

## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

### Report by the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability

Housing and Communities Committee: 14 August 2019

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**Subject: More Homes Better Homes West Dunbartonshire -  
Local Housing Strategy 2017 – 2022 Second Annual Progress  
Report**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** This report provides the Housing and Communities Committee with a progress report on the More Homes Better Homes West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy which covers the period 2017 - 2022.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Housing and Communities Committee:-
- (i) acknowledges the progress made in meeting the aims and objectives of the More Homes Better Homes West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2017 – 2022; and
  - (ii) notes the contents of the Local Housing Strategy Progress Report - attached as appendix 1 to this report.

#### **3. Background**

- 3.1** Under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Local Authorities are required to carry out a comprehensive assessment of housing needs and conditions and to produce a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) to address the issues identified.
- 3.2** The West Dunbartonshire LHS was approved by Housing and Communities Committee and submitted to the Scottish Government in November 2016 and covers the period 2017– 2022.
- 3.3** West Dunbartonshire Council are required to submit a new Local Housing Strategy to the Scottish Government in 2021, the preparation of this strategy has already commenced and is supported by new Scottish Government guidance which will be published this Autumn.

#### **4. Main Issues**

- 4.1** This annual Progress Report provides an update on progress on the five key themes contained in the Local Housing Strategy, namely:
- Housing Need and Demand;

- Promoting Good Quality Housing;
- Homelessness and Housing Options;
- Sustainable and Supportive Communities; and
- Addressing Particular Housing Needs.

**4.2** A performance management report has been drawn up to monitor progress on the delivery of the key actions arising from the LHS and this is attached to this report as Appendix 1: LHS 2017 -2022 Progress Report. Key elements of the report are described below.

#### **4.3** Housing Need and Demand

**4.3.1** A key aim of the LHS is to maximise the delivery of new affordable housing in West Dunbartonshire including increasing the Council's own new build programme. Overall it is proposed to deliver over 1000 new affordable homes through the More Homes West Dunbartonshire approach within the lifespan of the plan in support of the Scottish Government's target of 50,000 new homes by 2021.

**4.3.2** To assist in meeting the ambitious target outlined above, West Dunbartonshire Council have secured Scottish Government grant assistance through their Resource Planning Assumption (RPA) of around £50m to support the More Homes West Dunbartonshire approach. In 2018/19 one hundred and forty two new social housing units were completed to meet housing need and demand.

**4.3.3** The LHS has informed the development of the West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan 2 (LDP 2) and set the Housing Supply Targets to be met. The LDP 2 sets out the land use strategy, policies and proposals for the period and identifies opportunities for housing development to meet the targets. The LDP aims to achieve a satisfactory tenure balance and sufficient land supply for all required housing provision. Consultation on the new LDP 2 Main Issues Report closed in September 2017. The Proposed Plan was submitted to the Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) on 30th May 2019 for its examination.

**4.3.4** The Clydeplan Strategic Development Plan (SDP) was approved by the Scottish Government as robust and credible in July 2017. Key findings of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) which formed part of the SDP include:

- WDC continues to have a reducing and ageing population;
- Household numbers are rising but not as quickly as across Scotland generally; and
- Household size is falling.

**4.3.5** The Planning (Scotland) Bill was approved by the Scottish Government in June 2019. It retains regional planning and directs one or more local

authorities to prepare a Regional Spatial Strategy. The Bill is likely to receive Royal Assent Summer/Autumn 2019. It should be noted that the transitional arrangements are currently unknown on how we will transition between the current and new Acts.

- 4.3.6** WDC has set annual Housing Supply Targets of 150 for the private sector and 80 for the affordable sector, figures which are higher than the housing estimates shown in the SDP. This reflects the Council's overarching strategic objective to grow the population of West Dunbartonshire.
- 4.3.7** The LHS highlights the Council's main strategic housing regeneration projects which includes developments at Dumbarton Harbour and Queens Quay, Clydebank. Dumbarton Harbour is now on site with first units to be completed in 2019 while work on Queens Quay, Clydebank is scheduled to start in Autumn 2019.
- 4.3.8** The West Dunbartonshire Council Strategic *More Homes Better Homes Housing Investment Plan 2019/ 20 – 2023/24*, which augments the LHS by setting out the funding priorities for affordable housing, was approved by Council and published in November 2018. An updated plan will be submitted to the Housing and Communities Committee in November 2019.
- 4.3.9** West Dunbartonshire's Affordable Housing Supply Programme is determined by the priorities established within the LHS. Since 2013, when the Council resumed building Council homes after a gap of more than 25 years, 794 new social rented homes have started development of which 475 have completed including 161 new Council homes (34% of the overall total). These are shown in the table below:

Affordable Housing Supply Programme – New Build Completions 2013/14 -2019/20			
Project	Developer	Units	Completion Date *Estimated Completion Date
Miller Road, Haldane	WDC	15	October 2013
Granville Street, Clydebank	WDC	33	February 2014
Central Bellsmyre, Dumbarton	WDC	36	December 2014
Brucehill, Dumbarton	WDC	37	August 2015
The Scholars, Clydebank	Cube HA	33	June 2014
Glenfinnan Gardens, Dumbarton	Bield HA	33	February 2015
Beardmore Place, Clydebank	Cube HA	54	August 2015
Central Alexandria	Caledonia/Dunbritton HA	69 (63/6)	February 2017
Dalmuir Phase 3	Link HA	30	October 2017
Second Ave/Singer St, Clydebank	WDC	40	April 2018

Bingo Hall Site Clydebank	Clydebank HA	44	June 2018
Carrick Terrace, Dumbarton	Cube HA	31	March 2019
Auld St, Dalmuir	Cube HA	20	March 2019
Dumbain Road /Carrochan Road	Cube HA	35	July 2019*
Stirling Road, Bonhill	Cube HA	8	July 2019*
Dumbarton Harbour	Dunbritton HA	150	March 2020*
St Andrews, Clydebank	WDC	126	February 2021*
<b>Total</b>		<b>794</b>	

**4.3.10** The Council has secured a Resource Planning Assumption (RPA) from the Scottish Government's AHSP of more than £29m for the 3 years to 2020/21, rising to around £50m for the five years to 2023/24. This funding supports all new affordable housing delivery across West Dunbartonshire, including development by Housing Associations.

**4.3.11** The Council's innovative Affordable Housing Design Standard, first introduced in 2015, was updated in February 2019 and will apply to new SHIP projects from April 2020.

#### **4.4** Promoting Good Quality Housing

**4.4.1** The Council maintains compliance of its stock with the SHQS and continues to reduce the number of abeyances.

**4.4.2** The Council has strengthened its asset based approach to managing, maintaining investing in its housing portfolio through:

- the delivery of the Council's Strategic Asset Management Strategy – Better Homes West Dunbartonshire through the Better Homes Delivery Group
- managing the stock across all relevant departments to a high standard whilst meeting and aiming to exceed all specified standards
- identifying housing stock that requires intervention and carrying out appropriate actions to address this
- building quality affordable accommodation of the right size and type that is energy efficient and meets needs, including particular needs
- ensuring all actions contained in the Housing Asset Management Strategy provide best value for existing tenants and future customers and are affordable to the HRA.

**4.4.3** The Council continues to contribute to meeting the Scottish Government's vision for lower carbon consumption, reducing the impacts of climate change and improving energy efficiency standards across all housing sectors. We are on target to meet the December 2020 deadline for compliance with the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH). However, we are aware of the fast moving agenda around energy efficiency and it is an area that we will

prioritise in terms of research and development throughout 2019/20.

**4.4.4** The LHS notes the growing importance of the Private Rented Sector and its role in meeting housing need and has committed to adopting a more holistic approach to the issues in this sector. It is the intention that this will be delivered throughout the lifespan of this LHS

**4.4.5** WDC published its Empty Homes Strategy in February 2017 and we continue to strengthen our partnership approach to combatting empty homes within the private housing market. WDC has a target to bring back into use 25 empty homes each year which was again achieved in 2018/19. The Empty Homes work also seeks to support the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy by bringing back into use vacant flats above shops where possible.

#### **4.5** Homelessness and Housing Options

**4.5.1** The *More Than a Roof* West Dunbartonshire Homelessness, Prevention and Temporary Accommodation Strategy was adopted by West Dunbartonshire Council in February 2017. Its vision is that:

*“Our residents succeed and live a fulfilled life in their choice of home, and if they have to face the crisis of homelessness they do so with access to quality information, advice and support which will afford them choice to live successfully in their home”.*

**4.5.2** The 5 key objectives of *More than a Roof* are that:

- People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness;
- People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and about the range of housing options available to them;
- Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice;
- Homeless people are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed;
- Homeless people are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.

**4.5.3** Our *More Than a Roof* strategic approach was consistent with the Scottish Government’s re-energised approach to tackling homelessness and specifically rough sleeping and the establishment of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG). A key recommendation from the short-life working group (HARSAG) and adopted by the Scottish Government was for Local Authorities to develop and submit a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTP) by 31 December 2018.

**4.5.4** A report outlining our approach was provided to the Housing and Communities Committee in November 2018, our RRTP was submitted to the Scottish Government by the 31 December 2018 timescale and our RRTP was

subsequently approved by the Housing and Communities Committee on 6 February 2019. A full update on the implementation of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan has been submitted to the Housing and Communities Committee meeting of 14 August 2019

**4.5.5** Following submission of the RRTP's the Scottish Government provided all Local Authorities with written feedback by the end of March 2019. This was followed up with a face to face meeting with Scottish Government officials on 8 May 2019.

**4.5.6** The feedback received from the Scottish Government was positive and highlighted a number of areas of good practice including:

- The comprehensive temporary accommodation modelling undertaken as part of our wider "More than a roof" approach;
- The introduction of the supported tenancy model
- Prioritising Housing First
- Our award winning Leaving Care Housing Protocol; and
- The fact that we have largely managed to avoid using bed and breakfast type accommodation for homeless households.

**4.5.7** The Scottish Government and COSLA announced on 17 June 2019 that funding available for Scotland's transition to Rapid Rehousing had been increased from £15 million to £24m and will be distributed over a 3 year period. An initial £8m has been allocated to Councils to cover 2019/20, and a further £16m is for years 2 and 3 (2020/21, 2021/22). Funding for years 4 and 5 of the plan is not yet known.

**4.5.8** As West Dunbartonshire accounts for approximately 3.3% of homelessness assessments in Scotland an allocation of £265,000 funding has been awarded to cover the period 2019/20 to West Dunbartonshire.

**4.5.9** The initial allocation of the £265k will fund the Year 1 activities outlined within the RRTP and highlighted in the table below. More detailed information is provided to this Housing and Communities Committee in the West Dunbartonshire Rapid Re-housing Transition Plan "Home at the Heart" update report

Rapid rehousing costs	Year 1
Housing First West Dunbartonshire	132,500
Additional Housing Support Service	From identified existing
Additional Resettlement Support Service	35,000
Additional proactive Homelessness Prevention Service	35,000
Conversion programme	62,500

**4.5.10** The allocation of funding will also ensure our proposed scaling up of our Housing First Service which was been introduced this year in line with projected service targets.

**4.5.11** As part of the development of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan the Council has undertaken a review of supported and temporary accommodation and determined future need and ensures there is an adequate supply to meet demand.

**4.5.12** Joint work streams with the West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership and Employability Services have strengthened partnership working in areas such as Community Justice to deliver the new Criminal Justice National Outcomes.

#### **4.6** Sustainable and Supportive Communities

**4.6.1** Tenancy sustainment within the social rented sector has been a key area of work for all landlord services during 2018/19; the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) will hopefully demonstrate higher levels of tenancy sustainment across all social landlords when published in August 2019, alongside more localised information.

**4.6.2** A comprehensive action plan to reduce rent arrears and increase rent collection was introduced in late 2017. This includes developing pre-tenancy work, improved early intervention, enhancing procedures for vulnerable tenants in conjunction with Health & Social Care colleagues and reviewing provisions for households in severe hardship including as a result of Welfare Reforms.

**4.6.3** West Dunbartonshire has one of the highest incidence rate of domestic abuse in Scotland. In partnership with Police Scotland and the legal profession Housing and Employability launched the 'No Home for Domestic Abuse' policy which has been seen as sector leading approach to this issue since its launch in June 2018.

#### **4.7.** Addressing Particular Housing Needs

**4.7.1** Joint working continues with the West Dunbartonshire HSCP in support of the principle of shifting the balance of care from institutional settings to tenancy based support in the community. The principles of the collaborative working are set out in the Housing Contribution element of the HSCP Strategic Plan 2019-2022.

**4.7.2** Colleagues from the HSCP were involved throughout in the preparation of the LHS and the Strategic Housing Investment Plan. Each new affordable housing project contained in the programme must now include a minimum of 10% specialist provision, the nature of which is agreed with the HSCP. The HSCP has been a key participant in the review of the West Dunbartonshire Design Standard, with a particular interest in areas around accessibility,

adaptability and specialist housing.

**4.7.3** Following the completion of the Council's new older people's care home at Crosslet House, Dumbarton, work is ongoing at the second care home site at Queens' Quay, Clydebank.

**4.7.4** Housing and HSCP have worked together over the past two years to improve understanding of each agencies roles and the needs of our looked after young people. This improvement is having a direct impact on the outcomes experienced by our young people. There is now greater consideration to what type of accommodation a young person requires, the location and what supports are needed to enable the young person to access and successfully sustain their tenancy.

**4.7.5** Work is ongoing to develop a project for service users with more complex needs as part of the new WDC housing development at St Andrew's school. This development is particularly relevant for those service users currently living out with West Dunbartonshire, enabling them to return to their local community and support networks.

#### **4.8** Forthcoming Local Housing Strategy Guidance 2019

**4.8.1** New Scottish Government guidance on future Local Housing Strategies has been circulated in draft form and has been reviewed by relevant officers within the Council's Housing Service. It is proposed that this guidance will be formally issued in Summer 2019.

**4.8.2** While the main requirements of the LHS look unlikely to change, the following areas will have greater emphasis;

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Implications of the new Planning (Scotland) Bill: better alignment between the LHS and the Development Plan, especially in areas such as the use of surplus land and the setting of Housing Supply Targets. It seems likely that the Strategic Development Plan will now remain though on a 10- year time frame and that there will be a greater role for the National Planning Framework.

Equalities Impact Assessment: In keeping with wider Government policy, issues around equality are to be given a higher profile. More evidence will be required that an EIA has been carried out at an early stage of the LHS process.

Place-Making and Communities: more emphasis on supporting new and existing neighbourhoods based on the 6 principles set out in Creating Places – A Policy Statement on Architecture and Place for Scotland. The LHS should reflect use of the Place Standard Tool

Gypsy/Travellers: the guidance will strengthen the requirements around understanding and addressing the needs of Gypsy/Travellers. The East Lothian Council approach is highlighted as good practice.

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Homelessness and Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans: LHS should have a clear focus on the Housing Options Approach and a more joined up approach with RRTP,



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including in respect to people leaving custody. The LHS should be clear on the needs for temporary and supported accommodation.

**Key Workers/Armed Forces Communities:** The LHS should note any consideration given to these areas, particularly in locations with large military services establishments or where there is evidence to suggest that action to support key workers housing may be required.

**Specialist Provision and Independent Living:** More emphasis on the Public Sector Equality Duty to ensure that equality issues are fully considered in the LHS. In particular a new guidance for setting LHS targets on Wheelchair Accessible housing has been issued (MHDGN 2019/02).

**Fuel Poverty, Energy Efficiency and Climate Change:** While the draft does not propose any changes of LHS coverage in these areas at this point, it is likely that further guidance will be issued separately given that there is mention of a Bill expected in late 2019 to introduce ambitious new fuel poverty targets.

**4.8.3** These points have been taken into consideration through the development of the new Local Housing Strategy which will be required to be submitted to the Scottish Government in 2021.

## **5. People Implications**

**5.1** There are no direct implications associated with this report.

## **6. Financial Implications**

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

## **7. Risk Analysis**

**7.1** Despite recent mitigation efforts, Welfare Reform and in particular the Universal Credit element remains a concern. These, together with the ongoing prevalence of fuel poverty, pose a significant risk to the delivery of a number of the outcomes.

**7.2** The Scottish Government has set a date of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 as the deadline for delivery of the 50,000 new affordable homes and project funding may be at risk if they cannot be completed by this date.

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

**8.1** An Equalities, Health and Human Rights Impact Assessment was carried out on the Local Housing Strategy and found no substantive negative impacts. The assessment is available on the Council's website.

## **9.1 Consultation**

- 9.1** The West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2017 – 2022 was the subject of a widespread consultation exercise which is summarised in a report on the Council’s website, the implementation of the LHS is also subject to regular updates to the West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisation (WDTRO)

## **10. Strategic Assessment**

- 10.1** The ongoing implementation of the West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy contributes greatly to all five strategic priorities but particularly to the priority to improve local housing and environmentally sustainable infrastructure.

**Peter Barry**  
**Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability**  
**Date: 31 July 2019**

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**Person to Contact:** John Kerr – Housing Development and Homelessness Manager, Housing and Employability, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, G82 3PU, telephone: 01389 737889, email: [john.kerr@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:john.kerr@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

**Appendices:** 1. Annual Progress Report Summary

**Background Papers:** [West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2017 2022](#)

**Wards Affected:** All