

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL****Report by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability****Housing and Communities Committee: 3 May 2023**

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**Subject: Enhanced Standards for Multi Storey Living – A strategy for enhancing the experience of living in a multi storey home in West Dunbartonshire 2023/28**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide the Housing and Communities Committee with an update on the recent resident consultation which gathered ideas on how to enhance our 19 multi storey homes and seek approval to implement a strategy to enhance living standards in these homes by delivering a number of improvement actions.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Housing and Communities Committee:

- (i) note the contents of this report and the feedback received from current and future tenants regarding their experiences of living in our multi storey flat homes across the local authority area; and
- (ii) approve the strategic approach outlined with the Strategy document and improvement action plan developed to address the findings of the consultative exercise; and
- (iii) instruct the Chief Officer Housing and Employability to fully implement the strategy and associated action plan;

**3. Background**

- 3.1** West Dunbartonshire Council have 19 multi storey blocks of flats containing 1,232 homes. The blocks contain one, two and three bedroom flats. The blocks were built in the 1960s using concrete panels and were insulated and received new double glazing between 2010 and 2015 to make the homes more energy efficient. Apart from the three blocks at Littleholm, which are connected to the gas network, the remaining blocks use electric storage heaters as their main form of heating.
- 3.2** All blocks with the exception of one block are mixed tenure, while the Council is the majority owner in each of the blocks, the presence of owner occupiers and private landlords' means any major works have got to be agreed by all parties.
- 3.3** The homes are now around 60 years old and we have committed to review investment to ensure that we are putting in place the appropriate resource to enable them to continue to be attractive homes which contribute positively to our communities.

**3.4** Indeed, the recent resident survey showed that residents liked the views and the generous sizes and storage space offered by the flats, however the survey also offered up numerous areas for improvement which this survey will look to take forward. In the appendixes of this paper there is a report detailing the survey findings in detail.

## **4. Main Issues**

### **4.1 Consultation**

We surveyed residents using survey monkey for 12 weeks between October and December 2022. We received a good response from all blocks and the residents have provided us with a clear steer in terms of what they would like to see improved in their home and block.

**4.2** A challenge which emerged from the consultation findings is that many of the improvements people would like do not represent an enhanced living standard but are planned investment through the Housing Capital Investment Programme. For example, similarly to the recent rent consultation exercises kitchens and bathroom renewals and heating upgrades figured high in terms of priorities within the responses.

**4.3** We also surveyed those on the Council housing waiting list and 40% of those who responded indicated that they would like to live in a multi storey flat and provided improvement suggestions, many of which aligned with what tenants would like to see such as improved estate management of the blocks.

### **4.4 Identifying priorities and creating an action plan**

Taking the survey findings we identified key themes across the blocks which will form the overarching structure of the wider strategic approach and action plan. These tackle the common requests from our residents such as improving heating and hot water and deep cleaning and reimagining the common areas.

**4.5** The wider approach will continue to be developed with tenants and residents to ensure that they reflect the needs of each block. As we have also reviewed findings on a block by block basis to ensure that we are identifying block specific requests and these can be captured within the wider strategic approach to enhance the living standards in all our multi story flats across West Dunbartonshire.

**4.6** An improvement action plan has been developed to deliver the enhanced standards and this is attached as Appendix 1a of this report.

## **5. People Implications**

**5.1** A Senior Housing Development Officer will be tasked with effective project management to deliver the strategic aims contained within the strategy document and associated action plan. In addition, developing appropriate

service responses in areas where improvements actions have been identified will be managed from within existing resources within the Housing Revenue Account.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Implications**

### **6.1 Financial**

On 1 March 2023 Council approved the Housing Capital Programme 2023-2028 which committed resources of £4.25m to deliver an enhanced standard for multi storey living within the HRA Capital Programme. Housing and Finance Officers will continue to assess the ongoing affordability of future developments within the context of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

### **Procurement**

**6.2** Where any contract award is less than £213,000 to deliver this strategy, authority is delegated to the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability in consultation with the Procurement Manager to instruct the award of contracts for the planned revenue and capital spend detailed in this report to suppliers providing the most economically advantageous offer to the Council.

**6.5** All procurement activity carried out by the Council in excess of £2m is subject to a contract strategy. The contract strategy for new housing development within the HRA Capital Programme will be developed by the Corporate Procurement Unit in consultation with Housing Development Officers. The contract strategy will include, but is not limited to; contract scope, service forward plan, the market, procurement model and routes – including existing delivery vehicles, roles and responsibilities, risks, issues and opportunities and on-going contract management. Opportunities to maximise the positive social, economic and environmental impact for the Council through the relevant procurement processes will be developed in line with procurement policy.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

**7.1** There is a risk that failure to invest strategically in our multi storey flats will have a negative impact on their ongoing viability and in turn would lead to a loss of rental income and could potentially impact on the ongoing sustainability of the HRA Business Plan. In addition an ineffective approach to strategic asset management of our housing stock would attract an adverse reaction from the Scottish Housing Regulator.

**7.2** We maintain risk registers for each project which highlights the risk within and out-with the project team's control. These are maintained and adjusted on an on-going basis.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

**8.1** An EIA screening has been undertaken by officers and no issues were identified.

## **9. Consultation**

**9.1** As above, we carried out a 12 week consultative exercise and received a good response from residents and those on the waiting list. We will continue to develop the plans in conjunction with tenants and residents as we further develop a wider investment programme and a monitoring framework.

## **10. Strategic Assessment**

**10.1** The proposals contained in this report directly address all of the Council's strategic priorities. The investment in, and provision of attractive affordable housing will also indirectly support the objective of economic growth and employability through supporting employment and improving place attractiveness.

**Peter Barry**  
**Chief Officer, Housing and Employability**

**Date: 18 April 2023**

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**Appendices:** Appendix 1/1a: Enhanced Living Standards Strategy and Improvement Action Plan

**Background Papers:** EIA. March 2023  
Survey findings report, Housing Development 2022

**Wards Affected:** All