



Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
LIVINGSTON
EH54 6FF

28 January 2020

A meeting of the **Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel** of West Lothian Council will be held within the **Council Chambers, West Lothian Civic Centre** on **Tuesday 4 February 2020** at **2:00pm**.

For Chief Executive

BUSINESS

Public Session

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest - Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration at the meeting, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest
3. Order of Business, including notice of urgent business and declarations of interest in any urgent business
4. Confirm Draft Minute of Meeting of Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday 10 December 2019 (herewith).
5. Scottish Government Consultation on Housing 2040 - Report by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith)
6. Property Turnover October to December 2019 - Report by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith).
7. Housing Revenue Account Budget and Rent Level 2020/21 to 2022/23 - Report by Depute Chief Executive (herewith)
8. Housing Capital Investment Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23 - Report by Depute Chief Executive (herewith)

DATA LABEL: Public

9. Workplan (herewith).

NOTE **For further information please contact Eileen Rollo on 01506 281621
or email eileen.rollo@aol.com**



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29 January 2020

The following additional item(s) of business will be dealt with at the meeting of the **Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel** to be held within **Council Chambers, West Lothian Civic Centre** on **4 February 2020** at **2:00pm**.

for Chief Executive

BUSINESS

10. Local Fire and Rescue Plan Review 2020 - Report by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith)

NOTE For further information please contact Eileen Rollo on 01506 281621 or email eileen.rollo@aol.com

MINUTE of MEETING of the SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 10 DECEMBER 2019.

Present – Councillors George Paul (Chair), Andrew McGuire, Alison Adamson, Frank Anderson, Lawrence Fitzpatrick, John McGinty

Apologies – Councillor Peter Heggie

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 12 – New Build Temporary Accommodation Provision in West Lothian – Councillor Frank Anderson declared an interest in this item of business in that he was Chair of the Open Door Accommodation Project.

Agenda Item 15 – Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) Update – Councillor Frank Anderson declared an interest in this item of business in that he was Chair of the Open Door Accommodation Project.

Agenda Item 17 – Deans South Proposed Land Assembly Arrangements – Councillor Andrew McGuire declared an interest in this item of business in that he was an Employee of Dunedin Canmore and would leave the meeting during consideration of this item of business.

2. MINUTE

The Panel confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 1 October 2019 as a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE LOCAL PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on the Local Performance for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in West Lothian for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019.

The Panel was asked to note the contents of the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

4. SCRUTINY OF POLICE SCOTLAND PERFORMANCE IN WEST LOTHIAN

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by

the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on the performance of Police Scotland in West Lothian for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019.

The Panel was asked to note the contents of the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

5. CONTACT ASSESSMENT MODEL

The Panel considered a report and a presentation (copies of which had been circulated) by Chief Inspector Jocelyn O'Connor providing an update on the implementation of the Contact Assessment Model within Police Scotland.

The report requested that the Panel note the contents of the report which would provide understanding and context around changes to service delivery within Police Scotland.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

6. 2019/20 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services providing an update on the financial performance of Services for the Community portfolio for the General Fund Revenue budget.

The report recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the financial performance of the Services for the Community portfolio as at month 6;
2. Notes that the Services for the Community portfolio position at month 6 was part of the overall council budget position reported to Council Executive on 12 November 2019; and
3. Notes any actions required to be taken by Head of Service and budget holders to manage spend within available resources.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

7. SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD PERFORMANCE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an

update on the Safer Neighbourhood performance information from July 2019 to September 2019.

The report recommended that the Panel note the performance information detailed for the Safer Neighbourhood Team

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

8. RENTAL EXCHANGE SCHEME

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services advising that a decision at the Full Council meeting on 22 January 2019 directed Housing Customer and Building Services to prepare a report exploring the possibility of making The Rental Exchange Initiative available to council tenants wishing to participate in order to improve their credit rating. The report also advised of the findings of the work undertaken by the service in considering the possibilities of the scheme.

The report recommended that the Panel note and comment on the findings.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

9. PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing the current levels of performance for Housing, Customer and Building Services.

The report recommended that the Panel note the Housing, Customer and Building Services key performance indicators and determine if further action or enquiry is necessary.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

10. NEW BUILDING TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PROVISION IN WEST LOTHIAN

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated providing an update on the options for new building temporary accommodation provision identified in the West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP).

The report recommended that the Panel:

1. Note the proposals for a 12-person supported accommodation unit for young people;
2. Note that subject to availability of funding, there may be an opportunity to build either 12 or 16 mainstream flats;
3. Note that the preferred site at Deans, Livingston would deliver the full project within the budget of £4 million;
4. Note the proposal to reconfigure Newlands House, Bathgate to four self-contained flats; and
5. Agree that the proposals could be progressed to Council Executive to seek approval.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report
2. Agreed that the report and its recommendations be forwarded to the next appropriate meeting of Council Executive for approval.

11. HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY REVIEW

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services informing of the proposal for changes to the council's Housing Allocation Policy.

The report asked the Panel to:

1. Note the proposed changes to the Housing Allocation Policy and agree these would now be progressed to Council Executive to seek approval to commence the review and consultation process;
2. Note the proposed consultation timeline;
3. Note the proposal to explore Choice Based Lettings approach;
4. Note the proposal to review the Transfer led approach;
5. Note the alignment with the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) timescales; and
6. Confirm any other required actions.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report
2. Agreed that the report and its recommendations be forwarded to the next appropriate meeting of Council Executive for approval.

12. PROPERTY TURNOVER JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2019

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services informing of the property turnover for the second quarter, July to September 2019/20.

The report recommended that the Panel note the current levels of activity relating to property turnover for the second quarter of 2019/20 and in particular to note:

1. an increase in properly lets compared to the same period last year;
2. of the 47 communities in West Lothian, seven had only one mainstream property to let and 12 had none; and
3. 52% of lets were allocated to people who were homeless.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

13 RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN (RRTP) UPDATE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on progress of the West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) and the implications of recent legislative announcements by the Scottish Government on delivery of the plan.

The report recommended that the Panel:

1. Note the update on progress of the delivery of the West Lothian RRTP;
2. Note the Scottish Government allocation of £302k towards the delivery of the plan in 2019/20 through the Ending Homeless Together (EHT) fund;
3. Note that a report would be prepared and brought back to the panel, on the implications of the extension to the current restrictions in the Unsuitable Accommodate Order 2014 which would come into effect in May 2021; and
4. Note that update reports on the RRTP would be presented to future meetings of the Services for the Community PDSP on a biannual basis.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

14. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on various initiatives to increase the supply of affordable housing in West Lothian.

The report recommended that the Panel note the progress being made on delivering 3,000 affordable homes in West Lothian over the period 2012-2022.

Decision

3. To note the contents of the report
4. Agreed that the report and its recommendations be forwarded to the next appropriate meeting of Council Executive for approval.

15. DEANS SOUTH: PROPOSED LAND ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on the outcome of the recent engagement with all nine remaining private owners in Deans South with respect to the council's financial offer and to make recommendations on the way forward.

The report recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the position with respect to the redevelopment of the Deans South Phase 2 site, which would provide around 24 new homes for social rent;
2. Notes that there were ten remaining privately owned properties in the core area of Deans South, with the location of the properties shown in Appendix 1;
3. Notes the outcome of the recent engagement carried out with all nine remaining private owners, whereby none of the owners were currently interested in accepting the council's financial offer;
4. Notes the progress with discussions with the Wheatley Housing Group; and
5. Notes the proposed next steps for reporting to committee.

Discussions then took during which it was suggested that the council enter into tripartite negotiations with the Wheatley Group and Springfield Properties, and that the Scottish Government should be asked to provide financial assistance to help to resolve the difficulties.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report

2. Agreed that the report and its recommendations be forwarded to the next appropriate meeting of Council Executive for approval.

16. WORKPLAN

The Panel considered a list of items that would form the basis of the panel's work over the coming months.

Decision

To note the contents of the workplan.



SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON HOUSING TO 2040

REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to inform the panel of the council's proposed response to the Scottish Government's consultation on their draft housing vision and consultation paper "Housing to 2040: Consultation on outline policy options". The closing date for responses to the consultation document is 28th February 2020.

B. RECOMMENDATION

Services for the Community PDSP is requested to note:

- (i) The council's proposed response as set out in Appendix 2 of this report.
- (ii) That a report will be submitted to Council Executive on 25th February 2020 seeking approval to submit the response to the Scottish Government by 28th February 2020.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

| | | |
|------------|--|--|
| I | Council Values | Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership |
| II | Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment) | The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended in accordance with Homelessness (etc.) Act 2003 Housing (Scotland Act) 2001, Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, The Procurement (Scotland) Regulations 2016 |
| III | Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers | None |
| IV | Impact on performance and performance Indicators | None |

| | | |
|-------------|---|--|
| V | Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement | <p>4: We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities.</p> <p>5: People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances.</p> <p>6: Older people are able to live independently in the community with an improved quality of life.</p> <p>8: We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.</p> |
| VI | Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property) | Not yet fully determined. |
| VII | Consideration at PDSP | Yes |
| VIII | Other consultations | Consultation has been undertaken with West Lothian Council Planning and Building Standards. |

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 BACKGROUND

In July 2019, the Scottish Government published their draft vision for homes and communities; "Housing to 2040: A Vision For Our Future Homes and Communities". A copy of the document is contained in Appendix 1.

This followed the conclusion of the first phase of Housing to 2040 stakeholder engagement,(concluded November 2018) and the publication of a report on the outcome of the engagement in May 2019: "Scottish Government "Housing to 2040: Report on stakeholder engagement in 2018".

As part of the stakeholder consultation in 2018, a launch event with senior housing stakeholders was hosted by the Scottish Government and held in September 2018. At this event, stakeholders were asked to identify the key milestones between 2020 and 2040 to inform the Scottish Government's "route map" which will be published along with the final draft Housing to 2040 vision in summer 2020. West Lothian Council were represented at officer level at this consultation event.

The Scottish Government advises that the Housing to 2040 vision can assist to achieve many of the Government's ambitions for Scotland including eradicating child poverty and homelessness, ending fuel poverty and tackling the effects of climate change.

The Scottish Government's ambition is that everyone in Scotland should live in high quality, energy efficient homes that are affordable. Housing to 2040 sets out four key themes as follows;

- A well-functioning housing system
- High quality sustainable homes
- Sustainable communities

- Homes that meet people's needs

Under each of the themes fifteen high level principles are proposed which are highlighted in the main Housing to 2040 draft vision document in Appendix 1. The principles cover a number of key areas including housing supply, quality, energy efficiency, affordability and accessibility.

The proposed principles also promote:

- (i) A move toward "tenure neutral" space and standards.
- (ii) A need for a flexible housing market to meet people's changing housing needs.
- (iii) A need for the housing system to shift the balance away from the use of homes as a means to store wealth to supplying high quality affordable homes for people to live in and address inequalities in health, wealth and education.

D.2 Purpose of Consultation

The Scottish Government has requested comment on both the draft vision and principles and invited suggestions for "bold, imaginative and innovative proposals" in order to deliver the Housing to 2040 vision. The Scottish Government advise that the consultation document is designed to support a conversation about how the Scottish Government and key stakeholders can plan for "what we want our homes and communities to look and feel like in 2040"

To assist this next phase of the consultation process, the Scottish Government has requested responses to a number of guideline questions to enable consensus to be reached on the final vision and to enable the route map to be agreed.

The questions invite comment on:

- (i) The draft vision and principles.
- (ii) The scenarios and resilience of the route map or constraints and separately to the five themes of;
 - (iii) Affordability
 - (iv) Accessibility and Functionality
 - (v) Energy Efficiency and lowering carbon emissions
 - (vi) Quality standards and state of repair of existing and new housing.
 - (vii) Improving space around homes and promoting connected places and vibrant communities.

As part of the consultation process, a series of stakeholder engagement events are also being held throughout Scotland during January and February 2020 before the consultation deadline of 28th February 2020.

D.3 Summary Response

West Lothian Councils proposed response to Housing to 2040 is contained in Appendix 2.

Summary response to the draft vision and principles, resilience of the route map and constraints.

The council supports the main principles of the Scottish Government's draft Housing to 2040 vision. The ability to achieve the vision will however require a continued effort in terms of increasing the supply of affordable housing, improving standards of all new and existing housing, ensuring comprehensive support and care services are in place for those most in need and implementing measures to ensure that people have choice over their current and future housing options.

For the Scottish Government's 2040 vision to be realised, this will necessitate real increases in public expenditure over the next 20 years not only in housing but in other related sectors; health, education and social care and national and local infrastructure.

The constraints to the delivery of the Housing to 2040 vision are very high level and wide ranging and will require to be fully explored in more detail within the context of policy decisions and actions. The route map has not yet been developed and will be published in the summer of 2020. There is a need for the route map to identify key milestones between 2020 and 2024, which are fully costed with identified funding levels.

Summary response to the five themes listed at D.2 above

A continued increase in housing supply across all tenures would assist the aim of increasing housing choice. There also requires to be a realistic definition of "affordability" and for rent levels in both the public and private rented sector to be reviewed at a national level and affordable rents to be based upon a "whole life" cost approach.

Adoption of a "green energy standard" across all tenures with adequate funding would assist to make housing more affordable and increase housing choice. This along with "green deal" financial assistance for owners would also increase the energy efficiency of new and existing housing with reduced dependency on conventional energy sources.

With regard to the accessibility and functionality of existing and new housing, there is a need to align current guidance for both housing and the external environment with updated building standards on accessibility and functionality, coupled with a statutory requirement to increase the level of wheelchair accessible housing across all tenures.

There is a need also to increase the supply of housing for particular groups including meeting the needs of an ageing population and aligning with the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) priorities to prevent homelessness.

With respect to a national "green energy standard" and "accessibility" standard, there requires to be a national high level standard which combines energy efficiency, accessibility and quality across all tenures. This new standard should rationalise and simplify existing standards (ESSH for example), allowing for easy validation, monitoring and regulation.

Finally a co-ordinated approach to land assembly, infrastructure provision and the provision of infrastructure grants all aligned with a national transport strategy will assist new housing supply and improve space and connectivity of new housing.

D.4 Next Steps

The proposed next steps are:

- (i) Attendance at consultation events in 2020 in Glasgow (5th Feb) and/or Edinburgh (17th February).
- (ii) Submission of the council's proposed response, attached as Appendix 2, to Council Executive on 25th February 2020, seeking approval for the response to be submitted to the Scottish Government by 28th February 2020.

E. CONCLUSION

The council has been invited to participate in the Scottish Government's consultation process on their draft housing vision for 2040 via their consultation document "Housing to 2040: Consultation on outline policy options". The council welcomes the opportunity to participate and provide a consultation response on the future vision and options for housing in Scotland.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Scottish Government "Housing to 2040: Report on stakeholder engagement in 2018.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-2040-report-stakeholder-engagement-2018/pages/2/>

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1: Scottish Government "Housing to 2040: A Vision For Our Future Homes and Communities". July 2019.

Appendix 2: "Scottish Government Housing to 2040: Consultation on outline policy options" West Lothian Council's Response.

Contact Person:

Gillian Edwards, Planning & Coordination Officer, 01506 281376

CMT Member:

Ann Marie Carr, Head of Housing, Customer & Building Services

Date of Meeting: 4th February 2020

Appendix 1: Scottish Government “Housing to 2040: A Vision For Our Future Homes and Communities”. July 2019.

HOUSING TO 2040



What is Housing to 2040?

Housing has a vital role to play in meeting many of our ambitions for Scotland, including eradicating child poverty and homelessness, ending fuel poverty, tackling the effects of climate change and promoting inclusive growth.

We want everyone in Scotland to have a home that is warm, affordable and accessible and that fits their needs. We also want to ensure we have a housing system that is dynamic and resilient enough to respond to future changes, and can help to address the number of challenges we are facing, including an ageing population and a global climate emergency. That is why we have now begun to consider our longer term aspirations for housing in Scotland and the opportunities for how we might achieve this.

In our 2018-19 Programme for Government, we made a commitment to plan together with stakeholders for how our homes and communities should look and feel in 2040 and the options and choices to get there. This new approach will encompass the whole housing system¹ – we want Housing to 2040 to be a lasting legacy that is not just about new homes, but that takes into account the people, place, environment and communities in which our homes, both new and old, are located.

Since making this commitment, we have been engaging extensively with a variety of stakeholders, including local government, businesses, the third sector, home owners, tenants and others to help shape a draft vision and principles for 2040.

This document sets out the Housing to 2040 draft vision and principles that emerged following our initial round of stakeholder engagement.

What is the purpose of the vision and principles?

Our [National Performance Framework](#) provides the high-level vision for Scotland. Our draft housing vision for 2040 describes in more detail what we want the housing system to look and feel like in the future. It is meant to be ambitious and aspirational.

The vision is **person-centred**, and views the system from the citizen's perspective to reflect the diversity of people, homes and communities across Scotland. But the vision is also for all those involved in housing delivery and services - making the vision a reality will require action from Scottish Government, public, private and third sector partners and the people of Scotland.

The principles underpinning the vision are a high-level guide to how policy decisions might be made to make the vision a reality.

¹ In this context, the "housing system" includes culturally appropriate accommodation for Gypsy/Travellers such as sites, for example, as well as more traditional forms of accommodation.

What are some of the challenges we face?

We have an ageing population and people are living longer

This means that demands on health and social care will increase in the future. We want to think about our different housing options and promote greater adaptability to allow us to live independently at home for longer, reducing that demand.

The number of households is growing and more people are living alone

The number of households in Scotland is projected to increase and one person households are set to become the most common household type. This means we need to think strategically about how we design and build new homes and where, and how we can make the best use of our existing stock.

We need to mitigate the impact of climate change

We must ensure our homes are energy efficient and are able to adapt to the effects of climate change. We've set out the actions we'll take to reduce emissions from our homes in our Climate Change Plan and our Energy Efficient Scotland route map. We have also introduced a Climate Change Bill to strengthen our greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

We must act on homelessness

Nobody should be without a safe, warm place they can call home - that is why we are working hard to prevent homelessness in Scotland. We have published our Ending Homelessness and Rough Sleeping action plan to transform temporary accommodation and put an end to rough sleeping and homelessness.

We want to tackle child poverty

The Scottish Government is committed to ending child poverty and the housing system can help us to do this. We want to increase housing affordability and lower running costs to reduce poverty for households with children.

We need to manage the impact of Brexit and the UK Government's welfare reforms

Brexit will have consequences for both housing supply and demand. The UK Government's welfare reforms have reduced the support it provides - the Scottish Government works to mitigate this, but this isn't sustainable in the long term.

We want to hear your views...

The first phase of Housing to 2040 stakeholder engagement concluded on 30 November 2018, and attracted contributions from over 800 people representing more than 100 organisations. A Scottish Government report on stakeholder engagement in 2018 was published in May 2019 and is available here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-2040-report-stakeholder-engagement-2018/>

We will continue to engage with a wide range of people across Scotland and will undertake further formal public consultation in the autumn on the draft vision and principles, themes and outline options for the route map.

The outputs from the next round of consultation will help us to create the final vision and a route map to 2040, which we intend to publish in spring 2020.

What you can do now:

- Discuss this with friends, family or in your communities/workplace or on twitter using the hashtag #Housing2040
- E-mail us your thoughts at Housing2040@gov.scot (please note we won't be able to respond to each e-mail individually)

HOUSING TO 2040 VISION

A WELL-FUNCTIONING HOUSING SYSTEM

- **Finding the right home** - I can quickly find a home that is right for me when I need one, for example when my circumstances change, and the process of moving is straightforward. I have a choice about where in Scotland I live and the type of home I live in. I can find suitable accommodation no matter what area I choose to live in, even though I am on a modest income. There are new ways to find homes through, for example, arranging swaps directly with other people who want to move.
- **Affording a home** - I can afford a home that meets my needs. I find renting is affordable and allows me to make regular savings for my future, in order to buy a home, if I want to.
- **Making the best use of our homes** - As an older person wanting to move, I can get help to move to a home which better meets my needs; my current home is no longer right for me but would be ideal for a family.

I live in a social rented home, and can move across Scotland to be nearer family without losing my right to a home.

As a parent on a low income, I can get help to move to home better suited to my children's needs.

- **Investing** - There are a range of attractive forms of investment and savings products for me to consider beyond bricks and mortar and these will help me to fund my retirement.
- **Fairness** – I know that help with housing is there for me if and when I need it, for example if I am struggling to pay my rent. I am assisted to keep my home at difficult points in my life.
- **Rural and island communities** – I live in a remote area and it is great to know there are good housing options for everyone here, from farmers and crofters to young people and those seeking to move to the area to set up home and bring employment and new opportunities to the area. Housing supports much-needed skilled workers living and staying in my community; and local people and businesses are building the new homes.

New homes in my rural community have supported a jump in population. The future of the primary school and local shop is secure. It's a comfort to know that our local circumstances are taken into account when government makes decisions about housing; it feels like we're on a level playing field with the big cities.

HIGH QUALITY SUSTAINABLE HOMES

- **Design** – My home is well-designed and of a high standard, with enough space and flexibility to allow me to live well. I know that a lot of effort went into the design of my home, which has helped make it functional, attractive, flexible, resilient and energy efficient.
- **Equality of standards** - You can't tell by looking at my home whether I own or rent my home; it's in a great place and meets all of my needs.
- **Older homes** – My home is quite old but there are a range of innovative and affordable ways available to me to make it more comfortable and energy efficient without spoiling its appearance.
- **New build homes** – When I bought my new home, any defects were rectified quickly. Defects are minimised because of the high level of quality control during the construction process. I am confident that my house builder is a fair and inclusive employer.
- **Empowered** – I am not afraid to ask my landlord about changes or improvements to my home because I know they have to consider my request fully and I cannot be penalised for asking.
- **Good use** – Every home on my street is occupied and no home is left empty for a significant period of time without good reason.
- **Maintenance** – I find it easy to find high quality, reliable and cost effective tradespeople to make repairs and improvements to my home. Although I live in a block of flats, it is really straightforward to make improvements and repairs to communal areas. My property factor delivers a high quality service.
- **Running costs** - I understand exactly how much it costs to run my home and what I can do to reduce costs and carbon emissions; it's great that fuel poverty is a thing of the past.
- **Low carbon** - I know that my home is not damaging the planet having been retrofitted to be near zero carbon; it is heated using renewable energy, which is affordable and efficient. Every home in Scotland is energy efficient and we're all playing our part in tackling the global climate emergency.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

- **Staying local** – There is a good mix of housing where I live, which means I have the option to stay in the area if my needs change. This means I know I can stay in contact with my neighbours and friends and can continue to access the services that my family and I use. The right homes are available across Scotland and in the right place to support both rural and urban communities; there are homes suitable for different cultures and for people who need extra help to be cared for in my community. This means my elderly relatives can live nearby too if they choose.
- **Well-designed places** – The place where I live is well-designed, distinctive and has a strong sense of identity. House builders are building homes that are high quality, fit well into the neighbourhood and are climate ready. The flooding issues that used to bother us have been resolved by, for instance, using living roofs or allowing space for wild areas; these help to soak up the rain.
- **Connected places** – My local council and developers listen to me and my community. They pay attention to what we want and what makes my community special. We have the right infrastructure in place for new homes and we are well-connected. Open spaces are accessible and used by people of all ages. Good transport connectivity gives me easy access to the services I need, even though I live a long way from the nearest town.
- **Health and well-being** - There is a strong sense of community pride where I live and people care about our surroundings and are supported to maintain them. The streets around me are clean, accessible and safe. It is a walking and cycle-friendly environment. The parks, play areas and green spaces are easily accessible and used by people of all ages. We all benefit from good physical and mental health from a clean environment, inspiring and well-maintained surroundings.
- **Vibrant communities** – The centre of my community is a lively hub with shops, services and attractive places to meet. My community is digitally connected enabling me to work from home or hotdesk locally when I want to. People are attracted to live and work in my island community, and local businesses are thriving.

HOMES THAT MEET PEOPLE'S NEEDS

- **My lifestyle** - My home supports my well-being, and the well-being of my family. My home supports my children in doing the best they can at school, and allows me to engage with my community and other people who matter to me, including my family, friends and neighbours. My home supports me in progressing my career. My home supports me through different stages of my life and can be easily adapted around me.
- **My rights** – I know where to go to get information and advice about my rights to housing and housing services and I feel empowered. I know where to get the help I need to prevent me from losing my home.

As a former member of the Armed Forces, I receive support from my local authority including advice about the additional support to which I am entitled from veteran organisations. When I signed up to the Armed Forces, I was provided with information and advice on the housing options in Scotland which allowed me to plan for a better future in civilian life.

- **Diversity** – Where I live, there are a variety of different homes that meet the differing needs of people in the community. Land is available to support further housebuilding and the community is engaged and involved with taking forward proposals for housing in new and innovative ways, for example through self-build projects. There are also options to live more communally, if that is what people want. When my illness became more severe and limited my mobility, I was able to find a home that allows me to stay in my community and had my independence supported.
- **My services** – I get the help I need to live independently at home, supported by new and advancing technology. I can access health, welfare, education and other services, not least because my community is well-connected with good transport services. If I need an aid or adaptation to my home to allow me to continue to live independently, it will be provided within a reasonable time. If I am no longer able to live independently at home, there is a good choice of retirement, sheltered or residential homes available to me close to my family.
- **Self-build** – When I built my own home, I found it easy to access advice and support for my self-build project and I was able to work on it myself. This means I have a home which is just right for me.

HOUSING TO 2040 PRINCIPLES

A WELL-FUNCTIONING HOUSING SYSTEM

PRINCIPLE 1

The housing system should supply high-quality affordable homes for living in, to shift the balance away from the use of homes as a means to store wealth.

One decent home per household takes priority over second homes and investment returns on property, i.e. investment in housing is not for asset growth. Commercial investment in the Private Rented Sector is based on rental income return (not capital appreciation). Housing promotes fairer wealth distributions and reduces inequality. Government actively shapes the market to make sure that there is a sufficient number of high-quality homes in urban and rural areas so that everyone has a reasonable choice of where they live and the type of accommodation they live in. Older and disabled people benefit from the increased availability of affordable and accessible housing to support them to live independent lives.

PRINCIPLE 2

Government policy (including taxes and subsidies, for example) should promote house price stability, to help underpin Scotland's standard of living and productivity and promote a Fairer Scotland.

House price inflation is broadly in line with wage growth and other living costs, i.e. the ratio between the cost of a house and the cost of a loaf of bread is more or less constant². The cost of housing is under control, boosting productivity, because there is less pressure on wages and this increases Scotland's attractiveness as a place to invest. Policy is tailored to the different needs of urban, rural and island communities. Housing availability in rural areas is attracting inward investment and creating employment opportunities which, in turn, is attracting people to rural communities. People can live close to good quality schools for their children to attend.

²We may even need a period of static house prices in cash terms in order to increase affordability in some areas.

PRINCIPLE 3

Everybody should be able to save for the future (as well as be secure in their home and make significant changes to it) whether they rent or own.

Renters share more of the benefits of owner occupation³ as they have the capacity and mechanisms to save for the future, increased security of tenure and the discretion to make changes to their home. There are new and innovative financial products and tenancy agreements which combine aspects of renting with owning, for example actuarial products that offer lifetime tenure and a pension in return for the capital asset at end of life.

PRINCIPLE 4

Housing provision should be informed by whole life economic costs and benefits in the round and help to address inequalities in health, wealth and education.

The cost assessment of all new homes takes account, not only of the upfront build cost, but also the running costs of the home and its environmental impact. This applies both to the direct costs from utility bills, maintenance and repair and also to the indirect costs of developments which promote unhealthy lifestyles which are likely to have a health service cost later on (e.g. promoting car use over walking or cycling). Rules around, and investment in, housing takes account of the differing costs of delivery between rural and urban Scotland and also accounts for people with different needs. This includes adequate provision of culturally appropriate sites and accommodation for Gypsy/Travellers.

³ Owner occupation is currently popular for three main reasons: repayment mortgages are a form of saving and, at the end of the mortgage, the homeowner has both a valuable asset and a rent-free home; they have more security of tenure (provided they keep up with their repayments); and they have greater discretion to make changes to their home.

HIGH QUALITY, SUSTAINABLE HOMES

PRINCIPLE 5

Tenure-neutral space and quality standards for new homes (and existing homes where possible) should be set specifically to improve and protect quality of living and of place.

Rooms are the right size for their purpose and the size of the household. The space in the home can be configured flexibly to meet the household's needs. For example, there is sufficient space for children to do their homework and for others to work at home if this option is available to them. This improves economic productivity as it helps bring new workers into the market, reduces the resources required to support work (travel time and costs of commuting) and reduces the adverse economic, environmental and health impacts of congestion.

PRINCIPLE 6

Government policy should promote a greater diversity of home builders and broader availability of land for development to reduce prices and improve building quality.

There is a larger number and a greater variety of house builders and developers, including Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, community and social enterprises, custom-build and self-build. Land zoned for housing or with planning permission is made available to whoever is willing to progress development and this happens rapidly. Better use of public sector land supports infrastructure provision, creates social, economic and environmental value and improves the quality of place. Lower land costs frees up more money to be spent on building design and quality; and greater competition helps ensure that is the case. People are well-informed about the importance of quality and design and the homes being built are the ones they want. Developers offer a real choice and new homes are customised to the first occupants' wants and needs. Government investment in new and existing homes across all tenures is not an isolated activity but is part of the development of the wider place and enhances the quality of life.

PRINCIPLE 7

All tenures should apply the same high quality and safety standards and levels of consumer protection.

High standards are backed up through a system of incentives and penalties. All homes of all tenures are subject to the same high standards and with appropriate ways of enforcement, compliance and seeking speedy redress. The legislative and fiscal framework require and encourage households and businesses to meet the standards. Homes that cannot reasonably be adapted to meet the standards (taking account of technical feasibility and cost effectiveness) are considered for demolition or are repurposed. Good design is shared and reused, where appropriate.

PRINCIPLE 8

New homes for sale should be built to high standards, defects should be identified and remedied quickly and all owners should be required to maintain the condition of their home.

Tougher inspection and, where required, enforcement is in place during the construction phase so that, for example, insulation is installed properly. Purchasers are confident that defects and snagging are remedied quickly, even after the site is completed and the developer has left. People maintain their outside space in a nature-friendly way to make their neighbourhood attractive and are encouraged, sometimes required, to cooperate over communal repairs.

PRINCIPLE 9

Decisions around the quality, location and utilisation of existing stock and new build should be ambitious in enhancing biodiversity, promoting Scotland's energy security, and be consistent with the target for Scotland's emissions to be net zero carbon by 2045.

The existing housing stock is made more energy efficient, uses low carbon heat and is more efficiently allocated (e.g. so that people can live nearer their work, if that is what they want to do). New build homes are built so that they are net zero carbon (i.e. built to high standards of energy efficiency and use renewable heat or very low carbon heating), taking into account the natural resources consumed by the construction process too. Brownfield sites are prioritised and incentivised and the true value of green space is taken into account. There is more innovation in environmentally-friendly building and improvement techniques and materials, which are thoroughly tested before being implemented. All housing is resilient to the impacts of climate change, including minimising flood risk, and contributes to climate ready places and communities. Our homes, and the space around them, promote biodiversity by providing a variety of habitats and wildlife corridors. Fuel poverty has been eradicated.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

PRINCIPLE 10

New housing⁴, and the required community resources, should only be provided where they help to create safer, stronger, attractive, sustainable and integrated communities.

New housing is built to facilitate active or accessible travel to school, healthcare and employment opportunities, and enables residents to continue to be active in their community as they get older. There is a more organic approach to new housing, with the right number and type of homes placed in such a way as to strengthen the existing community, so that both incomers and existing residents benefit. Town centres are rejuvenated by more people living in them. The right housing supports rural and island economies to thrive.

⁴ Of whatever size or scale, from self-build to large developments.

PRINCIPLE 11

Local communities should be empowered to respond to housing need in their area, as part of a coherent regional economic approach (creating and maintaining jobs) and supported by provision of the right infrastructure.

Young people have the choice to stay in their community if they want to, and key workers can live locally, because local communities take action to meet that housing need. Communities do this by getting suitable homes built and having a say about how the homes are used in their area (e.g. numbers of second homes). New housing for working age people is planned in anticipation of employment opportunities. Local communities get assistance linking to transport or utility infrastructure, for example. Conversely, employment is attracted and directed to places where there is underutilised good housing. Rural communities are getting the relatively modest number of homes that make a big difference to them planned and built quickly.

PRINCIPLE 12

Government intervention should help existing and new communities to be physically, digitally, culturally and economically connected within a coherent geographic region; this includes retaining and attracting vibrant communities in areas facing depopulation.

Settlements do not exist in isolation and have strong inbound and outbound connections (e.g. bus, rail and ferry links and broadband). Settlements “make sense” in their regional context, in terms of where people live, work, relax and access services. There are strong local connections that see the local café supplied by the butcher who buys his meat from the local farmer, for example. People are attracted to live and work in rural communities through a range of supply of affordable housing options and good public transport links; this also boosts local business and attracts inward investment.

HOMES THAT MEET PEOPLE'S NEEDS

PRINCIPLE 13

Government should ensure that there are affordable housing options across Scotland for households at all income levels.

Households at the lower end of the income distribution are offered assistance with housing and housing costs and households at the higher end can afford the home of their choice. Those in the middle can also afford housing appropriate for their needs, wherever they live in Scotland. Social housing is available across Scotland for people who need it and they can easily move home for work or personal reasons; nationally, we make best use of our social housing stock. The Private Rented Sector is the right size to provide quality, affordable and secure options for the households who want or need a rented home. Service personnel are provided with the right support upon resettling in their community by local authorities and veteran organisations. Homelessness has been eradicated; people needing homes are found homes quickly.

PRINCIPLE 14

Housing and the housing market should be highly flexible to enable people to meet their changing needs.

There are enough accessible or adaptable homes across Scotland suitable for older people, disabled people, or anyone else in need of specialist accommodation, making it easy to move to be nearer family or work. Ex-service personnel are well looked after. There are no fiscal barriers or disincentives to people moving to a more suitable home for their needs. Government shows leadership but social housing development is progressed in partnership between local authorities, housing associations, developers and communities, with government intervention only if required. The state has an enabling role and communities know their rights and are more empowered. Government mediation balances individual and public good.

Housing supports, enables and reflects the diverse people of Scotland – people of all protected characteristics and other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups live in the right homes for them. They are well-represented in the workforce delivering housing and housing services. The housing system supports innovation, new models of housing and service delivery and the provision of other types of less traditional forms of accommodation: for example, culturally appropriate accommodation for Gypsy/Travellers that meets their needs and aspirations.

PRINCIPLE 15

Everyone has a right to an adequate home⁵.

This includes:

- legal security of tenure
- availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure
- affordability
- habitability
- accessibility
- location; and
- cultural adequacy (including for Gypsy/Travellers, for example).

⁵ The UK has ratified seven core United Nations human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Article 11 of ICESCR states that everybody has the right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing.

Appendix 2: “Scottish Government Housing to 2040: Consultation on outline policy options” West Lothian Council’s Response.

Housing to 2040

Consultation on outline policy options

December 2019



Dear stakeholder

Housing to 2040: consultation on outline policy options

The Scottish Government's ambition is that everyone in Scotland should live in high quality, energy efficient homes that are affordable and that meet their needs. In last year's Programme for Government, we committed to work with you on a vision for how our homes and communities should look and feel by 2040 and the options and choices to get there. This year we reaffirmed that commitment. We want to publish our final vision and route map for 2040 in summer 2020, aligned with our new Infrastructure Investment Plan, and the Capital Spending Review, which will take account of recommendations from the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland on strategic priorities.

In July, we published a draft vision for our homes and communities in 2040, and supporting principles to guide policy development. This built on the wealth of material received in response to our stakeholder engagement in 2018 and I want to thank you for all your contributions to date. **I am writing to you now to seek your views** on the draft vision and principles and **your suggestions for bold, imaginative and innovative proposals** in order to deliver the housing to 2040 vision.

We would very much like this to be an open public debate so that we can work together towards building a consensus around the vision and route map. In support of this, we are running a programme of stakeholder events and I am planning to attend as many of these as possible so I can hear your views. These will provide a forum to explore your suggestions and some of the difficult choices that necessarily follow. As it may not be possible to engage with everyone with an interest, we are also inviting written submissions.

Now is the time to reimagine our housing system and we want to work together with the whole of Scotland to create a shared vision for 2040. Housing is embedded in so much that we want to achieve. It has a vital role to play in meeting many of our aspirations, including eradicating child poverty and homelessness, ending fuel poverty, tackling the global climate emergency and promoting inclusive growth. We face a number of challenges which mean that **business as usual is not an option**. We need to think open-mindedly about how to respond and **I am clear that nothing is off the table**.

You have asked us to work towards cross-party political consensus on the future direction of housing policy. If the vision and route map are to be long-lasting, then they need to be created by, and belong to, all of us. I have invited other political parties to work with us on this and I look forward to engaging with them once I have

heard from you about how you would like us to deliver the vision. We all know that house building, and housing systems don't fit neatly into a parliamentary cycle. I want to provide you with the long-term certainty you need to plan ahead, whether as an individual or organisation, and to invest in housing and housing services, in order to deliver and enjoy our shared vision for 2040.

Attached to this letter you will find: details of how to engage (**Annex A**); some guideline questions (**Annex B**); and some points to consider (**Annex C**). A copy of this letter is available on the Scottish Government website.

This is an exciting opportunity for housing policy for Scotland and I want everyone to play their part in creating the homes and communities of 2040. This period of consultation will continue until **28 February 2020** and I look forward to engaging with you.

AILEEN CAMPBELL

HOW TO ENGAGE

Everything you need to know, including a copy of this letter, can be found at:

www.gov.scot/publications/housing-2040/

Please consider using **social media** - twitter **#housing2040** - to make a public contribution and encourage debate.

If you want to make a **formal written submission**, please respond to this consultation using the Scottish Government's consultation hub, Citizen Space. Further details can be found within **Annex D** – Responding to the Consultation.

The Scottish Government will be organising a series of **engagement events**, some of which will be open and some of which by invitation only, and details of these will be made available on our website.

As part of this engagement, a **housing exhibition**, *Present Voices, Future Lives*, has begun touring twelve locations across Scotland. Exhibition events have been running since 4 November and will conclude on 16 December. The exhibition is travelling to urban, rural and island locations in order to hear from local communities and young people across Scotland about what matters to them. It aims to convey some of the challenges and themes such as liveability, adaptability, and accessibility, as well as providing an opportunity to better understand people's lived experiences of housing and place.

The exhibition spends a full day in each of the locations, and involves daytime workshops with young people to explore how we want to live in future, followed by a curated evening exhibition. The evening exhibition is open to all and showcases the findings collected from the workshops during the day. You are most welcome to attend any of the upcoming evening exhibitions and there will be other opportunities to view the full exhibition during the consultation period. The full list of exhibition dates and venues is signposted on the Scottish Government website.

Please also consider **arranging your own events** and discussions and using these to shape your contribution. We have produced a step-by-step guide for running your own Housing to 2040 consultation event or workshop. If you would like to do this, please get in touch with the Housing to 2040 team as they may be able to offer further advice and assistance.

You can **contact the Housing to 2040** team at: housing2040@gov.scot (but please note we may not be able to reply to each e-mail individually).

GUIDELINE QUESTIONS

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| Q1 | <p>Earlier this year we published our draft vision and principles. A short and longer version are available here: https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-to-2040/. Do you have any comments on the draft vision and principles?</p> |
| West Lothian Council's Response | <p>West Lothian Council supports the main principles of the Scottish Government's draft Housing to 2040 vision. The ability to achieve the vision will however require a continued effort in terms of increasing the supply of affordable housing, improving standards of all new and existing housing, ensuring comprehensive support and care services are in place for those most in need and implementing measures to ensure that people have choice over their current and future housing options.</p> <p>It is noted that publication of the final Housing to 2040 vision, to be published in the summer of 2020, will align with the Scottish Government's new Infrastructure Investment Plan and Capital Spending Review.</p> <p>For the Scottish Government's 2040 vision to be realised, this will necessitate real increases in public expenditure over the next 20 years not only in housing but in other sectors; health, education and social care. The link between good housing and other wider benefits in terms of health, well-being, social isolation, tackling child poverty, homelessness and improving education requires to continue to be a high priority.</p> <p>It cannot be assumed that the proposals, as outlined, can influence the housing market in terms of "shifting the balance away from the use of homes as a means to store wealth" and ensure "the cost of housing is under control" especially in the private sector. How much wealth individuals and families accumulate through their property requires to be fully understood.</p> <p>A continued increase in housing supply across all tenures would undoubtedly assist the aim of increasing housing choice. There also requires to be a realistic definition of "affordability" and for rent levels in both the public and private rented sector to be reviewed at a national level but also have the ability to reflect local circumstances including employment and employment opportunities.</p> <p>At the moment rent setting in the social housing sector still mainly takes account of the physical aspects of a property and also the short and long term maintenance costs. In reviewing affordability, account should be taken of all running costs including energy costs.</p> |
| Q2 | <p>Do you have any comments on the scenarios and resilience of the route map or constraints?</p> <p><i>These are set out in sections 3 and 4 of Annex C.</i></p> |

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| West Lothian Council's Response | <p>The constraints are very high level and wide ranging will require to be fully explored in more detail within the context of policy decisions and actions.</p> <p>As outlined in response to Question 1 above, the ability of the Housing to 2040 vision to be implemented is dependent upon adequate and long term funding commitments for housing and other related areas such as care, health and also national and local infrastructure to enable new housing developments to be realised.</p> <p>The route map will require to include key milestones and timescales for the implementation of the proposals including timescales for addressing the constraints which exist as a barrier to the implementation of the proposals, especially where there are funding or resource constraints, or both.</p> <p>Short term milestones (within first 5 years), should be broken down annually, with five year milestones thereafter. To 2040. All milestones require to be fully costed with identified funding levels.</p> |
| <p><i>For questions 3 to 7 below, when making proposals, please be as specific as you can about:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who needs to make it happen and what type of action is required? E.g. facilitation, regulatory, financial, infrastructure, training etc. • How much it costs and who will pay? • Who is needed to do the work (workforce)? • How long the proposal would take to implement and whether it is a temporary or permanent measure? • When in the period 2021 to 2040 should it begin and does anything need to be done first? • Who will benefit (who is it for)? And who might lose out and how could this be mitigated? (Think about equality groups and different types of organisation and geography and the impact on the wider community.) • How does it help deliver the draft vision? Does it align with the draft principles? <p>We recognise you may not be able to answer all of these questions – please do not let that put you off responding to us with your proposals.</p> | |
| Q3 | Do you have any proposals that would increase the affordability of housing in the future? |
| West Lothian Council's Response | West Lothian Council considers that the policies and provisions outlined below will assist in ensuring that housing is made more affordable to people and are able to have a degree of choice over their current and future housing options. The majority of policy |

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| | <p>provisions will require new legislation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One of the biggest challenges for West Lothian is the supply and demand issues for social rented housing along with the need for affordable housing. There is an ongoing challenge to eradicate homelessness. The impact of high market pressures areas such as the City of Edinburgh on neighbouring local authorities, such as West Lothian, affects both the supply and the cost of housing and the ability of residents who live in such areas to access affordable housing. 2. Increase the supply of affordable housing including housing for particular needs (ongoing). 3. Increase resources for local authorities including West Lothian across all sectors, especially care and support services. (immediate) 4. Review of capital and revenue funding for housing to ensure that housing is affordable across all tenures and most importantly that an adequate welfare system is in place to support those most vulnerable and those with particular housing and support needs. (by 2023) 5. Review of universal credit system in regard to the impact on tenants and landlords including reinstating the ability to deduct at source. (by 2021) 6. Increase the minimum wage to assist poverty including child poverty and assist access to affordable housing and exercise of choice. (by 2021). 7. Review of consumer credit regulations which at present affect the ability of landlords to offer payment plans to owner occupiers for major repairs and comprehensive improvement works to common areas. This is an issue in West Lothian where there are common flats factored by the council or a local RSL and especially where there is a concentration of mixed tenure tenement stock. (by 2021). 8. Establishment of a national energy company to provide affordable energy for all. (by 2025). 9. Enforcement of the implementation of "green energy" measures in both the private and public sector; electric car charging e.g , air source heat pumps, increased insulation standards and other measures and introduction of appropriate levels of funding to both individuals and local authorities/private sector to install such measures. It is also important that local authorities, such as West Lothian, are able to use their statutory planning, environmental health and building standards powers to enforce standards with respect to energy efficiency and climate change. (by 2021). <p>West Lothian Council considers that legislation would need to be introduced and amended for many of the above measures with short timescales due to the urgency of the issues especially around the</p> |
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| | <p>minimum wage, affordable rents, social care and support and energy costs.</p> <p>Increased funding in the form of grants and subsidies would encourage individuals to implement green energy measures at individual dwelling level, thus reducing reliance on conventional sources of power and reducing the cost of heating individual homes. Improvement and energy efficiency grants could be means tested.</p> <p>Investment in housing across all tenures would mean employment and growth in the construction industry via the supply of skilled labour, goods and materials across the EU resulting in a net contribution to the Scottish and UK economy.</p> <p>Response aligns to Principles (i), (iii), (iv), (xiii)</p> |
| Q4 | <p>Do you have any proposals that would increase the accessibility and/or functionality of existing and new housing (for example, for older and disabled people)?</p> |
| West Lothian Council's Response | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Removal of current Housing for Varying Needs guidance and the introduction of minimum mandatory internal and external accessibility measures across all tenures and incorporation of these into minimum national Building Standards which all providers including private developers must meet. (by 2021). 2. Use of West Lothian Council local and also national planning policy to increase the supply of fully wheelchair accessible new build accommodation across all tenures to meet local housing needs. (2021 onwards) 3. Implementation of a national accessibility audit and implementation of measures such as kerb lowering at key access and crossing points to aid wheelchair manoeuvre through our town and cities. (by 2025). 4. Increase in grant funding for aids and adaptations to existing rented and owner occupied stock, based upon needs including a system of "self-referral" for minor adaptations and aids instead of the lengthy OT/GP referral system, removing increasing pressure on GP surgeries. (2021 onwards). 5. Implementation of a National Housing Needs survey for older and disabled people (by 2023). 6. Introduction of enforcement measures to ensure more single storey and wheelchair accessible properties are built by the private sector. (by 2023) 7. Implementation of a national public transport strategy with appropriate subsidy levels especially around cycle, train and bus |

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| | <p>travel, making it affordable to all. (2020 onwards).</p> <p>8. Making better use of our town centres, especially in areas where retail is failing due to other pressures including out of town and internet shopping and wider economic pressures. This could include conversion of ground floor retail units to provide accessible accommodation for the elderly enabling access to other town centre services.</p> <p>People's needs, change over time and the support provided should not only relate to the physical adaptation of the house but the level of support that people require to live in a community setting and prevent them from being admitted to hospital.</p> <p>There is an ongoing need in West Lothian for specialist housing provision for older people and other care client groups and a requirement for the planning system to be aligned with Health and Housing and Social Care priorities to meet these needs over all tenure types. This can be achieved partly at individual local authority level, however will also require legislative input to ensure that private sector developers are also part of the solution.</p> <p>In addition, there may be a requirement to redistribute and increase resources to ensure that people can live independently for longer provided they live in housing which meets their needs and there is appropriate levels of support in place. This would assist to address current local and national issues of delayed hospital discharge and reduce costs to the NHS, which could in turn be redistributed to housing.</p> <p>The response made aligns to Principles (xii), (xiv) and (xv)</p> |
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| Q5 | Do you have any proposals that would help us respond to the global climate emergency by increasing the energy efficiency and warmth and lowering the carbon emissions of existing and new housing? |
| West Lothian Council's Response | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainable design of housing is very important in relation to increasing energy efficiency, warmth and lowering carbon emissions. Consideration requires to be given to developing appropriate heating systems to limit carbon emissions. The aim should be in the future to construct housing that does not require heating by substantially improving insulation. (from 2020) 2. Regulation should be introduced as a matter of urgency that all new build dwellings do not continue to rely on natural gas as the main fuel source for heating. (from 2021) 3. Increase the requirement for the installation of energy efficiency measures on new and existing housing through the building regulations and provide greater incentives for the work to be done with approved suppliers. (from 2024) 4. Move toward "passive haus" standard as norm for new build and where possible retro fit; natural ventilation systems, air source heat pumps, no boilers, zero reliance on gas. This strategy also includes the introduction of solar and wind power wherever possible. (by 2025) 5. Introduction of minimum mandatory energy efficiency/zero carbon measures for the private sector via the Building Regulations; minimum Gold Standard for all new build across all tenures. (2021 onwards) 6. Increased grants for energy efficiency measures especially for private owners including continued improved insulation measures to existing stock. (2021) 7. Introduction of minimum mandatory eco standards for the private as well as the public sector including environmental measures; SUDS, minimum levels of new tree planting, eco planting, culverts etc. (2021) 8. Promote the use of new materials with proven high thermal qualities; terracotta promoted in passive haus developments, for example, (2020 onwards) <p>The response made aligns to Principles (i), (ix) and (xiii)</p> |

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| Q6 | Do you have any proposals that would improve the quality, standards and state of repair of existing and new housing? |
| West Lothian Council's response | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased powers to local authorities and factors to implement common repairs and improvements to factored flats where the majority are in favour including common external areas and tenement back courts. This would also involve a review of the definitions of "improvement" and "repair". (2021 onwards). 2. Consider a "Green Deal" type of financial grant assistance to enable homeowners to maintain and or improve the quality of their dwelling. Grants which are received should be able to be paid back at a low/ zero interest rate. The condition of many existing properties would benefit greatly from financial assistance. This would not only improve the energy efficiency but also the visual amenity of an area where such buildings exist. (2021 onwards) 3. In relation to affordable housing, there needs to be alignment and coordination of housing standards in the social rented sector. In the longer term and once EESSH 2 is implemented, consideration should be given to the development of one standard that includes house condition and energy efficiency measures. This would be easier to implement, monitor and regulate. Validation, monitoring and regulation of this new standard requires to be at a more simplified level rather than the current complexities which surround/ have surrounded SHQS and EESSH validation, monitoring and reporting. (2025 onwards) 4. As part of comprehensive Asset Management strategy and where housing stock is declared not to have a long term future, increased mechanisms are required for councils and RSL landlords to build and offer new housing for outright sale (through either new build or improvement for sale). (2023 onwards) 5. Extension of Housing Act provisions in relation to Housing Renewal Areas which predominantly focus upon renewal of stock and where there is currently limited grant assistance.(2023 onwards) 6. Update the National House Condition Survey to support the above and inform investment decisions linked to an updated national high level standard across all tenures. (by 2023). 7. Review of procurement arrangements; quality and price assessments/frameworks which do very little to encourage small and medium and local companies unable to compete with larger companies who specifically employ bid consultants/staff. <p>The response made aligns to principles (i), (v), (vi) and (vii).</p> |
| Q7 | Do you have any proposals that would improve the space around our homes and promote connected places and vibrant communities? |

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| <p>West Lothian Council's response.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continued promotion of Brownfield sites and also review of land use zoning (commercially zoned land) for residential purposes.(ongoing) 2. Review of grant funding for Brownfield and reclaimed land making it easier for both developers and landlords to access funding to remediate land with high abnormal site costs. (by 2021) 3. Implementation of a national and local public transport policy aligned with local development plans and also care delivery plans; integrated housing, transport and healthcare. (by 2023) 4. Develop a strategic and coordinated approach to use and disposal of public sector land including land owned by the NHS. Where land is no longer required for a purpose e.g. hospital or school, the first option should be to consider the land for housing. This would assist with housing land supply and ensure that sites were not left unused for long periods of time. There should be sufficient public sector funding available to ensure that large scale projects do not rely on land values for delivery. (2021 onwards) 5. Some sites require substantial investment in infrastructure or remediation to bring them forward. The level of infrastructure required (and associated developer contributions) may make sites unviable. A "development agency" approach, whereby infrastructure is provided by Government and sites made "oven ready" could be one approach to assist in unlocking sites and assisting with both the viability and deliverability of new build projects. (2021 onwards) <p>Future deliverability is one of the main concerns within West Lothian. Housing sites can be allocated in the Local Development Plan but the council has limited control over these coming forward. The sites may be in areas where regeneration initiatives are supported through council policy or community initiatives, however, they may not be in areas which are attractive to the development of industry and an could be considered for housing. Mechanisms such as (5) above, need to put in place to unlock such sites, encourage community regeneration and a variety of choice to encourage people to locate or remain within their local communities.</p> <p>The response made aligns to Principles (xi) and (xii)</p> |
| <p>Q8</p> | <p>Any other comments?</p> |
| <p>West Lothian Council's response</p> | <p>In summary, West Lothian Council considers that there requires to be a whole system approach to public sector funding and service provision. to ensure that revenue and expenditure meets future needs and that the major constraints to enable the Housing to 2040 vision to be realised are removed.</p> <p>The council also considers that there requires to be an ongoing commitment to investment in housing and understanding of the contribution that good housing makes to health, education and environmental objectives.</p> <p>The funding allocation for housing and social care for local authorities including West Lothian, requires to be considered in the long term (20 years plus) to ensure that commitments made can be delivered. Funding allocations should also be increased to reflect the savings made in other areas of local authority and NHS expenditure.</p> |

| | |
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| | |
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SOME POINTS TO CONSIDER

1. Introduction

- 1.1. We are inviting views on the draft vision for 2040 and the underpinning principles as well as your suggestions for radical policy proposals to make the vision a reality.
- 1.2. This paper takes forward the commitment in the Scottish Government's 2018-19 Programme for Government¹ to work on a vision for how our homes and communities should look and feel by 2040 and the options and choices to get there.
- 1.3. We are adopting a whole-systems approach to housing and, for this to be effective, we need to make the most of connections between different policy areas across government. We want to align housing to 2040 with longer term planning already underway, for example around infrastructure investment and the Infrastructure Commission, the Scottish National Investment Bank, and Scotland's inclusive growth agenda.
- 1.4. The Scottish Government has already taken significant steps to improve the housing system in Scotland and people's experience of it. This includes: a renewed commitment to social housing through record investment and ending 'Right to Buy'; improving protections and standards for tenants in the Private Rented Sector; and alleviating poverty through full mitigation of the bedroom tax through Discretionary Housing Payments and the introduction of the Universal Credit Scottish choices. Since 2013, over 120,000 homes throughout Scotland have benefited from our Home Energy Efficiency Programmes, making them warmer, greener and more energy efficient, and we have set out an Energy Efficient Scotland route map to 2040 describing how we will improve the performance of all our buildings. We are taking action to ensure everyone has a home, ending homelessness and rough sleeping in Scotland. In addition, our Affordable Housing Supply Programme is on track to deliver our target of more than 50,000 affordable homes by 2021. For each policy affecting housing, we must make the right changes at the right time to help us converge on the 2040 vision.

¹ 'Delivering for today, investing for tomorrow: the Government's programme for Scotland 2018-2019', September 2018 (page 98-99) <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/delivering-today-investing-tomorrow-governments-programme-scotland-2018-19/>

2. Vision and principles

- 2.1. Housing, and our approach to 2040, has a substantial role to play in contributing to the Scottish Government's Purpose, National Outcomes² and UN Sustainable Development goals. It can help us achieve many of our ambitions for Scotland, including eradicating child poverty and homelessness, ending fuel poverty and tackling the effects of climate change; housing must play its part in tackling the global climate emergency.
- 2.2. The draft principles we published in July 2019 are designed to provide a coherent framework for future housing policy development in Scotland. The advantages of setting out principles are that they help improve:
 - the consistency and focus of housing policies and actions; and
 - the connection between housing policy and other priorities, e.g. around inclusive growth, health and education.
- 2.3. Housing to 2040 is for all of Scotland. Rural communities face particular issues, for example with higher housing costs, both build costs and living costs, than in Scotland's towns and cities. The vision and principles are designed to work across Scotland and include important implications and protections for rural communities. As we develop the route map, we will be subjecting it to an islands impact assessment and considering how to ensure it is rural-proofed, in line with the recommendations of the National Council of Rural Advisers.

Development of the vision and principles

- 2.4. The Housing to 2040 draft vision and principles emerged as a result of extensive engagement which concluded on 30 November 2018, and attracted contributions from over 800 people representing more than 100 organisations. A Scottish Government report on this stakeholder engagement in 2018 was published in May 2019 and you can find a copy of the 2018 discussion document and the final report on the website.

3. Drivers of change

- 3.1. The high level policies to deliver the 2040 vision will, in due course, be included in a route map to 2040. For the route map to have lasting value, it has to be resilient around different possible futures. Some major influencers

² See [Scotland's National Performance Framework](#).

of the housing system include: population and health; political; economic; technology; transport; energy and climate change; and climate adaptation.

- 3.2. When suggesting your policy proposals, you might like to consider how resilient your proposals are against the following variables or “drivers of change”, noting that change may come faster or slower than forecast or be altogether different. (Note that this is not an exhaustive list.)

Population and health

- More single person households
- Relatively smaller working age population
- Geographical shift in population – areas of rising population and depopulation, especially in rural areas
- No natural growth in population – falling birth rate and an increase in the number of deaths
- Need for inward migration to maintain population
- Ageing population
- The gap between life expectancy and healthy life expectancy

Political

- Increased devolution of powers or full independence for Scotland
- Relationship with the EU
- Role of local government
- Public appetite to pay to fund public services
- Public engagement in decision-making

Economic

- Relative economic performance between Scotland and rUK
- Negative impact of Brexit
- Greater financial innovation, especially “green finance”
- Exchange rates

- Scottish Government borrowing limits
- Balance of imports, exports and internal consumption, e.g. around timber and forestry

Technology

- Increasing automation and artificial intelligence affecting the way we work
- different jobs, changing work patterns and skills requirements
- Technology as enabler for communications, care and longevity
- Data gathering and integration to improve policy-making and service delivery
- Balance between on-line and physical interaction, e.g. in retail, and the impact on urban planning
- Speed of technological development and regulatory lag
- Growing need for robust cyber security
- Rollout of 5G and superfast broadband
- Greater customisation and personalisation

Transport

- Increased use of electric vehicles – could mean a way of storing energy for homes or, in the case of autonomous cars, the depot is a storage node on the grid
- More walking and cycling
- Smart public transport, responding to demand

Energy and climate change mitigation

- Growing public support for climate action
- More renewable energy generation and changes to energy infrastructure
- Improved energy performance for homes and businesses
- Future of the gas grid – closed or repurposed?
- Carbon capture and storage

- Changing patterns of land use and farming methods, re-wilding, re-planting forests, protecting peat lands
- Changing patterns of consumption of food and other goods

Climate change: adaptation

- Increased flood risk from sea level rise and excess rainfall
- Prolonged periods of low rainfall with increased drought and fire risk
- Higher temperatures and greater need for cooling measures
- Changes to land use

4. Constraints: financial and labour market

Financial

- 4.1. Scottish Government's capital budget of over £827 million for the Affordable Housing Supply Programme in 2019-20 represents 16% of the total capital budget³. The current level of funding, however, will be difficult to sustain, especially considering the number of demographic, societal and fiscal challenges we face.
- 4.2. In the course of this Scottish Parliamentary term (2016-2021), it is anticipated that the Scottish Government will spend over £4 billion on housing in Scotland, primarily through affordable housing supply, shared equity schemes, energy efficiency measures and mitigating UK Government welfare cuts. The UK Government will spend over £8 billion on housing in Scotland, primarily through housing benefits and energy efficiency measures. This brings the total government spend to around £13 billion. Householders and the private sector will have made significant investment in housing infrastructure over this period too; publicly-funded housing infrastructure also attracts at least 50% private finance.
- 4.3. There are four major areas of investment and activity required in housing infrastructure in the period to 2040:
 - delivering more homes across all tenures;

³ The total capital budget is £5,106 million, including Financial Transaction Capital.

- adaptations of (some) existing homes to make them more accessible for disabled persons and appropriate for an ageing population;
- delivering the Energy Efficient Scotland targets through retrofitting energy efficiency measures in our existing homes; and
- addressing the backlog of major improvements, maintenance and repairs to existing homes across all tenures, but especially owner occupied homes.

4.4. The total cost of all this work might be expected to be of *order of magnitude* £100 billion⁴ over the 20 year period, apportioned between the public and private sectors and households. (By way of comparison, the total Scottish Government budget for 2019/20 is around £34.7 billion⁵.) One important constraint is the need to spread the cost of this work equitably across all sectors and distribute sensibly over time. In particular, public sector costs must be bearable and also take account of any revenue impact (positive or negative) from the policy options.

4.5. A whole systems approach to housing delivery needs to take account of all public sector housing-related costs and receipts. We need to bring more new and innovative forms of finance into the housing system and make sure that public investment complements, rather than displaces, private investment.

Labour market

4.6. Similarly, the work will need to be done by an evolving workforce and different skills will be required in different combinations for each activity. The planning and sequencing of the work in the route map will need to take account of the availability of people with the right skills in the different regions of Scotland. For example, there may be only so many electricians available at any given time in the Highlands and they cannot be overcommitted. This is a second important constraint.

4.7. Some important factors affecting availability include: the overall workforce size, shaped by demographic changes, including an ageing population and migration to, from and within Scotland; worker mobility across Scotland and between sectors of the economy; opportunities for training and re-training; the need for skills to evolve to suit new and emerging technologies; and the latency of the system – recruitment and training take time.

⁴ This means closer to £100 billion than either £10 billion or £1 trillion.

⁵ DEL only, i.e. excluding AME.

- 4.8. We also need to be active in shaping the future workforce to deliver the route map and the vision for 2040. For example, Scottish Government is already considering the future skills requirements to deliver new housing and more broadly⁶.
- 4.9. We need to think about efficient deployment too – if a home needs adapting and retrofitting, then it might make better use of skilled workers to do this in a combined effort. This is in line with the Place Principle⁷, requiring a more joined-up, collaborative, and participative approach to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place.
- 4.10. When we consider the sequencing of options, both these constraints need to be borne in mind.

5. Your policy suggestions

- 5.1. You might want to consider how your suggestions:
- contribute towards delivery of existing commitments post-2021, such as those around child poverty and tackling the global climate emergency;
 - recognise the scale of the fiscal, demographic and climate challenges - we cannot simply continue with business as usual;
 - facilitate an evolutionary approach, starting in 2021 and avoiding sudden shocks insofar as this is possible; and
 - focus on the “win-win” of delivering wider objectives, e.g. housing and health.
- 5.2. You might want to consider how your suggestions fit with the financial and workforce constraints and how resilient they are in the face of the possible drivers of change.
- 5.3. Finally, we received a wealth of material in response to our stakeholder engagement in 2018 and this can be found in the report on the website. You might like to develop one of your earlier suggestions, or someone else’s, and, informed by the draft vision and principles, develop it into a more detailed policy proposal.

⁶ See the [New Housing and Future Construction Skills Report](#), May 2019, and the [Future Skills Action Plan](#), September 2019.

⁷ See the Scottish Government’s [Place Principle](#).

RESPONDING TO THE CONSULTATION

We are inviting responses to this consultation by **Friday 28 February 2020**.

You can access and respond to this consultation online at:

<https://consult.gov.scot/housing-services-policy-unit/housing-to-2040>.

The response form takes you through the guideline questions (**Annex B**) and also allows space for your own views. You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date of 28 February 2020.

If you are unable to respond using our online consultation hub, please complete the Respondent Information Form (**Annex E**) and send it:

- by email to housing2040@gov.scot; or
- by post to Housing to 2040 Team, Scottish Government, 2J North Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

Handling your response

Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are content for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy:

<https://beta.gov.scot/privacy/>

Next steps in the process

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public at <http://consult.gov.scot>. If you use the consultation hub to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us. Responses will be published where we have been given permission to do so. An analysis report will also be made available.

Comments and complaints

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to the contact address above or to housing2040@gov.scot.

Scottish Government consultation process

Consultation is an essential part of the policymaking process. It gives us the opportunity to consider your opinion and expertise on a proposed area of work.

You can find all our consultations online: <http://consult.gov.scot>. Each consultation details the issues under consideration, as well as a way for you to give us your views, either online, by email or by post.

Responses will be analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. We will publish a report of this analysis for every consultation. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise, the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review;
- inform the development of a particular policy;
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals; or
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented.

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body.



ANNEX E

RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

- ☐ Individual
☐ Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

Phone number

Address

Postcode

Email

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

- ☐ Publish response with name
☐ Publish response only (without name)
☐ Do not publish response

Information for organisations:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

☐ Yes

☐ No



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SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

PROPERTY TURNOVER OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2019

REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to inform Scrutiny Panel of the property turnover for the third quarter (October to December) of 2019/20.

B. RECOMMENDATION

To note the current levels of activity relating to property turnover for the third quarter of 2019/20 and in particular to note:

1. a decrease in property lets compared to the same period last year;
2. of the 47 communities in West Lothian, five had only one mainstream property to let and 15 had none, and
3. 57% of lets were allocated to people who were homeless

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

| | |
|---|--|
| I Council Values | Focussing on our customers' needs Being honest, open and accountable Providing equality of opportunities Developing employees Making best use of our resources Working in partnership |
| II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment) | The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended and in accordance with the Homelessness (etc) (Scotland) Act 2003, Housing (Scotland) Act 2014. West Lothian Council Housing Allocation Policy |
| III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers | None |
| IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators | None |
| V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement | Outcome 7 - We have tackled the significant inequalities in West Lothian society. Outcome - 10. We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the services we need |

| | | |
|-------------|---|---|
| VI | Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property) | None |
| VII | Consideration at PDSP | None |
| VIII | Other consultations | Consultation takes place with the Housing Network as well as individual tenant groups |

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Quarterly Turnover

The number of permanent lets for the period 1st October to 31st December 2019 was 399 compared to the same quarter last year when 418 properties were let.

The number of lets excluding Assisted Moves (33 properties) was 366 properties. Details of all lets and property numbers for the quarter are provided in Appendix 1 and 2. Council stock figures by Ward are detailed in Appendix 3. Applicants can choose from a total of 47 communities. The main points to note are:

- The communities with the highest percentage of total lets were Bathgate with 78 lets (20%), Whitburn with 39 lets (10%) and Broxburn with 36 lets (9%);
- There were five sheltered housing properties let;
- Five communities had one mainstream property available to let (Breich, Kirknewton, Linlithgowbridge, Stoneyburn, Torphichen);
- Nine communities had between two and four properties available to let (Dechmont, Longridge, Mid Calder, Polbeth, Seafield, Uphall, Westfield, Whiteside, Winchburgh)

The following Fifteen communities had no properties becoming available.

| No | Community | Number of properties remaining |
|-----------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Ballencrieff | 5 |
| 2 | Bellsquarry | 4 |
| 3 | Craigshill | 33 |
| 4 | East Whitburn | 45 |
| 5 | Ecclesmachan | 4 |
| 6 | Eliburn Co-op | 41 |
| 7 | Greenrig | 103 |
| 8 | Howden | 20 |
| 9 | Newton | 12 |
| 10 | Philipstoun | 25 |
| 11 | Threemiletown | 6 |
| 12 | Torphichen | 26 |
| 13 | The Riggs | 137 |
| 14 | Whiteside/Birniehill | 252 |
| 15 | Wilkieston | 5 |

D2 Type of property

The majority of properties that became available were cottages at 163 (41%) followed by 4 in block at 137 (34%). 37% of these were two bedroom properties, 19 % were one bedroom properties and 19 % were three bedroom properties.

D3 Applicants

The 399 properties let in this quarter were allocated in accordance with the Council's Allocations Policy and group plus points system.

Performance for the Third quarter is as follows:-

| Group | Percentage Met |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Homeless (HL) | 57% |
| Housing with Care | 0% |
| Unsatisfactory Housing (UH) | 16% |
| General (GN) | 1% |
| Transfer (TL) | 26% |
| Outwith (OW) | 0% |

E. Conclusion

The report provides information on the lets in the third quarter of 2019/20. The report also highlights that there continues to be some communities where there is no movement in vacant properties at all.

F. Background References

None

Appendices/Attachments: Appendix 1 – Lets excluding Assisted Moves

Appendix 2 – Assisted Move Lets

Appendix 3 – Total Housing Stock per area

Contact Person: katy.mcbride@westlothian.gov.uk – Tel No- 01506 281070

Annmarie Carr

HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

Date of Meeting: 4th February 2020

Lets October - December 2019 (excluding Assisted Moves)

| Ward | Community | House Type | Number of Bedrooms | | | | | |
|------------|------------------|---------------|--------------------|----|----|---|---|-------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| Armadale | Armadale | Cottage | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| | | Four in Block | 1 | 16 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| | | Flat | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | | Maisonette | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | Armadale Total | | 5 | 19 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 33 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | Westfield | Cottage | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | Westfield Total | | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | Blackridge | Four in Block | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Cottage | | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | |
| Flat | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | |
| Maisonette | | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | |
| | Blackridge Total | | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | Torphichen | Cottage | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Torphichen Total | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | Ward Total | | 10 | 23 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 45 |

Lets October - December 2019 (excluding Assisted Moves)

| Ward | Community | House Type | Number of Bedrooms | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| Bathgate | <i>Bathgate</i> | Cottage | 1 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| | | Four in Block | 4 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| | | Flat | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | | Sheltered | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | <i>Bathgate Total</i> | | 9 | 14 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 27 |
| | <i>Boghall</i> | Four in Block | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| | | Cottage | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| | | Flat | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| | <i>Boghall Total</i> | | 3 | 12 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| | <i>Whiteside</i> | Four in Block | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | <i>Whiteside Total</i> | | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | <i>Wester Inch</i> | Four in Block | 7 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| | | Cottage | 3 | 12 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 28 |
| | | Flat | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | <i>Wester Inch Total</i> | | 12 | 17 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 42 |
| <i>Ward Total</i> | | | 26 | 44 | 17 | 2 | 1 | 90 |

Lets October - December 2019 (excluding Assisted Moves)

| Ward | Community | House Type | Number of Bedrooms | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| Breich Valley | Addiewell | Four in Block | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| | | Cottage | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Addiewell Total | | 1 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | Breich | Cottage | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Breich Total | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Fauldhouse | | Four in Block | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| | | Maisonette | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| | | Cottage | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | | Flat | 1 | 1 | | | | 2 |
| | Fauldhouse Total | | 3 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | Polbeth | Four in Block | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Polbeth Total | | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| West Calder | | Four in Block | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| | | Cottage | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | West Calder Total | | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | Stoneyburn | Cottage | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Stoeyburn Total | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | Longridge | Cottage | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Longridge Total | | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | Ward Total | | 11 | 14 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 35 |

Lets October - December 2019 (excluding Assisted Moves)

| Ward | Community | House Type | Number of Bedrooms | | | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------------|----|----|---|---|-------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| Broxburn | Broxburn | Cottage | 2 | 8 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| | | Four in Block | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| | | Flat | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| | | Maisonette | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Broxburn Total | | 8 | 14 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 34 |
| | Uphall | Maisonette | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | | Four in Block | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | | Flat | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Uphall Total | | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| | Winchburgh | Four in Block | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Winchburgh Total | | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | |
| Dechmont | Cottage | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | |
| Dechmont Total | | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | |
| Ward Total | | | 11 | 19 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 46 |
| East Livingston | East Calder | Cottage | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | | Four in Block | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | East Calder Total | | 0 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| | Pumpherston | Cottage | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | | Four in Block | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Pumpherston Total | | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| | Uphall Station | Cottage | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | | Flat | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | | Four in Block | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Uphall Station Total | | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |

Lets October - December 2019 (excluding Assisted Moves)

| Ward | Community | House Type | Number of Bedrooms | | | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|----|---|---|---|-------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| | <i>Kirknewton</i> | <i>Cottage</i> | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | <i>Kirknewton Total</i> | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | <i>Mid Calder</i> | Sheltered | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | <i>Mid Calder Total</i> | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | <i>Ward Total</i> | | 3 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 15 |

Lets October - December 2019 (excluding Assisted Moves)

| Ward | Community | House Type | Number of Bedrooms | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---------------|--------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| Linlithgow | <i>Bridgend</i> | Four in Block | 0 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| | <i>Bridgend Total</i> | | 0 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| | <i>Linlithgow</i> | Four in Block | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | | Maisonette | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | | Flat | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| | <i>Linlithgow Total</i> | | 2 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| | <i>Ward Total</i> | | 2 | 14 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| North Livingston | <i>Deans</i> | Cottage | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| | <i>Deans Total</i> | | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| | <i>Elburn/Livingston Village</i> | Four in Block | 7 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 |
| | | Cottage | 1 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| | <i>Elburn/Livingston Village Total</i> | | 8 | 14 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 24 |
| | <i>Knightsridge</i> | Cottage | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 7 |
| | | Flat | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | <i>Knightsridge Total</i> | | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 8 |
| | <i>Ward Total</i> | | 13 | 17 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 38 |

Lets October - December 2019 (excluding Assisted Moves)

| Ward | Community | House Type | Number of Bedrooms | | | | | |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------|--------------------|------------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| South Livingston | Dedridge | Cottage | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| | | Flat | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | | Maisonette | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Dedridge Total | | 5 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| | Ladywell | Cottage | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| | | Flat | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | | Four in Block | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | | Maisonette | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Ladywell Total | | 4 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| | Ward Total | | 9 | 3 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| Whitburn | Blackburn | Four in Block | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | | Cottage | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| | | Flat | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| | | Maisonette | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Blackburn Total | | 2 | 16 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| | Seafield | Cottage | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Seafield Total | | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Whitburn | Four in Block | 4 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| | | Cottage | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| | | Flat | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| | | Maisonette | 0 | 9 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| | | Sheltered | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Whitburn Total | | 9 | 25 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 38 |
| | Ward Total | | 11 | 42 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 59 |
| | Total | | 96 | 187 | 78 | 2 | 3 | 366 |

Lets October - December 2019 Assisted Moves

| Ward | Community | House Type | Number of Bedrooms | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Total |
| Armadale | Armadale | Cottage | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| | Armadale Total | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| | Ward Total | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Bathgate | Bathgate | Cottage | 0 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| | | Four in Block | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Bathgate Total | | 1 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| | Ward Total | | 1 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Broxburn | Broxburn | Cottage | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Broxburn Total | | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Ward Total | | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Linlithgow | Linlithgow Bridge | Cottage | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Linlithgow Bridge Total | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Linlithgow | Four in Block | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Linlithgow Total | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Ward Total | | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| North Livingston | Knightsridge | Flat | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Knightsridge Total | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Deans | Cottage | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | | Flat | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Deans Total | | | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Eliburn | Cottage | | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| | Four in Block | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Eliburn Total | | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| Ward Total | | | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 9 |
| South Livingston | <i>Dedridge</i> | Cottage | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Dedridge Total | | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | <i>Ladywell</i> | Cottage | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Ladywell Total | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Ward Total | | | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| East Livingston | <i>Pumpherston</i> | Cottage | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | Pumpherston Total | | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | <i>Mid Calder</i> | Four in Block | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Mid Calder Total | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | <i>Uphall</i> | Cottage | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Uphall Total | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Ward Total | | | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Whitburn | <i>Blackburn</i> | Four in Block | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Blackburn Total | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | <i>Whitburn</i> | Cottage | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Whitburn Total | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Ward Total

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Total

| | | | | | |
|---|----|----|---|---|----|
| 5 | 12 | 14 | 2 | 0 | 33 |
|---|----|----|---|---|----|

| Council Stock Numbers | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| Ward | Name | Number of properties | | |
| 1 | BRIDGEND | 218 | | |
| | LINLITHGOW | 339 | | |
| | LINLITHGOW BRIDGE | 84 | | |
| | NEWTON | 12 | | |
| | PHILPSTOUN | 25 | | |
| | THREEMILETOWN | 6 | | |
| | | 684 | | |
| 2 | BROXBURN | 861 | | |
| | CRAIGSHILL | 33 | | |
| | DECHMONT | 26 | | |
| | ECCLESMACHAN | 4 | | |
| | UPHALL | 206 | | |
| | WINCHBURGH | 277 | | |
| | | 1,407 | | |
| 5 | EAST CALDER | 294 | | |
| | KIRKNEWTON | 39 | | |
| | MID CALDER | 55 | | |
| | PUMPHERSTON | 271 | | |
| | UPHALL STATION | 110 | | |
| | WILKIESTON | 5 | | |
| | | 774 | | |
| 3 | DEANS | 609 | | |
| | ELIBURN CO-OP | 41 | | |
| | ELIBURN KIRKTON | 280 | | |
| | THE RIGGS | 138 | | |
| | KNIGHTSRIDGE | 486 | | |
| | | 1,554 | | |
| 4 | BELLSQUARRY | 4 | | |
| | DEDRIDGE | 715 | | |
| | LADYWELL | 642 | | |
| | HOWDEN | 20 | | |
| | | 1,381 | | |
| 6 | ADDIEWELL | 275 | | |
| | BREICH | 66 | | |
| | FAULDHOUSE | 611 | | |
| | LONGRIDGE | 89 | | |
| | POLBETH | 316 | | |
| | STONEYBURN | 239 | | |
| | WEST CALDER | 149 | | |
| | | 1,745 | | |
| 7 | EAST WHITBURN | 45 | | |
| | GREENRIGG | 103 | | |
| | WHITBURN | 1,479 | | |
| | BLACKBURN | 849 | | |
| | SEAFIELD | 109 | | |
| | | 2,585 | | |
| 8 | BALLENCRIEFF | 5 | | |
| | BATHGATE | 1,007 | | |
| | BOGHALL | 654 | | |
| | WHITESIDE & BIRNIEHI | 252 | | |
| | | 1,918 | | |
| 9 | ARMADALE | 1,267 | | |
| | BLACKRIDGE | 221 | | |
| | TORPHICHEN | 26 | | |
| | WESTFIELD | 69 | | |
| | | 1,583 | | |
| | Total stock | 13,631 | | |



SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET AND RENT LEVEL 2020/21 to 2022/23

REPORT BY DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Panel of the updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) financial plan for the period 2020/21 to 2022/23, as well as the proposed HRA budget, rent and service charges for 2020/21.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the proposed 3% rent strategy for the period 2020/21 to 2022/23, encompassing HRA properties and garages, which will fund service needs and the Housing Capital investment programme;
2. Notes the proposed 3% rent strategy for Sheltered Housing and Homelessness properties, as well as related service and support charges, for the period 2020/21 to 2022/23;
3. Notes the proposed rent increase of 3% in 2020/21 and the updated 2020/21 to 2022/23 HRA budget.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

- | | |
|--|--|
| I. Council Values | Focusing on customers' needs, being honest, open and accountable, making best use of our resources, working in partnership. |
| II. Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment) | <p>This report complies with legal requirements under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. The HRA budget and associated rent increase is reported to the Council annually for approval.</p> <p>The equality impact of the budget has been assessed in compliance with public sector duty requirements, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 and Fairer Scotland Duty, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>An Integrated Relevance Assessment has been undertaken and is included in Appendix 1.</p> |
| III. Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers | None. |
| IV. Impact on performance and performance Indicators | None. |

| | |
|---|--|
| V. Relevance to New Single Outcome Agreement | Outcome 10 – We live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the services we need. |
| VI. Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property) | Continuation of the 3% per annum rent strategy agreed by Council on 13 February 2018 will deliver a balanced HRA Budget and a capital investment programme over the three year period from 2020/21 to 2022/23. |
| VII. Consideration at PDSP | Not applicable. |
| VIII. Other consultations | A formal rent consultation has taken place with all tenants. Discussion with the Head of Finance and Property Services. |

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 GOVERNANCE

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget setting process is subject to statutory, regulatory and governance requirements. Section 25 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires landlords to give tenants at least four weeks' notice of any increased rent due to be paid, while section 53 of the Act requires a tenant participation strategy to be in place. The council's financial regulations state that the Depute Chief Executive (Corporate, Operational and Housing Services) is responsible for presenting the HRA Revenue Budget to a meeting of the full council.

The HRA Revenue Budget, alongside the Housing Capital budget, forms part of the council's integrated approach to financial strategy, corporate planning, delivery of outcomes and performance monitoring. The activity budget, along with service management plans, links activities, resources, outputs and outcomes which enables the council to demonstrate Best Value in the use of resources. The activity budget is published on the council's intranet.

The council has continued to build a resilient culture of effective planning and governance, with strong evidence to demonstrate how the council meets the defined best value characteristics. The council's Best Value Framework, which was approved on 10 June 2014, ensures that the council complies with the provisions contained within the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. The 2003 Act requires the council to:

- Secure best value in the performance of its functions;
- Balance the quality and cost of the performance of its functions and the cost of council services to service users;
- Have regard to efficiency, effectiveness, economy and the need to meet equal opportunity requirements in maintaining that balance;
- Fully discharge its duty to secure best value in a way which contributes to the achievements of sustainable development.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (often referred to as the 'general duty') requires public bodies in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct;
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Supplementary legislation (the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012), requires the council to be proactive in meeting the general duty of eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations. In addition, the Fairer Scotland Duty, part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, places a legal responsibility on councils to pay due regard to how they can reduce inequalities of outcome, caused by socioeconomic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions. The Fairer Scotland Duty came into effect from 1 April 2018, therefore it is not a retrospective duty and does not apply to decisions taken before that date.

In line with statutory and regulatory requirements, this report advises the Panel of the proposed HRA revenue budget and rent levels for 2020/21, in line with the five year rent strategy approved by Council on 13 February 2018.

D.2 FIVE YEAR RENT STRATEGY

In developing the existing five year financial plan, and in line with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, a formal tenants' consultation was undertaken during 2017 on future housing rent and capital investment strategy. The outcome was reported to the Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 12 December 2017, and indicated that tenants favoured a 3% rent increase per annum over the five year period to 2022/23. Tenants also indicated they would be willing to fund future council housing investment and supply.

In accordance with statutory and regulatory requirements, Council approval will be sought for the proposed 2020/21 HRA budget and an associated rent rise of 3%, in line with the five year rent strategy approved on 13 February 2018. The 3% increase will apply to all HRA properties, garage and garage sites, as well as Sheltered Housing and Homeless properties and associated service and support charges for 2020/21. An Integrated Relevance Assessment has been undertaken on the proposed updated three year rent strategy and related budget for 2020/21. The assessment gave consideration to the three key general duties and it is deemed unnecessary that a full Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) be carried out.

In terms of managing a disproportionate impact of rent levels on tenants, the income management approach and monitoring arrangements implemented by Housing, Customer and Building Services pay particular attention to the impact of Universal Credit full service on tenants' ability to pay rent. This has led to changes in processes which now focus on the earliest possible intervention to support tenant claimants, and the service has lowered the trigger for action on all arrears to a level that enables discussion on arrears to happen before the loss of two weeks rent is accumulated in most cases.

Full service was introduced in May 2018, and there are now more than 2,000 tenants claiming housing costs through Universal Credit. The self-directed, online only method of the claims process presents difficulties for the council in identifying tenants in the process of making Universal Credit claims, and for tenants themselves in providing the exact amount of housing costs to claim for. The previous process of claiming Housing Benefit involved council officers and enabled early interventions to be made to mitigate delays in the claims process and verification of housing costs, reducing delays and errors.

Whilst this is still a relatively new process, ongoing monitoring of rent income demonstrates that the claim process has had an impact on claimants' ability to avoid accumulating arrears. The processing time can vary as any change in circumstances results in further delays. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) aim to process and make the first payment to claimants within five weeks of a new claim. The latest figures provided by the DWP show that in July 2019, of the households making new claims, 89% received their first payment by the fifth week of the claim, which is an improvement on 79% in July 2018. However, for most tenants making a claim, this has resulted in a minimum of five weeks' delay in rent payments, resulting in arrears balances accumulating.

The council's approach to managing this impact includes monitoring historical and new arrears for tenants in receipt of Universal Credit, however the lack of council involvement in the new process means that the data on the number of claimants is not reported in real time, and accuracy is reduced as a result. In order to mitigate this, all processes in relation to income management have been reviewed in light of the changes in the claims process to mitigate impact on tenants primarily, and on the service income. This work has become a priority in terms of housing staff operational activity, with workstreams dedicated to wide communication of processes and support, early interventions as the service becomes aware of new or potential claims, and specific multi-service processes have been created to provide financial and individual support to tenants navigating the claims journey.

As the full impact of Universal Credit full service becomes clearer through the ability to identify trends in impact on tenants, it may be necessary to conduct a further IIA in order to identify and mitigate negative impacts on tenants with specific protected characteristics.

Any further budgetary proposals or amendments to the rent strategy or rent levels will be screened for IIA relevance where required.

D.3 HRA PROPERTIES AND GARAGE AVERAGE RENT

A continuation of the 3% per annum rent strategy will enable delivery of a balanced HRA revenue budget over the period 2020/21 to 2022/23 and ensure continued investment in our housing infrastructure, improving existing homes and creating new affordable homes over the three year timeframe.

If the proposed rent increase is approved, and based on the latest stock report as at 1 January 2020, the average weekly rental for homes will be £75.74 in 2020/21, increasing from £73.53 in 2019/20. The equivalent weekly figure for garages is £5.70 in 2020/21, increasing from £5.53 in 2019/20.

The Scottish Housing Regulator Return on the Charter data has shown for four consecutive years, that West Lothian Council rents are lower than the national average (£79.07 in 2018/19), other medium sized local authorities, and significantly lower than other local Registered Social Landlords. The indicative rent level for HRA properties and garages for 2020/21 is detailed in the table below:

Table 1: Average Weekly Rent

| Average Weekly Rent | 2019/20 (£) | Increase (£) | 2020/21 (£) | Increase (%) |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| HRA Properties | 73.53 | 2.21 | 75.74 | 3.00 |
| Garages | 5.53 | 0.17 | 5.70 | 3.00 |

D.4 LOANS FUND REVIEW

A review of both the General Fund and HRA loans fund advance repayments was carried out following the update of the Local Authority (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Scotland) Regulations 2016, and discussions were held with the council's treasury advisors. After reviewing and considering the options and recommendations resulting from the Loans Fund Review, officers proposed a number of changes to the way that the statutory loans fund was operated, which were approved by Council on 19 February 2019 and 24 September 2019.

Debt repayments for future years have been recalculated as a result of this decision, meaning that they will be repaid over a longer period of time to ensure that the payments can be assessed as prudent and to ensure that the repayments reasonably reflect the period over which the community receives the economic benefit of assets that are now

lasting longer than originally assumed. It also means that loans fund repayments that have effectively been over provided for in prior years will be adjusted, with an under provision in future repayments being made to offset the previous over provision.

Taking into account potential additional loans fund costs, the reprofiling of loans fund repayments will generate one off net cash flow savings for the Housing Revenue Account in the short to medium term, as set out below:

Table 2: Net Impact of Loans Fund Review Reprofiling of Debt Repayments

| | 2019/20 £m | 2020/21 £m | 2021/22 £m | 2022/23 £m | 2019/20 to 2022/23 £m | 2023/24 to 2027/28 £m | Total £m |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|--|---------------------|
| Loans Fund Review | 1.630 | 4.181 | 4.245 | 4.284 | 14.340 | 11.660 | 26.000 |
| Additional Loans Fund Costs | (0.150) | (0.150) | (0.150) | (0.150) | (0.600) | (0.750) | (1.350) |
| Net Loans Fund Review Surplus | 1.480 | 4.031 | 4.095 | 4.134 | 13.740 | 10.910 | 24.650 |

As approved by Council, options as to how to utilise the one off HRA resources for 2019/20 to 2022/23 of £13.740 million from the reprofiling of the loans fund repayments within the HRA have been considered in the context of the current HRA rent strategy and capital programme. The remaining one off surplus of £10.910 million available for 2023/24 to 2027/28 will be considered as part of future rent strategy and capital planning for the next five year strategy period.

Detailed proposals for the use of the £13.740 million net cash flow saving for 2019/20 to 2022/23 are set out in the updated three year Housing Capital Investment Programme, also presented to the Panel today for consideration.

D.5 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – UPDATED THREE YEAR STRATEGY

In formulating the five year strategy approved in February 2018, it was assumed that there would be a 3% rent increase each year from 2018/19 through to 2022/23, in line with the outcome of the tenants' consultation. Consultation on the 3% strategy included housing network meetings, tenants, the tenants' panel and social media. The consultation carried out in 2017 as part of the strategy process showed that 69% of respondents were in favour of building more council houses even if this meant an increase to rent, 81% were in favour of investment in existing stock even if this meant an increase to rent, 73% felt that their rent was affordable, and 85% noted a preference for a 3% rent increase.

The service embarked on further engagement with tenants in October 2019. This was designed specifically to determine views on the proposed rent increase for 2020/21, and targeted tenant networks, the tenants' panel, the online focus group, tenants' news and social media on a rolling programme of feedback. There have been no additional comments made, with the panels and network members agreeing that the 3% agreed during the initial budget strategy consultation is still appropriate. The feedback from the networks and panel was that they felt strongly that the increase allows the council to continue to invest in stock, and support tenants to the standard they expect.

This rental increase, along with an increase in housing stock numbers, forecast to rise from 13,678 in March 2019 to around 14,286 in 2022/23, will generate additional income to the Housing Revenue Account and enable a balanced budget to be delivered. It will also support capital investment over the medium term. Income assumptions also take into account estimates of mortgage to rent and open market acquisitions, as well as increases to the new housing supply. It is assumed that there will be no overall change in the number of policy void properties and temporary tenancies, with numbers being maintained at 2019/20 levels.

As noted in Section D.4, forecasts of capital financing charges have been updated following implementation of the recommendations resulting from the review of loans fund operations. Although the levels of borrowing required to fund the agreed capital programme have not changed, the change in repayment methodology has resulted in a reduction in the revenue capital financing budgets for 2020/21 to 2022/23. It is proposed that the Capital Funded from Current Revenue (CFCR) budget is increased to provide this additional funding for the capital programme.

Budget assumptions have been updated to take account of latest information and circumstances, and Table 3 below shows the updated estimated allocation of revenue resources, and the associated funding generated through a 3% rent increase, throughout the remaining three year period covered by the HRA budget strategy.

Table 3: Summary Three Year HRA Budget

| Expenditure | 2020/21 £'000 | 2021/22 £'000 | 2022/23 £'000 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Employee Costs | 5,282 | 5,388 | 5,497 |
| Premises Costs | 17,899 | 18,715 | 19,399 |
| Transport Costs | 142 | 149 | 156 |
| Supplies & Services | 3,296 | 3,291 | 3,296 |
| Third Party Payments | 118 | 127 | 136 |
| Transfer Payments | 2,095 | 2,314 | 2,534 |
| Support Services | 2,552 | 2,552 | 2,552 |
| Capital Financing | 12,687 | 13,924 | 14,970 |
| CFCR | 10,379 | 10,328 | 10,378 |
| Total Expenditure | 54,450 | 56,788 | 58,918 |

| Funding | 2020/21 £'000 | 2021/22 £'000 | 2022/23 £'000 |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Housing Rents | (53,581) | (55,881) | (57,972) |
| Garage Rents | (602) | (620) | (639) |
| Miscellaneous | (267) | (287) | (307) |
| Total Funding | (54,450) | (56,788) | (58,918) |

The key expenditure assumptions are as follows:

- A pay increase of 3% for employees in 2020/21, followed by a 2% pay award in 2021/22 and 2022/23;
- An increase to employers' pension contributions of 2.4% in 2020/21 and 2.3% in 2021/22 and 2022/23;
- Inflation of 5% per annum for Repairs, Gas Servicing and Transport costs;
- A range of inflationary pressures of 2% to 3% per annum for insurance costs and void property costs;
- Additional increase in bad debt provision of £150,000 per annum, to take account of the ongoing impact of Universal Credit;
- Although capital financing charges are now forecast to be lower as a result of the loans fund review, they will continue to increase year on year from 2019/20 to 2022/23 due to ongoing prudential borrowing required to support a core housing maintenance and refurbishment programme for existing stock and an increase in the housing supply.

D.6 HRA REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21

The proposed HRA Revenue budget for 2020/21 is based on the 3% per annum rent strategy approved in February 2018, which will enable high quality and responsive housing services to be maintained for tenants and allow key priorities to be delivered. The 2020/21 budget will enable financial resources to be directed towards the efficient management of the council's housing stock and tenancies, with customer focused services delivered by local housing teams. Targeted resources will support tenant participation, including tenants' panels, networks and other groups, as well as tenant led inspections.

The service will continue to maximise rental income through effective management of council houses, and will continue to work to mitigate the impact of welfare reform. A successful pilot scheme has now been implemented to automate a proportion of the rent arrears process, where low balance arrears trigger an automatic engagement with the tenant, prompting early intervention with housing staff to take action before the arrears balance accumulates any further.

The service continues to be responsive to social housing regulation and inspection, and received positive feedback from the Regulation Manager following a visit in August 2019 to discuss the service approach to management of stock, tenancies and areas for improvement. West Lothian Council will continue to work to improve the quality of life for tenants, assisting individual households as well as playing an important role in promoting strong and sustainable communities.

West Lothian Council remains committed to providing high quality, value for money housing services. The programme of service development is focused on good outcomes for tenants, whilst achieving value for money, best practice and identifying possible efficiencies. Building Services are currently developing proposals designed to modernise their service delivery model and deliver a more cost efficient service, bringing a wider service offering and benefits to customers. The service attended 38,420 repairs and services for customers in 2019, with 100% of properties receiving annual gas inspections and servicing.

The service continues to work towards meeting the 2020 standard for home energy efficiency in Scotland through a programme of improvement and investment works. Some of the recognised achievements of the service in the past year have included:

- The Housing, Customer and Building Services (HCBS) range of initiatives to promote tenant scrutiny in 2018/19 won the Tenant Information Service (TIS) National Excellence Awards 2019, under the Danny Mullen Scrutiny Excellence category for the partnership of HCBS and the Tenant Editorial Panel.
- Recognition at Celebrating Success with awards for the Syrian Refugee project and enabling Tenant Scrutiny.
- Successful reviews of the Allocations policy, repairs and maintenance process reviews, and full review and redesign of the void model.
- Completion of the redesign of the Safer Neighbourhood Team as a result of the Transforming Your Council project.
- Completion of the seventh Scottish Housing Regulator Annual Return to the Charter, where the service remains in the lowest category of risk for approach and delivery of the services provided to tenants and applicants for housing.

Planned service developments and improvements continue for Housing, Customer and Building Services in 2020/21. Enablement of tenant led scrutiny across service development, finance and practice continues to be recognised as best practice in utilising user needs and views to shape services, and widening customer access in sharing views and experiences is a priority.

The review of all key customer journeys focusses on the redesign of processes and policy in partnership with customers, in order to meet customer needs and to reflect the changes in the wider sector and within the council which demand that services reshape approaches as technology and legislation evolve.

Targeted resources as part of the service's customer experience project will focus on a programme of high quality, time intensive engagement with tenants. This will provide a range of information that will inform strategies, plans and practices, provide quality advice and support tenant participation, including tenants' panels, networks and other groups, as well as tenant led inspections.

The digital transformation of the service is underway, with the digitisation of all records and customer access to services in housing need, repairs and tenancy management. User and tenant experiences are critical to the service approach to how service delivery is redesigned in collaboration with those in receipt of a service. Future developments facilitating further self-service and increased access options are planned for the coming year, and will prioritise the customer journeys that users prefer.

The summary HRA Budget for 2020/21 of £54.45 million is outlined below.

Table 4: 2020/21 HRA Budget

| | 2020/21 £'000 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Rents | 54,183 |
| Other Income | 267 |
| Total Funding | 54,450 |
| Employee Costs | 5,282 |
| Premises Costs | 17,899 |
| Transport Costs | 142 |
| Supplies & Services | 3,296 |
| Third Party Payments | 118 |
| Transfer Payments | 2,095 |
| Support Services | 2,552 |
| Capital Financing Costs | 23,066 |
| Total Expenditure | 54,450 |

As detailed in Section D.5, the proposed budget takes account of a number of cost pressures and assumptions including:

- 3% rental increase for council houses and garages.
- A pay increase of 3% for employees and allowance for incremental pay progression.
- Indexation pressures, such as energy costs.
- Updated capital financing charges relating to the Housing Capital Programme.
- Ongoing impact of Welfare Reform and introduction of Universal Credit in May 2018.

While the Housing Scotland Act 1987 requires local authorities to maintain a ring fenced HRA, the HRA revenue budget also forms part of the council's integrated approach to corporate planning and performance management. In setting a balanced budget, the council is committed to delivering a well maintained housing stock and efficient management services to support tenants and their communities.

D.7 RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

In developing the 2020/21 HRA Budget, it is recognised that there are a number of risks and uncertainties that could impact on the level of financial resource required. This would include potential variances to pay and price indexation as well as capital borrowing requirements and associated interest rates. Resources for reactive repairs remain subject to demand for services and potential impact of winter weather.

The ongoing effect of Welfare Reform changes continue to present risk and uncertainty to all social landlords. While the council continues to actively pursue housing arrears as a priority activity, the value of current tenant arrears as at 5 January 2020 was £2.98 million. Although the arrears position remains a challenging and uncertain factor, it should be noted that the cash collection rate for rental income remains positive, at 97% in January 2020.

The Scottish Government have stated that they would wish to take advantage of provisions within the Scotland Act 2016 in relation to Welfare Benefits, however making these changes can take time to come into regulatory effect.

As of 4 October 2017, Universal Credit claimants in Scotland have been able to request that payments are made every two weeks, instead of once a month, with the housing element of their payment sent directly to their landlord.

The Scottish Government could also utilise its new welfare flexibilities, to effect change which could positively impact on plans to withdraw housing support to single people aged 18-21. The service takes a proactive approach by contacting tenants already in arrears who are moving to Universal Credit to ensure they understand the system of claims, and to suggest the direct payment and increased frequency options may be a better option for them to assist in budgeting and ensuring payment of rent.

Appropriate steps will be taken to mitigate against risks and contain expenditure within available resources during the financial year. Quarterly monitoring reports will be provided to Council Executive during 2020/21 to provide updates on the financial position and actions to ensure risks are appropriately managed.

D.8 HOUSING RESERVES

Local authority accounting standards require that, in setting budgets, the Council receives details of reserves, their proposed use and an opinion as to the adequacy of the reserves for the forthcoming year.

As reported to Council Executive on 4 February 2020, within the month 9 monitoring report, a breakeven position is forecast for the HRA revenue budget for 2019/20. It is therefore projected that the HRA reserve at 31 March 2020 will remain at £926,000 and there is no provision to augment this during 2020/21.

Given the inherent risk associated with the impact of Universal Credit, extreme weather conditions and other risks and uncertainties, it will be recommended that this balance be maintained and the level is considered adequate to meet with unforeseen demands on resources. The proposed budget for 2020/21 does not assume any use of this reserve.

D.9 PRUDENTIAL CODE IMPLICATIONS

The Prudential Code provides the council with local discretion in investment levels for Housing, provided it ensures that capital spending and associated borrowing are at levels that are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

To demonstrate this, the Code sets prudential indicators that are designed to support and record local decision making. The Head of Finance and Property Services is responsible for reporting these indicators for both the General Fund and the HRA. For this reason, the Prudential Indicators will be reported in detail by the Head of Finance and Property Services in the 2020/21 General Fund Revenue Budget, presented to the Council budget setting meeting.

A key Prudential Indicator is affordability, which assesses the incremental impact of capital spending on rent levels. Under the proposed budget, increases to loans charges arising from borrowing are fully funded within the HRA. This area will continue to be closely monitored, particularly in relation to affordability of housing arrears and remaining procurement costs for the planned new build projects.

D.10 INTEGRATED EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Following the key principles of relevance and proportionality within the Equality Act 2010, an integrated equality impact assessment of policies and decisions of the councils is a requirement of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. This process is well established within the council's budget setting process.

Prior to presentation of the five year financial plan to Council in February 2018, an initial equality relevance assessment was undertaken on the budget and rent proposals. This assessment identified if a full impact assessment was required to ensure appropriate consideration was given to the impact of proposals on protected groups, with judgements being undertaken regarding relevance and proportionality. The assessment determined that a full equality impact assessment was not required at that time.

The five year Rent Strategy was fully consulted on with council tenants, individually and via tenant representative groups. The service engages with tenants each year on the annual increase to enable comment and feedback on any further impact.

Reflecting the recent Fairer Scotland duty, the integrated relevance assessment was refreshed. It is not considered necessary for a full Integrated Impact Assessment to be carried out at this point, however any further budgetary proposals or amendments to the rent strategy or rent levels will be screened for IIA relevance where required.

D.11 CONSULTATION

Under Section 25 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, the council has a statutory duty to inform and consult tenants on its rent policy. Formal consultation on the five year strategy took place from 9 October to 8 December 2017. During the consultation period, meetings were held with Tenants Panels and Tenant networks, as well as specifically arranged drop in sessions and through a special edition of Tenant News.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their core housing activities. Indicator 29 requires all landlords to establish what percentage of tenants feel that the rent for their property represents good value for money. The biennial tenant satisfaction survey was conducted between October 2019 and January 2020, with 2,184 tenants answering the question regarding how they feel about the rent they pay and 80.67% responding that they are satisfied/very satisfied that rent levels represented good value for money. A total of 2,339 tenants completed the survey, the highest response level to the tenant satisfaction survey to date, and an improvement of over 500 responses from the same survey carried out in 2017.

E. CONCLUSION

The proposed updated three year HRA Revenue budget strategy provides a balanced financial plan, incorporating a proposed 3% per annum rent increase, which will allow the council to continue to provide value for money services to tenants and to be responsive to customers' needs. It also enables continued investment in existing housing stock and infrastructure, as well as the expansion of new housing supply.

The balanced budget for 2020/21 includes continued investment and funding of housing infrastructure, to meet the needs of existing and future tenants, as well as enabling the delivery of key priorities and allowing the people of West Lothian to continue to be supported to find a suitable place to live and have quality housing options available to them.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Rent Consultation – Report by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services to Services for the Community PDSP on 12 December 2017

Housing Revenue Account Budget and Rent Levels 2018/19 to 2022/23 – Report by Depute Chief Executive to Council on 13 February 2018

Treasury Management Plan 2019/20 – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to West Lothian Council on 19 February 2019

Update on Review of the Loans Fund, Insurance Fund and Modernisation Fund – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to West Lothian Council on 24 September 2019

2019/20 Housing Revenue Account - Month 9 Monitoring Report - Report by Depute Chief Executive to Council Executive on 4 February 2020

Housing Capital Investment Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23 – Report by Depute Chief Executive to Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 4 February 2020

Appendices/Attachments: One

Appendix 1 – Integrated Relevance Assessment Form

Contact Person: Pamela Bell, Senior Service Accountant
Email: pamela.bell@westlothian.gov.uk, Tel: 01506 281282

Graeme Struthers
Depute Chief Executive
4 February 2020

Integrated Relevance Assessment Form

| 1. Details of proposal | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Policy Title (include budget reference number if applicable) | 2020/21 to 2022/23 Housing Revenue Account Budget and Rent Level | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Service Area (detail which service area and section this relates to) | Housing, Customer and Building Services | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lead Officer (Name and job title) | AnnMarie Carr, Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other Officers/Partners involved (list names, job titles and organisations if applicable) | Sarah Kelly, Performance and Change Manager Kirsty Weir, Service Development Officer Alison Smith, Housing Operations & Community Safety Manager Pamela Bell, Senior Service Accountant Tenant Participation Stakeholders Tenants' Panel | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Date relevance assessed | 05/01/2020 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented? | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| YES | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X <input type="checkbox"/> NO | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>3. The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct • Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and • Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <p>NB: In this section you must also consider the Human Rights Act and the key PANEL (Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality) principles of Human Rights (further detail on what these are, are provided in the guidance document)</p> <p>Which groups of people do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? You should consider employees, clients, customers and service users (Please tick below as appropriate)</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Age – Older people, young people and children</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disability – people with disabilities/long standing conditions</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gender reassignment – Trans/Transgender Identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marriage or Civil Partnership – people who are married or in a civil partnership</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pregnancy and Maternity – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Race – people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Religion or Belief – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sex – Gender Identity - women and men (girls and boys) and those who self-identify their gender</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sexual Orientation – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> | | Age – Older people, young people and children | <input type="checkbox"/> | Disability – people with disabilities/long standing conditions | <input type="checkbox"/> | Gender reassignment – Trans/Transgender Identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth | <input type="checkbox"/> | Marriage or Civil Partnership – people who are married or in a civil partnership | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pregnancy and Maternity – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave | <input type="checkbox"/> | Race – people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds | <input type="checkbox"/> | Religion or Belief – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sex – Gender Identity - women and men (girls and boys) and those who self-identify their gender | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sexual Orientation – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Age – Older people, young people and children | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Disability – people with disabilities/long standing conditions | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gender reassignment – Trans/Transgender Identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Marriage or Civil Partnership – people who are married or in a civil partnership | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pregnancy and Maternity – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Race – people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Religion or Belief – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sex – Gender Identity - women and men (girls and boys) and those who self-identify their gender | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sexual Orientation – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|----|--|
| 4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities? Consideration must be given particularly to children and families | | | |
| Socio-economic Disadvantage | | | Impact – please tick below as appropriate) |
| Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing | | | ✓ |
| Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future | | | |
| Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies | | | |
| Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport) | | | |
| Socioeconomic Background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income | | | |
| 5. Integrated impact assessment required? (Two ticks (✓) above = full assessment necessary) | | | |
| YES | | NO | ✓ |
| 6. Decision rationale – if you have ticked no above, use this section to evidence why a full IIA is not required | | | |
| <p>The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Non-Statutory Guidance on “Making Fair Financial Decisions” 2015 outlines a duty to consider the impact of fiscal planning decisions on equality. The impact for tenants of the ongoing UK Government Welfare Reform Act roll-out, Universal Credit in particular, places a duty of care and an ethical obligation as a responsible landlord on the council to consider the social-economic impact of financial decisions on the local economic climate. In particular, there is a duty to consider the needs of those vulnerable to financial hardship or poverty as a result of these decisions. It should be noted that a separate IIA has been conducted on the implementation of Universal Credit in West Lothian during May 2018.</p> <p>Previous related rent setting proposals seeking formal committee approval and IIA screened for relevance are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval for the rent strategy consulted on with tenants setting out 3% increases from 2012-17. • The 2017 rent consultation with tenants on proposed rent changes from 2018/19 to 2022/23. • The 2018/19 to 2022/23 HRA 3% rent strategy which will fund current service needs and a five year Housing Capital programme. • Approval for the HRA budgets over financial years 2013/14 to 2019/20. • Approval for rent and garage charge changes over financial years 2013/14 to 2019/20. • Changes to service and support charges for Sheltered Housing properties including rents, service and support charges for Homeless properties over financial years 2013/14 to 2019/20. <p>This assessment deals with the proposals for 2020/21 to 2022/23 which are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A rent increase of 3% in 2020/21 which will fund current service needs and the remaining three years of the five year Housing Capital programme as agreed with tenants and approved by council in February 2018; 2. A 3% increase in garage rents in 2020/21; 3. An increase of 3% in rents and service and support charges for Sheltered Housing and Homelessness properties for 2020/21. | | | |

Rent Levels

The five year Rent Strategy has been fully consulted on with council tenants, individually and via tenant representative groups. The service engages with tenants each year on the annual increase to enable comment and feedback on any further impact. The HRA and rent levels being proposed for 2020/21 to 2022/23 remain in line with the previous strategy. The council has undertaken significant investment in its housing stock over recent years. The 3% increase will enable delivery of a balanced HRA revenue budget, and will allow high quality and responsive housing services to be maintained for tenants and ensure continued investment in housing infrastructure, improving existing homes and new build programme all of which will have a positive impact on equality and support for those within various protected characteristics.

Delivering affordable, socially rented accommodation built to a high standard of specification helps the council meet some of the rising demand for such accommodation within the community and increases housing options for vulnerable people. By investing significantly in our existing stock to meet SHQS and EESSH standards, regenerating local communities, and investing in energy efficiency improvement works, the service will mitigate the effects of rent increases through improving the energy efficiency of older properties that cost more to heat – working towards the outcome of helping vulnerable tenants avoid the threat of fuel poverty.

If the rent increase is approved, and based on the latest stock report at 1 January 2020, the average weekly rental for homes will be £75.74 in 2020/21, increasing from £73.53 in 2019/20. The equivalent weekly figure for garages is £5.70 in 2020/21, increasing from £5.53 in 2019/20. The indicative rent level for HRA properties and garages across the four year period is detailed in the table below.

| Average Weekly Rent | 2019/20 (£) | 2020/21 (£) | 2021/22 (£) | 2022/23 (£) |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| HRA Properties | 73.53 | 75.74 | 78.01 | 80.35 |
| Garages | 5.53 | 5.70 | 5.87 | 6.05 |

Service and Support Charges

In line with previously agreed strategies, it is proposed that service charges for Sheltered Housing properties will be increased by 3% in 2020/21. A 3% increase for support charges in relation to Homeless Properties for 2020/21 is also proposed.

Other Factors

As a result of either a freeze or minimal uprating for most working-age benefits from 2016 to 2020, the financial situation for benefit tenants has been challenging. A ministerial statement on Welfare was issued by the UK Government on 13 January 2020, which announced that this freeze will be lifted as of April 2020. Local Housing Allowance rates will therefore be increased in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). This increase will mean the majority of people in receipt of housing support in the Private Rented Sector will see their housing support increase, on average benefiting by around £10 per month. This uplift will exceed the rent increase for the vast majority of tenants in receipt of LHA, and will therefore mitigate the impact of a rent increase.

Additionally, unlike rents in the private sector, through the Local Housing Allowance limits if council rents go up by 3%, the eligible rent on which the Housing Benefit calculation is based will also go up by 3%, so those on full benefit will not suffer further financial detriment. Someone entitled to full Housing Benefit with a £100 rent whose rent increases to £103 will see their benefit increase to £103. While payment arrangements were impacted by the implementation of Universal Credit (UC) in West Lothian in May 2018, a range of initiatives were undertaken separately to manage and mitigate the impact of this. The service continues to monitor the impact of UC on tenants weekly as part of the income management approach. Affordability in terms of council tenants on benefits is unlikely to be affected, but rather the process for payment.

Those on part benefit, who may have to pay a portion of their rent just now, will see that amount increase, and those already subject to under occupancy charge (bedroom tax) who currently have their £100 Housing Benefit award reduced by £14, will see their £103 award reduced by £14.42 – increased pressure continues to be placed on our Discretionary Housing Payment cash which the council utilises to mitigate this shortfall. The council's focus on rent arrears from a preventative standpoint should assist those who are negatively impacted by the 3% raise as Housing officers continue to work in partnership with the Advice Shop to maximise income and improve budgeting skills.

At the time of the rent consultation in 2017, an exercise was undertaken using the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) rent affordability tool to assess the impact of the proposed rent strategy. The affordability tool presumes that landlords are not able to set affordable rents for every single tenant, but examines the impact of rent on moderate incomes. A low affordability ratio, represented by 25% of net income, is the measure for affordability of social rents. Based on the current highest council rent, for one, two and three bedroom properties, all rents are viewed as being affordable for all household types. Assuming a rental increase of 3% per annum over five years, and a modest income increase of 1% per annum, all average rents are judged to fall within the affordable range over the period of the rent strategy.

This exercise has provided useful evidence to demonstrate the impact of the proposed rent strategy on council tenants going forward. The service has plans to build on this exercise in 2020-2022 through a project designed to conduct intensive profiling of the council's customers, with affordability of rent forming a critical area of focus. The intelligence gained from spending time with customers conducting this study will provide invaluable data to inform future plans on rent setting and will shape our strategic direction.

The service embarked on further engagement with our tenants in October 2019, which was designed specifically to determine views on the agreed rent increase for 2020/21 from tenant networks, the tenants' panel, the online focus group, tenants' news and across social media on a rolling programme of feedback. There have been no additional comments made, with the panels and network members agreeing that the 3% agreed during the initial budget strategy consultation is still appropriate. The feedback from the networks and panel was that they felt strongly that the increase allows the service to continue to invest in stock, and support tenants to the standard they expect.

The ongoing effect of general economic conditions and Welfare Reform changes, including direct housing costs to tenants on Universal Credit, continue to present risk and uncertainty to all social landlords. Pressure on rent collection will be closely monitored following the implementation of Universal Credit within West Lothian.

The council continues to actively pursue housing arrears and there is a continued focus on reducing arrears balances. The service will continue to maximise rental income through effective management of council houses, and work to mitigate the impact of welfare reform. This year has seen the successful pilot and roll-out of the automation of a proportion of the rent arrears process, where low balance arrears trigger an automatic engagement with the tenant, prompting early intervention with housing staff to take action before the balance accumulates any further. The first focus for council staff is to provide support, advice and interventions as soon as possible for any tenant experiencing arrears, and the evidence to date this year is that this approach is seeing improved outcomes and is helping to mitigate the impact of Universal Credit, with non-UC related arrears being reduced, and support to tenants through arrangements and alternative payment methods proving beneficial in managing finances. A corporate approach to debt continues to be taken forward, to ensure resources are most appropriately targeted and that services are working in partnership to break the cycle of debt in complex and high level arrears cases where tenants have instances of multiple debts.

Housing, Customer and Building Services Senior Management Team, the Senior Service Accountant, income management staff and the service equality lead were involved in the consultation of this assessment. The details of the budget proposals within this report support these findings and it is unnecessary that a full Integrated Impact Assessment be carried out at this point. It is however recommended that any further budgetary proposals or amendments to the rent strategy or rent levels be screened for IIA relevance where required.

| | |
|---|---|
| Signed by Lead Officer | AnnMarie Carr |
| Designation | Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services |
| Date | 15/01/2020 |
| Counter Signature (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy) | |
| Date | |



SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

HOUSING CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2020/21 to 2022/23

REPORT BY DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Panel of the updated Housing Capital Investment Programme for 2020/21 to 2022/23 and the proposed exemption for works under the terms of the Best Value Framework.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the proposed updated 2020/21 to 2022/23 Housing Capital Investment Programme and related funding as detailed in the report;
2. Notes the updated exemptions for works under the terms of the Best Value Framework, as outlined in section D.6 of the report.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

| | |
|--|---|
| I. Council Values | Focusing on customers' needs, being honest, open and accountable, making best use of our resources, working in partnership. |
| II. Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment) | <p>The report on the updated Housing Capital Programme complies with the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 and the council's Financial Regulations.</p> <p>The equality impact of the budget has been assessed in compliance with public sector duty requirements, as set out in the Equality Act 2010, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 and Fairer Scotland Duty, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>An Integrated Relevance Assessment has been undertaken and is included in Appendix 3.</p> |
| III. Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers | None. |
| IV. Impact on performance and performance Indicators | An effective housing capital and asset strategy is vital to service performance. |
| V. Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement | Outcome 10 – We live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the services we need. |

| | |
|---|---|
| VI. Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property) | Proposed capital investment of £100.703 million for 2020/21 to 2022/23, with £32.850 million planned for 2020/21. |
| VII. Consideration at PDSP | Not applicable. |
| VIII. Other consultations | Consultation has taken place with the Tenants Panel and the Head of Finance & Property Services. |

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 BACKGROUND

The council approved a five year rent and capital investment strategy for 2018/19 to 2022/23 in February 2018. As reported to the Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 12 December 2017, the statutory consultation on the five year rent strategy with individual tenants and tenant groups indicated support for a future rent strategy with an annual rent increase to fund capital investment and to increase the housing stock. This report seeks to advise the Panel of the proposed three year Housing Capital Investment programme for 2020/21 to 2022/23.

D.2 2019/20 HOUSING CAPITAL OUTTURN POSITION

An updated 2019/20 Housing Capital budget of £36.398 million was approved by Council Executive on 25 June 2019. The programme encompasses both new build housing and major investment in the existing housing stock, with a number of large scale housing projects undertaken by Building Services.

As reported to Council Executive on 4 February 2020, expenditure totalling £34.436 million is forecast for the 2019/20 programme. The month 9 projected expenditure represents a net slippage/saving position of £1.962 million against the budgeted resources for 2019/20, and the final outturn position for the year will be reported to Council Executive in June 2020.

Any slippage or acceleration on projects in the 2019/20 programme will be rolled forward into the revised three year programme, and an updated programme will also be presented to Council Executive for approval in June 2020.

D.3 LOANS FUND REVIEW

A review of both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) loans fund advance repayments was carried out following the update of the Local Authority (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Scotland) Regulations 2016, and discussions were held with the council's treasury advisors. After reviewing and considering the options and recommendations resulting from the Loans Fund Review, officers proposed a number of changes to the way that the statutory loans fund was operated, which were approved by Council on 19 February 2019 and 24 September 2019.

Debt repayments for future years have been recalculated as a result of this decision, meaning that they will be repaid over a longer period of time to ensure that the payments can be assessed as prudent and to ensure that the repayments reasonably reflect the period over which the community receives the economic benefit of assets that are now lasting longer than originally assumed. It also means that loans fund repayments that have effectively been over provided for in prior years will be adjusted, with an under provision in future repayments being made to offset the previous over provision.

Taking into account potential additional loans fund costs, the reprofiling of loans fund repayments will generate one off net cash flow savings for the Housing Revenue Account in the short to medium term, as set out below:

Table 1: Net Impact of Loans Fund Review Reprofiling of Debt Repayments

| | 2019/20 £m | 2020/21 £m | 2021/22 £m | 2022/23 £m | 2019/20 to 2022/23 £m | 2023/24 to 2027/28 £m | Total £m |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Loans Fund Review | 1.630 | 4.181 | 4.245 | 4.284 | 14.340 | 11.660 | 26.000 |
| Additional Loans Fund Costs | (0.150) | (0.150) | (0.150) | (0.150) | (0.600) | (0.750) | (1.350) |
| Net Loans Fund Review Surplus | 1.480 | 4.031 | 4.095 | 4.134 | 13.740 | 10.910 | 24.650 |

As approved by Council, options as to how to utilise the one off HRA resources for 2019/20 to 2022/23 of £13.740 million from the reprofiling of the loans fund repayments within the HRA have been considered in the context of the current HRA rent strategy and capital programme. The remaining one off surplus of £10.910 million available for 2023/24 to 2027/28 will be considered as part of future rent strategy and capital planning for the next five year strategy period.

As noted in the updated Housing Revenue Account Budget and Rent Level report for 2020/21 to 2022/23, also presented to the Panel today for consideration, it is proposed that the reduced capital financing costs within the revenue account are offset with an increased level of budgeted CFCR. This would allow for the cash flow saving from the review of the loans fund operations to be utilised as an additional source of funding to enhance the existing approved housing capital investment programme for 2020/21 to 2022/23.

Proposals for the use of this funding within the updated three year capital investment programme are set out below:

New Housing Supply

Due to the council's ongoing commitment to deliver 3,000 new houses between 2012 and 2022, it is proposed that some of the additional resource that has been made available from the loans fund reprofiling is used to help deliver this commitment. The 3,000 houses are to be delivered by both the council and by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), and current plans indicate that 2,893 houses can be delivered within current budget assumptions, meaning that there is likely to be a shortfall of 107 houses from the 3,000 target.

The two main options available to increase housing supply within the required timescale to deliver the 3,000 house commitment are 'off the shelf' purchases from developers and open market acquisitions (OMAs). Two sites have been identified at Eliburn, Livingston and Wellhead Farm, Murieston that would deliver 62 units directly from developers at a net cost of approximately £4.590 million. The balance of at least 45 units to meet the 3,000 target could then be delivered through open market acquisitions at a net cost of approximately £4.725 million. Both of these options assume that these units will attract the standard Scottish Government grant awards for new builds and for OMAs.

Unsuitable Accommodation Legislation

As reported to the Services for the Community PDSP in October 2019, the Scottish Government have announced their intention to amend current homelessness legislation to extend the restrictions in the Unsuitable Accommodation Order to all homeless people. By May 2021, the seven day restriction for time spent in unsuitable accommodation, which currently only applies to families and pregnant women, will be extended to all homeless groups.

This will increase the requirement for suitable accommodation to be made available to homeless households. Officers are working on identifying the impact of the change, and have identified that current provision in Newlands House does not meet the criteria for suitable accommodation and that there may be other properties that will need to be assessed to determine suitability. It is therefore proposed that an allowance of £1 million is allocated from the loans fund resources to enable works to be identified and carried out to meet the requirements of the new legislation.

Improvements to Existing Housing Stock

There are a number of projects in the current approved housing capital programme where works have been accelerated due to demand and due to rescheduling of resources, namely central heating works and works to install smoke and heat detectors.

This means that the planned work approved as part of the original five year capital programme will be completed earlier than scheduled. It is proposed that an allocation is made from the loans fund resources to add to the existing budgets for these projects to enable the programmes to be extended and to achieve further improvements to the existing stock.

In particular, further investment in the central heating budget will enable the council to not only meet the current requirements of EESSH (the Energy Efficient Standard for Social Housing), but will enable work to be started on meeting future legislative requirements. It is proposed that £1.6 million is allocated to the existing central heating budget, and £1.1 million is allocated to the existing smoke and heat detector upgrade budget.

It is also proposed to allocate £625,000 to enhance the existing Planned Reactive/HIO Investment budget. This would result in a revised budget of £3.252 million over the next three years in planned reactive works, which would provide additional flexibility within the programme to respond to issues arising in relation to dampness and/or other emerging property related matters.

Tenant Environmental Projects

It is proposed that the remaining balance of £100,000 is allocated to the Tenants' Environmental Projects budget. The current approved expenditure over the next three years is £150,000 per annum.

Summary of Proposals

As outlined above, it is proposed to allocate the one off HRA loans fund resource for 2019/20 to 2022/23 as follows:

Table 2: Summary of Proposals to Utilise Loans Fund Resources

| Proposal | £m |
|--|---------------|
| Purchase of 20 units from Bellway Homes at Eliburn | 1.352 |
| Purchase of 42 units from Bellway Homes at Wellhead Farm, Murieston | 3.238 |
| Purchase of 45 open market acquisitions | 4.725 |
| Allowance to meet requirements of updated unsuitable accommodation legislation | 1.000 |
| Increase to existing budget for central heating | 1.600 |
| Increase to existing budget for smoke and heat detector upgrades | 1.100 |
| Increase to existing budget for planned reactive and HIO investment | 0.625 |
| Increase to existing budget for tenants' environmental projects | 0.100 |
| Total | 13.740 |

D.4 UPDATED HOUSING CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2020/21 TO 2022/23

The proposed three year Housing Capital Investment Programme for 2020/21 to 2022/23 will see total investment of £100.703 million, with significant resources invested in the creation of new homes and a strong focus on the maintenance of quality standards across the housing stock. The proposed programme is based on recent reports to Council Executive on the Strategic Housing Investment Plan and Local Housing Strategy, as well as the Housing Rent Consultation and Capital Investment Strategy which outlined proposals to be taken forward in relation to new housing supply and housing infrastructure.

The updated three year programme will see continued investment to increase housing supply and deliver the 3,000 new affordable homes programme by 2022. External upgrading will continue in areas identified with greatest need and an increasing emphasis will be placed on the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH).

The proposed investment programme includes the proposals for use of the one off loans fund resources, as outlined in Section D.3, and is summarised in the table below. Individual projects comprised within each project heading are listed in Appendix 1.

Table 3: Planned Capital Investment

| Investment Area | 2020/21 £'000 | 2021/22 £'000 | 2022/23 £'000 | TOTAL £'000 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| New Housing Supply | 13,626 | 40,532 | 1,479 | 55,637 |
| Major Refurbishment | 2,278 | 385 | 0 | 2,663 |
| Major Elemental Upgrades | 3,491 | 2,530 | 2,639 | 8,660 |
| Planned Programmes | 3,175 | 3,270 | 3,512 | 9,957 |
| Environmental Upgrading | 380 | 380 | 330 | 1,090 |
| Compliance Works | 8,540 | 6,206 | 5,730 | 20,476 |
| Miscellaneous | 1,360 | 600 | 260 | 2,220 |
| Total Expenditure | 32,850 | 53,903 | 13,950 | 100,703 |

New Housing Supply

Significant resources will be invested in the creation and acquisition of new homes, with budgeted resources of £55.637 million factored into the investment programme. The new build programme includes the completion of the current new build programme and a further 250 new build council homes. It also includes budget provision for two additional sites at Eliburn, Livingston and Wellhead Farm, Murieston to be funded from one off loans fund resources, as detailed in Section D.3.

The council remains committed to expanding the housing supply, and delivery of 3,000 new houses between the period 2012 to 2022 and, as such, it is planned that further Open Market Acquisitions will be progressed in the remaining three years of the programme, with at least an additional 45 units to be funded from loans fund resources. The council will continue to support applications that meet required criteria under the Scottish Government Mortgage to Rent Scheme.

Major Refurbishment

Significant improvements will include the completion of regeneration works at Bathville flats and the continuation of roof, render, stair and balcony works at the Lochs Scheme in Whitburn. A total of £2.663 million of major refurbishment works are planned, with estimated completion during financial year 2021/22.

Major Elemental Upgrades

Major Elemental Upgrades consist of long term maintenance work, where structural elements such as roof and external walls are beyond economical repair by routine maintenance. This work will continue to form an important part of the investment programme, with planned resources of £8.660 million to be invested in 11 individual projects during the period 2020/21 to 2022/23.

Continued evaluation of the external condition of the housing stock through the cyclical maintenance survey programme and monitoring of high cost repairs has resulted in rephasing of some planned major upgrades to ensure that the projects and profile of works can be carried out as efficiently as possible. The annual cost review exercise of tendered rates has also identified potential savings against previous budget assumptions, which has been factored into the updated budget proposals.

Planned Programmes

Planned programmes cover a broad range of activities, including decoration and internal upgrades, window and door refurbishments, painting and fencing programmes. These works are of preventative maintenance in nature, and are scheduled and prioritised based on condition. Works to the value of £9.957 million are anticipated over the three year period, and include an additional budget allocation for planned reactive and HIO investment, as proposed in Section D.3.

Environmental / External Upgrading

Planned work, to the value of £1.090 million, will continue on general environmental improvements and external upgrading, including tenant led street improvement projects. Although many works are of a small scale, these projects can have a substantial impact on local amenities and the community. The updated budget also includes an additional budget allocation for tenants' environmental improvements, to be funded from loans fund resources, as outlined in Section D.3.

Participatory Budgeting is usually referred to as 'Community Choices' in Scotland, and is a democratic process which empowers communities to have more say on how resources in their area are used. West Lothian Community Choices was included within the general fund revenue and capital budget reports and the housing capital investment report approved by Council in February 2018. Approval was given for a number of budget areas to be reviewed and for an update report to be presented to Council Executive in due course.

The tenants' environmental improvements budget was included as part of the proposed Community Choices programme, which was approved by Council Executive on 12 November 2019. Council Executive also agreed that the current process for determining works to be funded through this budget should be reviewed and the process extended to incorporate the community choices approach to funding. Further reports on the Community Choices process will be presented to Partnership and Resources PDSP and Council Executive during 2020.

Compliance Works

Compliance works include projects to deliver energy efficiency measures, central heating replacements, electrical testing and repair, external wall insulation upgrades and asbestos management projects. Works to the value of £20.476 million are anticipated over the three year period. The updated budgets include additional allocation for central heating works and works to upgrade smoke and heat detectors, to be funded from loans fund resources, as outlined in Section D.3.

The introduction of Scotland's Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) regulations means that by the end of December 2020, any house in Scotland under the management of social landlords should meet a minimum energy rating. EESH continues to be a major focus for project work.

There will be continuing investment in external wall insulation to target work in council houses in areas of mixed tenure, to maximise economies of scale where homeowners receive support through the Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland (HEEPS).

As reported to Council in February 2019, structural investigations were carried out at the Orlit properties in Armadale and Linlithgow, as recommended by structural engineers following significant upgrades to the properties approximately 20 years ago. Reports from external consultants have identified a scheme of repairs that require to be carried out on these properties, which have now commenced. Based on the properties that have been completed, estimates of costs have increased due to additional works that are required to fully open up the properties for repair, together with additional reinstatement and decoration costs to bring the properties back to the appropriate standard. It is therefore proposed that additional budget is allocated to this project, to be funded from within existing resources, namely the reprofiling and tender savings identified within the major elemental upgrades budgets outlined above.

Miscellaneous

Some of the most significant investment activities facing the service over the next three years will require focus on the synergies between housing investment, repairs and the wider community regeneration agenda. A range of capital projects and measures to support the work of the Housing Revenue Account, totalling £2.220 million, are encompassed within this heading, including feasibility studies and a range of home security measures, such as aids and adaptations, which support tenants to live safely and independently within their homes. The updated budget also includes a provision for works that are likely to be required as a result of the introduction of new unsuitable accommodation legislation by the Scottish Government, to be funded from loans fund resources, as outlined in Section D.3.

D.5 UPDATED HOUSING CAPITAL RESOURCES 2020/21 TO 2022/23

The updated split of the £100.703 million resources to fund the proposed 2020/21 to 2022/23 capital programme is detailed in Table 4. Financing of the programme will continue to be met largely through borrowing, with £47.980 million of borrowing planned over the three year investment period.

It should be noted that capital financing costs in respect of monies borrowed for the purpose of improving the housing asset stock, or acquiring new stock through new build or open market acquisition, must be charged to the HRA account under Schedule 15 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. As such, the level of sustainable capital expenditure is coterminous with the Housing Rent strategy over the three year period and must be deemed as prudent and affordable, based on the Prudential Indicators contained within the General Fund Revenue Budget report.

Both the capital financing charges and the Capital Funded from Current Revenue (CFCR) have been updated following the review of loans fund operations, and the revised level of capital financing charges and CFCR associated with the proposed programme are considered to be at an affordable level within the HRA Revenue Budget, based on an anticipated rent increase of 3% per annum. Due to the reprofiling of loans fund principal repayments as a result of the review of loans fund operations, the projected ratio of capital financing charges to gross rental income will increase at a slower rate than previously assumed, from 23.4% in 2020/21 to 25.5% by 2022/23.

Updated assumptions on Scottish Government grants and other contributions have also been factored into funding sources, as the council completes the existing new build housing programme and enters into a new phase of funding. Scottish Government grant funding for all new build is £57,000 per unit, and for open market acquisitions the grant available is £30,000 per unit. A total of £20.362 million is anticipated for 2020/21 to 2022/23, with £1.668 million anticipated to support both the new build programme and open market acquisitions in 2020/21. The updated grant assumptions include the Scottish Government grant funding that will be payable on the new build sites at Eliburn, Livingston and Wellhead Farm, Murieston and the additional 45 open market acquisitions that are proposed to be funded from the one off loans fund resources.

It is proposed that a capital receipts target is incorporated into the overall funding for the capital programme, on the basis that there are a number of land and garage sites owned by the HRA which, due to their size and suitability, are unlikely to be developed by the council. An initial target of £100,000 per annum is proposed, with further information on potential sites to be marketed to be reported and approved in due course.

With regards to other sources of financing, funding of £250,000 per annum is expected from developer contributions and between £70,000 and £80,000 per annum from council tax on second homes, which will be directed towards the creation of new social housing. In total, £975,000 is anticipated from these sources over the updated three year period from 2020/21 to 2022/23. Legislative changes came into effect on 1 August 2016 that ended tenants' right to buy council houses therefore no further sales receipts are anticipated.

Table 4 below summarises the updated capital resources available to fund the housing capital programme.

Table 4: Capital Funding

| Investment Area | 2020/21 £'000 | 2021/22 £'000 | 2022/23 £'000 | TOTAL £'000 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| CFCR | 10,379 | 10,329 | 10,378 | 31,086 |
| Borrowing | 20,373 | 24,455 | 3,152 | 47,980 |
| Government Grants | 1,668 | 18,694 | 0 | 20,362 |
| Developer Contributions | 250 | 250 | 250 | 750 |
| Council Tax on 2 nd Homes | 80 | 75 | 70 | 225 |
| Capital Receipts | 100 | 100 | 100 | 300 |
| Total Funding | 32,850 | 53,903 | 13,950 | 100,703 |

D.6 GOVERNANCE

In setting the HRA capital budget, due cognisance must be made to the relevant statutory, regulatory and governance requirements. The Prudential Code requires the council to take into account a number of factors when agreeing capital spending plans. In overall terms, the proposed Housing Capital Investment Programme for 2020/21 to 2022/23 is considered affordable, relative to gross rent levels and subject to appropriate management of capital risks and housing arrears. The revenue implications are incorporated within the HRA Revenue budget and loan charge projections continue to indicate that the proposed Housing Capital Investment Programme is prudent, affordable and sustainable.

The council has continued to build a resilient culture of effective planning and governance, with strong evidence to demonstrate how the council meets the defined best value characteristics. The council's Best Value Framework, which was approved on 10 June 2014, ensures that the council complies with the provisions contained within the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. The 2003 Act requires the council to:

- Secure best value in the performance of its functions;
- Balance the quality and cost of the performance of its function and the cost of council services to service users;
- Have regard to efficiency, effectiveness, economy and the need to meet equal opportunity requirements in maintaining that balance;
- Fully discharge its duty to secure best value in a way which contributes to the achievements of sustainable development.

All aspects of the Housing Capital Investment Programme are geared toward securing best value. The Best Value Framework requires works over a pre-determined threshold to be subject to competitive tendering. Under the 2003 Act, exemptions are permissible and the Council Executive approved exemptions relating to a number of identified projects undertaken by Building Services on 10 June 2014.

A review of the Housing Capital Investment Programme for the period 2020/21 to 2022/23 has been undertaken to determine works that will be carried out by external providers and works to be carried out in-house to ensure compliance with the Best Value Framework. It is therefore proposed that works on Energy Efficiency and Roof and Roughcasting continue to be carried out by Building Services, as well as Electrical Periodic Inspections.

The list of projects for exemption therefore includes:

- Energy Efficiency – Gas Central Heating Upgrades
- Roofing and Roughcasting Works – various projects
- Electrical Periodic Inspections and installation of smoke detection upgrades

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (often referred to as the ‘general duty’) requires public bodies in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct;
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Supplementary legislation (the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012), requires the council to be proactive in meeting the general duty of eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations. In addition, the Fairer Scotland Duty, part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, places a legal responsibility on councils to pay due regard to how they can reduce inequalities of outcome, caused by socioeconomic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions. The Fairer Scotland Duty came into effect from 1 April 2018, therefore it is not a retrospective duty and does not apply to decisions taken before that date.

D.7 INTEGRATED EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Following the key principles of relevance and proportionality within the Equality Act 2010, an integrated equality impact assessment of policies and decisions of the councils is a requirement of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. This process is well established within the council’s budget setting process.

Prior to presentation of the corporate asset management strategy and five year housing capital investment plan to Council in February 2018, an initial equality relevance assessment was undertaken on the proposed projects. This assessment identified whether a full assessment was required to ensure appropriate consideration was given to the impact of proposals on protected groups, with judgements being undertaken regarding relevance and proportionality. The assessment determined that a full equality impact assessment was not required at that time.

On re-assessing relevance in 2020, there is clear evidence that the service plans and delivers an ongoing co-productive approach to the design, timing, and delivery of the capital programme with tenants, tenant representatives and other stakeholders. This ensures that the views and preferences of stakeholders are factored in to shape the programme, and the ongoing reporting of progress and scrutiny of the delivery of the programme means that officers are accountable and performance is transparent. The changes implemented throughout the period of the capital investment programme have reflected the changing needs of tenants, and have been made in response to feedback from customers.

Reflecting the recent Fairer Scotland duty, the integrated relevance assessment was refreshed for the updated three year programme and is attached as Appendix 3. The assessment gave consideration to the three key general duties and it is deemed unnecessary that a full Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) be carried out. Any further budgetary proposals or amendments to the Housing Capital Investment Programme will be screened for IIA relevance where required.

D.8 CORPORATE ASSET MANAGEMENT AND FUTURE CAPITAL INVESTMENT

The current Corporate Asset Management Strategy was agreed by the council in February 2018. Asset management provides appropriate structures and governance arrangements to ensure that the council's assets are utilised appropriately in support of service delivery. It is important that resources are prioritised on an ongoing basis to ensure investment has the maximum impact on the core assets required to sustain existing service delivery.

The proposed updated three year Housing Capital Programme forms a key part in the longer term approach to asset investment and planning, and considers expenditure required to improve and extend the council's assets for future years. Looking forward, investment plans will be updated annually to demonstrate best value, continuous improvement, sound performance management, partnership working and sustainable development.

E. CONCLUSION

This report sets out the proposed updated Housing Capital Investment Programme for 2020/21 to 2022/23, with proposed investment of £100.703 million. It builds on, and consolidates, local housing needs identified within the Strategic Housing Investment Programme and Local Housing Strategy. The investment proposals are framed on the outcome of the Housing Rent and Consultation Strategy reported to Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 12 December 2017 and agreed by Council on 13 February 2018, which indicated that the majority of responses from tenants supported a 3% rent increase per annum.

There is a strong focus within the programme on the creation of additional social housing including completion of the existing new build programme, delivering a further 250 new build homes and continuing with a programme of open market acquisitions. These measures will increase the availability of social housing within communities for both existing residents and future generations.

Alongside investment in new and additional housing stock, there will be continued investment in existing council housing stock and the environment, to improve homes and local amenity. Energy efficiency is recognised as a continuing priority, with an emphasis on meeting the requirements of the Energy Efficiency Standards for Social Housing legislation.

Expenditure of £32.850 million is anticipated in 2020/21. The updated programme reflects movements reported to Council Executive in February 2020 and recognises the requirement to refine and rephase projects and expenditure. It also continues a new period of planned investment in the council's housing stock, ensuring that resources are prioritised effectively and reflect the investment needs of the stock.

Through the Housing Capital Investment Programme, the council continues to maintain quality standards and invest in the suitability and sufficiency of its housing stock to improve the environment within communities and meet the needs of existing and future tenants across West Lothian.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Best Value Framework - Report by Chief Executive to Council Executive on 10 June 2014

Rent Consultation – Report by Depute Chief Executive to Services for the Community PDSP on 12 December 2017

Housing Revenue Account Budget and Rent Levels 2018/19 to 2022/23 – Report by Depute Chief Executive to Council on 13 February 2018

West Lothian Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2019-2024 - Report by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services to Council Executive on 9 October 2018

Treasury Management Plan 2019/20 – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to West Lothian Council on 19 February 2019

Update on Review of the Loans Fund, Insurance Fund and Modernisation Fund – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to West Lothian Council on 24 September 2019

2019/20 Period 9 Housing Capital Monitoring – Report by Depute Chief Executive to Council Executive on 4 February 2020

Housing Revenue Account and Rent Level 2020/21 to 2022/23 – Report to Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 4 February 2020

Appendices/Attachments: Three

Appendix 1: Housing Capital Investment Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23

Appendix 2: Housing Capital Investment Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23 – Further Information

Appendix 3: Integrated Relevance Assessment Form

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Graeme Struthers
Depute Chief Executive
4 February 2020

Housing Capital Investment Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23

| | 2020/21 £'000 | 2021/22 £'000 | 2022/23 £'000 | Total £'000 |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| NEW SUPPLY | | | | |
| New Build | 12,576 | 34,357 | 1,379 | 48,312 |
| Open Market Acquisition Scheme | 900 | 6,075 | 0 | 6,975 |
| Mortgage to Rent | 150 | 100 | 100 | 350 |
| TOTAL NEW SUPPLY | 13,626 | 40,532 | 1,479 | 55,637 |
| REFURBISHMENT AND INVESTMENT | | | | |
| Major Refurbishment | | | | |
| Bathville Flats, Armadale | 1,448 | 0 | 0 | 1,448 |
| Harrison Houses - Loch Scheme, Whitburn | 830 | 385 | 0 | 1,215 |
| | 2,278 | 385 | 0 | 2,663 |
| Major Elemental Upgrades | | | | |
| Almond View & Cousland Terrace, Seafield | 0 | 0 | 863 | 863 |
| Anderson Avenue, Armadale | 436 | 0 | 0 | 436 |
| Badallan Place, Fauldhouse | 182 | 0 | 0 | 182 |
| Church Place, Fauldhouse | 285 | 0 | 0 | 285 |
| Croftmalloch Estate - Harrison Houses, Whitburn | 0 | 875 | 725 | 1,600 |
| Dedridge Area, Livingston | 897 | 897 | 715 | 2,509 |
| Drummond Place, Blackridge | 715 | 0 | 0 | 715 |
| Fallas Place, Walker Road, Main Street, Fauldhouse (Flats) | 205 | 466 | 0 | 671 |
| Mansefield Court & Waverley Street, Bathgate | 556 | 0 | 0 | 556 |
| Preston Area - Linlithgow | 0 | 292 | 336 | 628 |
| Strathlogie, Westfield | 215 | 0 | 0 | 215 |
| | 3,491 | 2,530 | 2,639 | 8,660 |
| Planned Programmes | | | | |
| Assisted Decoration & Internal Upgrade Scheme | 350 | 350 | 350 | 1,050 |
| Common Access Door Upgrades | 150 | 150 | 150 | 450 |
| Common Stair Upgrades | 100 | 100 | 250 | 450 |
| Fencing | 100 | 100 | 115 | 315 |
| Kitchens and Bathrooms | 680 | 680 | 680 | 2,040 |
| Painting | 200 | 200 | 200 | 600 |
| Planned Reactive / HIO Investment | 995 | 1,090 | 1,167 | 3,252 |
| Rainwater Goods Testing & Upgrading | 200 | 200 | 200 | 600 |
| Windows & Doors Refurbishment / Renewal | 400 | 400 | 400 | 1,200 |
| | 3,175 | 3,270 | 3,512 | 9,957 |
| Environmental / External Upgrading | | | | |
| Aerial Upgrades | 30 | 30 | 30 | 90 |
| Play Areas | 50 | 50 | 50 | 150 |
| Programmed Drainage | 100 | 100 | 100 | 300 |
| Tenant Environmental Projects | 200 | 200 | 150 | 550 |
| | 380 | 380 | 330 | 1,090 |
| Compliance Works (Direct and Assistive) | | | | |
| Aids and Adaptations - Building Services | 450 | 450 | 450 | 1,350 |
| Aids and Adaptations - Occupational Therapists | 250 | 250 | 250 | 750 |
| Asbestos Management | 690 | 690 | 690 | 2,070 |
| Central Heating | 2,850 | 2,850 | 2,800 | 8,500 |
| Energy Efficiency/PV Panels | 100 | 100 | 100 | 300 |
| External Wall Insulation | 1,300 | 426 | 0 | 1,726 |
| Orlit Remedial Upgrades | 240 | 240 | 240 | 720 |
| Periodic testing and electrical upgrades | 700 | 700 | 700 | 2,100 |
| Renewal of walls and footpaths | 100 | 100 | 100 | 300 |
| Smoke and heat detector upgrades | 1,690 | 300 | 300 | 2,290 |
| Stock Condition Surveys/Energy Performance Certificates | 170 | 100 | 100 | 370 |
| | 8,540 | 6,206 | 5,730 | 20,476 |
| Miscellaneous | | | | |
| Deans South, Livingston | 100 | 340 | 0 | 440 |
| Feasibility Surveys | 20 | 20 | 20 | 60 |
| Home Safety Service | 170 | 170 | 170 | 510 |
| Home Security for Senior People | 20 | 20 | 20 | 60 |
| IT | 50 | 50 | 50 | 150 |
| Unsuitable Accommodation Works | 1,000 | 0 | 0 | 1,000 |
| | 1,360 | 600 | 260 | 2,220 |
| TOTAL REFURBISHMENT & INVESTMENT | 19,224 | 13,371 | 12,471 | 45,066 |
| TOTAL HOUSING CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME | 32,850 | 53,903 | 13,950 | 100,703 |

HOUSING CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2020/21 TO 2022/23**FURTHER INFORMATION****1. New Build Supply**

Major investment is to continue, providing new houses in areas across the district of different sizes and style; many are designed to support occupation by people with limited movement ability, including wheelchair users. Built to modern standards, they are well insulated and will substantially reduce heating bills of tenants while ensuring warmth and stable heat levels. Existing tenants are given priority to move into the new housing supply. Rents are slightly higher but should be more than offset by the reduction in heating costs.

A priority will be to complete the existing 1,000 houses programme and deliver the additional 250 new build units that were approved in 2018, as part of the 3,000 affordable homes initiative.

In addition, provision has been made in the updated housing capital budget to utilise a portion of the one off funding that has been made available from the reprofiling of loans fund principal repayments to increase the housing stock further. Two sites have been identified at Eliburn, Livingston and Wellhead Farm, Murieston that will deliver 62 new build units directly from developers.

Details of the sites to be completed from 2020/21 to 2022/23 are provided below.

| Site | Units | Est. House Completions by 31/03/2021 | Estimated site completion date |
|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Brucefield, Livingston | 33 | 33 | 2020/21 |
| Standhill, Bathgate | 22 | 22 | 2020/21 |
| Eagle Brae, Livingston | 30 | 0 | 2021/22 |
| Mossend, West Calder | 69 | 0 | 2021/22 |
| Bathgate Sites | 82 | 0 | 2021/22 |
| Deans South (phase 2) | 24 | 0 | 2021/22 |
| Eliburn, Livingston | 20 | 0 | 2021/22 |
| Wellhead Farm, Murieston | 42 | 0 | 2021/22 |
| Total | 322 | 55 | |

The council will also add to its stock by purchasing houses; resources for acquisition of former council houses are included in the planned programme, and additional provision has been made from loans fund resources to increase the scheme and contribute towards the achievement of the 3,000 additional houses target by 2022. The majority of these will be Open Market Acquisitions. Provision has also been made to continue with the Mortgage to Rent scheme.

2. Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH)

One of the main objectives of the Housing Capital Programme is to invest in the existing housing stock to maintain the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and achieve compliance with the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) by 1 January 2021. A review of stock condition survey data has been undertaken, to provide an up to date assessment of stock condition and to inform the type and level of investment required.

Investment in the existing housing stock has been categorised as Major Refurbishment or Major Elemental Upgrades, as well as Planned Programmes, Environmental Upgrading, Compliance and other Miscellaneous works.

It is anticipated that the investment programme will ensure that all stock continues to meet with the SHQS and will also ensure that the stock meets with ESSH requirements by 1 January 2021 and maintains that standard beyond 2021.

a) Major Refurbishment

The Major Refurbishment group of projects involves renewal and reconfiguration of multiple elements such as roof, render, stairs, balconies and external areas in a single project.

Harrison Houses

Due to ongoing maintenance issues, resulting in high cost roof repairs, major external and structural upgrades will continue at the Whitburn Harrison Houses. The streets to be encompassed in the project include: Gareloch Way, Loch Awe Way, Loch Earn Way, Loch Fyne Way, Loch Maree Way and Loch Trool Way.

Despite their relative age, these properties have been assessed as being in greater need of upgrade, due to the impact on the day to day maintenance budget. This site is complex due to the large volume of privately owned properties and the need to engage with owners to encourage participation in the improvement programme. Housing will continue to work with Environmental Health and Legal to maximise options and outcomes of the scheme.

Bathville Flats

The works at Bathville are extensive, involving roof and external wall upgrades, new and more secure stairwells and environmental improvements. The works have been complicated by services such as gas and electricity which underlay the buildings. Building Services are making significant progress with the development.

Currently the refurbishment work at phases one, two and three are complete. Phase four is ongoing and scheduled for completion early Summer 2020. Work at phase five has yet to start and is scheduled to be on site late in August 2020, with an estimated completion date in February 2021.

b) Major Elemental Upgrades

The work involves long term maintenance work, where structural elements such as roof and external walls are identified as beyond economical repair through routine maintenance.

The work planned in 2020/21 to 2022/23 is detailed below:

| | 2020/21 £'000 | 2021/22 £'000 | 2022/23 £'000 | Total £'000 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Almond View & Cousland Terrace, Seafield | 0 | 0 | 863 | 863 |
| Anderson Avenue, Armadale | 436 | 0 | 0 | 436 |
| Badallan Place, Fauldhouse | 182 | 0 | 0 | 182 |
| Church Place, Fauldhouse | 285 | 0 | 0 | 285 |
| Croftmalloch Estate - Harrison Houses, Whitburn | 0 | 875 | 725 | 1,600 |
| Dedridge Area, Livingston | 897 | 897 | 715 | 2,509 |
| Drummond Place, Blackridge | 715 | 0 | 0 | 715 |
| Fallas Place, Walker Road, Main Street, Fauldhouse (Flats) | 205 | 466 | 0 | 671 |
| Mansefield Court & Waverley Street, Bathgate | 556 | 0 | 0 | 556 |
| Preston Area - Linlithgow | 0 | 292 | 336 | 628 |
| Strathlogie, Westfield | 215 | 0 | 0 | 215 |
| TOTAL | 3,491 | 2,530 | 2,639 | 8,660 |

c) Planned Programmes

Kitchens and Bathrooms

This category incorporates work which keeps Kitchens and Bathrooms in compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). The budget funds around 100 full kitchen and bathroom installations each year.

Windows and Doors

Windows and Door upgrades to keep them in compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and contribute towards meeting Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH). The budget funds around 90 full Window and Door Upgrades each year.

Cyclical Maintenance (CM)

CM work involves external and communal parts of the council housing stock and undertakes the required preparatory repairs and minor external upgrades. The work is done on a five year rolling programme. The programme plays a significant role within the council's capital programme planning processes linking key conditions information to overall investment planning.

All properties within the council stock are to be surveyed externally by a Housing Investment Officer (HIO) as part of the five year rolling programme. The survey programme is pre-determined as shown in the table below:

| Year | Areas |
|---------|---|
| 2018/19 | Broxburn, Uphall, Winchburgh & Linlithgow |
| 2019/20 | Armadale & Blackridge |
| 2020/21 | Fauldhouse & Brieche |
| 2021/22 | Blackburn, Whitburn & Bathgate |
| 2022/23 | Livingston South/North, East Livingston & East Calder |

The CM Programme is primarily made up from the following Capital Planned Maintenance Budgets:

- Painting
- Common Stair Upgrades
- Rainwater Goods Testing and Upgrading
- Fencing

Assisted Decoration and Internal Upgrade Scheme

In 2015, the Assisted Decoration Scheme was introduced to benefit tenants of West Lothian Council who are either senior citizens or of limited physical capacity and who are unable to decorate their home without assistance.

Qualifying Tenants can apply for one room per household for the duration of the scheme. Since introducing this innovative scheme we have successfully assisted 977 tenants, with the approved 5 year programme intended to assist a total of 2,812 households.

Common Access Door Upgrades

This Budget undertakes work which keeps the properties in compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). This requires Secure Door Entry System upgrades or replacements in order to keep them in compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). The budget funds around 12 communal blocks each year.

Planned Reactive/HIO Investment

This programme supports required individual upgrade investment out-with the named current capital projects and is commissioned by the Housing Investment Manager and Building Services Manager.

Additional budget allocation of £625,000 from one off loans fund resources is proposed to enhance the existing Planned Reactive/HIO Investment budget, to provide additional flexibility within the programme to respond to issues arising in relation to dampness and/or other emerging property related matters.

d) Environmental and External Upgrading

This category supports local environmental programmes which include; Tenant Led Environmental Projects, Programmed Drainage, Play Area, and Aerial Upgrades. These projects are delivered in consultation with NETS, Roads, Local Housing Offices, tenants and elected members.

For example, the drainage programme supports the design and implementation of large works to multiple homes to prevent the flooding of homes and the damage to access paths. 162 council houses have been identified by SEPA (The Scottish Environment Protection Agency) as being at risk of flooding over time as climate change continues. The Flood Risk Management team are identifying the solution to these issues and will be putting them in place over the years.

Additional budget allocation of £100,000 from one off loans fund resources is proposed to enhance the existing Tenant Environmental Projects budget in 2020/21 to 2022/23.

| | 2020/21 £'000 | 2021/22 £'000 | 2022/23 £'000 | Total £'000 |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Aerial Upgrades | 30 | 30 | 30 | 90 |
| Play Areas | 50 | 50 | 50 | 150 |
| Programmed Drainage | 100 | 100 | 100 | 300 |
| Tenant Environmental Projects | 200 | 200 | 150 | 550 |
| TOTAL | 380 | 380 | 330 | 1,090 |

e) Compliance Works

Smoke and Heat Detector Upgrades

The original smoke detector programme, which commenced in 2010/11, was concentrated on upgrading battery operated smoke detectors to hard wired smoke detectors. As reported to Council in February 2019, there was a need to review the plan once the outcome of the Scottish Government's consultation on Fire and Smoke Detectors was known. The legislation has now been updated, and a review of the programme has now taken place to ensure compliance with the new legislation by the February 2021 deadline.

Additional budget allocation of £1.1 million from one off loans fund resources is proposed to enhance the existing smoke and heat detector upgrade budget.

Periodic Testing and Electric Upgrades

There is an obligation on the council as a landlord to electrically test each house at least every five years and additionally at the point of re-letting after a house is empty. These surveys identify any potential problems. The most important of these are electrical faults, earthing issues and asbestos in consumer units. This includes full electrical upgrading where required.

Central Heating

The central heating upgrades are in order to keep the properties in compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and meet The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by 1 January 2021. The budget funds around 3,000 heating upgrades over 4 years.

Additional budget allocation of £1.6 million from one off loans fund resources is proposed to enhance the existing central heating budget.

Energy Efficiency/PV Panels

Local energy efficiency schemes will continue to be carried out, prioritising households in fuel poverty, in consultation with the local housing offices and the Advice Shop. It will also include PV panel schemes and replacement of existing insulation where required to meet The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by January 2021.

Stock Condition Survey/Energy Performance Certificates (EPC)

This budget funds stock conditions survey work and EPCs that are required for circa 9,000 of the council's properties in order to ensure the council meets its legal requirements when renting a property, as well as updating our Asset Management Database. This will also help focus investment measures required to ensure the council complies with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH).

External Wall Insulation

External wall insulation will be fitted to 485 No Fines properties across the district in order to improve the properties' energy efficiency level and ensure the properties comply with EESH. This improvement will make the properties cheaper to heat creating a saving in the tenant's fuel bills and will work towards reducing levels of fuel poverty in the district.

Aids and Adaptations

Aids and adaptations for both council housing and private sector housing are assessed by Occupational Therapists in Social Policy and are carried out based on individual need.

Asbestos Management

This budget funds surveys and removal work arising from those surveys.

Legionella Upgrades

This budget funds surveys and remedial work to installations of stored water in common areas. It also allows for upgrade and prevention works.

f) **Miscellaneous**

Deans South

This budget funds ongoing maintenance work, pending any agreement on the long term future of the estate.

Feasibility Surveys

This budget will support a three year Stock Condition Programme aimed at updating the council's stock conditions information and providing cost information for future capital planning. The budget also supports detailed engineering reports on structural issues.

Home Safety Service

This provides an upgraded package of smart technology primarily for older people in their own homes. This technology can help in providing a safer and more secure long-term home environment.

Home Security for Pensioners

This scheme provides options including; the provision of locks, external lighting, door viewers, door chains, window locks and door intercom systems. To date around 3,000 council houses have had security measures fitted under this scheme.

Mortgage to Rent

This is a Scottish Government subsidy scheme to allow owners in extreme financial difficulty to sell their properties to the council and become council tenants.

Integrated Relevance Assessment Form

| 1. Details of proposal | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Policy Title (include budget reference number if applicable) | Housing Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Service Area (detail which service area and section this relates to) | Housing, Customer and Building Services | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lead Officer (Name and job title) | AnnMarie Carr, Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other Officers/Partners involved (list names, job titles and organisations if applicable) | Grant Walker, Development Manager Robert Smith, Housing Investment Manager Kirsty Weir, Service Development Officer Pamela Bell, Senior Service Accountant Tenants Panel Capital Programme Working Group | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Date relevance assessed | 15/01/2020 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented? | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| YES | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X <input type="checkbox"/> NO | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>3. The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct • Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and • Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not <p>NB: In this section you must also consider the Human Rights Act and the key PANEL (Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality) principles of Human Rights – (further detail on what these are, are provided in the guidance document)</p> <p>Which groups of people do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? You should consider employees, clients, customers and service users (Please tick below as appropriate)</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Age - Older people, young people and children</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disability - people with disabilities/long standing conditions</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gender reassignment - Trans/Transgender Identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marriage or Civil Partnership – people who are married or in a civil partnership</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pregnancy and Maternity – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Race - people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Religion or Belief – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sex - Gender Identity - women and men (girls and boys) and those who self-identify their gender</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sexual Orientation – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table> | | Age - Older people, young people and children | <input type="checkbox"/> | Disability - people with disabilities/long standing conditions | <input type="checkbox"/> | Gender reassignment - Trans/Transgender Identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth | <input type="checkbox"/> | Marriage or Civil Partnership – people who are married or in a civil partnership | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pregnancy and Maternity – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave | <input type="checkbox"/> | Race - people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds | <input type="checkbox"/> | Religion or Belief – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sex - Gender Identity - women and men (girls and boys) and those who self-identify their gender | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sexual Orientation – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Age - Older people, young people and children | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Disability - people with disabilities/long standing conditions | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gender reassignment - Trans/Transgender Identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Marriage or Civil Partnership – people who are married or in a civil partnership | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pregnancy and Maternity – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Race - people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Religion or Belief – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sex - Gender Identity - women and men (girls and boys) and those who self-identify their gender | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sexual Orientation – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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|---|--|----|--|
| 4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities? Consideration must be given particularly to children and families | | | |
| Socio-economic Disadvantage | | | Impact – please tick below as appropriate) |
| Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing | | | ✓ |
| Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future | | | |
| Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies | | | |
| Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport) | | | |
| Socioeconomic Background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income | | | |
| 5. Integrated impact assessment required? (Two ticks (✓) above = full assessment necessary) | | | |
| YES | | NO | ✓ |
| 6. Decision rationale – if you have ticked no above, use this section to evidence why a full IIA is not required | | | |
| <p>The three year capital programme details where West Lothian Council intends to spend its capital resources. The justification for this expenditure is on house (stock) condition as outlined by the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, new build council houses, as well as other additional non SHQS upgrades and improvements including externals, environmental work to aid in achieving energy efficiencies (in support of EESSH compliance) and equipment and adaptations.</p> <p>The focus on meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard will improve the condition of older stock to make it more secure, safe, accessible and energy efficient by design. The new build homes are being built to an exceptionally high specification and the selection of the designs at tender bid stage were made in partnership with members of the local equality groups to ensure the service had considered the needs of potentially vulnerable tenants from the formative stages of the project.</p> <p>External upgrading will continue in areas identified as in greatest need and an increasing emphasis will be placed on the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) over the coming year. Demographically, the communities in greatest need of housing improvements tend to include people who may face fewer life choices and decreased social mobility – these tenants benefit most from improvement projects. By improving the appearance and overall quality of stock in these areas as a priority the life chances of those living there are significantly improved, with benefits to education, health and wellbeing and community safety.</p> <p>EESH is intended to continue investment in external wall insulation to target work in council houses in areas of mixed tenure, where homeowners benefit from support through the Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland (HEEPS). The funding to help tenants achieve energy efficiency and keep fuel bills as low as possible will obviously aid those in most danger of fuel poverty and deprivation. This funding commitment allocated for improvements include boiler and heating system replacements and the installation of energy efficient loft and cavity wall insulation. The service intends to continue to focus on this area in recognition of the importance of tackling poorly insulated and heated homes to mitigate the threat of fuel poverty for those tenants most vulnerable to this threat. Improving the energy efficiency of our stock most in need of this work is a priority for the service.</p> | | | |

One of the main drivers of the direction of capital funds is new build and housing supply. These programmes seek to address the gap in supply and demand issues for decent and affordable socially rented housing in the area. Provision of modern housing, exceeding the SHQS standard that is well supported by robust local infrastructure and services will benefit those most in need of housing and increase housing options for tenants and potential tenants. There is enormous housing demand pressure on all local registered social landlords; the capital programme priorities are directed towards alleviating some of this pressure and increasing the supply of affordable, socially rented accommodation.

This type of combined approach to meeting demand of increasing housing supply through new homes and improving older stock is continued in the proposed capital programme through the environmental upgrade works in communities, and the energy efficiency measures through the provisions made for increased spend on improving energy efficiency of properties. External environmental improvement projects support regeneration of communities most in need of works to improve the local environment.

The capital programme specifically budgets for needs based improvements to aid active living through provision of funding projections for adaptive equipment and adaptations to West Lothian Council's housing stock as determined by the health assessment process. Improvements made to meet the SHQS ensure all stock is more accessible at a basic level. The provision made for improvements to lighting, kitchen and bathroom renewals will also increase safety and quality of life for residents in older properties. This portion of the programme remains need-based and reactive in terms of service delivery in order to deliver improvements at the point of need to the tenant. A needs based investment approach prevents areas from becoming undesirable places to live, increases choice for potential tenants and encourages social mobility for existing residents, thereby increasing the social diversity of communities while seeking to prevent socio-economic deprivation.

The approach of making general structural and fixture/fittings improvements combined with specific adaptations where required enables tenants with mobility issues to remain independent in their own homes for longer and ensures that the adaptations that are made are tailored to the individual. By budgeting for and recognising the importance of this type of improvement work to properties the proposals ensure the provision of needs based solutions for those who require it most. The policy on equipment and adaptations is centred on qualification via a set criteria applied by Occupational Therapy professionals; this has led to a straightforward process that is transparent and easy to access. Most requests meet the criteria and are approved. By designing new build properties with the capacity for future aids and adaptations future proofs the supply of accommodation types in order to meet the needs of a diverse range of tenants. The decision to build one story bungalows is a result of responding directly to the needs of our local communities as expressed during consultation activity.

Housing, Customer and Building Services Senior Management Team, the Senior Service Accountant, the Housing Development Manager, the Housing Investment Manager, Housing Strategy Officers and the service equality lead were involved in the consultation of this assessment. The details of the budget proposals within this report support these findings and it is unnecessary that a full IIA be carried out. It is recommended that any further budgetary proposals or amendments to the Capital Programme be screened for IIA relevance where required.

| | |
|---|---|
| Signed by Lead Officer | AnnMarie Carr |
| Designation | Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services |
| Date | 15/01/2020 |
| Counter Signature (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy) | |
| Date | |

PDSP & Council Executive – HCBS Work Plan 2019

| Item | | Purpose | Frequency | Responsible Officer |
|--|--------------------------------|--|-----------|---------------------|
| Services for the Community PDSP 04/02/20 (Agenda Setting 21/01/19) | | | | |
| 1 | Finance | Housing Capital Investment Programme 2019/20 to 2022/23 | Annually | Ann Marie Carr |
| 2 | Finance | Housing Revenue Account and Rent Levels 2019/20 to 2022/23 | Annually | Ann Marie Carr |
| 3 | Housing Need | Property Turnover Report- Q3 | 1/4 | Katy McBride |
| 4 | Performance & Change | Housing to 2040: Consultation on outline policy options | Once | Grant Walker |
| Partnership & Resources PDSP (Customer Services) 07/02/20 | | | | |
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| Council Executive 25/02/20 (Agenda Setting 17/02/20) | | | | |
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| Culture & Leisure PDSP (Customer Services) 27/02/20 | | | | |
| 1 | Customer & Community Services | Library Performance Report | 1/4 | AnneMarie Vance |
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| Council Executive 24/03/20 (Agenda Setting 16/03/20) | | | | |
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| Services for the Community PDSP 24/03/20 (Agenda Setting 10/03/20) | | | | |
| 1 | Police Scotland | Performance - Q3 | 1/4 | Alun Williams |
| 2 | Scottish Fire & Rescue Service | Performance - Q3 | 1/4 | David Lockhart |
| 3 | Performance & Change | Performance- Q3 | 1/4 | Sarah Kelly |
| 4 | Housing Operations | SNT Performance- Q3 | 1/4 | Alison Smith |
| | | | | |
| Partnership & Resources PDSP (Customer Services) 03/04/20 | | | | |
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| Council Executive 21/04/20 (Agenda Setting 13/04/20) | | | | |
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| Council Executive 19/05/20 (Agenda Setting 11/05/20) | | | | |
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| Services for the Community PDSP 02/06/20 (Agenda Setting 19/05/20) | | | | |
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| Partnership & Resources PDSP (Customer Services) 05/06/20 | | | | |
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| Council Executive 09/06/20 (Agenda Setting 01/06/20) | | | | |
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| Culture & Leisure PDSP (Customer Services) 18/06/20 | | | | |
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| Council Executive 23/06/20 (Agenda Setting 15/06/20) | | | | |
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SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN REVIEW 2020

REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Panel Members with a proposed Questionnaire return to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service relating to the Local Fire and Rescue Plan Review 2020.

B. RECOMMENDATION

Services for the Community PDSP is requested to note:

- I. The council's proposed response as set out in Appendix 1 of this report
- II. That a response will be submitted to Council Executive on 25th February 2020 seeking approval to submit the response to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

| | | |
|------------|--|---|
| I | Council Values | Focusing on our customers' needs Being honest, open and accountable Making best use of our resources Working in partnership Providing equality of opportunity |
| II | Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment) | The Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004 applies |
| III | Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers | None |
| IV | Impact on performance and performance Indicators | SOA1304_35 Number of deliberate secondary fires per 10,000 population SOA1304_36 Number of accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 population |
| V | Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement | This report will have a positive impact on the following SOA indicators; SOA10 – We live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the services |

we need

SOA11 – We have strong resilient and supportive communities, where people take responsibility for their actions and how they affect

| | | |
|-------------|---|------------------------------|
| VI | Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property) | Community Safety Partnership |
| VII | Consideration at PDSP | Proposed return to SFRS |
| VIII | Other consultations | None |

D. TERMS OF REPORT

This report sets out the proposed Questionnaire return to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (Appendix 1) relating to the Local Fire and Rescue Plan Review 2020.

- D1.** The Local Fire and Rescue Plan For West Lothian was set out in 2018 and was developed to support the delivery of agreed local outcomes for West Lothian communities. By working in partnership with community planning partners to improve community safety, to enhance the well-being of those who live, work in, and visit West Lothian, SFRS aimed to tackle issues of social inequality as well as reducing incidents of fire.
- D2** As well as setting out priorities and objectives for the SFRS within West Lothian for 2018 and beyond, the Plan allowed Local Authority partners to scrutinise the performance outcomes of these priorities ensuring that the Community Safety Partners were all “Working together for a safer Scotland” through targeting the risks to West Lothian communities at a local level.
- D3** The Plan covered the following priority areas:
1. Improved Local Outcomes
 2. National and Community Resilience
 3. Modernising Response
 4. Workforce Development
 5. Governance and Social Responsibility
 6. Transformation
- D4** The Council's response to the consultation is very positive and continues to reflect the good practice and partnership working in West Lothian. The set of Questions posed by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the council response are attached in Appendix 1

E. CONCLUSION

This report informs Panel Members of the proposed return to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in relation to their Questionnaire, detailed above as part of their Local Fire and Rescue Plan Review 2020.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

The Local Fire and Rescue Plan For West Lothian 2018

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1 – West Lothian Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2018

Appendix 2- Questionnaire - Local Fire and Rescue Plan Review 2020.

AnnMarie Carr, Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services

Tel: 01506 281355

AnnMarie.Carr@westlothian.gov.uk

CMT Member:

AnnMarie Carr

Head of Housing, Customer & Building Services

Date of meeting: 4th Feb 2020

West Lothian Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2018

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**



**SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

FOR WEST LoTHIAN

2018



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Introduction

Welcome to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Local Fire and Rescue Plan (the Plan) for the West Lothian Council area. This Plan has been created with a focus on placing our communities at the heart of everything we do, and to improve local outcomes for the people of West Lothian. This plan is the mechanism through which the aims of the Scottish Government's Fire and Rescue Framework 2016-19, the SFRS's Strategic Plan 2016-19 and the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Local Outcome Improvement (LOIP) Plan 2013-23 are delivered locally to meet the agreed needs of the West Lothian communities.

This Plan has been developed to support the delivery of agreed local outcomes for West Lothian communities, working in partnership with community planning partners to improve community safety, to enhance the well-being of those who live, work in, and visit West Lothian, whilst tackling issues of social inequality.

This Plan sets out my priorities and objectives for the SFRS within West Lothian for 2018 and beyond, and allows Local Authority partners to scrutinise the performance outcomes of these priorities. SFRS will continue to work closely with partners in West Lothian to ensure we are all "Working together for a safer Scotland" through targeting the risks to our communities at a local level.

As a public service organisation and as a member of the CPP, SFRS recognises that the demographics of our society are changing which will challenge us to continually improve on how we deliver our services to our communities. This Plan will therefore seek to focus on those areas of risk and demand to maximise the potential to work in partnership and by using our capacity flexibly, more effectively and innovatively to ensure we direct our resources to the point of need within our communities to protect those most at risk and harm.

Through our on-going involvement with local community safety groups in West Lothian, we will continue to develop our understanding of local needs and proactively seek out consultation opportunities with all sections of the community. Using this approach we will ensure that the services we deliver are driven by consultation, in line with public expectations and help to build strong, safe and resilient communities.

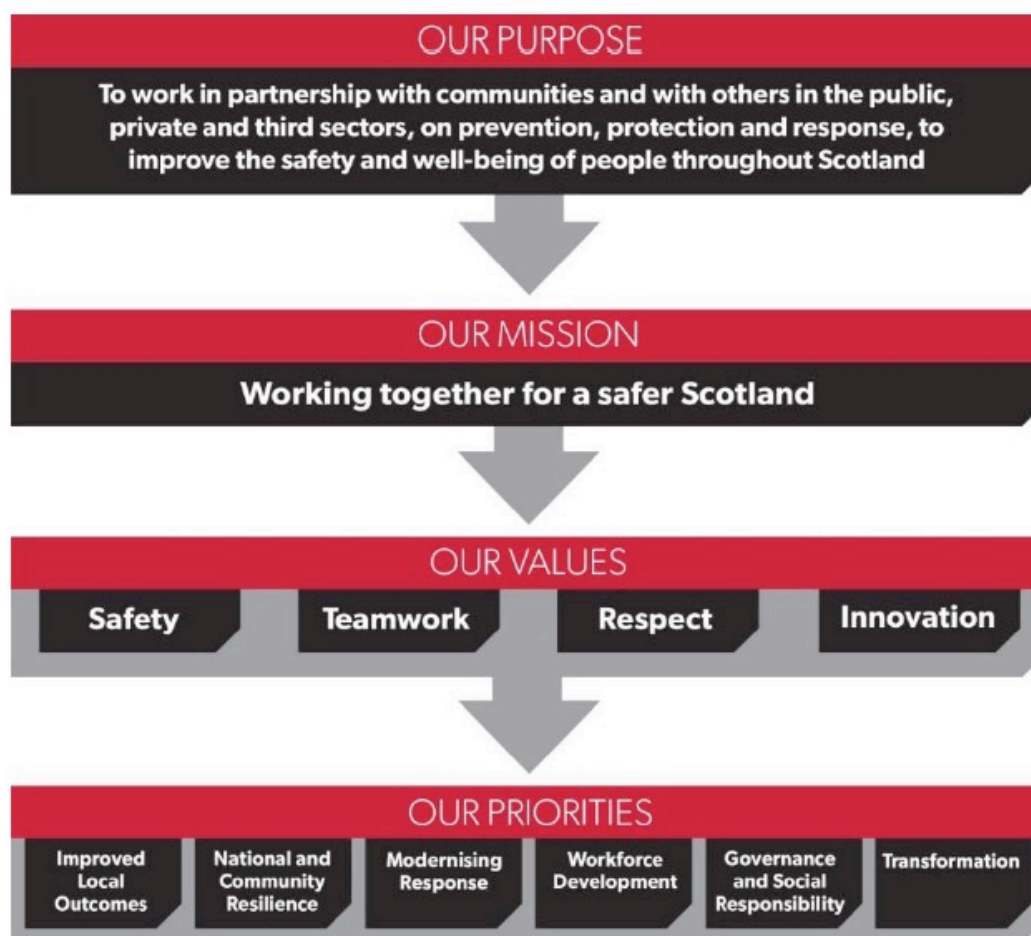
This Plan also takes cognisance of the strategic direction of the SFRS Board insofar that the Service needs to transform to meet the changing world around us in terms of threats from terrorism, severe weather events and the need to care for an ageing population in their homes. This changing environment is set against intense budgetary pressures being experienced across the public sector and the ambition to do more to reduce demand on services. Therefore this Plan has been developed using a flexible approach that permits change and adaptation as required

David Lockhart
Local Senior Officer
Falkirk and West Lothian

National Context

Scottish Ministers set out their specific expectations for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in the Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland 2016. This provides the outline we should follow to ensure our resources and activities are aligned with the Scottish Government's purpose and national outcomes.

Our Strategic Plan 2016-19 has been designed to meet these national expectations. Set against a complex and evolving backdrop, our Strategic Plan encapsulates our mission, values and strategic priorities.



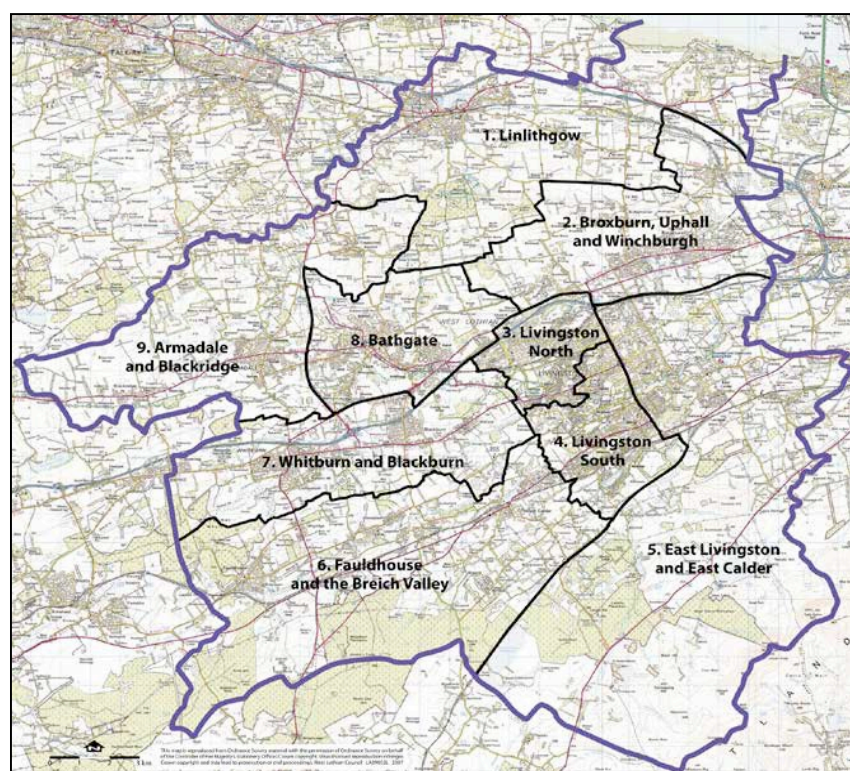
These have been shaped with due regard to the challenges we face and to what we need to achieve to be a highly effective, sustainable public service. Operating within a climate of significant financial uncertainty and public service reform means we need to transform how we operate. This will particularly include how we prepare for and respond to changing societal needs, the impact of climate change and the threat of terrorism.

Strong leadership, supported by sound governance and management arrangements are at the very core of our foundations. These arrangements will direct and provide assurance that we comply with our statutory responsibilities. In addition, they provide the Local Senior Officer with supporting mechanisms to deliver services specifically tailored to local needs.

Local Context

Understanding West Lothian and the profile of the community is of vital importance in helping the SFRS to develop this Plan and to identify priorities and objectives to ensure everyone has the opportunity to access our service and reduce their risk from fire and other hazards.

West Lothian covers a geographical area of approximately 428 square kilometres and is situated between the two main cities in Scotland, Edinburgh and Glasgow. West Lothian has a population of about 177,150, accounting for 3.3% of Scotland's total population. This Plan has been prepared within the wider context of the West Lothian CPP and sets out the local priorities for delivering Local Fire and Rescue Service priorities for West Lothian. Underpinning this Plan are the key principles of community planning namely; prevention and early intervention; integration of public services around the whole systems approach; transparency, accountability and innovation in our approaches to Fire and Rescue Service provision.



| Ward Area | Community Fire Station Locations |
|---|--|
| Ward 1 – Linlithgow | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linlithgow Broxburn |
| Ward 2 – Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh | |
| Ward 3 – Livingston North | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livingston |
| Ward 4 – Livingston South | |
| Ward 5 – East Livingston and East Calder | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Calder (Polbeth) |
| Ward 6 – Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley | |
| Ward 7 – Whitburn and Blackburn | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whitburn Bathgate |
| Ward 8 – Bathgate | |
| Ward 9 – Armadale and Blackridge. | |

The area has one of the fastest growing and youngest population in the country, with an average age of 39 compared with 41 across Scotland. West Lothian's rate of increase in population from 1991 to 2011 is at 21.55%, the highest of all Scottish local authority areas.

According to the 2011 census, 12.2% of the population of the area are Non White/Scottish. Since the 2001 census there has been an increase in the minority ethnic population with an emphasis on people coming into the area from Eastern European countries. People from minority or ethnic backgrounds can be more vulnerable due to feeling isolated within communities. This can be for a number of reasons, including language barriers and cultural differences.

By 2035 the population of West Lothian is projected to be 205,345, an increase of 19.3% compared to the 2010 population. The population aged under 16 is projected to increase by 13.3% over the 25 year period, however the biggest area of growth is in the older population, with growth in people of pensionable age anticipated to be 52% with particular increases in the over 75's. Risk to people is increased when age is combined with other factors, such as living alone and / or in poverty and isolation. Physical and mental health issues associated with aging can also contribute to an increase in risk.

West Lothian's projected population change is different to most other comparator local authorities, and the Scottish average, in that most of this projected change is estimated to be through natural change e.g. the birth rate being higher than the mortality rate.

Community Planning Partners put significant emphasis on reducing health inequalities across West Lothian and recognise that inequalities can lead to poorer health and earlier death. There is a correlation between health inequalities such as smoking and alcohol/drugs misuse and the increased vulnerability to the risks of fire.

The number of households in West Lothian is predicted to grow significantly. In 2010, there were around 72,500 households in West Lothian and around 74,500 houses. By 2033 there are expected to be 97,100 households in West Lothian, an increase of around 34%.

The 2016 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) shows that West Lothian is ranked 17th in the share of local authority deprived data zones, with sixteen data zones in the most deprived 15%. This equated to 7% of all data zones in West Lothian. Historically, it is recognised that there will be an increase in fire related activity in areas of deprivation.

Our six Community Fire Stations include two stations at Livingston and Bathgate which are staffed by Wholetime Duty System (WDS) and Retained Duty System (RDS) personnel with four stations at Broxburn, West Calder, Whitburn and Linlithgow staffed by RDS personnel. Wholetime stations are permanently staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week throughout the year whilst our RDS personnel operate on an "on call" basis and are alerted by pager for emergency calls. Across the six stations we have eight Fire appliances and one specialist Water Rescue vehicle.

Frontline personnel are supported by a team of local instructors from the Training and Employee Development (TED) Function. The local TED instructors provide dedicated support to operational personnel in terms of acquiring new skills, maintaining existing skills and ensuring role competency.

Our local Prevention and Protection (P&P) team consist of Fire Safety Enforcement officers, who deal with legislative matters including the auditing of relevant premises and a Community Action Team, who carry out a community engagement role through a diverse and wide reaching range of preventative activities. In addition to this, a SFRS Local Authority Liaison Officer acts as a coordinator for engagement activities and liaison with external partners.

An Area Manager, or Local Senior Officer (LSO), has overall responsibility for discharging the functions of the SFRS within West Lothian. Day to day management is devolved to a team of two Group Managers (GM) and two Station Managers (SM) responsible for Service Delivery. The Senior Management team also consists of a further two SM's who have responsibility for P&P and TED across the LSO area of Falkirk and West Lothian.

Local Priorities, Actions and Outcomes

In identifying the priorities for this Plan (listed below), we engaged with communities in the West Lothian area. The engagement process involved asking the views of citizens in relation to what the SFRS priorities should be in the local area, what additional work SFRS should undertake and asking if SFRS should target those most at risk. This proved valuable in ensuring that the services SFRS delivers meets the needs and expectations of the local community.

- Priority i: Local Risk Management and Preparedness
- Priority ii: Domestic Fire Safety
- Priority iii: Deliberate Fire Setting
- Priority iv: Non Domestic Fire Safety
- Priority v: Road Safety
- Priority vi: Unintentional Harm and Injury
- Priority vii: Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

Through analysis of our Community Planning Partners priorities that are detailed in the West Lothian Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2013-23 (revised 2017), it is possible to identify where the priorities within this Plan compliment and support the LOIP priorities. The table below depicts the identified links:

| | Local Fire and Rescue Plan West Lothian Priorities | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|-----|----|---|----|-----|
| West Lothian LOIP Outcomes | i | ii | iii | iv | v | vi | vii |
| 1) Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed | √ | √ | √ | | √ | √ | |
| 2) We are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities | √ | √ | √ | | | √ | |
| 3) Our economy is diverse and dynamic, and West Lothian is an attractive place for doing Business | √ | | √ | √ | | | √ |
| 4) We live in resilient, cohesive and safe Communities | √ | √ | √ | | √ | √ | √ |
| 5) People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances. | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | |
| 6) Older people are able to live independently in the community with an improved quality of life | | √ | √ | | | √ | |
| 7) We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities. | √ | √ | | | | √ | |
| 8) We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment. | √ | √ | √ | √ | | √ | √ |

In addition, the priorities within this Plan align to the Scottish Government National Outcomes, SFRS Strategic Priorities and Outcomes and CPP key documents that support the LOIP, these being:

- The West Lothian Community Engagement Plan 2013-23
- The West Lothian Prevention Plan 2013-23
- The West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy 2014-17
- The West Lothian Regeneration Framework 2013-34
- West Lothian Community Safety Strategy 2015-18.

Priority i: Local Risk Management and Preparedness

The SFRS is a key partner within the Resilience Partnership structure in Scotland as a Category 1 Responder, as set out in the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and Civil Contingencies Act (2004) (Contingency Planning) Regulations (2005). The West Lothian area forms part of the Lothian and Borders Local Resilience Partnership (LBLRP) which supports the East of Scotland Regional Resilience Partnership (EoSRRP). The SFRS works closely with partners including Police Scotland, Scottish Ambulance Service, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, NHS Lothian, MET Office, Maritime and Coastguard Agency and West Lothian Council, to develop and maintain plans based on identified risks across the LBLRP and EoSRRP area.

The SFRS have a statutory duty to reduce the risks to our communities to make certain that they receive the best possible service. The management of risk within our community means:

- Identifying the risks to the community that fall within the specific scope of responsibility of the SFRS
- Undertaking a process to prioritise these risks
- Ensuring that appropriate local and national resource capability are available and trained personnel are in place.

The SFRS is committed to working in partnership with communities, which includes empowering and supporting communities to build community resilience and cohesion. Through this work, we will work with communities to harness their resources and expertise. Examples of this work includes making communities aware of the risks that they face and making simple steps to improve their own safety.

We will achieve it by:

- *Fulfilling our statutory duties in relation to the Civil Contingencies Act*
- *Ensuring all known risk information is obtained, communicated and exercised*
- *Working locally with partner organisations and agencies to ensure effective response plans are developed for identified risks*
- *Ensuring our training, staff development and equipment is fit for purpose to meet our current risk profile and adaptable to changing circumstances*
- *Continually reviewing our response arrangements*
- *Adapting and evolving our response and service delivery models to meet future emerging risks.*

We will monitor progress against the following targets:

- *We will visit high risk premises on a regular basis to ensure our staff are aware of the hazards and risks posed by these premises*
- *We will participate fully in all multi agency training and exercising events*
- *We will use internal SFRS reporting systems to monitor the operational competence of our personnel.*

In doing so we will add value by:

- *Keeping members of the public and our staff safe, should any incident occur*
- *Reducing the financial burden and disruption caused to our communities when emergencies occur*
- *Improving the wealth and prosperity of our area*
- *Proactively helping the wider community by preventing emergencies and planning to mitigate their effects when they occur.*

Priority ii: Domestic Fire Safety

Accidental dwelling fires and associated fire casualties and fatalities have a significant impact on the families affected, as well as the wider community.

Analysis of accidental dwelling fire data identifies cooking as the most common cause of fires within the home, with the most common contributory factor being distracted whilst cooking.

Cigarettes and smoking materials are identified as the primary ignition source in a number of serious injury/fatal fires with alcohol consumption and/or drugs misuse being identified as a contributory factor, which affects the occupant's ability to react appropriately in a fire situation.

In addition, there are direct links to social deprivation, age and mobility with evidence suggesting that elderly members of the community and young people are more likely to be exposed to the risk of fire in the home.

Through our Home Fire Safety Visit programme, community engagement and education activities, we aim to reduce the risk and impact of fire and the associated losses and improve fire safety in domestic premises.

We will achieve reductions by:

- *Active participation in West Lothian Community Planning arrangements and adopting a partnership approach to risk reduction*
- *Sharing information with Health Care, Social Work and relevant partners to help protect the most vulnerable*
- *Developing new partnerships to identify and support at those at most risk groups*
- *Identifying opportunities for engagement with vulnerable members of our community to promote fire safety and good citizenship*
- *Delivery of targeted fire safety related educational programmes and community engagement activities*
- *Carrying out Post Domestic Incident Response following any accidental dwelling fire.*

We will monitor progress against the following targets:

- *We aim to reduce accidental dwelling fires in West Lothian by 3% per year*
- *We aim to reduce accidental dwelling fires fatalities in West Lothian to a level that is as low as reasonably practicable*
- *We aim to reduce accidental dwelling fires casualties in West Lothian by 2% per year.*

In doing so we will also add value by:

- *Promoting confident and safe communities where residents feel positive about where they live*
- *Protecting our citizens*
- *Making our communities safer*
- *Reducing the potential financial burden on society through the education of residents.*

Priority iii: Deliberate Fire Setting

Deliberate fire setting is a significant problem for the SFRS and is responsible for a large number of fires that are attended across West Lothian. Whilst some of these incidents occur in buildings, or involve vehicles, the vast majority can be identified as fires involving outdoor refuse/grass/shrub land fires and wheelie bins. SFRS classifies these as 'secondary fires'.

Deliberate secondary fires are a form of anti-social behaviour and by focusing our attention on deliberate fires, this will reduce the demand on the SFRS, the burden upon partners and in turn enhance community wellbeing and reduce negative environmental impact.

Analysis shows that the greatest amount of deliberate fire setting activity takes place in Livingston South and East Livingston and East Calder wards and activity increases significantly each year in April and May, and is at its lowest in December and January.

We will achieve reductions by:

- *Engaging in a multi-agency approach to tackling deliberate fire setting and fire related anti-social behaviour by the targeting resources to areas of demand and high activity*
- *Working with partners to develop new strategies to reduce deliberate fire setting*
- *Delivering youth engagement programmes to reduce anti-social behaviour through diversionary activities and education*
- *Delivering school based programmes to reduce deliberate fire setting*
- *Identifying and developing partnerships with organisations who engage with young people.*

We will monitor progress against the following target:

- *We aim to reduce deliberate fire setting in West Lothian by 5% per year.*

In doing so we will also add value by:

- *Promoting safe and attractive communities in which people want to live*
- *Diverting those persons away from anti-social behaviour by encouraging them to be good citizens*
- *Reducing the adverse effects that deliberate fire setting has on peoples' lives*
- *Supporting the national focus towards early and effective intervention.*

Priority iv: Non Domestic Fire Safety

All fires in workplaces and business premises are classed as Non-Domestic Fires and come under the scope of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005.

Fire Safety Enforcement Officers carry out audits to ensure statutory responsibilities are met and provide advice to businesses on fire safety. The types of premises encompassed by the Act can be wide-ranging and include industrial, commercial and those premises providing sleeping accommodation, such as residential care premises.

We proactively work as part of a partnership, with local industry to ensure that Businesses Continuity Planning and Emergency Preparedness Arrangements are appropriate, to ensure we can mitigate the impact of fires and other emergencies on business and that we are prepared to respond to adverse safety events.

In addition to industrial, commercial and sleeping/care premises, a number of non domestic premises types linked to domestic premises (e.g. garages, sheds and huts) can be at risk from fire. During our engagement with home owners we can raise awareness of this type of incident and offer fire safety information to mitigate risk in there types of property.

We will achieve reductions by:

- *Using a risk based approach to audit business and commercial premises by Fire Safety Enforcement Officers*
- *Working with the West Lothian Council licensing department to ensure all multiple occupation houses comply with the required standards in relation to Fire Safety*
- *Consulting with West Lothian Council Building Standards Officers and architects*
- *Carrying out Post Fire Audits following any fire within relevant premises*
- *Engaging in a multi-agency approach to tackling Non Domestic Fires*
- *Delivering youth engagement programmes to reduce anti-social behaviour through diversionary activities and education*
- *Delivering school based programmes to reduce deliberate fire setting*
- *Identifying and developing partnerships with organisations who engage with young people.*

We will monitor progress against the following target:

- *We aim to reduce fires in Non-Domestic Premises in West Lothian by 3% per year.*

In doing so we will also add value by:

- *Improving the wealth and prosperity in our area*
- *Improving the quality of our infrastructure and promoting the growth of our local economy*
- *Safeguarding the wellbeing of residents and employees within relevant premises*
- *Supporting business continuity and employment within our area.*

Priority v: Road Safety

A core part of the SFRS's role is responding to Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs). Firefighters are trained to a high standard and have at their disposal the most modern equipment for extricating people from vehicles involved in a collision and administering first aid to casualties.

Whilst attendance at RTCs is a core role for the SFRS, the primary responsibility for road safety lies with Transport Scotland, Police Scotland and local authorities. The SFRS has a crucial role in supporting these organisations at a local level. This includes providing access to hard-hitting education programmes aimed at the most at risk groups, to highlight the consequences of dangerous driving and RTCs. National statistics identify that the most at risk group is young drivers who are targeted through the multi-agency educational programme. This is aimed at fourth year secondary school pupils and supports Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2020 'Go Safe'.

We will achieve reductions by:

- *Continuing our involvement in multi-agency educational programmes, particularly aimed at high risk groups within our communities*
- *Developing innovative ways of delivering the road safety agenda in collaboration with partners*
- *Working with our partners within West Lothian to ensure that all agencies can map road incident hotspots.*

We will monitor progress against the following target:

- *We aim to reduce fatalities and casualties from Road Traffic Collisions in West Lothian by 2% per year.*

In doing so we will also add value by:

- *Protecting our citizens*
- *Making our communities safer*
- *Reducing the number of hospital admissions, and the associated costs to the NHS and other organisations due to RTC related injuries*
- *Encouraging young drivers and other groups to be responsible road users through active engagement and education.*

Priority vi: Unintentional Harm and Injury

Unintentional harm in the home environment - for example slips, trips, falls and scalds to the very young and old - is now widely recognised as presenting significant issues to the health of the public, as well as the impact these injuries have on our public services.

Analysis shows that our very young and elderly, particularly in more deprived communities, are most at risk of suffering from unintentional harm or injury. Analysis also shows that a number of agencies are often involved with those most vulnerable to these injuries.

Working with our community safety partners, both within West Lothian and across Scotland, SFRS has a significant role to play in contributing towards identifying those at risk, and the risks they are exposed to, and reducing or eliminating those risks, either directly through SFRS intervention, or indirectly through partner interventions.

We will achieve reductions in accidental harm by:

- *Working with our partners to understand the signs and causes of unintentional harm in the home, and educating SFRS personnel to identify these and deliver appropriate interventions*
- *Utilising our Home Safety Visit programme to assess for risk in the home, with a focus on the young and elderly, referring those deemed at risk from harm or injury to partners to provide additional support*
- *Focus resources where demand has been identified and deliver key community safety messages*
- *Work with partners to mitigate the negative outcomes of adverse health issues.*

We will monitor progress by:

- *Reviewing and reporting upon the number of Special Service casualties (excluding RTCs).*

In doing so we will also add value by:

- *Promoting confident and safe communities where citizens feel positive about where they live*
- *Protecting our citizens*
- *Making our communities safer*
- *Reducing the potential financial burden on society through the education of citizens.*

Priority vii: Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) are those occasions when an automated fire alarm system activates and results in the mobilisation of SFRS resources, when the reason for that alarm turns out to be something other than a fire. UFAS are categorised into three categories: False Alarm Good Intent, False Alarm Malicious or False Alarm Equipment Failure.

Within West Lothian, UFAS incidents in non-domestic properties account for a large number of the total incidents attended. UFAS has a negative impact on the SFRS through the deployment of resources to incidents where lifesaving services are not required. This negative impact is also experienced by businesses through loss of production, business continuity or service delivery. Attendance at UFAS creates a negative financial burden upon SFRS as well as increasing the road risk and environmental impact within West Lothian.

We will achieve reductions in Unwanted Fire Alarm Systems by:

- *Working with Duty Holders to reduce occurrences of UFAS*
- *Implement intervention systems such as staff alarm response or technical interventions including changes to the detector type, or double activation systems where required*
- *Where required, implement the SFRS policy on UFAS, and reduce the operational response to premises which continue to have UFAS incidents*
- *Identify premises which attract a significant operational response, and re-assess the response required.*

We will monitor progress against the following target:

- *We aim to reduce Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals in West Lothian by 5% per year.*

In doing so we will also add value by:

- *Protecting our citizens*
- *Making our communities safer*
- *Improving the wealth and prosperity in our area*
- *Reducing the negative impact of UFAS on local business.*

Review

To ensure this Local Fire and Rescue Plan remains flexible to emerging local or national priorities a review may be carried out at any time but will be reviewed at least once every three years. A review may also be carried out if the Scottish Minister directs it or if a new Strategic Plan is approved. Following a review the Local Senior Officer may revise the Plan.

Contact Us

We are fully committed to continually improving the service we provide to our communities and recognise that to achieve this goal we must listen and respond to the views of the public and our partners.

We use all feedback we receive to monitor our performance and incorporate this information into our planning and governance processes in order to continually improve our service. We are proud that the majority of feedback we receive is positive and we are keen to hear examples of good practice and quality service delivery that exemplifies the standards of service that we strive to provide for the communities of Scotland.

If you have something you'd like to share with us or you would like more information, you can get in touch in a number of ways:

Write to: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Falkirk and West Lothian LSO Area HQ
Westfield,
Falkirk
FK2 9AH

Phone: 01324 629121

Visit our website: www.firescotland.gov.uk

Follow us on Twitter: @fire_scot

Like us on Facebook: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

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SCOTTISH
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Working together for a safer Scotland

firescotland.gov.uk

Appendix 2

Local Fire and Rescue Plan Review 2020 – DRAFT

1. In what local authority area do you live or represent?

By telling us we can identify any common themes for your area.

Please choose the local authority area you live in from this alphabetical list.
The last two options cover people elsewhere in the UK or in the world.

West Lothian

2. If you represent an organisation, please give its name here:

Organisation name

West Lothian Council

3. If you are an SFRS employee, please indicated here:

☐ Yes ☒ No

No

4. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you in how the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is performing in your area?

(Required) ☒ Very satisfied ☐ Quite satisfied ☐ Neither/ Nor ☐ Quite dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied

Very Satisfied

5. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you at the way in which the SFRS understands and reflects local needs in their plans and activities?

(Required) ☒ Very satisfied ☐ Quite satisfied ☐ Neither/ Nor ☐ Quite dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied

Very Satisfied

6. Has there been any change in the quality of services delivered by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service over the last 3 years?

(Required) ☐ Much better ☐ A little better ☒ No change ☐ A little worse ☐ Much worse

No Change

7. In the past 3 years are you aware of any changes and innovations used to improve service provision and outcomes?

(Required) ☐ Much more ☐ A little more ☐ No change ☐ A little less ☐

Much less

A little more

8. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the level of information you received on local fire and rescue activity or developments?

(Required) ☒ Very satisfied ☐ Quite satisfied ☐ Neither/ Nor ☐ Quite dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied

Very Satisfied

9. Listed below are a number of core fire and rescue services, please rate these in terms of their importance to you:

Very important Quite important Neither/ Nor Not important

Being prepared
for and
responding to
fires

Promoting fire
safety in the home

Enforcing fire
safety in non-
domestic
buildings

Being prepared
for and
responding to
road traffic
collisions or
serious transport
incidents

Being prepared
for and
responding to
animal rescues

Being prepared
for and
responding to
flooding incidents

Very important Quite important Neither/ Nor Not important

Helping you be
prepared for
emergency
situations

All very important with one exception – ‘quite important’. Whilst animal rescues are important it should perhaps not be treated as importantly as the rescue of someone from fire, basically because there may be other people who can assist animal rescues – local farmers etc)

10. Listed below are other services we would like to do more of, please rate these in terms of their importance to you:

Very important Quite important Neither/ Nor Not important

Being prepared
for and
responding to acts
of terrorism

Working with
partners to
identify and help
people at risk of
preventable
accidents in their
home

Working with
partners to reduce
crime and
improve safety

Working with
partners to support
young people

Working with
partners to support
older people

Working with
partners to
improve the health
and wellbeing of
communities

Working with
partners to support
the local economy

and those in
poverty

Very important Quite important Neither/ Nor Not important

11. Are there any other fire and rescue activities which are important to you that are not listed?

Enter text here:

No

12. Are there any areas that we need to improve on in your locality?

Enter text here:

No – there are no particular area for further improvement. However, the Council would hope to see ongoing maintenance of staff retention and appliance levels.