

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability

Housing and Communities Committee: 3 February 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 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 including the first handovers of the new homes at the Haldane development;
 - (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;

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) 2020-2025, 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.
- 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. CCG Scotland Ltd is working 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. Progress was good with both Council and RSL developments until March 2020
- 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 six active new build sites and one demolition site. The March 2021 target is no longer fully achievable and revised plans are outlined below.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** 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	January 2021
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 six Council new build sites has now re-started in line with the Construction Roadmap above. All the sites are now at Phase 4 and whilst this is great progress in terms of the re-start, social distancing is having an impact on timescales for completing certain elements of work especially where that work takes place inside a property, these invariably are most significant close to the completion of the new homes.
- 4.6** Updates for each site are noted below with a reminder of the original start dates before lockdown:

St Andrews School:

Originally on-site on 3rd June 2019 to develop 126 new council homes and was anticipated to complete by March 2021 before lockdown. CCG are reporting an estimated 11 week delay to the original programme taking full completion of the site to July 2021. Handovers have begun and 21 properties now have tenants signed up to them. The remainder of the properties will be handed over in a phased manner until July 2021. A demonstration flat is available to assist staff in familiarising themselves with the various features of the property and provide an area to safely work from when signing tenants up to the properties; this is also providing the opportunity to show tenants any features they are unsure of without the need for any unnecessary visits to their property. This is working extremely well.

Aitkenbar Primary School:

Originally on-site on 14 October 2019 to develop 55 new council homes and was anticipated to complete by March 2021 before lockdown. As above, this project will experience Covid-19 related delays. CCG have reported that completion will now be in May 2021. This site also has a demonstration property on the same basis as described under St Andrews. Handovers have also begun and will carry on in a phased manner until May 2021.

Haldane Development:

Originally on-site on 21 October 2019 to develop 58 new build council homes and was anticipated to complete by March 2021 before lockdown. CCG are reporting that this site will still complete before the end of March 2021 with handovers from October 2020 to this point. A demonstration property is also available for this project. Handovers have begun and will carry on in a phased manner until March 2021.

Creveul Court, Alexandria Town Centre:

Originally on-site on 4 November 2019 to develop 22 new build council homes and was anticipated to complete by September 2020 before lockdown. This development has been designed using a number of dementia friendly design features and will be the first fully completed development within our current development programme. The development has attracted some national interest and CIH Scotland plan to use the development as a positive case study. All properties will be handed over to new tenants by early February.

Dumbarton Harbour:

Originally on-site on 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. It is likely that the handover process will begin in late spring with the whole development being complete by July 2021.

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 now complete as of 12th October. The design of this site is still underway with total numbers to be finalised but as indicated to the previous Housing and Communities Committee there is now sufficient scope to increase the provision of social housing.

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. It is likely that the Council will take handover of their properties in a phased manner towards the end of 2021, completing in March 2022.

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.

The Scheme continues following lockdown albeit at a slower pace with social distancing and virtual viewings in place. Since lockdown the Council has managed to complete the purchase of 10 properties and continues to progress a number of others.

- 4.7** A large number of the properties will be handed over to the Council at the same time in 2021. 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.

Future New Build – West Dunbartonshire

- 4.8** 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. *Future New Build – West Dunbartonshire* is an ambitious plan that aims to continue the positive momentum of the More Homes West Dunbartonshire programme.
- 4.9** As an affordable housing developer West Dunbartonshire Council has identified potential future sites for new council homes to address existing and new 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. We have identified the Pappert development site as the optimum site to develop our planned passivhaus pilot. We are currently finalising this approach and will provide a further update to the next Housing and Communities Committee.
- 4.10** 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.
- 4.11** One of the ambitions through the future new build plan we will address housing inequalities, tackle fuel poverty and improve health outcomes for future generations within West Dunbartonshire.
- 4.12** 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 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.

Willox Park, Doveholm, Dumbarton

Discussions have been taking place between officers from Housing Development and Asset Management over the potential purchase of the former care home site which neighbours the Council's existing sheltered housing complex. Early discussions with HSCP have taken place. In order to progress with this project, the HRA will require to complete the purchase of the land from general services.

Bank Street, Alexandria

In addition to above discussions are at detailed stage between officers from Housing Development and Asset Management over the potential transfer of the Council owned site at Bank Street, Alexandria, the Housing Team are working to develop a suitable affordable scheme that will meet evidenced housing need within his area.

- 4.13** The additional potential sites outlined below are at a very early feasibility stage and more detail on the outcome of these will be provided as soon as possible. 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
Willox Park, Dumbarton	20

- 4.14** The provision of much needed new housing has contributed to positively regenerating local communities. 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** As with all financial projections and plans, the affordable new build budget within the Capital Programme has been impacted by Covid-19. The full effect of this is still being assessed, however the notified additional costs for St Andrews, Aitkenbar, Creveul and Haldane are around £474,000 which equates to around £1,800 per property. These additional costs have still to be fully assessed and no additional payments will be made at present and the Council continue to liaise with the Scottish Government and CCG.
- 6.2** The Housing Development Team has been in advanced 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. In addition detailed discussions around the award of additional grant funding to support the increased costs within the Dumbarton Harbour development previously reported to the Housing and Communities Committee should soon be concluded. The outcome of this will be reported to the Housing and Communities Committee.
- 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 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	£55k

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. 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 6.10 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 five strategic priorities.

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Date: 20th January 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 More Homes, Better Homes West Dunbartonshire Strategic Housing Investment Plan, Housing Development, November 2017
Wards Affected:	All