

West Dunbartonshire Council Housing Services



Annual Charter Performance Report for Tenants and other Customers 2016/17





Foreword



Welcome to our Annual Charter Performance Report for tenants and other customers. This report outlines how we performed during 2016/17 against the Outcomes and Standards set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Both the content and the style of the report were chosen in partnership with tenants and I hope that it is received as positively as previous reports were.

This past year has been another busy and challenging period across housing services as we continue to respond positively to the challenges of Welfare Reform and continue to deliver improved services.

Over the past 12 months housing services has been undergoing a structural and operational transformation with a renewed focus and energy on providing excellent and appropriate housing and related services.

Some of our key achievements during the past year include investment of more than £14m to meet our housing supply targets, the housing led regeneration of our communities has resulted in the delivery so far of 121 new council homes for rent, our new Homelessness Strategy “More than a Roof” is being delivered and we have improved the support we provide in order to help tenants succeed in their homes.

In addition to this, we rolled out a Rent Campaign aimed at increasing housing benefit take-up and reduce rent arrears and are also now about to embark on a public campaign titled No Home for Domestic Abuse to protect the interests of those experiencing abuse.

This report looks at our performance during 2016/17 and outlines how we have continued to deliver the standards and outcomes that tenants and other customers can expect in terms of the quality and value for money of the services they receive. As well as highlighting areas where we have performed well, the report also highlights areas where we still need to improve. The report sets out some of the actions we will be taking during 2017/18 in order to respond positively to the challenges we face and ensure that our tenants and other customers are provided with good quality homes and other services.

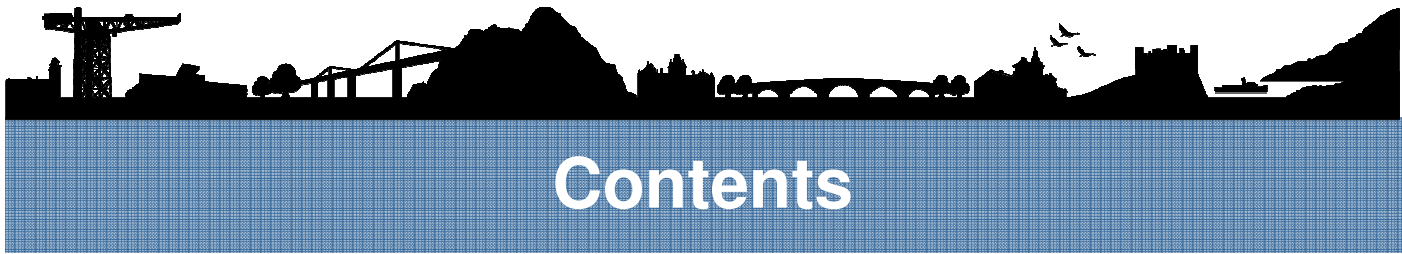
We continue to strive to ensure that our service compares well and we become the top performing landlord across all the Charter Outcomes, delivering both value for money and excellent customer service.

As always we welcome your opinion and would be happy for you to provide your views via the Housing Development team at HousingStrategy@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Peter Barry

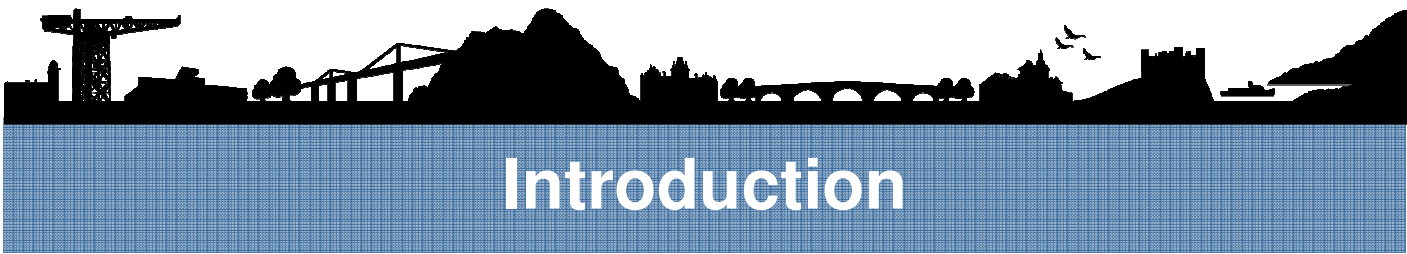
Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability





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Introduction

In April 2012, the Scottish Government introduced the new Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Charter sets out 16 outcomes and standards that the Scottish Government expects landlords should be delivering to their tenants and other service users.

From 2012 onwards, landlords have been expected to annually self-assess their performance against each of the Charter outcomes and standards that the Scottish Housing Regulator in May. This is called the Annual Return on the Charter or the 'ARC'.

In addition to reporting to the Regulator, the Council must also report its performance to its tenants and other service users by 31 October each year. This is our fourth annual report, and it tells you how Housing Services performed between April 2016 and March 2017.

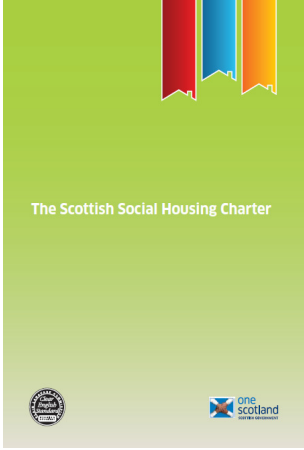
It doesn't cover all 16 outcomes and standards, it focuses on those areas tenants have told us they are most interested in. The purpose of our report is to provide you with clear, accurate information about areas of our performance which you want to know about. We hope that it will encourage you to ask more detailed questions and provide more comments to help improve housing services.

A review of the Charter has recently been carried out and an updated Charter was published by the Scottish Government on April 2017. During 2017/18 we will consult with tenants about the content and format of future performance reports.

We are keen to hear your views about the content and style of this report and you can do this by completing the form on page 15 or on our website at

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NPV5KYM>

or alternatively by using the QR code below



Key Achievements during 2016-17

- ◆ Delivered investment of more than £14m to meet the targets and ambition set by the Local Housing Strategy to increase housing supply to satisfy demand and housing need;
- ◆ Housing led regeneration of communities has resulted in the delivery so far of 121 new council homes for rent;
- ◆ During 2016/17 the service developed and consulted on a strong new Local Housing Strategy (LHS) for the period 2017-22;
- ◆ The new Homelessness Strategy “More than a Roof” has been developed, building on our strong strategic focus around this significant issue within West Dunbartonshire;
- ◆ Following the introduction of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, we are reviewing and updating our allocations policy and we are committed to ensure that people find it easy to apply for the widest choice of housing available and that sustainable solutions are found;
- ◆ We have delivered a comprehensive improvement programme at the Dennystoun Forge site and will continue to work in conjunction with residents to ensure the satisfaction continues to rise;
- ◆ We have taken steps to ensure there is more transparency in terms of explaining to tenants how their rent money is spent
- ◆ Undertook development and commissioning work for the Integrated Housing Management System which will update and improve how we provide services
- ◆ The roll out of a Rent Campaign designed to change the culture of rent collection, reduce arrears and increase the number of tenants claiming housing benefit





Tenant and Customer Involvement in this Report

The Scottish Social Housing Charter gives tenants a central role in assessing landlords performance. We share performance information with tenants throughout the year through our quarterly newsletter Housing News and on our website.



Our initial Charter Performance Report was created with the help of a tenant working group. This working group reviewed each area of housing performance and discussed what areas the report should focus on. The working group also helped us decide on the colour, the symbols and the way the report is set out.




Tenant's input has remained central, with readers of the report also able to have a say in relation to which performance areas they were most interested in and what changes should be made to the content and format of the report.

Based on this feedback we have made small changes to this years report, including reducing the use of jargon as much as possible. We have also slightly reduced the length of the report after feedback. The format of the annual report will continue to evolve by taking account of the feedback tenants give us each year. You have an opportunity again this year so use the comment sheet at the end of the report and have your say, or use the QR code on page 3 or 19 to give us your views.





We have received positive feedback about this report from tenants, as well as receiving a commendation from the Scottish Housing Network as a good example of a clear and accessible report, We have also received an award from TPAS Scotland for Best Practice in communicating performance information to tenants.

This report is based on an open and honest assessment about how housing services are performing in West Dunbartonshire. The West Dunbartonshire Scrutiny Panel have been closely involved in the development of the report and examined a draft version of this year's report and asked for clarification and for more information in certain areas. If you are interested in joining our Scrutiny Panel or would like to comment on the report please use the contact details at the end of this report.



Tenants were involved in choosing a range of symbols used in our report to tell you how we are performing over time and compared to other landlords.

performance improved  performance declined  no change in performance 

ranking is shown in quarters ranging from top (best) to bottom (poor).

   
Top Quarter Second Quarter Third Quarter Bottom Quarter

What we aim for: Tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides. Tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlords' decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

Performance Indicator	2015/16	2017*	Trend	Rank
% of tenants who feel that we are good at keeping them informed about services and decisions	87.2%	84.5%	↓	
% of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes	67%	79.1%	↑	

Developments in the last year have included carrying out a comprehensive Tenant Satisfaction Survey and using the feedback provided to improve how we deliver services. We have also reviewed and updated the housing content on the West Dunbartonshire Council website.

In addition, we also developed and updated our Tenant Participation Strategy called "Involving You", which aims to strengthen and add to the opportunities which exist for tenants and other customers to participate in, and influence our decision making processes.



The West Dunbartonshire Scrutiny Panel completed their third annual scrutiny activity and produced a report which made several recommendations in relation to the services we provide to new tenants, all of which have been adopted and will be implemented during 2017/18.

Developments in 2017/18

We will implement Year 1 of our Tenant Participation Strategy

We will take action to improve our Complaints Handling processes

We will implement an improvement plan based on the feedback provided from the Tenant Satisfaction Survey carried out in 2017



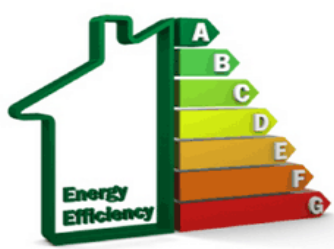
	Stage 1	Stage 2
Complaints received	168	15
Complaints upheld	86	5
Complaints responded to within target timescale	6 days (5 days)	18 days (20 days)



Outcome 4 **The Quality of Housing**

***What we aim for:** tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015, and continue to meet it thereafter, and when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair*

Performance Indicator	2015/16	2016/17	Trend	Rank
% of Council's housing stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	86%	88.2%	↑	
% of existing tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	81%	81%	↔	
% of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in	84%	86.6%	↑	



We continue to invest in our housing stock and develop our Capital Investment Programme with the aim of ensuring that our housing stock meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard , as well as the new Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing by 2020.

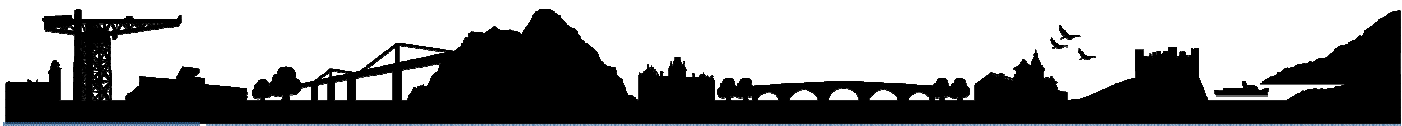
The majority of properties not meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard are properties where works are not being carried out due to owner or tenant refusals and we have a targeted programme to encourage those to reconsider refusals and ensure that works are completed to reduce this number.



Developments in 2017/18

We will consult on and deliver a new Housing Asset Management Strategy

We will continue to invest in our housing stock by delivering our Housing Capital Investment Plan



Outcome
5

Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements

What we aim for: *Tenants' homes are well maintained; with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices when work is done*

Performance Indicator	2015/16	2016/17	Trend	Rank
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	3.81 hours	3.9 hours	↓	
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	10.58 days	7.17 days	↑	
% of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time	94.5%	87.8%	↓	
% of repairs appointments kept	92.3%	85.4%	↓	
% of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service	92.7%	93.6%	↑	

Building Services delivers a wide range of services from offices and depots in Dumbarton and Clydebank, providing a dedicated repairs and maintenance service which is customer focused through a range of professional, technical and front line services.

We will continue to modernise the service delivery model introducing new ways of working and preparing the service for the implementation of new technologies, including within the Integrated Housing Management System. Throughout 2016/2017 we have worked on several key initiatives and projects to help meet the Council's strategic priorities and objectives and these will continue in 2017/2018.

Generally we perform well in comparison with peers and the introduction of new technologies will improve performance from mid-2018. In the interim, we will implement changes to the way we do things and have plans in place to help ensure our performance continues to improve.



Developments in 2017/18

We will develop and implement further actions aimed at reducing the average time taken to carry out non-emergency repairs



**Outcome
6**

Managing our estates, anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance and tenancy disputes

***What we aim for:** Tenants and other customers live in well maintained neighbourhood where they feel safe.*

Performance Indicator	2015/16	2016/17	Trend	Rank
% of tenants satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in	80%	80%	↔	
% of anti-social behaviour cases resolved within locally agreed targets	82%	70.45%	↓	

Ensuring that tenants live in well maintained neighbourhoods where they feel safe is a key objective. Whilst the level of tenant satisfaction with the management of the neighbourhood remains high, the percentage of cases of anti-social behaviour resolved within our target timescale of 12 weeks fell slightly during 2016/17. We have already taken measures to resolve this and we expect the measure to improve during 2017/18.

We acknowledge that a positive outcome is crucial in terms of resolving anti-social and in the vast majority of cases the activities undertaken result in the behaviour in question ceasing to be a concern

Developments in 2017/18

- We will take action to ensure the percentage of cases resolved within our target timescales rises
- We will implement a campaign to challenge domestic abuse
- We will increase the use of criminal anti-social behaviour orders where this is appropriate
- We will develop a campaign aimed at highlighting anti-social behaviour and the measures being taken to address this across our communities



During 2016/17 we implemented new plans to improve how we tackle fly-tipping, dog fouling and litter offences and we continue to take immediate action against those who discard items of waste irresponsibly within our estates.



What we aim for: people looking for housing find it easy to apply for the widest choice of social housing available and get the information they need on how the landlord allocates homes and their prospects of being housed.

Local Indicators	2015/16	2016/17	Trend
Average time to assess housing applications	4 days	3.9 days	↑
% of medical assessments assessed within 28 day target	54%	42.5%	↓

We are committed to ensuring that people find it easy to apply for the widest choice of housing available and which meets their needs. In addition to being given information about their prospects of being housed by the Council, our application pack provides information about how homes are allocated and information about a range of housing options.

We are currently undertaking a review of our Housing Allocations Policy which is due to be completed by November 2017 and we are updating the Nominations Agreement in place with local housing associations.

During 2016/17, the average time taken for applications to become active on the housing waiting list reduced to under 4 days, however disappointingly, the percentage of medical applications being assessed within our 28 day target decreased and as a result we will take actions to ensure this improves during 2017/18.



	2016/17
Total number of properties	10580
Total number of lets in the year	909
Total number on waiting list	3459

Developments in 2017/18

We will take action to reduce the time taken to assess applications for medical points

We will improve the way we provide housing advice to tenants to ensure more people have a face to face discussion about their housing needs



Outcome
11

Helping People Stay in their Homes

What we aim for: that tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and other organisations.

Performance Indicator	2015/16	2016/17	Trend	Rank
% of all new tenants housed in 2015/16 who were still in their tenancy 12 months later	86.8%	88.4%	↑	

Recent initiatives, such as introducing new tenant visits and annual tenant visits, have helped to increase the numbers of tenants being able to sustain their tenancy.

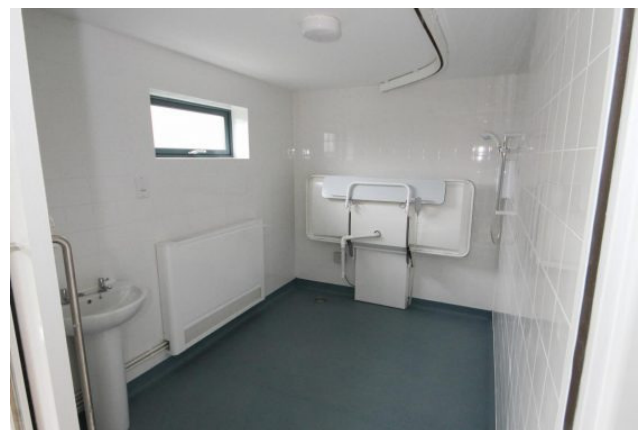
During 2016/17 the overall number of tenancies ending reduced and encouragingly the number of abandoned properties fell by 36%.

Developments in 2017/18

We will take action to reduce time taken to complete medical adaptations

Providing support to those who need it to remain in their homes is a key priority and we will continue to develop initiatives to ensure that recent improvements are sustained.

Last year we carried out a large number of major adaptations and the overall average time to complete adaptations increased. We will look at ways that this can be reduced and aim for this to improve during 2017/18.



Performance Indicator	2015/16	2016/17	Trend
Number of tenancies ending — with notice given	745	675	↑
Number of tenancies ending — being abandoned	132	84	↑
% of WDC tenancies ending with notice, ended for negative reasons	19%	20%	↓
Average time to complete medical adaptations	38 days	92 days	↓



Outcome
12

Homeless People

What we aim for: *homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed, and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.*

Performance Indicator	2015/16	2016/17	Trend	Rank
% of people satisfied with the quality of temporary accommodation	90.2%	77.8%		
% of households requiring temporary accommodation to whom an offer was made	99.9%	100%		

During 2016/17 we identified and implemented a range of actions aimed at reducing the repeat homelessness applications. These had a positive impact with the rate reducing from 10.5% in 2015/16 to 5.6% last year.

Our new Homelessness Prevention and Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2017–2020 ‘More than a Roof’ was also approved during 2016/17 and this sets out our assessment of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire and our approaches for both the prevention and mitigation of homelessness.

The strategy sets out a number of key actions and future developments that will be taken in order to meet new challenges around welfare reform and the need to continue to prevent and alleviate homelessness.

Examples include the provision of services to tackle youth homelessness, increasing the range of housing accommodation options, reviewing supported and temporary accommodation provision and continuing to reduce repeat homelessness.

Developments in 2017/18

We will carry out annual review of supported and temporary accommodation provision and ensure provision of appropriate supported accommodation

We will implement newly developed Temporary Accommodation Standards aimed at increasing the levels of satisfaction with temporary accommodation

Local Indicator	2015/16	2016/17	Trend
Number of young people presenting as homeless in West Dunbartonshire	381	360	
% of homeless cases re-assessed within 12 months (repeat homelessness)	10.5%	5.6%	
% of homeless applications given a decision within 28 days	86%	99%	



Outcome
13

Value for Money

What we aim for: *tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay. Social Landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers*

Performance Indicator	2015/16	2016/17	Trend	Rank
% of tenants who feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money.	68%	68%	↔	
Rent collected as percentage of total rent due in the reporting year.	102.4%	100.2%	↓	
Gross rent arrears (all tenants) as at 31 March each year as a percentage of rent due for the reporting year.	10.89%	10.15%	↑	
% of rent due lost through properties being empty during the last year.	1.47%	1.05%	↑	
Average length of time taken to re-let properties in the last year.	50 days	46 days	↑	

During 2016/17 we implemented a rent collection campaign which contributed to a reduction in the overall level of arrears owed to the Council.

We also reduced the average length of time taken to re-let empty properties and the rental income lost as a result of properties being empty.

We have developed detailed action plans which aim to deliver continued improvements and will monitor these closely to assess their effectiveness.

However, Welfare Reform continues to pose a challenge and we continue to maximise the use of Discretionary Housing Payments to assist those affected, as we continue to prepare for the roll out of Universal Credit.



Developments in 2017/18

Housing Officers will pilot further early intervention initiatives aimed at tackling arrears

We will review the procedures for tenants signing-up for new tenancies to ensure rental income can be paid via direct payments where appropriate

We will strengthen our pre-tenancy service to include a discussion about budgeting and referrals for income maximisation where appropriate



Outcomes

14,15

Rents and Service Charges

What we aim for: social landlords set rents and service charges in consultation with their tenants and other customers.

	2 Apt	3 Apt	4 Apt	5 Apt
WDC average rent	£71.79	£73.92	£78.52	£83.89
Scottish average rent	£71.67	£73.13	£79.42	£88.02

All tenants want to live in good quality, energy efficient homes in well maintained neighbourhoods, where they feel safe. For this reason, we continue to invest heavily in both our housing capital programme and our new council house building programme and employ housing officers to manage estates, promote successful tenancy sustainment and tackle anti-social behaviour.

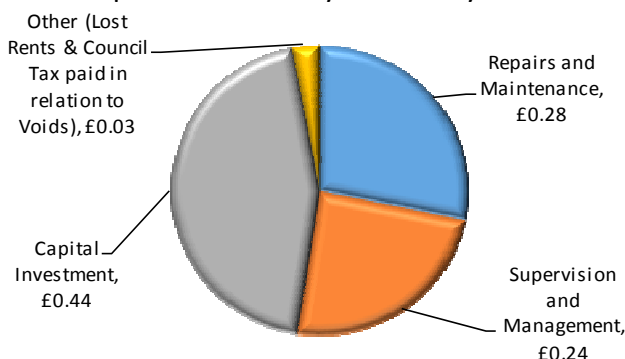
We strive to keep our costs as low as possible and carry out a rent consultation process annually in conjunction with tenants.

This consultation focuses on the Council's plans to both meet and maintain the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing, alongside our ambitions to improve our communities.

Last year various options were looked at and discussed with tenants and proposals were developed which were then agreed by the Council.

We aim to improve the involvement and influence of tenants in this process year on year and if you would like to become involved contact Jane Mack on 01389 737281 or Jane.Mack@west-dunbarton.gov.uk.

How we spent each £1 of your money in 2016-17



Supervision and

Management: employee costs, administration costs (this also includes payments to other departments for example financial services, computer systems, human resources, corporate communications, architectural services) and property costs.

Repairs and maintenance: the costs for day to day jobbing repairs carried out across all properties and costs associated with adaptations.

Other expenditure including voids: costs associated with arrears and the collection of rents, bad debt provision (funds required to account for rents and debt accounts which are not paid to the Council) and Council Tax on empty homes.

Capital Investment: the interest and principal repayments on money we have borrowed to carryout major works and improvements (e.g. cladding, kitchens, bathrooms, roofs).



What do you think of this report?

Tell us online at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NPV5KYM> , use the QR code on the right or complete this page and return it to the address overleaf



1. How satisfied are you with the design and layout of this report?

Very satisfied/Fairly satisfied/Neither or/ Fairly dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied

2. How satisfied are you that this report is easy to read and understand?

Very satisfied/Fairly satisfied/Neither or/ Fairly dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied

3. How satisfied are you that this report informs you about how we are performing?

Very satisfied/Fairly satisfied/Neither or/ Fairly dissatisfied/Very dissatisfied

4. Which information did you find particularly useful or not useful?

.....
.....

5. What other information would you like to see in a future annual report?

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West Dunbartonshire Council
Housing Development Section
Housing & Employability
FREEPOST SCO6367
Dumbarton



This document can be provided in large print, Braille or on audio cassette and can be translated into different community languages.

If you need this information in a different format please do not hesitate to contact us.

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formacie audio.

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.

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

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。

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