

**West Dunbartonshire Council**

**Report by Chief Officer, Housing and Employability**

**Housing and Communities Committee: 2 February 2022**

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**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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 WDTR0 (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 be 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.

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**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