

LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2017 - 2022

Summary Document
November 2016

Foreword



Welcome to the West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy.

This important document sets the vision for Housing and Housing Support services across West Dunbartonshire for the period 2017 - 2022. Good quality housing is a cornerstone of any thriving community and we in West Dunbartonshire Council aim to ensure that our communities are safe and secure, with housing that meets the needs of all our residents, including those with particular housing requirements.

As the statutory housing authority, West Dunbartonshire Council plays the lead role in delivering on this strategy. However, the ambitious plans contained in this strategy can only be realised through partnership working with a wide range of agencies and organisations and with the support of local people in our communities. For example, the success of the new affordable housing programme detailed in our More Homes West Dunbartonshire initiative will be determined by how well we work with colleagues in the housing associations and the Scottish Government, More Homes Division.

The LHS is laid out under five key themes covering the wide range of housing and housing support related activities. The main actions associated with each theme are listed in the Action Plan and progress on these will be monitored as we move forward.

Councillor David McBride
Convenor of Housing, Environment and Economic Development

Foreword

More Homes, Better Homes West Dunbartonshire

The strategy contains a 10-point success plan “Forward in All Directions”:

1. Maximise the delivery of new affordable housing through the More Homes Better Homes West Dunbartonshire initiative in partnership with developing HA partners delivering 1000 new social rented homes in West Dunbartonshire.
2. Ensure a generous supply of suitable housing sites and deliver on the Council’s main strategic housing regeneration priorities including those at Dumbarton Harbour and Queens’ Quay.
3. Reduce the impacts of climate change and fuel poverty by supporting energy efficiency measures across all housing sectors and by delivering on compliance with EESSH for social rented housing by December 2020.
4. Use all available powers to improve the housing quality across all tenures, particularly in mixed ownership blocks, and to improve the delivery of the Council’s Housing Capital Programme through the More Homes Better Homes West Dunbartonshire initiative.
5. Introduce a Housing Options approach to prevent homelessness and to ease access to suitable accommodation for West Dunbartonshire households.
6. Work with partners to reduce repeat homelessness and increase tenancy sustainment in the social rented sector.
7. Adopt a more holistic joined up approach to improving standards in the Private Rented Sector.
8. Work with HSCP to develop housing support services for those with particular housing needs, around the principles of Forward Planning, Choice and Prevention.
9. Ensure rapid access to assessment, and provision of aids and adaptations.
10. Improve education, training and job opportunities for West Dunbartonshire residents through the workstreams and investment associated with this strategy and build on existing strong links through Working4U.



The West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy
‘More Homes, Better Homes West Dunbartonshire’
vision is:

“To develop and maintain a partnership approach, maximising opportunities to promote the growth of the housing sector, create opportunities to deliver joint solutions, meet housing need and provide a wide range of high quality and sustainable housing in a strong well functioning local housing system”

1 Introduction

Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to prepare a Local Housing Strategy which is the main strategic document on:

- Housing;
- Homelessness;
- Housing support services; and
- Fuel poverty.

This Local Housing Strategy (LHS) sets out how West Dunbartonshire Council and its partners plan to address the housing and housing related issues over the next five year period 2017/18 - 2021/2022.

The Strategy contains an action plan which outlines the projects/ activities to be implemented to achieve the aims outlined for the period 2017 - 2022.

The LHS is augmented by the biennial Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2017 - 2022 (SHIP) detailing how the investment priorities will be delivered.

The full LHS and the SHIP can be found on the Council's website here:

LHS: <http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/housing/local-housing-strategy/>

SHIP: <https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/housing/strategic-housing-investment-plan/>



2 Strategic Policy Framework

This section outlines the wider policy context affecting the Local Housing Strategy. It details the other main strategies, policies and plans, both local and national which the LHS refers to.

The main other relevant documents are:

- **West Dunbartonshire Council's Strategic Plan 2012 - 2017 which has a vision of:**
A prosperous West Dunbartonshire recognised as a dynamic area within a successful Scotland
- **The Community Planning West Dunbartonshire 2014 - 2017 Single Outcome Agreement is the overarching strategic framework for the partnership¹.** It outlines the long term vision for the area and the key priorities and outcomes.
- **The West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2015 -2016 is the Integration Authority's paper setting out their outcomes and priorities².** The HSCP Partnership Board's:
 - *Mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of West Dunbartonshire.*
 - *Purpose is to plan for and ensure the delivery of high quality health and social care services to and with the communities of West Dunbartonshire.*



- The LHS sits within the planning framework of the **Clydeplan Strategic Development Plan - Proposed Plan 2016³** at a regional level, and the **West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (Proposed Plan) 2015⁴** at a local level, with the latter providing the land use planning context.
- The LHS has a role to play in meeting the key strategic priorities of the **West Dunbartonshire Economic Development Strategy 2015 - 2020: Sustainable Economic Growth for All**
- **Homes Fit for the 21st Century February 2011** which sets out the Scottish Government's vision for housing to 2020
- **More Homes Scotland**, the Scottish Government's plan to provide 50,000 new affordable homes over the next 5 years
- **The Council's Homelessness Strategy**
- **The Scottish Social Housing Charter** introduced in April 2012 detailing outcomes and the standards which Social Housing landlords are required to meet.

1. http://www.wdcp.org.uk/media/136670/wd_soa_2014-17.pdf
 2. <http://www.wdhsc.org.uk/media/1213/wdhsc-strategic-plan-2015-16.pdf>
 3. http://www.clydeplan-sdpa.gov.uk/files/Proposed_Plan_Jan_2016_WEB_Low_Res_Update.pdf
 4. <http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4307506/ldp-adopted-version-march-2015-web.pdf>

3 The Consultation Process

The LHS was drawn up following a lengthy consultation exercise which involved:

- Invites to all appropriate organisations on the Corporate Community Group Distribution list
- The offer to speak at any of the above organisations' events
- Presentations to the umbrella group, the West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisation (WDTRO)
- A special meeting of the Housing Providers Forum, the meeting which brings together the Council, The Scottish Government and the RSLs operating in West Dunbartonshire
- 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
- Presentations at the West Dunbartonshire Equality Forum, the Homelessness and Housing Access Forum and the West Dunbartonshire Access Panel.



4 Key Themes

The strategy is split into 5 key themes:

1. Housing Need and Demand covering

- Need and Demand Projections
- Housing Land Supply
- Affordable Housing Supply Programme
- Council New Build
- Tenure Balance
- Right to Buy

2. Promoting Good Quality Housing covering

- Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)
- Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH)
- Regeneration
- The WDC Design Standard
- Fuel Poverty
- Climate Change
- Private Rented Sector
- Assistance to Owners

3. Homelessness and Housing Options covering

- Housing Options
- Housing Advice and Prevention
- Temporary Accommodation
- Tenancy Sustainment and Support
- Supported Accommodation

4. Sustainable and Supportive Communities covering

- Neighbourhood Quality/Sustainable Places
- Estate Management
- Anti-Social Behaviour/Public Reassurance
- Equalities eg how we tackle hate crime
- Community Justice

5. Addressing Particular Housing Needs covering

- Health and Social Care Integration
- Aids and Adaptations / Access to Suitable Housing
- Care and Repair
- Older People's Households
- Learning Disability
- Vulnerable Young People
- Dementia
- Black and Minority Ethnic Communities
- Gypsy/ Travellers.

Housing Regeneration Areas

The new LHS continues to give high priority to housing regeneration and in particular identifies the following areas:

- Bellsmyre
- Brucehill
- Castlehill
- Central/Radnor Park
- Clydebank East/Whitcrook
- Dalmuir
- Drumry
- Haldane
- North Mountblow (Brunswick/Montreal/Quebec)
- Westcliff.

It should be stressed that investment in new affordable housing will not be confined to the regeneration areas. When deciding on the priority for any given new affordable housing proposal, a number of factors are taken into account including availability of land, type of housing being proposed, deliverability and value for money.

5 Key Theme 1: Housing Need and Demand

This section looks at the projected housing need and demand and what this may mean for the development of the housing strategy for the area. It also deals with how the LHS fits with the Local Plan and wider Planning framework.

A Housing Needs and Supply Assessment (HNDA) was undertaken through the *Clydeplan* group of 8 local in the Glasgow and Clyde Valley city region area and completed in 2015 as part of the proposed Strategic Development Plan.

Key findings from the HNDA were:

- The HNDA shows a continuing reduction anticipated in West Dunbartonshire's population, due primarily to net out-migration
- Whilst the projected population in West Dunbartonshire continues to decline, the number of households is projected to increase. This trend is reflected across both the private and social rented tenures
- Over the city region as a whole, the 2015 HNDA estimates suggest more muted growth in the private sector and more significant growth in the Social Rented /Below Market Rent sector compared with the previous HNDA.

The study noted the following characteristics of the make-up of housing in West Dunbartonshire:

- West Dunbartonshire has a higher than average proportion of flats than most local authorities at 51%, with only the four Scottish cities having more (and against a Scottish average of 38%).
- It has a higher than average percentage of dwellings in the lowest 3 Council Tax bandings (A-C).
- Almost half of West Dunbartonshire Council's own housing stock is of non-traditional construction.

Key Actions

- Exceed the annual Housing Supply Target of delivering 80 new Social Rented homes and 150 new Private Sector homes
- Deliver 1000 new affordable homes within the lifespan of the strategy by delivering on the *More Homes* initiative with an emphasis on promoting accessibility
- Ensure a generous supply of suitable housing sites
- Deliver on the Council's main strategic housing regeneration priorities including those at Dumbarton Harbour and Queens' Quay
- Make best use of resources including the Scottish Government's new Infrastructure Fund to help meet the *More Homes Scotland* targets
- Carry out an update of the 2014 Affordability Review.

6 Key Theme 2: Promoting Good Quality Housing

This section outlines how we plan to promote good quality housing across all tenures in West Dunbartonshire and the measures we will take to improve sustainability and energy efficiency as well as reducing fuel poverty.

The Scottish Government had a target that all socially rented housing is to be brought up to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015. The SHQS required that all houses should be:

- Compliant with the Tolerable Standard;
- Free from Serious Disrepair;
- Energy Efficient;
- Provided with Modern Facilities and Services; and
- Healthy, Safe and Secure.

In March 2015, WDC achieved the objective of compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS).

87.9% of WDC social housing stock fully met the standard and 12.1% were exempt or in abeyance. Overall, the Housing Association stock in West Dunbartonshire has achieved a compliance rate of over 90%. The Council's asset management base approach to its own stock has provided the Council with a robust information and evidence that informs strategic plans including the demolition programme, the Council's new build programme and the HRA Capital Programme.

Fuel Poverty: The key contributors to fuel poverty are household income, fuel costs and the energy efficiency of the home.

One of the contributors that we can impact on is the energy efficiency of the home. However despite major levels of investment in our social housing in recent years and those private properties in common, the Scottish House Condition Survey 2011-2014 estimates that there were 29% of households living in fuel poverty and 6% of households living in extreme fuel poverty in West Dunbartonshire (2014).

Key Actions

- Ensure the Council's housing is fit-for-purpose through the Better Homes initiative
- Maintain SHQS compliance and minimise abeyances
- Comply with the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by Dec 2020
- Contribute to the vision for lower carbon consumption and improving energy efficiency
- Target HRA funding at improving energy efficiency of Council homes
- Adopt a more holistic approach to issues in the Private Rented Sector
- Continue to provide the home energy advice and information service
- Continue to engage with owners in mixed tenure blocks and ensure all measures available are utilised in these areas
- Refresh the Council's Housing Asset Management Strategy.

7 Key Theme 3: Homelessness and Housing Options

The strategic aims are to

1. Prevent Homelessness occurring in West Dunbartonshire
2. Improve access to support services and increased tenancy sustainment
3. Improve the range of Housing Options available in West Dunbartonshire and ensure a sustainable housing solution
4. Ensure a commitment to continue to develop and improve services to tackling homelessness through a partnership approach.

Important points from the draft strategy include:

- Homelessness in Scotland has continued to fall since the last LHS in 2012. West Dunbartonshire has mirrored this. In 2011/12 there were 1545 homelessness applications taken. This has slowly reduced to 1122 in 2015/16.
- When looking at all applications in 2015/16 just over half (56%) of the main applicants were male. However when you look more closely at the households type you can see that there are clear differences. Two thirds of the single person households were male, whereas 93% of the single parent households were female
- Over a third of people who presented to West Dunbartonshire as homeless were aged between 16 and 25
- Just over a third of households stated their reason for homelessness as being a dispute within the household. Just over half of these were violent or abusive, in other words they were domestic abuse. 85% of these households were female

- 51% of young people assessed had a support requirement for housing management skills. This figure is in line with previous years. A quarter of households assessed as homeless had a mental health support need and 16% had an addiction
- West Dunbartonshire Council has a Temporary Accommodation Model that is used on a regular basis to look at the stock of temporary and supported accommodation against who is homeless in the area. This model will ensure we have the right type and number of temporary and supported accommodation. The outcome from the model will also influence the new Homelessness Strategy
- Welfare reform is a key challenge for the council as it is likely that the need for temporary accommodation may increase as increased number of households fall into debt. It is vital that the housing service works in partnership with internal and external partners to mitigate the changes
- Scotland currently has 23,000 long term empty homes in the private sector - long term empties are classed as any property that has been empty for 6 months or more. West Dunbartonshire currently has over 400 properties recorded as being in this category. This pool of vacant houses is seen as a potentially valuable resource in addressing housing supply and homelessness issues. Since August 2012 the Council has employed an Empty Homes Officer who works closely with other Council services particularly Environmental Health and Council Tax to help bring empty properties back into use.

7 Key Theme 3: Homelessness and Housing Options

Housing Options:

Delivery of a comprehensive Housing Options service is a key delivery priority for West Dunbartonshire Council and one which will support tenancy sustainment.

Why Housing Options and Prevention?

- Reduction in homelessness as people receive advice about sustaining their tenancy
- Homeless people receive prompt and easy access to help and advice
- Prevention of homelessness is a sustainable and cost effective option
- Balance between proactive and reactive services
- Housing information and advice is given out to allow client to make informed choices. This can lead to tenancy sustainment and reduction in homelessness.

Key Actions

- Develop and Implement a new West Dunbartonshire Homelessness Strategy 2017-2020
- Carry out a review of supported/temporary accommodation and Housing Support
- Introduce a housing options approach
- Work with Community Justice partners in line with redesign of service
- Strengthen HSCP/Employability Service partnership
- Mitigate the effects of welfare reform
- Reduce the number of young people presenting as homeless
- Reduce repeat homelessness and increase tenancy sustainment
- Work with partners to ensure children are not affected by homelessness
- Roll out the new Health, Homelessness and Housing Protocol.

8 Key Theme 4: Sustainable and Supportive Communities

This section deals with housing operations around estate management, allocations, voids, and caretaking. It also looks at issues around Anti-Social Behaviour and housing's role in the Community Justice process.

A recent organisational review across housing services enabled WDC housing services to establish a new operational framework focusing on key actions moving forward in 16/17 with regard to:

- Making better use of existing housing stock
- Developing local lettings planning
- Improving housing advice and housing options
- Tenancy Sustainment
- Reducing void houses and associated rent loss
- Maximising rent collection levels and reducing rent arrears
- Improving the Environment through legislative fixed penalty notice



- Area Regeneration & Environmental Improvement
- Reshaping access to housing services in 2016/17.

The Scottish Government is currently working with stakeholders to develop a new model for community justice in Scotland. At a local

level, strategic planning and service delivery is expected to become the responsibility of local community justice partners which will include housing. A joint working Protocol is in preparation which will seek to set out the roles and responsibilities with regard to homelessness prevention and other housing matters.

8 Key Theme 4: Sustainable and Supportive Communities

Key Actions

- In 2016/17 we aim to improve our performance in reducing the number of empty homes by prioritising and reconfiguring tasks and actions within our estates service and to link these actions with the Your Communities operating objectives.
- We have created 2 specific Void Officer roles within our new operating model which will focus specifically on reduce void housing, creating efficiency within the void house process, maximise income and reduce expenditure on void housing and develop a robust void action plan at a geographical level.
- Improve tenancy sustainability and reduce the number of terminations for non-positive reasons and set geographical targets.
- Reduce the number of presentations to homelessness services from a secure WDC tenancy and to set a target that is proportionate to a stock ratio within all social rented landlords within West Dunbartonshire.
- Develop local lettings planning within each area, using landing profiling and other demographic tools to make best use of our housing stock to achieve individual tenancy and broader community sustainment and social cohesion.
- Develop local strategies to tackle low and no demand housing
- Work with our strategic partner and local housing providers to develop new build housing and improve nomination and access to new build housing on a site by site review.
- Enable Housing Officers to take a lead role in “WDC transfer” termination visits to prevent rechargeable repairs and reduce void repair costs.
- Improve pre-tenancy housing advice and assessment of income maximisation to achieve tenancy sustainment.
- Improve the customer experience through a reviewed customer satisfaction monitoring framework across housing operations. Improve rent collection levels and set targets for income maximisation and recovery of arrears at a geographical patch level.
- Create a work stream and associated action plan tackling anti-social behaviour across West Dunbartonshire, underpinned by our ARC performance framework.
- Create a work stream and associated action plan to improve tenancy sustainment levels and reduce the number of abandoned houses
- Create a work stream in partnership with homelessness services and multi-agency partnership framework to tackle domestic abuse
- Housing Services will fully contribute to the development of the Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan, to be published March 2017.

9 Key Theme 5: Addressing Particular Housing Needs

This section of the Local Housing Strategy outlines the Council's and its partners' approach to addressing the housing and support needs of specific groups in West Dunbartonshire and how this approach will help people to live at home or in a homely setting which promotes their independence and well-being. It details how housing will interact with the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP).

- **Choice;** increasing the range of housing and housing support options available to people who need them.
- **Prevention;** promoting that housing support can be a preventative, relatively inexpensive and cost effective way of enabling people to live independently at home.

The Housing Sector - through the Council - and the HSCP are able to build upon existing robust and effective mechanisms for engagement, working together closely across many service areas on issues of joint interest. There is a shared recognition that the wider housing sector must be involved in supporting the delivery of the health and social care integration agenda. In particular, all housing associations have a role to play.

The Strategy seeks to ensure clear strategic leadership about housing priorities for older people. It aims to ensure appropriate information and advice to make informed choices and that older people are assisted to remain in and make best use of existing housing stock. It seeks to invest in new housing which meets the needs of older people and to provide low level preventative support.

The Housing Contribution Statement has been published which sets out the role and contribution of the local Housing Sector - through the offices of West Dunbartonshire Council in its role as strategic housing authority - in meeting the outcomes and priorities identified within the Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan.

Whilst acknowledging the particular issues which a specific disability may present, the Local Housing Strategy notes that the housing support needs of the particular groups are fairly consistent. It further notes that successful housing and social care support often depends on the location, model and range of housing available.

With regards to addressing particular housing needs, the Local Housing Strategy has three underpinning principles which impact on the needs of those with additional housing support needs:

- **Forward Planning;** future proofing housing and housing support to take account of how people's social and physical needs change.

9 Key Theme 5: Addressing Particular Housing Needs

Key Actions

- Develop housing support services to enable long term clients to be supported within West Dunbartonshire
- Develop plans for new and refurbished housing
- Develop Services at Points of Transition
- Provide preventative interventions and supports
- Ensure rapid access to assessment, and provision of aids and adaptations
- Seek to develop supported housing solutions for younger adults with complex needs
- Supporting the housing sector to sustain the tenancies of vulnerable households through early social work interventions, promoting payment of rent, signing up for benefits and other assistance.



10 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

This final part of the strategy contains an action plan spelling out how we plan to monitor progress on the plan's objectives by measuring progress against agreed timescales.

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Other formats

This document can also be provided in large print, Braille or on audio cassette and can be translated into different community languages.
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本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

अनुसोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔

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