

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

**Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee:
2 November 2011**

**Subject: Consultative Draft West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy
2011 - 2016**

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to consider the consultative draft of the next West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy (LHS) which is currently out to consultation and is scheduled to be submitted to the Scottish Government at the end of November 2011.

2. Background

- 2.1** Scottish Government LHS guidance requires that the new-style strategy has a clearer focus on strategic outcomes for housing and related support needs, and expects it to feed into, and support, the local authority's Single Outcome Agreement.

- 2.2** The LHS is required to cover the following areas:

- the extent and type of housing need and demand;
- the local authority's strategic vision for the future of housing across all tenures, taking account of national priorities;
- how the standard of housing will be improved;
- clear strategic direction for housing investment;
- the outcomes required to achieve this vision; and
- specific commitments made by the local authority and key partners to enable the delivery of outcomes as shared priorities.

- 2.3** The scope of the LHS has been broadened. The Local Housing Strategy is now expected to be a key corporate planning activity for the local authority and the sole strategic document on:

- housing,
- homelessness,
- housing support services and
- fuel poverty.

The new style LHS will help facilitate the effective integration of strategic planning on these closely-related issues.

2.4 In February 2009, the Scottish Government and COSLA issued a paper detailing their joint approach to the development and improvement of local housing strategies. The key purpose of the joint review process is to promote best practice and support improvement. In addition it:

- Helps ensure that the enhanced status of local housing strategies is reinforced and widely recognized;
- Allows the local housing strategy to inform future investment in housing;
- Assists the Scottish Government and local government to understand local and regional contributions to the delivery of national housing policy objectives and;
- Ensures there is a necessary balance in the way in which other elements of the reformed housing and planning delivery framework (housing need and demand assessment and development plans) are reviewed.

2.5 The Supporting Improvement paper lists ten key review criteria for local housing strategies. These include a need to evidence that the local authority has consulted widely on its proposed strategy and to demonstrate that commitments have been made by the Council, Community Planning partners and other partners to enable delivery of the outcomes as shared priorities.

2.6 The preparation of the new LHS provides the opportunity to set out a vision for the future shape of the housing system in West Dunbartonshire and how this will be achieved through clearly stated aims and objectives. Many of the key issues identified in the initial LHS 2004-2009 and in subsequent annual updates remain relevant and will be developed here, but others will require to be addressed in view of the expanded remit of the strategy.

2.7 The development of the strategy is underpinned by West Dunbartonshire Council's commitment to promoting and sustaining equality and inclusion, and equality and diversity principles. The plan has been developed within the context of the Council's overarching vision of improving prosperity and inclusion for all citizens, delivering better and more efficient services, and improving West Dunbartonshire as a place to live, work and visit.

3. Main Issues

3.1 Consultation

3.1.1 This draft is the result of a consultation process which commenced in May 2011 and concluded in July 2011. A *Housing Issues Paper* was widely circulated and three area based public events took place during June 2011. In addition, separate meetings were held with the West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisation (WDTRO) and the Clydebank Community Forum (CCF). A presentation was also made to the West Dunbartonshire Landlords Forum.

3.1.2 An on-line survey was available on the Council's website. However this resulted only in a very small number of responses. The West Dunbartonshire Citizens' Panel proved to be a much more useful consultation tool. While this survey was principally concerned with the new Local Development Plan, the questions posed were relevant to the LHS and the results informative.

3.1.3 The main points made in the consultation process may be summarised as follows:

- There was very strong support for the provision of more affordable housing. Making better use of existing stock was a recurring theme.
- There was overwhelming support for making regeneration the main focus of housing investment.
- Considerable support was expressed for providing more support in temporary accommodation and more options generally for those facing homelessness.
- A more visible presence by housing and other staff was considered to be good way to way of improve the housing service and reduce anti-social behaviour. More attention should be paid to environmental improvements in housing areas.
- There was considerable support for the policy of helping people stay in their own homes for as long as possible. Support was also expressed for an increase sheltered and other supported housing models.
- The issue of accessibility of the housing stock was also raised and the need to have a better coordinated and strategic approach to the provision of aids and adaptations across all housing providers was noted.

3.1.4 The comments made during the various parts of the consultation process have influenced the drawing up of the consultative draft.

3.2 LHS 2011 - 2016 Consultative Draft

3.2.1 Second Stage Consultation

The consultative draft has been issued for comment to a wide range of partners, community groups and individuals. The draft is also posted on the Council's website. A closing date of 25 November has been given for this consultation stage. Efforts have been made to consult with groups which had not so far become involved in the consultation.

3.2.2 Five Key Themes

Five key themes helped to shape the consultative draft. These were:

- Housing Need and Demand
- Promoting Good Quality Housing
- Homelessness
- Sustainable and Supportive Communities
- Addressing Particular Housing Needs.

3.2.3 Submission to the Scottish Government

While there is no prescribed date for submission of the LHS to the Scottish Government, it is planned to do so by the end of November 2011.

3.2.4 Regeneration

The draft highlights the priority given to regeneration in West Dunbartonshire and the links that housing has with corporate economic development regeneration priorities.

3.2.5 West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership

The Local Housing Strategy is set within the wider context of the West Dunbartonshire Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and the Council's Corporate Plan. The SOA recognises that good affordable and sustainable housing is a key element in the strength and resilience of our communities. Ongoing monitoring of LHS outcomes will be taken forward through the West Dunbartonshire Housing Providers Forum.

3.3 Main Issues by Key Theme

3.3.1 Housing Need and Demand

- (i) The key outcome under this heading is: Ensuring people have access to affordable housing which is in the right location and is suitable for their needs.
- (ii) The principal issues are around the population and household projections and what these mean for demand for housing and future supply. It is a requirement that the LHS be informed by a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) which has been confirmed by the Scottish Government's Centre for Housing Market Research (CHMA) as robust and credible.
- (iii) A Housing Needs and Supply Assessment (HNDA) was undertaken through the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Strategic Development Plan Authority and completed in June 2011 as part of the proposed Strategic Development Plan for the eight local authorities in the Housing Market Partnership area. This study has been endorsed by the CHMA and this forms the main evidence base for this section.
- (iv) While the population is falling, the number of households is increasing largely due to an increase in single person households. The HNDA broadly indicates a trend whereby the demand for Private Sector Housing is slowing down, the fall in demand for the Social Rented is levelling off and the Private Rented Sector is rising quite steeply. The study indicates that there is an adequate supply of housing land available to meet needs to at least 2025, although some difficult development sites, such as Queens Quay, are included.
- (v) Consideration is given here to the provision of appropriate new housing, across all tenures.

3.3.2 Promoting Good Quality Housing

- (i) The key outcome identified is: All residents live in good quality housing regardless of tenure.
- (ii) This section includes progress towards meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and the measures that are in place or are planned to address fuel poverty. Issues such as sustainability and around how best to promote energy efficiency across all sectors are considered here.

- (iii) This section links to the Council's Scheme of Assistance for owners and how owners are encouraged to bring their properties up to the standard.

3.3.3 Homelessness

- (i) The key outcome here is: Homelessness is minimised through prevention and early intervention measures.
- (ii) This section links to the Council's Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 and provides updates in particular on key policy developments such as temporary accommodation, homelessness prevention activity and housing options development. It is the intention that West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy will be updated next year in light of the likely impact of Welfare Reform.

3.3.4 Sustainable and Supportive Communities

- (i) The key outcome identified here is: We provide good quality neighbourhoods and housing services where all people feel safe and secure.
- (ii) This section considers how we can improve the quality of our neighbourhoods and improve their sustainability. It also looks at how housing services are delivered and what improvements should be examined.
- (iii) Consideration is given to ways in which the housing allocations policy can more effectively serve the needs of all groups within our communities through better use of the existing stock.
- (iv) Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour is a key task for the Council and here we set out how housing links with, and proposes to develop, the ASB Strategy over the next five years.

3.3.5 Addressing Particular Housing Needs

- (i) The key outcome identified is: People with particular housing needs have access to suitable housing with any necessary support to optimise their independence and well being.

- (ii) This section outlines the Council's approach to addressing the housing and support needs of specific groups in West Dunbartonshire and what we can do to enable people to live in housing which promotes their independence and well being. It covers a wide range of particular needs groups including older people, people with a learning disability, people with a physical disability, people with dementia, vulnerable young people, people with a mental health issue, the BME community, and the Gypsy/Traveller community.
- (iii) One of the principal policy drivers for the Council is the increasingly ageing demographic and shifting the balance of care for older people to safe and affordable community based options is identified as a key development area. The variety of measures employed to achieve this are considered here.

4. People Implications

4.1 There are no direct implications associated with this report.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no direct financial implications in relation to this report, although the delivery of the LHS will bring together a number of resource streams from the Council and other partner organisations.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to publish a Local Housing Strategy. Notwithstanding any sanctions from the Housing regulator, failure to put in place a LHS would result in a lack of strategic direction in housing and related fields.

6.2 The strategy has been drawn up in a volatile policy environment and where there is a great deal of economic uncertainty. The strategy will be the subject of annual review to ensure that any relevant local or national changes are incorporated.

6.3 The outcomes contained in this strategy will be dependent on the ongoing resource commitments of a wide range of partners in both the public and private sector.

7. Equalities, Health and Human Rights

7.1 An Equalities, Health and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been carried in regards to this strategy and is available on the Council's website.

8. Strategic Assessment

- 8.1** The Council has identified four main strategic priorities for 2011/2012, namely Social & Economic Regeneration, Financial Strategy, Asset Management Strategy; and Fit for Purpose Services.
- 8.2** The LHS 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.
- 8.3** The LHS places regeneration at the heart of local outcomes contributing greatly to all four of the Council's main strategic priorities for the communities of West Dunbartonshire.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 9.1** The draft Local Housing Strategy 2011 - 2016 sets out our understanding of the housing issues facing West Dunbartonshire and indicates how the Council and our partners intend to address them.
- 9.2** Development of the LHS has been informed by an extensive consultation exercise centred on the Housing Issues Paper. The second stage of the consultation, over the Consultative Draft, is continuing until 25 November 2011.
- 9.3** It is planned that the LHS be submitted to the Scottish Government by the end of November 2011 and thereafter be subject to the agree review process.
- 9.4** The Committee is asked to:
 - i) note the issue of Consultative Draft and its content;
 - ii) agree that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Development to submit a final version to the Scottish Government by the end of November 2011, having regards to further comments made in the consultation exercise; and
 - iii) agree that the submitted final Local Housing Strategy be reported to the January 2012 Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee for ratification.

Elaine Melrose
Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development
Date: 3 October 2011

Person to Contact: Jamie Dockery - Policy Officer, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, G82 3PU, telephone: 01389 737366, e-mail: jamie.dockery@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

John Kerr - Housing Strategy Manager, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, G82 3PU, telephone: 01389 737889, e-mail: john.kerr2@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendix: West Dunbartonshire Council Consultative Draft 2011 - 2016

Background Papers: West Dunbartonshire Council Local Housing Strategy
Housing Issues Paper Consultative Draft 11 May 2011

West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2004 - 2009

Scottish Government and COSLA Local Housing Strategies -
Supporting Improvement 11 February 2009

Wards Affected: All