and none being below an EPC band D. Technical exemptions will apply such as those using alternative fuels, the accepted EPC rating for these will be C.

This will require further significant investment to bring homes up to this new, higher standard and all landlords will require to have an EESSH2 strategy which will set out how landlords plan to work towards these new goals and targets and identify any challenges.

Levels of fuel poverty in West Dunbartonshire mean we, and our strategic partners, need to be mindful that energy efficiency investments represent value for money for our tenants and allows us to continue to carry out planned maintenance. Consequently, we will continue to programme energy improvement measures for non-compliant homes as per our regular programmes.

In addition to this, we intend to explore through the development of a pilot or strategy a holistic approach to achieving high levels of energy efficiency. This approach will allow us to take into consideration the variety of property types found in West Dunbartonshire, many being of non-traditional construction which were built at a time when there was no requirement for basic wall insulation levels to be met.

We also have a high share of stock in flatted or shared block construction involving private owners which presents obstacles for example when introducing insulation measures as these are not essential under title condition definitions.



WDC Housing Asset Management Strategy and the Housing Capital Programme

West Dunbartonshire Council has adopted a strategic, evidence-based approach to managing its Housing Revenue Account assets, in particular its housing stock.

Using a asset management database, the Council assesses the performance of its stock yearly. This assessment allows the Council to establish which properties are performing well across several indicators that look at demand, current costs, and future costs. This method has provided the Council with robust information and evidence that informs strategic plans including the demolition programme, the Council’s new build programme, and the HRA Capital Programme.

The outcomes of the assessment including plans that stem from them are reported on an annual basis to the Housing and Communities Committee.

Private homeowners

Owner-occupied properties are, on average, the least energy-efficient of all tenures. Similar to Scotland, 61% of owner-occupied homes in West Dunbartonshire are rated EPC D or below and therefore there is significant scope to improve their energy efficiency score and thus reduce bills.

In 2019 the Scottish Government consulted on an option to introduce a minimum EPC rating of C for homes at the point of sale or major renovation from 2024. This may potentially apply in the lifetime of this strategy, although this has yet to be confirmed. Further, the Scottish Government in their recent Heat in Buildings Strategy committed to ongoing support for owner occupiers to improve and invest in their properties and as such we will seek to encourage owner occupiers to engage with advice services such as Energy Advice Scotland who can offer financial assistance such as grants and loans.

Supporting owner-occupiers to know what their options are and supporting them to access funding, where appropriate, or skilled tradespeople needs to be a priority. As noted above, 70% of respondents were not aware that we offered energy advice service and therefore we would hope that by promoting this, as set out above, will be helpful and we will include them in area based scheme where appropriate, as set out below.

Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector has a slightly higher SAP score than owner-occupied properties yet fuel bills remain above the median and 57% of properties were rated EPC band D or below (EST, 2020).

This may prove problematic going forward as the Scottish Government is proposing to introduce a minimum EPC score of E for all tenancies by March 2022 and an EPC score of D for all tenancies by March 2025. These dates are subject to change due to the recent pandemic but will likely apply during the life of this strategy.

We will continue to work in partnership with private landlords active within West Dunbartonshire through our landlord’s forum and ensure that they and their tenants are aware of our energy advice service.

We will make them aware of these changes and support them to invest and upgrade their properties to ensure they comply. We will support private tenants in engagement with their landlords over improving the energy efficiency of the homes they rent. As with owner-occupiers, we will take landlords and their tenants into consideration with our area-based initiatives covered below.

57%
of properties rated EPC band D or below

Supporting Owner Occupier and Private Landlords with their homes

Scheme of assistance strategy

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 introduces a ‘Scheme of Assistance’ based on the principle that individual owners (including owners of privately rented houses) have primary responsibility for maintaining their properties in good condition, with assistance available from Local Authorities when necessary.

Part 2 of the above Act requires Councils to publish a ‘statement of assistance’. This Statement of Assistance sets out how this Council provides advice, information, and assistance for homeowners to improve the quality of private housing in West Dunbartonshire.

Home Improvements & Repairs

West Dunbartonshire Council will provide information and advice that will assist the homeowner in arranging home improvements or repairs by:

- advice on how to carry out repairs and maintenance
- site visits to assist in identifying works that are required
- choosing a contractor and signposting to other services to provide other specific advice, e.g. Citizens Advice Service, Money Made Clear, etc

The Council’s Private Housing Advice section will generally be the first point of contact for most homeowners who require information or advice regarding the repair, maintenance, or improvement of their homes.

However, Lomond & Clyde Care & Repair Service can also offer impartial advice and practical assistance to homeowners on improving, repairing, and maintaining their property regardless of their age or disability.

Under One Roof

West Dunbartonshire Council continues to contribute to an online resource for owners of common property which was launched in September 2016. This website is for owners of all types and ages of shared residential properties and their advisers. It will help owners of traditional stone tenements, newly built apartment blocks, ex-local authority tenements, four-in-a-blocks, and converted houses.

Invaluable advice is provided in over 100 articles on flat owners’ legal responsibilities towards their co-owners and over 70 technical information articles that enable owners to identify repair problems and understand quotations from builders.

It is envisaged that this website will continue to be a valuable resource, playing a huge part in helping to prevent properties falling into disrepair and leading to better-maintained homes in the future.

Area based Initiatives

HEEPS: ABS:

We use the HEEP: ABS funding to target the areas with high indicators of fuel poverty for energy improvement measures, mostly external wall insulation due to the type of homes in West Dunbartonshire. This is the most beneficial measure to install to enhance energy performance.

With our core allocation from the Scottish Government, we can assist approximately 120-150 per year. We also provide energy advice and signpost to other agencies for energy advice during this process. The recent Heat in Buildings Strategy noted potential to expand the HEEPS:ABS and other area based schemes and we would welcome this.



LHEES:

The concept of Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) was introduced in 2016 and aims to establish area-based plans and priorities for improving the energy efficiency of buildings and tackling fuel poverty.

We are developing a pilot LHEES which will establish a framework for reducing energy demand and decarbonising the heat supply in the Clydebank area from the boundary with Glasgow City Council on the River Clyde, northwards using Great Western Road as a boundary and to a westerly limit of Mountblow Road.

It is anticipated that the strategy will identify opportunities for additional connections to the Queens Quay DHN, explore the feasibility and costs of other energy efficiency measures and build on existing programmes.



Heat decarbonisation agenda

District Heating Networks (DHN) aims to distribute large-scale sources of heat over a geographic area by connecting multiple buildings to create a heat network. These networks are an attractive option in dense urban areas and have been cited as a means to tackle fuel poverty.

Our DHN at Queens Quay in Clydebank is operated through an energy centre. Within the energy centre, heat pumps extract water from the River Clyde. This water is transported via district heating pipes to homes and businesses to heat them. Each property connected to the district heating network will have a Hydraulic Interface Unit (HIU) which is similar in size to, and looks like, the traditional boiler it will replace.

This device allows tenants and landlords to switch on the heat and hot water as and when it is required. It also allows them to monitor the

amount of energy consumed to ensure they are billed accurately for it.

Following the introduction of Heat Network (Metering and Billing) Regulations which came into force initially in 2014 and has since been amended, accurate billing and use of metering devices that track consumption are now required in DHN.

This change aims to drive energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions from heating and hot water usage by making people more aware of what they use. Metering also supports fair and transparent billing for customers on heat networks and operators must use these devices to bill customers based on their consumption of heating, cooling, or hot water.



New build housing design requirements

The Scottish Government has established an ambition to achieve tenure-neutral space and quality standards for new homes (and existing homes where possible) and this has been supported by our survey respondents; 78% said homes should be designed to cater to a variety of needs and 66% said making all new homes energy efficient should be a priority.

The majority of homes, and all affordable homes, are designed in accordance with Housing for Varying Needs, which was last updated in 1999 and is understood to be under review. This standard sets basic requirements for homes to ensure that they should be able to meet the existing and future needs of occupants. These are supplemented by technical Building Standards which are updated regularly.

Best design and good practice is always evolving and West Dunbartonshire Council introduced its first **Design Standard**, required in addition to HfVN, in 2017, the first such standard in Scotland, and updated it again in 2019. The current Design Standard requires all new affordable homes to at least meet the Silver Active energy efficiency building standard and the design standard will be subject to ongoing review.



New build housing & energy efficiency

New build housing accounts for a small but important share of the homes we live in and it will have a particularly important role in ensuring that modern properties are not only well designed, but highly energy efficient.

New build properties thus offer an opportunity to put best practice into use, and we have seen the development of innovative forms of new development including the introduction of new Building Standards for energy efficiency, NetZero Carbon, and Passivhaus continuing to drive innovation and change in this sector. As per our pilot projects referenced above we will develop new build pilot projects to ensure we are bringing best practice to our new homes. In addition to the Council's own new build, through the Design Standard and SHIP

discussions we will encourage RSLs to meet similar high standards of energy efficiency in their projects.

We anticipate that each of these development types, alongside any other to emerge which are similar, will help us towards our NetZero ambitions and we will actively support and encourage developments that fulfil such criteria.



Poor quality homes
(Below Tolerable Standard)

The tolerable standard sets out the basic requirements for a healthy safe home. It applies to all tenures and is as defined by section 86 of the 1987 Act and amended by section 102 of the 2001 Act and section 11 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006:

A home that meets the current tolerable standard if meets all the criteria set out in the legislation, but the property is below tolerable standard if one or more of the criteria are not met

The criteria are set out in the act. It is estimated that 2% of properties in Scotland are classified as Below the Tolerable Standard, we do not have the statistics for West Dunbartonshire but it is estimated to be around 1% to 2%.

These homes are rarely found in the social rented sector due to the various requirements on social landlords and as a result, they are primarily found in the private rented and owner-occupied sectors.

When these properties are identified, as per our Statement of Assistance, we will support the property owners by providing support and guidance using formal measures such as maintenance orders and works notices where appropriate.

We intend to utilise other initiatives, such as energy efficiency improvements, our private landlord forum, and our relationship with colleagues in HSCP, to identify and support owners in the most appropriate way.

Conclusions

Quality homes are the foundation of many of our ambitions including reducing our impact on the environment, reducing fuel poverty and supporting the health and wellbeing of our residents. Achieving these goals will require effort, not only from ourselves, but also our strategic partners, home owners and private landlords.

In order to help everyone contribute towards these ambitions, education is important. Our survey identified that 70% of people did not know that we offered an energy advice service. Therefore we will look to promote the energy advice service to our residents and enable the energy advice officer to link in with colleagues in housing operations and Working4U to ensure that households are helped to increase their incomes.

Action 2.1:
Promote the energy advice service to residents, and landlords through the landlord form, across West Dunbartonshire Council and report annually on number of households helped and type of advice required.

Education and learning is also important for West Dunbartonshire Council as the strategic housing authority. Understanding, technology and best practice energy efficiency measures are constantly evolving and changing and we want to ensure that we are taking best practice forward for our homes.

Therefore in addition to continuing our planned asset management investment and strategies we will look to carry out a number of holistic pilot studies both in our existing homes and future developments. These will allow us to try new technologies and work with tenants to understand their experiences of these new measures.

Action 2.2:
Develop, track and share the findings from a number of holistic energy efficiency retrofit and new build pilot projects.

Area based schemes such as HEEPS: ABS, the District Heating Network and the upcoming LHEES report offer us the potential to approach, and tackle, energy efficiency and fuel poverty on a community focused basis. Therefore, we will work where possible to maximise the number of homes and households who benefit from these opportunities. Further, funding opportunities may present themselves and we will aim to utilise this funding as much as possible.

Action 2.3:
Maximise the number of households who benefit from area based schemes and report annually on the number of households who have been supported through area based opportunities.

Finally, new build homes offer an opportunity to ensure that all new homes we add to our housing stock are designed with best practice energy efficiency in mind and can cater to a variety of needs of households. We understand a review of Housing for Varying Needs is underway and we anticipate building standards will continue to evolve and as such we will continue to ensure our design standard for affordable homes reflects best practice and therefore we commit to updating it at least once within the lifetime of this strategy.

Action 2.4:
Update the Design standard to reflect best practice to ensure all affordable homes in the area are designed and built to highest standard including dementia design features and wheelchair specialist homes.



Homelessness and Housing Options

3



Tackling homelessness has been a focus of Scottish Government policy and the legal and regulatory framework which has been put in place means that Scotland has some of the strongest rights in the world for anyone experiencing homelessness.

However, there is an ambition to do more to ensure that people experiencing homelessness can access the accommodation and support they need. This ambition focuses on preventing homelessness in the first place and then preventing it from recurring through the provision of supportive pathways.

The forthcoming introduction of the Prevent Duty will increase the focus on the prevention of homelessness and place a duty on many of our partners such as Health and Social Care Partnership, education and criminal justice to highlight and work to prevent homelessness too. This represents an opportunity to assist people earlier but will also be a challenge to ensure that we have the resource available, in the face of short-term funding plans, to assist both our partners and those households they, and ourselves, identify.

Statutory requirement summary

Local authorities have a duty:

- to provide advice and information about the prevention of homelessness
- to carry out a robust homelessness assessment within 28 days
- for the provision of suitable temporary accommodation for those who require it
- to secure the provision of permanent accommodation when assessed as homeless
- to assess support needs for those found to be “homeless or threatened with homelessness unintentionally” and who we have reason to believe requires a support assessment.

And a power:

- to assess whether a household has a local connection
- to refer those where no local connection has been established to another local authority that they have a connection with
- to assess intentionality (to have done something deliberately, or failed to do something, which resulted in homelessness).

These duties and powers have been shaped by 35 years of legislation and regulation. In addition to this summary, more detailed information is available in our background papers.

Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcomes

Our approach to tackling homelessness is linked to the Scottish Social Housing Charter, which sets out the outcomes and standards that all social landlords should be delivering for their tenants and other customers.

The Charter:

- describes the results that tenants and other customers expect social landlords to achieve
- covers social landlords’ housing activities only
- can be monitored, assessed, and reported upon by the Scottish Housing Regulator
- does not replace the legal duties that apply to social landlords.

The Council has to report on these outcomes annually to the Scottish Housing Regulator and makes this information available to the public each year in October.



Evidence about homelessness in WDC

Number of homeless households

Homelessness figures remain high in West Dunbartonshire. During our Homelessness Strategy “More than a Roof”, which covered the period 2017/20 there was a reduction in homeless applications of 2.6% over the 3 years to a figure of 1021.

Who is homeless in West Dunbartonshire?

The age profile of those presenting as homeless in West Dunbartonshire has remained relatively stable in recent years, although in the last year of “More than a Roof” there was an increase in applications from those over 60 years old.

Figure 9
Table showing Homeless applications by age

Year	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
Age	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
16-17	31	3%	22	2%	38	4%
18-25	259	25%	258	25%	267	26%
26-59	722	69%	715	69%	659	64%
60+	36	3%	42	4%	57	6%
All	1,048	100%	1,037	100%	1,021	100%

Source: Scottish Government -
West Dunbartonshire HL1 figures

The rate of youth homelessness continues to be high and a key area of concern and focus. The most recent figures published by the Scottish Government for 2019/20 highlighted West Dunbartonshire as a youth homeless hotspot, with a Youth Homeless rate of 26.7 per 1,000 population against a Scottish figure of 12.7.

There are more applications made from households where the main applicant is male, however, this gap reduced over the 3 year period of “More than a Roof” and in 2019/20 a male was recorded as being the main applicant in 52% of applications, compared to 48% of applications where a female was the main applicant.



In terms of household type, during the 3 years of “More than a Roof” over 70% of applications were received from single people, and around a quarter were from households with children, the vast majority of these being single-parent households.



Homeless rate per 1,000 population



Figure 10
Table showing Homeless applications
by household type

Year	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
Household type	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Single person	759	72.4%	754	72.7%	716	70.1%
Single Parent	189	18%	190	18.3%	199	19.5%
Couple	48	4.6%	42	4.1%	51	5%
Couple with children	42	4%	48	4.6%	50	4.9%
Other	5	0.5%	2	0.2%	4	0.4%
Other with children	5	0.5%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%

The core reasons for homelessness in West Dunbartonshire are households being asked to leave their current accommodation and disputes within a household (both violent and non-violent). More data in our background papers.

Homeless Prevention & Housing Options

Preventing homelessness and helping people understand their housing options are the core motivations of both this Housing Strategy and our homelessness strategy, More than a Roof, and if homelessness cannot be prevented then our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan aims to help people find settled housing as soon as possible.

The Housing Options approach seeks to help households understand their choices around housing and help them find appropriate housing solutions.

As such, we continue to strengthen our housing options approach by embedding the delivery of a robust housing options service when someone, or a household, makes contact by creating a new role within our team to provide housing options information and advice at the front of our service. We have also reviewed existing homeless caseworker job profiles to incorporate a housing options service.

Further, we have developed our own WDC Housing Options Guide and implemented the

Housing Options HUB PREVENT1 guidance to ensure that there was a shared understanding of prevention activities and recording.

Whilst some in-house training and case study review has taken place, as a member of the West of Scotland Housing Options Hub, we will benefit from licences purchased to allow all staff to use the Housing Options Toolkit when it is rolled out at the end of summer 2021. This is in addition to continuous staff development and training which includes motivational interviewing, trauma-informed practice (ACEs), mediation and dealing with disclosure for example.

Other new housing options which are being scaled up as part of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan include Housing First and converting temporary accommodation to a permanent housing outcome for homeless households who have settled well and wish to stay where they are. RRTP funding has also contributed to the provision of a proactive prevention role for those at risk of losing their existing home and by providing a prevention fund.

West Dunbartonshire Council continues to work closely with partners on the West of Scotland Housing Options Hub (includes East Dunbartonshire, Renfrewshire, and East Renfrewshire, North and South Lanarkshire, and Glasgow City Council and GHA) to seek service improvement in the delivery of housing options and the prevention of homelessness.

We reviewed and re-launched our Help to Rent West Dunbartonshire rent deposit guarantee scheme to support the private rented sector as a viable option for households across West Dunbartonshire.

The Prevention Review Group (PRG)

The Prevention Review Group (PRG) was set up at the request of the Scottish Government to take forward work on preventing homelessness identified by the independent Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) and the subsequent Scottish Government /COSLA Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan published in 2018. The Group’s task was to identify legal duties on local authorities and other public bodies to prevent homelessness.

The PRG included representatives from local authorities, HSCP, and third sector organisations. A consultation was carried out that included speaking with people who have lived experience of homelessness and frontline workers.

Effective homelessness prevention requires action as early as possible. People facing housing difficulties may be involved with various services before they make contact with housing or homelessness service, providing potential opportunities to act early. Health and social care services, children’s services, police, and prisons may all work with people who are at risk of homelessness, as well as social and private landlords, providing opportunities to identify issues early and intervene.

Therefore, the PRG has identified a need to introduce a duty or duties to prevent homelessness on services beyond homelessness and housing. We expect this duty to be introduced during the lifetime of this strategy and once we know what this duty will look like and understand the ways it may increase demands on some of our services and staff, we will look to work with partners to put policies and protocols in place to help them identify people at risk of homelessness early.

Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

The cornerstone of the recommendations of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) is a transition to a Rapid Rehousing approach, of which Housing First forms a smaller yet significant component.

Rapid Rehousing is about taking a housing-led approach for people that have experienced homelessness, making sure they reach a settled housing option as quickly as possible rather than staying in temporary accommodation for too long.

Where homelessness cannot be prevented, Rapid Rehousing means:

- **a settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible**
- **time spent in any form of temporary accommodation reduced to a minimum, with the fewer transitions the better**
- **when temporary accommodation is needed, the optimum type is mainstream, furnished, and within a community.**

And for people with multiple needs beyond housing:

- **Housing First is the first response for people with complex needs and facing multiple disadvantages**
- **a highly specialist provision within small, shared, supported and trauma-informed environments if mainstream housing, including Housing First, is not possible or preferable.**
- **each Local Authority was required to develop their plans in collaboration over a planned and costed phase of 5 years (2019/20 to 2023/24). Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans are now an integral part of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and will be reviewed annually as part of the SHIP process.**

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is designed to be a working tool which:

- **sets out the local housing market and homelessness context in West Dunbartonshire**
- **provides the baseline position of temporary accommodation supply**
- **identifies support needs to enable rapid rehousing**
- **sets out West Dunbartonshire Council and partners’ 5-year vision for temporary accommodation supply**
- **details the actions required to achieve our vision for temporary accommodation supply and settled housing options for homeless households**
- **provides a Rapid Rehousing resource plan required to deliver the plan.**

Home at the Heart is West Dunbartonshire Council’s first Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan for the period 2019/20-2023/24. The plan was developed in partnership with key stakeholders including the West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership and local Registered Social Landlords. It followed on from the good work and progress made in “More than a Roof”, West Dunbartonshire’s previous homeless strategy 2017-2021.

The plan also confirms that rough sleeping is not a widespread issue within West Dunbartonshire and that the rehousing outcomes being achieved for homeless households are largely positive. However, challenges exist, with the levels of overall homelessness and youth homelessness which remain the highest in the country, the proportion of homeless households with multiple and complex needs increasing, and the number of households that lose contact with the service being a cause for concern.

Our plan acknowledges the challenges faced in terms of developing appropriate Accommodation and Support Pathways which work for homeless households and has the following four key outcomes:

1. **deliver a Whole Systems approach to the prevention of homelessness**
2. **enable service users with low or no support needs to access settled housing quickly**
3. **to develop interim housing options which enable independent living and housing sustainment**
4. **implement a Housing First model which enables the most excluded service users to achieve housing sustainment.**



Objective One
Whole Systems approach to the prevention of homelessness

An enhanced prevention service has been launched under this objective to ultimately reduce homelessness demand in West Dunbartonshire and to stop homelessness from happening or reoccurring.

The current Section 11 process will be reviewed with the aim to intervene at an earlier stage to stop homelessness from occurring. Other pilot projects will be explored contributing to preventing homelessness.

Objective Two
Service users with low or no support needs to access settled housing quickly

Measures put in place to house those with no and low support needs as quickly as possible which is one of the main aims the Scottish Government wanted in every R RTP.

To enable this to happen requires current applicants to be housed and for new incoming demand to also be housed at the same time meaning higher letting targets. Annual letting targets will be set based on applicants waiting to be housed and an assumption on new demand. Targets for all partners are set and agreed upon in Contribution Statements. This then will allow another aim to be achieved, reducing time in temporary accommodation for the same group.

Objective Three
Develop interim housing options which enable independent living and housing sustainment

Under this objective a Supported Accommodation Service was established, this has been in place since April 2019. We have also committed to create defined housing pathways for the following particular groups:

- 1. Prison Leavers
- 2. Care Leavers
- 3. Armed Forces
- 4. Hospital Discharge
- 5. Domestic Abuse
- 6. LGBT+

To date, we already have the first five in place with the last one currently being worked on and due to be launched in Year 3 of the R RTP.

Another aim under this objective is Conversions. Where temporary accommodation is converted to a Scottish Secure Tenancy as our experience to date shows 100% tenancy sustainment. There has also been a budget for conversions however this has been increased through R RTP funding and targets set. Below shows the number achieved in the last 2 years and targets for the remaining 3 years.

No of conversions:

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
11 achieved	32 achieved	target 30	target 30	target 30

Objective Four
Implement a Housing First model which enables the most excluded service users to achieve housing sustainment

The final objective is to establish a Housing First Service for those with multiple and complex needs and who are mostly likely to be excluded from normal routes to housing. It aims to deliver a housing led approach and lead to more sustainable housing outcomes.

The service was set up in our first year of the R RTP and plans are to continue to expand the service throughout the years to meet the projected demand. We have created a specific R RTP pathway for those who would benefit most from Housing First.

Housing First Case Study

Ann (35) had been known to homeless services for several years and had 10 previous homeless presentations as well as failed previous secure tenancies.

Ann has a history of addiction, mental health problems, and past trauma. Ann presented to WDC homeless service after a relationship breakdown and fleeing domestic violence.

She had previously lived in supported accommodation but the previous stepped-up approach required applicants to become “tenancy ready” by first working their way through issues that may prevent them from sustaining a tenancy, but this model proved problematic for Ann and others who required additional support.

The Housing First approach identifies settled accommodation early, allows support workers to be more reactive to the immediate needs of the clients and as such this was the agreed best option for Ann.

Through the Housing First process, she received an offer of housing in her chosen area with an RSL partner. With Housing First additional funding she has been able to choose her furniture and carpets for her property and was also provided with white goods. Ann expressed how grateful she was at having a carpet as her previous tenancies had never felt like a home due to not being able to afford the essential items she needed.

A year on Ann continues to meet with her Housing First keyworker regularly and takes part in regular care plan and key-work meetings. She has been supported to engage in walking and going to the gym which has helped with her anxiety. Ann is also engaging with other agencies to address issues that have contributed to previous failed tenancies. Ann states that she now feels part of a community and does not feel stigmatised for her past issues as she is managing her tenancy and running her own home with the confidence that she will not be going back through the homeless system in the future.

Pathways, Policies and Protocols

Housing works with the WDHSCP and other partners to improve pathways to housing solutions for groups with particular challenges. We highlight here the following groups:

- **Prison Leavers**
- **Young Care Leavers (see Chapter 5)**
- **Armed Forces Leavers**
- **People being discharged from Hospital (see Chapter 5)**
- **Young people facing homelessness**
- **People experiencing domestic or sexual abuse**

Prison Leavers

We have a dedicated Resettlement Officer providing a housing options service to persons with convictions, this is part of a wider prison discharge pathway that ensures West Dunbartonshire Council delivers on the SHORE Standards.

Pathways include supporting individuals to hold on to existing secure accommodation where possible and opening up opportunities for individuals to access secure accommodation and/or Housing First direct from prison.

Other initiatives such as closer working relations with Community Justice partners, signing up to the Scottish Prison Service data sharing agreement, and developing Information Sharing Protocols with RSL partners have contributed to early intervention and increased housing options for persons with convictions.

Leaving Care Housing Protocol

West Dunbartonshire’s Leaving Care Housing Protocol ensures that an integrated and coordinated service exists so that no Young Care Leaver will become homeless on leaving care or lack support to achieve independence and stability within the community.

The protocol is based on the principle that care leavers should have access to secure accommodation and is complemented by our

Housing Allocations Policy, which recognises Young Care Leavers as a group given reasonable preference to housing. More details available in Chapter 5.

Armed Forces

West Dunbartonshire Council’s Housing Options and Homelessness Officers provide high-quality professional housing advice which can help veterans plan for life outside the military environment. This can include assistance for those whose military service has resulted in a need for additional support or a specific adaptation to their home.

Our officers provide personalised housing options suited to the veterans, and where appropriate their family’s needs. Information is available online but they offer housing options meetings for those who require, or would benefit from, advice.

As well as looking at housing solutions, they also provide information and links to other services, which could impact your housing options, such as the Welfare Rights Hub, employment and training, and support services, etc.

For example, if a veteran has recently left Armed Forces and is looking for employment or unsure what their next step is, the Working4U Service can help and the Department for Work and Pension has dedicated armed forces employment champions, there are two within West Dunbartonshire Council; one in Clydebank and one in Dumbarton. The housing options team also works with several third sector partners including Poppy Scotland to assist veterans in settling into post-service life.

Hospital Discharge

WDC’s hospital discharge protocol outlines the legislative and operational frameworks agreed between services for providing assessment, planning, and appropriate accommodation for people with housing and health and/or social care needs who are discharged from the hospital (see Chapter 5).

Domestic and sexual abuse support and strategy

As a local authority, we have a responsibility to prevent and respond to domestic abuse per **Equally Safe** (Scotland’s strategy for preventing and addressing violence against women and girls).

Domestic Abuse is a violation of basic human rights, and this includes children. It is recognised that children who live with domestic abuse are, themselves, experiencing abuse.

In response to this, West Dunbartonshire Council Housing and Homelessness Services have developed a policy to prevent and address domestic abuse. It has been developed in conjunction with the Violence Against Women (VAW) partnership and has been approved there.

This wider policy incorporates our **No Home for Domestic Abuse** approach to support Council tenants experiencing domestic abuse to remain in their own home and the wider

housing options, accommodation, and support services available to everyone living in West Dunbartonshire regardless of tenure.

This policy aims to provide a proactive housing response to preventing and addressing domestic abuse by:

- **Providing a sensitive and supportive response to victims/survivors**
- **Working collaboratively to enable victims/survivors to access a range of housing options, advice, information, and support**
- **Holding perpetrators to account**

The policy is in line with the Domestic Abuse (protection) (Scotland) Bill 2020. This bill has just been passed in parliament and gives the social landlord the ability to apply to the courts for recovery of possession of a house from the perpetrator. This is with the view that the tenancy can be transferred over to the victim. This is the case for joint tenancies too. More details available in our full policy: **No Home for Domestic Abuse**.





Young people, homelessness and housing options

Young people experiencing homelessness are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. In West Dunbartonshire Council young people aged 16 to 24 make up 9.8% of the population⁵. Despite this, in 2020/21 32% of homeless presentations were from young people.

As a local authority, we have a duty to assess, provide support and accommodate anyone who is assessed as homeless and this includes young people. Young people face many barriers when accessing housing, in particular affordability, worsened by recent welfare reforms, which can make access to housing more difficult for young people than other age groups. Welfare reforms also have implications for the type of temporary housing we can provide; funding is capped at housing benefit level and if the cost to provide supported accommodation exceeds that cost then a funding gap emerges which needs to be met by West Dunbartonshire Council.

Taking a housing options approach will help young people face the challenges and barriers in a comprehensive approach that can involve multiple and varied actions to achieve sustainable housing outcomes for individual customers. Housing options are not just about providing good quality advice, but about working around the person to help them gain the skills and knowledge to make an informed choice about their housing. Having the appropriate range of housing

options available to young people, as well as providing support when required, is key to enabling tenancy sustainment.

As a Council, we need to be innovative when looking at homeless prevention and the housing options available to young people. West Dunbartonshire Council undertook a Young Persons Housing Options Service. This was across the Clydebank area and involved the use of mediation. The project was a success and has now been adopted across the whole Council area.

West Dunbartonshire Council is exploring option as part of a National Lottery-funded Early Action System Change, West Dunbartonshire Council is working closely with Action for Children who provide a bespoke Youth Housing Options Service for young people aged 16-24yrs.

We are also funding a new Shared Living pilot for young people who would otherwise struggle in their tenancy due to affordability, linked to recent changes in welfare reform, and isolation. This is a new housing option for young people with matching and support services provided by Simon Community Scotland.

West Dunbartonshire Council will continue to monitor youth homelessness levels across West Dunbartonshire and identify further actions where appropriate.

⁵ https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/Council-area-data-sheets/west-dunbartonshire-Council-profile.html#table_pop_est_age

Conclusions

Prevention of homelessness has, and will continue to be, our focus. We have already put in place a number of policies and pathways to support people and households at risk of homelessness to understand their housing options.

We understand that as the HARSAG recommendations come into place other public sector bodies such as education and health services will have a responsibility to prevent homelessness. We know that education and making the right information available for example about tenant rights can be crucial in preventing homelessness and averting crisis. Therefore, as and when, more information about the Prevent duty is available we will work with our partners to develop a joint approach to helping them fulfil this duty. We already have a good working relationship with a number of partners and this action will build on those relationships.

Action 3.1:
Once details are available develop in partnership with other public sector bodies education and support to help them fulfil their prevent duties.

Ensuring that people and households achieve permanent settled accommodation as soon as possible has been shown to deliver a range of benefits for their health and wellbeing. As such, and in line with the HARSAG recommendations we have developed our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and intend to deliver the actions and outcomes set out in that. Therefore, we will commit to deliver that plan including the development of a LGBT+ pathway acknowledging the particular challenges those who are LGBT+ can face, as identified in our HIIA.

Action 3.2:
Deliver our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan including committing to continually review our pathways to ensure they reflect best practice.

Our Housing First model is for those tenants who have complex needs which have historically

made sustaining a tenancy difficult and these tenancies come with significant levels of support and as the case study above makes clear it can be transformational.

The goal for this model is to firstly help people become established in their own home and able to participate and be part of their communities. In turn, it should help prevent future homeless presentations and whilst resource intensive can bring significant benefits, and therefore cost savings, for many parts of the public sector including the NHS and social services.

However, at the moment housing first is a pilot with funding only agreed for three of the five years of this strategy and thus we will need to work with our partners to establish how to best fund this service going forward.

Action 3.3:
Work with our partners to establish long term financial support for Housing First acknowledging the variety of benefits it delivers across the public sector.

Finally, our survey respondents and HIIA process identified that one of the major components needed for our approach both homeless prevention and rapid rehousing to be successful is a steady supply of homes available across all tenures and types, but in particular affordable housing and therefore this part of the strategy links closely to other actions and ambitions, primarily around the development of more, new homes including those set out in chapter 1.



Place and Community

4



Our places, our towns, and communities are where many of the ambitions of this strategy intersect. The physical buildings, which provide us with homes, sit within and help create places and therefore we must work to make these places the best that they can be.

High-quality places which are safe, vibrant, and community-focused are home to people who are healthier and happier. For example, creating places which encourage people to take fewer car journeys and instead travel safely and pleasantly by foot, bike or public transport brings benefits for both their health and is more sustainable.

Focusing on the local area will be important for making our places resilient to climate change too; by considering our planting and trees which absorb rainfall and provide shade, and local food growing initiatives to reduce food miles.

Place making as a public health priority

Our places can have an important role in encouraging active travel, such as walking and cycling and by making routes safe and pleasant we can encourage and support, improvements in the physical wellbeing of the residents who live there.

There are also benefits to be had for mental wellbeing, for example studies have shown that access to green spaces, such as parks, can boost mental health by improving mood, reducing stress, and encouraging activity (Mind, 2021). To maximise the positive role of green space, both new and existing spaces need to be integrated into our places and communities so that everyone has good access to these benefits.

Therefore our places play an important role in health and this applies across all ages and demographics including children. The WHO (2016) has shown that access to green space for children is important for both cognitive and physical development, for example allowing them to develop fine motor skills which are important for adulthood.

Place making and climate change

The recently established **Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan** identifies that our places will have an important role to play in our ability to respond to, and be resilient to, climate change.

Flood prevention systems and technical flood planning will be part of that approach but it is important we also support and contribute to attempts to manage water in our neighbourhoods. For example through using permeable surfaces, planting specific types of plants, and mechanisms such as rain gardens which slow the pace of water. These types of interventions can bring other benefits such as cooling on hot days and providing biodiversity for animals.

These types of actions can build our resilience and capacity to respond to changes but our places also have an important role to play in helping our communities reduce their carbon emissions by reducing the need to drive, promoting walking and other active travel choices by making sure our homes sit within places of short distances. Thus meaning within short distances people can be connected to other places, for example by bus. West Dunbartonshire is well placed as it is fairly compact and largely urban and this links to 20-minute neighbourhoods covered below.

We will do this by supporting town centres and neighbourhoods to provide our communities with the amenities they need, as set out below, and by working with colleagues in other teams to ensure that the space around our homes contributes to our resilience to climate change for example through biodiversity.



Place making and planning context

Creating places is about giving our communities an identity and making West Dunbartonshire a place where people want to visit and live. It is about integrating and thinking about how houses, communities, open spaces, schools, other community facilities, town centres, industrial areas and the countryside come together to create places that people are proud to call their home.

West Dunbartonshire
Local Development Plan 2

Local Development Plan 2 sets out a design framework based on creating places for people and focussing on a green infrastructure first approach to design. This approach will help to create new communities and places whilst strengthen existing ones. Policies CP1 and CP2 of the LDP 2 set out the requirements in this regard and achieved the first Building with Nature Accreditation in the UK.

High-quality places and design is also a priority for the Council and as such, a Place and Design Panel has been established to raise the standards of design and place-making within West Dunbartonshire and is a formal process that will benefit proposals brought to the Panel through the provision of a workshop approach, bringing various skillsets together. The Place and Design Panel Terms of Reference detail the work

of the Panel and the types of applications that it will consider.

Policy CP 4 of the Plan requires developers to incorporate the recommendations of the Place and Design Panel. If the developer chooses not to do so, justification must be provided as to why the recommendations have not been adhered to.

20 minute neighbourhoods

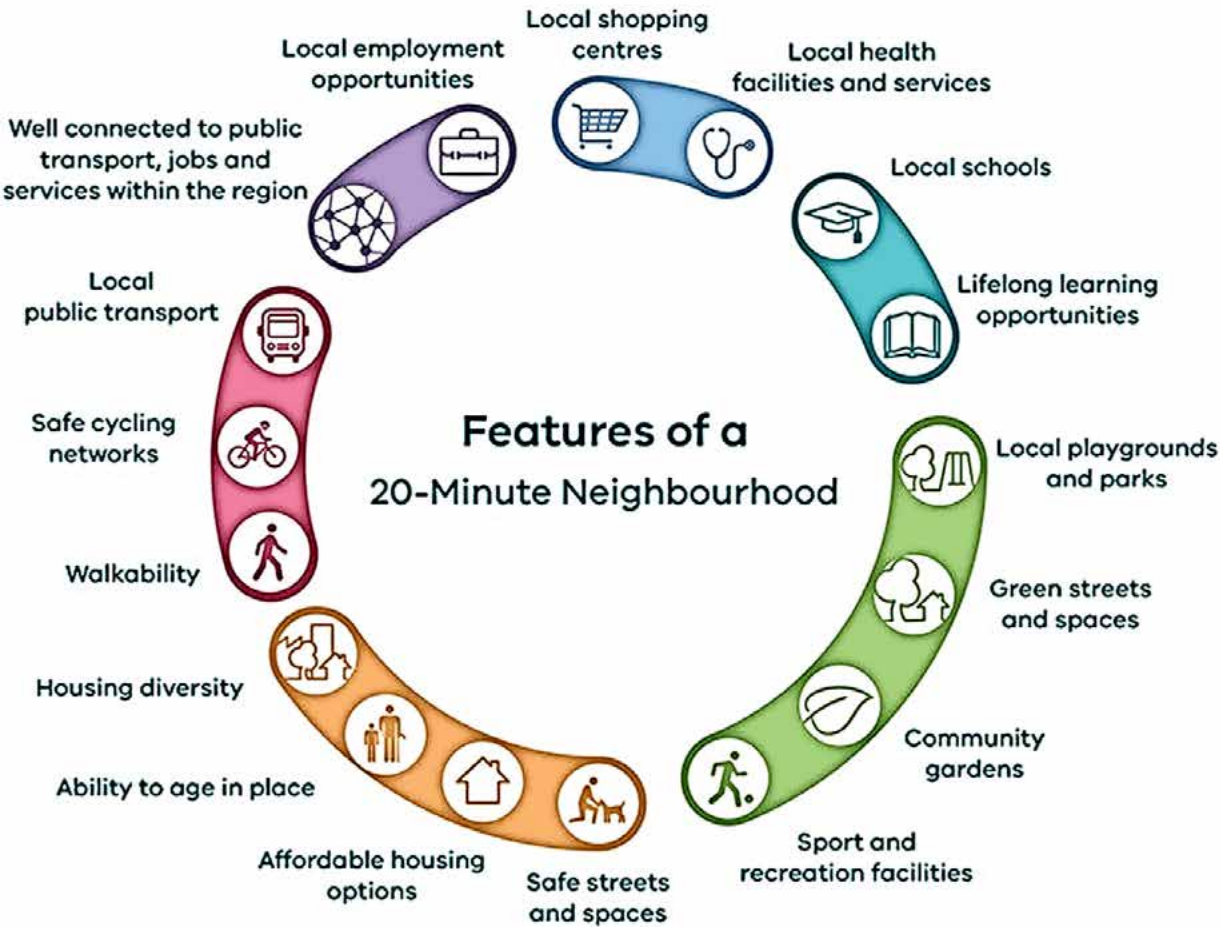
What is a 20-minute neighbourhood?
20 minutes or approximately 800m based upon average adult walking time. Within this distance, a short ten-minute walk there and ten minutes (total time 20 minutes) back you should be able to access and use, services, amenities such as public transport links, and green spaces.

Our consultation noted the differences between good (some amenities available nearby, more within reach by public transport) and great (lots of amenities nearby such as in town centre locations) but the opportunity to make good amenities great for example by good, safe paths, cycle routes and cycle storage at home and at destinations such as schools and stations. This was reflected by our survey respondents:

72%
of whom thought that 20 minute neighbourhoods would improve their neighbourhoods

52.5%
thought it would encourage them to walk or cycle more.

Indeed, walkability is an important feature of a 20-minute neighbourhood but it also supports cycling and public transport use. This may require a more dense urban form but neighbourhoods that fulfil these principles have been shown to have positive outcomes for health and wellbeing, alongside supporting reduced carbon emissions.



20-minute neighbourhoods and policy context
20-minute neighbourhoods are a concept that has been gaining popularity in policy for several years. The idea originated in large cities, with Melbourne and Paris being the most famous examples, but it is increasingly viewed as a good model for all neighbourhoods.

The recent pandemic has highlighted the importance of having good quality local amenities such as shops and green spaces and as a result, the Scottish Government, in the most recent programme for Government (2020), identified 20-minute neighbourhoods as something they support and we anticipate it may become more prominent in government thinking as contained within NPF4.

Creating 20-minute neighbourhoods
The most obvious first step in creating 20-minute neighbourhoods is to carry out community reviews. This involves taking the above graphic list mapping up where amenities such as schools and public

transport are, types of housing available, and establishing how walkable an area is.

In addition to the physical elements of the space both our HIIA process and survey respondents felt strongly that feelings of safety should be prioritised for example well lit and overlooked streets, wider paths to allow those using prams or wheelchairs to move around easily and cycle safety measures.

This is no small project and it makes sense in the first instance to align it with other initiatives or projects, for example the Alexandria Masterplan or Queens Quay Masterplan which can help involve residents in creating the places they want and weave the 20-minute neighbourhood into that. It may be that some amenities or services will be shared between communities, depending on the size of the area, but these must be connected by public transport and active travel routes.



Town Centres

Town centres are highly accessible, have good public transport connections and a large number of amenities. There are several smaller and larger town centres within West Dunbartonshire.

Our main town centres are Clydebank, Dumbarton, and Alexandria which are well connected by public transport and offer a range of retail and leisure opportunities for their catchments. In addition to these are smaller centres which typically offer shops, transport links, and schools and are located in areas throughout West Dunbartonshire including Faifley, Duntocher, Old Kilpatrick, Bowling, Milton, Renton, and Balloch.

Looking forward, housing within these areas can bring huge benefits in terms of vibrancy, driving demand for amenities, as well as allowing people to be less reliant on cars. Ultimately, the inclusion of housing can help town centres be resilient places.

Our planning and housing policies promote the Town Centre First Principle and we utilise the toolkit for example the work undertaken in Alexandria to create the Alexandria masterplan. Further, any new developments aim to be sensitive to the local area and through our work around tackling empty homes we aim to bring empty properties in our town centres back into use. All of which aim to support and promote our town centres.

Housing Regeneration Areas Strategy

Quality places are resilient and as we as a Council look to build more resilient communities we want to ensure our homes and their respective places continue to support this ambition. This is already evident in a number of our planning and housing policies but the Local Housing Strategy allows us to identify areas for regeneration where additional focus is required.



The principal criteria used in designating the priority Housing Regeneration Areas were the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) statistics, the findings from the Council’s Asset Management assessment, details in chapter 2, and analysis of the capital investment made in the area. We had in the draft version excluded Bellsmyre from our regeneration areas due to the improvements in the SIMD statistics but our survey respondents and workshop feedback felt strongly that it should be included.

The areas identified and proposed are set out below:

- **Haldane, Balloch**
- **Bonhill, Alexandria**
- **Brucehill, Dumbarton**
- **Westcliff, Dumbarton**
- **Castlehill, Dumbarton**
- **Bellsmyre, Dumbarton**
- **Mountblow, Clydebank**
- **Dalmuir, Clydebank**
- **Drumry, Clydebank**

- **Faifley, Clydebank**
- **Clydebank East, Clydebank**

While these areas were termed housing regeneration areas, the importance of linking proposals here to wider social and economic outcomes is recognised. The Strategic Housing Investment Plan will give a degree of prioritisation to projects located in these areas.

Not all of these areas contain prospective new housing sites but in these cases, other regeneration avenues will be explored including holistic refurbishment programmes and other forms of investment into these communities. For example, supporting active travel through twenty-minute neighbourhoods or the expansion of district heating systems.

It should be stressed that investment in new affordable housing will not be confined to the regeneration areas. When deciding on the priority for any given new affordable housing proposal, several factors are taken into

account including the availability of land, type of housing being proposed, deliverability, and value for money. Projects proposed for inclusion in the WD SHIP are scored against a matrix of factors and their priority is assessed accordingly.

Empty Homes Strategy

Making the most of our existing homes is a key policy focus for this strategy and a priority for both West Dunbartonshire Council and the Scottish Government.

Our Empty Homes Strategy was recently updated and approved in February 2021 and establishes the strategy’s key objectives as:

- maximise the re-use of empty homes,
- reduce the number of long term empty problem properties,
- help to alleviate the effects of homelessness and a waiting list in WDC
- Support Town Centre regeneration.

WDC has a target to bring back into use 25 empty homes each year and during the last financial year (April 2020 to April 2021) brought 29 long-term empty properties back into use. There are 352 empty homes still on the register and they are spread across the Council area:

- Alexandria 105
- Clydebank 145
- Dumbarton 102

The Empty Homes Strategy works in alignment with the Buy-back Strategy, details below, and so far 15 out of the 40 homes purchased through the Buy-Back scheme have been empty homes and we are hoping that should more empty properties be suitable to be purchased through this scheme, we could then use the existing Empty Homes Loan Fund to refurbish these properties if necessary, making more family homes available for social rent for perpetuity.

Empty Homes and increased Council Tax

The Scottish Government announced in 2012 that local authorities would be given new powers to help reduce the number of empty homes and since April 2013 Councils have had the option to reduce, increase or maintain discounts on second homes and long term empty properties with the further option to increase Council tax owed for properties that have been empty for 12 months or more.

From April 2014, West Dunbartonshire Council has agreed to adopt a new policy that is intended to reduce the number of empty properties in our area. This policy included doubling the Council tax for long-term empty homes.

Following a review of the Empty Property Discount Policy, some discretionary elements have been agreed upon that will prevent the application of a double Council tax charge for properties that have been empty for over 12 months in some circumstances.

Existing owners of empty homes can apply for a maximum three-month discretionary exemption to allow them to do required works, for example make it suitable for habitation or prepare it for sale. Meanwhile, new owners can apply for up to 12 months to allow them to carry out required works.



Compulsory Sale Orders

The Scottish Government has intended to legislate to introduce a Compulsory Sale Order (CSOs) Power for vacant land and buildings. When introduced CSOs will be a legal mechanism intended to help local authorities address the many thousands of empty homes and vacant urban land across the nation.

CSOs would allow the authorities to sell these buildings and plots to the highest bidder after they have been derelict for a set period, allowing them to be regenerated.

This would give the Empty Homes Strategy and officer an additional tool in those instances where all other means of engaging with the owner have been exhausted. The intended legislation that would introduce these powers was delayed because of BREXIT and the COVID-19 pandemic but we await its introduction and more detail.

Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs)

Many public sector organisations (e.g. local authorities, Transport Scotland) and a range of infrastructure providers (e.g. energy transmission companies) have powers to purchase land without the owner’s agreement if there is considered to be a strong enough case in the public interest in doing so, this is known as a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO).

The CPO process can be lengthy, fraught, and time-consuming and therefore we are wary of using this power, particularly when linked to empty homes, and instead welcome the prospect of Compulsory Sales Orders instead for these properties.

Otherwise, Compulsory Purchase Orders will be viewed as an option of last resort for properties that are structurally unsound, unsafe, or are otherwise putting communities at risk but we will always seek to work with owners and landlords before taking a CPO forward.

Buy Back Strategy

West Dunbartonshire Council’s Buy Back Scheme was updated and approved in October 2019. It allows the Council to purchase homes previously sold through Right to Buy to increase the amount of affordable housing available. To meet the demand for housing, the scheme has clear aims and criteria.

The main aims of the scheme are:

- to acquire housing that can increase the stock of WDC social housing
- help maintain or create viable sustainable communities
- assist with managing the effects of Welfare Reform
- assist the Council with SHQS/ capital Improvements
- potentially assist with bringing empty homes back into use.

We are keen to see our registered social landlord partners also take a strategic approach to buy-backs to help deliver the objectives of the LHS. Negotiations are ongoing with the Scottish Government’s More Homes division regarding Affordable Housing Supply Programme funding for the buy-back programme.





Tenant Participation

Involving You, the Council’s Tenant Participation Strategy for 2021-2024, aims to involve tenants in decision-making about their homes and the services they receive. It does this by enhancing feedback to tenants, continuing to encourage the involvement of under-represented groups including young people, homeless people, and minority ethnic groups, and promoting the personal benefits to tenants of participating in decision-making processes.

The strategy builds upon previous successful strategies and is informed by both the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Scottish Social Housing Charter requirements, which set out between them tenant rights and Council duties. We recognise that involving tenants and other service users in decisions about their homes, services and communities helps us continually work to improve these same places and homes alongside the services we offer and as such we are committed to continually improving and listening to our tenants and residents.

We also recognise that getting involved brings benefits for our tenants and communities and as such we aim to provide a variety of different opportunities and formats to help get as many people as possible involved including Housing News, our quarterly newsletter, Tenants and Residents Associations, Scrutiny Panel, attending focus groups and public meetings. More details can be found in the strategy.



Conclusions and actions

Places and communities are vitally important to both our resident’s health and well-being and our ambitions to reduce our impact on the environment. Indeed, our survey findings suggest strong support for the idea of 20 minute neighbourhoods and the opportunity they present to improve our places. However, housing is only one part of our places and we do not have control over every element of our places but we will endeavour to work with colleagues in other teams for example roads and their active travel strategy ensuring that our homes contribute the best they can. We will commit to carrying out at least one 20 minute neighbourhoods reviews per year with our colleagues and communities where appropriate.

Action 4.1:
Carry out at least one twenty minute neighbourhood review per year with colleagues from other teams, and communities where appropriate, identifying gaps and priorities. In addition we will support other team’s strategies which are in alignment with these principles for example active travel and economic development.

Beyond 20 minute neighbourhoods we will work to support our places across a number of measures. For example our town centres and housing regeneration areas, our survey responders demonstrated clear support for prioritising investment in these areas. We will report back annually on the investment made and projects taken forward in these areas by both ourselves and partners such as the registered social landlords active in West Dunbartonshire. This may include new homes, connections to district heating and retrofit homes for energy efficiency.

Action 4.2:
Report annually on investment actions taken into town centres and housing regeneration areas by ourselves (West Dunbartonshire Council) and our partners.

All of these measures require that we make the most of our existing homes and indeed we have a number of policies, strategies and tools at our disposal to help us do this. We look forward to the introduction of Compulsory Sales Orders and hope that it will be a helpful tool. In addition to these national policies, our Empty Homes and Buy Back Strategies ensure that we make the most of existing housing in our communities and as such we will report annually on progress on these strategies.

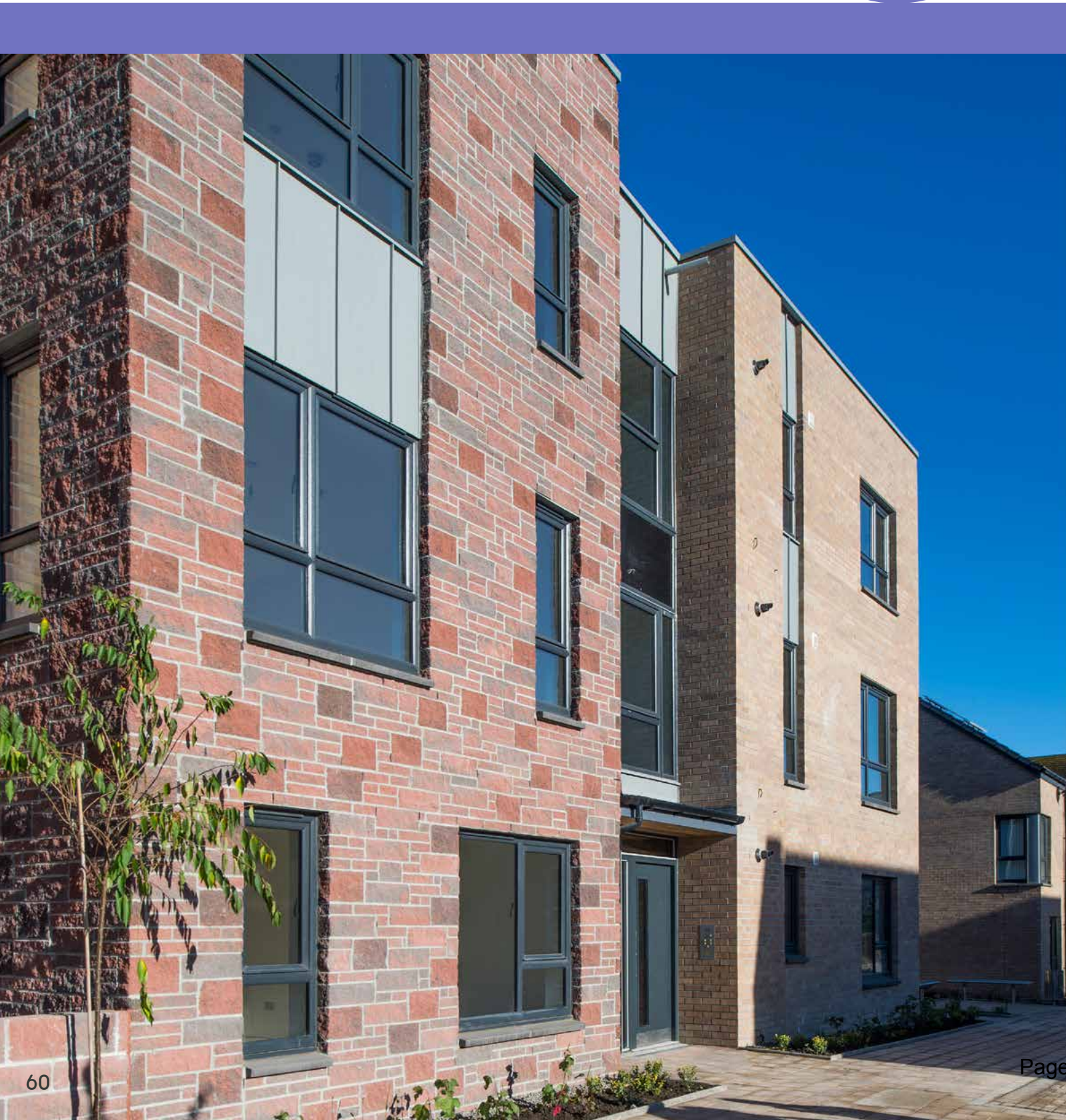
Action 4.3:
Report annually on the number of homes brought back into use by the Empty Homes officer and strategy and report on the number of homes purchased by the Buy Back officer and strategy.

Feeling part of a community and having a say in your community are both really important for building sustainable and resilient places which reflect the ambitions and aspirations of the people who live there. We have recently updated our tenant participation strategy and commit to delivering this and constantly seeking to improve not only opportunities to become involved but support our places, communities and homes.

Action 4.4:
Commit to delivering the Involving You Tenant Participation Strategy and in doing so look to continually improve how we engage and communicate with our tenants and residents, encouraging the involvement of underrepresented groups including private sector tenants, to ensure that our homes and places reflect what the people who live there want to see.

Supported, Specialist and Particular Needs Housing

5



Housing has an important role to play in health because homes can impact on people's health in a way that few other factors can. Homes are where people spend a significant portion of their time and the links to physical health are clear but homes also invoke feelings of safety and security and therefore have important connections to mental health too.

Having access to the right housing can deliver positive mental and physical outcomes and this is particularly the case for those who require specialist accommodation, support to live independently or have housing requirements that vary from other groups.

This chapter sets out how we plan to ensure these groups have access to the housing and support they require. This will require close working across Council services and in particular with our colleagues in the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). We have set out what that relationship will look like below before setting out local demand and our approach over the coming five years for specialist, supported and particular housing.

Housing and HSCP

Housing Contribution Statement
Housing Contribution Statement (HCS) is the aspect of the Strategic Plan which acts as a "bridge" between the Integration Authority's Strategic Plan and the Council's Local Housing Strategy. It outlines the key areas of joint working and shared objectives. It forms part of the West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan: 2019 – 2022.

The Housing Contribution Statement echoes the Strategic Plan in highlighting key areas where Housing and HSCP will be working together in the coming period to:

- provide a housing support service enabling long term clients to be supported within West Dunbartonshire
- continue to develop plans for new and refurbished housing

- develop Services at Points of Transition
- provide preventative interventions and supports
- ensure rapid access to assessment, and provision of aids and adaptations
- seek to develop supported housing solutions for younger adults with complex needs.

Housing will continue to engage with the HSCP over updates to the new Strategic Plan.

Need and demand for specialist accommodation

Several trends are going to influence the need and demand for specialist, supported, or particular housing in West Dunbartonshire. These are long-term trends and this is only a five-year strategy, however it presents us with an opportunity to continue to build upon work done to date and take into consideration best practice.

Changing demands on housing stock
The overall population in West Dunbartonshire is predicted to decline but the percentage of the population aged 65 and over has been increasing over the last 20 years and is expected to continue to increase from 18.8% currently to 22.8% in 2028 and 25.7% in 2043. Those aged 75 and over are predicted to rise from 8% currently to 9.6% in 2028 and then 14.3% of the total population.

Levels of frailty and ill health within our communities would be expected to rise in accordance with this aging population, however, we also have levels of frailty due to long-term conditions and co-morbidities within our under 65 population.

More support required
In West Dunbartonshire, life expectancy at birth was higher for females (79.2 years) than for males (75.0 years) in 2016-18 and has been improving in recent years. Healthy life expectancy measures how long people are living without debilitating health conditions,

chronic illness, or disability. This is not the same as life expectancy. For example for females currently aged 60-64 years in West Dunbartonshire, the average life expectancy is a further 22 years, but only 11 of these years are expected to be spent in good health.

One of the Scottish Government's National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes is that:

People, including those with disabilities or long term conditions or who are frail are able to live, as far as reasonably practicable, independently and at home or in a homely setting in their community

People living longer with more complex health conditions means we need to consider and plan for the needs of people being supported at home often over a number of years. Over 1,400 people in West Dunbartonshire currently receive support from the HSCP's Care at Home services with over 10,000 hours of home care provided in a typical week. Around 2,000 people also have the support of a community alarm to provide an emergency response from Care at Home should they become unwell or experience a fall. As our population ages and people live longer with more complex health needs these numbers will increase as will the demand on appropriate housing and/or aids and adaptations.

It is not just older households who require support to live at home but a variety of different groups including people with physical disabilities or complex health conditions who may require to use mobility aids, specialised equipment or wheelchairs and people with learning disabilities whose support allows them to live otherwise independently. Meanwhile, for others, that support might not be in the home but around

it, for example for those experiencing poor mental health or particularly vulnerable groups such as Prison Leavers, Young Care Leavers or people being discharged home from hospital where their housing situation has become a barrier.

What does this mean for housing need and demand?

Older households mean we need to plan for smaller households whilst looking to provide housing which is:

- suitable for people with mobility problems & users of scooters
- suitable for people with dementia
- future-proofed and adaptable to suit changing needs
- provides choice so households can decide the best option for them.

Crucially our housing stock must seek to make it easier to support people and not act as an impediment to them living a fulfilling life. Thus, this might require housing that has been designed or adapted with a specialist requirement in mind, or that facilitates a degree of independence for example supported living units.

Specialist Housing

Older people's housing
There are approximately 550 purpose-built amenity, retirement and sheltered homes across West Dunbartonshire. They are primarily owned and managed by either West Dunbartonshire Council or our strategic housing partners.

Each of these three types of accommodation offers something slightly different with amenity properties offering emergency response, maintained garden areas, secure entry and repairs service; to retirement which typically offers the addition of a staff presence, some support to residents, laundry and sometimes meals facilities; through to sheltered housing

which offers considerable support to residents as well as usually a 24 hour warden presence on site.

We continue to develop new affordable housing options for older households and will be looking to review whether existing housing for this group is suitable going forward. However older people's or age-restricted housing will only ever accommodate a small number of households thus the majority of older people's housing going forward will be formed of existing mainstream homes allowing people to 'age in place'. It may not be the home the person currently lives in as they may require a property with different attributes or they may require right sizing.

Older people's housing was identified by our survey respondents as another focus and area where they would like to see more options available and many felt that internet should be readily available for this group.

Accessible housing & delivery of wheelchair housing

Accessible housing is the cornerstone of independent living. Without an accessible home, it's clearly impossible for many disabled and older people to live as equal citizens - to work, to play, to have relationships, to be active members of our communities and all that follows from that: in other words to do all the things non-disabled people take for granted.

Etienne d'Aboville Chief Executive, Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living.

Ensuring our homes are easy to get into, out of, and around is of utmost importance and should form the cornerstone of our approach to both new and existing homes.

People who use wheelchairs face particular design and accessibility barriers, both in and around the home and in the wider environment. Projections indicate that over 31,000 people with disabilities will experience unmet housing needs in Scotland by 2024 (CIH and Horizon 2017).

The recommendation from this report included the development of new wheelchair standard homes for owner-occupiers and tenants; support for home adaptations across tenures; and efficient allocation of accessible and adaptable homes in affordable and social rented sectors to help resolve these challenges.

Our Design Standard necessitates 10% of affordable homes to be wheelchair standard to access affordable housing supply programme funding. We also provide details of wheelchair space standards, alongside required design features in our Design Standard which are required in addition to complying with Housing for Varying Needs and the latest Building Standards.

This requirement applies to the affordable housing sector but is discretionary for private developers and delivering private wheelchair user standard homes can be a challenge and may require national policy change. As such the affordable housing sector continues to be vital and as such so are their allocation policies to ensure the right people have access to appropriate housing.

Respondents to our survey and our HIA process both identified the vital role wheelchair appropriate housing play and thought it should be prioritised because it could have a significant impact upon people's ability to live independently or provide car to children who use wheelchairs.



People with disabilities

Taking a person-centred approach can help ensure that everyone, regardless of their ability level can access a home that meets their needs and allows them to access support if they require it.

Inclusive design allows people who use wheelchairs, some or all of the time, to use their wheelchair easily and this design, in turn, can also help people of varying levels of mobility, or ability, to use the space. For example, wide door frames cater for people who use electric scooters or walking supports either long term or whilst recovering from injury.

Thus, inclusive design enables future-proofing for everyone whose needs may change permanently, or temporarily, over their lifetime. We understand Housing for Varying Needs is under review and may be updated in the time of this strategy. We welcome these updates as they will apply across all new developments, regardless of tenure.

Therefore, like many areas new build homes offer an opportunity to develop custom homes which deliver best practice design but existing homes are also important and it is crucial we think about how best to make these work. As set out in the following sections, adaptations such as chairlifts, hoists and ramps can be important supports for many different ability levels.

Adaptations & policy for adaptations & allocating adapted property

In comparison to new properties where best practice and inclusive design are more easily integrated into homes, existing homes can represent more of a challenge and may require adaptations to allow people with varying levels of ability or frailty to continue to live in their existing home. Adaptations include ramps, showers, door alterations, path widening, and handrails.

West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership's Community Teams carry out



assessments for equipment and adaptations to make it easier for people to live independently. Adaptations for tenants of West Dunbartonshire Council are provided and funded through the Council and registered social landlords have access to an adaptations budget from the Scottish Government. There is also grant funding available to assist home owners and private landlords to adapt their homes.

The community team at WDC can help with applications, and our Care and Repair Scheme can help households complete the work. Further recent Scottish Government guidance should make it easier to adapt common areas such as closes to support adaptations, [full guidance here](#).

Care and Repair

Lomond and Clyde Care & Repair Limited are a community based organisation covering all of West Dunbartonshire. Funded by West Dunbartonshire Council, West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership and Community Planning West Dunbartonshire,

they offer advice and assistance to older people and people with disabilities who are homeowners or private rented sector tenants to enable them to have their homes repaired, improved, or adapted.

Further, they also offer a small repairs service which provides a trusted team of small repairs maintenance workers to carry out small repairs to people's homes, to enable them to remain safe and secure within their own homes, whilst retaining as much independence as possible.

Aids and Adaptations

Aids and adaptations while effective can often be costly, particularly where more complex adaptations are required and they are dependent on the design and construction of individual properties.

The design of new homes is hugely important and the development and availability of specialist homes makes it easier to support people to live independently, if this is what is best for them, for as long as possible.

Older, existing homes will always represent more of a challenge but remaining in their own home and community can deliver health and wellbeing benefits.

As such we will provide support to help people remain at home, provide assistance with adaptations and use technology to help older households live as independently as possible.

Technology supported housing

Technology is already an integral part of many homes with many households having smart heating systems, speakers or televisions but looking forward we anticipate that technology will become important in helping people to live independently.

For example, technology can help people manage their properties more easily and systems around heating systems are well established but there is a growing area around technology enabled care such as Telecare whereby people can have sensors or systems installed which allow them access to support quickly if required and also provide reassurance to family members and carers. For example, sensors that track movement can highlight when a person’s pattern of daily activity has changed and may be of concern or where a person has experienced a fall.

Our survey respondents identified that technology and access to the internet should be an integral part of our specialist and supported housing provision. They felt that internet provision could help people maintain independence, feel less isolated and make it easier to provide care. Therefore we will work with colleagues in HSCP to ensure that we incorporate technology into our care options.



Dementia Housing

There are around 90,000 people in Scotland currently living with dementia, and this number is expected to increase significantly as the proportion of older people within the national population increases. Locally almost 600 people with dementia received support at home at some point during 2021/22.

West Dunbartonshire Council has committed to CIH’s Housing and Dementia Framework and we have incorporated dementia design elements into our design standard to ensure that new homes are dementia friendly. One of the recent developments at Creveul Court in Alexandria has dementia design elements at its core which have been well received by the community and residents who are already benefitting from the good design. Our Design Standard has been updated to encourage the inclusion of dementia friendly elements.

We are aware that new builds can only accommodate limited numbers and that for some people staying in a familiar home can be more beneficial for their wellbeing. Therefore, we need to support people to find the best option for them to allow them to live as independently and safely as possible. Therefore, we will work with colleagues in the HSCP to ensure we follow best practice and are able to provide our residents with choices.



Case Study

Our Creveul Court development in Alexandria town centre delivered 22 new homes including 16 flats and 6 wheelchair bungalows. The properties were designed to make life easier for people with dementia and have been well received by the tenants who have moved in. They particularly like the communal garden (pictured), town centre location and the design features which help them retain independence. One resident commented recently that:

“moving to Creveul Court has been better than any medication that any Doctor could prescribe”





Supported Housing

For some people living independently will not be an option and supported accommodation models may be the right housing option. The type of supported accommodation and level of support required can vary significantly for example, households with dementia will require different supported accommodation models to younger people with learning disabilities who are unable or not ready to sustain their property.

Supported accommodation therefore might take the form of sheltered housing for older households where there is staff on-site to help people or it could take the form of a shared house or temporary supported accommodation for those experiencing homelessness to help them access support. Ensuring we have the right mix and types of supported accommodation in the right locations will require ongoing investment and partnership working between HSCP, Housing, and Housing Options.

Individuals with learning disabilities have some of the poorest health outcomes of any group

in Scotland. Life expectancy is increasing for people with learning disabilities, but it remains shorter by 20 years when compared to the general population (Scottish Government, 2015). In 2019, there were 458 people with a learning disability living in West Dunbartonshire known to the HSCP’s Learning Disability Services.

In line with The Keys to Life, Scotland’s learning disability strategy, both the HSCP and Housing strive to tackle the significant health inequalities faced by people with learning disabilities and to improve the quality of their lives. The principles of choice, control, and independence for people with learning disabilities are central to the strategy.

Working in partnership with registered social landlords and support providers, 206 people with a learning disability were living in their own tenancies with support in West Dunbartonshire in 2019.

Significant changes to the number of people with a learning disability living within West Dunbartonshire going forward are not anticipated. Yet, as life expectancy for people

with a learning disability is improving this may mean that we have an increasingly older population who have a learning disability and thus have more complex needs. West Dunbartonshire Housing has developed a good working relationship with HSCP Learning Disability Services resulting in good examples of collaborative working, not least in the development of the new six-bedroom Supported Living home at the heart of the St Andrews project.

People with autism

The Scottish Government and West Dunbartonshire Council recognise that the autism spectrum is wide and autistic people are diverse. As a result, there can be no one size fits all solution for their housing needs; whilst some people who have autism live independently, others may require some level of support and the needs of those with autism, like anyone else, will likely change across their lifespan. In this section of our Local Housing Strategy, we will set out how we plan to support people with autism going forward.

The latest Scottish Government Autism Strategy has established a National Scottish Autism Prevalence Rate of 1.035% (103.5 per 10,000). This means there are approximately 44,133 autistic people in Scotland and this would proportionally equate to just below 1,000 people in West Dunbartonshire. Therefore it is relatively common and people with autism are represented within the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

The Scottish Government Autism Strategy identifies four main strategic outcomes and housing plays an important role across many of these. However, it is the healthy life and independence outcomes where housing has the opportunity to play the most visible role, but good housing can assist with all four strategic outcomes.

Whilst autism is not a learning difficulty nor a mental health problem, people with autism are more likely to experience social isolation, mental

health issues, and some adults with a learning disability in West Dunbartonshire also have an autistic spectrum disorder.

Therefore some people with autism will require, as part of a wider package of support, specialist housing. We are encouraged to see the Scottish Government commit to ensuring flexibility in the housing grant subsidy arrangements within the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) so that social landlords are supported to build specialist housing in accordance with local needs.

Meanwhile, others may require other types of support for example to sustain tenancies, engage with their community, and access other services. Housing will continue to work with our partners in HSCP to ensure people get the support they require and we will continue to review our policies and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive as possible.

People with mental health needs

The joint strategy, by the NHS, COSLA, and the Scottish Government, Good Mental Health For All set out the absolute importance of good mental health across the lifespan. The strategy identifies that poor mental health can be linked to wider health inequalities with links between mental health and socioeconomic inequality, poor physical health, stigma and discrimination.

Particularly relevant for this strategy is the positive role that good housing and housing support services can have on mental health and wellbeing. The strategy identifies a range of things in the physical environment that have an impact on mental health and wellbeing, including:

- access to local green space
- access to active travel
- opportunities for play
- good-quality, affordable, safe housing

Thus, as set out in previous chapters our approach to delivering new, and supporting

investment in existing homes and increased focus on our local places should help mental health and wellbeing.

However, the strategy notes that physical factors are only one element of mental health and it is important to take a person-centred approach in giving support and this may include supporting people to access employment and services. This is an integral part of our Housing Options approach where we work to identify and support people with their housing and tenancy sustainment.

Respondents to our survey highlighted the need for more awareness of mental health and wellbeing in our communications with tenants and thus as identified in the HIA section of this report we will seek to engage our housing staff in mental health awareness and wellbeing training and encourage our strategic partners to do the same.

People with complex needs

Whilst some people may never require specialist housing or support some people may need some or all of these elements, either throughout their life or over a short period to help them during a particular period of their life.

Complex needs are by description complex and thus taking a person-centred approach is important and day to day support will be provided by HSCP or Housing staff including Housing Options, Housing First, and housing officers, and the physical housing itself forms the backbone to this. The Scottish Government set out in Housing to 2040 that people should be able to live in homes that allow them to access support, therefore we will work in partnership to ensure that both housing and support needs are met.

Offender and Prison Leavers

We have six pathways that support those leaving prison, these require close working

with resettlement and support officers who will obtain information about any existing tenancies or properties including if any arrears have been accrued, and if no accommodation is available then organise for accommodation to be made available, potentially short term temporary solutions until permanent accommodation can be found.

As part of this process, the team may identify that the person will require additional support and as such our pathways work closely with Housing First officers and other support mechanisms to ensure that support is available from the day of release.

Armed Forces communities

Faslane, the HM Naval Base, is located in Gareloch near Helensburgh and the Ministry of Defence is proposing to expand their operations thereby relocating other submarines to the area. This will result in more Armed Forces members locating to the base and may result in increasing numbers of families moving with them.

We know that West Dunbartonshire is an attractive place to call home and should families linked to the naval base choose to live here then we will look to accommodate them across the range of housing tenures to suit their needs.

Leaving Care Housing Protocol

West Dunbartonshire’s Leaving Care Housing Protocol ensures that an integrated and coordinated service exists so that no Young Care Leaver will become homeless on leaving care or lack support to achieve independence and stability within the community.

The protocol is based on the principle that care leavers should have access to secure accommodation and is complemented by our Housing Allocations Policy, which recognises Young Care Leavers as a group given reasonable preference to housing.



The protocol has been used as an example of good practice and has been shortlisted for awards with COSLA, APSE, and CIH Scotland in their service and innovation categories.

In June 2019, as a further commitment to strengthening existing services as corporate parents, the Housing Improvement Board approved a pilot Young Care Leavers Rental Exemption Scheme. This scheme supports those care leavers who wish to attend full-time education by covering the rental payments of those eligible.

This enables these students to fully focus on their studies and not have financial worries during this time. It also encourages more Young Care Leavers to aim to further their education by undertaking further or higher studies at college or university.

The pilot Young Care Leavers Rental Exemption Scheme has been monitored since it was introduced in August 2019 and as it has been operating well, and is a key benefit for those Young Care Leavers who are eligible, it was agreed in August 2020 that the pilot Rental

Exemption Scheme is made part of our permanent mainstream service provision and incorporated within the main protocol.

We have reviewed our Leaving Care Housing Protocol to take into account recent guidance from the Scottish Government, CELCIS, and “A Way Home Scotland” and found that no additions to the protocol are required as it is fully compliant with the recommendations made and remains reflective of best practice.

Hospital Discharge Protocol

It is often the case that people are unable to be discharged from hospital as they do not have suitable accommodation to go to, or are discharged from hospital to return to accommodation that is no longer suitable.

WDC’s Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan committed to working in partnership with the WDHSCP to review and build on current arrangements relating to those being discharged from hospital, to ensure that the most suitable accommodation and support pathway is delivered quickly.

The Community Hospital Discharge Team (CHDT) is part of WDHSCP and can offer support or care for those leaving the hospital. This support can include assisting people to continue to live at home, to move to supported housing or a care home, and also offer advice about benefits.

For most patients, following completion of health and social care assessments, the necessary care, support, and accommodation arrangements are put in place in the community without any delay and the patient is appropriately discharged from the hospital.

A delayed discharge occurs when a patient, clinically ready for discharge, cannot leave the hospital because the other necessary care, support, or accommodation for them is not readily accessible and/or funding is not available, for example, to purchase a care home place. Ensuring someone coming out of hospital has an appropriate property to return to is part of this package.

Accommodation and support pathways:

- 1. **Return home in the short term with appropriate equipment to assist with independent living but pursuing more appropriate settled/permanent accommodation**
- 2. **Temporary accommodation to facilitate hospital discharge whilst the home is made suitable to accommodate with appropriate aids and adaptations;**
- 3. **Temporary accommodation to facilitate hospital discharge with appropriate settled/permanent accommodation then being identified.**

As part of our sheltered housing review we will make sure there is an adequate number and the right type of home available to support this protocol.

Groups with particular needs

Gypsy/Traveller communities

There is one long-established site in West Dunbartonshire for Gypsy/Travellers. This provides 20 pitches for a largely settled community and is located at Dennystoun Forge in West Dunbartonshire.

There has been ongoing engagement with residents of the Dennystoun Forge site and this has resulted in improvements to the site we have committed to continual review and consultation to ensure it continues to meet their needs. This forms part of West Dunbartonshire Council's Equality Plan 2021-25 which set out to better meet the needs of both our permanent and temporary Gypsy Travelling communities in West Dunbartonshire.

Recent consultation, as part of the LHS, highlighted that more pitches or different housing options such as cabins may be required at Dennystoun Forge to respond to the changing profile of residents who live there. We will commit to exploring this in more detail with the community.

Further, we do have more transient gypsy populations who may locate in the area for short periods. These groups have different needs to our residents who live in the permanent site.

Travelling Show people

Whilst often considered together gypsy travellers and travelling show people are different and have different requirements and needs. On average there are between three and six license applications per year for circuses/funfairs run by show people visiting West Dunbartonshire.

The normal practice is for people to set up at sites they are using for the shows, and this has not created issues for show people or residents. The LHS arrangements will have no net effect on Travelling Show people visiting West Dunbartonshire.

Ethnic minorities

West Dunbartonshire Council is a participant in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme; strong partnership working on this scheme has contributed to fostering good relations and equality of opportunity, and this experience will inform not just future relocations, but wider work with all communities in West Dunbartonshire. In addition we have recently signed up to contribute to the Afghan Resettlement schemes which will seek us house refugees fleeing the situation in Afghanistan.

LGBTQI

We are aware that the LGBTQI community can face harassment and discrimination in the community and this may translate into discrimination in other areas of their lives, including housing.

Whilst, a specific product is not likely to be required for this group, awareness of the barriers and challenges this group can face are important elements of our housing policy. As such as we are developing an LGBTQI pathway as part of our Housing Options approach through which we hope to strengthen our policies to ensure they are supportive of the LGBTQI community.

Key workers

Key workers such as teachers, police officers, and care staff are vital to our communities and economy. They provide crucial services and they must be able to access housing which supports them to do so, for example in locations that make it easy for them to get to work and do their job. This requires housing of all types and tenures to suit different household profiles and thus we will endeavour to deliver across the housing strategy.



Conclusions

Our research has shown that we have a growing number of older households in the council area and as such we need to plan for their housing needs. This was also a clear finding from our HIA and survey respondents who want us to prioritise support for older people. Our new allocations policy will alleviate some concerns and hopefully facilitate downsizing but we need to ensure the right properties are available. This will include the type of home, its tenure and location and level of support available or it's potential to be provided.

Ultimately, no single housing type or options will be the right option for every older household but we will commit to reviewing housing options for this demographic group. This will include an older person's accommodation review. This will include a review of sheltered, amenity and retirement housing alongside making sure we have enough temporary properties to allow for hospital discharge or respite care to be provided. This will be supported by the provision of new homes and promoting of dementia designed homes as set on in action 2.4.

Action 5.1:
Over the lifetime of this strategy we will carry out a review of older people's housing options including a review of sheltered, amenity and retirement housing. We will work with our strategic partners and HSCP to do this.

Technology offers significant potential to help people of all ages and abilities to manage their home better and feel less isolated meanwhile it can help those who provide or receive care to do so more easily through tech-enabled care. Looking forward we will look to ensure we facilitate and bring best practice to our tenants and residents.

Action 5.2:
In partnership with HSCP, and other partners, we will look to facilitate tech enabled care solutions in our homes. We will jointly carry out research and look at how we can take these lessons across our housing to ensure everyone benefits.

Survey respondents felt strongly that those who use wheelchairs all or some of the time should have access to homes that suit their needs. Our statistics show us that the number of people who use wheelchairs some or all of the time is forecast to increase and thus we need to ensure that we the right mix of homes available to accommodate this need.

New affordable developments must provide at least 10% of homes as wheelchair suitable and all homes of all tenures should be future proofed as per Housing for Varying Needs but we understand that this standard is under review which is welcomed. As for existing homes we will continue to review our adaptation policies to ensure these are helping the maximum number of people access the right types of homes. We are anticipating new guidance from the Scottish Government and as such we will continue to review our policies against guidance.

Action 5.3:
We will continue to review our adaptations approach in alignment with the anticipated updated policy guidance from the Scottish Government.

Our survey respondents commented that sometimes it feels like the emphasis was on physical impairments or challenges and not on often less obvious conditions or impairments such as mental illnesses and autism. Thus we have identified that training and development for our housing staff, and others who may wish to be involved, would be beneficial to help raise awareness and understanding of the particular challenges some people encounter and how we can best mitigate.

Action 5.4:
As part of our ongoing training programme investigate and provide training on how to best support people with particular support needs including mental illness, autism and any other need, identified during the lifetime of this strategy to ensure understanding and best practice is taken forward.

For some people supported accommodation will be the best model and we will continue to provide this option across the council and will commit to reviewing our approach and policies. Supported accommodation takes various form for example sheltered accommodation for older households will be reviewed as part of our older people’s housing review and supported accommodation for homeless people will be part of our rapid rehousing plan but we also develop and own supported accommodation options for people with learning disabilities which allows them to live independently.

Action 5.5:
We will continue to work with colleagues in HSCP to ascertain demand for specialist accommodation for people with learning disabilities for example, and developing new suitable properties where appropriate

Other groups required particular housing and one such group are our Gypsy Traveller community who live at our settled site at Dennystoun Forge. We are aware from our scoping works for this report that new and different accommodation options may be required for this group and we will explore this need along with committing to continue to improve, monitor and engage with residents to ensure the site is the best it can be.

Action 5.6:
We will explore to potential need for more and different accommodation options at Dennystoun Forge whilst continuing to improve the site and work with residents to ensure it reflects their ambitions and needs long term.



Glossary of Terms/Abbreviations

AHSP: Affordable Housing Supply Programme

The principal Scottish Government grant funding for Council and housing association new build affordable housing.

ARC

Annual Return on the Charter:
The annual performance report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter, the Scottish Government’s performance management tool for local authority and RSL housing.

BTS

Below Tolerable Standard:
Term used to define houses failing to meet a minimum repairs standard as defined by section 86 of the 1987 Act and amended by section 102 of the 2001 Act and section 11 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006.

CHMA

Centre for Housing Market Analysis is a Scottish Government department which produces the data and information behind the HNDA.

Clydeplan

The name for the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Strategic Development Plan Authority, with participation from the eight local authorities in the area. Previously the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Strategic Development Plan Authority.

EESSH

Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing:
A measure introduced by the Scottish Government to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty. We are now working towards EESSH2 and updated and more onerous standard.

Equity

Net wealth invested in residential property ie the value of a property minus the owner’s outstanding mortgage balance.

Fuel Poverty

A household is defined to be in fuel poverty if more than 10% of its income is spent on fuel use.

HCS

House Condition Survey:
A representative survey of the Council’s houses often a 15% sample, which is used to inform financial planning.

HIIA

Health Inequalities Impact Assessment is a tool which we used to carry out our equalities monitoring which puts health at the core and encourages us to think about both the mental and physical health impacts of the strategy. It is similar but different to an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA).

HNDA

Housing Need and Demand Assessment:
An exercise which requires to be carried out by a local authority or group of authorities to assess estimates of housing need from existing households together with projected housing demand from households that will form in the future. In West Dunbartonshire this is done through Clydeplan and is a key piece of evidence for both the LDP and the LHS.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG)

Is an independent group which advises and reports to the Scottish Government on what needs to be done to eradicate homelessness and rough sleeping in Scotland.

Housing Contribution Statement

The WDHSCP statement of intent paper which acts as the bridge between the Strategic Plan and the Local Housing Strategy.

Housing Estimates

An estimate of the number of new houses required over the period of the plan as estimated by the HNDA.

Housing First

A model designed to ensure that the housing and support needs of homeless people are

given priority under the umbrella of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Housing for Varying Needs

Housing for Varying Needs (HfVN) is a building standard, last updated in 1999 which provides guidance about how to design a home to suit a variety of needs.

Housing Supply Targets

These take the housing estimates and set out how many homes will be delivered during the timescales of the Local Development Plan.

HLA

Housing Land Audit: A comprehensive annual account of the current housing land supply carried out by Planning. All housing sites with a capacity of four or more are identified, organised by tenure and planning status.

HMO

Houses in Multiple Ownership: A legal term to describe a property housing more than two related families and subject to licensing.

HRA

Housing Revenue Account: The self-contained account which funds Council housing from its rental stream.

HMP

Housing Market Partnership: A grouping of Local Authorities who come together to assess the need for, and plan the delivery, of housing across a joint housing market area.

HNDA

Housing Needs and Demand Assessment:
The analysis of projected housing requirements for an area.

HSCP

Health and Social Care Partnership:
The health and social care integration body.

LDP

The Local Development Plan:
The statutory land use planning framework for West Dunbartonshire. This plan covers

the whole of West Dunbartonshire with the exception of the area within the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. Formerly known as the WD Local Plan.

LHA

Local Housing Allowance: the mechanism for calculating and paying housing benefit. The allowance figures are set by the UK government.

LHEES

Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) aim to establish area-based plans and priorities for improving the energy efficiency of buildings and tackling fuel poverty.

LL&TTNP

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

MMR

Mid - Market Rent:
Rents set somewhere between social housing rent and those in the private rented sector. This is usually calculated at around 80% of the Local Housing Allowance.

NRS

National Records for Scotland:
The Scottish Government compiles and publishes information and data on council areas across Scotland and makes this information available publically. This includes information about population size, number of households and household projections.

Passivhaus

A particular form of new house standard which builds energy efficient homes. It falls within the more general category of Zero Carbon homes which have very low future energy requirements and low fuel bills.

PSHG

Private Sector Housing Grant: A grant available from the local authority to help fund the upkeep of private properties. The funding is made from an annual allocation received from the Scottish Government.

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

A Scottish Government initiative to ensure homeless people are found settled housing as quickly as possible.

RoS

Registers of Scotland: part of the Scottish Government chiefly responsible for holding records on property and land ownership.

RSL

Registered Social Landlord:
A non- profit making social housing provider registered with Communities Scotland, generally a Housing Association.

SAP

Standard Assessment Procedure:
A government energy rating for homes.

Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Charter introduced in 2012 setting out standards for social housing landlords in Scotland. Monitoring of performance is carried out by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Scottish Government More Homes Division

The arm of the Scottish Government responsible for funding for affordable housing. Previously known as the Scottish Government’s Housing Supply and Innovation Division.

SEA

Strategic Environmental Assessment:
An impact assessment required under the Environmental (Scotland) Act 2005.

Section 5s

Section 5 referrals are the formal means by which local authorities can ensure that homeless people are housed by registered social landlords (RSLs).

Sheltered (or Supported) Housing

Housing which gives people the independence of having their own flat within an associated warden service and call duty system, controlled entry and communal facilities.

SHS

Scottish Household Survey is a survey completed annually by the Scottish Government which surveys households on their household for example size, income and perceptions of neighbourhood.

SHQS

Scottish Housing Quality Standard:
A housing standard required to be met by all social housing landlords by 2015.

Supported Living

Where people occupy their own single or shared tenancy and are supported to sustain their tenancy and are enabled to make decisions and choices about their personal and social life. This support can be of just a few hours or up to 24 hours duration.

Telecare

The range of equipment and services available to assist a person to remain safely in their own home. It includes things like movement and fall detectors, panic buttons, and automatic medication management.

Tenure

Housing tenure describes the legal status under which people have the right to occupy their accommodation. The most common forms of tenure are:

- Home-ownership or owner occupation: this includes homes owned outright and mortgaged
- Renting: this includes social rented and private rented housing.

Very Sheltered Housing

Housing which has all the features of Sheltered Housing but will also usually have additional warden services and the provision of (at least one) meals.



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This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format on request.

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formacie audio.

British Sign Language

BSL users can contact us via contactSCOTLAND-BSL, the online British Sign Language interpreting service. Find out more on the contactSCOTLAND website.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability****Housing and Communities Committee: 2 February 2022**

Subject: “Home at the Heart 2019-24” West Dunbartonshire’s Rapid Re-housing Transition Plan update and new approaches to homelessness progress report

1. Purpose**1.1** The purpose of this report is to

- Provide members with an update in terms of the progress and challenges in delivering Year 3 of “Home at the Heart”, our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP)
- Outline the key findings from the review of our residential supported accommodation
- Provide an update on Scottish Government funds to assist in the delivery of the RRTP
- Provide an update relating to our local response to the recommendations made by the national Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) and wider information on new approaches to homelessness.

2. Recommendations**2.1** It is recommended that the Housing and Communities Committee:

- (i) Note the progress and challenges in delivering Year 3 of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan;
- (ii) Note the key findings from the review of residential supported accommodation highlighted within section 4.17- 4.22 of this report;
- (iii) Note that Scottish Government funding of £238k has been awarded for 2022/23 for the specific delivery of the West Dunbartonshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan;
- (iv) Approve that the Council’s housing allocation letting target for homeless households is amended to 69% for 2022/23 as set out in paragraph 4.20 and 4.21 of this report and note the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability will keep this target under close review based on current modelling projections;
- (v) Note the continued uncertainty around future funding and specifically the risk to our Housing First approach;

- (vi) Note that a full annual update and progress report will be provided to the Housing and Communities Committee in Autumn 2022, including a fully updated Year 4 plan based on the identified 2022/23 funding.

3. Background

- 3.1** Our current approach to tackling homelessness is outlined in our RRPT “Home at the Heart” and reinforced within the new Local Housing Strategy approved by the Housing and Communities Committee in November 2021. This approach builds on the good progress made within West Dunbartonshire by previous strategies, most recently our “More than a Roof” approach which covered the period 2017/20, whilst also acknowledging the challenges set by the renewed Scottish Government national commitments to tackle homelessness, to end rough sleeping and to transform temporary accommodation.
- 3.2** “Home at the Heart” was developed in response to a key recommendation from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) that was adopted by the Scottish Government, for Local Authorities to develop and submit a RRTP for the period 2019-2024.
- 3.3** It was developed in partnership with key stakeholders, including HSCP and the wider Housing Solutions Partnership, which includes local Registered Social Landlords. It was submitted to the Scottish Government on 31 December 2018 and retrospectively approved by the Housing and Communities Committee on 6 February 2019.
- 3.4** The feedback received from the Scottish Government in relation to our RRTP has been positive and has highlighted a number of areas of good practice including:
- The comprehensive temporary accommodation modelling undertaken as part of our wider “More than a Roof” approach;
 - The strategic approach to tackling homelessness;
 - The introduction of the supported tenancy model;
 - Prioritising Housing First as a housing solution;
 - Our award winning Leaving Care Housing Protocol; and
 - The fact that WDC has never breached the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.
- 3.5** Regular reports have been provided to the Housing and Communities Committee, initially detailing and seeking approval for our RRTP and subsequently providing updates in terms of progress being made and approving the use of Scottish Government funding in order to deliver our key objectives.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** The aims of “Home at the Heart” in terms of tackling homelessness are influenced by the Scottish Social Housing Charter and consistent with the

Scottish Government's "Ending Homelessness Together" approach and are structured around the following four strategic objectives:

- Deliver a whole systems approach to the prevention of homelessness;
- Enable service users with low or no support needs to access settled housing quickly;
- Develop interim housing options which enable independent living and tenancy sustainment; and
- Implement a Housing First model which enables the most excluded service users to secure sustainable housing.

- 4.2** Work is currently being undertaken to fully review Year 3 activities and refresh our plan for Year 4 and a full progress report will be provided to the Housing and Communities Committee in September 2022. However, progress on some key aspects of the plan and some challenges being faced are outlined below.

Objective 1: Deliver a whole systems approach to the prevention of homelessness.

- 4.3** The Prevention Officer has continued to engage with households at risk of homelessness. This has included managing the pilot prevention fund which has made payments direct to households totalling £12,500 and has helped ensure that 35 existing tenancies were sustained.
- 4.4** We plan to make this post permanent within our wider service delivery and are exploring options to identify longer term funding for the pilot prevention fund.
- 4.5** The overall number of approaches to our Housing Options service has increased significantly during 2021/22 with 291 approaches being made by the end of November 2021 and homelessness has been prevented in 54% of all cases closed.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 (YTD Nov 2021)
Prevent1 approaches	178	240	332	291
Prevent1 closures	177	221	249	248
% homelessness prevented	64%	57%	51%	54%
% closed with presentation	24%	26%	27%	32%

- 4.6** Given that the temporary eviction ban has now been lifted and we await the full economic impact of the pandemic the expectation is that the number of households approaching the service for assistance will continue to rise.

Objective 2: Enable service users with low or no support needs to access settled housing quickly.

- 4.8** One of the key objectives of our RRTP is to ensure that homeless households are able to access settled accommodation as quickly as possible. Our key

target is reducing the length of time homeless households with no/low support needs spend in temporary accommodation from 23 weeks at the start of Year 1, to 13 weeks by the end of Year 5.

- 4.9** We have developed a RRTP model which takes into account the level of new homeless decisions, the backlog of homeless households, projected future demand, the number of lets made to homeless households and projected letting activity. The RRTP model uses this data to determine the number of lets that will be required for homeless households on an annual basis and determines a projected lettings % target.
- 4.10** The modelling determined that around 55% of all social lets during 2021/22 would need to be made to homeless households in order to meet our target of reducing the time spent in temporary accommodation to 17 weeks (119 days). This objective was supported by the Housing Improvement Board in terms of lets made by WDC and a similar commitment was sought from our RSL partners via their annual RRTP Contribution Statements.
- 4.11** Not all of our RSL partners have signed up to the lettings target and in addition we have seen a higher levels of homeless presentations than projected and letting activity has not fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels.
- 4.12** As a result, whilst we continue to deliver a quick and efficient assessment process, at the end of November 2021 we had 112 homeless households on this pathway that had been opened for longer than our 17 week target.

Live cases with no/low support needs (target 17 weeks/119 days)	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Under 90 days	159	164	148	181	175	194	157	164
90-119 days	33	38	22	28	41	37	50	34
Over 119 days	90	91	84	73	65	82	93	112
Total open	282	293	254	282	281	313	300	310

Objective 3: Develop interim housing options which enable independent living and tenancy sustainment.

- 4.13** We continue to provide a range of interim housing options for those homeless households with more complex support needs. This includes supported tenancies in the community, as well as residential supported accommodation where this need is identified.
- 4.14** Residential supported accommodation offers temporary accommodation and on-site support to alleviate homelessness and enable homeless households to make a planned transition to settled accommodation.
- 4.15** A key action for Year 3 was to commission a full review of our provision of residential supported accommodation within the context of the updated Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan, the updated Unsuitable Accommodation Order and a range of new policy and legislative standards on temporary accommodation arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and national policy agenda.

- 4.16** In July 2021, Arneil Johnston was commissioned to carry out this review. A six-stage project methodology was delivered to complete the review including a performance diagnostic, lived experience primary research, stakeholder engagement, service redesign, temporary accommodation modelling and financial impact assessment.
- 4.17** Some of the key findings of the review include:
- Whilst Residential Supported Accommodation should continue to be delivered as an option for those with moderate-complex needs, there is likely to be less required in future years;
 - All supported accommodation projects should be founded on a trauma-based care model;
 - Current supported accommodation projects should be reshaped to provide opportunities for gender specific provision and should be smaller units;
 - The length of stay in trauma informed supported accommodation should be based around a structured support planning journey enabling independence;
 - There is a gap in current supported provision for a small but significant population of service users;
 - For those who are unwilling/unable to engage with support but who need a safe place to stay for intermittent periods of time (rapid access accommodation); and
 - For those who may need permanent supported accommodation not homeless accommodation (will require partnership working and potentially joint commissioning with the HSCP);
 - Current provision is contributing to bottlenecks in terms of households not being able to move to settled accommodation and to a backlog of homeless households in temporary accommodation.
- 4.19** Whilst this will be a crucial element in helping to deliver our wider objectives, the proportion of lets to homeless households, equally crucial to reduce the overall time in temporary accommodation to prevent a growing backlog and the need for additional provision.
- 4.20** Currently modelling suggests that over the next five years, on average across West Dunbartonshire, 69% of all available social tenancies inclusive of conversions and housing first will require to be allocated to homeless households to ensure targeted reductions in temporary accommodation and faster access to settled accommodation is achieved.
- 4.21** To understand the implications of not delivering on this target, a scenario was tested in the RRTP model where the number of lets to homeless households remained at current levels. This showed that this would require an additional 374 dispersed units to provide accommodation for homeless households, more than doubling current provision and the backlog of households waiting to be housed.
- 4.22** To deliver the optimum service model, it is anticipated that a three year plan will be required. This will include the decommissioning of some existing services, the commissioning of new provision in order to better meet identified need and a full financial impact assessment. In order to develop and lead on the development and implementation of this plan we are planning to recruit an

additional resource to lead on the delivery of new residential supported accommodation.

Objective 4: Implement a Housing First model which enables the most excluded service users to achieve housing sustainment.

- 4.24** A key objective in Year 3 of our RRTP was the upscaling of our Housing First approach for those households with the most complex needs. Our plan was to use our RRTP funding to increase the staff resource within the dedicated Housing First Support Team by three fixed term posts (18 months) from April 2021 and create a further 35 new Housing First tenancies in 2021/22.
- 4.25** By the end of November 2021, we had created 19 new Housing First tenancies, a further 6 clients have been offered a property and 8 clients were awaiting an offer of settled accommodation being made.
- 4.26** Delays to the start date of one of the additional fixed term Housing First posts has impacted on further progress and has led to a waiting list of assessments to be carried out.
- 4.27** Whilst our Housing First approach continues to have a high tenancy sustainment rate. All these tenancies have been sustained apart sadly from the death of three tenants. However, long term future funding for the initiative is still to be clarified.

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan funding update

- 4.28** All local authorities were asked to provide the Scottish Government with a written report outlining how they had spent their allocation of Year 2 funding and progress to date.
- 4.29** West Dunbartonshire Council submitted this report in June 2021, which included our refreshed RRTP for 2021/22 based on the funding available. These plans were approved by the Housing and Communities Committee in September 2021.
- 4.30** In September 2021, the Scottish Government confirmed in its Programme for Government that £8 million would be provided to local authorities to support rapid rehousing plans and scale up the Housing First approach nationally for each of the next two years (2022/23 and 2023/24).
- 4.31** The formula currently used to allocate local authorities share of this funding is based on the number of homeless assessments made in a local authority area over a three year period. There has been some criticism of this approach as it does not take into account homelessness prevention work within the assessment. It can therefore act as a disincentive to make the wider system changes advocated within Ending Homelessness.
- 4.32** The Scottish Government and COSLA had hoped to explore the possibility of joining up the funding stream for preventing and responding to homelessness with the rapid rehousing funding stream and to look at alternative distribution formulas. However, this work has been delayed due to conflicting Covid-19 responsibilities.

- 4.33** The same formula has therefore been used for the funding allocation for 2022/23. This formula has resulted in an allocation for West Dunbartonshire Council of £238,000 to deliver Year 4 of our RRTP which was announced on 20 December. In addition the Scottish Government also on the same date confirmed the funding allocation of £541k to West Dunbartonshire Council for the provision of homelessness prevention and response services.
- 4.34** Whilst the additional RRTP funding is welcome, a shortfall for Year 4 is still being projected. Work is currently being undertaken to fully review Year 3 activities and refresh our plan for Year 4 to take account of available funding.

New approaches to homelessness and impacts of Covid-19

HARSAG2

- 4.35** HARSAG2 developed and published a detailed set of 105 recommendations in response to the following four questions:
1. What needs to be in place right now for the ongoing emergency?
 2. What do we need to do so that people don't get back to sleeping on the streets or staying in homeless shelters?
 3. How can we accelerate the pace of work to prevent homelessness?
 4. What needs to change in the national Action Plan to end homelessness to recognise the changing circumstances caused by coronavirus?
- 4.36** The Scottish Government agreed in principle to all the recommendations within the HARSAG report and subsequently published an updated Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan on 8 October 2020 and progress report in October 2021.
- 4.37** The Scottish Government's Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group oversees the implementation of this plan. Whilst some of the key recommendations are directed towards Scottish Government future policy, some recommendations, such as those around benefits and support for people regardless of their immigration status, are urgent requests of the UK Government.
- 4.38** In addition, many of the recommendations will require to be delivered by each individual local authority. Work has been on-going to develop and implement an action plan in response to these recommendations and the current version of our "HARSAG2 recommendations tracker" is available as a background paper to this report.
- 4.39** Progress in terms of the on-going development and implementation of this comprehensive response continues to be reported regularly to the Housing and Communities Committee and to the Housing Solutions Partnership to ensure the full delivery of these recommendations.

Changes to the Local Connection provisions

- 4.40** The policy intention of suspending local connection referrals between Scottish local authorities is to remove barriers to support for people who are homeless or rough sleeping so they can resettlement successfully, and avoid repeat homelessness. If people are living in an area of their choosing, they are more likely to integrate successfully into a local community and access the services and support they require.
- 4.41** The pandemic has delayed this legislation and it is now due to be laid during this session of parliament. The Scottish Government will monitor the impact of these changes and respond to any local authorities that report undue pressure on service provision.

Public Sector duty to prevent homelessness

- 4.42** Another proposal from HARSAG being taken forward by the Scottish Government is to look at developing legislation focussed at introducing a Public Sector duty to prevent homelessness.
- 4.43** The Scotland Prevention Review Group was convened and worked with public bodies, housing providers and other partners to develop proposals for a new duty on public bodies and delivery partners aimed at the prevention of homelessness.
- 4.44** Their report was published in February 2021 with a series of recommendations around actions that could be taken to prevent homelessness and that these should start up to six months before someone faces losing their home.
- 4.45** A joint Scottish Government and COSLA consultation on these proposals opened on 17 December 2021 and officers are currently developing our response. A briefing on this consultation was provided to members as part of January's elected member briefing.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** Any additional post required to strengthen the team will be recruited in line with the Council's existing recruitment policy and will be funded from the Scottish Government funding for the provision of homelessness prevention and response.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** The Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning wrote to West Dunbartonshire on 20 December 2021 advising of the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan funding allocation for 2022/23 of £238k. This funding will be included in the weekly payment of the 2022/23 General Revenue Grant.
- 6.2** In addition the Scottish Government also on the same date confirmed the funding allocation of £541k to West Dunbartonshire Council for the provision

of homelessness prevention and response, this funding will be paid as part of the General Revenue Grant payment, with the first payment in 2022/23 made on 1 April 2022.

- 6.3** Whilst the Scottish Government has now announced they will provide £8 million to fund RRTP's for 2023/24, no confirmation of the allocation of this funding for West Dunbartonshire is expected to be provided until the Autumn of 2022.
- 6.4** We are aware of some national discussions looking at reviewing funding to deliver homelessness and housing option services, however there remains some financial uncertainty in terms of how the Housing First approach can be funded in the longer term.
- 6.5** The delivery of the wider Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan will be within existing budgets noting the increases in such as a result of the Scottish Government funding for 2022/23.
- 6.5** There are no procurement implications in terms of this report,

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** There are financial and regulatory risks associated with not being able to fully deliver our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, including the Housing First element of the approach.
- 7.2** The decision to award funding in Year 4 was based again on a formula which focuses on homelessness assessments (and not the content of the RRTP's), arguably benefits larger local authorities who receive a higher proportion of homeless assessments and could discourage local authorities from implementing initiatives aimed at preventing homelessness.
- 7.3** There is no confirmation of funding for RRTP past Year 5 (2023/24) therefore long term funding is required to be sourced to continue our Housing First service.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** There are no negative equalities impacts due to this update to our RRTP however preventing and responding to homelessness has a significant positive impact on individuals and communities. There are some potential positive impacts for some groups as noted in the EIA carried out when our RRTP was updated in June 2021.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** The first draft of our RRTP was developed in collaboration with key partners, including the Health and Social Care Partnership, local Registered Social Landlords and third sector organisations, via a series of well attended stakeholder events held in November and December 2018.
- 9.2** Consultation and communication have continued since the submission of the first iteration of the RRTP through the Housing Solutions Partnership. Further

engagement has also taken place with other local landlords via the Strategic Housing Providers Forum, engagement has continued with the Health and Social Care Partnership and also a dialogue with the WDTR0 regarding the implementation of the RRTP and Housing First has also taken place.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** Having considered the Council's strategic priorities, this report contributes significantly to all strategic priorities.

Peter Barry
Chief Officer, Housing and Employability

Date: 20 January 2022

Person to Contact: John Kerr – Housing Development and Homelessness Manager, Housing Development and Homelessness Team, Housing and Employability, telephone: 07793717981, email: john.kerr@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices: None

Background Papers: HARSAG2 recommendations tracker, West Dunbartonshire Council Housing Development and Homelessness Team, December 2021

West Dunbartonshire Council's Revised Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan including Action Plan and Equalities Impact Assessment, [Home at the Heart](#)

Housing and Communities Committee Report 1st September 2021 "Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and new approaches to homeless update" [Report](#)

Letter from Shona Robison, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government on Distribution of Funding for Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans for 2022/23; 20 December 2021

Ending Homelessness Together – High Level Action Plan; Scottish Government/COSLA
<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/publication/2018/11/ending-homelessness-together-high-level-action-plan/documents/00543359-pdf/00543359-pdf/govscot%3Adocument>

Wards Affected: All

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Officer, Housing and Employability

Housing and Communities Committee - 2 February 2022

Subject: Employability Service Provision**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress for the delivery of employability programmes and support and is set within the context of 'No One Left Behind' a new approach to employability services that requires partner input to services.
- 1.2 The report outlines the developing No-One Left Behind employability policy between Scottish and Local Government to ensure that employability is aligned and integrated with service delivery at a local level. The report highlights the increasing role of Local Employability Partnerships in local decision making and the approach to acquiring local services.

2. Recommendations

Committee is asked to

- 2.1 Approve the proposed approach for West Dunbartonshire to establish an Employability Grant Programme delivered through the West Dunbartonshire Local Employability Partnership as the primary model for commissioning employability services from external service providers in 2021-24.
- 2.2 Note that regular progress will be reported through the Community Planning Partnership Delivery Improvement Group.

3. Background

- 3.1 Employability is a key priority of both local and national government and is recognised as a major contributor to both local economic development and work to tackle poverty and deprivation.
- 3.2 The Partnership Working Framework signed by both Scottish Government and the 32 local authorities identified a new collective approach to employability. This approach centres on the agreement between the Scottish Government and COSLA to work in partnership and shape national employability provision, while providing local authorities with the responsibility for identifying local priorities and implementing relevant responses.
- 3.3 The approach is set within a 'Scottish Approach to Service design' and a number of existing employability funds, currently managed by SDS and SCVO, will be 'rolled up' into a single fund to be managed by the local authority.
- 3.4 It is assumed the future use of these funds will be determined by input from the third sector and other employability providers and service users. It is also

expected that third and private sector service providers (partners) will obtain access to funding for the delivery of employability services.

3.5 The first phase of the NOLB approach was to integrate investment in current national programmes into a new local employability delivery model managed by West Dunbartonshire Council (Working4U). This approach is very well established in West Dunbartonshire and consists of four groups:-

- The Strategic Employability Group – this includes representatives from key agencies responsible for the co-ordination and delivery of employability service. The group is led by Working 4U and sets strategic priorities to address local challenges and, where appropriate, invests funding resources to address these challenges.
- The Creative Design Group - consisting of employability service providers operating in West Dunbartonshire identifying service delivery challenges and solutions to inform local needs and opportunities.
- A community of Practice – consisting of frontline staff providing insight into the implementation of services and challenges faced by people accessing the services.
- Service User input – obtaining information about lived experience and impact of employability services on service users.

3.6 The focus for the West Dunbartonshire LEP is consistent with the Scottish Government's No-One Left Behind (NOLB) policy and the plans for greater alignment and integration of employability services. It is also consistent with West Dunbartonshire strategic priorities. This means we will focus efforts on people who face challenges in securing access to employment and training opportunities (those most distant from the labour market) with emphasis placed on those with experience in care and families affected by poverty and disadvantage.

3.7 Phase 2 of NOLB brings additional funds (Employability Fund and Community Jobs Scotland Programmes) at the end March 2022. It is expected that these funds will be managed by Local Authorities. However, use will be determined by Local Employability Partnership priorities.

3.8 Scottish Government have identified that full and final implementation of the new NOLB employability model (Phase 3) will roll out in 2023/24 on completion of the current Fair Start Scotland contracts with those resources also then being directed to the LEP for local services.

3.9 In summary, the employability agenda is changing significantly over the next two years. West Dunbartonshire Council has become the accountable body for the employability grant funding from Scottish Government. However, the expectation is that elements of the grant funding will be used for co-commissioning. This is designed to ensure that the funding is spread throughout the range of local partners while the LEP directs where services are required. Working4U will take the lead, act as chair for the Strategic Employability Group, and facilitate the management of the other groups within the partnership with support from partners

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** A key element of the new approach to employability in Scotland is to ensure that the resources coming to a local authority area are distributed to best effect. It is expected that this will rest on a co-commissioned process led by the Local Employability Partnerships.
- 4.2** Partnership working and consultations with local providers have identified real concerns around the timing of the changes to be made this year (Phase 2). Many providers currently obtain funding through the Employability Fund programme. And while the proposed changes are broadly accepted there is concern that provision may not be in place at the beginning of Phase 2.
- 4.3** To mitigate the risks for local providers a number of Councils have been utilising a grant programme for a number of years. In addition, West Dunbartonshire Council used, to good effect, a grant approach for the distribution of funds from the UK Government Community Regeneration Funds.
- 4.4** It is proposed to establish a similar approach for West Dunbartonshire and create a new Employability Grant Programme. A future national procurement framework for the commissioning of employability services is also being developed by Scotland Excel. It is anticipated that the national procurement framework will be available from next year and can be used in addition to the proposed grant programme.
- 4.5** The Scottish Government funds allocated to WDC are:
- Young Persons Guarantee: £50,000 for 2021-22 activity and an expectation of a similar amount for next year (services for young people only)
 - Parental Employability Support Programme: £150,000 for 2021-23 activity (all age service provision)
 - NOLB: anticipated £250k - £0.5M in 2022-23 (Ministerial announcement is imminent). All age grant programme.
- 4.6** In addition, it is anticipated that planned and future development will adopt a similar requirement for partnership co-commissioning. This will include, for example, Fair Start Scotland (Scottish Government Employability Funds) and Community Regeneration Funds (UK Government employability funds replacing European Social Funds)
- 4.7** From the figures currently available and estimates of what may become available, we estimate that £150,000 is available in the current approved budgets for co-commissioned services with an additional £0.25 - £0.75M expected to be announced in the coming months for 2022-23.
- 4.8** As such we propose that a grant programme with an estimated value of £0.75million can be established in the current year and continue for the subsequent years 2022/23 and 2023/24. This will establish a solid foundation for the development of NO One Left Behind.

- 4.9** Values of grant funding available may vary as they are dependent on the funds that will be made available by the Scottish Government and UK Government for Employability Service Provision.

5. Options Appraisal

- 5.1** We have explored a number of options for the effective distribution of funds for the provision of employability services by external partners, including.
- Establishing an local employability service provider framework;
 - Using a national framework for the provision of employability services.
 - Establish a competitive grant approach.

Local Employability Service Provider Framework

- 5.2** We have a Local Employability Service Provider Framework in place and will draw on this where we require additional specialist services outwith the context of our grant approach.

National Framework

- 5.3** A future national procurement framework for the commissioning of employability services is also being developed by Scotland Excel. It is anticipated that the national procurement framework will be available from next year and can be used in addition to the proposed grant programme.

Employability Grant Approach

- 5.4** The Employability Grant approach can be implemented at the discretion of the local authority and will provide a number of benefits, including:
- Complementing the current methods for procuring/acquiring employability services, adding flexibility in approach as a result.
 - Adding value to the funding and other resources already available.
 - Provide an application and assessment process for the allocation of funds.
 - Supporting the aims and objectives outlined Next Steps for the Integration and Alignment of Employability Support in Scotland.
 - The opportunity to support innovation, pilots, new ideas and approaches through a quicker process than formal procurement of services and timing that works for local providers.
 - Shift from transactional relationships towards stronger partnership with providers to develop and deliver services improve lives and opportunities in West Dunbartonshire.

- 5.5** Taking this into account we propose the development of a grant approach

that will complement existing methods for acquiring/procuring employability services.

6. People Implications

- 6.1** The development of the approach to No One Left Behind represents a significant change in Working4U's role in managing and delivering employability services.
- 6.2** Working4U currently delivers services directly with limited procurement of external services. This change centres on its emerging role as a 'lead agency' with associated requirement for greater levels grant management, monitoring and evaluation of external service provision.
- 6.3** This places importance on developing the organisations capability to manage the grant application process and service delivery compliance. It also places importance on the role of partnership management within the local employability partnership and service delivery.
- 6.4** Working4U staff will give consideration on how to address the implications and growing demand as the lead agency function grows to meet requirements to incorporate additional grant funding.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1** There are no additional funding requirements being placed on West Dunbartonshire Council. The employability grant will utilise funds provided by the Scottish and UK Governments for employability service provision where there is a requirement placed on West Dunbartonshire Council to adopt a partnership approach.
- 7.2** Funding from the Scottish Government that is available for the Council to distribute grants includes funds for:
 - Young Persons Guarantee.
 - Parental Employability Support Programme
 - No One Left Behind.
- 7.3** The amount of funding available from these sources each year in West Dunbartonshire will be determined through discussions with the Scottish Government and COSLA and has yet to be determined.

8. Risk Analysis

- 8.1** The proposed approach has been established to manage a number of risks. These include:
 - Risk of non-compliance with COSLA/Scottish Government agreement on approaches to local employability provision. Scottish Government expects a partnership approach and evidence to demonstrate partner access to resources; the grant approach addresses this risk.

- Risk of non-compliance - Local service providers have limited access or opportunity to shape service provision. Creation of creative design group to influence grant priorities addresses the risk.
- Risk that local providers may not obtain access to resources - procurement process and scale of resources may lead to limited access to funds for local services competing with national organisations. A local grant approach manages the risk and supports local innovation.

9. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

9.1 Equalities legislation requires that new or significantly changing policies or services and financial decisions should be subject to an assessment of their impact on the wellbeing of certain groups of people.

9.2 Employability service provision provides positive impacts by focusing service provision on those that would not access employment and training opportunities without support. An equalities impact assessment has been carried out and emphasise the positive impact on individuals and families facing socio-economic disadvantage. This positive impact has been brought about by:

- Increased number of services designed to maximise income and access to training;
- Increased input to service design for those affected by poverty, disadvantage and unemployment.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 At its meeting on 25 October 2017, the Council agreed its five main strategic priorities for 2017 – 2022. These priorities included the commitment to a strong local economy with improved employment opportunities.

10.2 This development of the local employability partnership will co-ordinate access to employability skills development and employment opportunities. By adopting a grant approach to acquiring employability services we will:

- increase access to support,
- broaden the number of organisations providing support;
- increase the types of support available across the employability pipeline

10.3 As such the proposal has a strong fit with the Council's strategic priorities.

Stephen Brooks
Working4U Manager

Person to Contact: Stephen Brooks, Working4U Manager, 07773950131

Appendices: None

Background Papers: An equalities impact assessment has been carried out.

Wards Affected: The services will be delivered throughout West Dunbartonshire.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Officer – Resources

Housing and Communities Committee: 2 February 2022

Subject: Financial Report 2021/22 as at Period 9 (31 December 2021)

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to provide the Committee with an update on the financial performance to 31 December 2021 (Period 9) of those services under the auspices of the Housing and Communities Committee.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i) note the contents of this report which shows the revenue budget forecast to overspend against budget by £0.676m (20.0%) at the year-end, of which £0.539m is COVID-19 related
- ii) note the net projected annual position in relation to relevant capital projects which is showing no projected variance; and
- iii) note the progress on efficiencies incorporated into budgets for 2021/22.

3. Background

3.1 Revenue Budget

At the meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council on 22 March 2021, Members agreed the revenue estimates for 2021/22.

A total net budget of £3.224m was approved for services under the remit for Housing and Communities services at that time. Adjustments have been made since that date and the revised budget now under the remit of Housing and Communities is £3.382m as per below.

Description	£m
Starting Position	3.224
Staff transfer	0.032
Savings applied	(0.037)
Procurement savings	(0.015)
Recurring Variances	(0.036)
Working4U	(0.063)
Homeless Prevention	0.277
Revised budget	3.382

Capital

- 3.2** At the meeting of Council on 4 March 2021, Members also agreed the updated 10 year General Services Capital Plan for 2021/2022 to 2030/31. The next three years from 2021/22 to 2023/24 have been approved in detail with the remaining 7 years being indicative at this stage. The total project life budget approved for projects that have either commenced or are due to commence in that period total for Housing and Communities services was £1.247m.

4. Main Issues

Revenue Budget

- 4.2** Appendix 1 shows the probable outturn for the services at £4.058m. As the revised annual budget is £3.382m there is a projected adverse variance currently projected of £0.676m, of which £0.539m is COVID-19 related. A more detailed analysis by service is given in Appendix 2. Comments are shown in Appendix 3 when there are projected net annual variances greater than £0.050m and also where the net variance is below £0.050m but there are offsetting variances of over £0.050m within the service. Appendix 4 shows progress on the achievement of saving options adopted as part of the 2021/22 budget.

Budget holders will continue to seek ways to reduce this overspend wherever possible.

Capital Budget

- 4.3** The overall programme summary report is shown in Appendix 5. The analysis shows that for the in-year planned spend there is currently no projected variance.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no people implications.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1** Other than the financial position noted above, there are no financial implications of the budgetary control report.
- 6.2** Agreed management adjustments for 2021/22 are monitored with current indications being that the saving of £0.020m will be achieved (see Appendix 4).

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** The present variances should be viewed in the knowledge that there are a number of variable factors which could arise between now and 31 March and which could affect the year end results for both the revenue and capital

budgets – particularly in light of COVID-19.

- 7.2** Assumptions around service demand and timing of nationally agreed changes through the phasing out of lockdown change regularly and therefore there is a significant risk that the projected year end budgetary position will change from that reported.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** The report is for noting and therefore no Equalities Impact Assessment was completed for this report.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** The views of both Finance and Legal services have been requested on this report and both have advised there are neither any issues nor concerns with the proposal. As the report is for noting no further consultation is envisaged.

10. Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** Proper budgetary control and sound financial practice are cornerstones of good governance and support Council and officers to pursue the five strategic priorities of the Council's Strategic Plan. This report forms part of the financial governance of the Council. This report is for noting and, therefore, does not directly affect any of the strategic priorities.

Laurence Slavin
Chief Officer, Resources

Date: 12 January 2022

Person to Contact: Janice Rainey - Business Unit Finance Partner, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton, G82 1QL, telephone: 01389 737707, e-mail janice.rainey@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendices: Appendix 1 - Summary Budgetary Position (Revenue)
Appendix 2 - Detailed Budgetary Position (Revenue)
Appendix 3 - Variance Analysis (Revenue)
Appendix 4 - Monitoring of Savings Options (Revenue)
Appendix 5 - Budgetary Position (Capital)
Appendix 6 - Variance Analysis Green (Capital)

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL 2021/2022
HOUSING & COMMUNITIES SUMMARY

Appendix 1

MONTH END DATE 31 December 2021

Actual Outturn 2020/21	Service / Subjective Summary	Total Budget 2021/22	YTD Spend 2021/22	Forecast Spend 2021/22	Annual Variance 2021/22		Annual RAG Status	Net Variance Attributable to Covid	Underlying Variance Excluding Covid
£000		£000	£000	£000	£000	%		£000	£000
2,698	Working 4 U	2,699	1,568	2,697	(2)	0%	↑	0	(2)
859	Communities	860	485	859	(1)	0%	↑	0	(1)
632	Homeless Persons	584	960	632	48	8%	↓	39	9
39	Private Sector Housing	39	29	39	0	0%	→	0	0
79	Private Sector Housing Grant	78	229	79	1	1%	↓	0	1
458	Anti Social Behaviour	442	352	458	16	4%	↓	0	16
28	Housing Asset and Investment	80	21	28	(52)	-65%	↑	0	(52)
(734)	Housing Maintenance Trading A/c	(1,400)	(815)	(734)	666	48%	↓	500	166
4,059	Total Net Expenditure	3,382	2,829	4,058	676	19.99%	↓	539	137

YEAR END DATE

31 December 2021

PERIOD

9

Actual Outturn 2020/21	Service Summary	Total Budget 2021/22	YTD Spend 2021/22	Forecast Spend 2021/22	Annual Variance 2021/22	RAG Status
£000	All Services	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
18,317	Employee	18,482	13,224	18,317	(165)	-1%
2,264	Property	2,223	1,567	2,264	42	2%
1,305	Transport and Plant	1,173	975	1,305	132	11%
10,167	Supplies, Services and Admin	10,024	7,896	10,167	144	1%
5,707	Payments to Other Bodies	5,710	2,674	5,707	(3)	0%
0	Other	-	-	-	0	0%
37,760	Gross Expenditure	37,611	26,337	37,760	149	0%
(33,701)	Income	(34,229)	(23,508)	(33,702)	527	2%
4,059	Net Expenditure	3,382	2,829	4,058	676	20%
£000	Working 4 U	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
2,867	Employee	2,865	2,046	2,867	2	0%
2	Property	2	0	2	0	0%
9	Transport and Plant	23	5	9	(14)	-62%
192	Supplies, Services and Admin	191	71	192	1	1%
3,075	Payments to Other Bodies	3,047	935	3,075	28	1%
0	Other	0	0	0	0	0%
6,144	Gross Expenditure	6,127	3,057	6,144	17	0%
(3,446)	Income	(3,428)	(1,489)	(3,447)	(19)	-1%
2,698	Net Expenditure	2,699	1,568	2,697	(2)	0%
£000	Communities	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
627	Employee	625	391	627	2	0%
275	Property	275	130	275	0	0%
4	Transport and Plant	4	1	4	0	0%
6	Supplies, Services and Admin	4	6	6	2	53%
114	Payments to Other Bodies	146	36	114	(31)	-21%
0	Other	0	0	0	0	0%
1,026	Gross Expenditure	1,053	565	1,026	(27)	-3%
(167)	Income	(193)	(80)	(167)	27	14%
859	Net Expenditure	860	485	859	(1)	0%
£000	Homeless Persons	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
2,447	Employee	2,450	1,688	2,447	(2)	0%
1,667	Property	1,624	1,331	1,667	42	3%
33	Transport and Plant	33	25	33	0	0%
64	Supplies, Services and Admin	66	55	64	(2)	-3%
1,136	Payments to Other Bodies	1,136	644	1,136	0	0%
0	Other	0	0	0	0	0%
5,347	Gross Expenditure	5,309	3,743	5,347	38	1%
(4,716)	Income	(4,725)	(2,783)	(4,716)	9	0%
632	Net Expenditure	584	960	632	47	8%
£000	Private Sector Housing	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
0	Employee	-	-	-	-	0%
0	Property	-	-	-	-	0%
0	Transport and Plant	-	-	0	-	0%
0	Supplies, Services and Admin	-	-	-	-	0%
39	Payments to Other Bodies	39	29	39	-	0%
0	Other	-	-	-	-	0%
39	Gross Expenditure	39	29	39	-	0%
0	Income	-	-	-	-	0%
39	Net Expenditure	39	29	39	-	0%

YEAR END DATE

31 December 2021

PERIOD

9

Actual Outturn 2020/21	Service Summary	Total Budget 2021/22	YTD Spend 2021/22	Forecast Spend 2021/22	Annual Variance 2021/22	RAG Status
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£000	Private Sector Housing Grant	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
39	Employee	38	0	39	1	3%
241	Property	241	46	241	0	0%
0	Transport and Plant	0	0	0	0	0%
0	Supplies, Services and Admin	0	(1)	0	0	0%
245	Payments to Other Bodies	245	185	245	0	0%
0	Other	0	0	0	0	0%
525	Gross Expenditure	524	229	525	1	0%
(446)	Income	(446)	0	(446)	0	0%
79	Net Expenditure	78	229	79	1	1%

£000	Anti Social Behaviour	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
295	Employee	280	211	295	16	6%
0	Property	-	-	-	0	0%
5	Transport and Plant	1	4	5	4	532%
7	Supplies, Services and Admin	11	3	7	(4)	-36%
151	Payments to Other Bodies	151	135	151	0	0%
0	Other	-	-	-	0	0%
459	Gross Expenditure	442	352	459	16	4%
(0)	Income	-	1	0	0	24%
458	Net Expenditure	442	352	458	16	4%

£000	Housing Asset and Investment	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
365	Employee	526	270	365	(161)	-31%
0	Property	0	0	0	0	0%
3	Transport and Plant	2	2	3	1	50%
1	Supplies, Services and Admin	1	1	1	0	0%
0	Payments to Other Bodies	0	0	0	0	0%
0	Other	0	0	0	0	0%
369	Gross Expenditure	529	273	369	(160)	-30%
(341)	Income	(449)	(252)	(341)	108	24%
28	Net Expenditure	80	21	28	(52)	-65%

£000	Housing Maintenance Trading A/c	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
11,676	Employee	11,699	8,617	11,676	(23)	0%
81	Property	81	61	81	0	0%
1,251	Transport and Plant	1,110	938	1,251	141	13%
9,897	Supplies, Services and Admin	9,751	7,762	9,897	146	1%
946	Payments to Other Bodies	946	710	946	0	0%
0	Other	0	0	0	0	0%
23,851	Gross Expenditure	23,587	18,088	23,851	264	1%
(24,585)	Income	(24,987)	(18,903)	(24,585)	402	2%
(734)	Net Expenditure	(1,400)	(815)	(734)	666	-48%

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL 2021/2022
ANALYSIS FOR VARIANCES OVER £50,000

Appendix 3

YEAR END DATE

31 December 2021

Budget Details	Variance Analysis				RAG Status
	Total Budget	Forecast Spend	Variance		
	£000	£000	£000	%	

Housing Asset and Investment	80	28	(52)	-65%	↑
Service Description	This service manages capital investment across council and private sector housing stock.				
Main Issues / Reason for Variance	Employee costs are showing a favourable variance due to vacant posts within the service. This is partially offset by a reduction in the level of income being recharged to the Housing Revenue Account.				
Mitigating Action	None Required				
Anticipated Outcome	Underspend forecast at year end				

Housing Maintenance Trading A/c	(1,400)	(734)	666	-48%	↓
Service Description	This service delivers maintenance and investment services to the council's housing stock.				
Main Issues / Reason for Variance	£500K of this variance is attributable to the ongoing impact of COVID which has impacted on resource availability and reduced the amount of work undertaken by the in-house workforce . The remaining 166K adverse variance is due to increased costs of hire costs in transport and additional supplies spend due to increased use of specialist contractors .				
Mitigating Action	Service will maximise income available though reviewing scope for increased internal charges and through the application of Council COVID funding.				
Anticipated Outcome	Surplus significantly below target at year end because of COVID impact.				

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
MONITORING OF EFFICIENCIES AND MANAGEMENT ADJUSTMENTS 2021/22

Appendix 4

Efficiency reference	Efficiency Detail	Strategic Lead Area	Budgeted Amount £	Projection of Total Saved £	Projection of Total Not Saved £	Comment
MA2	Move CCTV monitoring in-house	Housing and Employability	20,000	20,000	-	This has been fully achieved

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME
OVERALL PROGRAMME SUMMARY

APPENDIX 5

MONTH END DATE

31 December 2021

PERIOD

09

Project Status Analysis	Project Life Status Analysis				Current Year Project Status Analysis					
	Number of Projects at RAG Status	% Projects at RAG Status	Spend to Date £000	% Project Spend at RAG Status	Number of Projects at RAG Status	% Projects at RAG Status	Spend to Date £000	% Project Spend at RAG Status		
Red										
Projects are forecast to be overspent and/or experience material delay to completion	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%		
Amber										
Projects are either at risk of being overspent and/or delay in completion (although this is unquantifiable at present) or the project has any issues that require to be reported at this time	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%		
Green										
Projects are on target both in relation to overall budget and the forecast stages in the project life cycle and no issues are anticipated at this time	3	100%	840	100%	3	100%	50	100%		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3	100%	840	100%	3	100%	50	100%		
	Project Life Financials				Current Year Financials					
	Budget £000	Spend to Date £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000	Budget £000	Spend to Date £000	Forecast Spend £000	Forecast Variance £000	Slippage £000	Over/ (Under) £000
Red										
Projects are forecast to be overspent and/or significant delay to completion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Amber										
Projects are either at risk of being overspent and/or delay in completion (although this is unquantifiable at present) or the project has any issues that require to be reported at this time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Green										
Projects are on target both in relation to overall budget and the forecast stages in the project life cycle and no issues are anticipated at this time	1,247	840	1,247	0	89	50	89	0	0	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	1,247	840	1,247	0	89	50	89	0	0	

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME
ANALYSIS OF PROJECTS AT GREEN ALERT STATUS

APPENDIX 6

PERIOD END DATE

31 December 2021

PERIOD

09

Budget Details	Project Life Financials					
	Budget	Spend to Date		Forecast Spend	Variance	
	£000	£000	%	£000	£000	%
Invest in "Your Community Initiative"						
Project Life Financials	912	823	90%	912	0	0%
Current Year Financials	41	41	102%	41	0	2%
Project Description	Capital budget to support the roll out of Your Community, an initiative designed to achieve coordinated service delivery in response to community need. This is complimented by community capacity building, empowering WD citizens to do more for their own communities (leading to less reliance on council). Also included is the implementation of participatory budgeting to support and build capacity in communities.					
Project Manager	Elaine Troup					
Chief Officer	Peter Barry					
Project Lifecycle	Planned End Date	31-Mar-23	Forecast End Date	31-Mar-23		
Main Issues / Reason for Variance						
The project remains on schedule with a number of larger value grants expected to be drawn down over the winter months.						
Mitigating Action						
None required at this time.						
Anticipated Outcome						
Full spend is anticipated on this year's budget.						
Integrated Housing Management System						
Project Life Financials	110	17	15%	110	0	0%
Current Year Financials	23	9	40%	23	0	0%
Project Description	Development of IHMS system.					
Project Manager	Graham Watters					
Chief Officer	Peter Barry					
Project Lifecycle	Planned End Date	31-Mar-30	Forecast End Date	31-Mar-30		
Main Issues / Reason for Variance						
Development of system progressing, with budget spend anticipated to be incurred in 2021/22.						
Mitigating Action						
None required at this time.						
Anticipated Outcome						
Development of IHMS system.						
Dennystoun Forge Site Improvements						
Project Life Financials	225	0	0%	225	0	0%
Current Year Financials	25	0	0%	25	0	0%
Project Description	Dennystoun Forge Site Improvements					
Project Manager	John Kerr					
Chief Officer	Peter Barry					
Project Lifecycle	Planned End Date	31-Mar-30	Forecast End Date	31-Mar-30		
Main Issues / Reason for Variance						
Project was initially stalled due to COVID-19 restrictions, however as these are easing Officers have now carried out a consultative exercise and initiated a site inspection to develop the work programme for 2021/22. No work has started yet but full spend is anticipated.						
Mitigating Action						
Officers carried out some proactive consultative work to establish the tenant priorities this will allow the work programme to be developed timeously.						
Anticipated Outcome						
It is expected the works programme for 2021/22 be delivered within Quarter 4.						

Keeping People Safe in West Dunbartonshire

Our Purpose:- To improve the safety and wellbeing of people, places and communities in Scotland

Violent Crime & Antisocial Behaviour

Figures recorded at the end of Qtr. 3, show a 14.9% increase (+17) in Group 1 crimes of violence. This is also 16.5% above the previous 5 year average. Increased crime levels are largely due to a rise in serious assaults (+13) and crimes relating to threats & extortion (+12). Attempt murder crimes have also increased slightly (+4). Most crimes relating to threats & extortion involved threats to disclose indecent images via social media and demanding money.

Almost 70% of threat & extortion crimes occurred online, mainly on Facebook or Instagram

489 stop searches have been carried out YTD, 39% had a positive result

Overall public reported ASB incidents continue to show a noticeable downward trend, largely due to a decrease in public nuisance incidents relating to Covid-19 matters. Complaints relating to disorder have reduced by 32.7% (-1,741). ASB related crimes have also reduced by 7.8% (-169). While most ASB crime types have seen a decrease, common assaults have increased by 9.7% (+67). Approx. 1 in 4 common assaults were domestic related with 47% of all assaults taking place in a private setting. In 41% of crimes occurring in a public space the offender was known to the victim.

The detection rate for Grp 1 crimes is 70.2%, which is slightly lower than last year's figure (73.7%). To date, all attempt murder crimes have been detected and 73.8% of all serious assaults, albeit this is also lower than last year's figure (85.4%). The detection rate for common assault has reduced slightly to 63.1% while crimes involving threats & extortion is unchanged year on year at 40% likely due to the complexity involved in investigating online crime.

Acquisitive Crime

10.8% decrease
In vehicle crime

33.3% decrease
In housebreakings

At the end of Qtr 3 the total number of acquisitive crimes recorded remains similar to last year (-0.1%) however the current figure is also 14.5% below the previous 5 year average. Housebreaking (inc. Domestic) and vehicle crimes have seen a noticeable reduction overall though this continues to be offset by a 12.8% increase in fraud (+19) which continues to grow in line with national trends. In line with previously noted trends, the increase in fraud is due to a significant rise in social engineering fraud and credit / debit card frauds. Figures for both shoplifting and common theft have increased compared to lockdown periods last year, but remain well below the previous 5 year average. The detection rate for acquisitive crime is currently at 25.7%, slightly lower than last year's figure (33.8%).



Compared to the same period last year, the total number of bogus crimes has increased from 40 to 51. This is due to a rise in frauds involving scam phone calls or emails. Almost all bogus crimes recorded in Qtr. 3 related to social engineering fraud, with 4 involving cold callers/rogue traders.

Public Protection

Set against figures recorded at the end of Qtr. 3 last year, Group 2 sexual crimes have increased by 11.4% (+18). Increased crime levels are mainly as a result of a 38.5% increase in sexual assaults (+20). Crimes relating to lewd & libidinous practices have also increased significantly from 6 to 17 (+12) year on year, nearly all relate to non-recent reports. Rape crimes have seen a slight increase of 3% (+1). Almost 70% of indecent assault and lewd & lib crimes occurred in a private setting, with 60% of these being non-recent reports. Following a previous upward trend, crimes relating to indecent images / communication now show a reduction of 13.8% (-9) compared to last year.

92% of indecent assaults (inc. Lewd & Lib) were committed by persons known to the victim.

The overall detection rate for Group 2 sexual crime has improved slightly from 44.9% to 48.3% when compared to last year. The detection rate for indecent/sexual assaults has also increased from 30.8% to 36.1% year on year however for rape crime it has reduced from 60.6% to 44.1%.

Vulnerable Persons

The number of incidents recorded in West Dunbartonshire where an adult concern has been raised, has increased by 10.3% from 1281 to 1413 compared to figures recorded at the end of Qtr 3 last year. Child concerns continue to show a reduction of 5.2% decreasing from 3141 to 2976.



At the end of Qtr 3, 195 missing person reports had been recorded which is a slight increase from 175 in the same period last year. 36% of all MP report related to 5 repeat MP who were aged 14- 18 years. A new Missing Person Coordinator has been identified and repeat missing persons will all be reviewed.

Overall domestic related incidents continue to show an increase from 1067 to 1072 (+5). Domestic abuse crimes have increased by 4.6% from 632 to 661 (+29). Both figures remain above the previous 5 year average by 6.1% and 17.4% respectively.

Serious & Organised Crime



Across Argyll & West Dunbartonshire 22 persons linked to serious and organised crime have been arrested and £186,114 seized under POCA.

At the end of Qtr. 3, drugs supply charges had decreased by 14.4% from 90 to 77. Drug possession charges have also reduced by 35.5% from 757 to 488. Both figures remain below the previous 5 year average.



In total 208 cyber-crimes had been recorded within West Dunbartonshire at the end of Qtr 3, which is a reduction from 226 in the same period last year. The most commonly reported types of cyber-crime are cyber-enabled fraud (80), threatening messages sent via social media (62) and crimes relating to indecent images/communication (42).

Road Safety & Road Crime



There were no fatal road collisions recorded within West Dunbartonshire during Qtr 3. Overall road casualties have followed a downward trend reducing by 25% from 48 to 36. This is due to a decrease in slight injuries which have reduced from 33 to 20 year on year. The number of serious injuries recorded remains unchanged at 14, while fatalities increased from 1 to 2 year on year.

At the end of Qtr. 3, figures show a 14.7% decrease in the total number of road traffic offences recorded YTD within West Dunbartonshire. Most types of offences have seen a reduction; speeding offences have decreased from 262 to 239 (-8.8%) and drink / drug driving offences from 193 to 162 (-16.1%). Dangerous Driving offences have decreased from 47 to 34 (-27.7%) and Careless Driving from 161 to 142 (-11.8%).

User Satisfaction / Complaints

User Satisfaction results show that in Argyll & West Dunbartonshire public confidence levels remain high with overall satisfaction levels at 70%. At the end of Qtr. 3, 83 complaints against the police had been recorded which is a decrease from 102 last year. The number of allegations against officers has also reduced considerably year on year from 266 to 140.

West Dunbartonshire

Local Policing Plan (2020 – 2023) Quarterly Report (Qtr. 3 – 2021/22)

LIFE CHANGES TRUST AWARD FOR WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE – CALL BLOCKERS

Following an increase in phone scams being reported throughout West Dunbartonshire, Police Scotland and West Dunbartonshire Community Volunteering Services (WDCVS) have launched the roll out of free call blocking devices. This work is supported with funding from the Life Changes Trust. The Trust is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund. The trueCall call blocking units will be installed by Lomond and Clyde Care and Repair. We are looking to supply these to people who are most vulnerable of falling victim to these scams, particularly if you live alone or suffer from a disability or mental impairment such as dementia.

HERBERT PROTOCOL VIDEO

Since the launch of the Herbert Protocol, work has continued to raise awareness of this initiative, which aims to help people living with dementia should they go missing, with partners and the wider public. A recent partnership venture with Carers of West Dunbartonshire resulted in a user friendly video focussing on the Herbert Protocol and its benefits. This has been provided to all paid and unpaid carers and featured on social media for public awareness.

ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

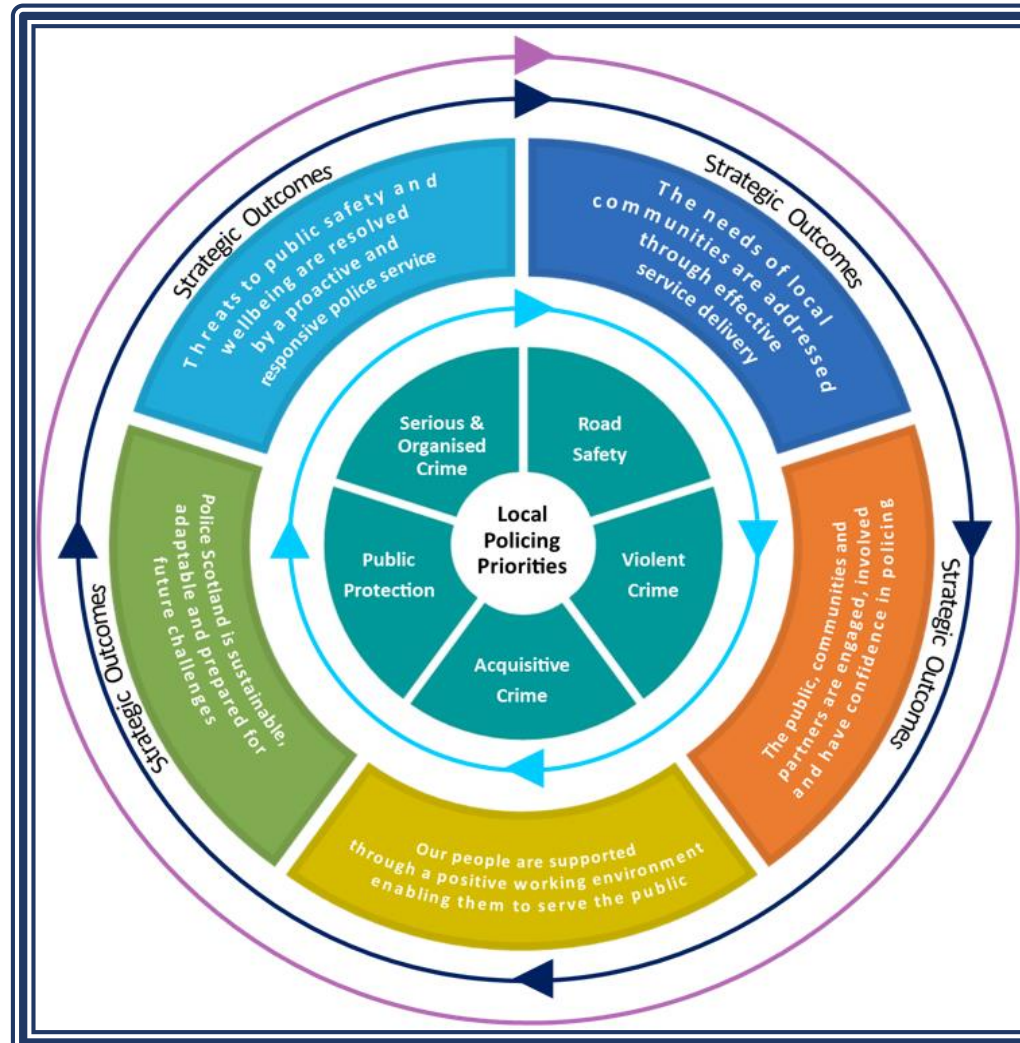
In December 2021, Argyll and West Dunbartonshire Policing Division hosted an evening online event to raise awareness of the opportunities and risks that comes with increasing online use by young people. A total of 42 people attended the event in varying capacities from parents, carers, other guardians and professionals from across both West Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute.

The virtual session was opened by Area Commander for West Dunbartonshire, Chief Inspector Coleen Wylie. PC Jules Wreford, local Youth Engagement Officer delivered a presentation that highlighted the opportunities now available through the internet and passed on some useful advice. This aligned with Christmas often bringing new mobile devices for many young people.

Wider online safety advice in relation to “sextortion” is regularly provided through social media channels to ensure the public are assisted on how to manage their privacy settings.

OPERATION MOONBEAM AND PROACTIVE PATROLS

For Bonfire night, Operation Moonbeam saw coordinated patrols in areas known to be problematic over this period. Working with SFRS and the local authority to increase awareness of the risk and impact on residents of ASB at this time of year, and also remove illegal bonfires prior to the event. Local officers continued these dedicated patrols in areas that have seen an increase in ASB/disorder incidents. This included working with licensed premises to ensure as alcohol often plays a crucial part in these types of offences.

**16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

The above campaign took place between 25th November, (which is International Day for Elimination of Violence) and 10th December, (which is Human Rights Day).

The campaign provided key messages to demonstrate our commitment to tackling domestic abuse and keeping people safe. Police Scotland highlighted various initiatives that have been established to help tackle domestic abuse and provide support for victims, including:

- Holly Guard app, a safeguarding tool that can be downloaded onto any mobile telephone.
- Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse in Scotland (DSDAS) which aims to prevent domestic abuse by given people the right to ask about the background of their partner.
- Ask for ANI initiative that provides members of the public with a safe and private safe to provide a phone to call 999 or to be able to contact the Domestic Abuse Helpline. The Ask for ANI initiative involves community based pharmacies as an alternative to attending at a police station.

Following this, a new campaign was launched on 20th December to increase reporting of domestic abuse. As the festive period can cause an increase in domestic abuse incidents, our campaign has been created to encourage the public, including friends and relatives or those at risk, to contact police by phone, in person or by use of the DSDAS form.

OFF ROAD BIKES – DETECTIONS

Following a number of reports of anti-social behaviour involving off road bikes in Clydebank, a male was reported to the Procurator Fiscal for a number of road traffic offences including dangerous driving and no licence or insurance. The bike was also seized under Road Traffic legislation. Local Roads Policing officers have been providing extra attention to the areas raised by the public of most concern.

DEATH OF CAROLINE GLACHAN 1996

In November 2021, two men and a woman were arrested and charged in connection with the death of Caroline Glachan who was discovered in the River Leven, Renton in 1996. The Major Investigations Team thanked the public who have assisted in the investigation and those who came forward with important information surrounding Caroline’s death.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Planning for Summer Safety.
- Planning for Local Council Elections.
- Ongoing monitoring of Covid-19 and regulations.
- Distress Brief Intervention training for Police Scotland and partners.

AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY (SCOTLAND) ACT 2019 – NOW LIVE

The Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 1029 (or ACRA) was implemented on Friday 17th December 2021. The main legislative change provided, is that a child cannot be held criminally responsible for harmful behaviour that amounts to a crime or offence, which occurred when the child is aged under 12 and cannot be arrested or charged with crimes or offences. All officers have undergone training on this new legislation.

EMPLOYEE SAFEGUARDING PROCESS DEVELOPED

Police Scotland has developed an Employee Safeguarding Process to record concerns and enable the support made available to officers and police staff in order to manage them. The process has been established following requests for advice from officers and staff and complements existing arrangements already in place to support the integrity of policing.



West Dunbartonshire Performance Report
Quarter - 3
1st Oct 2021 - 31st Dec 2021



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**

West
Dunbartonshire
COUNCIL

West Dunbartonshire Performance Report

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Local Fire and Rescue Service Plan Priorities

The Local Fire and Rescue Service Plan has been developed to set out the priorities and objectives within West Dunbartonshire and allows our local authority partners to scrutinise the performance outcomes of these priorities. We will continue to work closely with our partners in West Dunbartonshire to ensure we are all **“Working Together for a Safer Scotland”** through targeting risks to our communities at a local level.

The plan has been developed to complement key partnership activity embedded within West Dunbartonshire’s Community Plan and associated Delivery and Thematic plans. Through partnership working we will seek to deliver continuous improvement in our performance and effective service delivery in our area of operations.

The Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Dunbartonshire identified six areas for demand reduction and is subject to regular monitoring and reporting through the Police & Fire and Rescue Committee. A summary of the priorities and current activity is detailed below with further detail and analysis contained within this performance report.

	Accidental Dwelling Fires	Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties	Unintentional Injury and Harm	Deliberate Fire Setting	Non-Domestic Fire Safety	Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals
Clydebank Central	5	0	2	10	1	28
Clydebank Waterfront	5	1	2	27	1	26
Dumbarton	2	0	0	8	0	18
Kilpatrick	6	2	3	3	0	12
Leven	5	1	3	12	1	22
Lomond	3	0	1	7	0	13
Total Incidents	26	4	11	67	3	119

Year on Year Change	◆ 8%	◆ 100%	◆ 57%	● -43%	● -67%	◆ 5%
3 Year Average Change	● -10%	▲ 0%	● -18%	▲ -1%	● -22%	◆ 7%
5 Year Average Change	● -7%	◆ 6%	◆ 2%	● -13%	● -19%	◆ 3%

About the statistics within this report

The activity totals and other statistics quoted within this report are published in the interests of transparency and openness. They are provisional in nature and subject to change as a result of ongoing quality assurance and review. Because all statistics quoted are provisional there may be a difference in the period totals quoted in our reports after local publication which result from revisions or additions to the data in our systems. The Scottish Government publishes official statistics each year which allow for comparisons to be made over longer periods of time.

- Activity levels have reduced by more than 5%
- ▲ Activity levels have reduced by up to 5%
- ◆ Activity levels have increased overall

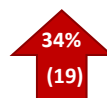
West Dunbartonshire Activity Summary



fires
primary &
secondary



special
services



false
alarms



381
total number of
incidents

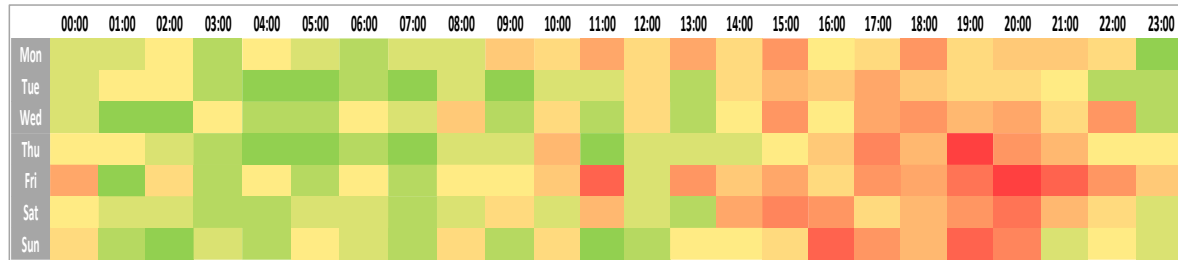


15
fire & non-fire
casualties

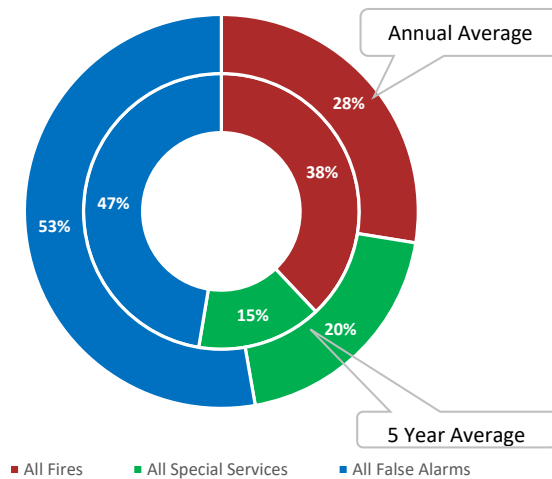


£234,430
economic cost of
ufas incidents

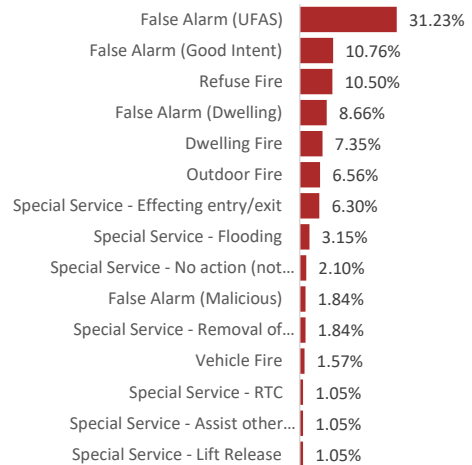
Activity by Time of Day



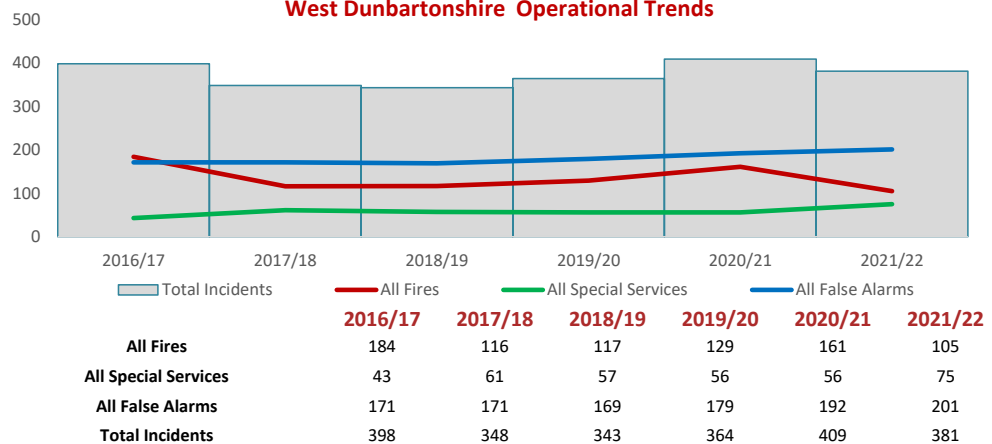
Incidents by Classification



Top 15 Incident Types by % of Total Incidents



West Dunbartonshire Operational Trends



Contributory Factors

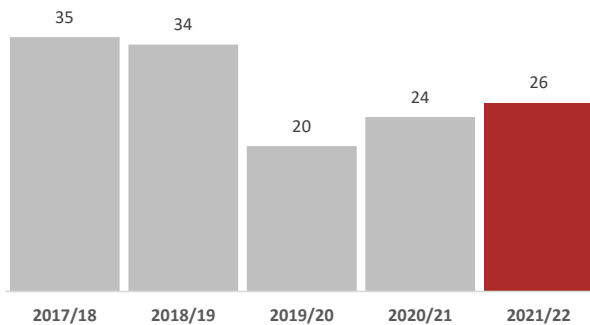
Domestic Safety - Accidental Dwelling Fires



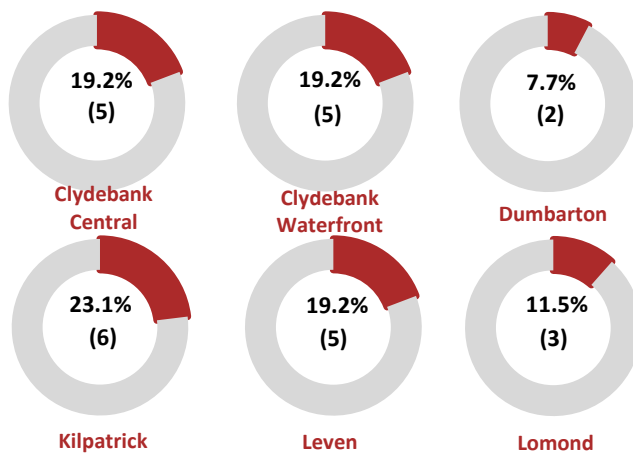
Performance Summary

Year on Year	3 Year Average	5 Year Average
8%	-10%	-7%

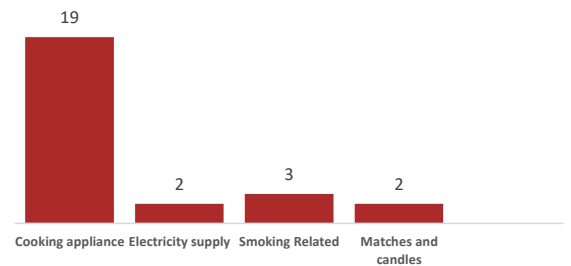
Accidental Dwelling Fires to Date



Accidental Dwelling Fires Activity by Ward (% share)



Main Source of Ignition



Accidental Dwelling Fires by Time of Day



Severity of Accidental Dwelling Fires



No Firefighting Action
69.2% (18)



Direct Firefighting
30.8% (8)



Heat/Smoke Damage Only
53.8% (14)



No fire Damage
46.2% (12)

Human Factors



Distraction
69.2% (18)



Alcohol/Drug Impairment
30.8% (8)

Automatic Detection & Actuation



Detection Present
84.6% (22)



Detection Actuated
18.2% (4)



Calls Made via Linked Alarms
84.6% (22)

Contributory Factors

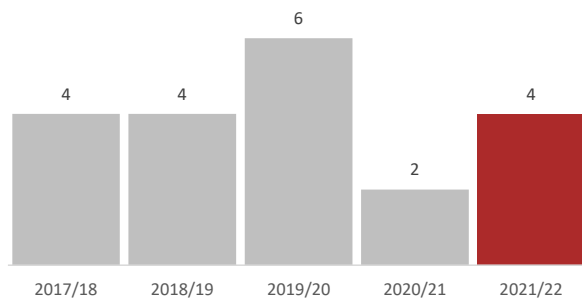
Domestic Safety - Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties



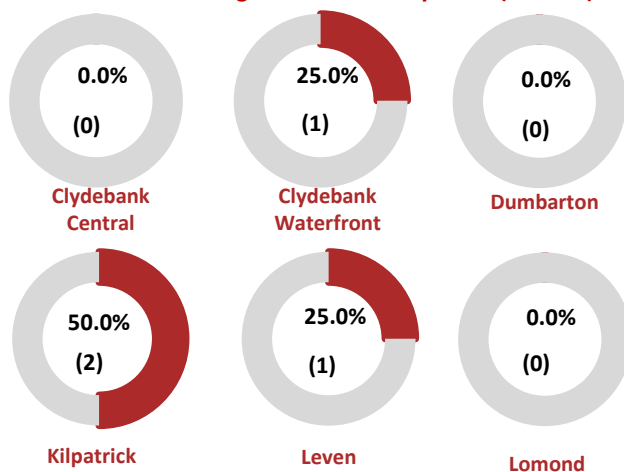
Performance Summary



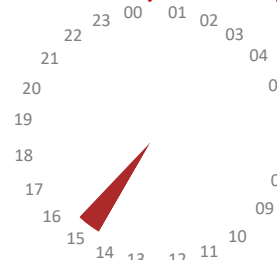
Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties Year to Date



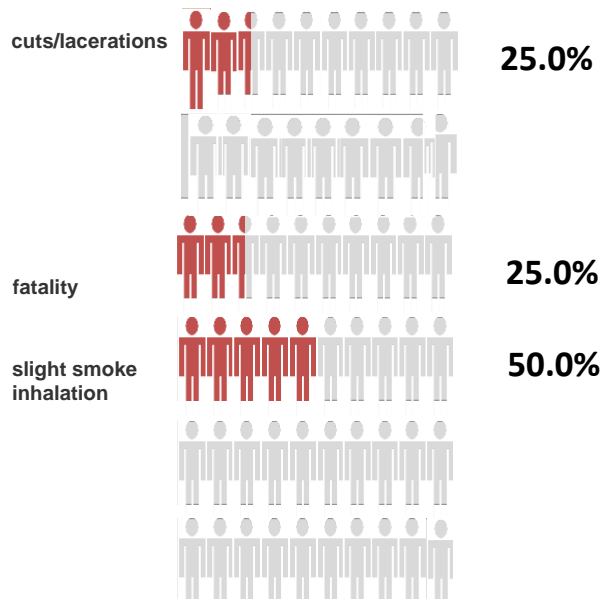
Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties by Ward (% share)



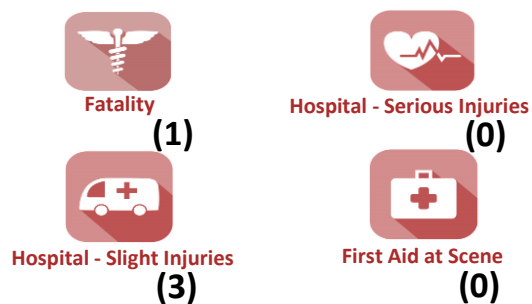
Fire Casualties by Time of Day



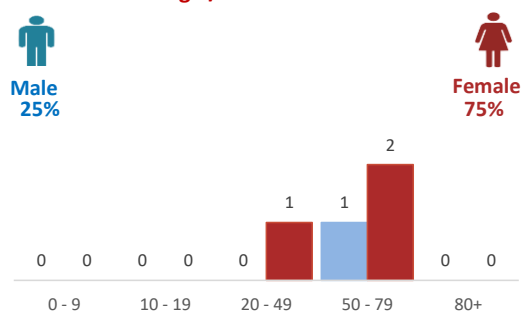
Nature of Injury



Extent of Harm



Age / Gender Profile



Contributory Factors

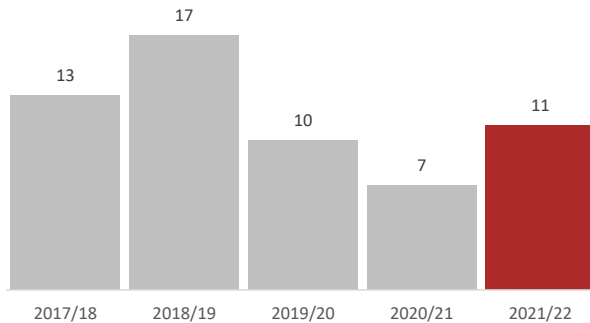
Unintentional Injury or Harm



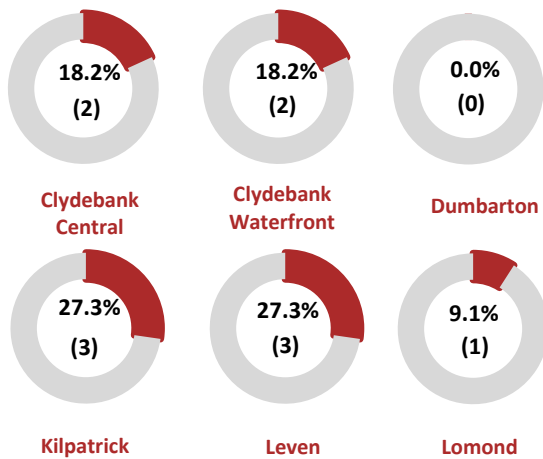
Performance Summary

Year on Year	3 Year Average	5 Year Average
57%	-18%	2%

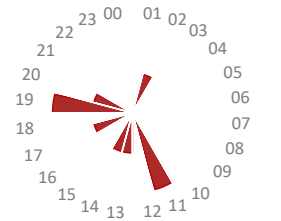
Non-Fire Casualties Year to Date



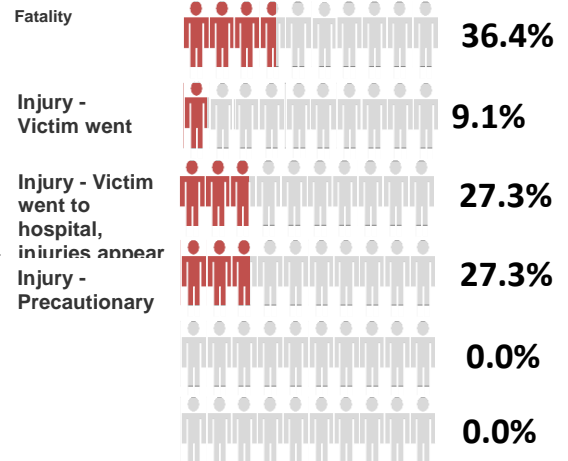
Non-Fire Casualties by Ward (% share)



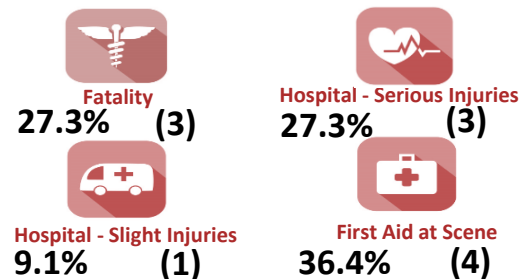
Non-Fire Casualties by Time of Day



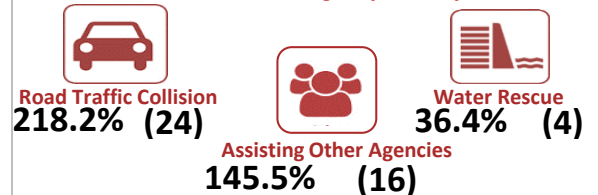
Nature of Injury



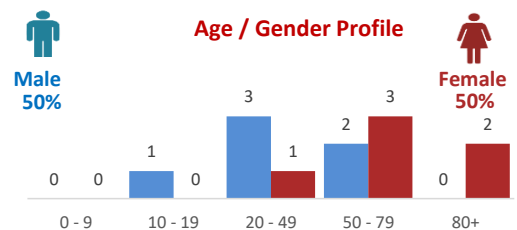
Extent of Harm



Non-Fire Emergency Activity



Age / Gender Profile



Contributory Factors

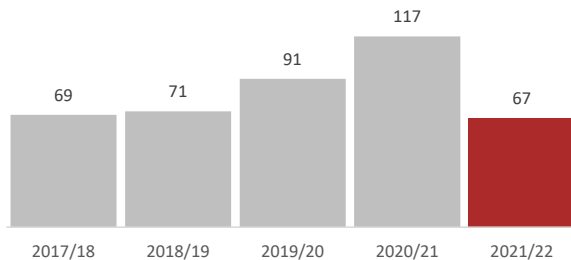
Deliberate Fire Setting



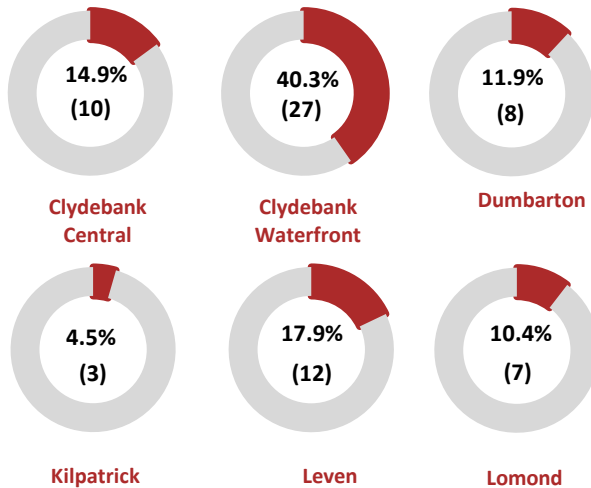
Performance Summary

Year on Year	3 Year Average	5 Year Average
-43%	-1%	-13%

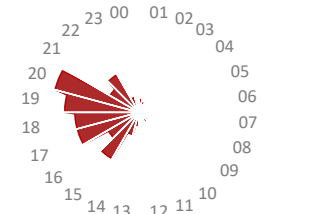
Deliberate Fires Year to Date



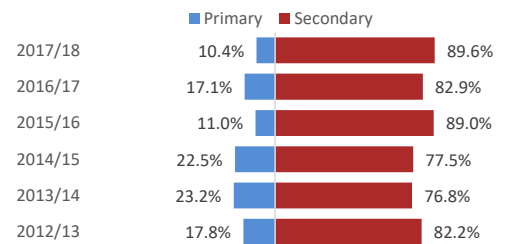
Deliberate Fires by Ward (% share)



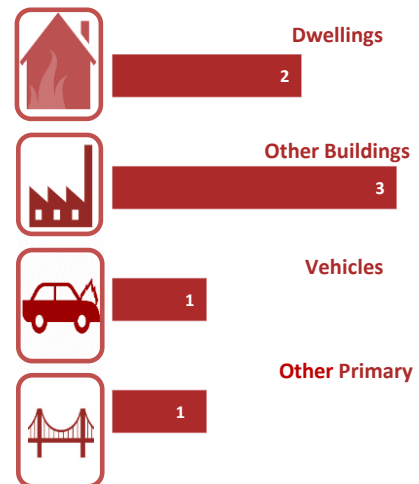
Deliberate Fires by Time of Day



Deliberate Fires by Classification



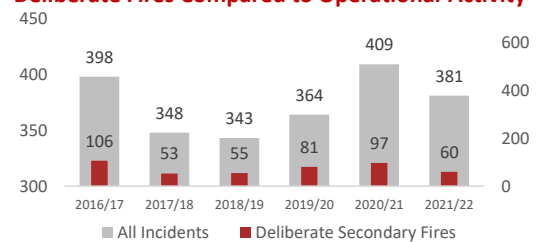
Primary Fire Ratio by Activity Type



Secondary Fire Ratio by Activity Type



Deliberate Fires Compared to Operational Activity

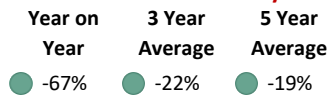


Contributory Factors

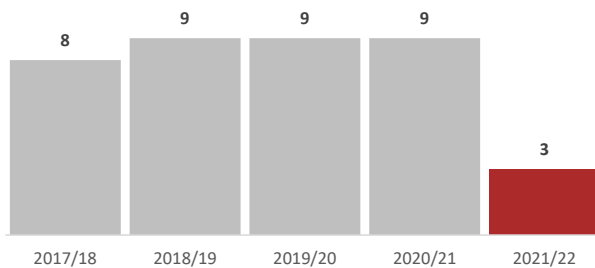
Non Domestic Fire Safety



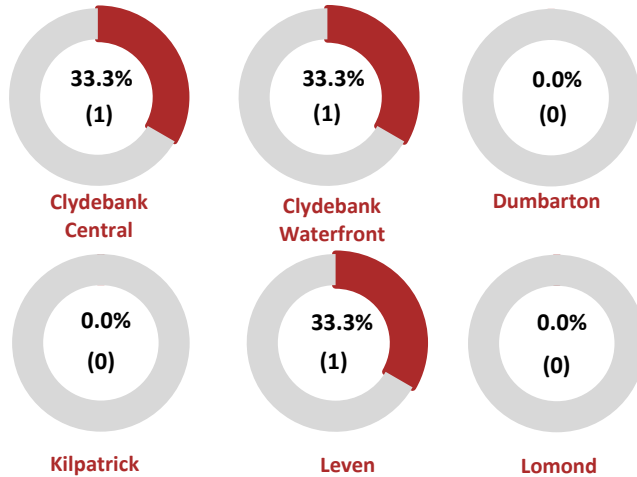
Performance Summary



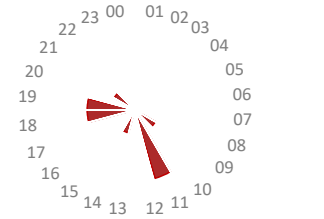
Non-Domestic Fires Year to Date



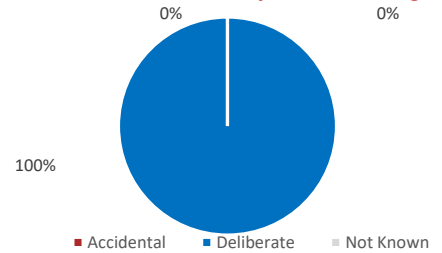
Non-Domestic Fires by Ward (% share)



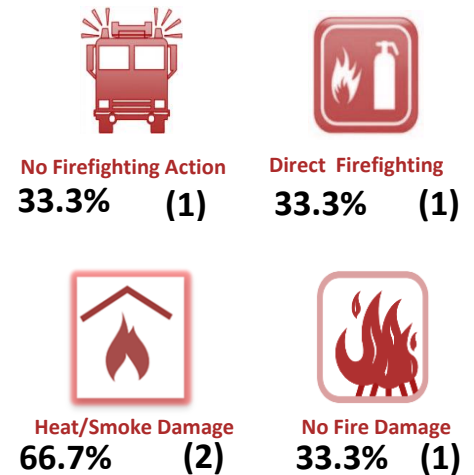
Non-Domestic Fires by Time of Day



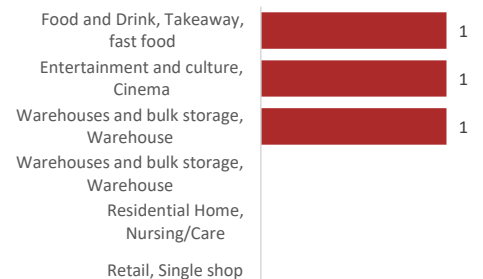
Non-Domestic Fires by Nature of Origin



Severity of Non-Domestic Fires



Non-Domestic Fires by Premises Type



Contributory Factors

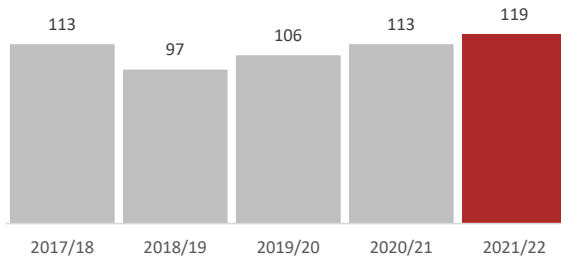
Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals



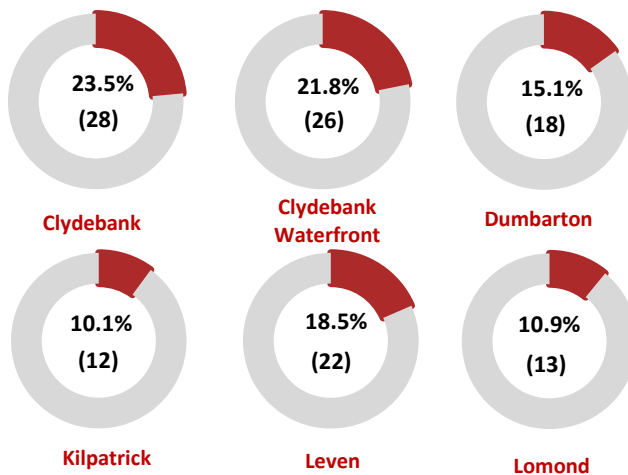
Performance Summary

Year on Year	3 Year Average	5 Year Average
5%	7%	3%

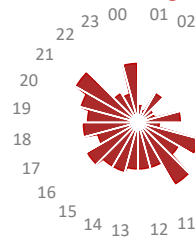
Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals Year to Date



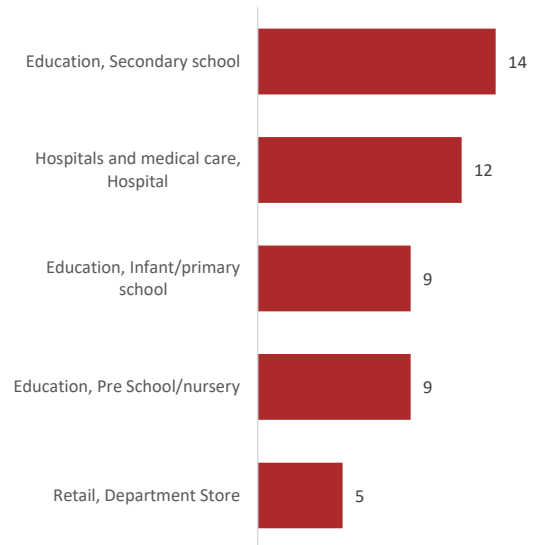
Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals by Ward (% share)



Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals by Time of Day



Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals - Top 5 Premises



Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals Activity Ratios



UFAS Percentage Against all Incidents

31% (119)



UFAS Percentage Against all False Alarms

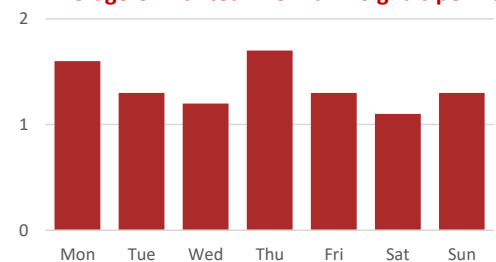
59%



Human Influence and Alarm Activations

35.3% (42)

Average Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals per Day



Contributory Factors