

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability

Housing and Communities Committee: 2 September 2020

Subject: More Homes West Dunbartonshire and ‘Building Back Better – West Dunbartonshire Council Affordable Housing Supply 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 strategic delivery of the Council’s new homes.

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;
- (ii) Note that the report and the delivery of the Council’s ambitious plans to deliver new homes to meet housing need will include significant member involvement in its delivery and as such a regular update report will be provided to each Housing and Communities Committee
- (iii) Note that a number of issues discussed in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic will be more fully detailed at future Housing and Communities Committees due to the emerging nature of the impacts.

3. Background

3.1 In West Dunbartonshire the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) is delivered through the More Homes West Dunbartonshire strategic approach which was initially tasked with delivering over 1000 new affordable homes in West Dunbartonshire by 2021 and includes the Council’s ambitious New House Building Programme.

3.2 The Council have now delivered 161 new council 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
Totals	161	

- 3.3** The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2019-2024, 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 2019.
- 3.4** The More Homes Delivery Team continues to prioritise the new build projects in order to ensure that West Dunbartonshire Council delivers the new Council homes within the agreed budget and timescales.
- 3.5** The Council's Tendering Committee approved the appointment of a Strategic Delivery Partner on 29 August 2018. The reaching of this key milestone will see CCG Scotland Ltd work with the Council to deliver five of our new build developments inclusive of enabling and construction works.
- 3.6** As part of the Council's More Homes West Dunbartonshire programme a target had been set for 1000 new affordable homes to be built within a 5 year period up to March 2021 between the Council and developing partner Housing Associations. Achieving this target was progressing well and the Council had ambitious plans to assist in the overall target of building around 400 (this figure is inclusive of buy back properties) new homes for social rent from 2018–2021, the first of which were delivered in Spring 2018 in Second Avenue, Clydebank. Partner Housing Associations have a combined target of over 800.
- 3.7** In March 2020, the country was placed in lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This ceased all activity on each of the Council's 6 active new build sites and 1 demolition site. With the March 2021 no longer fully realistic, how the Council plans to recover from the lockdown period in terms of its Affordable New Build Programme and its plans going forward, will be outlined below.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** Pre Covid-19, the Scottish Government had a key national target to deliver a minimum of 50,000 new supply affordable homes in Scotland by March 2021 supported by over £3bn of investment. The West Dunbartonshire approach to this is outlined above at 3.6.
- 4.2** The Strategic Housing Investment Plan and HRA Capital Plan outlined the plans the Council have for meeting their targets. These revised new build targets for the Council are outlined below:

Table 2: Council New Build

Site/Developer	Number of Units	Est Completion Date
St Andrews High School, Clydebank	126	July 2021
Dumbarton Harbour	45	July 2021
Creveul Court, Alexandria	22	December 2020
Haldane Primary School	58	March 2021
Aitkenbar Primary, Bellsmyre	55	May 2021
Clydebank East ex MSF site	50	July 2022
Queens Quay, Site B/C, Clydebank	60*	July 2022
416 units		

*Includes 29 units at Site b and a projected 31 units at Site C which was not a March 2021 project

4.3 Before lockdown in March 2020, the Council's new build programme had 335 new homes at construction stage; these sites ceased immediately following the national announcement. All sites were secured.

4.4 As lockdown measures eased, a Construction Industry 6 Stage Roadmap was devised in consultation with the Scottish Government. The following phases were included along with dates that these could go ahead:

Phase	Description	Date
Phase 0	Planning	29/5/20
Phase 1	COVID-19 pre-start site preparation	29/5/20
Phase 2	Soft start (only where physical distancing can be maintained)	11/6/20
Phase 3	Steady state (only where physical distancing can be maintained)	22/6/20
Phase 4	Steady state (where physical distancing can be maintained and/or with PPE use)	15/7/20
Phase 5	Increasing density/productivity	tbc

4.5 Activity in the 6 Council new build sites has now re-started in line with the Construction Roadmap above. Noted below is a reminder of when the projects went on-site before lockdown and a general update that covers the 4 CCG sites and individual updates on Dumbarton Harbour, Queens Quay Site B and Clydebank East. Individual updates for all sites will be given at the next Housing and Communities Committee as more progress is made under the new working practices. It is important to note that although the March 2021 target is at risk and will be difficult nationally and locally to achieve, there are likely to be a number of properties completed by March 2021; however, this won't be at the same rate as before lockdown.

St Andrews School: on-site as of 3rd June 2019 to develop 126 new council homes and was anticipated to complete by March 2021 before lockdown.

Aitkenbar Primary School: on-site as of 14 October 2019 to develop 55 new council homes and was anticipated to complete by March 2021 before lockdown.

Haldane Development: on-site as of 21 October 2019 to develop 58 new build council homes and was anticipated to complete by March 2021 before lockdown.

Creveul Court, Alexandria Town Centre: on-site as of 4 November 2019 to develop 22 new build council homes and was anticipated to complete by September 2020 before lockdown.

CCG have re-started on the site on the sites above following all the Scottish Government guidance.

Progress meetings are taking place virtually and will continue this way until such times as social distancing rules permit on-site meetings.

All on-site staff have undergone a Covid-19 induction and the number of staff working has reduced greatly from prior to lockdown. The impact of lockdown and the new working practices going forward is still being assessed in terms of a new programme. A verbal update will be given to Committee on revised completion dates.

Dumbarton Harbour: on-site as of 20 November 2019 to develop 45 new build council homes. Due to delays caused by the liquidation of the original construction company it was unlikely that this project would have completed fully by March 2021.

Cullross Ltd, having 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.

As with the 4 CCG sites outlined above, work on Dumbarton Harbour has resumed post lockdown with the same measures and working practices in place and revised completion dates will be reported verbally to Committee.

Clydebank East: the demolition of 339 multi storey flats and maisonettes was well underway on this site before lockdown. As with the other sites, the site closed immediately. Work has now resumed and the demolition is programmed to complete by November 2020.

As this site was not as advanced as the 5 projects above it has provided an opportunity to re-visit what is possible to achieve on the site. Previously the Council had taken a masterplanning design approach to oversee the development of over 100 new homes within this site with a mix of social and private homes. However, following national discussions and emerging local evidence over the impact of Covid-19 both in terms of homelessness, increased demand for social housing and assisting with economic recovery, developing this site fully for social/affordable housing is being investigated

and findings and recommendations will be reported to a future Housing and Communities Committee..

Queens Quay, Site B, Clydebank: A joint project with Wheatley Group and Clydebank Housing Association, the Council had 29 out of the 146 properties in total on site just before lockdown. As with the other sites, this site is progressing again, following Scottish Government Guidance and a fuller update will be provided at a future Committee.

Buy Back Scheme: Since 2015 the Council has operated a Buy Back Scheme that assists the Housing Team in purchasing properties of formally 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.

To date 29 new homes have been purchased through the scheme at an overall cost of £2.4m. It should be noted that these costs are inclusive of all works to bring the home up to SHQS and EESSH standard.

- 4.6** As it is likely that a large number of the properties will be handed over to the Council at the same time. The Housing Development team is currently being put together to strategy to plan how to deal with this and at the same time taking into consideration the way that Covid-19 has changed how we deal with viewings, sign ups, house moves etc. This will be done in partnership with the Health and Social Care Partnership, Homelessness and Housing Options service and the Housing Operations Service.

Building Back Better – West Dunbartonshire

- 4.7** 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 is and will increase. *Building Back Better* is an ambitious plan that aims to continue the positive momentum of the More Homes West Dunbartonshire programme.
- 4.8** As an affordable housing developer West Dunbartonshire Council has identified potential future sites for new council homes to address existing and arising housing need. The design of these homes will endeavour to further develop, improve and exceed current best practice, providing sustainable homes using innovative technology and delivering on our low carbon ambitions including passivhaus and other net zero carbon opportunities.
- 4.9** The current Covid 19 crisis 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.

- 4.10** One of the ambitions through the building back better plan we will address housing inequalities, tackle fuel poverty and improve health outcomes for future generations within West Dunbartonshire.
- 4.11** In order to contribute to building back better, the Housing Development team have been working on investigating potential sites that affordable housing can be developed on. In addition to investigating increased provision of social/affordable at Clydebank East which is also planned to be our first zero carbon social housing development the following sites are currently being looked at as future affordable new build sites:

Queens Quay, Site C, Clydebank

The Council is currently developing a design to deliver a projected 20/30 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.

- 4.12** The additional potential sites outlined below are at a very early feasibility stage and more detail on the outcome of these will be brought to the November Housing and Communities Committee. Outlined below are general locations and estimated unit numbers:

Location	Unit Numbers - Est
Bonhill	50
North Mountblow	18
Alexandria Town Centre 1	20
Alexandria Town Centre 2	20
Dumbarton Town Centre	40
Clydebank Central	40
Doveholm, Dumbarton	20-50

- 4.13** The provision of new housing that is the right type and size and that which is needed in accordance with our housing demand lists has contributed to positively regenerating the housing regeneration areas where our new build plans have developed new high quality homes for social rent. In addition, the provision of new council housing for rent, along with other housing service led initiatives through our Better Homes West Dunbartonshire 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.
- 4.14** As part of our strategic housing approach, tenant satisfaction levels and other contributing indicators to analyse the impact of housing regeneration activities will continue to be tracked and be reported to the Housing and Communities Committee. It will be closely monitored through the More Homes Project Board.

4.15 In addition to its direct role as a developer of new housing, the Council's Housing Development Team plays a key enabler role through its statutory position as the Strategic Housing Authority.

5. People Implications

5.1 There are no people implications from this report.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

Financial

6.1 As with all financial projections and plans, the affordable new build budget within the Capital Programme has been impacted by Covid-19. As we are still at an early stage of assessing the effect, it is not possible to fully outline the financial impact on the new build budget in terms of delays to projected spend and any additional costs this will have. This will be reported to a future Housing Communities Committee.

6.2 The Housing Development Team has been in discussions with the Scottish Government at a national and local level regarding the impact of Covid-19 on the overall new build programme, financial considerations and how to assist in the recovery and will continue to do this.

6.3 In February 2019 Council approved the Housing Capital Programme 2019-2024 which has gross profile spend of £96.924m on council new build housing over that 5 year period year period. This includes some £8m per annum from 21/22 provision for future new build projects. As noted above, the Housing team has already commenced developing the feasibility of future development and these will be reported to future Housing and Communities Committees.

6.4 The introduction of the West Dunbartonshire Affordable Housing Design Standard approved by the Housing and Communities Committee in November 2015 and updated in February 2019 will ensure all new affordable housing developments in West Dunbartonshire will be eligible for the higher 'greener' subsidy levels of £72k (RSL) and £59k (Council). This enables the leverage of an additional £2k of grant funding per unit of affordable housing in West Dunbartonshire.

Procurement

6.5 Following a robust contract strategy CCG Scotland Ltd were appointed to deliver five of our new build development sites inclusive of enabling and construction works.

6.6 Further opportunities to maximise the positive social, economic and environmental impact for the Council through this contract will also be explored.

Community Benefits

6.7 As part of each project, the contract has incorporated an element of Community Benefits that can supported a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits for communities including jobs, apprenticeships and local charity and community initiatives. For the projects that are currently on-site, the following is taking place:

- Aitkenbar, £8000, community art project with 2nd Year pupils from Our Lady and St Patricks High School
- Haldane, £8000, creation of a show flat, interior design project with local school
- Creveul Court, £3500, community gardening project that The Leamy Foundation will lead on
- St Andrews, £11,000, not yet determined how this will be spent
- Clydebank East, £11,000, not yet determined how this will be spent

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.

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.

9.2 Regular updates on new build development are provided to the West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisation at the bi-monthly liaison meetings.

9.3 As detailed at 6.7 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.
- 10.2** Having considered all the Council's strategic priorities, this report and the provision of new supply social housing for rent contributes greatly to all five strategic priorities.

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Date: 18th August 2020

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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, November 2016
http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/716927/lhs_eia_sept_2011-revised.pdf

More Homes, Better Homes West Dunbartonshire Strategic Housing Investment Plan, Housing Development, November 2017

Affordable Housing in West Dunbartonshire, Housing Strategy and Development, July 2015
<http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4308583/brochure-final-website-version.pdf>

Wards Affected: All

