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## **SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

### **WEST LOTHIAN LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2017- 2022 UPDATE**

#### **REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES**

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to update the panel on progress with the actions in the West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

To note and consider the following recommendations which are intended to be submitted to Council Executive for approval:

- Notes that good progress is being made implementing the Local Housing Strategy;
- Notes the COVID pandemic has presented a challenging situation particularly in relation to homelessness, new build completions and meeting EESSH;
- Notes the development of net zero carbon targets will be included in the LHS going forward and;
- Notes that a new Local Housing Strategy will be developed during 2021 and 2022, and a further report with progress on this will be brought forward in early 2022.

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I</b>	<b>Council Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on our customers' needs;</li> <li>• being honest, open and accountable;</li> <li>• providing equality of opportunity;</li> <li>• making best use of our resources; and</li> <li>• working in partnership</li> </ul>
<b>II</b>	<b>Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	A Strategic Environmental Assessment pre-screening report and Integrated Impact Assessment were carried out on the Local Housing Strategy
<b>III</b>	<b>Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None.
<b>IV</b>	<b>Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	Performance indicators have been included in the Local Housing Strategy
<b>V</b>	<b>Relevance to Single</b>	Our children have the best start in life and are

<b>Outcome Agreement</b>	<p>ready to succeed.</p> <p>Our economy is diverse and dynamic, and West Lothian is an attractive place for doing business.</p> <p>We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities.</p> <p>People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances.</p> <p>Older people are able to live independently in the community and with an improved quality of life.</p> <p>We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities.</p> <p>We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.</p>
<b>VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	Resources are in place to implement the Strategy, primarily within the Housing Capital Programme.
<b>VII Consideration at PDSP</b>	An update on the LHS was reported to Services for the Community PDSP in December 2018.
<b>VIII Other consultations</b>	Consultation has taken place with Housing Associations operating in West Lothian, with Scottish Government More Homes Division, Planning Services, Social Policy and Finance and Property Services.

## **D. TERMS OF REPORT**

### **D.1 Background**

The West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 was approved by Council Executive on 24 October 2017. Since then a number of actions have been progressed and new actions identified. This report provides a summary of the key achievements and actions that have been progressed and also identifies a number of key challenges ahead. The updated action plan is included in Appendix of the report. A new Local Housing Strategy (LHS) will require to be developed during 2021 and 2022 and will also need to comply with updated Scottish Government guidance which includes a number of new areas of activity as set out in section D.4.

### **D.2 LHS Themes and achievements**

#### **• Housing Supply and Place Making**

Good progress has been made achieving the 3,000 affordable homes target over the 10 year period to 2022. At 31 March 2021 2,254 homes were completed. It is anticipated that around 92% of the target will be complete by March 2022. Since April 2018, 709 new council homes have been completed and 230 RSL homes have been built.

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (2021-2026) was approved by Council Executive on 19 January 2021 and identifies sites for more than 2,500 affordable homes over the next five years in West Lothian to be built by Registered Social Landlords (RSL's), subject to funding being made available.

There are regular meetings with Homes for West Lothian Partnership to engage with RSLs in West Lothian to increase the supply of affordable housing.

- **Preventing and Addressing Homelessness**

The council and its strategic partners continue to implement the West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP). The COVID pandemic has resulted in a continued high demand for homeless services. The reduction in letting of void properties during lock down as well as the closure of the construction industry had an impact on through put in temporary accommodation. This resulted in an increasing need to use bed and breakfast accommodation again since March 2020 as well as the backlog of homeless open cases increasing.

A new Allocations Policy was approved in November 2020. The aim is to enable a shift to homeless prevention and housing options approach to ensure that council housing is allocated to those with the highest housing need.

All of the West Lothian RSL's increased their lets to homeless households in 2020/21.

A new development that will specifically meet the needs of young people who are at risk of homelessness is being planned.

- **Independent Living and Specialist Provision**

New specialist accommodation is being developed for people with complex care needs. This is located in Pumpherston and will provide accommodation for 16 people. Funding of £3million has been approved in the General Services Capital Programme to support this project.

A review of the Scheme of Assistance is complete in regards to adaptations and eligibility criteria.

Commissioning plans for client groups have been developed by West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership with input from Housing. A Housing Contribution Statement was included with the Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan in 2019.

- **Private Rented Housing**

Monitoring of rents in the Private Rented Sector is ongoing. The number of private rented registered landlords is 5,132. This has reduced but may reflect market conditions. Landlord forums have continued remotely to enable to ensure landlords are aware of their responsibilities.

- **House Condition**

The Housing Investment Capital Programme has identified £154.8million of investment in existing housing stock and new build over the five year period to 2022/23.

Work is ongoing to ensure that WLC housing meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. At March 2020, 94.2% of WLC stock met the SHQS. A stock condition survey will be undertaken during 2021/22 to determine future investment requirements.

- **Fuel Poverty and Climate Change**

Through the Housing Investment Capital Programme and support provided by the Scottish Government the council continues to deliver energy efficiency upgrades to help tenants and residents living in energy inefficient housing to reduce their fuel costs.

89% of WLC Housing stock meets EESSH (as at January 21). This is an increase of 41.6% from March 2017. However, it is below the 100% target that was set for December 2020 by Scottish Government. This work has been affected by the COVID pandemic and ongoing restrictions on the ability to work within tenants homes since Spring/Summer 2020.

### **D.3 Key challenges and actions for 2021/22**

Continue to progress with the council new build housing programmes and meet as far as possible the target of 3000 homes by 2022. Work with RSLs through the Homes for West Lothian Partnership to increase the supply of affordable housing in West Lothian.

Continue to implement the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan for West Lothian and engage with RSLs in the provision of housing to people who are homeless.

Work with Social Policy to develop proposals for specialist housing for people with learning disability and identify other opportunities for specialist housing provision with RSLs.

Engage with private landlords to raise awareness on responsibilities on house condition and tenancy matters.

Continue to deliver the programme of work to meet EESSH by 2021 and commence work towards EESSH2 compliance. For all future new build council houses it has been determined that the initial specification for the heating system should be for a system which produces zero direct emissions at the point of use or a low carbon alternative.

### **D.4 Developing a new LHS**

A new LHS will be developed during 2021 and 2022. The Scottish Government revised the LHS guidance in 2019 and the new LHS will include the following themes.

- Housing Delivery
- Private Rented Sector
- Place Making
- Preventing and Addressing Homelessness
- Specialist provision/Independent Living  
(including Gypsy/Travellers, Travelling show people, Armed Forces)
- House Condition
- Health and Social Care Integration

A new Housing Need and Demand Assessment will be required in order to inform future housing supply targets and work has commenced on this in conjunction with the five other councils in the South East Scotland region (City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, Fife and Scottish Borders). A further report will be prepared on progress with development of the new LHS and will be presented to the Panel in early 2022.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Overall good progress has been made on the actions in the Local Housing Strategy, despite the challenging environment of the COVID pandemic. New homes continue to be delivered and existing homes improved. There has been good collaboration with RSLs to ensure more lets to homeless households. There has been increased collaboration and engagement with Social Policy to enable a range of housing providers assist in the development of specialist housing provision. The development of net zero carbon targets will inform future work on existing house condition and new build homes and will be further developed in the course of the next Local Housing Strategy. Work will commence on a new LHS during 2021.

## **F BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel 11<sup>th</sup> April 2018  
West Lothian Local Housing Strategy Update 2017-2022

Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 The  
Integration of Net Zero Carbon Targets in Housing Strategy

Council Executive 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 West Lothian Strategic Housing Investment  
Plan 2021- 2026

Council Executive 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017 West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2017-  
2022.

Appendices/Attachments: Local Housing Strategy Action plan 2017-22

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**1 June 2021**

## **Appendix 1**

West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022

Action Plan update June 2021

## Housing Supply and Place Making - ACTION PLAN

Outcome: To increase supply of housing both affordable and market housing in West Lothian between 2017 and 2022						
Action	Baseline	Indicator/Measure	Target/Milestone	Timescale	Responsible Person	Progress Update
<b>Provide new council homes.</b>	657 council homes built between April 2012 and March 2017	Number of homes built.	Complete current council houses programme and begin a new programme.	By 2022	Housing Strategy and Development Manager	Completions 2017/18 124 2018/19 360 2019/20 315 2020/21 34
<b>Support and Assist other providers to deliver affordable homes.</b>	267 RSL homes completed between April 2012 and March 2017.	Number of homes built	700 RSL homes to be built.	By 2022	Housing Strategy and Development Manager	Completions 2017/18 22 2018/19 55 2019/20 110 2020/21 43
<b>Private Sector Homes to be delivered.</b>	2,445 completed between 2012/13 and 2016/17 (average of 489 per annum).	Number of homes built.	1,516 private homes to be built. (Balance of Housing Land Requirement 2016/17 and 2017/18) Housing Supply Target of 333 per annum for 4 years).	By 2022	Planning Services	Completions 2017/18 – 494 2018/19 – 631 2019/20 – 683 2020/21 - 470
<b>OMSE</b>	757 purchases between 2012/13 to 2016/17	Number of Open Market Shared Equity Purchases.	500 (subject to continued support of the Scheme by Scottish Government).	By 2022	Housing Strategy and Development Manager	Purchases 2017/18 -195 2018/19 – 248 2019/20 – 24 2020/21 - 0
<b>Open Market Acquisitions</b>	30 homes per annum	Number of homes bought by the council for social rent.	100 homes purchased	By 2022	Housing Strategy and Development Manager	Completions 2017/18 38 2018/19 73 2019/20 35 2020/21 36
<b>Complete Regeneration of Deans South</b>	To commence in 2017/18	Number of homes built.	Complete phase 1	By 2022	Housing Strategy and Development Manager	Completion of WLC site of 54 units and a further 29 homes on site in 2021.

						Council will sell land at Deans South to Springfield Properties PLC for the provision of 127 Social Rented houses.
<b>Progress Regeneration Project in Almondell, Broxburn</b>	To commence 2017/18	Common area and security improvements.	Complete	End 2018	Housing Strategy and Development Manager	Environmental works <b>complete</b> .



## Preventing Homelessness – ACTION PLAN

<b>Outcome: Improving Housing Options to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place</b>						
<b>Action</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Indicator/Measure</b>	<b>Target/Milestone</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<b>Explore potential to develop a new assessment centre and supported housing provision in the East of the county.</b>	New Provision Required	New supported housing provision in place.	Feasibility in 2017/18 New Provision by 2022	2017 -2022	Housing Needs Manager	Site options being considered for a minimum of 12 Self contained flats and crash pad.
<b>Develop a supported accommodation strategy for those aged 16-30 to improve access to accommodation and support and to increase options for sustainable outcomes.</b>	Build on existing strategies focusing on young people.	Strategy to be developed.	To commence in 2018	2018	Housing Needs Manager	Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP). Focus on prevention and early intervention.
<b>Developing relationships and protocols with RSLs and private landlords and to maximise opportunities to prevent homelessness.</b>	Number of successful section 5 referrals/number of properties leased from RSLs to provide temporary and supported accommodation	Increase the number of special lets.  Increase the % of lets to homeless people as settled accommodation.	2017/18	2018/19	Housing Needs Manager	RRTP is being implemented West Lothian RSLs increased lets to homeless households in 2019/20
<b>Ensure that financial advice, inclusion and tenancy sustainability services are in place to assist homeless households.</b>	Build on the work of the advice shop and support staff.	Number of new tenant visits.	2017/18	2018/19	Housing Needs Manager	Housing support being reviewed as part of the RRTP.

## Independent Living – ACTION PLAN

<b>Outcome: (1) Enable people to live independently where they choose to do so.                      (2) Ensure that accommodation is planned and available for people with a wide range of needs.                      (3) Ensure housing support is available to those people who need it.</b>						
<b>Action</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Indicator/ Measure</b>	<b>Target/ Milestone</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<b>Continue to provide wheelchair homes in new build council house programme and RSL housing programmes.</b>	137 wheelchair accessible bungalows in current WLC programme.	Number of new build wheelchair homes per annum built by RSLs and WLC	30 per annum	2017 /2022	Housing Strategy & Development Manager and RSL Development Managers	Completions 2017/18 – 30 (WLC), 6 RSL 2018/19 41 (WLC) 2019/20 60 completed (WLC) 1 RSL 2020/21 8 (WLC)
<b>Continue to provide adaptations and equipment and make best use of adapted stock.</b>	2,900 adaptations per annum.	Number of private sector adaptations per annum and associated expenditure.	2,900 adaptations per annum.	2017-2022	Social Policy Lead Officer/ Housing Strategy & Development Manager	2017/18 2426adaptations. 2018/19 1603 adaptations 2019/20 647 adaptations*
<b>Develop specialist housing provision for people with particular needs including core and cluster housing for people with learning disabilities, supported accommodation for older people and supported accommodation for younger people.</b>	Eight core and Cluster new build council houses developed for specialist housing provision. 48 Properties in developments specifically for older people	Number of properties developed for people that require specialist housing.	10 per annum	2017-2022	Housing Strategy & Development Manager	Two core and cluster units completed, 8 units in total.  Development work is underway for a unit for 16 people with complex care needs. at Cawburn Road site.  Site selection underway for a new unit for supported housing for young people (12 flats and a crash pad).

Action	Baseline	Indicator/ Measure	Target/ Milestone	Timescale	Responsible Person	Progress Update
<b>Make use of information on health and social care integrated planning to better estimate the need for specialist housing provision.</b>	To be developed through the Joint Accommodation Plan 2017 -2027	Confirm level of specialist housing provision to be provided.	TBC	2018/19	Housing Strategy & Development Manager	The Housing Contribution Statement was reviewed in 2018/19. Housing input to Commissioning Plans for Learning Disability and Physical Disability, Older People and Mental Health.
<b>Encourage and promote the use of technology enabled care (TEC) to enable people to live independently.</b>	To be developed in discussion with Social Policy.	Level of take up.	TBC	2017-2022	Social Policy Lead Officer	2017/18 5430 2018/19 4131 2019/20 3909
<b>Await outcome of review of current configuration of mental health service provision to inform future specialist housing requirements for this care group.</b>	To be developed through the Joint Accommodation Plan 2017 -2027.	Confirm level of specialist housing provision to be provided.	TBC	2018-2019	Social Policy Lead Officer/ Housing Strategy & Development Manager	To be developed and aligned with the RRTP. Development of Supported Accommodation Strategy for People with mental health issues.

\*Reduction in adaptations due to changes in criteria and focus on major adaptations.

## Private Rented Sector – ACTION PLAN

<b>Outcome: The Private Rented Sector provides good quality housing options for people in West Lothian.</b>						
<b>Action</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Service/Partner</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<b>Develop the approach to landlord registration and enforcement.</b>	Number of landlords registered	5,397	To increase.	2017/18	Housing, Customer and Building Services /Environmental Health /Legal Services	2018/19 5412 private landlords are registered 2019/20 5165 private landlords registered 2020/21 5132 private landlords
<b>Develop the approach to HMO licensing and enforcement.</b>	Number of licensed HMOs	27	To increase.	2017/18	Housing, Customer and Building Services /Environmental Health /Legal Services	2020/21 - 47
<b>Make use of effective enforcement options, including referrals to Licensing Committee for removal of landlords from register.</b>	Number of landlords provided with advice on best practice	Number of landlords provided with advice	To increase.	2017/18	Housing, Customer and Building Services /Environmental Health /Legal Services	Additional resources will be employed to address housing quality in the private rented sector.
<b>Monitor Third Party Referrals to the Private Rented Housing Panel.</b>	No baseline but will be monitored	Number of referrals	Target will be developed in line with the number of requests received	2017/18	Housing, Customer and Building Services /Environmental Health /Legal Services	To be developed.
<b>Increased Participation in private landlord forum.</b>	On average 10 landlords attend	30-40	To increase.	2018/19	Housing, Customer and Building Services /Environmental Health /Legal Services	In place of landlord forums, Private landlords were issued with updates and FAQ's. In replacement of the forums, there have been running online training courses with Landlord Accreditation Scotland (LAS) on the new changes to the tenancy agreements. Six courses have been arranged with 50 landlords attending each session.

						Surveys have been carried out with landlords. Closer working with the Housing Options team to ensure that the private rented sector is a suitable option for people seeking housing.
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## House Condition – ACTION PLAN

<b>Outcome: To improve public and private sector house condition in West Lothian.</b>						
<b>Action</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsible Person/Service</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<b>Continue to ensure all WLC stock complies with SHQS.</b>	100% compliance.	% of WLC homes complying with the SHQS.	100%	2017-2022	Housing, Strategy and Development Manager	99.47% 2017/18 98.84% 2018/19 94.2% 2019/20*
<b>Continue to engage with WLC tenants in the development of the housing capital programme.</b>	Quarterly meetings with the Tenants' Panel Capital Working Group.	Continue to have quarterly meetings	Four meetings per year.	2017-2022	Housing, Strategy and Development Manager	Four meetings per year being held to update on progress.
<b>The Scheme of Assistance Policy will be reviewed over the course of the LHS 2017-22 as a result of the changing legislation in relation to private sector housing.</b>	Existing policy dates from 2011.	Scheme of Assistance aligns with guidance and legislation.	To be reviewed over the course of the LHS	By 2020	Housing, Strategy and Development Manager	Scheme of Assistance review completed in June 2019 Further review to be carried out in 2021/22 in relation to Mixed Tenure properties.

\*SHQS - The 0.63% change between 2017/18 and 2018/19 can primarily be attributed to an increase in abeyances, which went from 0 to 83 and a small increase properties failing the SHQS up from 24 to 26. It should also be noted that as of May 2020 there have been a number of changes to the SHQS. namely the introduction of new standards for smoke detectors and periodic electrical checks, as well as the inclusion of the energy efficiency standard for social housing (EESH) within the SHQS, this will bring with it additional abeyances and exemptions which would not previously been reported.

## Fuel Poverty and Climate Change - ACTION PLAN

<b>Outcome: Reduce levels of fuel poverty and increase number of people living in energy efficient homes</b>						
<b>Action</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Target / Milestone</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Responsible Person/Service</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<b>Develop a baseline carbon footprint for WLC housing stock.</b> <b>(This action developed during 2021)</b>	From 2021 onwards	In line with targets set out in Net Zero Carbon strategy.	Reductions to be reported on annually at review of LHS	To commence from 2021 onwards	Housing Investment Manager	Integration of net zero carbon targets agreed as part of the Local Housing Strategy and will be taken forward into the next LHS. Including new build housing meeting EESSH2 for existing housing stock.
<b>Develop a baseline to measure number of actual households in fuel poverty included in energy efficiency programmes.</b>	To be determined once Scottish Government provide updated Fuel Poverty definition.	Number of households in fuel poverty.	To be reported on annually	On-going.	Housing Investment Manager	To be developed
<b>Develop a HEEPS: ABS programme to assist householders to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, to reduce energy consumption and save money.</b>	N/A	Number of households receiving energy efficiency measures as part of HEEPS:ABS programme.	Implemented by end of 2022.	Annually until replaced by SEEP (2017).	HIO - Energy Efficiency Officers.	2017/18 114 home owners had EWI installed in through the HEEPS/ABS programme  2018/19 External wall insulation provided 253 homes in Deans  2019/20 101 homeowners assisted through HEEPS/ABS  2020/21 – 103 planned (delayed due to lockdown)
<b>Ensure all social rented housing complies with the EESSH by 2020.</b>	47.4%	Percentage increase in rate of compliance	100% by 2020	By end of 2020.	Housing Investment Manager	87% at August 2019 89% at January 2021

Action	Baseline	Indicators	Target / Milestone	Timescale	Who is responsible?	Progress
<b>Develop SEEP working group including relevant council departments.</b>	N/A	N/A	Implemented by end of 2017.	On-going once established.	HIO - Energy Efficiency Officers.	SEEP no longer being developed. Focus is on Zero carbon and Climate Change Emergency.
<b>Develop technical working group with RSL's that have housing stock in West Lothian.</b>	N/A	Number of organisations included and frequency of meetings	Established by Mid-2017.	On-going once established.	HIO - Energy Efficiency Officers.	Previous collaboration on EWI with Almond HA. Liaison with RSLs done through Homes for West Lothian Partnership.
<b>Provide energy advice services through the council or a mechanism to direct householders to existing services.</b>	The number of referrals from the previous year.	Number of referrals to Advice Shop from Energy Efficiency Advisor from HEEPS:ABS programmes.	Ongoing.	Ongoing.	Advice Shop.	<p>A dedicated energy advice officer has been employed.</p> <p>The council is working to increase the number of households who would qualify for assistance from funding raised through the Energy Company Obligation.</p> <p>The Advice Shop has provided assistance to residents in West Lothian. Through benefit checks and energy cost savings, £170,000 of benefit has been secured for residents of West Lothian.</p>