

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability

Housing and Communities Committee: 3 November 2021

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 and Haldane this year;
- (ii) Note the success of the Council's Creveul Court development being shortlisted for the Scottish Housing Awards in the Affordable Housing Development Category. This is the third national recognition that this exemplar development has received; and
- (iii) 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 St Andrews development in Clydebank delivering in total 125 new homes for social rent and one assisted living unit which will be leased to the West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership. 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 and Aitkenbar, Bellmysyre. The Council have now completed 10 new build developments since 2013 and are the largest developer of social homes in West Dunbartonshire delivering 422 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
Totals	422	

- 3.3** The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2021-2025, 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 2020. A revised SHIP will be presented for approval to 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
Dumbarton Harbour	45	October 2021
Queens Quay, Site B/C, Clydebank	29	March 2022
Clydebank East	88	February 2023
	162 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. 124 of the homes are now tenanted and households are enjoying their new homes. The 2 remaining properties are the property which has been used as a demonstration flat by Housing and Homelessness staff and the assisted living unit which will be leased to the

Health and Social Care Partnership. There has been a delay in the procurement of an external care provider and as a result the property will not be occupied by the intended residents until January 2022. As a result, Housing and Homeless Services intend to use the assisted living unit temporarily as the demonstration property, thus allowing the current demonstration flat to be tenanted immediately. The use of the demonstration projects within our new build development has been a positive addition to our approach and has worked well for staff and new tenants alike, and will continue to be a feature of future council housing developments.

Dumbarton Harbour:

Currently on-site to provide 45 new council homes. This project has encountered delays caused by the liquidation of the original main contractor. Cullross (Dumbarton Harbour) Ltd, having since taken on the Main Contractor role, managed to resume on site activity following the collapse of the original contractor very quickly, however lockdown occurred immediately after this. Further delays have been faced due to the pandemic and winter weather conditions when brickwork was planned. More recently, the shortage in labour and materials being experienced throughout the country has pushed prices up on the final work required on this site. As report to Council in September it is expected that around £0.155m of this £0.310m overspend will be met by additional Scottish Government funding. More positively handovers are progressing well and we would expect the final handover to be achieved in mid November 2021.

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. The additional design requirements of the Planning committee decision have negated the planned site start date of January 2022 and will lead to increased costs which will be reported to the Housing and Communities Committee at the earliest possible time. 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. It is likely that the Council will take handover of their properties in a phased manner towards in April 2022.

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 5 properties (as at July 2021). 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 has been named as a finalist in the Scottish Housing Awards. These awards recognise excellence in the creation of new homes and place-making across the country with finalists and winners chosen by an independent judging panel. The 22 homes at Creveul Court have been designed to make independent living easier for tenants with dementia.

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.
- 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 now 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;
- The installation of automatic fire suppression systems in new homes; and
- The installation of zero emissions heating systems in all new homes ahead of the 2024 regulations coming into force.

4.8 One of the ambitions through the future new build plan is to address housing inequalities, tackle fuel 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 investigating the increased provision of social housing at Clydebank East, which will also be the first zero carbon social housing development, the following sites are currently being looked at as future affordable new build sites:

Pappert, Bonhill

The Housing and Communities Committee in May 2021 approved proceeding with Pappert as the Council's Passivhaus pilot project inclusive of the additional costs highlighted in the report to the May committee. The design team are developing the proposals and the proposed development will provide 25 new homes that include 7 Passivhaus units and 18 net zero units. Work is also ongoing on developing a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) strategy with the Council's Biodiversity Officer and discussions with the Roads Department. Once all feasibility works are complete, the development will be consulted upon more widely and a procurement strategy will be finalised to appoint a main contractor.

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.

Willox Park, Doveholm, Dumbarton

This site was transferred in March 2021 to the Housing Revenue Account to deliver new council homes 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 a future 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 taken forward by the Scottish Government at this stage; however we plan to continue the design and consultative process in terms of this project.

Strategic Housing Investment Plan

We are currently preparing our new Strategic Housing Investment Plan which will include the above housing development opportunities and will be presented to Committee in November 2021. In addition, housing development officers are investigating other additional opportunities which could increase the provision of new affordable housing in West Dunbartonshire; a development programme will be part of the update report to the Housing and Communities Committee in February 2022.

- 4.10** The provision of much needed new housing has contributed to positively regenerating local communities. In West Dunbartonshire there were 231 new build social homes delivered the 7th highest level across Scotland.
- 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** In light of Brexit and the current 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. 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	£79k

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.

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Date: 20 October 2021

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: West Dunbartonshire Council's Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022
<http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4311723/housing-strategy-2017-2022-final.pdf>

Local Housing Strategy, Equalities Impact Assessment,
http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/716927/lhs_eia_sept_2011-revised.pdf

Wards Affected: All